



ESL EASY READ

LEITURA FACILITADA EM INGLÊS

NÍVEL
B1

The Enchanted April

Elizabeth von Arnim



1 NÍVEL DE
LEITURA

B1



TEXTO
ORIGINAL
EM INGLÊS



TRADUÇÃO
EM PORTUGUÊS



NOTAS E
GLOSSÁRIO
DE VOCABULÁRIO

Abril Encantado

TRADUÇÃO EM PORTUGUÊS

APRENDA • LEIA • ENTENDA • PROGRIDA



→ DO NÍVEL **B1** AO TEXTO ORIGINAL ←

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The Enchanted April

Abril Encantado

Elizabeth von Arnim

ESL Easy Read

Reading Comprehension B1 • Original Text • Português
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Autor

Elizabeth von Arnim (1866 - 1941)

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Autor: Elizabeth von Arnim (1866 - 1941)

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Introdução

Como ler este livro

Cada livro desta coleção é apresentado em um nível de leitura simplificada, de acordo com o CEFR - Quadro Europeu Comum de Referência para Línguas.

A2 - Básico: indicado para leitores que já compreendem frases simples, vocabulário frequente e textos curtos sobre situações do cotidiano.

B1 - Intermediário: indicado para leitores que conseguem compreender as ideias principais de textos claros e acompanhar uma narrativa com vocabulário e estruturas de dificuldade moderada.

B2 - Intermediário avançado: indicado para leitores que já conseguem compreender textos mais complexos, acompanhar descrições detalhadas e reconhecer uma variedade maior de vocabulário e estruturas gramaticais.

Este livro foi adaptado para o nível B1.

Você pode começar a lê-lo mesmo sem dominar completamente o inglês. O texto foi simplificado para facilitar a compreensão, preservando a história, os personagens, o ambiente e os principais acontecimentos da obra original.

O objetivo não é substituir a obra original, mas criar uma passagem gradual entre o inglês que você já conhece e a linguagem literária do texto completo.

Como usar En/Pt

No texto simplificado em inglês, En/Pt abre a página correspondente.

A página En/Pt apresenta três camadas independentes, sempre nesta ordem: a tradução em português do texto simplificado; o trecho correspondente do original em inglês; e a tradução em português do original.

No texto original em inglês, Pt abre diretamente o mesmo parágrafo na versão portuguesa. Nessa versão, En retorna ao mesmo parágrafo no

texto original em inglês. Na página [En/Pt, Original English](#) retorna de Original Português ao mesmo parágrafo original.

Como usar o glossário

As palavras e expressões incluídas no glossário são marcadas no texto. Clique ou selecione uma delas para abrir a entrada correspondente.

Cada entrada apresenta:

- a palavra ou expressão original em inglês;
- a sua pronúncia fonética;
- a tradução em português;
- um exemplo de uso em português;
- um exemplo de uso em inglês;
- até seis trechos do livro em que a palavra ou expressão aparece, ou todos os trechos disponíveis quando houver menos de seis ocorrências.

Cada ocorrência apresentada no glossário inclui um link direto para o ponto exato do livro em que a palavra ou expressão foi usada.

Depois de consultar uma ocorrência, o leitor pode retornar diretamente ao ponto do texto de onde abriu o glossário ou navegar para qualquer outra ocorrência da mesma palavra ou expressão dentro do livro.

A função da tradução em português

Procuramos oferecer traduções em português claras, naturais e literariamente agradáveis, tanto para o texto simplificado quanto para o texto original.

Ainda assim, a tradução deve ser entendida apenas como instrumento de apoio. Este livro não foi concebido para ser lido principalmente em português: seu objetivo é ajudar você a ler em inglês e recorrer ao português somente quando necessário.

Sempre que possível, tente primeiro compreender o trecho em inglês. Consulte a tradução para confirmar o sentido, esclarecer uma dificuldade ou comparar estruturas; depois, retorne ao texto em inglês.

Sobre este livro

Fugindo de uma Londres chuvosa e decepcionante, duas esposas infelizes, a gentil Lotty Wilkins e a devota Rose Arbuthnot, respondem a um anúncio para dividir um castelo medieval italiano durante o mês de abril. Para reduzir as despesas, convidam mais duas estranhas: a bela e desiludida socialite Lady Caroline Dester e a autoritária idosa Sra. Fisher. Em San Salvatore, cercadas por flores, sol e pelo mar cintilante, as mulheres pouco a pouco baixam suas defesas. Lotty é a primeira a florescer, e sua felicidade se espalha até aquecer as demais. Maridos são chamados, mal-entendidos desaparecem e até as hóspedes mais frias redescobrem a ternura, a beleza e a capacidade de amar. Caloroso, espirituoso e discretamente sábio, o romance mostra como um lugar encantado pode curar a solidão e devolver a alegria.

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Chapter 1

En/Pt It began one February afternoon in a women's club in London. The club was uncomfortable, and the afternoon was miserable. Mrs. Wilkins had come from Hampstead to shop and had eaten lunch there. In the smoking-room, she picked up The Times from a table and saw this in the Agony Column:

En/Pt To people who love wisteria and sunshine. A small medieval Italian castle on the Mediterranean coast can be rented, furnished, for the month of April. Necessary servants will stay. Z, Box 1000, The Times.

En/Pt That was how it began. But, as with many other ideas, the person who thought of it did not know it at the time.

En/Pt Mrs. Wilkins did not realise that her April had already been decided for her. She dropped the newspaper in anger and resignation, then went to the window and sadly looked out at the wet street.

En/Pt Such places were not for her, not even small medieval castles. The shores of the Mediterranean in April, with wisteria and sunshine, were for rich people only. Yet the advertisement was for people who valued these things, so it was also for her, because she loved them deeply. But she was poor. She owned only ninety pounds, saved little by little from her dress allowance. Her husband had told her to save it for a rainy day. Her father gave her £100 a year for clothes, so her clothes were cheap and plain. Her husband called them modest and suitable, but other people thought they looked awful.

En/Pt Mr. Wilkins was a solicitor who liked saving money, except when it came to food. He did not call that thrift; he called it bad housekeeping. But he praised the saving that made Mrs. Wilkins wear old, spoiled clothes. "You never know when there will be a rainy day," he said. "Then you may be glad to have some money saved. We both may."

En/Pt Looking out of the club window into Shaftesbury Avenue, Mrs. Wilkins stood there sadly for some time. She thought of the Mediterranean in April, of wisteria, and of the rich people's lucky lives. At the same time she watched the dirty rain falling on the busy umbrellas and buses. Then she wondered if this was the rainy day Mellersh had often told her to prepare for. Maybe, she thought, it was Providence's

plan for her to use her savings to leave such a climate and go to the small medieval castle. Of course it would be only part of her savings. And if the castle was old, it might be broken down, which should make it cheaper. She would not mind that at all, because broken parts do not cost extra. In fact, they lower the price. But this was nonsense to think about.

En/Pt She turned from the window with the same mix of irritation and resignation. She crossed the room, planning to get her mackintosh and umbrella, fight her way onto an overcrowded bus, go to Shoolbred's on her way home, and buy some soles for Mellersh's dinner. Mellersh was hard to please with fish and liked only soles, except salmon. Then she saw Mrs. Arbuthnot, a woman she knew by sight. Mrs. Arbuthnot also lived in Hampstead and belonged to the club. She was sitting at the middle table, where the newspapers and magazines were kept, and was reading the first page of The Times very intently.

En/Pt Mrs. Wilkins had never spoken to Mrs. Arbuthnot. Mrs. Arbuthnot belonged to a church group and liked to study, classify, and register poor people. Mrs. Wilkins and Mellersh, when they went out, went to parties for impressionist painters, who were common in Hampstead. Mellersh's sister had married one of them and lived on the Heath, so Mrs. Wilkins was brought into a social circle that felt very unnatural to her. She had learned to fear pictures. She had to say something about them, but never knew what. She used to say, "Marvellous," and feel it was not enough. But nobody cared. Nobody listened to her. Nobody noticed her. She was the sort of person who is invisible at parties. Her clothes made her almost unseen, her face was forgettable, her speech was shy, and she did not talk much. If her clothes, face, and words all meant little, she thought, what was left of her at a party?

En/Pt Also, she was always with Wilkins, a clean-shaven, handsome man who gave any party more importance just by being there. Wilkins was very respectable. People knew his senior partners thought highly of him. His sister's friends admired him. He gave sensible opinions about art and artists. He was brief, careful, and never said too much or too little. He seemed to keep a record of everything he said. He was so clearly reliable that people who met him at these parties often became unhappy with their own solicitors. After some time, they would leave them and go to Wilkins.

En/Pt Naturally, Mrs. Wilkins was ignored. His sister said, with a firm and final way, that she should stay at home. But Wilkins could not leave his wife at home. He was a family solicitor, and men like him always show their wives. During the week he went to parties with her, and on Sundays he took her to church. He was still quite young, only thirty-nine, and he wanted to know more old ladies for his work. So he could not afford to miss church. There Mrs. Wilkins came to know Mrs. Arbuthnot, though they never spoke.

En/Pt She watched Mrs. Arbuthnot lead the poor children into the church pews. Every Sunday, she came from the Sunday School just before the choir. She seated the boys and girls neatly in their places, made them kneel for prayer, and then stand again as the vestry door opened and the choir and clergy came out. They were ready to say the prayers and commandments. Mrs. Arbuthnot had a sad face, but she was clearly good at her work. This made Mrs. Wilkins wonder. Mellersh had told her that a person who was efficient would not feel depressed, and that doing one's work well would make one bright and lively.

En/Pt Mrs. Arbuthnot was not bright and lively, though much of what she did with the Sunday School children seemed automatic. But when Mrs. Wilkins turned from the window and saw her in the club, she was not acting automatically at all. She was staring hard at one part of the first page of The Times, holding the paper still, with her eyes fixed. She was only staring. Her face was, as always, like a patient and disappointed Madonna.

En/Pt On a sudden impulse, which she herself found strange, Mrs. Wilkins, shy and unwilling, did not go on to the cloakroom and then to Schoolbred's for Mellersh's fish. Instead, she stopped at the table and sat down directly opposite Mrs. Arbuthnot, although she had never spoken to her before in her life.

En/Pt It was one of those long, narrow refectory tables, so they were very close to each other.

En/Pt But Mrs. Arbuthnot did not look up. She kept staring at one spot in The Times, as if she were dreaming.

En/Pt Mrs. Wilkins watched her for a minute and tried to find the courage to speak. She wanted to ask if Mrs. Arbuthnot had seen the advertisement. She did not know why she wanted to ask, but she did. It

seemed foolish that she could not speak to her. She looked kind. She looked unhappy. Why should two unhappy people not help each other with a little honest talk about what they felt and what they still hoped for? Mrs. Wilkins also thought that Mrs. Arbuthnot might be reading the same advertisement. Her eyes were on the same part of the paper. Was she imagining the same thing, with its colour, smell, light, and the sea softly touching little hot rocks? Colour, smell, light, and sea instead of Shaftesbury Avenue, wet buses, the fish department at Shoolbred's, the Tube to Hampstead, dinner, and then tomorrow the same, and the day after the same, and always the same...

En/Pt Suddenly, Mrs. Wilkins *leaned* across the table. 'Are you reading about the mediaeval castle and the wistaria?' she heard herself ask.

En/Pt Naturally, Mrs. Arbuthnot was surprised, but Mrs. Wilkins was even more surprised at herself for asking.

En/Pt Mrs. Arbuthnot had not yet seen the shabby, thin *figure* opposite her, with its small freckled face and big grey eyes almost hidden by a squashed wet-weather hat. She looked at her for a moment without answering. She had read about the mediaeval castle and the wistaria ten minutes before, and since then she had been lost in dreams of light, colour, smell, and the sea softly lapping among little hot rocks...

En/Pt "Why do you ask me that?" she said in her serious voice, because her work with poor people had made her calm and *patient*.

En/Pt Mrs. Wilkins blushed and looked very shy and afraid. "Oh, only because I saw it too, and I thought perhaps - I thought somehow - " she said with difficulty.

En/Pt Mrs. Arbuthnot was used to sorting people into groups, so she looked thoughtfully at Mrs. Wilkins and wondered under which group she should place her.

En/Pt "And I know you by sight," Mrs. Wilkins went on. Like many shy people, once she began, she kept talking and frightened herself with every word. "Every Sunday - I see you every Sunday in church - "

En/Pt "In church?" Mrs. Arbuthnot repeated.

"And this seems such a wonderful thing - this advertisement about the wistaria - and - "

En/Pt Mrs. Wilkins must have been at least thirty, but she stopped and moved uneasily in her chair like an awkward, embarrassed schoolgirl.

En/Pt "It seems so wonderful," she said suddenly, "and - it is such a miserable day..."

Then she looked at Mrs. Arbuthnot with the eyes of a trapped dog.

En/Pt "This poor woman," Mrs. Arbuthnot thought. Her life was spent helping people and making things easier for them. "She needs advice."

En/Pt So she got ready patiently to give it.

"If you see me at church," she said kindly and carefully, "I suppose you live in Hampstead too?"

En/Pt "Oh yes," said Mrs. Wilkins. Then she said it again, her long thin neck drooping a little, as if thinking of Hampstead made her bend down. "Oh yes."

En/Pt "Where?" asked Mrs. Arbuthnot. When she needed advice, she naturally first wanted to collect the facts.

En/Pt But Mrs. Wilkins softly laid her hand on the part of The Times where the advertisement was, as if the printed words were precious, and only said, "Perhaps that's why this seems so wonderful."

