



LEBEN?

ODER

THEATER?

WAS  
S  
GESPIEL

CHARLOTTE SALOMON  
LIFE? OR THEATER?

1

M004155-1

Life? or Theater?

A Play With Music

Charlotte Salomon

M004155-2

Dedicated to Otilie Moore

Consisting of a Prelude, a Main Section, and an Epilogue

M004155-3

The tri-coloured play with music begins.

The cast is as follows

Mr. and Mrs. Dr. Knarre — a married couple

Franziska and Charlotte — their daughters

Dr. Kann — a physician

Charlotte Kann — his daughter

Paulinka Bimbam — a singer

Dr. Singsong — a versatile person

Professor Klingklang — a famous conductor

An Art teacher

Professor and Students at an art academy

Chorus.

The following appear in the Main Section

Amadeus Daberlohn — a voice teacher

His fiancée

A sculptor

Paulinka Bimbam

Charlotte Kann

subsidiary persons

The following appear in the Epilogue

Mrs. Knarre

Mr. Knarre

Charlotte Kann

and Others.

The play takes place during the years 1913 to 1940 in Germany,  
later in Nice, France.

- 2 M004156  
Scene 1  
1913  
One November day, Charlotte Knarre left her parents' home and threw herself into the water.
- 3 M004157  
Suicide of eighteen-year-old! charlotte seeks death in lake schlachten!  
Last night a young girl drowned herself in Lake Schlachten. The body was recovered and was identified this morning at the morgue by her father. We extend our deepest sympathy to her parents and trust they will find consolation in their older daughter.  
Vossische Zeitung
- 4 M004158  
1914  
FRANZISKA 'I have to be a nurse!'  
With this emotional outburst and the allusion to the needs of the Fatherland for more helping hands, Franziska surprises her parents one day while they are engrossed in reading the 'extras'. Naturally they are not very agreeable to this notion, especially since their little daughter wishes to go to the front.
- 5 M004160  
1915  
...she became a very efficient ward and operating nurse. There was one young surgeon whom she particularly enjoyed assisting. Since he had the sniffles she had to wipe his nose during the operation. After the operation they parted, and Franziska made her rounds. But then they met again and had a little chat.
- 6 M004161  
1916  
One year later, this young surgeon, whose name was Dr. Kann—Albert Kann—turned up at the Knarres' apartment with a bunch of lilac. Dr. and Mrs. Knarre impressed him as being very stern and civilized, which is why he was very shy in stating the reason for his visit, namely, that he desired their daughter Franziska for his wife.  
To the tune: 'Eure Tochter will ich haben' [It's your daughter I desire]
- 7 M004163  
PARENTS 'Yes, she's yours, but—it is a most precious possession that we are entrusting to you.'  
In pronouncing the longed-for consent, Mr. Knarre explains to Albert Kann that his daughter—quite apart from the respectable dowry he is prepared to give her—is indeed a most precious possession that has to be treated with much loving care. Albert seems aware of this. In the large, dark, high-ceilinged dining room, they sit down for supper. Dr. Kann feels a little uncomfortable. He finds Mrs. Knarre's glances particularly disquieting. He would prefer to be alone with Franziska. Later, she embraces him tenderly, and he walks down the red-carpeted, white marble stairs, not quite sure whether he has done the

right thing; he finds Franziska charming, but the atmosphere of her parents' home makes him uneasy.

8 M004164

However, it is too late for such thoughts. In the presence of the witnesses Mr. Knarre and Albert's brother—Albert's parents having died many years previously—the registry official of the German Empire places the ring on the ring finger of the happy bride's slender right hand. After the civil ceremony, the dressmaker and her assistant are busily dressing Franziska. She really looks charming and is so happy as she walks on the arm of her beloved at the head of the numerous members of the wedding party.

Mr. Knarre, and especially Mrs. Knarre, seem to be thinking of something very sad and look depressed among the cheerful throng.

To the tune: Wir winden dir den Jungfernkranz [We wind round thee the bridal wreath]

9 M004165

The wedding banquet, served in the big, high-ceilinged study, which has been stripped of its furniture and is now decorated with little tubs of rose trees, is excellent, and there is nothing to remind the gathering of the war that is still raging.

Later the bridal couple leaves the house accompanied by the good wishes and blessings of parents and guests.

No tune. Presumably: Wir winden dir den Hochzeitskranz [We wind round thee the bridal wreath]

10 M004166

For his first night Albert has chosen the finest hotel in the city. He loves his comfort and even as a boy had a weakness for grand hotels. The room they enter is charmingly furnished in Empire style. The wide bed is adorned with a cherub's head carved in wood. The silk quilt is pleasantly downy soft. The moon appears to be just at the full. The wide window frames throw a shadow onto the bed and the thick pile carpet.

No tune.

11 M004167

'Good-bye, sweetheart...'

Unfortunately Albert, being a soldier, must leave town the following morning.

Mr. and Mrs. Knarre, who have come to the station to see him off, want Franziska to come home with them. Franziska, however, prefers to be driven to her own, new home, which is situated somewhat beyond the bustle of the city. She is sad that her beloved has gone away—but happy in the anticipation of taking possession of their home, which has been furnished with so much love and taste.

Mr. and Mrs. Knarre are horrified at this first act of disobedience on the part of their daughter.

To the tune: Wir winden dir... [We wind round thee...]

12 MO04168

- 1 The apartment is really, one might almost say, beautiful. There is:
2. the study with adjoining consulting room for Albert;
3. a drawing room, all in blue, containing Franziska's grand piano;
4. the big dining room with a small alcove in the background for such lesser meals as breakfast, afternoon tea, etc.;
5. a long passage leads to the rear of the apartment;
6. at the end of which are the linen room with its well-stocked linen closets;
7. the nursery for the anticipated additions to the family;
8. the bedroom;
9. the kitchen, where Augusta is already sitting, waiting for her mistress's orders;
10. the pleasant bedroom;
11. and Augusta's little room.

To the tune: Wir winden dir... [We wind round thee...]

13 MO04169

1917

Barely a year later the war is over and, unexpectedly for Franziska, Albert suddenly returns, shortly before the birth of their first child, to whom in memory of her younger sister she gives the name Charlotte. Birth announcements are mailed to all their friends and acquaintances.  
No tune.

14 MO04170

Dr. A. Kann and Mrs. F. Kann, née Knarre, announce the birth of a girl, yesterday, named Charlotte.  
April 1917

15 MO04171

Although little Charlotte did not seem at all pleased at being born—she cried pitifully day and night—Franziska was very happy with her. She fed her herself and was very downcast each time the all-powerful nurse took the baby away from her. Furthermore, she always pushed the high white baby carriage containing the new Charlotte's tiny head herself.

16 MO04172

[No text]

17 MO04174

One day Franziska took Charlotte to school. She didn't like it there much, since she wasn't allowed to look around without the teacher getting very cross with her. But she had a friend, Kurt, with curly black hair whom she adored. Her birthday always meant a big celebration. The whole class was invited for tea and supper, and Kurt made a long speech in which he asked the guests to drink the health of the birthday queen.

But Christmas was almost more wonderful still. Her mother sat at the grand piano and sang 'Silent night, holy night' or 'On the Christmas tree the lights are burning,' and her father and grandparents sang too, as did Charlotte and Minna and Augusta standing beside the tree that had been so beautifully

trimmed by Franziska. While they were still singing, Charlotte would steal a furtive glance at the big laundry basket standing in the middle of the room. This year too, as in every other year, it contained indescribably marvellous gifts.

Charlotte was extremely fond of winter sports. With her friend Kurt she went tobogganing and built snowmen, but she cut her finest figure as a figure skater.

To the tune: Am Weihnachtsbaum die Lichter brennen [On the Christmas tree the lights are burning]

**18** M004175

FRANZISKA 'In Heaven everything is much more beautiful than here on earth—and when your Mommy has turned into a little angel she'll come down and bring her little lambkin, she'll bring a letter, telling her what it's like in Heaven, what it's up there in Heaven.'

Franziska was of a somewhat sentimental disposition. She would often take the child to bed with her and tell her about a life after death in celestial spheres, a life that was said to be simply glorious and for which she seemed to have a terrible yearning, and she often asked Charlotte whether it wouldn't be wonderful if her mother were to turn into an angel with wings. Charlotte agreed that it would, only she asked her mother not to forget to tell her in a letter—which she was to deliver personally as an angel and deposit on Charlotte's windowsill—what it was up there in Heaven.

To the same tune.

**19** M004176

Scene 2

Quite inexplicably, Franziska suddenly ceases to find pleasure in anything. She continues her singing lessons with Mrs. Klatte, to which Charlotte is allowed to accompany her; she plays the piano, she helps her husband, she continues to keep entire dinner parties entertained with her high spirits, and accompanies Charlotte's gym lessons on the piano. But none of it gives her any pleasure. She is in despair.

