

Peter
and
Ann

Past Life Recollections of
Marie Fox O'Brien

A List of Books

Marie's Story - An Extraordinary Odyssey

Channeled Books

Martin's Original Writings

Revelations

The Divine Nature of Man

Lessons

A new Endeavor

Concepts

Prayers

Past Lives

Moses

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Martin's Life Remembered

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Saturday, 5/1/93 5:02 PM.

[I am writing as Ann]

I was so completely in love, and he did not know that I existed. Well, he knew that I existed, but as a child, not to be taken seriously in any way. As soon as I saw him, I knew that he would be special to me, but I could tell nobody. Everybody would have laughed.

I first saw him in the library with my uncle. I learned later that they were working on a book together. When I entered the room without knocking, for I thought the room was empty, both of them looked up from their work, and Peter stood. My uncle introduced me as his ward and asked what I needed. I blushed under Peter's gaze, and said that I had come to get a book. I wondered what else he thought I might do in his library. He told me to be quick about it, and I was so.

After that, I used to watch for the arrival of Peter, and find excuses to go to the library when he was there alone. I had no wish to anger my uncle. Always I was careful to be returning one

book and getting another. I cannot tell you the scores of books that I took from that library and returned unread. I fancied that I was getting away with this ruse until years later when Peter roared with laughter about my deception and told me how difficult it had been to keep a straight face during my incursions.

As it was, most of the time he barely looked up from his work. Occasionally he would stop and speak pleasantly to me, asking me about what I had finished reading, frequently embarrassing me into admitting that the book I was returning I had found not to my taste. Occasionally he would suggest a volume and find it for me.

These I felt obliged to read, though often I was short of fully understanding. There was an advantage in this in that it gave me the opportunity of expressing my puzzlement and asking for help in understanding. I cherished those conversations and knew I must not try that particular ruse too often. Sometimes he would be so engrossed that he would not even look up at my entry, and I would try to be even more quiet than usual, and try to find a very small book so that I would have an excuse to return again

soon.

Never did I see him outside the library. I longed to be old enough to take part in social affairs. I longed for my uncle to invite Peter to share dinner with us. I did not even expect to speak. I would have been happy to listen. When I did dine with my uncle, it was a dreary affair. He would ask first about my activities and listen carefully at first when I began to speak. Then I was aware that I had lost his attention and that I spoke to empty air. When I stopped speaking, he would nod and grunt. I never knew if he had really heard anything of what I said. My uncle was not being unkind, but he lived in his own world, a world of scholarship and thought, and his kindness was stretched with having a child he never asked for under his roof.

Sunday, 5/2/93 6:20 AM

[Peter]

It was my pleasure during a very long life to achieve many significant victories in my chosen field of medicine. When I was very young, I

knew that above all else I needed to devote myself to work which brought ease to my fellow men. I particularly desired to eliminate the hardships of the poor, the downtrodden, those far less endowed with material comforts than I.

To this end, I applied myself assiduously from a tender age to learning what was available from any source open to me. I spoke with as many learned men as I could about the history of science and the current state of achievement and knowledge. I tried at all times to seek out those who offered to share their knowledge with me, and in this I was aided constantly by those men who sought as I did to find answers to the problems that plagued their fellow men and to provide the kind of relief to human sufferers that I felt ideal. We were a goodly company, I discovered as I grew older and more intent in my search. We were a group anxious to teach and to learn, disparate in age and experience and even in focus, but we found in each other a joyful sharing that was not available to us outside this select group of seekers. As a group, we grew constantly if not rapidly. There were among us a few of advanced age to whom the rest of us

looked with reverent eyes, and of whom we expected no error. They had lived lives of disciplined experimentation and scholarly application of their experiments, and each of them had kept careful records which served as both text and inspiration to those of us who were younger and eager to learn.

At no time did I ever observe the kind of selfishness in scientific discovery that marked medicine in a later day. I met no one whose chief concern was fame or recognition. There was a devotion to science which was pure in its intention and in its application, and in this pure atmosphere of searching and scholarly methodology, great progress was made. Each discovery seemed to fit in as part of the greater puzzle, and it was rare that any individual was not helped by the discovery of another, however far removed it might at first seem from the center of his interest. And so, I was privileged to share in the wisdom and accomplishment of a group of elite scholars, men of near genius intelligence whose seeking after truth served as an ideal for me at the same time that my hunger for knowledge was being satisfied. I was fortunate to

be accepted by this group at such a young age, and had to thank for this my patron, a man of generous instincts and sheer integrity.

6:15 PM

[Ann]

Sometimes I thought that my years of childhood would never end. Sometimes I thought I would wither and die without knowing the pleasures of society. Finally though, I came to my seventeenth year, and I knew that it was the last year I would spend in almost total isolation with my uncle. My uncle David was not a harsh man by nature, not at all, but he was lost in his own world of books and scholars, and he had little concept of the needs of a young girl. To be sure I always had more than I needed in material things, but I hungered for companionship other than his and the servants'.

As my eighteenth birthday approached, I did not dare ask my uncle if he planned an observance. I knew that my uncle was proper in all things, and that he would do what custom demanded. Fi-

nally, he spoke to me. He said that he had instructed the housekeeper to begin planning the celebration of my coming of age and introduction to society. He said that he had instructed her to do all that was necessary to prepare me for this occasion and to tell me all that was required of me. He said that the party would be large but not excessive, that he hoped I would be pleased. I had trouble keeping my seat as he spoke. I wanted to leap up, rush around the table, and hug my uncle to within an inch of his life. I knew, though, that this would not be proper behavior, and so I sat looking solemnly across the table at this good man and trying not to grin with happiness. I assured him when he finished speaking that I was both grateful and pleased, and thought I saw in his eyes a gleam of satisfaction.

The weeks that followed were glorious. All the women of the household, my surrogate mothers in my eyes, shared in the excitement and smiled each time they saw me. The housekeeper taught me all that would be required of me in behavior. I practiced curtsying endlessly. I practiced words of greeting and response. I had long mock con-

versations with myself. Still, I was nervous.

When the night came, everything was perfect. The house glowed with light, and I think I must have glowed too. My dress was simple and white with lace and ribbons. My hair for the first time was braided into a coronet about my head, and the cook, of all unlikely people, had volunteered to wind through the plaits strands of ribbon matching those on my dress. Even my uncle looked pleased when I presented myself for his approval.

We walked solemnly together down the staircase and stood by the door together at the time appointed for the guests to arrive. When they came, they came in droves, and after a few awkward moments I found myself at ease as I was introduced to each guest by my uncle. The words I thought might stick in my throat came easily, and all of a sudden I found myself smiling. "So much like your mother," I heard over and over again, and I tried to see a strong resemblance between what I saw in the mirror and the only likeness I had of my mother, and I failed. Soon the line thinned, and my uncle was about to suggest we join our guests when Peter came

rushing in, mumbling apologies for his lateness and looking only at my uncle as he spoke. Finally he turned to me, and my heart stopped when I saw the change of expression on his face and the dawning awareness in his eyes. He was speechless for a few moments as he stared at me. Then he murmured my name. I gave him my hand and he took it in both of his and raised it to his lips, all the time holding my eyes in his gaze. My uncle cleared his throat and moved restlessly. Peter dropped my hand, all too quickly to suit me. My uncle offered me his left arm and took Peter by the elbow with his right. The three of us, my uncle between Peter and me, turned toward the big hall and our guests.

Wednesday, 5/5/93 6:25 AM

[Peter]

I had not expected to complicate my life by falling in love. My world was, I thought, complete. All of my days were spent in study and consultation with those I needed to learn. My nights likewise were devoted to the pursuit of

knowledge. I felt that I needed no more. Then, without the slightest volition on my part, I found myself distracted, lost in thought of a pretty young thing I had ignored for years.

It took me a long time to admit this folly. I continued my daily visits to the library I felt was almost my own, and I found myself listening for the opening of the door that told me she was there. When I found myself so distracted with longing to gaze into those wondrous eyes that I could not solve a single problem, could not remember a single formula, I knew that I must take some action, and so I resolved to speak to my patron and ask his permission to walk out with his niece. I did not know what he would say nor what I would say beyond my simple question.

As it was, I had to be patient, for that very day I resolved to speak, my patron told me that he was taking his niece on an extended trip to the continent. He had, he said, felt that her education was incomplete, and that it was his duty to expose her to the art she loved so well in books. They would, he said, be leaving in a fortnight and be gone for six or seven weeks. He assured me that

the library was as much mine in his absence as in his presence, and we spoke briefly of all we had been working on together. Then he rose, shook my hand, and said that his pleasure in my scholarship was a source of great satisfaction to him. He did not go so far as to say that he felt real affection for me as well, but it was conveyed in his touch and in his expression.

So my patience was cruelly tried. I thought that perhaps her absolute absence from the house would permit me the kind of concentration that had been my strength in scholarship, but I found myself gazing at the page and seeing her face. I found myself listening to the silence and hearing her voice. Instead of improving, it got worse, and toward the end of their absence I stayed away entirely from the house in the vain hope of forgetting my obsession.

Then I feared to stay away too long. The thought of not being there when she arrived home tormented me, and so I returned to my daily routine, but instead of staying the entire time in the library with my studies, I found myself roaming through the halls, trying to imagine what I would say to my beloved when I had the opportunity.

The staff looked at me and said nothing, but I was not above wondering what the conversation was among themselves. Was the young master ill? Mad? Had too much studying finally gone to his head? I wondered myself about my sanity. I had not anticipated this obsession. It had no place in my orderly existence. I did not want to be in love. Withal, I was as helpless as a babe in the throes of my emotions.

1:10 PM

[Ann]

Our journey was more than I ever dreamed of. We saw so many wonders. My uncle's attitude toward me changed in a most gratifying way. It seemed to me that he now regarded me as an adult, not a child any longer, and I know that he relished the role of teacher to me, and teacher he was. I thought I had learned much about art from my reading, but my knowledge was dwarfed by my uncle's scholarship. From the very first day I learned from him, and he, in turn, I know, was gratified and pleased by my ea-

gerness and, if I may be immodest, by my intelligence. He was patient and painstaking in all of his instruction. I think that he found pleasure in introducing me to those we encountered in our travels, both old friends he sought out and strangers newly met. I surprised myself with my social ease and with the pleasure I found in earnest discussion. Often I watched my uncle's face as I spoke, looking for any sign of disapproval, of warning that I had gone too far in expressing myself, and never did I find him reproachful. Each day brought us closer, and at the end of each day I slept dreamlessly and awakened to the next day full of pleasurable anticipation.

Finally it was over, and we were homeward bound. Only then did I realize how I had missed his presence, and my heart skipped a beat at the thought of encountering him. My uncle had no awareness of my feelings for Peter, and I was determined that he would not. I feared that it would cause him to doubt my maturity, my seriousness of purpose, and I did not want anything to threaten this growing affection my uncle felt for me and I for him. I wondered, though, how

long I would be able to conceal my feelings, and thought perhaps I should simply avoid encountering Peter. The thought desolated me.

It was early evening when we arrived home. It had been a long arduous day, and when I looked at my uncle I could see the extent of his fatigue. When we pulled up in front of the house, the door opened, and two of the manservants came down the stairs to help with the boxes and trunks. I waited, as I had learned to do, for my uncle to hand me down from the carriage, and together we walked to the door. The housekeeper, Mrs. Carling, stood just inside and greeted us, first my uncle and then me. She said that she would arrange for a light repast after we had changed from our traveling clothes and asked if he required anything else. He thanked her and said she need not bother about anything else that evening.

After we ate lightly, I went to where my uncle sat at the head of the table and bent to kiss his dry cheek and to tell him how grateful I was for all he had done for me and how much I had learned from him. He patted my hand and murmured, "There, there." Then he rose and said that the

journey had so tired him that he must retire immediately. I walked to the foot of the staircase with him and once again kissed him on the cheek and bade him a sound sleep.