En/Pt "No - I think that's wonderful anyway," said Mrs. Arbuthnot, forgetting the facts and giving a small sigh.

"Then you were reading it?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Arbuthnot, with a dreamy look in her eyes again.

"Wouldn't it be wonderful?" whispered Mrs. Wilkins.

En/Pt "Wonderful," said Mrs. Arbuthnot. Her face brightened, then became calm again. "Very wonderful," she said. "But it is no use wasting time thinking about such things."

En/Pt "Oh, but it is," Mrs. Wilkins answered quickly and surprisingly. This was surprising because it did not match her plain coat and skirt, crumpled hat, and loose hair. "And just thinking about them is worth it by

itself - such a change from Hampstead - and sometimes I believe, I really do believe, that if you think hard enough, you get things."

En/Pt Mrs. Arbuthnot watched her patiently. If she had to place her in some group, what kind would she be?

En/Pt "Perhaps," she said, leaning forward a little, "you will tell me your name. If we are to be friends" - she gave her serious smile - "as I hope we are, we should begin at the beginning."

En/Pt "Oh yes - how kind of you. I'm Mrs. Wilkins," said Mrs. Wilkins. "I don't expect," she added, blushing when Mrs. Arbuthnot said nothing, "that it means anything to you. Sometimes it does not seem to mean anything to me either. But" - she looked around, as if asking for help - "I am Mrs. Wilkins."

En/Pt She did not like her name. It seemed small and mean, with a joking twist at the end, like a pugdog's tail turned up. But there it was. She could do nothing about it. She was Wilkins, and she would stay Wilkins. Her husband told her to use Mrs. Mellersh-Wilkins at all times, but she did that only when he could hear her. She thought Mellersh made Wilkins even worse, like a villa with the word Chatsworth on its gate-posts, making the villa seem grander than it was.

En/Pt When he first suggested adding Mellersh, she refused for the reason above. After a pause - Mellersh was careful and almost never spoke without pausing first - he said, very annoyed, "But I am not a villa," and looked at her as a man looks when he fears, for perhaps the hundredth time, that he may have married a fool.

En/Pt "Of course you are not a villa," Mrs. Wilkins said to him. She had never thought he was. She did not mean to say that. She was only thinking.

En/Pt The more she explained, the more Mellersh grew sure, as he had often been before, that he might have married a fool. They had a long quarrel. It can hardly be called a quarrel, though: one side was silent with dignity, and the other kept apologizing. They argued about whether Mrs. Wilkins had meant to suggest that Mr. Wilkins was a villa.

En/Pt "I believe," she thought when it was finally over - it had taken a long time - "that anyone would quarrel about anything if they had not

been apart for a single day in two whole years. What we both need is a holiday."

En/Pt "My husband," Mrs. Wilkins went on to Mrs. Arbuthnot, trying to explain herself, "is a solicitor. He - " She looked for something else to say about Mellersh and found: "He's very handsome."

En/Pt "Well," said Mrs. Arbuthnot kindly, "that must give you great pleasure."

"Why?" asked Mrs. Wilkins.

En/Pt "Because," said Mrs. Arbuthnot, a little surprised, for she was used to the poor agreeing with her without question, "because beauty is a gift like any other, and if it is used properly - "

En/Pt She stopped speaking. Mrs. Wilkins looked at her with her large grey eyes. Mrs. Arbuthnot suddenly felt that perhaps she had grown used to explaining things in a simple, instructive way, like a nursemaid, because she had an audience that had to agree, was afraid to interrupt, and was, in truth, under her power.

En/Pt But Mrs. Wilkins was not listening. At that moment, a strange picture flashed into her mind. She saw two people sitting together under a great hanging wistaria that grew over the branches of a tree she did not know. It was herself and Mrs. Arbuthnot. She could see them. Behind them, bright in the sun, were old grey walls, a medieval castle. She saw it all.

En/Pt So she stared at Mrs. Arbuthnot and did not hear a word she said. Mrs. Arbuthnot also stared at Mrs. Wilkins, stopped by the look on her face. It was full of excitement, and it seemed bright and trembling, like water in sunlight when the wind moves it. If she had been at a party, people would have watched Mrs. Wilkins with interest.

En/Pt They looked at each other. Mrs. Arbuthnot looked surprised and curious. Mrs. Wilkins looked like someone who has had a great revelation. Of course. That was how it could be done. She herself could not afford it, and even if she could, she could not go there alone. But she and Mrs. Arbuthnot together . . .

En/Pt She leaned across the table. "Why don't we try to get it?" she whispered.

Mrs. Arbuthnot opened her eyes wider. "Get it?" she repeated.

En/Pt "Yes," said Mrs. Wilkins, still afraid of being overheard. "Not just sit here and say how wonderful it is, and then go home to Hampstead without doing anything. Not just go back as usual and think about dinner and fish, as we have done for years and years and will keep doing for years and years. In fact," she said, turning red to the roots of her hair, because her own words frightened her, though she could not stop, "there seems to be no end to it. So there ought to be a break, time off, for everyone. It would really be unselfish to go away and be happy for a little while, because we would come back so much nicer. After a while, everyone needs a holiday."

En/Pt "But how do you mean, get it?" asked Mrs. Arbuthnot.

"Take it," said Mrs. Wilkins.

"Take it?"

"Rent it. Hire it. Have it."

"But do you mean you and I?"

En/Pt "Yes. Between us. Share it. Then it would only cost half, and you look as if you wanted it as much as I do, as if you needed rest and something happy to happen to you."

En/Pt "Why, but we do not know each other."

En/Pt "But think how well we would know each other if we went away together for a month! And I have saved for a rainy day, and I expect you have too. This is the rainy day - look at it - "

En/Pt "She is not sane," thought Mrs. Arbuthnot; yet she felt strangely moved.

"Think of getting away for a whole month, away from everything, to heaven - "

En/Pt "She should not say things like that," thought Mrs. Arbuthnot. "The vicar - " Yet she felt strangely moved. It would truly be wonderful to have a rest, a break.

En/Pt Habit soon made her calm again. Years of working with poor people made her say, with a kind but slightly superior tone, "But you see, heaven is not somewhere else. It is here and now. We are told so."

En/Pt She became very serious, as she did when she tried patiently to help and teach poor people. "Heaven is within us," she said in her soft low voice. "We are told that by the highest authority. And you know the lines about the kindred points, don't you - "

En/Pt "Oh yes, I know them," said Mrs. Wilkins impatiently.

En/Pt "The kindred points of heaven and home," continued Mrs. Arbuthnot, who liked to finish her sentences. "Heaven is in our home."

En/Pt "It isn't," said Mrs. Wilkins, again with surprise.

En/Pt Mrs. Arbuthnot was taken by surprise. Then she said gently, "Oh, but it is. It is there if we choose it, if we make it."

En/Pt "I do choose it, and I do make it, and it isn't," said Mrs. Wilkins.

En/Pt Then Mrs. Arbuthnot said nothing, because she also sometimes had doubts about homes. She looked at Mrs. Wilkins with unease and felt a strong need to classify her. If she could only put Mrs. Wilkins in the right place, she thought she would feel steady again. For some reason, she was beginning to feel off balance. She had not had a holiday for years. The advertisement had made her dream, and Mrs. Wilkins's excitement was catching. As she listened to her strange, sudden talk and watched her bright face, she felt as if she were waking from sleep.

En/Pt Mrs. Wilkins was clearly unbalanced, but Mrs. Arbuthnot had met unbalanced people before. She often met them, and they never affected her own stability. But this woman was making her feel shaky. It was as if leaving her safe ideas of God, Husband, Home, and Duty, and going away just to be happy, might be both good and desirable. Of course it was not. Of course it was not. She also had savings in the Post Office Savings Bank, and it was absurd to think she would ever take them out and spend them on herself. Surely she could not forget her duty, or forget poor people and their misery and sickness like that? No doubt a trip to Italy would be wonderful, but there are many wonderful things one might want to do. What is strength for, except to help one not do them?

En/Pt To Mrs. Arbuthnot, the great facts of life were clear and fixed: God, Husband, Home, Duty. After a time of great misery, she had rested her mind on these facts like a pillow. She feared being woken from such a simple and peaceful state. So she looked hard for a way to place Mrs. Wilkins in her mind. This would help her feel calm and clear again. After thinking about her last [remark](#), and feeling more and more uneasy and affected by her, she decided for the moment to put her under the heading [Nerves](#). She might even belong in Hysteria, which could lead to Lunacy. But Mrs. Arbuthnot had learned not to place people too quickly in their final category. More than once she had sadly found that she was wrong. Then it was very hard to change her mind, and she felt deep remorse.

En/Pt Yes, [Nerves](#). Mrs. Arbuthnot thought Mrs. Wilkins probably had no regular work for other people, no work that took her outside herself. She seemed to have no direction, and was pushed around by feelings and sudden impulses. [Nerves](#) was almost certainly her category, or would be soon if no one helped her. Poor little thing, thought Mrs. Arbuthnot, and her balance returned as her pity grew. Because of the table, she could not see how long Mrs. Wilkins's legs were. She only saw her small, eager, shy face, her thin shoulders, and the childlike hope in her eyes for something that she believed would make her happy. But such things did not bring true happiness. Mrs. Arbuthnot had learned, in her long life with Frederick, her husband, whom she had married at twenty and was now thirty-three, where real joy could be found. It was found only in living each day, and each hour, for other people. It was found only at the feet of God, where she had often taken her disappointments and troubles and come away [comforted](#).

En/Pt Frederick had been the kind of husband who sends his wife early to the feet of God. The step from him to God had been short, though painful. Looking back, it seemed short, but in fact it had taken the whole first year of their marriage. Every step had been a [struggle](#), and she felt at the time that each one was stained with her heart's blood. But that was over now. She had long ago found peace. Frederick, once her loved bridegroom and adored young husband, was now second only to God in her duties and patience. There he hung in her mind, second in importance, a bloodless thing made white by her prayers. For years, she had only been able to be happy by forgetting happiness. She wanted to

stay that way. She wanted to shut out anything that reminded her of beauty, or made her begin longing and wishing again.

En/Pt “I’d like very much to be friends,” she said earnestly. “Won’t you come and see me, or let me come to you sometimes? Whenever you want to talk. I’ll give you my address” - she looked in her handbag - “and then you won’t forget.” She found a card and held it out.

En/Pt Mrs. Wilkins did not take the card.

En/Pt “It’s so funny,” said Mrs. Wilkins, as if she had not heard her, “but I can see us both - you and me - this April in the mediaeval castle.”

En/Pt Mrs. Arbuthnot felt uneasy again. “Do you?” she said, trying to stay calm under the strange, bright grey eyes. “Do you?”

En/Pt “Don’t you ever suddenly see things before they happen?” asked Mrs. Wilkins.

“Never,” said Mrs. Arbuthnot.

En/Pt She tried to smile. She tried to give the kind, wise, and understanding smile she used when listening to the limited and one-sided views of poor people. But she could not do it. The smile only trembled and disappeared.

En/Pt “Of course,” she said softly, as if she feared the vicar and the Savings Bank might hear. “It would be very beautiful, very beautiful.”

En/Pt “Even if it were wrong,” said Mrs. Wilkins, “it would only be for a month.”

En/Pt “That - ” began Mrs. Arbuthnot, seeing clearly how wrong such an idea was. But Mrs. Wilkins stopped her before she could finish.

En/Pt “Anyway,” said Mrs. Wilkins, stopping her, “I’m sure it is wrong to be good for too long until one becomes unhappy. And I can see you have been good for years, because you look so unhappy” - Mrs. Arbuthnot tried to protest - “and I have done nothing but duties and things for other people since I was a girl. I don’t believe anybody loves me any more than before. And I long, oh, I long for something else.”

En/Pt Was she going to cry? Mrs. Arbuthnot felt very uncomfortable and sorry for her. She hoped she would not cry there, in that unfriendly room, with strangers coming and going.

En/Pt But Mrs. Wilkins pulled nervously at a handkerchief that would not come out of her pocket. At last she managed only to pretend to blow her nose. Then she blinked quickly, looked at Mrs. Arbuthnot with a shaky, half shy, half frightened apology, and smiled.

En/Pt “Will you believe,” she whispered, trying to control her mouth and clearly ashamed, “that I have never spoken like this to anyone before in my life? I cannot think. I simply do not know what has come over me.”

En/Pt “It’s the advertisement,” said Mrs. Arbuthnot, nodding seriously.

En/Pt “Yes,” said Mrs. Wilkins, wiping her eyes secretly, “and because we are both so - ” She blew her nose again a little. “Miserable.”

Chapter 2

En/Pt understanding and finding the exact right words.

En/Pt After trying many words about living for others, prayer, and peace in God's hands, Mrs. Wilkins found the right words. They were simple: it could do no harm to answer the advertisement. It was only an inquiry, with no promise. What upset Mrs. Arbuthnot was that she did not suggest it only to comfort Mrs. Wilkins. She suggested it because she herself longed for the mediaeval castle.

En/Pt This troubled her deeply. She was used to guiding others, advising them, and supporting them, except Frederick, whom she had long ago left to God. Yet now she herself was being led and influenced by an advertisement and by a strange woman she barely knew. It was very disturbing. She could not understand why she suddenly wanted something so selfish, when she had not felt that desire for years.

En/Pt "There's no harm in asking," she said quietly, as if others were listening and judging.

En/Pt "It isn't as if it commits us to anything," said Mrs. Wilkins in a low voice, though her voice was shaking.