Her expression has completely changed. She speaks only of death. Albert tells her he needs her, and that Charlotte needs her mother too: she was so young, just eight years old—but all in vain. Franziska had lost all desire to go on living, and one night she got out of bed and from her husband's medical kit took a strong dose of opium, swallowed it and returned to bed.

**20** M004177

ALBERT 'What kind of nonsense is this? How can anyone take poison? Well, thank God it didn't come off!'

Thank God the dose wasn't strong enough and Albert succeeded in his efforts to bring her back to life. It was thought that she would be better taken care of in her parents' home than in her own, so her husband and Mr. Knarre took her to the Knarres'. A psychiatrist is consulted, but he pronounces her perfectly healthy and regards the attempted suicide as no more than a sentimental fancy.

21 M004179

The nurse shares this opinion. However, she confuses hope for the future with the reality of the present, and for one moment—which is utilized by Franziska to throw herself out of the window—leaves the room.

FRANZISKA 'I cannot bear it any longer, I'm always so alone.'

22 M004181

Wir winden dir den Jungfernkranz mit veilchenblauer Seide  
[We wind round thee the bridal wreath]

Franziska died immediately, the apartment being on the third floor. There is nothing more to be done about the tragedy.

23 M004182

Mrs. Knarre does not cry, but her eyes seem to penetrate the profoundest depths of the world. From the topmost tips of her hair down to the farthest joints of her small feet, her grief spreads throughout her body. It transcends her own suffering. It is the suffering of the world, the suffering of the fate that Mrs. Knarre, née Bend, has been elected to bear.

MRS. KNARRE 'Now my little Franziska too.'

24 M004183

ALBERT 'Oh, I have lost her, all my happiness is gone!'

Albert, too, is inconsolable. He sits on his lonely red quilt, ready to make any sacrifice to have his lost one restored to him.

25 M004184

On Monday, February 22, after brief suffering, our dearly beloved daughter, wife, and mother, Franziska Kann née Knarre, passed away. No condolence visits, by request. Cremation has taken place.

Survived by her loving parents, Dr. L. Knarre and wife Marianna, née Bend, husband Dr. A. Kann, and daughter Charlotte Kann.

February 1926

26 M004186

CHARLOTTE 'Oh, I have lost her!'

GRANDPARENTS 'Oh, we have lost her!'

The funeral is attended by a great crowd of people. Yet Albert feels entirely alone as he stands by her coffin, which is about to be cremated. Mr. and Mrs. Knarre and Charlotte are not present at the funeral. Charlotte asks her grandmother why everyone is crying; if 'her Mommy is now an angel in Heaven' they should rejoice in her happiness and not cry. Mrs. Knarre is strangely moved by this observation.

27 M004187

CHARLOTTE 'Dear Mommy, please write to me.'

A few weeks later, when they all visit the grave where Charlotte Knarre already rests, the little girl brings along a letter for her mother in which she reminds her not to forget her promise and to describe to her, as soon as possible and in detail, 'what it is like up there in Heaven'. For the first time Albert is slightly amused again.

28 M004188

Charlotte can't sleep well any more. Ten times a night she gets up to see whether there is any angelic trace or at least a letter lying on the windowsill. She is very disappointed.

CHARLOTTE 'Why doesn't she come, my Mommy—she promised.'

29 M004189

And whenever she has to walk along the endless, wide, high, dark passage in her grandparents' home, she imagines something terrible, with skeleton's limbs, that has something to do with her mother. Then she is filled with panic and begins to run—run—run—..

Wir winden dir den Jungfernkranz mit veilchenblauer Seide [We wind round thee the bridal wreath]

30 M004190

...until she finally locks herself in the bathroom and begins to ponder about life.

CHARLOTTE 'So that's what they call life.'

To the same tune.

31 M004191

A governess arrives.

Charlotte makes every conceivable effort to annoy her and invents all kinds of naughtiness.

CHARLOTTE 'I don't need any governesses, I know by myself what I want!'

When she is slapped, grandmother is informed by telephone right away. Right away she comes to the Kann apartment and is told that no one can possibly cope with such a brat, and Charlotte is gleeful.

To the same tune.

32 M004192

But, oh horrors, a different one appears! Compared to Elfriede Wolf, the previous one was pure gold.

GOVERNESS 'Do as I say—right now!'

Charlotte is extremely unhappy. In school, too, she gets slapped all the time.

Albert is sad too, but he can do nothing about her suffering.

Still Wir winden dir... [We wind round thee...]

33 M004195

Miss Stargard also says that Charlotte is the naughtiest creature in the whole world and that she's at the end of her tether. Charlotte's father is not exactly overjoyed to hear this, but Charlotte is in excellent spirits, and then she is very nice, and everybody loves her.

CHARLOTTE 'Today I am so happy. Today I am so glad!'

The excellent spirits are the result of looking forward to a trip with her grandparents to the Dolomites. A small house in a very lonely spot has been rented, and all three of them stay there. Charlotte's unruly behaviour keeps Mrs. Knarre in a state of agitation. One day on a meadow she comes across a girl playing a lute as she watches a child. She is the governess of a family whom the Knarres happen to know quite well. Charlotte decides that she must have 'that governess' for herself.

To the same tune

Das hat nicht Ruh bei Tag und Nacht, ist stets auf Wanderschaft bedacht—das Wasser [It knows no rest by day or night, it moves along with all its might—the water]

**34** M004196

And she actually gets her way. A month later the young woman, whose name is Hase, moves in with the Kanns.

Charlotte is very pleased with her new governess, and since Hase finds that the child has a gift for drawing (here you see her first painting, ‘a little boy’ running after ‘a big bell’) Charlotte does her portrait.

Once again Christmas is a glorious feast with many gifts and a Christmas tree.

Tune: Am Weihnachtsbaum die Lichter brennen, die Lichter brennen—wie glänzt er ruhig, lieb und mild [On the Christmas tree the lights are burning, bright with candles—how soft it shines, serene and mild]

**35** M004198

Charlotte goes with Hase to the North Sea and is thrilled. Once she is even allowed to ride, and the back of the horse arouses an emotion of great tenderness in her.

CHARLOTTE ‘What will she bring me?’

**36** M004202

Ich weiss nicht, was soll es bedeuten, dass ich so traurig bin, ich glaube die Glocken läuten—das kommt mir nicht aus dem Sinn

[I know not what is this yearning, the sadness filling my heart, I seem to hear church bells ringing—and ne’er from that sound can I part]

Charlotte has now reached a melancholy age. Her friend Hilde has found a new, much prettier friend than Charlotte, and during recess she now goes around with Marianne while Charlotte trails sadly behind or sits on the stone cairn that stands in the middle of the playground.

She lets her hair grow and spends hours in front of the mirror. She loves to read very romantic stories. Gym and ping-pong cheer her up a bit. Drawing is one of her favorite occupations. Albert Kann has meanwhile studied a great deal. He has published some interesting works on organic impairments of the lower extremities of the human body. He has been made a full professor and given a chair for minor surgery. Charlotte is very proud of her father.

He is a lover of fine food and also thinks it would be a good idea to remarry, only that the choice, because of the great variety of offers, is quite difficult. At a party he meets a singer who sings a song by Schubert: Was vermeid ich denn die Wege, wo die andern Weiser stehn [Why do I avoid the pathways where the other signposts stand]. Her singing impresses him very much. Later they fall into conversation, and he tells her that he has a young daughter. She says she finds that charming.

**37** M004203

Ich hab heut nacht geträumt von dir, du süsse kleine Frau [Last night I had a dream of you, sweet little lady mine]

The singer has the glorious name of Paulinka Bimbam. Almost every evening—

awaited with longing by both Charlotte and Albert—she comes to their apartment. On one occasion she invites Charlotte with Hase the governess to the opera.

Charlotte's head is full of Miss Paulinka Bimbam, but she is far too shy to let her or anyone else notice it. She goes with Hase the governess to the seaside, and windmills—houses—lighthouse—airplanes—sea seem to whisper 'her' name in her ear.

Meanwhile Albert and Paulinka Bimbam decide to get married.

**38** M004205

Announcing the marriage of  
Professor Albert Kann. Paulinka Bimbam.  
September 1930

**39** M004206

Die Liebe vom Zigeuner stammet, fragt nach Recht nicht und Gesetzes Macht  
(Love is a gipsy child, never has it known a law)

The wedding was celebrated in Paulinka's home town of Kurzenberg-on-the-Rhine. Her father had been dead for many years, but her mother was still alive and was frequently moved to tears at the wedding. Albert and Paulinka went off to Italy. Charlotte celebrated the wedding with Hase the governess and the Knarre grandparents. She was given a phonograph record of Paulinka singing 'Ja, die Liebe hat bunte Flügel' [Yes, love has brightly colored wings] from Carmen in her glorious contralto. The record was played so often that it got stuck every third bar and repeated it ad infinitum unless the needle was lifted and moved on.

