

A neighbour saw the flash of the powder and heard the shot; but, since everything remained quiet, he thought no more about it.

Next morning at six o'clock the servant came in with a candle. He found his master on the floor, saw the pistol and the blood, called out and shook him; but Werther made no reply, and merely groaned. The servant ran to fetch a doctor and Albert. Lotte heard the doorbell being pulled and a shudder went through her. She woke her husband, they rose, the servant came in weeping and stammered out the news, and Lotte fainted away at Albert's feet.

When the surgeon reached the unfortunate man he found him on the floor, beyond hope, his pulse was still beating but his limbs were powerless. He had shot himself above the right eye, blowing out his brains. To crown it all, a vein was opened in his arm; the blood flowed; he still continued to breathe.

From the blood on the back-rest of the chair it could be deduced that he committed the deed sitting at his desk, then sank to the floor, thrashing convulsively about the chair. He was found lying on his back near the window, all strength gone, fully clothed, wearing his boots and his blue coat and buff waistcoat.

The household, the neighbourhood and the entire town were in commotion. Albert entered. Werther had been laid on his bed, his head bandaged, his face already deathlike; he could not move his limbs. His lungs still produced a fearful death-rattle, one moment feebly, the next louder; his end was expected soon.

He had drunk only a single glass of the wine. *Emilia Galotti*⁷² lay open on his desk.

Of Albert's consternation and Lotte's misery I shall say nothing.

The old officer arrived hastily on hearing the tidings, and kissed the dying man, shedding ardent tears. His eldest sons soon followed him on foot, threw themselves down by the bedside in immeasurable pain, kissed his hands and mouth; and the eldest, of whom he had always been fondest, kissed his lips until he expired, and then the boy had to be forcibly taken away. It was twelve midday when he died. The presence of the officer, and the precautions he took, prevented any disturbance. About eleven that night he had him buried at the place he had chosen for himself. The old gentleman and his sons followed the corpse, but Albert was unable to. There were fears for Lotte's life. Guildsmen bore the body. No priest attended him.

He flew to the desk, broke the seal and read aloud: 'Let no one be blamed . . .' He stopped, passed his hand over his eyes, and read on.

'What! Help! Oh, help!'

He could do nothing but say the word over and over again: 'Poisoned! Poisoned!' Félicité rushed to find Homais, who shouted it loudly into the square; Madame Lefrançois heard it in the Lion d'Or; some people got out of bed to go and tell their neighbours, and all through the night the village never slept a wink.

Desperate, incoherent, on the verge of collapse, Charles paced round the room. He kept lurching into the furniture and tearing at his hair, and the pharmacist would not have believed that his eyes could ever behold so shocking a spectacle.

Homais returned home to write to Monsieur Canivet and Doctor Larivière. He lost his head: he wrote more than fifteen rough drafts. Hippolyte set off for Neufchâtel, and Justin spurred Bovary's horse so mercilessly that he had to abandon it on the hill at Bois-Guillaume, done in and almost done for.

Charles tried to leaf through his medical dictionary, but could make nothing of it; the lines kept dancing about.

'Calm down!' said the apothecary. 'It's simply a matter of administering a powerful antidote. What is the poison?'

Charles showed him the letter. It was arsenic.

'Very well,' continued Homais. 'We'll have to analyse it.'

For he knew that, in all cases of poisoning, an analysis must be carried out; and Charles, without understanding, replied:

'Yes, do it, do it, save her . . .'

Then, returning to her, he sank down onto the carpet, and remained with his head resting against the edge of her bed, sobbing.

'Don't cry!' she said to him. 'Soon I won't be tormenting you any more!'

'Why? What made you?'

'I had to do it, my dear,' she replied.

'Weren't you happy? Is it my fault? Although I did all I could!'

'Yes . . . it's true, you did . . . you're a good man!'

And, slowly, she ran her fingers through his hair. The sweetness of this sensation intensified his misery; he felt his whole being collapse in despair at the thought of losing her, just now when she was being more loving to him than ever before; yet he could think of nothing he might do—there was nothing he knew, nothing he dared try, the urgent need for immediate action having robbed him of his last vestiges of presence of mind.

They were behind her forever, thought Emma, all the betrayals, the infamies, and the myriad cravings that had tormented her. She did not hate anyone, now; a twilight confusion was settling over her thoughts, and, of all the world's sounds, Emma heard only the intermittent sobbing of that poor man, soft and faint, like the fading echo of an ever-more distant symphony.

Two maid-servants, strolling about on the platform, turned their heads to look at her, and made some audible remarks about her dress. 'It's real,' they said of the lace she was wearing. The young men did not leave her in peace. Gazing into her face and laughing and shouting unnaturally they again passed by. The station-master asked her in

passing whether she was going on. A boy selling kvas fixed his eyes on her. 'O God! where am I to go?' she thought, walking further and further along the platform. She stopped at the end of it. Some ladies and children, who had come to meet a spectacled gentleman and were laughing and talking noisily, became silent and gazed at her as she passed them. She walked faster away from them to the very end of the platform. A goods train was approaching. The platform shook, and it seemed to her as if she were again in the train.

Suddenly remembering the man who had been run over the day she first met Vronsky, she realized what she had to do. Quickly and lightly descending the steps that led from the water-tank to the rails, she stopped close to the passing train. She looked at the bottom of the trucks, at the bolts and chains and large iron wheels of the slowly-moving front truck, and tried to estimate the middle point between the front and back wheels, and the moment when that point would be opposite her.

'There!' she said to herself, looking at the shadow of the truck on the mingled sand and coal dust which covered the sleepers. 'There, into the very middle, and I shall punish him and escape from everybody and from myself!'

She wanted to fall half-way between the wheels of the front truck, which was drawing level with her, but the little red handbag which she began to take off her arm delayed her, and then it was too late, the middle had passed her. She was obliged to wait for the next truck. A feeling seized her like that she had experienced when preparing to enter the water in bathing, and she crossed herself. The familiar gesture of making the sign of the cross called up a whole series of girlish and childish memories, and suddenly the darkness, that obscured everything for her, broke, and life showed itself to her for an instant with all its bright past joys. But she did not take her eyes off the wheels of the approaching second truck, and at the very moment when the midway point between the wheels drew level, she threw away her red bag, and drawing her head down between her shoulders threw herself forward on her hands under the truck, and with a light movement as if preparing to rise again, immediately dropped on her knees. And at the same moment she was horror-struck at what she was doing. 'Where am I? What am I doing? Why?' She wished to rise, to throw herself back, but something huge and relentless struck her on the head and dragged her down. 'God forgive me everything!' she said, feeling the impossibility of struggling. . . . A little peasant muttering something was working at the rails. The

candle, by the light of which she had been reading that book filled with anxieties, deceptions, grief, and evil, flared up with a brighter light, lit up for her all that had before been dark, crackled, began to flicker, and went out for ever.