En/Pt They stood up at the same time. Mrs. Arbuthnot was surprised that Mrs. Wilkins was so tall. They went to a writing table, and Mrs. Arbuthnot wrote to Z, Box 1000, The Times, asking for details. She asked for all the details, but the only one they really cared about was the rent. Both felt that Mrs. Arbuthnot should write the letter and handle the practical side. She was used to organizing things, she was older, and she was calmer. She also knew she was wiser. Mrs. Wilkins had no doubt of that either. The way Mrs. Arbuthnot parted her hair seemed to show great calm and wisdom.

En/Pt But even if Mrs. Arbuthnot was wiser, older, and calmer, her new friend still seemed to push things forward. She was confused, yet she urged action. She had a strange power to affect other people. She drew them in. Her mind jumped quickly to conclusions, and they were often wrong. The idea that Mrs. Arbuthnot was miserable was one such wrong conclusion. That was unsettling.

En/Pt Still, whatever she was like, and however uncertain she seemed, Mrs. Arbuthnot found herself sharing Mrs. Wilkins's excitement and longing. After the letter was dropped into the hall letter-box and could not be taken back, both women felt guilty.

En/Pt "It only shows," *whispered* Mrs. Wilkins as they turned away from the letter-box, "how perfectly good we've been all our lives. The first time we do something our husbands don't know about, we feel guilty."

En/Pt "I'm afraid I can't say I've been perfectly good," Mrs. Arbuthnot said gently. She felt uneasy at this new example of Mrs. Wilkins's quick guesses, because she had not said anything about feeling guilty.

En/Pt "Oh, but I'm sure you have. I can see you being good, and that is why you are not happy."

En/Pt "She should not say things like that," thought Mrs. Arbuthnot. "I must try to help her stop."

En/Pt Out loud she said seriously, "I do not know why you keep saying that I am not happy. When you know me better, I think you will see that I am. And I am sure you do not really mean that goodness, if one can achieve it, makes a person unhappy."

En/Pt "Yes, I do," said Mrs. Wilkins. "Our kind of goodness does. We have achieved it, and we are unhappy. There are unhappy kinds of goodness and happy kinds. The kind we will have at the mediaeval castle, for example, is the happy kind."

En/Pt "That is, if we go there," said Mrs. Arbuthnot carefully. She felt that Mrs. Wilkins needed to be held back. "After all, we have only written to ask. Anyone can do that. I think it is quite possible that we will find the rules impossible, and even if we do not, by tomorrow we may not want to go."

En/Pt "I can see us there," was Mrs. Wilkins's answer.

En/Pt All this made Mrs. Arbuthnot feel unsteady. As she walked through the wet streets to a meeting where she was to speak, she was very upset. She had tried to seem calm and practical to Mrs. Wilkins, hiding her own excitement. But inside, she felt strongly moved. She felt happy, guilty, and afraid at the same time. Without knowing it, she had the feelings of a woman who has just left a secret meeting with her lover.

She even looked like that when she arrived late at the meeting. Her open face seemed almost sneaky as she looked at the wooden-faced people waiting to hear her ask for money for the poor people of Hampstead, though each of them thought they needed help themselves. She looked as if she were hiding something shameful but wonderful. Her usual open and honest expression was gone. In its place was a hidden, nervous happiness, which a more worldly audience would have taken for recent passionate love.

En/Pt Beauty, beauty, beauty . . . the words kept sounding in her ears as she stood on the platform and spoke about sad things to the small audience. She had never been to Italy. Was that really what her savings were to be used for after all? She did not like the way Mrs. Wilkins spoke about fate, as if she had no choice and as if trying or even thinking about it did not matter. Yet it affected her. Mrs. Wilkins's eyes had looked like the eyes of someone who could see the future. Mrs. Arbuthnot knew that some people were like that, and if Mrs. Wilkins had truly seen her at the mediaeval castle, then perhaps fighting against it would be useless. Still, to spend her savings on pleasure - The money had come from a bad source, but she had at least believed its end would be good. Was she now going to turn it away from its proper use, the only reason she had kept it, and spend it on giving herself pleasure?

En/Pt Mrs. Arbuthnot went on speaking. She knew this kind of speech so well that she could have said it in her sleep. At the end of the meeting, her eyes full of secret dreams, she hardly noticed that no one had been moved at all, especially not to give money.

En/Pt But the vicar noticed it. He was disappointed. Mrs. Arbuthnot usually did much better than this. And, more unusually, he saw that she did not even seem to care.

En/Pt "I cannot imagine," he said to her as they said goodbye. He spoke crossly, because he was annoyed with both the audience and her. "What are these people becoming? Nothing seems to move them."

En/Pt "Perhaps they need a holiday," Mrs. Arbuthnot said. The vicar thought this was a strange and unsatisfactory answer.

"In February?" he called after her with sarcasm.

"Oh no - not till April," said Mrs. Arbuthnot over her shoulder.

En/Pt “Very odd,” thought the vicar. “Very odd indeed.” Then he went home and was not very kind to his wife.

En/Pt That night, Mrs. Arbuthnot prayed for guidance. She thought she should ask clearly that the mediaeval castle had already been taken by someone else, so the matter would be settled. But she lost courage. What if God answered her prayer? No, she could not ask that. She could not take the risk. Besides, if she spent her present savings on a holiday, she could save up again soon. Frederick often gave her money, and for a while her gifts to parish charities would be smaller. Later, the next savings would be made pure by how she used them.

En/Pt Mrs. Arbuthnot had no money of her own. She lived on Frederick’s earnings, and even her savings came from his work. This upset her deeply. Frederick wrote very popular memoirs every year about the mistresses of kings. There were many such women in history, so he always had enough material. He had published a book each year of their marriage, and still many more women were left to write about. Mrs. Arbuthnot could do nothing but live on the money. Once, after his successful Du Barri memoir, he gave her a terrible sofa with soft cushions, and she hated that this sign of a dead French sinner should stand in her own home.

En/Pt Mrs. Arbuthnot believed that morality is the basis of happiness, so it troubled her that she and Frederick lived on money from guilt, even if it was old guilt from long ago. The more one of these women was forgotten, the more people read Frederick’s book, and the more money he gave his wife. After adding a little to her savings, she spent the rest on the poor. She hoped that one day people would stop wanting stories about wickedness, and then Frederick would need help himself. In her mind, the parish grew rich because of the bad lives of women like Du Barri, Montespan, Pompadour, Ninon de l’Enclos, and Maintenon. The poor were the means by which the money was cleaned and made pure. Mrs. Arbuthnot could do no more. She had tried to work out the right answer, but it was too hard, so she left it to God, just as she had left Frederick to God. She spent nothing on herself, except for the large soft sofa in her house. The poor gained the most. Their boots were, in a way, made strong by sins. Yet it had been very difficult. She prayed about it until she was tired. Should she refuse to touch the money because it came from wrong deeds? But then what about the boots for the poor?

She asked the vicar what he thought, and after careful, careful talk, it became clear that he supported the boots.

En/Pt At least Mrs. Arbuthnot had persuaded Frederick to publish the memoirs under another name. He had only begun this very successful work after their marriage. When she married him, he was a good official at the British Museum library. So she was not publicly connected with the books. People in Hampstead enjoyed reading them, and had no idea the writer lived among them. Frederick himself was almost unknown in Hampstead, even by sight. He never went to local social events. Whatever fun he had was in London, and he never spoke about it or about the people he met. The vicar alone knew where the parish money came from, and he said it was a matter of honour not to mention it.

En/Pt At least their small house was not filled with the bad women from Frederick's books, because he did his work away from home. He had two rooms near the British Museum, where he studied his subjects, and he went there every morning. He came home long after his wife was asleep. Sometimes he did not come home at all. Sometimes she did not see him for days. Then he would suddenly appear at breakfast, having let himself in with his key the night before. He was cheerful, generous, and pleased to give her things. He seemed like a well-fed man who was happy with life. Mrs. Arbuthnot was always gentle, and she made sure his coffee was just as he liked it.

En/Pt He seemed very happy. Mrs. Arbuthnot often thought that life was still a mystery, no matter how much people tried to sort it out. Some people could never be understood. Frederick was one of them. He did not seem at all like the man she had first known. He no longer seemed to need the things he once said were most important: love, home, sharing thoughts, and caring about the same things. After her painful efforts to bring him back to that old closeness, she was badly hurt, and the Frederick she thought she had married seemed changed almost beyond recognition. In the end, she placed him beside her bed as the main subject of her prayers and left him to God. She had loved him too much to do anything else. He did not know that every time he left the house, her blessing went with him, like a small echo of their finished love. She did not dare think of him as he had been in their first wonderful days together. Her child had died, and she had no one of her own to love fully. The poor became her children, and God became the one she loved. She

sometimes asked herself what life could be happier than this, but her face, especially her eyes, stayed sad.

En/Pt “Perhaps when we are old . . . perhaps when we are both quite old . . .” she thought with a sad hope.

Chapter 3

En/Pt The owner of the old castle was an Englishman, Mr. Briggs. He was in London at the time. He wrote that the castle had enough beds for eight people, not counting the servants. It also had three sitting rooms, battlements, dungeons, and electric light. The rent was £60 for one month, and the servants' wages were extra. He also wanted references. He wanted proof that the second half of the rent would be paid, since the first half had to be paid in advance. He also wanted a letter from a solicitor, a doctor, or a clergyman to show they were respectable. He was very polite and said this was normal and only a formality.

En/Pt Mrs. Arbuthnot and Mrs. Wilkins had not thought about references, and they had never dreamed the rent could be so high. They had imagined something like three guineas a week, or even less, because the place was small and old.

En/Pt Sixty pounds for one month.

It shocked them.

En/Pt Mrs. Arbuthnot thought of all the boots sixty pounds could buy. Besides rent, there were servants' wages, food, and train tickets. References were a problem; they couldn't give them without making their plan too public.

En/Pt Both of them had thought it would be best to tell their own friends, in separate circles, that each was staying with a friend who had a house in Italy. Mrs. Wilkins said this would be true enough, but Mrs. Arbuthnot did not think it would be fully true. Mrs. Wilkins also said this was the only way to keep Mellersh calm. He would be angry if she spent money just getting to Italy. She did not want to imagine what he would say if he knew she was renting part of a medieval castle for herself. It would take him days to say it all, and it was her own money, not his.

En/Pt "But I expect," she said, "your husband is the same. I expect all husbands are alike in the end."

En/Pt Mrs. Arbuthnot said nothing. Her reason was the opposite of Mrs. Wilkins's. Frederick would be glad for her to go away. He would not mind at all. He would even laugh at her pleasure in life and tell her to enjoy herself and not hurry back, but in a cold way that would hurt. She

thought it was better to be missed by Mellersh than to be sent off by Frederick. To be missed and needed, for any reason, seemed better to her than being completely lonely and not missed or needed at all.

En/Pt So she said nothing and let Mrs. Wilkins go on with her idea. For one whole day, both of them thought the only thing to do was give up the medieval castle. Only when they made this painful decision did they truly see how much they wanted it.

En/Pt Then Mrs. Arbuthnot, who was good at finding solutions to problems, found a way to solve the reference problem. At the same time, Mrs. Wilkins suddenly saw how to lower the rent.

En/Pt Mrs. Arbuthnot's plan was simple and worked perfectly. She took all the rent to the owner herself. She got the money from her Savings Bank and again looked shy and sorry, as if the clerk must know she was using the money for pleasure. Then she went to the address near the Brompton Oratory where the owner lived, with the six ten-pound notes in her hand-bag. She gave them to him and said she did not want to pay only half. When he saw her parted hair, soft dark eyes, and plain clothes, and heard her serious voice, he told her not to bother writing for those references.

En/Pt "It'll be all right," he said, writing a receipt for the rent. "Please sit down. Nasty day, isn't it? You'll find the old castle has lots of sunshine, whatever else it has not got. Is your husband going?"

En/Pt Mrs. Arbuthnot was not used to anything but honesty, so this question upset her. She began to murmur, and at once the owner thought she must be a widow. He thought she was a war widow, because other widows were old. He felt silly for not guessing it sooner.

En/Pt "Oh, I'm sorry," he said, turning red up to his fair hair. "I didn't mean - h'm, h'm, h'm - "

En/Pt He looked at the receipt he had written. "Yes, I think that is all right," he said, standing up and giving it to her. Then he took the six notes she held out and smiled, because Mrs. Arbuthnot was lovely to look at. "Now," he said, "I am richer, and you are happier. I have money, and you have San Salvatore. I wonder which is best."

En/Pt "I think you know," said Mrs. Arbuthnot with her sweet smile.

En/Pt He laughed and opened the door for her. It was a pity the meeting was over. He would have liked to ask her to lunch. She made him think of his mother, his nurse, and many kind and comforting things, but she was also different from them.

En/Pt “I hope you will like the old place,” he said, holding her hand for a moment at the door. Even through her glove, her hand felt comforting. He thought it was the kind of hand children would like to hold in the dark. “In April, you know, it is full of flowers. And then there is the sea. You must wear white. You will fit in very well. There are several portraits of you there.”

En/Pt “Portraits?”

“Madonnas, you know. There is one on the stairs that looks exactly like you.”

En/Pt Mrs. Arbuthnot smiled, said good-bye, and thanked him. At once, with no trouble, she put him in the right category: he was an artist with an energetic, lively nature.

En/Pt She shook hands and left, and he wished she had not. After she was gone, he thought he should have asked for references, if only because she would think him unbusinesslike if he did not. But he could as soon have asked for references from a saint in a halo as from that serious, gentle lady.