Meanwhile, a very good friend of Paulinka's, an extremely famous man, the general manager of an opera house, sat in his box listening with a critical ear to a new production of Orpheus and Eurydice.

Orpheus's aria 'Ach, ich habe sie verloren' [Oh, I have lost her] seemed to be rendered with particular expressiveness and feeling.

**40** M004207

Now comes the last painting of scene 2.

From now on, Charlotte's feelings are expressed in 'songs'.

CHARLOTTE 'Oh dear—our home is being all changed around, and I have to give up my room to her, and my dear Hase is leaving me, and Anna is leaving too, and those new ones are coming—I have to go to the station. Oh dear, how I resent doing this. Oh, my dear Mommy...

...

Isn't it nice of Grandmother to give her such a lovely piece of jewelry!

...

But they've brought me something too, and she is my darling little woman too, and everyone loves her—but no one as much as I do.'

**41** M004235

Scene 4

Meanwhile little Charlotte Kann has been staying with her Knarre grandparents and is now taken home, where, for mysterious reasons, she doesn't dare pull the bell. There is a struggle with the person accompanying

her until the latter angrily goes upstairs and rings the bell herself. But now our model is overcome with shame, and she hurries up the stairs, to be tenderly embraced by the beloved figure in the black dress.

42 M004236

And in school, too, she thinks only about her. It is almost impossible to wrench her out of her lethargy. But now she has a new friend and also likes going to the movies. However, the first question when she comes home is: 'Is she (for to give her a name has so far been beyond her) at home?!'

43 M004237

The little girl was even jealous—believe it or not—of her father. And Paulinka was not happy. Besides, the sudden death of her mother had been a blow. And she did not resent the little girl's ardently disguised love (for of course no one knew anything about it).

44 M004238

Here you seen them both at a little concert given at home. Paulinka sings: Schlage doch, gewünschte Stunde, brich doch an, gewünschter Tag [Strike, oh strike, thou yearned—for hour; break, oh break, thou yearned—for day].

45 M004239

And this picture was actually prompted by the tune: In einer kleinen Konditorei, da sassen wir zwei bei Kuchen und Tee. [In a small café, we sat one sunny day, over a cup of tea.] Not one word did you say, but you knew right away that all was understood. And the electric piano tinkled soft, a tune of love we'd heard so oft.

46 M004250

And Paulinka sings: Bist du bei mir, geh ich mit Freuden zum Sterben und zu meiner Ruh [Be Thou with me, I go with joy to death and to my rest].

47 M004253

Meanwhile, to the tune Ja, die Liebe hat bunte Flügel [Yes, love has brightly colored wings], Charlotte is sitting on her bed.

48 M004254

Scene 5

In the meantime, Mrs. Knarre has withdrawn entirely into herself and lets her tragic, troubled life pass before her eyes in her own poetic form.

49 M004274

'She always had her happy sister's face before her eyes.'

50 M004275

Tune

And we were so dazzled...

51 M004277

'Am I to blame for her death? my Franzi asked herself.'

- 52** M004288  
'So her thoughts ran in her mind.'  
Tune: And my husband loves me not. And my child, she needs me not. Why, oh why, am I alive?
- 53** M004290  
'Thus she would stand and stand—Yes, she would stand at this window, for—'
- 54** M004291  
'Now she no longer stands there. Ah me, in a different place she now abides.'
- 55** M004292  
Tune: She was but part of Nature's heart, and Earth again has claimed her.
- 56** M004293  
'Then my sister and my brother's only daughter took their lives.'  
[...] inform you [...] by gas poisoning of your youngest sister [...] son Franz.  
I inform you [...] unique [...] of your brother Georges Bend [...] his live [...] using verondl.
- 57** M004294  
'One, two, three, four, five, six, do you play witch's tricks? Now we are only three.'
- 58** M004300  
'... I've no one left now. Fate, fate, how harsh you are. And...'
- 59** M004304  
Act two  
30.1.1933  
Es schaun aufs Hakenkreuz voll Hoffnung schon. Der Tag für Freiheit und für Brot bricht an [The swastika—a symbol bright of hope -. The day for freedom and for bread now dawns
- 60** M004305  
Just at this time, many Jews—who, with all their often unmistakable efficiency, are perhaps a pushy and insistent race, happened to be occupying government and other senior positions. After the Nazi takeover of power they were all dismissed without notice.  
Here you see how this affected a number of different souls that were both human and Jewish!  
Der Stürmer. Organ of popular enlightenment  
The Jew has made only money from your blood. The Jewish bosses financed the world war. The Jew has deceived and betrayed you, so—German men and women, take your revenge!!! Once Jewish blood spurts from the knife, you'll have by far a better life. Hunt the swine until he sweats and smash his windowpanes to bits.  
April 1, 1933  
Boycott the Jews! Whoever buys from any Jew, himself a filthy swine is too.

- 61** M004306  
Tune: Gentlemen, here you see a serious gastric ulcer, but by using the new method I have invented we can save the patient  
'Professor Kann—out—get out.'
- 62** M004308  
Tune: Der du von dem Himmel bist... ach, ich bin des Treibens müde—was soll all der Schmerz, die Lust. Süßer Frieden, komm, ach komm in meine Brust.  
[Thou who art from Heaven... Weary am I of my days—wherefore all this pain, this pleasure. Sweet peace, come, oh come into my breast.]  
Endlich naht sich die [Stunde], wo ich dich, du mein Geliebter, erwarten werde  
[At last there approaches—where I shall wait for you, O my beloved]  
NAZIS IN THE AUDIENCE 'Out—get out!'  
Dr. Singsang.
- 63** M004318  
Charlotte Kann over and over again. 'I won't go back to school. You can do with me what you will. I won't go back to school. I've had more than my fill.'  
ALBERT KANN 'Just see your finals through, that's all I ask of you.'
- 64** M004319  
CHARLOTTE 'Perhaps I could learn to draw, that might be just the thing.  
Perhaps I could learn to draw, I'd really have a fling!'  
Tune: Ich hört' ein Bächlein rauschen [I heard a babbling brook]
- 65** M004310  
DR. SINGSANG 'One might establish a Jewish theater—that would be a big help to all the artists.'  
Tune: first movement of Mozart's Eine kleine Nachtmusik.
- 66** M004315  
MINISTER 'Your request has been approved. Have a cigarette.'  
Tune: I am the Minister for Propagandah! I'm busy night and day, no time for rest or play.
- 67** M004317  
Tune: Dopo tante tante pene [After so much pain]
- 68** M004325  
Roma aeterna città divina. Oh, in my redemption's pain, I can feel Thy might again. Roma aeterna città divina.
- 69** M004328  
POPE 'I am Pius XI, God's Vicar on earth. Tiens, tiens, tiens. What are those little Jews doing here?'  
The same tune.
- 70** M004329  
And then: this Michelangelo, his paintings really tower—I find them filled with transcendent power. It's true, you need to lie down flat if you want to see all

that. He hovers on too high a plane, but yet, of course, ca vaut la peine!

- 71** M004330  
Michelangelo's 'Last Judgement.  
'I prefer the School of Athens.'  
'I find it really gorgeous.'  
'It's simply glorious.'  
Tune: Wie ein grosser Leib von Leibern walzt sich der Mensch heran [Like a great body of bodies, the crowd surges forward]
- 72** M004331  
'And this Pietà. I really love it.'
- 73** M004348  
[No text]
- 74** M004351  
[No text]
- 75** M004353  
'Ah, now I've got it!'  
To the tune: Allons enfants de la patrie. [Come, children of the fatherland]
- 76** M004371  
BEGINNING OF MAIN SECTION  
|  
Amadeus Daberlohn, prophet of song, enters to the tune of the Toreador's Song from Carmen.
- 77** M004372  
Thus he comes to Dr. Singsang for, alas, he lacks permission to teach, and Singsang is authorized to give it to him.  
DR. SINGSANG 'Have a seat.'  
To the tune: I'm busy night and day, no time for rest or play.
- 78** M004373  
To the tune: What you are telling me sounds very interesting, however, I have no time to listen to you. Let me give you an introduction to a very great singer; she can test your knowledge and report back to me.
- 79** M004376  
And that's how the new man enters the Bimbam-Kann home. And has a good look around.  
Tune: What a strange feeling. This room in reddish-blue affects me through and through.  
And now our play begins!