When he had gone, I forgot my resolve entirely and fairly flew to the library. I knew he was not there, but I longed for the sense of his presence. On the table lay some notes in his handwriting. I clasped them to my chest and tried to envision his face and hear his voice. I failed, and I carefully replaced the notes where I had found them. I wondered if I would be strong enough the next day to resist visiting the library. I hoped so and I hoped not so. Never had I been so confused.

Saturday, 5/8/931:00 PM

[Ann]

The morning after our return from our journey I slept later than usual. My sleep had been restless and fitful through the night, and it was after dawn that I fell asleep soundly. My sleep had been filled with strange dreams of Peter, and

once I woke myself up with the sound of my voice. I don't remember what my words were, but I knew they were of Peter. When I was dressed I went into the hall, and I could hear my uncle and Mrs. Carling speaking at the foot of the stairs. Then I heard the library door open and close. Then, silence.

I stood there uncertain of what to do. I knew my resolve to avoid seeing Peter had no strength in it, but, I asked myself, should I wait a while or should I go directly to the library and catch a look at that dear face? In the end, I decided on patience. I went to the kitchen to get something to eat and then back to my room. I could not sit still. I fussed about and rearranged everything there was to rearrange, and then I sat and tried to imagine what I would say. Nothing came to me, or at least nothing clever. Finally, I could wait no longer. I had, fortunately, left two books from the library in my room during our absence, and so I had a ready excuse to go to the library. In addition, I was anxious to read again some of the books I had read earlier on art. I felt I had learned so much on our journey both from my uncle's vast knowledge and through my own

eyes, that I would have new appreciation of these works. In addition, I had decided to ask my uncle if I could have drawing lessons, and I intended to do some copying to show him what I regarded as fair aptitude.

And so, I opened the library door carefully and stepped inside. There they sat, and I thought my pounding heart would give me away as I looked at Peter's bent head. I was sure the pounding was audible, but as I stood there and they became aware of my presence, they barely interrupted their perusal of a book that lay between them, nothing more than a murmured greeting, an acknowledgment of my presence, nothing more. I murmured a reply and passed them in utter confusion. Peter acted as if I had never been away, and certainly as if I was of no consequence whatsoever. I found myself standing in front of a shelf of books trying to compose myself and still my wildly beating heart. When I focused on the titles, I realized they were all in Latin, works of science quite beyond me. Though I had a little Latin, I had no knowledge of science and really, at that time, no interest. I glanced back to see if they had observed my strange preoccupa-

tion with these books so far beyond my comprehension, but they had not.

Quickly then I found the books I sought on art, and replaced those I was returning, and headed for the door. I had my hand on the latch when my uncle called me by name. I turned and he said, "Peter is anxious to hear about our trip. We will speak of it at tea. Will you join us?" My ill controlled heart began once again to beat wildly, and I know I blushed with excitement, but I forced myself to say in a steady voice, "As you wish, Uncle," and to leave without a single glance at Peter.

Outside, I jumped with joy and decided that after putting the books in my room I would take a long, long walk and dream of the joy that lay ahead. I told Mrs. Carling, and she advised me somewhat sharply to stay away from the bramble bushes which I had walked through the last time to the great detriment of my skirts. I promised I would, and waited until I was far from the house before skipping like a child and shouting my joy for all the heavens to hear.

1:57 PM

[Peter]

It was difficult for me to disguise my impatience while I waited for a glimpse of my beloved, and when she did finally enter the room after such a long painful absence I hardly dared look at her for fear of betraying myself. My patron, ever interested primarily in scholarship, had spoken briefly of their journey when I asked, and had added that he would speak to me at length of his experiences in the afternoon as we enjoyed tea. I did not dare ask if we would be joined by his niece, and I was overjoyed when he asked her to join us as she left the library with her new store of books.

She had grown even more beautiful while she was away, and I sensed in her uncle a new awareness of the loveliness of his niece in every regard. We spoke no further of anything but our work together the rest of that day until a knock on the door told us that tea was ready. In his methodical way, my patron neatly arranged all the papers and books we had been using, and only then did he rise from his chair and bid me follow

him. I was in an agony of impatience, and it took all of the control I possessed to disguise this impatience and assume a casual, unhurried air.

My patron recounted incidents that seemed particularly memorable to him, and spoke with the clarity and erudition that I expected of him always. I asked questions when they seemed relevant, but all the time I waited for words from my beloved. She sat there, lovely and controlled, looking earnestly into our faces as we spoke and clasping and unclasping her hands as she listened. I wondered if she was as calm as she seemed.

Finally, my patron turned to his niece and asked her a question about a particular painting they had seen which had moved her to tears. She spoke softly and meaningfully about this experience, and every word she spoke was engraved into my mind and heart. I resolved to write them immediately when I was alone. They reflected the sincerity and simplicity that I knew she had to possess, and when she was finished speaking, I dared to ask her myself what other pieces she had seen that she found moving and memorable.

Then the floodgates opened, and she spoke freely, often turning to her uncle for questions or for confirmation of all the wonders she had known and of all she had learned. I was impressed, as was inevitable. I would have been impressed no matter what she said, so smitten was I, but her words betrayed both sensitivity and intelligence, and a fineness of insight rare in one so young, I thought. I was pleased, too, by the approval I read in her uncle's eyes, and I thought it fortunate that he was beginning to know pleasure in the care of his ward. I resolved to speak to him that very day about my admiration for his Ann, and to ask his permission to converse with her again. I knew that my patron both liked and approved of me, and I hoped that this affection and approval would permit him to agree to my request.

Thursday, 5/13/932:45 PM

[Peter]

Before that day was over, I had received permission from my patron to pursue the conversation

I had so enjoyed with his niece. I professed myself eager to learn from her as she had from him so much about the great art they had enjoyed together.

It was true, unfortunately, that I was woefully ignorant of much that I yearned to know of the world outside my narrow sphere of interest. I rarely read a book that was not a book of science. I rarely spoke with others except about science. I was capable, it is true, of social small talk, but I found trivial conversation generally boring, and when I was so engaged, I frequently lapsed into the kind of problem solving that was my joy in life, and when my partner in these conversations became aware of my lapse in attention, he or she generally found an excuse to seek other company. Usually I was content for this to happen. My pleasure was primarily in the investigation of all things scientific whether that involved daydreaming at inappropriate times or serious consultation with others or solitary perusal of text.

And so, I think, my patron regarded my request as wholly reasonable, the natural tendency of a mind overly focused on one subject to reach out

with intellectual curiosity for education in others. I had not, to this point, been aware of how general the knowledge my patron possessed was, and I begged his permission to know about how he had become so erudite in matters far removed from scientific pursuit. He responded that he had been fortunate enough to grow up in a household where the pursuit of knowledge approached passion, and that his mother and his sisters had shared equally with his father and his brothers and himself in this passion. Much of the library we enjoyed, he said, had been the fruit of his parents' pursuit of knowledge and their determination to share it with others, particularly their children. Ann's mother, he added, had from a tender age been sensitive to beauty in all forms, particularly music and art, and before her death had been greatly admired by all for the depth and breadth of her knowledge.

I yearned to ask him more of Ann's mother, but I knew my patron well enough to know that he would tell me exactly what he deemed fitting for me to know and no more, regardless of questions I might put to him. He assumed a dreamy expression, not at all typical, when he spoke of

his family, and particularly of his sister, also called Ann, whose child he was learning to love as he had loved her mother.

I think I had succeeded in concealing my exultation until the moment Ann reentered the room and looked directly at me. Then I knew I was revealed. She smiled gently and sat beside her uncle. He told her of my request and of his permission, and suggested that for the moment our meetings and discussions be confined to the library under his watchful eye. He would, he said, allow us the privacy of distance that the room permitted, and added that should either of us need him in any way in the furtherance of my education he would be readily available.

I knew from looking at Ann that she was both pleased and flustered, and she protested that she was far from a teacher. I responded that in this case she was indeed the teacher, for I was most abysmally ignorant, and that perhaps I stood in the same relationship to her as she to her uncle in erudition. I needed her, I repeated, to learn all I longed to know about the art she so loved. In the end, it was agreed that my tuition would begin the very next day.

Friday, 5/14/93 2:10 PM

[Ann]

I could not at first believe what my ears were hearing. They were, to me, the kindest, gentlest, most loving words I had ever heard my uncle utter. They were beyond my wildest dreams. I had been well trained to control myself and to subdue emotion, and even at that I am not sure that I managed completely to conceal my exultation. At the same time, I could not stop myself from protesting that my capability was inadequate to the task, my knowledge too meager, too newly acquired to do what was being suggested. It made my heart sing when Peter overrode my protests and insisted that he needed -- needed, what a joyful word! -- my instruction.

I did not dare hope that there was an element of ruse in all that was being suggested, that Peter's motive was not as simple as a hunger for knowledge. I hoped that his request at least betrayed a pleasure in my company, for certainly he could have asked this instruction of my uncle, who was in all senses of the word a teacher. But Peter had asked to speak with me, and I was more

than content no matter what his motives.

That night at dinner my uncle spoke further of Peter. He said that he had one of the finest minds he had ever encountered, and that it was Peter's good fortune to possess a high degree of modesty about his abilities, so that there was nothing of arrogance in his intellect. Arrogance, I knew, was a quality that my uncle abhorred. As my uncle spoke, I wondered if he had ever noticed that all else about Peter was beautiful too -- the gentleness of his manner, the kindness of his expression, the gracefulness of his bearing.

I was startled out of my preoccupation with Peter's perfection to me when my uncle mentioned my mother. Rarely had there ever been a reference to her by anyone since I had come into the household as a small child so many years ago. At first I had asked and asked, and gradually learned that I was to get no answer. Now, my uncle was recounting to me his conversation with Peter that afternoon. I hardly dared breathe for fear my uncle would stop. When he spoke of my mother's interest in music and art his voice softened as I had never before heard, and I still remained speechless. Then, although the light

was poor and I could not see clearly, I thought I saw his eyes begin to fill with tears. Instantly he affected a coughing spell -- or perhaps it was real -- and excused himself from the table.

On his return he was totally composed, and I dared ask him what I was longing to know. I said that at my birthday observance, I was puzzled when so many of the guests had spoken of my resemblance to my mother, because I could not see this in the one miniature portrait I had of her. My uncle smiled and said that indeed I was much like her, that although I had inherited my father's fair coloring rather than my mother's dark beauty, there was indeed a strong resemblance between me and my mother at my age. It was greatly, my uncle said, reflected in manner -- -- the way I moved, the way I smiled, in the expressions that reflected my feelings. And in talents, he added, in our shared capacity for appreciation of beauty in art.

I was almost tempted at that point to tell my uncle about my drawings, but I held my tongue. I would be patient about that, I thought. Perhaps I would share them with Peter first and get his reaction, though I knew it would be an untu-

tored one, and perhaps prejudiced.

When I tried to ask more about my mother, my uncle indicated that the subject was closed for now. When I dared persist and asked if he would speak of her and of my father at another time, he smiled thinly and said only, "Perhaps." It was enough to send my hopes soaring, and I vowed to be so diligent in my studies and in my conversations with Peter that my uncle would be so pleased with me that he could not refuse me this favor.

Thursday, 5/20/936:15 PM

[Peter]

It was clear from the very first of our meetings that we could not do without each other. Ann spoke with earnestness and devotion of all I longed to know of art and of the worlds of wonder she had both read about and seen on her journey. We were ever aware of my patron's presence in the library, but I, even more than Ann, was aware of his capacity for total absorption in his studies, and I was certain that he

heard the sound of our voices without hearing the words.

There was no end of pleasure for me in Ann's words, although I must confess that occasionally I was distracted enough to let myself consider the bewitching way her lips curled in a smile or the beautiful incandescence of her eyes, and I would find myself caught in inattention. At these times my precious Ann feared that she was boring me, but my protests were sincere enough to convince her that this was never the case. She provided excuses for me. I was tired. She had talked too long. I longed to get back to my studies with her uncle.