En/Pt Rose Arbuthnot.

Her letter, which made the appointment, was lying on the table.

Pretty name.

En/Pt So that problem was solved. But there was still the other one: the very hard effect of the cost on their savings, especially on Mrs. Wilkins's, which was much smaller than Mrs. Arbuthnot's. Then Mrs. Wilkins had a sudden idea that showed her how to solve it. After getting San Salvatore, whose beautiful religious name they both loved, they would place an ad in The Times and look for two more ladies with the same wish as theirs to join them and share the cost.

En/Pt At once, the pressure on their savings would be cut in half. Mrs. Wilkins was ready to spend all her money on the plan, but she knew that if it cost even sixpence more than her ninety pounds, she would be in a

terrible position. Imagine going to Mellersh and saying, "I owe money." It would be bad enough if she had to say one day, "I have no savings," but at least then she could comfort herself that the money had been hers. So, although she was ready to spend her last penny, she would not spend a single farthing that was not truly her own. She felt that if her share of the rent was lowered to fifteen pounds, she would still have enough left for other costs. They might also save a lot on food, for example by picking olives from their own trees and eating them, and perhaps catching fish.

En/Pt They realised they could reduce the rent a lot by having more people. But they did not want to share a bedroom with a stranger. They wanted peace and rest. So they only wanted two more ladies. They got only two answers to their advertisement.

En/Pt "Well, we only want two," said Mrs. Wilkins, quickly recovering, because she had imagined many people would want to come.

En/Pt "I think choosing would have been a good thing," said Mrs. Arbuthnot.

"You mean because then we would not have had Lady Caroline Dester."

"I did not say that," said Mrs. Arbuthnot gently.

En/Pt "We do not need her," said Mrs. Wilkins. "Just one more person would help us a lot with the rent. We are not required to have two."

En/Pt "But why should we not have her? She really seems to be just what we need."

"Yes - she does from her letter," said Mrs. Wilkins uncertainly.

En/Pt She thought she would be very shy with Lady Caroline. Strange as it sounded, Mrs. Wilkins had never met anyone from the aristocracy, even though they seem to be everywhere.

En/Pt They interviewed Lady Caroline and the other applicant, Mrs. Fisher.

En/Pt Lady Caroline came to the club in Shaftesbury Avenue. She seemed to want one thing above all else: to get away from everyone she had ever known. When she saw the club, and Mrs. Arbuthnot, and Mrs.

Wilkins, she knew this was exactly what she wanted. She would be in Italy, a place she loved. She would not stay in hotels, which she hated. She would not stay with friends, whom she disliked. She would be with strangers who would never mention anyone she knew, because they did not know them and could not meet them. She asked a few questions about the fourth woman and was happy with the answers. Mrs. Fisher of Prince of Wales Terrace was a widow. She too would not know Lady Caroline's friends. Lady Caroline did not even know where Prince of Wales Terrace was.

En/Pt "It is in London," said Mrs. Arbuthnot.

"Is it?" said Lady Caroline.

It all seemed very calm and restful.

En/Pt Mrs. Fisher could not come to the club because, she wrote, she could not walk without a stick. So Mrs. Arbuthnot and Mrs. Wilkins went to visit her.

En/Pt "But if she cannot come to the club, how can she go to Italy?" Mrs. Wilkins wondered aloud.

"We shall hear that from her own lips," said Mrs. Arbuthnot.

En/Pt From Mrs. Fisher herself they only learned, after careful questions, that sitting in trains was not the same as walking about, and they already knew that. But apart from the stick, she seemed a very good fourth: quiet, educated, and *elderly*. She was much older than them, and older than Lady Caroline too, though not so old that she had lost her active mind. She was very proper, and she still wore full black clothes, even though her husband had died eleven years earlier. Her house was full of signed photographs of famous Victorian people who were dead. She said she had known all of them when she was young. Her father had been a famous *critic*, and at his house she had met nearly everyone important in literature and art. Carlyle had frowned at her, Matthew Arnold had held her on his knee, and Tennyson had teased her about the length of her pigtail. She eagerly showed them the photographs on her walls and *pointed* to the signatures with her stick. She did not tell them about her own husband, and she did not ask about theirs, which was a great *comfort*. She even seemed to think they were widows too, for when she asked who the fourth lady would be and heard it was Lady Caroline

Dester, she said, "Is she a widow too?" When they explained that Lady Caroline had not been married yet, Mrs. Fisher said calmly, "All in good time."

En/Pt Mrs. Fisher's distant manner was actually a good sign. She seemed mostly interested in the famous people she had known and in their memorial photographs. A good part of the meeting was spent on her memories of Carlyle, Meredith, Matthew Arnold, Tennyson, and many others. She said she only wanted to sit quietly in the sun and remember. That was also what Mrs. Arbuthnot and Mrs. Wilkins wanted in a sharer. Their perfect sharer would sit quietly in the sun, remember, and wake up on Saturday evening only to pay her share. Mrs. Fisher also said she liked flowers, and once, when she was staying with her father for a weekend at Box Hill -

En/Pt "Who lived at Box Hill?" interrupted Mrs. Wilkins. She was deeply excited to meet someone who had really known the great people of the past, seen them, heard them speak, and touched them.

En/Pt Mrs. Fisher looked at her over her glasses with some surprise. Mrs. Wilkins was so eager to get to the important parts of Mrs. Fisher's memories that she kept interrupting with questions. She was afraid Mrs. Arbuthnot would stop her and she would miss half the story, but to Mrs. Fisher her questions seemed ignorant.

En/Pt "Meredith, of course," said Mrs. Fisher rather sharply. "I remember one weekend in particular," she went on. "My father often took me there, but I always remember this weekend especially -"

En/Pt "Did you know Keats?" Mrs. Wilkins asked eagerly.

After a pause, Mrs. Fisher said, rather coldly, that she had never known either Keats or Shakespeare.

En/Pt "Oh, of course - how silly of me!" Mrs. Wilkins cried, blushing red. "It's because the great dead writers still seem alive. It feels as if they might walk into the room any minute. So one forgets that they are dead. In fact, one knows very well that they are not dead - not nearly as dead as you and I are now," she told Mrs. Fisher, who was looking at her over her glasses.

En/Pt Mrs. Wilkins went on talking, even though her words made little sense, because Mrs. Fisher kept looking at her over her glasses. "I

thought I saw Keats the other day in Hampstead, crossing the road in front of that house - you know, the house where he lived - ”

En/Pt Mrs. Arbuthnot said they must go.

Mrs. Fisher did nothing to stop them.

En/Pt “I really thought I saw him,” Mrs. Wilkins said, trying to make them believe her one after the other. Her face kept changing colour, and she could not stop talking because of Mrs. Fisher’s glasses and her steady gaze. “I believe I did see him - he was dressed in a - ”

En/Pt Even Mrs. Arbuthnot now looked at her, and in her kindest voice said they would be late for lunch.

En/Pt At this point, Mrs. Fisher asked for references. She did not want to be shut up for four weeks with someone who saw things. It was true there were three sitting rooms, plus the garden and the battlements at San Salvatore, so she could keep away from Mrs. Wilkins if needed. But it would still be unpleasant if Mrs. Wilkins suddenly said she saw Mr. Fisher. Mr. Fisher was dead, and Mrs. Fisher wanted him to stay dead. She did not want to hear that he was walking in the garden. What she really wanted to know was whether Mrs. Wilkins was healthy and normal. Was she an ordinary, sensible woman? Mrs. Fisher felt that if she had even one address, she could find out what she needed. So she asked for references, and the others looked shocked. Mrs. Wilkins was at once serious. Mrs. Fisher then said, “It is usual.”

En/Pt Mrs. Wilkins found her voice first. “But,” she said, “shouldn’t we be asking for references from you?”

En/Pt Mrs. Arbuthnot thought this was the right attitude too. Surely they were taking Mrs. Fisher into their party, not Mrs. Fisher taking them into hers?

En/Pt In reply, Mrs. Fisher leaned on her stick, went to the writing-table, and wrote three names in a firm hand. She showed them to Mrs. Wilkins. The names were so respected, so important, almost holy, that just reading them was enough. They were the President of the Royal Academy, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Governor of the Bank of England. Who would dare disturb such men by asking whether one of their women friends was quite proper?

En/Pt “They have known me since I was little,” said Mrs. Fisher. It seemed that everybody had known Mrs. Fisher since she was little, or when she was little.

En/Pt “I don’t think references are nice things at all between ordinary decent women,” said Mrs. Wilkins suddenly. She felt brave because she was cornered. She knew the only reference she could give safely was Shoolbred, and she had little trust in it, since it would depend only on Mellersh’s fish. “We’re not business people. We needn’t distrust each other - ”

En/Pt Mrs. Arbuthnot said this kindly but with dignity: “I’m afraid references would bring an atmosphere into our holiday plan that is not quite what we want. I do not think we shall ask for yours, or offer you ours. So I suppose you will not want to join us.”

En/Pt Then she held out her hand to say goodbye.

En/Pt Mrs. Fisher looked at Mrs. Arbuthnot, who could make even Tube officials trust and like her. Mrs. Fisher felt it would be foolish to give up the chance of going to Italy under these special conditions. She also thought that she and this calm woman could control the other one when she had her attacks. So she took Mrs. Arbuthnot’s hand and said, “Very well. I waive references.”

En/Pt She waived references.

En/Pt As the two women walked to the station in Kensington High Street, they could not help feeling that this sounded proud and grand. Even Mrs. Arbuthnot, who often found excuses for mistakes, thought Mrs. Fisher might have chosen different words. By the time Mrs. Wilkins reached the station, her walk and the struggle with other people’s umbrellas on the crowded pavement had warmed her up, and she even suggested giving up Mrs. Fisher instead.

En/Pt “If anything is to be given up, please let us be the ones who do it,” she said eagerly.

En/Pt But Mrs. Arbuthnot, as usual, stayed with Mrs. Wilkins. After she had calmed down on the train, Mrs. Wilkins said that Mrs. Fisher would find her true place at San Salvatore. “I see her finding her level there,” she said, with very bright eyes.

En/Pt Then Mrs. Arbuthnot sat with her quiet hands folded and thought about how she could help Mrs. Wilkins see a little less, or at least see in silence if she had to see at all.

Chapter 4

En/Pt It was arranged that Mrs. Arbuthnot and Mrs. Wilkins, traveling together, would arrive at San Salvatore on the evening of March 31st. The owner, who explained how to get there, understood that they did not want to begin their stay on April 1st. Lady Caroline and Mrs. Fisher, who did not know each other yet, were to arrive on the morning of April 2nd. This would give time to prepare everything nicely for the two women who, although sharing equally, still seemed a little like guests.

En/Pt Near the end of March, there were unpleasant moments. Mrs. Wilkins, frightened but determined, told her husband that she had been invited to Italy, and he did not believe her. Of course he did not believe her. No one had ever invited his wife to Italy before. He wanted proof. The only proof was Mrs. Arbuthnot, and Mrs. Wilkins had brought her after much pleading. Mrs. Arbuthnot had never thought she would have to face Mr. Wilkins and say things that were not fully true. This made her feel, as she had already begun to suspect, that she was moving further and further away from God.

En/Pt All through March, she had many unhappy and worried moments. It was a troubled month. Mrs. Arbuthnot's conscience had become very sensitive after years of being spoiled, and it could not accept what she was doing as right. It gave her little peace. It disturbed her prayers. While she asked for God's guidance, it also asked questions like, "Are you not a hypocrite? Do you really mean that? Would you not be disappointed if that prayer were answered?"

En/Pt The long wet, cold weather also troubled her conscience, because it caused much more illness among the poor. People had bronchitis and fevers, and there was no end to the suffering. And here she was, spending money to go away simply to be happy. One woman happy, while so many others suffered . . .

En/Pt She could not face the vicar. He did not know, and no one knew, what she was planning, and from the beginning she could not look anyone in the face. She refused to make speeches asking for money. How could she ask others for money when she herself was spending so much on her own pleasure? It did not help her when she told Frederick, hoping to make up for what she was wasting, that she would be grateful if

he would let her have some money. He at once gave her a cheque for £100. He asked no questions. She was red with shame. He looked at her for a moment and then looked away. Frederick was relieved that she should take some money. She gave all of it at once to the organization she worked with, and then felt more confused than ever.

En/Pt Mrs. Wilkins felt no doubts at all. She was sure that having a holiday was the right thing, and that it was good and beautiful to spend one's own hard-earned savings on being happy.

En/Pt "Think how much nicer we shall be when we come back," she said to Mrs. Arbuthnot, trying to cheer up the pale woman.

En/Pt Mrs. Wilkins had no doubts, but she did have fears. March was also an anxious month for her, while the unaware Mr. Wilkins came home every day to dinner and ate his fish in quiet, safe trust.

En/Pt Mrs. Wilkins tried very hard to cook only what Mellersh liked. He was pleased and thought he had married the right wife. On the third Sunday, he said he wanted to take her to Italy for Easter. Mrs. Wilkins was shocked because she planned to tell him about her own invitation the next Sunday.

En/Pt None came. The room was silent except for the hail on the windows and the cheerful fire. Mrs. Wilkins could not speak. She was stunned. The next Sunday was the day she had planned to tell him her news, and she had not even thought of the exact words yet.

En/Pt Mr. Wilkins had not been abroad since before the war. As week after week passed with wind and rain, he grew more and more disgusted with the weather. At last he wanted to leave England for Easter. His business was doing well, so he could afford a trip. Switzerland was no use in April. Italy felt right for Easter. He would go there, and he would take his wife too, because not taking her would look strange. Also, she would be useful. In a country where he did not know the language, another person could help carry things and wait with the luggage.