- 80 M004378  
PAULINKA 'So we are to work together.'
- 81 M004383  
'Torment myself the livelong day—if at least the strain would pay. But no one, none, believes in me—just I—oh what a parody!'
- 82 M004384  
'But this woman I saw today, maybe I could get her. I will make her the greatest of all singers, for there's good material there. Yes indeed, I'll get her. But for this there's one condition—she must love me!'
- 83 M004385  
'Yes, I shall give to the world its greatest singer. So you must adore me—I am your redeemer!'
- 84 M004391  
DABERLOHN 'Good morning, Mrs. Kann. I've brought you my book.' (So I throw myself at her feet, all complete. For that's what one has to do. Only by surrender can one make the voice rejoice.)
- 85 M004392  
'Many of my theories will surprise you. But all I'm doing is going back to nature. Take a baby, for example. It cries because it feels hunger, and many a singer would envy it for the power and endurance of its voice. When you were a little girl, in Klingklang's day, you sang much more beautifully. Now you have a husband whom, although you respect him, you do not love. You have friends whom you admire, but now when you sing you do so only for the public.'
- 86 M004394  
'Do you know these words of Nietzsche, Learn to sing, O my soul? What does that mean if not the urge to freedom? And for me freedom is synonymous with singing. But that's enough of theories.'
- 87 M004401  
Next morning.  
PAULINKA 'Your book has moved me profoundly. Have you really experienced all that???'
- 88 M004402  
DABERLOHN 'Yes, I was barely seventeen when I had to go to war, and here is clearly seen what's left of me from before.'
- 89 M004403  
'For a long time I was covered by the earth. And I woke up among corpses. And when I then miraculously came home again, and when I then... I had partially lost my memory.'
- 90 M004405  
'And I was more of a dead man than a living one, and I kept hearing the cries

for help of a comrade whom I could have saved. But I did not do it because I knew it would cost me my life. Then when my memory was restored I often experienced terrible seizures. As I sometimes still do. I was sent to a psychiatrist. And he in turn sent me to Italy. So that for me too, so that for me too the sky would be blue again.'

91 M004404

'But then I realized that this was not so easy. I realized that no heaven, no sun, no star could help me if I did not contribute by my own will. And then I realized that actually I still had no idea who I was. I was a corpse. And I was expecting life to love me now. I waited and came to the realization: what matters is not whether life loves us, but that we love life.'

92 M004406

'And I began to study myself, and became aware that there are two sides to everything: day and night, sun and shadow, death and life. With one of those sides, with death, I was now familiar, because, you see, I had risen from the dead. There remained only for me to become familiar with the other side, with life, in order to be this perfect creature whom you see before you.'

93 M004407

'I am convinced you will not doubt for a moment that I have meanwhile become familiar with and learned to love life. But in doing so I have never lost my point of departure. So I am one of those who say: Zwei Seelen wohnen ach in meiner Brust [Two souls, alas, cohabit in my breast].'

94 M004475

[No text]

95 M004476

[No text]

96 M004531

'It is part of my nature as a man among men to remind them of suffering, which in our day we like to pretend does not exist. Yet I have never forgotten to emphasize that I love life and affirm it threefold. In order to love life completely, one must also embrace and comprehend its other side death, including suffering. This is how my oft-repeated words must be understood those whom I love to undergo bitter experiences so that they will be forced to follow the path into their own depths.'

97 M004532

'A Mary—a Mona Lisa—a Helen, and having recognized this, should I not in yearning strife to bring this unique form to life?'

98 M004533

'One of the chief commandments of the Christian religion is: Love thy neighbor as thyself. Thus to be compassionate toward others, one must first have borne one's own cross. One can also say: in order to go out of oneself one must first have gone into oneself. The God Who could give birth to light

only by turning toward the earth, which was covered by the darkness of the depths, forbade the making of an image of Himself. The God of the New Testament is unimaginable without a pictorial symbol. This is the path that must be followed by every human and artistic endeavor in life. But just look at the people of today -'

99 M004534

'Using the perceptions of great men who lived long before their time, they drew up laws and commandments to which they anxiously cling, striving not to transgress them, unaware that all truly great achievements can arise only from direct contact. By dint of all the rules of mathematics and counterpoint, you cannot compose a Beethoven sonata. By dint of following all religious commandments, you do not come closer to your God by so much as a fraction. By dint of a thousand plaster casts, you cannot copy or understand a Michelangelo or a Phidias.'

100 M004535

'So in every field the result is rigid and rigidified forms. We speak of a golden throat, and indeed for me singing has always been the most pristine form of artistic satisfaction. A throat of Gold expresses the soul -'

101 M004536

'Our conversation just now has given me a marvellous idea. As you know, I have been interested for some time in the head and voice of Mrs. Bimbam. Mrs. Bimbam will shortly be singing Orpheus in Orpheus and Eurydice. It has just occurred to me that my work with her...'

102 M004537

'... means nothing less than my endeavour to make her understand that this Orpheus, in order to regain his lost beloved, must descend (symbolically, of course) into the underworld, into his own depths, for which he needs the help of Amor or Eros. Yet she herself is the very one who has lost a valuable part of her nature...'

103 M004538

'... and in singing and acting makes Orpheus's path her own. In my capacity of singing teacher I maintain that, apart from great technical ability, the emotional life of the singer must suffer a great upheaval to enable that singer to achieve exceptional results.'

104 M004539

'Total empathy with the object that is to be represented is as important in singing as in every other art. So you see me here, the sacrificial beast, prepared to let itself be slaughtered in order to lead this singer back to herself.'

105 M004548

'Are you here again? I must say, it's almost more than I can take from you.'

- 106** M004551  
'You're ruining the entire Orpheus for me with your persistent presence.'
- 107** M004552  
'I don't want to see you again till after the performance.'
- 108** M004571  
However, an hour later he is sitting in the theater.  
Ach, ich habe sie verloren, alle mein Glück ist nun dahin. Wäre, ach wäre ich nie geboren [Oh, I have lost her, all my happiness is gone. How I wish that never was I born]
- 109** M004572  
Kehre wieder, Euridice [Come back to me, Eurydice]
- 110** M004573  
Paulinka sings as purely and beautifully as she rarely has since Professor Klingklang's day.
- 111** M004574  
AUDIENCE 'Bravo, bravissimo!'
- 112** M004582  
DABERLOHN 'Oh Madonna, I bless you. It was glorious.'
- 113** M004583  
PAULINKA 'Please go now, good-night.'  
DABERLOHN 'Oh my sun, do not leave me.'
- 114** M004588  
He recalls the conversation with his friend the sculptor and its culmination—to have his own death mask made in order to discover the nature of what determines the transition from life to death. Having reached the acme of both spiritual and physical despair, he feels exactly like someone suspended between death and life and consequently decides to have the experiment with the death mask carried out on himself.
- 115** M004593  
Learn to sing, O my soul!
- 116** M004594  
He is pervaded by a deep sense of satisfaction from his exhausting labours and feels that he has penetrated far into the mysterious depths of human existence. DABERLOHN 'O mask, I did not hold you to my face: you were lifted off my face.' Between death and life there must be a stage of high concentration that can be filled by singing.'
- 117** M004597  
Meanwhile Charlotte is totally absorbed in her efforts to express in an etching Daberlohn's profound subconscious fascination for her. A man standing by

the sea, surrounded by a group of young people. He is addressing them, and they are listening. In the background a youth of medium height points to his forehead. He is implying that they are all round the bend and crazy.

CHARLOTTE 'Even if it drives me out of my mind—I have to get it the way I want it. The print still isn't right. The print still isn't...'

118 M004599

Daberlohn's diagnosis holds encouragement for Charlotte. The etching has no particular artistic merit and betrays no above-average talent, but concept and execution reveal a touching effort, which does not escape him.

'In my opinion you are destined to create something above average.'

119 M004600

'Above average.'

She is elated by his letter and really feels quite proud that someone finds it worth wasting his thoughts on her. While beginning to paint the buttercup-strewn meadow where she happens to be sitting, she decides to make his prophecy come true and actually create something 'above average'.

120 M004601

CHARLOTTE 'I picked it for him. It's supposed to be lucky.'

121 M004623

DABERLOHN 'I presume you haven't said anything at home about meeting me?'

CHARLOTTE 'No, of course not!'

122 M004624

DABERLOHN 'Well, you do show a certain amount of courage. Perhaps you're not nearly as shy as you make out, perhaps you're quite a dangerous girl! The only trouble is, you're still so terribly tense: relax, child, stop hugging your chest like that, what you need is a good kick in a certain place.'

123 M004625

He suddenly finds Charlotte significant for his theories of the future.

DABERLOHN 'To judge by the various expressions on your face, you are quite a fertile object for me. Only you must control your face a bit more, it's not necessary for all the world to know what you're thinking.'

124 M004626

'Tell me, do you love me?'

125 M004627

'We'd better go home now, your mother will be angry if you're late.'

126 M004630

DABERLOHN 'Good-night, see you again tomorrow at ten.'

127 M004633

DABERLOHN 'Can't you spare a bit more time for me?'