She had no concept, at first, of how completely I had lost my heart to her, modest and unassuming as she was, but gradually she began to see in my eyes the love I no longer strove to hide. The first time our eyes met and held and clearly communicated our inner feelings, Ann looked away quickly, but not quickly enough to hide her growing affection. She blushed nicely, I remember clearly, and when she resumed her tutorial she stammered ever so slightly, just enough to betray her confusion.

And so the weeks passed, and my patron questioned me closely about all I had learned each day with his niece. He educated me further with his vast knowledge of all things I sought to know, and finally the day came when he said to me, "I think, Peter, that you have learned as much of yourself as you have of art." There was no avoiding answering him, and there was no question of his insight. I replied that indeed I was the victim of my emotions where his niece was concerned, that I found myself deeply attracted to her in every way, but that I hoped I had been adequately circumspect in all my statements and in all my actions so that she remained innocent of my true feelings.

I was pleased that my patron had taken from me the burden of first speaking of my love for Ann, that I was able to say in full truth that I feared I had lost my heart to his niece, and that I hoped he would not consider my suit unworthy. He turned aside for a moment as though he were considering my words carefully, and had I not known him as well as I did, I would have thought him caught up in emotion. When he spoke the words were a pure joy to me. He

spoke of his growing affection for his ward, and said that I was, of course, aware of his affection for me and of his respect for my talents and seriousness of purpose. "But," he added, and my spirits sank, "Ann is very young, not necessarily in chronological age, but in innocence. She has seen little of the world, and she has known little of companionship. She is not, I feel, ready for a lasting commitment." My sinking spirits rose again as he added that I should feel free to pursue my suit provided that I understood that he would not approve of a marriage in any way precipitate, that he would demand at least a year before I asked for Ann's hand in marriage, and that it was his intention that during that time she enjoy a social life which would permit her to develop acquaintances among young people of her age. He pressed upon me the importance of my affording Ann this freedom to develop her social relationships unhindered in any way by an emotional attachment to me. I had no option but to agree, and in my heart I knew that here was no harm in what Ann's uncle asked of me. I had looked deeply into my beloved's eyes and I knew what I saw there.

Friday 5/21/93 4:54 PM

[Ann]

I could not believe how different my life became all of a sudden. My uncle, who had never enjoyed the company of others in a social setting, suddenly gave instructions that a series of soirees would be planned, and that a particular effort must be made to include all the young people in the area as well as their elders. Suddenly the house hummed with activity. The staff beamed with pleasure at the change in affairs. There was a flurry of redecorating under my uncle's close supervision, and he instructed Mrs. Carling that I was to be fitted with a number of ball dresses suitable to my youth and simplicity. He seemed to be everywhere at once, and I wondered often how many long hours he must be spending in the library after the affairs and responsibilities of the day were ended.

Peter and I continued our daily tutorials even when my uncle was unable to supervise us, but there was always the awareness between us that he could enter the room at any time, and the decorum that marked our behavior was un-

changed ever. I began to wonder if I had fancied the love I thought I saw in Peter's eyes that one time when our eyes locked in revealing emotion. I kept waiting for him to ask just one personal question, make one personal comment, betray one personal feeling, but I was disappointed in this. Finally, I could control my patience no longer, and one day after we had finished our work and were putting away the books we had used, I asked Peter to tell me about his family. Never had he spoken of them. Never had my uncle told me anything of Peter except that he had a fine mind.

Peter looked surprised at my question and glanced hastily at my uncle who that day sat nearby, immersed in his reading. I sensed Peter's reluctance to speak, and instantly regretted my forwardness. Peter must have noticed my stricken look, for he begged my forgiveness for not answering directly then and there and promised that at a later time we would find the time to speak together of what each of us longed to know of the other. His manner was so kindly that my embarrassment was dispelled, and I promised patience.

After I returned to my room, I permitted myself the luxury of speculating about Peter's family. All I knew of them was that they lived nearby and that Peter was the eldest son. I had no notion even of their numbers, nor whether his parents were still alive. I did not quite understand why Peter chose not to speak of them to me then and there, but thought perhaps my uncle has placed a stricture on what he was allowed to speak of to me. Once again I told myself to be patient and undemanding and to wait for the time when Peter would feel free to speak. I knew it would come.

Thursday, 5/27/93 11:34 AM

[Peter]

It was some time before I could bring myself to speak to my Ann -- for that is what I called her in my heart, "my" Ann -- about my family. It was not that there was any shame in what I felt for all those born dear to me, but rather an embarrassment of riches. Whereas my patron was a man of means and lacked no material comforts,

my family had been born into wealth so extravagant that I found myself from a very young age trying to escape it.

Neither of my parents was bothered at any time to any degree about the enormity of their holdings. Indeed in their scheme of things it was the will of Providence that they be so gifted by birth and alliance, for my parents' marriage was indeed an alliance, a joining of two great fortunes, a marriage of convenience as the saying goes, loveless but amicable, and this marriage had produced four children, I, the eldest son, and three daughters considerably younger than I. During a period of several years, indeed, it looked as though I might be the sole product of this marriage, but in a space of three years three girls had been added.

During the years of growing up in the great house that my parents considered their first home, I saw little of my mother and even less of my father. They traveled most of the time, and participated fully in the social life enjoyed by the nobility and near nobility of the time. At no point in my long life did I understand their obsession with this life that deprived me of my

parents and them of their children, but perhaps, I reluctantly concluded, they were unable to love us, so lacking love for each other and perhaps indeed for themselves.

I tried, as I grew, to be both brother and guardian to my sisters, and indeed at the time I thought I succeeded admirably, though in later years I knew that I had attempted to do something far beyond my abilities. In any case, at the time Ann asked me about my family, I had no family in the most basic sense of the word. My parents had recently removed my sisters from the house they had always called home and had established them in a home they regarded as more suitable for growing girls who would soon, they assumed, be desirous of taking their rightful place in society, a society of frivolity, of empty laughter, of childish games played by adults, of constant movement from place to place, from group to group, as though stability were an evil unto itself.

My sisters professed reluctance to leave me, and indeed I believe there was an element of regret in their departure from the home they had always known and in leaving their only brother,

but these hesitations were far outweighed by the romance that they believed awaited them in the world of glamour occupied by our parents, and indeed I could not fault any one of them for dreaming of being like our mother when they grew to womanhood, for she was indeed a creature of great beauty and charm and could turn heads in a crowded room always, but it was difficult not to notice the emptiness of her eyes when she was not conscious of anyone looking at her, and the sadness of expression her face assumed in repose. She could not tolerate repose, ever. Constant activity, constant chatter, made her life bearable and made it possible for her to feign satisfaction with all she chose to make of her life.

Friday 6/4/93 9:13 AM

[Peter]

I could not at first convince myself to speak to Ann as frankly as I needed to speak to her. She had led a life so sheltered as to render her almost totally unaware of the world that loomed and

threatened outside her quiet environment. It is true that she was aware from her travels that such a world existed, but she was acquainted with it in such a general and superficial way that she was completely innocent of the complexities and intrigues that lay below the surface. She had grown up knowing the idealism which governed all of her uncle's pursuits, and she had no reason to believe that he was different from other men. She knew that there had to be a reason for her uncle's refusal to speak of her parents, a refusal quite apart from the grief he clearly felt for his sister's untimely death, and he was at no time forthright about how she had met her end.

At the same time, I realized that Ann felt a certain embarrassment about having gone beyond the bounds of propriety in asking personal questions of me, and I was anxious to put her mind at ease while at the same time conveying to her the nature of my family without alarming her as to the implications of a lasting relationship with me. It was not, I hasten to add, that I dared hope at that time that I could be sure of persuading my Ann to share my life and fortunes, but I knew I saw in her eyes a feeling she did not be-

tray when she looked at others.

I decided that I would be uncomfortable speaking to Ann in the close confines of the library, never sure of privacy from one moment to the next, and so I begged of my patron permission to ask his niece to accompany me, without other company, on a walk about the grounds one fair afternoon. He looked at me with clear eyes, and commented that I had taken longer to reach this point than he had guessed. Despite my self assurance, I found myself stammering trying to explain myself, and he smiled as he clapped me on the shoulder and wished me good fortune. I was grateful for his generous agreement and clear understanding, and determined to ask Ann the very next day to walk with me and hear my words.

That evening, alone in the cavernous emptiness of my rooms, I found myself rehearsing what I would say to my beloved in terms of assurance and honesty. I needed to rehearse. It had been quite some time since I had put from my mind the dark secrets that made me uncomfortable, secrets I was loathe to share with anyone, but which I knew I must share with Ann. I could not

otherwise pursue my suit.

9:45 AM

[Ann]

It was a bright sunny morning in spring when Peter spoke to me of his family. I remember thinking as I entered the library that afternoon to put away the books we had left lying on the table that there could not have been a greater contrast between the bright beauty of the day and the dark anguish I had seen in Peter's eyes as he spoke to me.

We had not been working that morning for more than ten minutes when Peter put his hand over mine as it lay on the table. That act startled me. Never had there been the slightest intimate gesture between us, and I dared not breathe for fear he would remove his hand from mine. I did not dare look at him, but I heard him say that my uncle had given him permission to walk with me with no other company, and he asked if I would leave then and there to do this. My heart was pounding as I ran up the stairs to get a cloak and

bonnet, and I stopped briefly before I returned to the downstairs hall to try to still my racing heart and to compose myself.

There was no one in the hall as we slipped out the front door, but there was no doubt in my mind that eyes watched us as we walked around the house to the rear garden. I loved these gardens with their sweet smell and lively colors, and I spent much time in the little garden house in the center. It was to this house that Peter headed directly, and he stood aside as I entered and sat down. He sat opposite me, close enough so that I could hear him clearly, though he spoke in low tones.

I could sense his urgency, and it puzzled me. We had developed such an easy relationship over our studies, and both of us knew that I had long since stopped being the teacher. We were learning together, and took much joy in the learning and the sharing. Now, however, it was a different Peter who spoke to me. He began by expressing his regret that he had not answered me directly when I asked about his family. I blushed at this. I knew at the time it was not appropriate for me to ask, and I began to speak to him of my regret,

but he leaned closer to me and begged me to listen to what he had to say without interrupting. What he was about to tell me, he said, he had known for only a few years. He said he did not know how many others knew. He needed, he said, to be honest with me for reasons that would become clear to me in time.

Then Peter began by speaking lovingly of his mother and of his first memories of her, of his complete adoration of her and his joy in her attentions. His father, he said, was a shadowy figure always in his memories. It was not long, though, that he saw less and less of his mother and was left more and more in the care of servants. The absences of his parents from home grew longer in duration and more and more frequent, and he grew up with all the material advantages that money could buy, but without the constant reassurance of parental affection. His love for his mother never waned, indeed grew with absence, and although his love for his father was more nebulous, it was a solid dependency. Their visits home were a time of delirious happiness to him.

Peter's face reflected his emotions always, and as

he relived those days of happiness he glowed. His capacity for feeling was so great that I felt myself part of it. He described those years when his mother had been home for an extended period for the confinements preceding the births of his sisters and for a brief recuperation. After each birth the pattern would be repeated and his parents would again disappear from their lives to reappear briefly at unpredictable times. Through all these years, Peter took refuge and comfort in learning, and eventually, he said, his voice heavy with feeling, he had found in my uncle the mentor he craved, in a sense the father he never had.

At this point I wondered why Peter had been so reticent about speaking of his family. He was not, I imagined, the only boy to have grown under such circumstances. Then he stood and turned his back to me as he recounted an evening some years before when Peter was barely entering adulthood when his father in a fit of anger had told Peter things he wished he did not know. That evening Peter had dined with his parents, and his father had grown increasingly annoyed with the clear devotion Peter felt and expressed for his mother. Perhaps he had drunk

too much wine. Perhaps there were other factors that Peter knew nothing about. Whatever the case, before the meal was over, Peter's father burst into a diatribe. He said that there were things about his beloved mother -- and scorn dripped from his voice at the word "beloved" -- that Peter should know.