En/Pt He expected her to shout with gratitude and excitement. When she did not, he thought she must not have heard him. Probably she was lost in some silly dream. It was sad that she was still so childish.

En/Pt He turned his head. Their chairs were in front of the fire, and he looked at her. She was staring into the flames, and he thought the fire was probably making her face look red.

En/Pt “I am thinking,” he repeated, raising his clear, educated voice and speaking sharply, because not listening at such a moment was very bad, “of taking you to Italy for Easter. Did you not hear me?”

En/Pt Yes, she had heard him. She had been thinking about the amazing coincidence. It was truly amazing. She was just about to tell him how she had been invited. A friend had invited her for Easter too. Easter was in April, wasn't it? Her friend had a house there.

En/Pt In fact, Mrs. Wilkins, frightened by terror, guilt, and surprise, was even more confused than usual.

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Chapter 1

Pt It began in a Woman's Club in London on a February afternoon - an uncomfortable club, and a miserable afternoon - when Mrs. Wilkins, who had come down from Hampstead to shop and had lunched at her club, took up The Times from the table in the smoking-room, and running her listless eye down the Agony Column saw this:

Pt To Those who Appreciate Wistaria and Sunshine. Small mediaeval Italian Castle on the shores of the Mediterranean to be Let Furnished for the month of April. Necessary servants remain. Z, Box 1000, The Times.

Pt That was its conception; yet, as in the case of many another, the conceiver was unaware of it at the moment.

Pt So entirely unaware was Mrs. Wilkins that her April for that year had then and there been settled for her that she dropped the newspaper with a gesture that was both irritated and resigned, and went over to the window and stared drearly out at the dripping street.

Pt Not for her were mediaeval castles, even those that are specially described as small. Not for her the shores in April of the Mediterranean, and the wistaria and sunshine. Such delights were only for the rich. Yet the advertisement had been addressed to persons who appreciate these things, so that it had been, anyhow, addressed too to her, for she certainly appreciated them; more than anybody knew; more than she had ever told. But she was poor. In the whole world she possessed of her very own only ninety pounds, saved from year to year, put by carefully pound by pound, out of her dress allowance. She had scraped this sum together at the suggestion of her husband as a shield and refuge against a rainy day. Her dress allowance, given her by her father, was £100 a year, so that Mrs. Wilkins's clothes were what her husband, urging her to save, called modest and becoming, and her acquaintance to each other, when they spoke of her at all, which was seldom for she was very negligible, called a perfect sight.

Pt Mr. Wilkins, a solicitor, encouraged thrift, except that branch of it which got into his food. He did not call that thrift, he called it bad housekeeping. But for the thrift which, like moth, penetrated into Mrs. Wilkins's clothes and spoilt them, he had much praise. "You never know,"

he said, "when there will be a rainy day, and you may be very glad to find you have a nest-egg. Indeed we both may."

Pt Looking out of the club window into Shaftesbury Avenue - hers was an economical club, but convenient for Hampstead, where she lived, and for Shoolbred's, where she shopped - Mrs. Wilkins, having stood there some time very drearily, her mind's eye on the Mediterranean in April, and the wistaria, and the enviable opportunities of the rich, while her bodily eye watched the really extremely horrible sooty rain falling steadily on the hurrying umbrellas and splashing omnibuses, suddenly wondered whether perhaps this was not the rainy day Mellersh - Mellersh was Mr. Wilkins - had so often encouraged her to prepare for, and whether to get out of such a climate and into the small mediaeval castle wasn't perhaps what Providence had all along intended her to do with her savings. Part of her savings, of course; perhaps quite a small part. The castle, being mediaeval, might also be dilapidated, and dilapidations were surely cheap. She wouldn't in the least mind a few of them, because you didn't pay for dilapidations which were already there; on the contrary - by reducing the price you had to pay they really paid you. But what nonsense to think of it . . .

Pt She turned away from the window with the same gesture of mingled irritation and resignation with which she had laid down The Times, and crossed the room towards the door with the intention of getting her mackintosh and umbrella and fighting her way into one of the overcrowded omnibuses and going to Shoolbred's on her way home and buying some soles for Mellersh's dinner - Mellersh was difficult with fish and liked only soles, except salmon - when she beheld Mrs. Arbuthnot, a woman she knew by sight as also living in Hampstead and belonging to the club, sitting at the table in the middle of the room on which the newspapers and magazines were kept, absorbed, in her turn, in the first page of The Times.

Pt Mrs. Wilkins had never yet spoken to Mrs. Arbuthnot, who belonged to one of the various church sets, and who analysed, classified, divided and registered the poor; whereas she and Mellersh, when they did go out, went to the parties of impressionist painters, of whom in Hampstead there were many. Mellersh had a sister who had married one of them and lived up on the Heath, and because of this alliance Mrs. Wilkins was drawn into a circle which was highly unnatural to her, and she had

learned to dread pictures. She had to say things about them, and she didn't know what to say. She used to murmur, "Marvellous," and feel that it was not enough. But nobody minded. Nobody listened. Nobody took any notice of Mrs. Wilkins. She was the kind of person who is not noticed at parties. Her clothes, infested by thrift, made her practically invisible; her face was non-arresting; her conversation was reluctant; she was shy. And if one's clothes and face and conversation are all negligible, thought Mrs. Wilkins, who recognised her disabilities, what, at parties, is there left of one?

Pt Also she was always with Wilkins, that clean-shaven, fine-looking man, who gave a party, merely by coming to it, a great air. Wilkins was very respectable. He was known to be highly thought of by his senior partners. His sister's circle admired him. He pronounced adequately intelligent judgments on art and artists. He was pithy; he was prudent; he never said a word too much, nor, on the other hand, did he ever say a word too little. He produced the impression of keeping copies of everything he said; and he was so obviously reliable that it often happened that people who met him at these parties became discontented with their own solicitors, and after a period of restlessness extricated themselves and went to Wilkins.

Pt Naturally Mrs. Wilkins was blotted out. "She," said his sister, with something herself of the judicial, the digested, and the final in her manner, "should stay at home." But Wilkins could not leave his wife at home. He was a family solicitor, and all such have wives and show them. With his in the week he went to parties, and with his on Sundays he went to church. Being still fairly young - he was thirty-nine - and ambitious of old ladies, of whom he had not yet acquired in his practice a sufficient number, he could not afford to miss church, and it was there that Mrs. Wilkins became familiar, though never through words, with Mrs. Arbuthnot.

Pt She saw her marshalling the children of the poor into pews. She would come in at the head of the procession from the Sunday School exactly five minutes before the choir, and get her boys and girls neatly fitted into their allotted seats, and down on their little knees in their preliminary prayer, and up again on their feet just as, to the swelling organ, the vestry door opened, and the choir and clergy, big with the litanies and commandments they were presently to roll out, emerged.

She had a sad face, yet she was evidently efficient. The combination used to make Mrs. Wilkins wonder, for she had been told by Mellersh, on days when she had only been able to get plaice, that if one were efficient one wouldn't be depressed, and that if one does one's job well one becomes automatically bright and brisk.

Pt About Mrs. Arbuthnot there was nothing bright and brisk, though much in her way with the Sunday School children that was automatic; but when Mrs. Wilkins, turning from the window, caught sight of her in the club she was not being automatic at all, but was looking fixedly at one portion of the first page of The Times, holding the paper quite still, her eyes not moving. She was just staring; and her face, as usual, was the face of a patient and disappointed Madonna.

Pt Obeying an impulse she wondered at even while obeying it, Mrs. Wilkins, the shy and the reluctant, instead of proceeding as she had intended to the cloakroom and from thence to Schoolbred's in search of Mellersh's fish, stopped at the table and sat down exactly opposite Mrs. Arbuthnot, to whom she had never yet spoken in her life.

Pt It was one of those long, narrow refectory tables, so that they were quite close to each other.

Pt Mrs. Arbuthnot, however, did not look up. She continued to gaze, with eyes that seemed to be dreaming, at one spot only of The Times.

Pt Mrs. Wilkins watched her a minute, trying to screw up courage to speak to her. She wanted to ask her if she had seen the advertisement. She did not know why she wanted to ask her this, but she wanted to. How stupid not to be able to speak to her. She looked so kind. She looked so unhappy. Why couldn't two unhappy people refresh each other on their way through this dusty business of life by a little talk - real, natural talk, about what they felt, what they would have liked, what they still tried to hope? And she could not help thinking that Mrs. Arbuthnot, too, was reading that very same advertisement. Her eyes were on the very part of the paper. Was she, too, picturing what it would be like - the colour, the fragrance, the light, the soft lapping of the sea among little hot rocks? Colour, fragrance, light, sea; instead of Shaftesbury Avenue, and the wet omnibuses, and the fish department at Shoolbred's, and the Tube to Hampstead, and dinner, and to-morrow the same and the day after the same and always the same . . .

Pt Suddenly Mrs. Wilkins found herself leaning across the table. "Are you reading about the mediaeval castle and the wistaria?" she heard herself asking.

Pt Naturally Mrs. Arbuthnot was surprised; but she was not half so much surprised as Mrs. Wilkins was at herself for asking.

Pt Mrs. Arbuthnot had not yet to her knowledge set eyes on the shabby, lank, loosely-put-together figure sitting opposite her, with its small freckled face and big grey eyes almost disappearing under a smashed-down wet-weather hat, and she gazed at her a moment without answering. She was reading about the mediaeval castle and the wistaria, or rather had read about it ten minutes before, and since then had been lost in dreams - of light, of colour, of fragrance, of the soft lapping of the sea among little hot rocks . . .

Pt "Why do you ask me that?" she said in her grave voice, for her training of and by the poor had made her grave and patient.

Pt Mrs. Wilkins flushed and looked excessively shy and frightened. "Oh, only because I saw it too, and I thought perhaps - I thought somehow - " she stammered.

Pt Whereupon Mrs. Arbuthnot, her mind being used to getting people into lists and divisions, from habit considered, as she gazed thoughtfully at Mrs. Wilkins, under what heading, supposing she had to classify her, she could most properly be put.

Pt "And I know you by sight," went on Mrs. Wilkins, who, like all the shy, once she was started plunged on, frightening herself to more and more speech by the sheer sound of what she had said last in her ears. "Every Sunday - I see you every Sunday in church - "

Pt "In church?" echoed Mrs. Arbuthnot.

Pt "And this seems such a wonderful thing - this advertisement about the wistaria - and - "

Pt Mrs. Wilkins, who must have been at least thirty, broke off and wriggled in her chair with the movement of an awkward and embarrassed schoolgirl.

Pt "It seems so wonderful," she went on in a kind of burst, "and - it is such a miserable day . . ."

Pt And then she sat looking at Mrs. Arbuthnot with the eyes of an imprisoned dog.

Pt "This poor thing," thought Mrs. Arbuthnot, whose life was spent in helping and alleviating, "needs advice."

Pt She accordingly prepared herself patiently to give it.

Pt "If you see me in church," she said, kindly and attentively, "I suppose you live in Hampstead too?"

Pt "Oh yes," said Mrs. Wilkins. And she repeated, her head on its long thin neck drooping a little as if the recollection of Hampstead bowed her, "Oh yes."

Pt "Where?" asked Mrs. Arbuthnot, who, when advice was needed, naturally first proceeded to collect the facts.

Pt But Mrs. Wilkins, laying her hand softly and caressingly on the part of The Times where the advertisement was, as though the mere printed words of it were precious, only said, "Perhaps that's why this seems so wonderful."

Pt "No - I think that's wonderful anyhow," said Mrs. Arbuthnot, forgetting facts and faintly sighing.

Pt "Then you were reading it?"

Pt "Yes," said Mrs. Arbuthnot, her eyes going dreamy again.

Pt "Wouldn't it be wonderful?" murmured Mrs. Wilkins.

Pt "Wonderful," said Mrs. Arbuthnot. Her face, which had lit up, faded into patience again. "Very wonderful," she said. "But it's no use wasting one's time thinking of such things."

Pt "Oh, but it is," was Mrs. Wilkins's quick, surprising reply; surprising because it was so much unlike the rest of her - the characterless coat and skirt, the crumpled hat, the undecided wisp of hair straggling out. "And just the considering of them is worth while in itself - such a change from Hampstead - and sometimes I believe - I really do believe - if one considers hard enough one gets things."

Pt Mrs. Arbuthnot observed her patiently. In what category would she, supposing she had to, put her?

Pt “Perhaps,” she said, *leaning forward* a little, “you will tell me your name. If we are to be friends” - she smiled her grave smile - “as I hope we are, we had better begin at the beginning.”

Pt “Oh yes - how kind of you. I’m Mrs. Wilkins,” said Mrs. Wilkins. “I don’t expect,” she added, flushing, as Mrs. Arbuthnot said nothing, “that it conveys anything to you. Sometimes it - it doesn’t seem to convey anything to me either. But” - she looked round with a movement of seeking help - “I am Mrs. Wilkins.”

Pt She did not like her name. It was a mean, small name, with a kind of facetious twist, she thought, about its end like the upward curve of a pugdog’s tail. There it was, however. There was no doing anything with it. Wilkins she was and Wilkins she would remain; and though her husband encouraged her to give it on all occasions as Mrs. Mellersh-Wilkins she only did that when he was within earshot, for she thought Mellersh made Wilkins worse, emphasising it in the way Chatsworth on the gate-posts of a villa emphasises the villa.