- 128** M004634  
PAULINKA 'But dear boy, you're here every day, sometimes twice—isn't that enough?'
- 129** M004639  
Charlotte is not sure of her emotions. Is it jealousy or something else growing within her where her love is concerned?
- 130** M004641  
DABERLOHN 'Isn't it a absurd to address each other so formally? You're such a baby—here, let me hold your hand.'
- 131** M004642  
DABERLOHN 'Real painter's hands.'  
CHARLOTTE 'To me they're just ugly.'
- 132** M004643  
CHARLOTTE 'You would be a wonderful subject for a portrait—'  
DABERLOHN, to himself. 'Little girl, if you only knew what one has to go through to be able to paint.'
- 133** M004644  
[No text]
- 134** M004653  
DABERLOHN 'Aren't you afraid of me? After all, I'm a total stranger to you.'  
CHARLOTTE 'I love you.'
- 135** M004654  
CHARLOTTE 'Oh, please, stay—I don't want you to go!'  
DABERLOHN 'No, let go of me. I must leave now.'
- 136** M004655  
DABERLOHN 'Good-night.'
- 137** M004699  
[No text]
- 138** M004700  
He continues 'his experiments', which like always interest him.  
Charlotte doesn't move at all which has never occurred to him during his many years practice. He experiences something which feels very cold and deathlike and is amazingly surprised.
- 139** M004701  
But suddenly his hypersensitive nerves are touched by a firelike current—which is only natural considering that this picture was created to the tune of: *Wie ich dich liebe*—so hat noch nie—noch nie ein Mensch geliebt [I love you as no one has ever, ever, loved before].

140 M004702

It was only a second. Charlotte is lying there as if it were not she who had brought about this fiery stream. Perhaps if Daberlohn had known old Mrs. Knarre, he would once again have noted a family resemblance—just as you can after reading the Epilogue.

141 M004703

For the time being he is entirely absorbed in his vision of the new religion that is to usher in the 'earthly' resurrection of suffering humanity.

DABERLOHN 'There's going to be a thunderstorm.'

CHARLOTTE 'I love thunderstorms. Come on, let's go for a swim.'

DABERLOHN 'That is the new religion.'

142 M004705

'Listen to the thunder! Look at the lightning!'

143 M004706

He endeavours to implant something of himself into her ...

DABERLOHN 'So far, thunder and lightning have always cleansed the world best.'

144 M004707

... and having exerted himself even feels a sense of satisfaction.

DABERLOHN 'See, my child? That was lovely! Now we can go home, the thunderstorm is over. By the way, are you remembering my birthday present? It's not far off now. Well then, good-bye, my child. May I remind you again of my birthday present!'

145 M004708

She becomes utterly engrossed in completing the work of illustration.

Ride, ride, ride—through the night, through the day, through the night—and courage has grown so small, and yearning so great.

146 M004709

Purling softly, the hour trickles slowly into the dream of night.

147 M004710

And he hurled his horse into the midst of the enemy...

148 M004711

... and breathed his last under the slowly dying flames of the burning flag.

149 M004713

Friend Daberlohn seems to have a very busy day ahead of him. Charlotte is most disappointed—so much so that everything within her vision becomes blurred.

DABERLOHN 'Yes—I'll have a look at it later, at home, I'm terribly strapped for time today.'

- 150** M004714  
DABERLOHN 'When shall we meet again, then?'  
CHARLOTTE 'For the time being, not at all!'  
DABERLOHN 'Just as you wish, young lady.'
- 151** M004715  
'I'm dreadfully strapped for time today -'
- 152** M004716  
She is filled with grief mingled with rage.  
CHARLOTTE 'I'll start by throwing my money out of the window!'
- 153** M004717  
'In fact I wouldn't mind throwing myself out too.'
- 154** M004719  
'Besides, some day I'll find out how he liked the illustrations.'
- 155** M004732  
CHARLOTTE 'It's two weeks now since I last spoke to him. Was I nothing but the object of his experiments?'
- 156** M004733  
'But tonight I must speak to him, even if I have to wait all night on the street.'
- 157** M004740  
DABERLOHN 'What are you doing here, young lady?'  
CHARLOTTE 'I'm waiting for you.'
- 158** M004741  
DABERLOHN 'You would have received a letter from me very shortly.'  
CHARLOTTE 'There goes your train.'
- 159** M004742  
DABERLOHN 'Never mind, let it go, never mind, let it go.'
- 160** M004743  
'Do you know, child, that some of your pictures are quite excellent?'
- 161** M004744  
'One day people will be looking at us two.'
- 162** M004761  
And time marches on  
New section, chapter one.  
November 9, 1938  
Der Angriff  
Cowardly Sneak Murder by Jew Abroad. Grünspan, a Jew, sneaks into the German Consulate and shoots German diplomat to death. Deeply shocked, the entire German nation stands beside the bier of its son. This is the latest

outrage to be perpetrated by Judea's might! The German people will have their revenge! German men en women: our forbearance toward the criminal Jewish world-power has come to an end!

163 M004762

'Perish Judea! Grab what you can!'

164 M004763

PAULINKA 'You must go to the hospital right away, my snifflebunny, I'll run and get your little coat, I'll run and get your little hat.'

MAID 'You must hide, Professor. They've already picked up half the Jews in town.'

165 M004764

PLAINCLOTHESMAN 'We want to speak to Mr. Kann.'

PAULINKA 'What is it about, please?'

PLAINCLOTHESMAN 'Don't try anything—we'll find him anyway.'

166 M004767

'You must go to the police headquarters and ask if you can take your father some warm things.'

167 M004768

As for Paulinka, she'll tackle the situation at a higher level.

PAULINKA 'Meanwhile I'll pull every possible string to have him released.'

168 M004769

'There must be a way to get him released. I need a visa, and I'll get it. What's the use of my charm if I can't win over anyone I like?'

169 M004787

Paulinka has suddenly remembered Charlotte's unstable family on her mother's side, and a sense of dread—Charlotte might do herself an injury—makes her go out onto the street and run after her because she has seen her from the window.

PAULINKA 'You stupid girl, what are you running away for? Your father is in camp ...'

170 M004788

'...and we don't know if we'll ever see him again. That's no time to run away and leave me here alone.'

171 M004789

CHARLOTTE 'Oh, forgive me!'

PAULINKA 'And there's no good reason, either.'

172 M004790

CHARLOTTE 'I can't take this life any more, I can't take these times any more.'

- 173** M004791  
Chapter two.  
The grandmother  
Now we will make a slight detour to the Knarre grandparents on the Côte d'Azur. Mrs. Knarre spends all her time sitting by the radio.  
'Terrible excesses against Jews in Germany.'
- 174** M004793  
She will do everything possible to have Charlotte with her as soon as possible.  
GRANDMOTHER 'She must come here as quickly as possible!'
- 175** M004797  
GRANDMOTHER 'How can you say such a thing when you hear news like that: "Maltreatment of German Jews in the camps"?'
- 176** M004798  
Chapter three.  
Papa.  
Meanwhile Dr. Kann, former professor, is forced to do heavy manual labour.  
CAMP GUARD 'You have to work here, there'll be no loafing.'
- 177** M004799  
CAMP GUARD 'You've done enough loafing in your lives.'
- 178** M004800  
Luckily for him, he has a wife who possesses, in addition to a heart overflowing with generosity, enough charm and intelligence to intervene successfully on his behalf.  
PAULINKA 'It would mean so much to me if he could be released immediately.'
- 179** M004801  
And indeed Paulinka's great efforts do succeed in getting Albert released.  
CAMP GUARD 'You may go. You're discharged.'
- 180** M004802  
[No text]
- 181** M004804  
Chapter four.  
The german jews  
Of whom each one is so preoccupied with himself that at a dinner party a silent observer feels as if he were in a goose pen.  
ALBERT 'First of all I'm sending away my daughter.'  
WOMAN TO HIS RIGHT 'And we're going to Australia!'  
MAN TO HER RIGHT 'And what will you do?'  
SCULPTOR 'And I'll go to the United States and become the greatest sculptor in the world.'  
PAULINKA 'We'll be staying here for the time being.'  
MR. BLÄHN 'And I'll go to the United States and there I'll become the greatest singer in the world.'

DABERLOHN'S FIANCEE 'And we're going to America, aren't we, Mucki?'  
MAID 'Take this piece, Professor, it's the best one.'

- 182** M004805  
MAN NEXT TO CHARLOTTE 'So you're going to America too?'  
DABERLOHN 'To make it easier for you to look at my hand: here it is.'
- 183** M004806  
ALBERT 'So you're going to America with your fiancé.'  
DABERLOHN 'And you, Ma'am, will be going to Australia.'  
WOMAN 'Yes, we're going to...'  
PAULINKA 'Well, Blähn, you'll be leaving us so soon?'
- 184** M004807  
DABERLOHN'S FIANCEE 'If I shouldn't see you again before you leave, I wish you all the best—you're certain to be seeing my fiancé again.'  
DABERLOHN 'That's not certain at all—d'you imagine I'm having an affair with that young lady? Haha!'
- 185** M004808  
[No text]
- 186** M004815  
DABERLOHN 'Shall we stand here by the stair, or go to my room up there?'
- 187** M004817  
'Can you see that spot up there? It represents Io and Jupiter.'
- 188** M004819  
'And here is a farewell gift—a picture, The Darkest Day—and I ask you not to forget that I love life and affirm it threefold. In order to love life completely, perhaps it is necessary to embrace and comprehend its other side: death.'
- 189** M004820  
'May you never forget that I believe in you.'
- 190** M004824  
[No text]
- 191** M004826  
PAULINKA 'Please be seated now!'
- 192** M004827  
[No text]
- 193** M004828  
[No text]
- 194** M004829  
PARENTS 'You'd better get on the train now.'