At this point, Peter's mother rose from the table and fled the room. Peter tried to follow her, but his father forcibly restrained him and pushed him back into his seat and stood over him as he continued his invective, saying unspeakable things about his wife, the sordid nature of the relationships she had enjoyed outside marriage, of the humiliations he had known. His triumph was in telling Peter that each of his sisters was indeed the product of a long liaison, now over, a liaison that was widely known. Peter's voice quavered and stopped. He was rigid.

I did not know what to do. For a moment I sat silently and then said his name softly. He did not move. I rose and went and stood behind him and put my hand on his arm. "Please, Peter," I said, "Let me speak."

Thursday, 6/10/93 2:57 PM

Peter did not turn around.

"Peter," I persisted, "you must listen to me." Then, emboldened beyond anything I could have imagined before that minute, I let my hand slide down his sleeve until it met his hand, and I intertwined my fingers with his. I pulled him gently by the hand and led him to a bench and pulled him down beside me. He still had not looked directly at me.

Further emboldened, I held his hand fast in both of mine and asked, "Peter, why did you tell me these things?"

Then he did turn, and his eyes met mine directly. "Don't you know?" he asked. "Don't you have any concept?"

I shook my head slowly from side to side. "I need to have you tell me."

Then Peter related his conversation with my uncle and his promise to allow me the freedom my uncle felt I needed to meet other young men without being bound in any way. I could not help bursting out laughing at these words, and I

told him I had been bound from the very first sight of him, that no matter how many others I met I could not change in this. I could not believe that the words were coming from my mouth, so boldly were they spoken, but without question they pleased Peter. His stricken expression vanished to be replaced by the smile I loved so well. He said that he had hoped all I said without being fully certain. His hand stirred in mine, and he reached up and gently stroked my cheek. Then his expression darkened again.

"Are you sure, my Ann, that all I have told you makes no difference in your feelings for me?" I could not believe he had called me "his" Ann.

"I cannot pretend Peter," I said slowly, "not to be shocked by what I have heard--- I know so little of the world --- but what you have told me reflects in no way upon you. Why should it?"

Then Peter spoke of the stigma that would evermore blot his mother's name and indeed that of his innocent sisters. He spoke of his concern that I might be harmed by the scandalous nature of his mother's behavior.

"Peter," I asked, "have you ever spoken of this with your mother?"

"Never," he replied firmly. "Nor will I ever. That evening when my father spoke so cruelly of her, I went to her when I was free to do so. She had been crying. I had never before seen my mother cry. I held her in my arms and spoke of my love for her, and told her I had ever loved her and would ever, that nothing could change that.

There was no need to say more. She clung to me for a while, and by the time I left her she was calm. The next day you would never have guessed from her gaiety that there had been even a moment of sadness. It was hardest for me not to resent my father's betrayal of her, but even that I learned to accept in time."

With every word Peter spoke, my love grew. I could not believe how much happiness an hour could bring. I told Peter that I needed and wanted to know much more about him and his family, and he begged me to be patient. Another time, he promised, he would tell me more, would tell me whatever I asked, but for now he simply needed to hear me say that my feeling for him was unchanged by all he had told me. The words flowed now when I spoke to my love and told him that nothing could ever affect my feeling for

him. Nothing.

I resolved to speak to my uncle at the earliest chance and tell him of my happiness and to ask if Peter could now dine with us frequently. I hated the thought of his returning to an empty home each evening. Then I began to wonder about the nature of Peter's house, and resolved to remember my promise to be patient and question Peter no further that day.

Peter pulled me to my feet. "You have made me very happy," is all he said. The words could not have been more beautiful.

Friday, 6/11/93 5:23 PM

[Peter]

The grace with which my Ann listened to my words and responded to them in love and understanding filled my soul with joy. I had never dreamed of such happiness. Within the space measured in minutes we had come to a complete understanding of our love for each other, our trust in each other, our longing for each other.

I knew that I would need, immediately, to speak

to my patron of this exchange with Ann, and to tell him that all doubts had been removed, all obstacles discarded, and that above all else I wished to spend the rest of my life with Ann and that her wish was to spend hers with me. I knew that I would be well received, although we were some months short of the year that Ann's uncle had deemed it wise for her to have to choose among those who would have her as wife. Perhaps, I thought, he knew from the very beginning Ann's feelings. Perhaps she had betrayed them to him as she had to me --- without saying a single word.

As we walked back to the house, our joy shared exultantly, Ann asked me when I would speak to her uncle and begged permission to be present. I wished above all to please Ann, but I knew that it was proper for me to speak alone first with my patron, then for Ann to speak alone with him, and only then for us to speak to him together of our wishes. And what were these wishes? I asked her. We needed, I said, to speak together of such matters. I would forthwith speak to my patron of my love for his niece and ask his permission to take her to wife. Then, directly, I suggested,

Ann should speak in much the same way, and I would wait patiently in the library to hear of what she said and what her uncle had responded.

Mrs. Carling was waiting for us in the hall, and reminded Ann that she had an appointment that hour with the dressmaker who had been waiting patiently in her room. Ann murmured her regrets and fairly flew up the stairs, though not without stopping on the landing to turn and meet my eyes with eyes of love.

I asked Mrs. Carling where I could find her master, provided he was free, and she indicated, somewhat curtly, I thought, that he was alone in his study. I begged her to inquire of him if he would see me that instant, and if not then as soon as could be arranged. I whistled tunelessly as I waited for Mrs. Carling to return, and found myself unexpectedly nervous about the interview I sought. I was fully aware of my patron's affection for me and his respect for all I contributed to the work we pursued together, but I was equally aware of the affection he felt for his ward and of the protective nature of this affection. When Mrs. Carling returned with word that my patron awaited my presence, I thanked her

and made a conscious effort to compose myself as I walked to the study door. It was ajar, and I tapped it lightly to indicate my presence. My patron bade me enter, and wordlessly motioned me to a seat. I asked if he would permit me to stand as I spoke, and he nodded his agreement.

Almost immediately I was aware that I need have no fear of being rebuffed. Ann's uncle David listened closely to all I related to him about my mother and my sisters, and although he did not say so, I had the feeling I was telling him things that he already knew. When I related to him Ann's response to all I had said, he smiled gently and said it was as he would have expected. By then my confidence was calming me, and when I asked if he would agree to a marriage at the earliest time between Ann and me provided that she spoke to him of her love for me as I had spoken of my love for her, he nodded, and I realized that this wise man had anticipated this moment and was pleased to agree to all I sought.

Friday, 6/12/98 3:20PM

[Ann]

My Peter is full of indecision and I do not know what to do. He knows that I love him fully and I know that his love for me is unquestioned. Yet he is fearful of commitment. His fear lies in what he regards as disgrace in his family. He fears that the inconstancy of his mother has in some way sullied his life. He is afraid of the blood that flows through his veins.

I have tried over and over to allay his fears. I have told him how I depend on him, on his strength, on his love. He has listened gravely but he had not heard. I do not know what demons have created in him such profound distrust of himself. Perhaps this mistrust was always in his soul. Now when it is most important that he believe in himself he cannot, and I am powerless to persuade him. His fine mind tells him one thing. His heart speaks another. His conflict brings tears to my eyes. I tell him that my love for him is too great to accept any hindrance, any obstacle to our shared happiness, and he groans and holds me in his arms with fierce need.

He has asked to speak to my uncle of us and my heart is filled with fear. I know the protectiveness that my uncle feels for me. I know that he would be alarmed at the slightest threat to my well-being. I know the joy he felt when Peter and I first told him of our love for each other. Now he is being asked to learn that this love is threatened. I do not know what he will say. Peter has agreed that I can be present when he speaks to my uncle, though he at first demurred.

When we met in my uncle's study, Peter stood in front of the desk at which my uncle sat. I watched from a distance but heard Peter's words clearly. Without the slightest show of emotion, Peter described to my uncle his fears that his family history tainted our relationship. He feared that as time passed he would exhibit the weakness, the inconstancy, that his parents had known. He feared hurting me.

My uncle did not respond at once, and in the silence I heard my heart pound. Then Peter continued. He said that it was perhaps desirable for us to be separate for a time. He proposed an extended stay abroad, a time of study and contemplation, a time in which he would seek to

eliminate all doubt of his own worthiness from his mind. Hearing this, my uncle rose from his chair and came to where I sat. He put his hand on my shoulder.

"And you, Ann?" he asked

I had until then managed to control the turmoil of my mind and the wrenching of my heart. Then it became too much to bear.

"I love Peter," I sobbed.

My uncle squeezed my shoulder and then returned to his seat at his desk.

"This is not my decision," he said to Peter in a tone more weary than I had ever heard him use, "but I would warn you that even the strongest love cannot survive all trials."

I could take no more. I rose from my chair and swiftly left the room.

Saturday, 6/13/98 10:03AM

[Peter]

It was with the utmost regret that I surrendered

to my fears. I knew with absolute certainty that the love I felt for Ann was one I would never again know for another. I knew that her gentle soul was mine in all ways and that never would she be less than perfect in her love for me. It was in this total perfection of love that I first began to be fearful of my own capacities for response. In Ann's very vulnerability I saw, or felt I saw, danger. My mind, which I had always felt fully disciplined became a morass of doubt and uncertainty. I knew I loved. Was I capable of sustaining this love over a lifetime? Would I be able to satisfy this dear child in all ways as a husband and lover? My mind was at times crowded with memories of my childhood. I yearned to be free of these memories. Yet they persisted. I remembered the loneliness I felt in the absence of my parents.

Above all I remembered that night of horror when my father's naked hatred was so cruelly expressed. I remembered my mother's tears. Then I remembered how lightly she seemed to dismiss this vituperation directed at her. How much else, I questioned, did I not know of my parents? Were they once as deeply in love with each other

as Ann and I? Did the very married state change them radically so that they lost each other and themselves?

Ann knew I was troubled. In the quietest of times, in moments of tranquil love, I found her gaze disconcerting. It was as if she could see directly into my troubled soul. She asked me gently once or twice to speak of my feelings, but I could not. I feared hurting her. Yet in the end I found myself telling my beloved Ann of my fears and uncertainties. I spoke of my parents and their destruction of each other. I spoke of my concern that I could become, as they had, loveless and uncaring. With each word I spoke I felt criminal. With each word I spoke I was doing exactly what I feared most. I was hurting Ann.(10:16)

Saturday, 6/14/98 10:25PM

[Ann]

I knew there was only one place for me to go. I sped to the library, the place of such joy to me and now such sorrow. I walked and looked at the

books, title by title, strangely unfeeling, until I tired and sat at the table. I hoped against hope for the sound of a door opening behind me, but there was none. Finally I put my head down on the table and let the tears come. I don't know how long I sat there. I think I must have dozed when my tears were spent, but finally I heard the door open. I dared not hope it was Peter. I did not dare to look. When I felt the touch of a hand on my shoulder I knew it was my uncle.

"I thought I might find you here." I heard him say. I was incapable of response. He sat beside me and for a while there was no sound between us. Finally he reached for my hand and held it in his. "Is he gone?" I asked.

My uncle patted my hand insistently. "He is," he said.

I could not contain my anguish. I moaned and sobbed. I turned to my uncle. "What will I do?" I asked brokenly. "How can I live without Peter?"

I could not believe my uncle's smile. "He will be back," he said with absolute assurance. "You have not lost your Peter." (10:35)

Monday, 6/15/98 3:05PM

[Peter]

I don't know what persuaded me of my own foolishness in the end. I know that I could not bear Ann's stricken look. I know that I feared losing my mentor, the truest father I had ever known. Yet this was not enough. I needed to look deep inside myself and exorcise those voices that spoke doubt and betrayal. I knew the depths of despair before I found myself.

