

was fairer than it is now—not half so apricotty—more like butter beans. Mum used to tie it back with two yellow bows. And you had a white cashmere dress with a yellow sash and tan stockings and tan shoes and a paper umbrella with canaries flying round it. And you used to walk up and down Kitchener Road and then Hal and I used to come strolling up pretending to be two photographers.’ ‘Yes, go on,’ said Maisie. ‘Oh, I remember.’

The platform was getting very crowded. The train was expected. The pitch of the excited voices rose higher and stronger. Some broad beams of late sun struck through the glass roof of the station. Philip’s heart began to beat quickly. ‘Go on,’ said Maisie. ‘We would come up to you and then suddenly start back—like this—’. He started and put his hand to his heart, staring at Maisie. ‘And then we would take off our hats and say “Pardon Mamzelle. May we ’ave ze honour of photographing you? We are ze court photographers of ze Kaiser of Germany on tour”. And then we’d set up the camera. Three clothes props and a soap box and the bit of black velvet off the top of the piano. And you would pose against old Mr Williams’s gate that had two stone jars on top of it. I took the photographs and Hal used to arrange you. “Ver’ good, ver’ good” ’ said Philip, acting the part. ‘ “A leetle to the left foreground. Ze parasol oblique to foreshorten ze elbow.” ’

A bell clanged. There was a cry of ‘Here comes the train’. ‘Philip, Philip—the train—look, look.’ She jumped up and down, tugging his arm. A huge express swung into the station, slowed down, stopped. There were heads at every window. Endless it seemed to Maisie. ‘We’ll never find her,’ she wailed, ‘we’ll never find her, Phil.’ ‘Yes we will. Here, take my hand. We’ll run up and down. I’ve got an idea. Take off your hat. She’ll see your hair.’ Up and down they ran, dodging the greeting, kissing groups. No sign—no sign. Suddenly Maisie felt hands round her neck. She turned, was caught up tight, trembling, into Maata’s arms. ‘Maata, Maata, is it *really* you?’ And a laughing voice between kisses stammered, ‘You darling, you darling, I knew you by your hair.’

For ever afterwards Philip had only to shut his eyes and he saw the two again—in a world of people—Maata stooping and Maisie given* to her. He felt again that furious unbearable expectation until Maata straightened up and turned to him her warm beautiful face. She was dressed in grey. She wore a little hat with a wing in it and a dark silky veil pushed up just above her eyebrows. A bright colour shone beneath her brown skin—her lips were trembling—but her eyes laughed. Simply from access of amazement he could say nothing but ‘Yes, you’ve come, you’ve come’ and press her hands and laugh back at her. He had never in life imagined anyone could look so radiant and so triumphant. ‘Are you really Phil?’ she