195 M004830  
[No text]

196 M004831  
[No text]

197 M004832  
[No text]

198 M004833  
[No text]

199 M004835  
EPILOGUE

High on a cliff grow pepper trees—softly the wind stirs the small silvery leaves. Far below, foam eddies and melts in the infinite span of the sea. Foam, dreams—my dreams on a blue surface. What makes you shape and reshape yourselves so brightly from so much pain and suffering? Who gave you the right? Dream, speak to me—whose lackey are you? Why are you rescuing me? High upon a cliff grow pepper trees. Softly the wind stirs the small silvery leaves.

200 M004841  
September 1939.  
La guerre est déclarée.  
Les troupes allemandes ont franchi aujourd'hui les frontières de la Rhénanie.  
La guerre est déclarée et il paraît qu'aussi Angleterre sera engagée.

201 M004846  
Old Mrs. Knarre tries to hang herself in the bathroom. The awful pain that has pursued her throughout her life but had been kept somewhat in abeyance seems to have resurfaced into full consciousness as a result of the raging war, and she feels her sharp intellect and her self-control, which had made her life worth living, breaking up against a greater force. Fear of the onset of madness drives her to this decision.

202 M004847  
'She is not dead, thank God.'

203 M004849  
Charlotte is altogether paralyzed with shock and has to lie down.  
CHARLOTTE 'After a life like that, to strangle oneself in the bathroom, it's too horrible. Oh God, I feel sick.'

204 M004850  
But now, following famous examples, she forces herself to go completely out of herself and to give all her attention to Grandma Knarre. Then she remembers

Daberlohn and starts her therapy.

GRANDMOTHER 'Oh, let me die, let me die, I know I can't go on living!'

205 M004851

CHARLOTTE 'Grandma, look how the sun is shining.'

GRANDMOTHER 'I see how the sun is shining.'

206 M004852

CHARLOTTE 'Look at the flowers in the meadow. So much beauty, so much joy. Look at the mountains up there, so much sun, so much light.'

207 M004853

GRANDMOTHER 'I see the flowers blooming, so much beauty there in the meadow. I see the mountains up there, so much sun, so much light.'

208 M004854

CHARLOTTE 'And our path leads us ever higher and ever purer. People dancing, singing—can you hear them? Joy, joy everywhere.'

209 M004855

CHARLOTTE Freude, schöner Götterfunken, Tochter aus Elysium! [Joy, O joy, divinest spark, daughter of Elysium!]

210 M004860

'Your mother tried it with poison, then she threw herself out the window. Your Aunt Charlotte drowned herself, but the worst case was Grandma's mother. For eight years she tried every day to escape the care of two nurses in order to take her life.'

211 M004861

'It all began with her brother. He was a nice fellow, very talented, and was studying law when he began to show the first signs of madness, expressed chiefly by unmotivated laughter. For a whole year he was kept completely isolated with a guard in your great grandmother's garden house—as his doctor and brother-in-law I was his only visitor. In those days we had just been married, and you can imagine how it upset your grandmother, who was very close to her brother. Then he recovered and could finish his studies. The doctors thought he should get married, and that was the beginning of the tragedy.'

212 M004862

'Your great-grandmother who, although she was a very strict woman, attached great importance to class and wealth, forced him to marry a girl from a very rich family and he became very unhappy with her. He spent his married life more in our home than in his, until he finally drowned himself. Needless to say, his mother reproached herself bitterly and came to the decision, which was accompanied by mental illness, to take her own life. We engaged two nurses who were forbidden to leave her alone for a single second, and we did succeed in seeing her die a natural death—from overexertion. But the turbulence of those eight years, during which our children were born, was, especially for Grandma, almost beyond description.'

213 M004863

'Hardly had she recovered a bit than Uncle Schneider with whom, as you know, she was on very friendly terms—plunged to his death in her presence. Soon after that, her sister and her sister's husband committed suicide, also due to a nervous malady. Meanwhile our children were growing up, and I must say that they were a source of pure joy to us. They were ideal children—but for reasons we have never been able to fathom, our Lottie drowned herself. Shortly after that, the war broke out, and you know what Grandma is like and you can imagine how that upset her all over again. Then, against our will, your mother married your father. At the same time her brother's only daughter committed suicide with an overdose of Veronal. Then you were born. A great tragedy was still to come, the death of your mother, also for inexplicable reasons, for...'

214 M004864

'... of course we don't attach any blame whatsoever to your father; but now your grandmother had come to the end of her tether. She didn't want to go on living, but I succeeded in my experiment to restore her to life by means of more extended travels, by the beauty of the South, by art and nature. Then came 1933, and she forced me to leave Germany immediately, and again it was the South that attracted us. In Rome we spent the happiest years of our lives. There, too, she received the news of the suicide of her nephew, the only surviving member of her family.'

215 M004866

Nobody had ever told Charlotte how some of her family had lost their lives. CHARLOTTE 'I knew nothing of all that. I always thought my mother had flu and died of flu.'

216 M004867

GRANDMOTHER 'What are you talking about, my dear ones?'

CHARLOTTE 'There, Grandma, you see? You're already feeling much better!'

217 M004868

GRANDMOTHER 'Yes, I believe I am feeling much better.'

CHARLOTTE 'And you'll never again have such a silly notion.'

218 M004870

'...that I love life and embrace it strongly. To love and understand life totally it is necessary to know its counterpart death. I hope you'll never forget that I believe in you.'

219 M004875

CHARLOTTE 'If you think about it, you can look back on a wonderful, full life. Apart from anything else, you've found a great deal of satisfaction, and you have succeeded in expressing in poems many things that have been denied to others. Some of your most recent poems are positively inspired, and I am convinced that a great literary talent has been lost in you. So I'll make you the following proposition: instead of taking your own life in such a horrible way...'

- 220** M004876  
'... why don't you make use of the same powers to describe your life? I am sure there must be some interesting material that weighs on you, and by writing it down you will liberate yourself and perhaps perform a service to the world. There aren't that many good books representing universal truths, and your book would be among those. I'm absolutely sure of that. You can start right now. Here are paper and pencil. I have to leave you alone now, since I don't imagine you want to go hungry for the rest of the day.'
- 221** M004877  
CHARLOTTE 'How beautiful life is, I believe in life! I will live for them all!'
- 222** M004889  
'And still there is joy, and still the flowers grow, and still the sun shines.'
- 223** M004890  
Freude, schöner Götterfunken.  
Wir betreten sonnentrunken,  
Himmlische, dein Heiligtum  
[Joy, O joy, divinest spark,  
sun-drunk we will now embark,  
off to Thy most sacred realm]
- 224** M004893  
CHARLOTTE 'Another night like that will be more than I can take.'
- 225** M004899  
[No text]
- 226** M004901  
GRANDFATHER 'Here are some carnations I've brought for her.'  
CHARLOTTE 'Grandpa, it's too late.'  
GRANDFATHER 'So she has done it after all.'
- 227** M004907  
'Dear God, please don't let me go mad'
- 228** M004913  
May 1940.  
Declaration of war.  
La guerre est déclarée.
- 229** M004914  
Avis  
Toutes les ressortissantes allemandes sont tenues de quitter sans delai la ville et le departement.
- 230** M004915v  
GRANDFATHER 'I don't understand you. What's wrong with sharing a bed with me—when there's nothing else available? I'm in favour of what' natural.'

CHARLOTTE 'Don't torment me. You know that I know exactly what I have to do.'

231 M004916

CHARLOTTE 'God, it's beautiful here!'

GRANDFATHER 'Oh, come along, do! We have to find some place to sleep tonight.'

CHARLOTTE 'Chère Madame, n'existe pas la possibilité— je ne peux pas dormir à côté de mon grandpère—que je puisse dormir ailleurs?'

HOTELKEEPER 'Je veux voir, Mademoiselle. Je crois ça ira.'

232 M004919v

CHARLOTTE 'God, oh God, how beautiful!'

233 M004923v

And now something strange happened to our Charlotte. While busy painting, as she always was, she fell asleep in the midday sun. And when she awoke, the finished portrait of her once so ardently beloved Daberlohn lay before her. However, she tore the sheet into a hundred thousand shreds, which she threw into the wind. Then she sat down and tried to fall asleep again, and the experiment succeeded once more. Again it was the face of our Amadeus, but this time in profile, turned toward a standing figure Charlotte—and she sought for an explanation of this strange happening. Then her glance fell on one of her old paintings representing Death and the Maiden. And suddenly she knew...