I did not, as I had so cruelly announced, depart on a long journey. Rather I sought to find myself in complete solitude. I spent days in the cavernous rooms that I called home. I paced. I sought words of wisdom in the books I cherished. I slept restlessly, seeing in my troubled dreams my Ann, desolate and lonely. And then one day when I least expected it, I felt a great calm overcome my restless seeking. In my heart I suddenly recognized the foolishness of my fears. I was not my mother. I was not my father. I was their product, but I was my own soul. I resorted to the reason that had always been my strength, and in my mind I saw clearly the path that I

should take. I was not even concerned that I had so alienated Ann and my mentor that they would find it difficult to rely on my words, to believe in my strength and my certainty.

I had almost lost track of the days, but I determined to see my Ann as quickly as possible and to try to persuade her that my heart now spoke truly and confidently. At once I sent a message to David to ask his permission to call upon him and speak to him of all I wanted him to know. I did not mention Ann, nor, I felt, did I have to. I knew that my beloved's guardian knew me well, better perhaps than I knew myself until now, and I was both confident in his trust and grateful for his generous soul.

My servant, instructed to wait for a reply, knocked on my door within the hour. In the envelope he handed me there was a single word written on David's crested paper. "Come," it said. No more. It was still early in the evening and I hurriedly prepared for this momentous meeting. My longing to be with Ann was endless, and already I could see her smile.

10:18PM

[Ann]

I had almost despaired of ever seeing Peter again when he returned. Day after day I wandered through the house, always ending up in the library where I had known such joy. I took from the shelves the books I knew he had used and I held each in close embrace as though I could feel in those tomes the love I once knew. I took long walks hoping wildly that I would catch a glimpse of him, and then I would remind myself that he had said he intended to go abroad, and I would be lost in despair again.

The servants looked at me pityingly and gave up attempting to cheer me after a few efforts. My poor uncle tried so hard to keep my hopes up, but I could not believe what he said. He spoke of Peter's integrity and the absolute conviction of his caring. I wanted to believe, but I dared not. Our meals were cheerless affairs, and I found the very thought of food distasteful. For a few days, Uncle David said nothing about my lack of appetite, but I could sense his concern.

Finally he spoke to me somewhat sharply and said that since I was still his responsibility it was his duty to keep me healthy and to be healthy I had to eat.

"I cannot make you happy," he said, "but I can prevent you from abusing your body." I did make an effort, not only to eat, but to be pleasant company. Mostly I failed in both efforts, but my uncle was kind enough to be tolerant. He spoke of my youth and the opportunities that lay ahead for me in society, but I dismissed such comfort. When he spoke of Peter my heart told me to listen to this wise and caring man, and I almost dared hope he was right in believing that Peter was not gone from my life.

Wednesday 6/17/98 5:10PM

[Peter]

It was so sweet to be with Ann once again in the full richness of love shared. Indeed perhaps our love was the sweeter for having been so sorely tried. As it was, I felt nothing but gratitude to my beloved for the quick acceptance she offered, for

the total understanding that was her gift to me. She had, she said, fairly flown to her uncle's study when she heard I was there. She rushed through the door to our shared astonishment and stopped only when she realized that she had interrupted a serious conversation. With Ann's presence no further conversation between Uncle David and me was needed. David rose from behind his desk, looked at each of us in turn, and said simply, "Blessings on you both." Then he left the room, closing the door quietly behind him.

Once alone, Ann and I moved into close embrace. She rested her head against my shoulder and repeated my name over and over again as in incantation. I tightened my hold upon her. I had no words. I could not have spoken had I wished, overcome as I was by the wonder of the treasure I held in my arms.

As it turned out, no words were necessary between Ann and me. When I began to explain, she put her finger to my lips to silence me.

"I know," she said "how you have struggled. I do not need to know more than that. You are here. That is all I need to satisfy me."

Once again I was rendered speechless, and I wondered if this was to be the pattern of my life, to be incapable of expression when it was most called for. (5:20)

Thursday, 6/18/98 4:35PM

[Ann]

I don't know how long it was that we clung to each other, afraid to let go for fear the dream would end. Finally Peter gently took me by the shoulders and pushed me far enough away from him to look into my eyes. When our eyes met I knew that there were no more problems, no more doubts, no more separateness. Peter knew too, and slowly his face broke into the smile I had grown to love.

"Oh, Ann," he said, "we are indeed blessed."

Once again he pulled me close and whispered words of love. I could not imagine greater happiness. Then Peter said that we must walk and talk and perhaps shout with joy. I would have tried to jump over the moon if that was what Peter wanted, and a walk seemed a perfect idea

to me. I said I needed to speak to my uncle before I left and Peter said that he would wait for me at the foot of the stairs.

I knew I would find Uncle David in the library, and I fairly flew down the hall. This time I remembered to knock and immediately the door opened from the other side. Uncle David, usually so reserved, opened his arms and I rushed into them. He was so comforting in the strength of his embrace, and his expression when he let go told me that he knew that Peter and I were together again. I tried to find the words to express my gratitude for his patience and kindness, but I did not succeed, choked with emotion as I was. My dear uncle smiled, and when I told him that Peter and I were going to walk and talk, his smile widened and he bade me run to my beloved, not to wait a second.

I did as he said, and never was a sight more welcome as I descended the staircase. Peter watched my every step, and as I drew near to him he held out his hand to me. We were sedate enough until we got a little way from the house. Then we whooped and hollered, something I had never done in my life, and I was certain that Peter had

not either, and as we raced across the lawn like children at play I wondered if it was possible to be more happy than I was at that instant. I doubted it.

Friday, 6/19/984:55PM

[Ann]

The days that followed were glorious. It was a banquet of love shared each day, all the sweeter coming after such desolation and deprivation. Peter was so happy, all his doubts dismissed, all his inner strength restored, and above all lost in the love that he had waited so long to find. We were indeed like a pair of children finding new delight in each other with each word spoken, each gesture of love gratefully shared.

In all of this love, everyone shared. My dear uncle fairly beamed each time he saw us together. I secretly thought that part of his delight was in knowing that he had not lost Peter in all their scholarly pursuits, but perhaps I am in error here. I, for one, was glad for my uncle in this regard, and I think that Peter looked for-

ward as well to this renewal of shared scholarly seeking.

There was an air of near hilarity throughout the household. The servant girls giggled with delight at the sight of Peter, and even Mrs. Carling had tears in her eyes when she spoke of our coming marriage. There was nothing that did not contribute to our happiness. We felt invulnerable.

There was much to discuss about the coming festivities, for my uncle was anxious to be proper in his role. He was unstinting in all he wanted to do to provide the most luxurious of nuptials. In the end, Peter and I persuaded him that we preferred a small private ceremony for the marriage itself, but that we would welcome a gala ball welcoming us back from our wedding trip as a married couple. This arrangement pleased everyone, and so the planning began.

Saturday, 6/20/98 11:25PM

[Peter]

I felt such an outsider in the wedding plans. I listened closely to all Ann had to say, and I was

grateful that she had simplified everything as completely as possible. It was my role to plan all else, and all else was a joy to contemplate. The first consideration was where Ann and I would spend our first married days and weeks, and when I asked Ann her preference in this she insisted that the decisions were mine alone, that she preferred to be surprised each moment of our married life with the completeness of my caring concern for her joy and that therefore she was prepared to be delighted in all I chose for the start of our life together.

I found this a daunting challenge. First of all I knew that Ann had found great pleasure in all the places she had visited with her uncle so long ago, and I determined that part of our trip would be spent revisiting the places she had described to me with such joy in those priceless hours in the library when I was her student and she the artful instructor. Beyond that I wanted to expose Ann to places that were dear to me that she had never seen, and I set about constructing an itinerary that would be for my bride both comfortingly familiar and tantalizingly exotic, a challenge in all ways to the mind and heart I

loved.

For this challenge I turned to the cities of northern Africa, rife with tradition and exciting in their foreignness. I knew that Ann would be grateful whatever my choices were, but I hoped that this journey would be the first of many, and that my Ann would rejoice with me in learning the richness of the world beyond our shores. I determined not to tell Ann in advance of my plans. I wanted each day to be one of fresh discovery fully shared, and I could anticipate clearly and fully the wonder of Ann's response to the discoveries that lay in wait.

I was unsure of how much time I should plan for us to be away, and I needed to be certain of our schedule to permit planning for the celebration of our return. This is the only detail I discussed with Ann, and she was in agreement that six weeks would be a reasonable time for us to be away. Once that time frame was established it became my pleasure to fill in each of the days with all that I thought would both please my bride and provide both of us with memories that would last a lifetime. It was a joyous task.
(11:40)

Sunday, 6/21/98 10:57PM

[Peter]

It was, I thought, inevitable that the total euphoria I knew in the very thought of Ann would lessen, but it seemed rather to increase. I could not have enough of her presence. When she was gone from me I felt aimless and bewildered. I was at first alarmed at such dependence, for I deemed it a kind of weakness. Then it became clear to me that this was no weakness but rather a blessing, a clear indication that my need for Ann was the single most important aspect of my life.

I, who had spent so many years, and happy years they were, in scholarly and often solitary pursuits, came to realize that I had indeed not known true happiness but rather I existed in a state of nothingness compared to what Ann had brought into my life. I tried to imagine existence without my dear love and I could not. At such times I was swept with an overwhelming feeling of protectiveness for my beloved wife-to-be, and I promised myself that never would a day pass without my telling my Ann of all my heart told

me of love. I resolved that no moment of anxiety or unhappiness would be visited upon my Ann.

When we were together I was almost giddy, and there were many times when I assume that David thought I had quite lost my senses. When we worked together earlier my concentration was absolute and unchallengeable. Now I was easily distracted and listened to my mentor with only half of my mind, perhaps less. David was very patient with me at such times and often broke off our work and sent me in search of Ann. I felt foolishly grateful when he did this. As for Ann, she professed to be equally affected and assured me that at no time was she totally happy when I was not with her. We counted the days until our marriage and held them too numerous, but we managed in time to contain our impatience, and it was my pleasure to know that when the time came all would be perfectly prepared and that the start of our new life together would know no flaw. (11:12)

Monday, 6/22/98 10:57PM

[Ann]

Even though our marriage was not to be a grand affair, there seemed to be endless decisions to make. In all of this planning my uncle was central. The first question to be answered was "Who will marry us?" Neither Uncle David or Peter had ever been churchgoers, though nominally Peter was a member of the local congregation. I had never attended local services. My uncle's scientific mind did not consider this a necessary part of my upbringing. In addition, I did not like the idea of being married in a church that meant nothing to me. The problem was solved when my uncle contacted a clergyman friend of his from university days and explained the situation to him. This generous man agreed to perform the ceremony even though it meant traveling some distance. He said that there was little that Uncle David could ask of him that he could refuse.

The next question was "Where?" Uncle David had assumed that either the ballroom or the drawing room would be most suitable, but I

begged for the library. I pointed out that the library was fair sized and could accommodate easily the small number we expected to attend. To my relief both Uncle David and Peter assented to my plea. When we discussed who would be invited to attend, I pointed out that I had never found a close friend in the young people I had met so recently and that I would prefer that Peter and my uncle choose those who would attend. Peter regretted that he had no way of contacting his sisters, for he would have been happy for them to share his joy. His hope was that they would hear of our marriage and be able to attend our homecoming ball. Uncle David had in mind inviting two couples, close friends of his who had known me since childhood. I thought his decision perfect. It was agreed that we would be married late in the afternoon and that a nuptial dinner would follow.

Perhaps the largest consideration was where we would live after our wedding trip. I had of course assumed that we would live in Peter's house, though strangely I had never seen it. Peter was adamant in stating that much work would have to be done before it was a suitable

dwelling for us and already he had begun to arrange changes, but six weeks was nowhere near adequate time for completion. Unknown to me, Peter and my uncle had discussed this problem and Peter had for both of us accepted my uncle's suggestion that, temporarily at least, we would continue to live in the only home I ever knew, or at least could remember. Uncle David had pointed out to Peter that one section of the house easily lent itself to being converted into a separate apartment and he proposed to make such adjustments while we were gone. Details of decoration could be left to our taste after we moved in. Uncle David cleared his throat after Peter explained this plan to me and said that he would be most appreciative of not losing me all at once. I thanked God for this beautiful guardian and tried to thank my uncle for his goodness and caring, but I ended up in grateful tears. (11:20)

Tuesday, 6/23/98 11:10PM

[Ann]

In the end everything was perfect. Peter and I looked at each other in that precious moment when we became man and wife and we knew each in the depths of our being that no union had ever been more perfect, more foreordained, more full of love. When we left, we left with a heavy heart at saying farewell to Uncle David, but Peter comforted me with the thought that on our return after a brief absence we would begin a life which afforded my uncle even more pleasure than he had known to that point. Indeed I knew this in my heart and in his sweet farewell embrace I knew great promise of happiness to come for all of us.