Pt When first he suggested she should add Mellersh she had objected for the above reason, and after a pause - Mellersh was much too prudent to speak except after a pause, during which presumably he was taking a careful mental copy of his coming observation - he said, much displeased, “But I am not a villa,” and looked at her as he looks who hopes, for perhaps the hundredth time, that he may not have married a fool.

Pt Of course he was not a villa, Mrs. Wilkins assured him; she had never supposed he was; she had not dreamed of meaning . . . she was only just thinking . . .

Pt The more she explained the more earnest became Mellersh’s hope, familiar to him by this time, for he had then been a husband for two years, that he might not by any chance have married a fool; and they had a prolonged quarrel, if that can be called a quarrel which is conducted with dignified silence on one side and earnest apology on the other, as to whether or no Mrs. Wilkins had intended to suggest that Mr. Wilkins was a villa.

Pt “I believe,” she had thought when it was at last over - it took a long while - “that anybody would quarrel about anything when they’ve not left

off being together for a single day for two whole years. What we both need is a holiday.”

Pt “My husband,” went on Mrs. Wilkins to Mrs. Arbuthnot, trying to throw some light on herself, “is a solicitor. He - ” She cast about for something she could say elucidatory of Mellersh, and found: “He’s very handsome.”

Pt “Well,” said Mrs. Arbuthnot kindly, “that must be a great pleasure to you.”

Pt “Why?” asked Mrs. Wilkins.

Pt “Because,” said Mrs. Arbuthnot, a little taken aback, for constant intercourse with the poor had accustomed her to have her pronouncements accepted without question, “because beauty - handsomeness - is a gift like any other, and if it is properly used - ”

Pt She trailed off into silence. Mrs. Wilkins’s great grey eyes were fixed on her, and it seemed suddenly to Mrs. Arbuthnot that perhaps she was becoming crystallised into a habit of exposition, and of exposition after the manner of nursemaids, through having an audience that couldn’t but agree, that would be afraid, if it wished, to interrupt, that didn’t know, that was, in fact, at her mercy.

Pt But Mrs. Wilkins was not listening; for just then, absurd as it seemed, a picture had flashed across her brain, and there were two figures in it sitting together under a great trailing wistaria that stretched across the branches of a tree she didn’t know, and it was herself and Mrs. Arbuthnot - she saw them - she saw them. And behind them, bright in sunshine, were old grey walls - the mediaeval castle - she saw it - they were there . . .

Pt She therefore stared at Mrs. Arbuthnot and did not hear a word she said. And Mrs. Arbuthnot stared too at Mrs. Wilkins, arrested by the expression on her face, which was swept by the excitement of what she saw, and was as luminous and tremulous under it as water in sunlight when it is ruffled by a gust of wind. At this moment, if she had been at a party, Mrs. Wilkins would have been looked at with interest.

Pt They stared at each other; Mrs. Arbuthnot surprised, inquiringly, Mrs. Wilkins with the eyes of some one who has had a revelation. Of course. That was how it could be done. She herself, she by herself,

couldn't afford it, and wouldn't be able, even if she could afford it, to go there all alone; but she and Mrs. Arbuthnot together . . .

Pt She leaned across the table. "Why don't we try and get it?" she whispered.

Pt Mrs. Arbuthnot became even more wide-eyed. "Get it?" she repeated.

Pt "Yes," said Mrs. Wilkins, still as though she were afraid of being overheard. "Not just sit here and say How wonderful, and then go home to Hampstead without having put out a finger - go home just as usual and see about the dinner and the fish just as we've been doing for years and years and will go on doing for years and years. In fact," said Mrs. Wilkins, flushing to the roots of her hair, for the sound of what she was saying, of what was coming pouring out, frightened her, and yet she couldn't stop, "I see no end to it. There is no end to it. So that there ought to be a break, there ought to be intervals - in everybody's interests. Why, it would really be being unselfish to go away and be happy for a little, because we would come back so much nicer. You see, after a bit everybody needs a holiday."

Pt "But - how do you mean, get it?" asked Mrs. Arbuthnot.

Pt "Take it," said Mrs. Wilkins.

Pt "Take it?"

Pt "Rent it. Hire it. Have it."

Pt "But - do you mean you and I?"

Pt "Yes. Between us. Share. Then it would only cost half, and you look so - you look exactly as if you wanted it just as much as I do - as if you ought to have a rest - have something happy happen to you."

Pt "Why, but we don't know each other."

Pt "But just think how well we would if we went away together for a month! And I've saved for a rainy day, and I expect so have you, and this is the rainy day - look at it - "

Pt "She is unbalanced," thought Mrs. Arbuthnot; yet she felt strangely stirred.

Pt “Think of getting away for a whole month - from everything - to heaven - ”

Pt “She shouldn’t say things like that,” thought Mrs. Arbuthnot. “The vicar - ” Yet she felt strangely stirred. It would indeed be wonderful to have a rest, a cessation.

Pt Habit, however, steadied her again; and years of intercourse with the poor made her say, with the slight though sympathetic superiority of the explainer, “But then, you see, heaven isn’t somewhere else. It is here and now. We are told so.”

Pt She became very earnest, just as she did when trying *patiently* to help and enlighten the poor. “Heaven is within us,” she said in her gentle low voice. “We are told that on the very highest authority. And you know the lines about the kindred points, don’t you - ”

Pt “Oh yes, I know them,” *interrupted* Mrs. Wilkins *impatiently*.

Pt “The kindred points of heaven and home,” continued Mrs. Arbuthnot, who was used to finishing her *sentences*. “Heaven is in our home.”

Pt “It isn’t,” said Mrs. Wilkins, again surprisingly.

Pt Mrs. Arbuthnot was taken aback. Then she said gently, “Oh, but it is. It is there if we choose, if we make it.”

Pt “I do choose, and I do make it, and it isn’t,” said Mrs. Wilkins.

Pt Then Mrs. Arbuthnot was silent, for she too sometimes had doubts about homes. She sat and looked uneasily at Mrs. Wilkins, feeling more and more the urgent need to getting her classified. If she could only classify Mrs. Wilkins, get her safely under her proper heading, she felt that she herself would regain her balance, which did seem very strangely to be slipping all to one side. For neither had she had a holiday for years, and the advertisement when she saw it had set her dreaming, and Mrs. Wilkins’s excitement about it was infectious, and she had the sensation, as she listened to her impetuous, odd talk and watched her lit-up face, that she was being stirred out of sleep.

Pt Clearly Mrs. Wilkins was unbalanced, but Mrs. Arbuthnot had met the unbalanced before - indeed she was always meeting them - and they had no effect on her own stability at all; whereas this one was making her

feel quite wobbly, quite as though to be off and away, away from her compass points of God, Husband, Home and Duty - she didn't feel as if Mrs. Wilkins intended Mr. Wilkins to come too - and just for once be happy, would be both good and desirable. Which of course it wasn't; which certainly of course it wasn't. She, also, had a nest-egg, invested gradually in the Post Office Savings Bank, but to suppose that she would ever forget her duty to the extent of drawing it out and spending it on herself was surely absurd. Surely she couldn't, she wouldn't ever do such a thing? Surely she wouldn't, she couldn't ever forget her poor, forget misery and sickness as completely as that? No doubt a [trip](#) to Italy would be extraordinarily delightful, but there were many delightful things one would like to do, and what was strength given to one for except to help one not to do them?

Pt Steadfast as the points of the compass to Mrs. Arbuthnot were the great four facts of life: God, Husband, Home, Duty. She had gone to sleep on these facts years ago, after a period of much misery, her head resting on them as on a pillow; and she had a great dread of being awakened out of so simple and untroublesome a condition. Therefore it was that she searched with earnestness for a heading under which to put Mrs. Wilkins, and in this way illumine and [steady](#) her own mind; and sitting there looking at her uneasily after her last [remark](#), and feeling herself becoming more and more unbalanced and infected, she decided pro tem, as the vicar said at meetings, to put her under the heading [Nerves](#). It was just possible that she ought to go straight into the category Hysteria, which was often only the antechamber to Lunacy, but Mrs. Arbuthnot had learned not to hurry people into their final categories, having on more than one occasion discovered with dismay that she had made a [mistake](#); and how difficult it had been to get them out again, and how crushed she had been with the most terrible remorse.

Pt Yes. [Nerves](#). Probably she had no regular work for others, thought Mrs. Arbuthnot; no work that would take her outside herself. Evidently she was rudderless - blown about by gusts, by impulses. [Nerves](#) was almost certainly her category, or would be quite soon if no one helped her. Poor little thing, thought Mrs. Arbuthnot, her own balance returning hand in hand with her compassion, and unable, because of the table, to see the length of Mrs. Wilkins's legs. All she saw was her small, eager, shy face, and her thin shoulders, and the look of childish longing in her eyes for something that she was sure was going to make her happy. No;

such things didn't make people happy, such fleeting things. Mrs. Arbuthnot had learned in her long life with Frederick - he was her husband, and she had married him at twenty and was now thirty-three - where alone true joys are to be found. They are to be found, she now knew, only in daily, in hourly, living for others; they are to be found only - hadn't she over and over again taken her disappointments and discouragements there, and come away comforted? - at the feet of God.

Pt Frederick had been the kind of husband whose wife betakes herself early to the feet of God. From him to them had been a short though painful step. It seemed short to her in retrospect, but it had really taken the whole of the first year of their marriage, and every inch of the way had been a struggle, and every inch of it was stained, she felt at the time, with her heart's blood. All that was over now. She had long since found peace. And Frederick, from her passionately loved bridegroom, from her worshipped young husband, had become second only to God on her list of duties and forbearances. There he hung, the second in importance, a bloodless thing bled white by her prayers. For years she had been able to be happy only by forgetting happiness. She wanted to stay like that. She wanted to shut out everything that would remind her of beautiful things, that might set her off again longing, desiring....

Pt "I'd like so much to be friends," she said earnestly. "Won't you come and see me, or let me come to you sometimes? Whenever you feel as if you wanted to talk. I'll give you my address" - she searched in her handbag - "and then you won't forget." And she found a card and held it out.

Pt Mrs. Wilkins ignored the card.

Pt "It's so funny," said Mrs. Wilkins, just as if she had not heard her, "but I see us both - you and me - this April in the mediaeval castle."

Pt Mrs. Arbuthnot relapsed into uneasiness. "Do you?" she said, making an effort to stay balanced under the visionary gaze of the shining grey eyes. "Do you?"

Pt "Don't you ever see things in a kind of flash before they happen?" asked Mrs. Wilkins.

Pt "Never," said Mrs. Arbuthnot.

Pt She tried to smile; she tried to smile the sympathetic yet wise and tolerant smile with which she was accustomed to listen to the necessarily biassed and incomplete views of the poor. She didn't succeed. The smile trembled out.

Pt "Of course," she said in a low voice, almost as if she were afraid the vicar and the Savings Bank were listening, "it would be most beautiful - most beautiful - "

Pt "Even if it were wrong," said Mrs. Wilkins, "it would only be for a month."

Pt "That - " began Mrs. Arbuthnot, quite clear as to the reprehensibleness of such a point of view; but Mrs. Wilkins stopped her before she could finish.

Pt "Anyhow," said Mrs. Wilkins, stopping her, "I'm sure it's wrong to go on being good for too long, till one gets miserable. And I can see you've been good for years and years, because you look so unhappy" - Mrs. Arbuthnot opened her mouth to protest - "and I - I've done nothing but duties, things for other people, ever since I was a girl, and I don't believe anybody loves me a bit - a bit - the b-better - and I long - oh, I long - for something else - something else - "

Pt Was she going to cry? Mrs. Arbuthnot became acutely uncomfortable and sympathetic. She hoped she wasn't going to cry. Not there. Not in that unfriendly room, with strangers coming and going.

Pt But Mrs. Wilkins, after tugging agitatedly at a handkerchief that wouldn't come out of her pocket, did succeed at last in merely apparently blowing her nose with it, and then, blinking her eyes very quickly once or twice, looked at Mrs. Arbuthnot with a quivering air of half humble, half frightened apology, and smiled.

Pt "Will you believe," she whispered, trying to steady her mouth, evidently dreadfully ashamed of herself, "that I've never spoken to any one before in my life like this? I can't think, I simply don't know, what has come over me."

Pt "It's the advertisement," said Mrs. Arbuthnot, nodding gravely.

Pt "Yes," said Mrs. Wilkins, dabbing furtively at her eyes, "and us both being so - " - she blew her nose again a little - "miserable."

Chapter 2

Pt Of course Mrs. Arbuthnot was not miserable - how could she be, she asked herself, when God was taking care of her? - but she let that pass for the moment unrepudiated, because of her conviction that here was another fellow-creature in urgent need of her help; and not just boots and blankets and better sanitary arrangements this time, but the more delicate help of comprehension, of finding the exact right words.

Pt The exact right words, she presently discovered, after trying various ones about living for others, and prayer, and the peace to be found in placing oneself unreservedly in God's hands - to meet all these words Mrs. Wilkins had other words, incoherent and yet, for the moment at least, till one had had more time, difficult to answer - the exact right words were a suggestion that it would do no harm to answer the advertisement. Non-committal. Mere inquiry. And what disturbed Mrs. Arbuthnot about this suggestion was that she did not make it solely to comfort Mrs. Wilkins; she made it because of her own strange longing for the mediaeval castle.

Pt This was very disturbing. There she was, accustomed to direct, to lead, to advise, to support - except Frederick; she long since had learned to leave Frederick to God - being led herself, being influenced and thrown off her feet, by just an advertisement, by just an incoherent stranger. It was indeed disturbing. She failed to understand her sudden longing for what was, after all, self-indulgence, when for years no such desire had entered her heart.