234 M004924

... two things. First, that Daberlohn's eyes seemed to say: 'Death and the Maiden, that's the two of us;' and second, that she still loved him as much as ever. And if he was Death, then everything was all right, then she did not have to kill herself like her ancestors, for according to his method one can be resurrected in fact, in order to love life still more, one should once have died. So she was in fact the living model for his theories, and she remembered...

235 M004924v (Facsimile)

... his book, Orpheus, or The Way to a Death Mask, of which he had said that he regretted not having written it as a poem.

And with dream-awakened eyes she saw all the beauty around her, saw the sea, felt the sun, and knew: she had to vanish for a while from the human plane and make every sacrifice in order to create her world anew out of the depths.

236 M004925-T

And from that came:

Life or theater???

237 M004925

Life or theater?

## Letter to Amadeus Daberlohn

(ca. February 1943)

Blad 1

Six months after the completion of the pages at hand.

Beloved friend, I thank you the way I love you as no one has ever loved another—the way I thank you no one has ever thanked another. You gave me courage and energy to come alive. Through cruelest darkness you guided me into the eternity of the brightest southern sun. It was a battle I fought for three years. A battle—though it was on my behalf—it was for you—to realize your ideas. Or did you believe perhaps that I was fighting for myself? That I lifted one finger for the pathetic creature that I am? But the more I saw how humanity was disposed, the more satisfaction I felt in drawing and in any uninterrupted work—the more, my beloved, I thought about you and the truth of your thoughts.

Blad 2

My life began when my grandmother wanted to take her life—when I came to know that my mother too had taken her life—just like her whole family—as I came to find out that I, myself, am the only survivor, and deep inside I felt the same predisposition—the tendency to desperation and toward death. What I [went through] in the four or five nights when I did not stray from my grandmother—who had gone crazy—I cannot say (yet I could—since you gave me the strength to do so). It felt to me as though the whole world in all its depth and ugliness revealed itself before me. When I tore my grandmother away from my softly snoring grandfather's neck—she definitely wanted to strangle him, even though she loved him sooo much—as I stood alone in the deepest night before the gruesome depth of humanity's abyss and before the nearly laughable but now devastating flatness of a little conformist man through whom a talented woman's deep soul sought protection for over fifty years, and the very worst was---

Blad 3

she even believed that she had found it.

-----In that moment you appeared to me clearly. I felt your penetrating gaze resting on me and I thought I could hear your voice. When it ended with my grandmother, when I stood alone again before her bleeding corpse, when I saw her little foot still swinging in the air and automatically, reflexively contracting—when I put a white sheet over her, when I heard my grandfather saying “Now she has done it after all,” that is when I knew I had a task that no force in the world must keep me from—completing it in triumph for you...I now know much better than back then how much you suffered for being misunderstood, the endless striving to make something about yourself clear to people and again and again being misjudged...

-----I loved you with incredible force...

Blad 4

Back then I had perhaps reached the apex of my love. It was at that time the war began to rage. The occupation of Holland, Belgium, France by the

Germans. I saw the whole world fall apart before my eyes; I saw it turn to chaos. I asked for a God to disrupt and destroy the horrifying order of humanity, the old calcified rules and laws of high-level conformism. I believed strongly that this war would mean a deluge—it would become clear finally that humankind, culture and education are laughable notions constructed by humanity to be destroyed with thoughtless wild force by humankind itself. What was playing out so gruesomely inside me was being played out in a large way in the world. Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, Brahmanism, Communism, Fascism—all the institutions struggling for “salvation” and “goodness” prove useless

Blad 5

yes, even these factors by which the war reminded people—who had perhaps forgotten—how gruesome our existence had become. Everything that a normal person—what gets called normal—would consider normal—it all gets destroyed by the cynical ridiculing laughter of a blood-drenched and self-destructive war-making humanity—I—believed in—you. I believed in an unknown-to-me instinctive power in you—that discerned and now celebrates its triumphs. [A power] that holds contempt for people and must at the same time help them since they're driven by the big “it.” The old story goes that prophets are without honor in their own country...there are very few people who can create or see in others an unconscious power lying fallow the way undeveloped land goes unplowed. In most people such energies slumber—only in the rarest cases are they awakened. Just as well-plowed land brings forth fertile soil—so too people become productive—become happy and good

Blad 6

whenever all unconscious energies come to the fore and can be used for action!!!—

I was your object, this is indeed how I have felt throughout, even though I have not heard anything from you anymore... I was a little girl, “not very talented not very beautiful not very industrious very comfortable undisciplined and egotistical”— so it was said. Then—you came along and I loved you without qualification. You noticed this even though I had—only too naturally—absolutely no attraction for you ----. Were you at all moved by the love that went through fire for you? You threw me breadcrumbs and I became your dog. A lot of what you told me I did not understand but I believed—and understood it later because I so ardently wanted to. You said I was talented even though the whole world insisted the opposite. You even protected me against

Blad 7

the woman that you loved. You knew how to give me a place in life. With exemplary irony in which there is a small kernel of truth you compared me to Michelangelo, yourself to Vittoria Colonna, who inspired him to create [and] you asked me—as they asked Rodin in the evening—because they knew what was most important for him: Have you worked well today? You so spurred my ambition that I defied others and for your sake set myself to becoming a greater person and artist.  
-----As I already said—I started this after the death experience with my grandmother. By willpower alone, nothing gets done—if life goes missing even

though I sat at my drawing board as undeterred as before and got angry over every disturbance. But the main thing missing was my...

Blad 8

... my own "I"—my life. The great satisfaction—making a true artist—was not present—that started later very slowly from time to time. The satisfaction grew and grew and got so great that I decided—only people who are worthy and have insight into their interior lives and into nature's great might—have a right to me—meaning, permission to place a claim on me for their care +++0 Irony of fate. I was tied to my grandfather, a play-actor, and an optimistic one at that—without a backdrop. Not a bad person as such, just like most everyone. A shallow type. You know his family history. He suspected in me the same tendency to suicide—without knowing what an incredible will to live at any cost (namely for you) was hidden inside me. It took an uninhibited egoist (optimist)—while the world was already...

M004928-A

...collapsing to keep on believing in its existence. Really the world disintegrated more and more during this time. While people were fighting everywhere, we lived seemingly peaceful lives on the Côte d'Azur. My love of drawing grew and grew-- the more I experienced it as a blessed act. My grandfather was the symbol for me of the people I had to resist. He was someone who had never felt true passion for anything. With the advantage of an attractive appearance, he was able to advance in his work as well as in other ways too. He married my grandmother, and guided by his own ambition, he surrendered to the illusion he was her cultural equal. Then it became apparent that there were suicidal tendencies in my grandmother's genteel family.

M004928-B

When in despair after the death of her mother [and] her brother, she sought comfort from her husband. He offered it to her as best he could: "We must accept things as they are. No exaggerated sentimentalities that lead nowhere." She seemed content and believed she loved her good, clever husband. In other respects, they and their two children led a life full of energy, hard work, and beauty. Every hour of the day had its purpose and nothing unforeseen dared interrupt the holy order of the house. The two children were raised with a firm dignified strictness and benevolence, according to the best principles and diligence of the day. They were good children and brought much happiness to their parents. And early on, the children showed a keen enthusiasm for...

M004928-C

their parents' love of ancient Greek, history, Goethe, and Schiller. Nothing disturbed the calm of their comfortable family life until suddenly, one day, the younger daughter killed herself. Of course this was also very painful for her father, but one must accept things the way things are and not try to search for unknown causes. He made an effort to instill this pearl of wisdom in his deeply sensitive wife. My mother was their remaining child, who against their will (the match wasn't wealthy enough) married my father. And my mother took her own life in the ninth year of her married life. This time it was so much harder for my grandfather to persuade his wife of the purpose of living.

M004928-D

She did not want to go on living. The South was offered up. Spain, Turkey, and Greece would give my grandmother her life back. On one of these trips she met a charming young American woman who later invited them—when my grandparents left Germany owing to the Hitler movement—to her home on the Côte d'Azur and fixed up a cottage for them in her wonderful garden where they lived for three years in complete beauty. [They were] spoiled by the goodness of a woman who should have earned their lifelong gratitude for this act of kindness alone, even though she later lost interest...

M004929-A

in the two old people because more important moments entered her life. The two old people could not understand these greater challenges, for there are factors determined by education, age, and nationality that set people apart. I arrived at my grandparents' just at the time that her interest was turning to these other matters. For this reason—since my grandparents had become accustomed to her boundless attentions—they had become so vain they imagined a rich young American woman was charmed by them and found them irresistible! They therefore made a mistake that all people make all the time—seeing things only from their own point of view...