As for our voyage, it was equally perfect. Each day we spent in sweet visitation of places precious to me in memory was perfect. Each exchange between us in full appreciation of the beauty we were privileged to know in genius expressed was perfect. And at the end of each day when we came together in love and gratitude for each other we knew perfection beyond expres-

sion. When Peter took me to places unknown heretofore to me, my imagination soared. I tried to visualize the history that lay behind these exotic places and I knew that my education was less than complete. I resolved that on our return to our new home Peter would become the instructor and I the student. The prospect was pleasing to me.

With all the wonder I was experiencing I knew toward the end of our trip an intense longing to return home. Much as I adored my Peter and all the pleasures I was discovering in worlds new to me, I longed for the familiar, and I longed greatly for my dear uncle. I envisioned him looking out the windows down the long approach to the house hoping for a glimpse of us on our return, and I longed for that moment to be soon. When I spoke to Peter of this he laughed. I was discomfited until he explained that his humor responded to his wondering how long it would be before I expressed such a sentiment. He said he had bet sooner.

In all, we turned homeward with eager anticipation, sated with discovery and anxious for the familiar, totally aware of all we needed to do to

express our loving gratitude for all we had been given and determined to share our love. (11:20)

Wednesday, 6/24/98 10:50PM

[Peter]

There was such joy for me in all I knew of Ann in those blessed days following our marriage. There was such shared joy at the moment and such infinite joy in the days and weeks that followed. My life had been so solitary and I had been for so long grateful for the slightest hint of intimacy in my relationships that I was quite unprepared for the constant awareness of the needs and gifts of another human, much less one so adored and adoring. To put it simply, my very existence was transformed and I with it. I almost resented sleep, for it deprived me of the lively companionship of my Ann.

There was not a moment in those halcyon days and weeks following our marriage that I did not thank the gods that be for the new found wonder of my life. Not a day passed without fresh discovery of the enchantments of my wife, my

own Ann. In time I realized that I had barely scratched the surface, that henceforth each day would be a miracle of discovery and love without end. I knew that I was not alone in my euphoria. My Ann fairly glowed, and when she put her hand upon my arm as we walked together I could sense her absolute contentment with our belonging each to the other. Our minds met and we were glad. Our souls touched each other's and we knew the rightness of our love. Our bodies expressed fully the love and belonging that was God's gift to us and we knew wonder we had been incapable of imagining until our discovery of each other's responsive need.

There was no flaw in all we knew of love and of each other and of the wonders of this world, and each day and each night was a fresh adventure. I could, at times, not believe in the magic of my existence. I knew that my happiness in Ann and in all she gave to me would never end. My gratitude knew no bounds and I knew in the deepest part of my being, in my very soul, the rightness of all I knew of love, and I knew equally that never would this love know pause or weakness, that it was the perfection all men seek

and that I had been granted this perfect love in a way that surpassed my understanding. For all I had been given, I decided, I need to respond in kind. I looked forward to all that life held for me and my Ann. (11:06)

Thursday, 6/25/98 9:41PM

[Ann]

I could not believe the difference the married state meant when I returned to my uncle's house as a wife with Peter at my side. Even Mrs. Carling was deferential as she welcomed us, and all of the servants and maids bobbed and curtsied with extravagant energy.

I had not prepared myself mentally for the assumption of authority, and I realized with a start that my dear uncle had instructed the staff to treat me as the mistress of the household. Peter smiled knowingly at the first hints of my new status and I tried, I think without success, to cover my confusion and uncertainty. I had no idea what was expected of me. My uncle had always in my memory entrusted the running of

the household to his housekeeper and now, almost before we had completed unpacking, Mrs. Carling was consulting me about my wishes as to meals, to visitors, to staff. I was quite undone and did my best to conceal my discomfort. Whether I did or not, I will never know, but suddenly the running of the household was my responsibility and with the good graces of Mrs. Carling I managed to avoid gross error, and Uncle David's well ordered existence continued uninterrupted.

There was so much excitement in my life as a married woman. Almost immediately after our return David took me to see my future home. I was both overwhelmed and distressed. I had no concept of how cold grandeur could be, and David's ancestral home was little besides grand. In our absence workers had begun to divide some of the enormous spaces into more comfortable environments. I wished in a sense that I had been consulted from the start, but I accepted with good grace all that was less than ideal to me and spoke to my Peter of the caring that his work reflected. It was going to be a very long time, I thought to myself, before Peter's

home was going to be ours. For this I was largely grateful. I longed for the completeness of sharing we knew with my uncle to be extended indefinitely. The enormity of Peter's undertaking held promise of this.

In our absence Peter's sisters had communicated their loving good wishes and assured Peter that they would be in attendance whenever he wished, certainly at our welcoming party. They would plan to stay nearby, they wrote, for a few days before and after the great event. I was excited, though somewhat apprehensive, at meeting these sisters. I considered my drab existence -- or at least before Peter -- with theirs and wondered what we would share in experience. I knew though that no more was needed than our shared love of my husband and their brother, and I was sure that nothing would please Peter more than for them to be part of our new life. As for me, I found each day a day of joy anticipated and fulfilled. I thrived in the love of Uncle David and my beloved Peter, and I knew that no matter what I asked of life I could not ask and be given more than this total fulfillment, this absolute happiness, this all encompassing joy.

Friday, 6/26/98 10:25PM

[Peter]

"Lest it be forgotten, I must speak of all that filled my mind and heart in those sweet days of love I shared with my new found love, my perfect bride." These are the words I wrote in my journal the night after our return to Ann's and David's home, now mine as well, to insure that no part of this lovely story be ever forgotten. I do not know who I felt would have an enduring interest in the account of those blissful days, an account I penned faithfully each day that passed. Some of my words were mundane and practical, an account of duties met with effort and achievement, of earthly concerns, of practical plans. Those were not the treasured words that I hoped would live. As I penned them I knew that my hope, then not fully formulated, certainly not expressed, was that one day our children would find revelation and sharing in knowing the beauty of the love we shared each and every moment of our shared life.

And bliss it was. We were both involved in the planning of our future home. Ann was unre-

servedly supportive in all my efforts to make a mausoleum, as I sometimes considered it, a home, and even when I was most discouraged she buoyed up my spirits and made simple and direct suggestions that solved the problems that perplexed me. In short, my wife was perfect in all ways, and I wanted the children I dreamed of one day having to know the wonder of their mother.

As for the rest of my life, I found greater and greater satisfaction in my work with David. I found our voluminous correspondence with those who shared our interests and with whom we sought answers both challenging and time consuming. It was a time of scientific unrest in medical studies. Old concepts were being disproved and discarded on what seemed an almost daily basis and new respect was being granted to those who forged new pathways to seek new answers to the ills of mankind.

In the course of time I had come to respect absolutely my mentor's insights. Purely theoretical as they were, they touched directly on simple and effective solutions. It had for some time been clear to us that we had reached a point where all

we had together concluded cried out for clinical experimentation, experimentation of a nature so far unheard of. To this end, David and I agreed to pool our resources and to open a clinic of sorts in a nearby village which had lately been devastated by disease. Mortality was threatened almost from birth, and it seemed that this small enclave of honest and formerly hardy souls might vanish from this earth.

Had we sought a greater challenge I doubt we could have found it. (10:42)

Saturday, 6/27/98 10:45PM

[Ann]

My uncle, with all the thoughtfulness that was his nature, had planned our gala welcoming ball for several weeks after our return, allowing us the luxury of settling into our new life and resuming the old, though the changes for me from old to new were remarkable. Nevertheless Peter and my dear uncle resumed their studies as if there had been no interruption, and in the time I was free of household responsibilities I found

great pleasure in pursuing my interest in art. I allowed myself the luxury of thinking that my capacity for portrayal had steadily increased and that my talent truly showed promise. I knew I was ready for further instruction, but I decided to be patient in this need and to wait for an opportune time.

Meanwhile the great night approached. All the invitations had been prepared for delivery in our absence, and one of my first responsibilities as mistress of the household was to look over this list of invitees and to decide which, if any, should be eliminated, and which, if any, should be added. I was lost in this task. I recognized the names of my uncle's dear friends, most of whom I had met at my coming-of-age party, but the majority of these names meant nothing to me and I turned to Peter to help me. To my relief he accepted this responsibility and to my astonishment most of the names unknown to me were familiar to him. He accepted the list as it had been prepared and changed it only in adding a few of his friends he had not seen in some time who he hoped would come.

I was not at all concerned at the perfection that

Mrs. Carling and her staff would insist on. I remembered fully all that had been perfectly prepared and executed for my introduction to society, and I knew that these loving souls would do no less for Peter and me. Nevertheless, Mrs. Carling felt obliged to check with me on every aspect of the evening. My uncle had told her, she said, that all the choices for that lovely event would be Peter's and mine. It was a joy to assent to all that was planned without my advice. I had nothing to add, but I spent each day in eager anticipation.

When the night of this welcome home party arrived I was taut with excitement. Peter and my dear uncle, resplendent in formal attire, came to gather me from my dressing room at the appointed hour. I had chosen to wear my simple wedding dress and to do little more extravagant to my appearance. I wore no jewelry. My coiffure was simple. I needed to be me, free of pretense, free of adornment. When we stood in the grand foyer, Peter at my right and Uncle David at my left, greeting the arriving guests, I was constantly taken back those few years to the night when Peter had first seen me as a woman.(11:07)

Sunday, 6/28/98 9:59PM

[Peter]

I did not expect my introduction as part of my mentor's household to include kinship, but I could not have asked for anything more perfect in its giving. When Ann and I put together our hearts, souls, and lives temporal we forged an alliance that had deep roots in each of our backgrounds. All I knew of Ann was her uncle's absolute integrity, unfailing brilliance, and devotion to duty. All Ann knew of me was that she loved me, that whatever family relationships I knew or chose not to know had no impingement on the love that bound us together. As we progressed in our awareness of our shared love, I was aware that we needed to share further our family histories. Accordingly I told her of my shameful awareness of love distorted and unfaithfulness proclaimed, and, as I have related, my gratitude knew no bounds when my Ann held me faultless in all I spoke of weakness and infidelity.

It bothered my Ann that she could not offer to me equal candor. I knew without any expression

of need on Ann's part that she longed to know more of her own history. She was aware of the loving relationship between her beloved uncle and her dead mother. She knew he never ceased to mourn the sister he held dear, and that all the reason for her own existence lay in this love. She had wondered always how she came to be her uncle's ward, and she had respected the silence he had chosen to impose on the subject of her mother.

Now, however, things were different. Ann was a married woman. She needed, she felt, to know her heritage to pass its wonder on to the children that lay in wait. If there was something painful or disgraceful about her mother's death, she needed to know. If not, she needed to be relieved. Ann spoke first to me of these grave concerns and I told her in the strongest of terms that she had the right and duty to ask questions of her uncle. He loved her, I reminded my love, and no matter how painful the memories might be, he would feel that he owed her this awareness. When Ann begged me to speak of all she longed to know I could not refuse and I was glad of this acceptance.

David, I think, was ready for my questions, and in a sense, I felt, was grateful that they had finally come. I flatter myself, perhaps, but I had the distinct sense that he was not only grateful but ready to speak of things too long concealed as if in shame. (10:18)

Monday, 6/29/98 10:45PM

[Ann]

I could not believe my ears when Peter told me of my dear uncle's confidence. Peter's face fairly glowed with the new awareness he had of the high esteem in which he was held by the man he called his master. Now he knew the soul of this perfect person, and it was his pride to convey to me truths long since locked away and only released in love newly found.