Pt "There's no harm in simply asking," she said in a low voice, as if the vicar and the Savings Bank and all her waiting and dependent poor were listening and condemning.

Pt "It isn't as if it committed us to anything," said Mrs. Wilkins, also in a low voice, but her voice shook.

Pt They got up simultaneously - Mrs. Arbuthnot had a sensation of surprise that Mrs. Wilkins should be so tall - and went to a writing-table, and Mrs. Arbuthnot wrote to Z, Box 1000, The Times, for particulars. She asked for all particulars, but the only one they really wanted was the one about the rent. They both felt that it was Mrs. Arbuthnot who ought to write the letter and do the business part. Not only was she used to

organising and being practical, but she also was older, and certainly calmer; and she herself had no doubt too that she was wiser. Neither had Mrs. Wilkins any doubt of this; the very way Mrs. Arbuthnot parted her hair suggested a great calm that could only proceed from wisdom.

Pt But if she was wiser, older and calmer, Mrs. Arbuthnot's new friend nevertheless seemed to her to be the one who impelled. Incoherent, she yet impelled. She appeared to have, apart from her need of help, an upsetting kind of character. She had a curious infectiousness. She led one on. And the way her unsteady mind leaped at conclusions - wrong ones, of course; witness the one that she, Mrs. Arbuthnot, was miserable - the way she leaped at conclusions was disconcerting.

Pt Whatever she was, however, and whatever her unsteadiness, Mrs. Arbuthnot found herself sharing her excitement and her longing; and when the letter had been posted in the letter-box in the hall and actually was beyond getting back again, both she and Mrs. Wilkins felt the same sense of guilt.

Pt "It only shows," said Mrs. Wilkins in a whisper, as they turned away from the letter-box, "how immaculately good we've been all our lives. The very first time we do anything our husbands don't know about we feel guilty."

Pt "I'm afraid I can't say I've been immaculately good," gently protested Mrs. Arbuthnot, a little uncomfortable at this fresh example of successful leaping at conclusions, for she had not said a word about her feeling of guilt.

Pt "Oh, but I'm sure you have - I see you being good - and that's why you're not happy."

Pt "She shouldn't say things like that," thought Mrs. Arbuthnot. "I must try and help her not to."

Pt Aloud she said gravely, "I don't know why you insist that I'm not happy. When you know me better I think you'll find that I am. And I'm sure you don't mean really that goodness, if one could attain it, makes one unhappy."

Pt "Yes, I do," said Mrs. Wilkins. "Our sort of goodness does. We have attained it, and we are unhappy. There are miserable sorts of goodness

and happy sorts - the sort we'll have at the mediaeval castle, for instance, is the happy sort."

Pt "That is, supposing we go there," said Mrs. Arbuthnot restrainingly. She felt that Mrs. Wilkins needed holding on to. "After all, we've only written just to ask. Anybody may do that. I think it quite likely we shall find the conditions impossible, and even if they were not, probably by to-morrow we shall not want to go."

Pt "I see us there," was Mrs. Wilkins's answer to that.

Pt All this was very unbalancing. Mrs. Arbuthnot, as she presently splashed through the dripping streets on her way to a meeting she was to speak at, was in an unusually disturbed condition of mind. She had, she hoped, shown herself very calm to Mrs. Wilkins, very practical and sober, concealing her own excitement. But she was really extraordinarily moved, and she felt happy, and she felt guilty, and she felt afraid, and she had all the feelings, though this she did not know, of a woman who has come away from a secret meeting with her lover. That, indeed, was what she looked like when she arrived late on her platform; she, the open-browed, looked almost furtive as her eyes fell on the staring wooden faces waiting to hear her try and persuade them to contribute to the alleviation of the urgent needs of the Hampstead poor, each one convinced that they needed contributions themselves. She looked as though she were hiding something discreditable but delightful. Certainly her customary clear expression of candour was not there, and its place was taken by a kind of suppressed and frightened pleasedness, which would have led a more worldly-minded audience to the instant conviction of recent and probably impassioned lovemaking.

Pt Beauty, beauty, beauty . . . the words kept ringing in her ears as she stood on the platform talking of sad things to the sparsely attended meeting. She had never been to Italy. Was that really what her nest-egg was to be spent on after all? Though she couldn't approve of the way Mrs. Wilkins was introducing the idea of predestination into her immediate future, just as if she had no choice, just as if to struggle, or even to reflect, were useless, it yet influenced her. Mrs. Wilkins's eyes had been the eyes of a seer. Some people were like that, Mrs. Arbuthnot knew; and if Mrs. Wilkins had actually seen her at the mediaeval castle it did seem probable that struggling would be a waste of time. Still, to spend her nest-egg on self-indulgence - The origin of this egg had been

corrupt, but she had at least supposed its end was to be creditable. Was she to deflect it from its intended destination, which alone had appeared to justify her keeping it, and spend it on giving herself pleasure?

Pt Mrs. Arbuthnot spoke on and on, so much practised in the kind of speech that she could have said it all in her sleep, and at the end of the meeting, her eyes dazzled by her secret visions, she hardly noticed that nobody was moved in any way whatever, least of all in the way of contributions.

Pt But the vicar noticed. The vicar was disappointed. Usually his good friend and supporter Mrs. Arbuthnot succeeded better than this. And, what was even more unusual, she appeared, he observed, not even to mind.

Pt "I can't imagine," he said to her as they parted, speaking irritably, for he was irritated both by the audience and by her, "what these people are coming to. Nothing seems to move them."

Pt "Perhaps they need a holiday," suggested Mrs. Arbuthnot; an unsatisfactory, a queer reply, the vicar thought.

Pt "In February?" he called after her sarcastically.

Pt "Oh no - not till April," said Mrs. Arbuthnot over her shoulder.

Pt "Very odd," thought the vicar. "Very odd indeed." And he went home and was not perhaps quite christian to his wife.

Pt That night in her prayers Mrs. Arbuthnot asked for guidance. She felt she ought really to ask, straight out and roundly, that the mediaeval castle should already have been taken by some one else and the whole thing thus be settled, but her courage failed her. Suppose her prayer were to be answered? No; she couldn't ask it; she couldn't risk it. And after all - she almost pointed this out to God - if she spent her present nest-egg on a holiday she could quite soon accumulate another. Frederick pressed money on her; and it would only mean, while she rolled up a second egg, that for a time her contributions to the parish charities would be less. And then it could be the next nest-egg whose original corruption would be purged away by the use to which it was finally put.

Pt For Mrs. Arbuthnot, who had no money of her own, was obliged to live on the proceeds of Frederick's activities, and her very nest-egg was the fruit, posthumously ripened, of ancient sin. The way Frederick made his living was one of the standing distresses of her life. He wrote immensely popular memoirs, regularly, every year, of the mistresses of kings. There were in history numerous kings who had had mistresses, and there were still more numerous mistresses who had had kings; so that he had been able to publish a book of memoirs during each year of his married life, and even so there were great further piles of these ladies waiting to be dealt with. Mrs. Arbuthnot was helpless. Whether she liked it or not, she was obliged to live on the proceeds. He gave her a dreadful sofa once, after the success of his *Du Barri* memoir, with swollen cushions and soft, receptive lap, and it seemed to her a miserable thing that there, in her very home, should flaunt this re-incarnation of a dead old French sinner.

Pt Simply good, convinced that morality is the basis of happiness, the fact that she and Frederick should draw their sustenance from guilt, however much purged by the passage of centuries, was one of the secret reasons of her sadness. The more the memoired lady had forgotten herself, the more his book about her was read and the more free-handed he was to his wife; and all that he gave her was spent, after adding slightly to her nest-egg - for she did hope and believe that some day people would cease to want to read of wickedness, and then Frederick would need supporting - on helping the poor. The parish flourished because, to take a handful at random, of the ill-behaviour of the ladies *Du Barri*, *Montespan*, *Pompadour*, *Ninon de l'Enclos*, and even of learned *Maintenon*. The poor were the filter through which the money was passed, to come out, Mrs. Arbuthnot hoped, purified. She could do no more. She had tried in days gone by to think the situation out, to discover the exact right course for her to take, but had found it, as she had found Frederick, too difficult, and had left it, as she had left Frederick, to God. Nothing of this money was spent on her house or dress; those remained, except for the great soft sofa, austere. It was the poor who profited. Their very boots were stout with sins. But how difficult it had been. Mrs. Arbuthnot, groping for guidance, prayed about it to exhaustion. Ought she perhaps to refuse to touch the money, to avoid it as she would have avoided the sins which were its source? But then what about the parish's boots? She asked the vicar what he thought, and, through much delicate

language, evasive and cautious, it did finally appear that he was for the boots.

Pt At least she had persuaded Frederick, when first he began his terrible successful career - he only began it after their marriage; when she married him he had been a blameless official attached to the library of the British Museum - to publish the memoirs under another name, so that she was not publicly branded. Hampstead read the books with glee, and had no idea that their writer lived in its midst. Frederick was almost unknown, even by sight, in Hampstead. He never went to any of its gatherings. Whatever it was he did in the way of recreation was done in London, but he never spoke of what he did or whom he saw; he might have been perfectly friendless for any mention he ever made of friends to his wife. Only the vicar knew where the money for the parish came from, and he regarded it, he told Mrs. Arbuthnot, as a matter of honour not to mention it.

Pt And at least her little house was not haunted by the loose-lived ladies, for Frederick did his work away from home. He had two rooms near the British Museum, which was the scene of his exhumations, and there he went every morning, and he came back long after his wife was asleep. Sometimes he did not come back at all. Sometimes she did not see him for several days together. Then he would suddenly appear at breakfast, having let himself in with his latchkey the night before, very jovial and good-natured and free-handed and glad if she would allow him to give her something - a well-fed man, contented with the world; a jolly, full-blooded, satisfied man. And she was always gentle, and anxious that his coffee should be as he liked it.

Pt He seemed very happy. Life, she often thought, however much one tabulated was yet a mystery. There were always some people it was impossible to place. Frederick was one of them. He didn't seem to bear the remotest resemblance to the original Frederick. He didn't seem to have the least need of any of the things he used to say were so important and beautiful - love, home, complete communion of thoughts, complete immersion in each other's interests. After those early painful attempts to hold him up to the point from which they had hand in hand so splendidly started, attempts in which she herself had got terribly hurt and the Frederick she supposed she had married was mangled out of recognition, she hung him up finally by her bedside as the chief subject of her

prayers, and left him, except for those, entirely to God. She had loved Frederick too deeply to be able now to do anything but pray for him. He had no idea that he never went out of the house without her blessing going with him too, hovering, like a little echo of finished love, round that once dear head. She didn't dare think of him as he used to be, as he had seemed to her to be in those marvellous first days of their love-making, of their marriage. Her child had died; she had nothing, nobody of her own to lavish herself on. The poor became her children, and God the object of her love. What could be happier than such a life, she sometimes asked herself; but her face, and particularly her eyes, continued sad.

Pt "Perhaps when we're old . . . perhaps when we are both quite old . . ." she would think wistfully.

Chapter 3

Pt The owner of the mediaeval castle was an Englishman, a Mr. Briggs, who was in London at the moment and wrote that it had beds enough for eight people, exclusive of servants, three sitting-rooms, battlements, dungeons, and electric light. The rent was £60 for the month, the servants' wages were extra, and he wanted references - he wanted assurances that the second half of his rent would be paid, the first half being paid in advance, and he wanted assurances of respectability from a solicitor, or a doctor, or a clergyman. He was very polite in his letter, explaining that his desire for references was what was usual and should be regarded as a mere formality.

Pt Mrs. Arbuthnot and Mrs. Wilkins had not thought of references, and they had not dreamed a rent could be so high. In their minds had floated sums like three guineas a week; or less, seeing that the place was small and old.

Pt Sixty pounds for a single month.

Pt It staggered them.

Pt Before Mrs. Arbuthnot's eyes rose up boots: endless vistas, all the stout boots that sixty pounds would buy; and besides the rent there would be the servants' wages, and the food, and the railway journeys out and home. While as for references, these did indeed seem a stumbling-block; it did seem impossible to give any without making their plan more public than they had intended.

Pt They had both - even Mrs. Arbuthnot, lured for once away from perfect candour by the realisation of the great saving of trouble and criticism an imperfect explanation would produce - they had both thought it would be a good plan to give out, each to her own circle, their circles being luckily distinct, that each was going to stay with a friend who had a house in Italy. It would be true as far as it went - Mrs. Wilkins asserted that it would be quite true, but Mrs. Arbuthnot thought it wouldn't be quite - and it was the only way, Mrs. Wilkins said, to keep Mellersh even approximately quiet. To spend any of her money just on the mere getting to Italy would cause him indignation; what he would say if he knew she was renting part of a mediaeval castle on her own account Mrs. Wilkins preferred not to think. It would take him days to say it all; and this

although it was her very own money, and not a penny of it had ever been his.

Pt “But I expect,” she said, “your husband is just the same. I expect all husbands are alike in the long run.”

Pt Mrs. Arbuthnot said nothing, because her reason for not wanting Frederick to know was the exactly opposite one - Frederick would be only too pleased for her to go, he would not mind it in the very least; indeed, he would hail such a manifestation of self-indulgence and worldliness with an amusement that would hurt, and urge her to have a good time and not to hurry home with a crushing detachment. Far better, she thought, to be missed by Mellersh than to be sped by Frederick. To be missed, to be needed, from whatever motive, was, she thought, better than the complete loneliness of not being missed or needed at all.