M004929-B

They could not get outside themselves to understand others. That is how people overlook a human being's ability to bring up youngsters in tandem with the need for living things around them and, motivated by true goodness, to bring about whatever is for the good of all. Her extraordinary interest in people of every kind and class played a part here. She felt despair about life despite her immense financial resources. She had a need for action, for satisfaction, for insatiable curiosity about life itself and what it can offer. This woman must feel, and have felt, deeply disappointed by each of many people she had given a part of herself to—because almost everyone abandoned her the way my grandparents had done: with ingratitude, contempt, and scorn! And when she stood before them when she was not well herself—seeking help in her own house like a stranger, it did not occur to one of the many people for whom she had done kind things

M004929-C

to engage the inner life of this rich woman and to understand fully how much suffering and empathy it took to keep up that expenditure of energy. What a drive for goodness it required to do what she did: Moved by the horrors of wartime—she took in children who had turned poor and homeless as we were—educated them in her own home as if they were her own children. She gave them gymnastics and music lessons, nice clothes, cleanliness, sports of all kinds, dancing, etc. to show them pleasure once again in living. She also wanted to reawaken in the adults the joy of life through the many resources available to her. But even she forgot to focus on each individual being, to let go of her self-involvement

M004929-D

in order to understand what was best for others. One time, when I asked her

about the occupation of a young man whom she had taken in as a caretaker for her flock of children, she said, "What does it matter to me who someone used to be in his past (normal) life, or is now? He is a poor wretch a pitiable type and he can help me and his comrades, so he should be happy here." But the "pitiable type" showed no interest in the grand, very personal welfare work of this woman. He didn't want to do a good turn for his comrades by working, he didn't understand this way of thinking. Instead, he just wanted to get as much for himself as he could from the passion of a slightly crazy, rich American woman. He was just one example, but this is what everyone did to her.

M004930-A

This train of thought has distracted me from the topic at hand, and yet to my astonishment I realize it has only led me deeper into my subject and yours, dearest friend—because this person interested me from almost the first moment I met her. I found many of your ideas in her. And yet I belonged to the category of people like my grandparents, who seek and find their own advantage. I couldn't bear living alongside my grandparents, as they took everything from this woman and at the same time hearing them say the meanest things about her. So I contributed to the growing rift and, knowing how to influence my theatrically-inclined

M004930-B

grandparents quite well, I appealed to their sense of honor in being kept by someone they despised. So we moved away. And then came the death of my grandmother. The woman I've been telling you about came to us at once—and I slammed the door in her face for I was still in shock from the terrible revelation of realities, feeling instinctively that the experience of estrangement from this person had given grandmother the last push to do what she was already predisposed to do. Afterwards, things became very ugly between my grandfather and me. Although...

M004930-C

I had certainly thrown her out in a most hurtful way she returned several times. She didn't want to just toss charity our way. didn't want drop charity on. Honestly she was the only person who took pleasure in my drawings and so she bought lots of them from me and hung them nicely framed in her house. Later she noticed how living with my grandfather was making me sick and even though she knew his character she took him into her home where he behaved very badly. He stole fruit from the cellar and blamed the children for supposedly doing it

M004930-D

and he took particular pleasure in speaking badly about his hostess with the domestic servants. He completely forgot that none of this matched his long awe-inspiring beard and plentifully-imbibed so-called "culture." There was no other way—he had to move back in with me!!!!!!! At this time I began work on the pages gathered here and was desperately unhappy when I realized that my old despair about certain people was gaining the upper hand again and I fell back into a state of slow death-like lethargy. If

MO04931-A

I can't find joy in life and work I will take my life. I live only for you, to prove that people need mentors—I was in despair. I had time enough for work but I could not do it. A paralyzing dullness in his presence overcame me again. Then she came again and this time I spent several months there. It was summer with trees and sky and sea—I saw nothing else. Only colors paintbrush you and this. Everyone became too much for me... I had to go further into solitude, completely away

MO04931-B

from everyone—then maybe I could find what I had to find: namely, myself—a name for myself + so I began Life and Theater: It was—no, I can't say that. One seldom dreams of perfection. The war raged on and I sat there by the sea and looked deep into the heart of humanity. I became my mother my grandmother in fact I was all the characters who appear in my play. I learned to travel all their paths and became all of them. Months passed and I was far from finished. Often letters from my grandfather arrived—

MO04931-C

—threatening, mean-spirited letters. Also the police would not allow me to stay away from him for long because I only had a residence permit in order to care for him. My happiness was at an end. Absolutely at an end from brilliant sunlight into gray darkness back to my grandfather playing his “theater of civilized, cultured people.” The woman to whom my book is dedicated had in the meantime departed. She left behind just one friend, someone I did not know exactly how to approach.

MO04931-D

I was in despair. To have gained insight into everything and then have to return to this “puppet” to take care of him. It was a winter that few people could have endured. Profound dullness—unable to lift a finger—everything I did for my grandfather drove my blood to my face. I was sick, I was constantly beet-red from mute rage and grief. Spring arrived. I had to finish it! Whatever the cost. What do I care about the police [or] grandfather. I have to go back to

Blad 9

life to my work to my happiness. It started when I went to my woman-friend's home (who did not know much about the fact I was her friend). But the conditions there were repugnant to me. Still, a male friend remaining there did a great service by which I learned to judge him better and more judiciously. I went from there back toward you—and the happiness that I felt by the sea was larger than all the suffering of humanity could be. I finished up and swore to myself I would never go back to my grandfather, who I discovered was the barb of the

Blad 10

diseased state within me. All because I wanted to live for you and your new religion! I left loneliness behind with the feeling I had something I would be able allowed obliged to say to humanity and lo and behold—all people liked me. I got

Blad 11

better. You were successful. But everything came out differently. Mr Hitler made it his mandate to destroy Europe's Jews and for this purpose sent his orders into all the countries he conquered: all Jews up to sixty years of age must be taken prisoner and led to a still-unknown fate. These were very anxious weeks. Suffering lay thick in the air... One smelled it and could only

Blad 12

inhale "it." Thank God the friend of my woman-friend had a stomach ulcer and the presence of mind to have his surgery before anyone came to take him away. We were somewhat close and I knew that he was all alone pretty weak in character and not surrounded by friends—because everyone envied him for having in his hands the management of the beautiful property ... I had the desire to love—just to have one person—I believed

Blad 13

I could be of use to—to hand over some of my large saved-up surplus energy and faith[.] [M]y old grandfather would not have been half enough to protect me from Hitler's violent actions. At all costs I did not want to be sent into the unknown at this moment. Not for my own sake but because of this person who lay weak and alone in the hospital allowing himself to undergo surgery under these circumstances. I turned myself in to the police. I had

Blad 14

said: Here, take me, but see this elderly 80-year-old man who is completely helpless without me—for whom I am absolutely necessary—even though I had left him all alone for three months, the experiment worked. Trying out my influence on people for the first time in my life and convincing the police officials of the necessity of my presence. In half an hour, I was free. I stayed—[with] Grandfather but the more that time passed, the more I noticed the old dullness starting to take hold of me again.

Blad 15

I could not do anything about it. I told myself that it wasn't so. But the insecurity started again. I tried to keep myself distracted for this man's sake by running around for the four children left behind by my woman-friend—by going [grocery] shopping. But nothing at all helped. It got worse and worse for me. I could not do anything—could not muster any interest in a single person[.] [W]hat was even a winter on the Russian front compared to my suffering: to have known at one time the most exquisite happiness and now despair. Myself. (Your work, beloved). Dying by way of an 80-year-old goatee. What was all the work for—what was three years of fighting to prove what you said—if I should die of it all, I should have just gone with the police to Poland or wherever!!! That's what I said day and night: No one can understand me; even that man with the sensitive emotions only notices that I no longer entice him and of course he doesn't know why. At least he was a good measure of my internal state—and now comes my confession which is why I am writing

Blad 16

these lines to you: I was sick with despair!!! When my grandparents left

Germany they brought with them poison morphine opium veronal for taking their lives together when the money ran out. My grandmother didn't think of the poison and my grandfather had kept clear of it—because suicide goes against—as he expresses himself—his nature—I knew where it was—As I write, it is working. Maybe by now he is already dead. Forgive me. A great deal of strength was needed for this and it was all the strength left to me from the summer of Life and Theater! As grandfather already fell asleep gently by intoxication with the “Veronal omelette” and as I made a drawing of him—it felt to me as though a voice called out: Theater

Blad 17

is dead! Perhaps dearest it is actually true that with this war even the theater that's played out by humanity comes to an end so that all of humankind

Blad 18

tested by hard pain and  
experience  
moves toward  
a truer  
life—

Blad 19

affirming  
life.  
I thank you.  
I almost want  
to say:  
Amen.

CHARLOTTE SALOMON  
LEBEN? ODER THEATER?  
03/31– 09/10/2023

EXHIBITION

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