Peter related to me the feeling that he had that my dear uncle was relieved at long last to be speaking of secrets locked in his heart for so many years. His eyes filmed with tears during his recital, Peter said, and it was hard for me to feel anything but total sympathy for this dear man so

determined to protect me for all the years I could remember.

My uncle related to Peter the events that had taken my mother from the safety and security of her family. She was, Peter was told, a true beauty, talented in many ways and totally devoted to those she loved, but she was a restless soul, never quite satisfied with her life and always seeking the new adventure. Her opportunities for adventure were indeed limited, and she was forced to content herself with her music and her art. She found the young people in her circle dull, and she was indifferent to each and every one of the suitors that sought her love. Her parents, totally sympathetic to the striving for the new and challenging that possessed their daughter, sought to satisfy her needs by exposing her to new environments, new education, new people less provincial than those she knew.

To this end they engaged a tutor, a woman of meager means but impeccable background and extensive experience, to be both companion and confidante of their daughter. They arranged for the pair to travel extensively in a search for culture and companionship. Many doors were open

to them in far flung parts of the empire and all that was reported to Ann's parents spoke of dreams fulfilled and talents satisfied.

Then, for a while, there was silence. The letters ceased and concern grew. Finally, and to the horror of the young Ann's family, the tutor returned without her charge. Tearfully she related all that had happened. It was in Paris, she said, that Ann had met this young philanderer and had instantly fallen in love. He was the scion of a distinguished family but had so completely rebelled that they had no choice but to disown him. He lived on his charm, always surrounded by supportive friends, never at a loss for a place to stay, a meal to eat, an amusement to enjoy. He was the darling of a number of older ladies who were flattered by his presence and whose pleasure was in indulging him in every way he demanded.

Young Ann had never met anyone faintly like him, and when he turned his charms upon her she was helpless. The tutor related tearfully the passionate pleading she had tried to dissuade her charge of trusting this young vagabond, but her words were, she said, of no use. Her charge was

hers no longer. She had been lost.(12:05)

Tuesday, 6/30/98 11:59PM

[Peter]

What was left unsaid that first meeting was the final chapter in the story of Ann's mother. I watched my dear David relive emotionally the trauma of losing to misfortune the sister dearest to him since birth, and I agonized with him as he recounted the efforts he had made to find her. Caught up as he was in academic pursuits, he chose to believe that his dear Ann would see the folly of her ways and return to the comfort and succor of her family. His parents, by that time both infirm and devastated by guilt at having made Ann's errors possible, could find no solace. They turned to him to be his sister's savior, to rescue her from whatever continued to lead her astray, and to return her to the love that awaited her, to the love she had known since birth.

David was ill equipped, he said, to be his sister's savior. He knew little of the world beyond his

narrow sphere of interest. He had never chosen to seek beyond this blessed haven that occupied him completely. Nevertheless he reassured his parents, by then despairing of ever seeing again their much loved child, that he would do his utmost to return his sister to their love and caring.

As David related it, his search took him into a world he never knew existed, a world that never slept, a world so shallow in its concerns that David wondered how it could continue to exist. In all cases David chose to chance all in the pursuit of his sister. He found himself in the lowest strata of society, seeking in their haunts news of the lovely young Englishwoman who had embraced this life that she felt offered her release from the staidness that she found unacceptable. As David questioned these people who seemed to him from a different world, he had the feeling that a barrier existed between him and them. No one professed knowledge of his sister. No one knew of anyone resembling her. He despaired.

Finally he chose a different path. He was cognizant that in Paris society there were a number of his fellow citizens who had chosen a foreign domicile for the affectation it offered them, for

the very foreignness that they enjoyed. In this group David found many tantalizing leads, and they all led to the same individual, a debonair young man named Philippe whose delight was in being the center of attention no matter where he was. David, by now weary and discouraged, determined that Philippe was the key to success in his search.

Wednesday, 7/1/98 10:04PM

[Ann]

Peter's tale drew to a close without the answers I needed and longed for. He recited faithfully all he had learned from my uncle, and I could almost hear David speaking. I could almost feel his sorrow. But what, I wanted to know, is the end of the story? Peter said that he had broken off the recital of David's search for my mother when it became clear that my uncle's anguish was intense, that he was near emotional exhaustion. Peter said that he had asked my uncle to complete his story in my presence, that I would want to hear from his lips directly all that fol-

lowed. I was strong enough, Peter told him, to hear the final accounting, buoyed up as I was by the love I knew and had always known from my guardian, my only link with family. Peter urged my uncle to rest and recover and suggested that we meet in the library in the morning to share all that my uncle held in his heart.

I knew such gratitude for Peter's kindness and understanding and slept that night fitfully, dreaming of the happy ending I longed for but knowing that at best the end of the story would be bittersweet. I was grateful too to my dear uncle for his capacity for enduring love and sweet protectiveness. I think I would not have slept at all were it not for Peter's calming influence. I was glad that I had not heard this tale sooner at a time when I felt quite alone. I realized with a fresh rush of love that no matter what I heard of my mother I would never feel alone.

Thursday, 7/2/98 11:10PM

[Ann]

The next morning Peter and I went together to the library at the appointed time and found uncle David already there. His face was drawn. I thought he had not slept well if at all, but he was calm. Peter and I sat across the table side by side and I reached for Peter's hand and its reassuring grasp. Uncle David looked at us and then spoke to me.

"You have been very patient with me, Ann. I saw no reason to cause you unhappiness in telling you of your mother, but you are right. The time has come for you to know. Now you are strong enough."

I got up from where I sat and went to put my arms around my beloved uncle. "Thank you," I said. "I do not wish to cause you pain."

"Dear child," he replied, "you could not ever. Let me tell you now all you need to hear."

I went back to my seat beside Peter and watched my uncle's face as he spoke of pain suffered long ago.

"I talked with Philippe," he said, " and knew that I needed him to discover all I had to know. He was very suspicious at first and reluctant to give me any information about my sister. Finally I offered him money for his cooperation and his attitude changed. He said that Ann was in the care of his friends and that she had a child by her side.

My heart lurched at his words. I did not need to ask if he was the father. I controlled my fury, but I did ask if he felt no sense of responsibility. At this he laughed. 'She is one of many,' he said with a laugh, 'though I must admit that she is the fairest.'

I wanted no more conversation with this loathsome creature and reminded him of our agreement. I told him that the money would be his when I saw my sister."

Uncle David paused and got up from where he was seated and walked to the window. With his back to us he described being led to a bleak dwelling where he found his sister ill and unkempt being cared for, such as it was, by a pair of girls not even as old as Ann. They told him that Ann had been ill since the birth of the child,

sometimes coherent, sometimes not, but wanting her child at her side always. The two young women had been wise enough to ensure the child's survival by persuading one of their neighbors, also with a young baby, to succor Ann's child until Ann was well.

Uncle David said that at first his sister did not recognize him, but when lucidity returned she was filled with joy at his presence and told him proudly of her child. When the wet nurse brought the infant to the bedside, Ann's eyes filled with pleasure. David was moved to tears. He stayed with her day and night for three days until she died. When her mind wandered she went back to the days of her girlhood. She imagined herself once again surrounded by love and caring. At these times she did not know her child. Uncle David cursed his limitations. All his knowledge could not help the person most dear to him in this world. (11:44)

Friday, 7/3/98 7:12PM

[Peter]

Ann listened intently to all that David said with utter composure. All that betrayed her emotions was the tightening of the grip she had on my hand. David, on the other hand, seemed with each word to relive the pain. When he paused once to compose himself, Ann jumped from her chair to embrace him.

"Uncle," she said, "I am causing you such pain."

"It is all right, my dear child," he responded, and then continued his account.

He knew, he said, that he could not tell his parents the truth. He knew too that the child was his responsibility, his sister's only legacy. So he set about making plans. It was a simple matter to arrange for Ann's internment. He found a pleasant grave site outside the city and arranged for a simple service and an equally simple marker. The two young women asked if they could attend, and David was grateful. Equally he was grateful for the caring and concern of the wet nurse who held his niece's life in her hand. She agreed to

keep the child until David could make other arrangements. He had little choice in the matter, but he was glad to feel a sense of trust in this woman. Poor as she was, her home was clean and comfortable and her own child the picture of health.

Then David turned homeward in search of a more permanent solution. Through friends he found a home in the country for the child, a place where children often lived temporarily in the absence of parents. The kind woman in charge offered to arrange transportation of Ann to her home and David gratefully accepted. Once again he had a sense of trust in this person, every reason to place Ann's child in her care. When asked the child's name he said automatically, "Ann", and that, he said was how my Ann was named.

At this, Ann showed the first sign of emotion. She shook her head from side to side. "How good you were, Uncle. How good you are."
(7:26)

Sunday, 7/4/98 5:24PM

[Ann]

My beloved uncle's story was drawing to a close. When he returned to his parents' home he told them that he had failed in his mission. It was, he said, perhaps the most difficult thing he had ever done to deceive the two persons closest to him, but he knew as he struggled with his conscience that he had no choice. This way they were permitted to think of their child as they wanted her to be, happy in a new life, finding fulfillment in new adventure. They were able to dream of her return one glorious day.

Within a year they were both dead, his mother first, his father shortly afterward. Then came the most difficult decision of all. Should he leave the child in the loving home she knew or should he take her to her true home? After a visit to the temporary haven he had found for Ann he decided to leave her in that place for a few more years. He felt totally incapable of giving an infant the needed care, but rationalized that within a few years it would be less of a challenge. Consequently he timed carefully his announcement

that his dear sister had died and that she had named him guardian of the child she left behind. And so, he continued, "Ann came to live with me when she was just over three years old to the delight of all the household."

"Now," he said to me, "you know the whole story and you must be the judge of whether I acted wisely or unwisely."

I was bursting with love for my dear uncle. I had never dreamed of the enormity of his giving. There were never going to be words enough, I told him to express my love and gratitude. Without him I would have perished. Without him I would have been unloved. There was no way, I said, to repay this debt.

"Oh, Ann," Uncle David said, "I have been repaid over and over again. You have brought me joy I never expected. I am only sorry that it took me so many years to learn full pleasure in you, but I was so unsure of myself in my role as your guardian. Now I think I should not have been so uncertain."

Peter spoke finally, "I join Ann, David, in her thanks and in her love. I cannot imagine life without both of you. Now I think we must all

forget the past and look to the future."

I did not say anything just then, but I knew I had to speak later to Peter about the past. It was not for me easy to forget.

11:20PM

[Peter]

My darling Ann spoke to me of her feelings that night before we slept. The rest of the day we had spent in loving reminiscence with David about the years he had cherished Ann without her realizing her worth to him, not as the daughter of his dear sister, but as a sweet soul given to him in return for all he sought of human love.

Ann spoke of how she had felt a burden to him, of how often she longed to express her wonder at his goodness, of how she admired his dedication to his work, of how she admired the brilliance of his intellect. David, in turn, admitted his fear of loving his niece too much, of chancing this affection that could at any time result in disappointment. He told Ann of his fears that his love would be a burden, not a blessing, and

that she would tire of him. He feared desertion again, and so he erected emotional barriers. He dared not show his feelings. In turn Ann described her early hunger for full expression of love and her gradual realization that she expected too much and of her awareness that she must be cautious in her demands.

Then together, like two old friends reliving life, they recalled the flowering of love that came with Ann's transformation into womanhood. David spoke of the joy he knew in discovery of Ann's inquiring mind and uncanny resemblance in interest and aptitude to her mother. Ann, in turn, spoke of the total pleasure she knew in David's awareness of her loving nature and his encouragement of her interests and avocations. They discovered each other in mutual awareness of each other's offerings and each other's needs. The day ended beautifully for both, and a new era began for the three of us.

Sunday, 7/5/98 10:58PM

[Peter]

My Ann was so placid after that momentous day. We relived it often in the days that followed and there was new awareness on both our parts of the need to express our love for dear David in word and deed. Our work continued uninterrupted in its nature and was enriched by our plan to apply our principles to practice. I was obliged to be away from our studies to organize the clinics and to enroll and employ those who would be useful and necessary in our endeavor. Ann oversaw the construction of our future home as well as supervising her uncle's household. Whatever time remained to her was spent in pursuit of her art. She had asked that the plans for our new home be altered enough to include a studio with good light in close proximity to our living quarters. This was easily arranged and it gave me great pleasure to indulge my love in this way. She asked little and I longed to give much.

Our lives had assumed such a settled and harmonious quality that I was surprised one evening when Ann asked to speak to me of a serious re-

quest, something her heart told her insistently was necessary. I do not know what I expected, but I was astonished when Ann announced that she wanted to find her father. I did not know what to say, and my beloved misunderstood my silence and began to justify her desire. I hastened to assure her that I had in no way meant to suggest opposition by my silence but merely puzzlement. I pointed out to Ann the various difficulties that we could encounter in such a quest. It was a long time ago. We would be seeking someone we did not know except for his name in a foreign land. We risked disturbing her uncle further.

Ann listened to all I had to say and responded firmly. She had, she said, considered all these things but still needed to follow her heart in the matter, and her heart spoke insistently. She admitted that she did not fully understand herself, that her motivation was uncertain, but that this was one last avenue she needed to explore. If her efforts failed, she would be disappointed but satisfied. but she hoped for success and in success closure. There was nothing I could ever deny my Ann and so we began to make plans.

I first spoke privately to David of Ann's wishes and asked him to help us. I sought from him any personal records he might have of his original quest and I asked him to commit to paper the names of all those he had encountered in his search for Philippe. David readily agreed.

MONDAY, 7/6/982:55PM

[Ann]

I was so glad of my uncle's and Peter's response to my need to find my father. I had no concept of how this could be accomplished, but I had full faith that Peter would, and indeed he did. From among his household staff he selected a young man of intelligence and promise whose discretion he trusted completely for this mission. He armed him with all the information Uncle David had supplied and adequate funds for a considerable length of time and sent him on his way. His instructions were to make every effort to discover the whereabouts of this Philippe but not to make direct contact should he find him. He was told to be discreet and not to betray the

reason for his search. Under no conditions was Peter's name to be mentioned or used. Of course the young man had no idea of the real reason for his mission, nor did he ever, but he was grateful for the adventure and challenge offered him and promised to do all that was demanded and needed to succeed.

We did not have long to wait. Within a few weeks Peter's young man returned with news of Philippe's whereabouts. He had found few of the total number of persons named in my uncle's notes, but those few had directed him to others and finally to Philippe himself. On his return he reported directly to Peter all he had learned and I waited with ill concealed anxiety for Peter to in turn report to me. I did not know what to expect. I was both fearful and hopeful.

When Peter came to me he asked first if I was still sure that I wanted to know of my father. This question caused me to feel dread, but I assured Peter that no matter what the facts were I needed to hear them. So Peter, without relating the details of the search, told me that Phillippe had been located in a sanitarium for the indigent some short distance from Paris. Since he was so

instructed, Peter's servant had not seen Philippe and so did not know the exact nature of his illness.

On hearing this I was filled with a sense of urgency, and I pleaded with Peter to make arrangement for us to go to France and visit the sanitarium. I still had no idea of what I would say or do when we got there. Certainly I could not guess how I would be received, but I knew that no matter what the consequences, I had to confront my father.

In his infinite goodness Peter arranged our journey, and in a little less than a week we were in Paris. We stayed at a hotel which had pleased us on our wedding trip, and Peter arranged for us to be taken to the sanitarium the next day. When we got there we were directed by one of the nurses to a porch where several patients were, some seated, some walking about, some in invalid chairs. She pointed to one of the invalid chairs and said that was Philippe. He was faced away from us, and we stood for a few minutes watching him, I trying to find courage to approach, Peter hovering over me protectively. When I went and stood in front of him he did

not look up immediately, and as I stood there I was impressed by his frailty. He was like a wraith, but in his face there were traces of the handsome youth he once was. When he finally did look up, a look of mixed horror and amazement came over his features. "Ann," he gasped, then shook his head, and then covered his eyes. He trembled. Then he looked at me again. "It can't be," he said. "You....." and his voice trailed off.

"I am Ann," I said softly. "I am your daughter." At this he lost his composure completely and began to cry convulsively. Peter came forward and held me protectively. We waited. I wanted to reach out and touch my father in comfort but I did not dare. I feared frightening him more. The other patients watched with interest.

Finally, Philippe grew calm and his tears stopped.

Tuesday, 7/7/98 11:00PM

[Ann]

I felt an overwhelming sense of pity for this man I had never before seen. I knew that I was his

child in blood. I knew that I needed to understand him. I wanted to love him. This last I did not understand at all. I had never had the chance to love my mother, even abstractly, for I knew nothing of her. Now I knew and I knew of the tortured relationship that was my heritage. In my heart I knew great peace at that moment, for my path was clear.

When his composure returned I spoke to the man Philippe, the man I knew was my father. "You knew me," I said. "You called me Ann."

He shook his head as if bewildered. He said, "I thought I was dreaming. You are she."

I asked if we might withdraw to a more private place to talk, and he readily agreed. Peter wheeled the invalid chair to a quiet corner provided with benches. This afforded me the chance to study more carefully the face I had tried for years to envision. I knew all I needed to ask, but the words were hard in coming. Finally I dared speak. I asked him if he knew why I was here. He shook his head despairingly, but his eyes sought mine. Then I confessed that I was not sure either why I was at his side, but that I knew I needed to know certain things. I needed to

know, I told him, how my mother had cast aside all those she cherished. What, I asked, had he offered her.

He had no answer.

"Nothing," he said finally.

I was not satisfied.

Wednesday, 7/8/98 5:04PM

[Peter]

I could not believe the courage and compassion my Ann showed as she spoke to this man she had every reason to regard with loathing. I stood slightly apart, but I could hear clearly the words they exchanged. At one point I was tempted to interfere when I saw Ann's eyes fill with tears, but she waved me away as I began to approach and I respected her wishes.

At first there were long silences between them, but after a while there seemed almost a sense of urgency in questions and answers. He told Ann that too late in his life had he recognized its emptiness. He looked back, he said, on the

stranger he once was and felt a deep and abiding sense of shame and regret. When Ann questioned him closely about her mother, his voice broke with emotion as he answered her questions.

He said first that it was only when he had lost Ann's mother that he had realized that she was more to him than he had dared admit. His life, he said, was so full of fakery and foolishness that he had little awareness of deeper feeling. He told Ann that her mother had fallen in love with him almost unwillingly, that she had begged him to abandon the life he led and go with her to her home and family where he could begin anew. His eyes streamed with tears as he recounted the false promises with which he had lured Ann to his bed. Her faith in him was too strong for doubt, her love too strong for denial.

"And so," he concluded "I killed the one person who could have saved me." (5:14)

Sunday, 7/9/98 4:01PM

[Peter]

As I heard those words, my sorrow was infinite. There were so many victims in this tale. Most of all my heart went out to my Ann, but I could not help feeling sympathy for Philippe. He was so acutely aware of a life wasted and emotions abused. Ann instinctively reached her hand out for his and held it in both of hers in utter silence. She look at me pleadingly, and I went to her side and gently lifted her to her feet.

"We will be back," she said to Philippe. Then she turned away and put her arm in mine. We left without further words.

When we got back to our hotel, Ann made it clear to me that she had definite plans to care for her father.

"We must find a better place for him," she said firmly, knowing full well that I was incapable of denying anything to her. And so it was. We found a pleasant home for Philippe, a caring household with a nurse able to provide for his needs. The cost was moderate, but I would have

spent a fortune if need be to bring peace to my Ann's troubled soul. It was hard for Philippe to accept Ann's help, so laden was he with guilt and regret, but in the end he did, and we were able to return home.

When we got there Ann asked her uncle to listen to her story and he did so with the good grace that was his nature. When Ann had finished telling him of all she had experienced his only question related to the effect on her happiness. She said that she was both pleased and relieved to have found part of herself in poor Philippe and that it would bring her further happiness to know he was well cared for. David nodded his approval.

"I would expect no less of Ann's daughter," he said. "I am pleased for you."

Not long after that first visit, Ann asked to return once more. She had two reasons, she said. One was to see her father in his new home and to be assured that he was happier. The other was to visit her mother's grave. Then, she said, she would be ready to return to ordinary life. Once again we did as Ann wished. She found her father greatly improved in appearance though still

an invalid and unlikely to improve further. She spent a long time sitting beside her mother's grave. When I asked her what she had been thinking of she said that she was trying to imagine her mother's happiness in love, brief as it was, and her joy in childbirth. (4:23)

Friday, 7/10/98 5:15PM

[Ann]

I felt no sorrow when my father died. Death came as a welcome visitor, one he had waited patiently for. He was old and infirm and ready for surrender, and I was ready to let him go.

Over the years rarely did a week go by without my writing to him of my life, and always there was a response. He spoke often of my mother and his new found faith that he would find her once again in the hereafter. There was much happiness to report to him. Peter and I had finally moved into our new home, but we were frequent visitors to Uncle David's house, particularly after our two children were born. They adored their great uncle and he adored them.

Peter and Uncle David were both fulfilled in their work and were recognized by the scientific community for their contributions. In short, there was little more I could have asked of life, surrounded as I was by loving family. In all of my happiness I liked to believe Philippe found great comfort. He professed to, and I had no reason to doubt this.

There is still much ahead for me in this life, and the prospect gives me joy. It will be a sad time for me when Uncle David dies, and I think of this as he shows more and more signs of age, but even when that day comes I know that he will live in all of our hearts, and not a day passes that I do not remember with gratitude all he has given to me and to Peter and our children in the purest of love. Someday, somehow, I hope that I can give to others as has been given to me.

Saturday, 7/11/98 8:50PM

[Peter]

It was so perfect for my Ann, this healing. Her heart, open always, embraced the needs of

Philippe while at the same time bringing peace to her dear uncle. Her loving forgiveness served to heal the wounds inflicted so long ago, and Ann shared completely with David all that she had done. Over the years she shared with David the news she received from her father, and in the references to Ann's mother he found particular comfort. He saw in Ann always replication of the sister he loved so well, and he rejoiced that her love embraced all those bound to her in blood, and that her love was infinite and unmeasured ever in the giving. Indeed, David confided in me that never could he imagine his lingering bitterness being transformed into compassion and finally a form of caring akin to love. He thanked my beloved Ann over and over again for freeing him from the confines of resentment and hatred he had harbored for the person he regarded as his sister's killer. In turn, Ann felt the utmost gratitude that her heart had so guided her.

In my Ann I always found the purest of love, infinite caring and sharing, and when our family grew to include children the richness only increased. I was a man blessed in all ways. Never

did I spend a day without knowing the miracle of love given and received. I needed no more.

Sunday, 7/26/98 10:06PM

[Peter]

In all of what transpired in her life, my Ann was to clasp to her heart the final fulfillment of love she had achieved. She tried to visualize her mother, young and hopelessly in love, in full embrace of the man she had learned not only to accept but to love as her father. The peace that possessed her was beyond my understanding, but I grew to appreciate it daily. Every aspect of my wife's life was illuminated and enriched by all she had experienced of love lost and then found, of sin and error committed and then forgiven and redeemed.

It seemed to me that nothing could ever cause my Ann to doubt the perfection of all she had known of love. Having been deprived of this salutary grace for so long, she embraced it eagerly and shared it endlessly. I could not imagine greater grace than sharing my Ann's love. It

blessed all who knew her, however casually, and as our children grew in the warmth and protectiveness of this love I saw in them total awareness of the need their mother felt to share this blessing.

To say I was content would understate. To say I thanked the God I was not sure I believed in was equally so. My life was one of love complete and perfect and my single desire was to share all that was my privilege.