Pt She therefore said nothing, and allowed Mrs. Wilkins to leap at her conclusions unchecked. But they did, both of them, for a whole day feel that the only thing to be done was to renounce the mediaeval castle; and it was in arriving at this bitter decision that they really realised how acute had been their longing for it.

Pt Then Mrs. Arbuthnot, whose mind was trained in the finding of ways out of difficulties, found a way out of the reference difficulty; and simultaneously Mrs. Wilkins had a vision revealing to her how to reduce the rent.

Pt Mrs. Arbuthnot's plan was simple, and completely successful. She took the whole of the rent in person to the owner, drawing it out of her Savings Bank - again she looked furtive and apologetic, as if the clerk must know the money was wanted for purposes of self-indulgence - and, going up with the six ten pound notes in her hand-bag to the address near the Brompton Oratory where the owner lived, presented them to him, waiving her right to pay only half. And when he saw her, and her parted hair and soft dark eyes and sober apparel, and heard her grave voice, he told her not to bother about writing round for those references.

Pt “It'll be all right,” he said, scribbling a receipt for the rent. “Do sit down, won't you? Nasty day, isn't it? You'll find the old castle has lots of sunshine, whatever else it hasn't got. Husband going?”

Pt Mrs. Arbuthnot, unused to anything but candour, looked troubled at this question and began to murmur inarticulately, and the owner at once concluded that she was a widow - a war one, of course, for other widows were old - and that he had been a fool not to guess it.

Pt "Oh, I'm sorry," he said, turning red right up to his fair hair. "I didn't mean - h'm, h'm, h'm - "

Pt He ran his eye over the receipt he had written. "Yes, I think that's all right," he said, getting up and giving it to her. "Now," he added, taking the six notes she held out and smiling, for Mrs. Arbuthnot was agreeable to look at, "I'm richer, and you're happier. I've got money, and you've got San Salvatore. I wonder which is best."

Pt "I think you know," said Mrs. Arbuthnot with her sweet smile.

Pt He laughed and opened the door for her. It was a pity the interview was over. He would have liked to ask her to lunch with him. She made him think of his mother, of his nurse, of all things kind and comforting, besides having the attraction of not being his mother or his nurse.

Pt "I hope you'll like the old place," he said, holding her hand a minute at the door. The very feel of her hand, even through its glove, was reassuring; it was the sort of hand, he thought, that children would like to hold in the dark. "In April, you know, it's simply a mass of flowers. And then there's the sea. You must wear white. You'll fit in very well. There are several portraits of you there."

Pt "Portraits?"

Pt "Madonnas, you know. There's one on the stairs really exactly like you."

Pt Mrs. Arbuthnot smiled and said good-bye and thanked him. Without the least trouble and at once she had got him placed in his proper category: he was an artist and of an effervescent temperament.

Pt She shook hands and left, and he wished she hadn't. After she was gone he supposed that he ought to have asked for those references, if only because she would think him so unbusiness-like not to, but he could as soon have insisted on references from a saint in a nimbus as from that grave, sweet lady.

Pt Rose Arbuthnot.

Pt Her letter, making the appointment, lay on the table.

Pt Pretty name.

Pt That difficulty, then, was overcome. But there still remained the other one, the really annihilating effect of the expense on the nest-eggs, and especially on Mrs. Wilkins's, which was in size, compared with Mrs. Arbuthnot's, as the egg of the plover to that of the duck; and this in its turn was overcome by the vision vouchsafed to Mrs. Wilkins, revealing to her the steps to be taken for its overcoming. Having got San Salvatore - the beautiful, the religious name, fascinated them - they in their turn would advertise in the Agony Column of The Times, and would inquire after two more ladies, of similar desires to their own, to join them and share the expenses.

Pt At once the strain of the nest-eggs would be reduced from half to a quarter. Mrs. Wilkins was prepared to fling her entire egg into the adventure, but she realised that if it were to cost even sixpence over her ninety pounds her position would be terrible. Imagine going to Mellersh and saying, "I owe." It would be awful enough if some day circumstances forced her to say, "I have no nest-egg," but at least she would be supported in such a case by the knowledge that the egg had been her own. She therefore, though prepared to fling her last penny into the adventure, was not prepared to fling into it a single farthing that was not demonstrably her own; and she felt that if her share of the rent was reduced to fifteen pounds only, she would have a safe margin for the other expenses. Also they might economise very much on food - gather olives off their own trees and eat them, for instance, and perhaps catch fish.

Pt Of course, as they pointed out to each other, they could reduce the rent to an almost negligible sum by increasing the number of sharers; they could have six more ladies instead of two if they wanted to, seeing that there were eight beds. But supposing the eight beds were distributed in couples in four rooms, it would not be altogether what they wanted, to find themselves shut up at night with a stranger. Besides, they thought that perhaps having so many would not be quite so peaceful. After all, they were going to San Salvatore for peace and rest and joy, and six more ladies, especially if they got into one's bedroom, might a little interfere with that. speech first However, there seemed to be only two

ladies in England at that moment who had any wish to join them, for they had only two answers to their advertisement.

Pt “Well, we only want two,” said Mrs. Wilkins, quickly recovering, for she had imagined a great rush.

Pt “I think a choice would have been a good thing,” said Mrs. Arbuthnot.

Pt “You mean because then we needn’t have had Lady Caroline Dester.”

Pt “I didn’t say that,” gently protested Mrs. Arbuthnot.

Pt “We needn’t have her,” said Mrs. Wilkins. “Just one more person would help us a great deal with the rent. We’re not obliged to have two.”

Pt “But why should we not have her? She seems really quite what we want.”

Pt “Yes - she does from her letter,” said Mrs. Wilkins doubtfully.

Pt She felt she would be terribly shy of Lady Caroline. Incredible as it may seem, seeing how they get into everything, Mrs. Wilkins had never come across any members of the aristocracy.

Pt They interviewed Lady Caroline, and they interviewed the other applicant, a Mrs. Fisher.

Pt Lady Caroline came to the club in Shaftesbury Avenue, and appeared to be wholly taken up by one great longing, a longing to get away from everybody she had ever known. When she saw the club, and Mrs. Arbuthnot, and Mrs. Wilkins, she was sure that here was exactly what she wanted. She would be in Italy - a place she adored; she would not be in hotels - places she loathed; she would not be staying with friends - persons she disliked; and she would be in the company of strangers who would never mention a single person she knew, for the simple reason that they had not, could not have, and would not come across them. She asked a few questions about the fourth woman, and was satisfied with the answers. Mrs. Fisher, of Prince of Wales Terrace. A widow. She too would be unacquainted with any of her friends. Lady Caroline did not even know where Prince of Wales Terrace was.

Pt “It’s in London,” said Mrs. Arbuthnot.

Pt “Is it?” said Lady Caroline.

Pt It all seemed most restful.

Pt Mrs. Fisher was unable to come to the club because, she explained by letter, she could not walk without a stick; therefore Mrs. Arbuthnot and Mrs. Wilkins went to her.

Pt “But if she can’t come to the club how can she go to Italy?” wondered Mrs. Wilkins, aloud.

Pt “We shall hear that from her own lips,” said Mrs. Arbuthnot.

Pt From Mrs. Fisher’s lips they merely heard, in reply to delicate questioning, that sitting in trains was not walking about; and they knew that already. Except for the stick, however, she appeared to be a most desirable fourth - quiet, educated, elderly. She was much older than they or Lady Caroline - Lady Caroline had informed them she was twenty-eight - but not so old as to have ceased to be active-minded. She was very respectable indeed, and still wore a complete suit of black though her husband had died, she told them, eleven years before. Her house was full of signed photographs of illustrious Victorian dead, all of whom she said she had known when she was little. Her father had been an eminent critic, and in his house she had seen practically everybody who was anybody in letters and art. Carlyle had scowled at her; Matthew Arnold had held her on his knee; Tennyson had sonorously rallied her on the length of her pig-tail. She animatedly showed them the photographs, hung everywhere on her walls, pointing out the signatures with her stick, and she neither gave any information about her own husband nor asked for any about the husbands of her visitors; which was the greatest comfort. Indeed, she seemed to think that they also were widows, for on inquiring who the fourth lady was to be, and being told it was a Lady Caroline Dester, she said, “Is she a widow too?” And on their explaining that she was not, because she had not yet been married, observed with abstracted amiability, “All in good time.”

Pt But Mrs. Fisher’s very abstractedness - and she seemed to be absorbed chiefly in the interesting people she used to know and in their memorial photographs, and quite a good part of the interview was taken up by reminiscent anecdote of Carlyle, Meredith, Matthew Arnold, Tennyson, and a host of others - her very abstractedness was a recommendation. She only asked, she said, to be allowed to sit quiet in

the sun and remember. That was all Mrs. Arbuthnot and Mrs. Wilkins asked of their sharers. It was their idea of a perfect sharer that she should sit quiet in the sun and remember, rousing herself on Saturday evenings sufficiently to pay her share. Mrs. Fisher was very fond, too, she said, of flowers, and once when she was spending a week-end with her father at Box Hill -

Pt "Who lived at Box Hill?" interrupted Mrs. Wilkins, who hung on Mrs. Fisher's reminiscences, intensely excited by meeting somebody who had actually been familiar with all the really and truly and undoubtedly great - actually seen them, heard them talking, touched them.

Pt Mrs. Fisher looked at her over the top of her glasses in some surprise. Mrs. Wilkins, in her eagerness to tear the heart out quickly of Mrs. Fisher's reminiscences, afraid that at any moment Mrs. Arbuthnot would take her away and she wouldn't have heard half, had already interrupted several times with questions which appeared ignorant to Mrs. Fisher.

Pt "Meredith of course," said Mrs. Fisher rather shortly. "I remember a particular week-end" - she continued. "My father often took me, but I always remember this week-end particularly - "

Pt "Did you know Keats?" eagerly interrupted Mrs. Wilkins.

Pt Mrs. Fisher, after a pause, said with sub-acid reserve that she had been unacquainted with both Keats and Shakespeare.

Pt "Oh of course - how ridiculous of me!" cried Mrs. Wilkins, flushing scarlet. "It's because" - she floundered - "it's because the immortals somehow still seem alive, don't they - as if they were here, going to walk into the room in another minute - and one forgets they are dead. In fact one knows perfectly well that they're not dead - not nearly so dead as you and I even now," she assured Mrs. Fisher, who observed her over the top of her glasses.

Pt "I thought I saw Keats the other day," Mrs. Wilkins incoherently proceeded, driven on by Mrs. Fisher's look over the top of her glasses. "In Hampstead - crossing the road in front of that house - you know - the house where he lived - "

Pt Mrs. Arbuthnot said they must be going.

Pt Mrs. Fisher did nothing to prevent them.

Pt “I really thought I saw him,” protested Mrs. Wilkins, appealing for belief first to one and then to the other while waves of colour passed over her face, and totally unable to stop because of Mrs. Fisher’s glasses and the steady eyes looking at her over their tops. “I believe I did see him - he was dressed in a - ”

Pt Even Mrs. Arbuthnot looked at her now, and in her gentlest voice said they would be late for lunch.

Pt It was at this point that Mrs. Fisher asked for references. She had no wish to find herself shut up for four weeks with somebody who saw things. It is true that there were three sitting-rooms, besides the garden and the battlements at San Salvatore, so that there would be opportunities of withdrawal from Mrs. Wilkins; but it would be disagreeable to Mrs. Fisher, for instance, if Mrs. Wilkins were suddenly to assert that she saw Mr. Fisher. Mr. Fisher was dead; let him remain so. She had no wish to be told he was walking about the garden. The only reference she really wanted, for she was much too old and firmly seated in her place in the world for questionable associates to matter to her, was one with regard to Mrs. Wilkins’s health. Was her health quite normal? Was she an ordinary, everyday, sensible woman? Mrs. Fisher felt that if she were given even one address she would be able to find out what she needed. So she asked for references, and her visitors appeared to be so much taken aback - Mrs. Wilkins, indeed, was instantly sobered - that she added, “It is usual.”

Pt Mrs. Wilkins found her speech first. “But,” she said, “aren’t we the ones who ought to ask for some from you?”

Pt And this seemed to Mrs. Arbuthnot too the right attitude. Surely it was they who were taking Mrs. Fisher into their party, and not Mrs. Fisher who was taking them into it?

Pt For answer Mrs. Fisher, leaning on her stick, went to the writing-table and in a firm hand wrote down three names and offered them to Mrs. Wilkins, and the names were so respectable, more, they were so momentous, they were so nearly august, that just to read them was enough. The President of the Royal Academy, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Governor of the Bank of England - who would dare

disturb such personages in their meditations with inquiries as to whether a female friend of theirs was all she should be?

Pt “They have known me since I was little,” said Mrs. Fisher - everybody seemed to have known Mrs. Fisher since or when she was little.

Pt “I don’t think references are nice things at all between - between ordinary decent women,” burst out Mrs. Wilkins, made courageous by being, as she felt, at bay; for she very well knew that the only reference she could give without getting into trouble was Shoolbred, and she had little confidence in that, as it would be entirely based on Mellersh’s fish. “We’re not business people. We needn’t distrust each other - ”

Pt And Mrs. Arbuthnot said, with a dignity that yet was sweet, “I’m afraid references do bring an atmosphere into our holiday plan that isn’t quite what we want, and I don’t think we’ll take yours up or give you any ourselves. So that I suppose you won’t wish to join us.”

Pt And she held out her hand in good-bye.

Pt Then Mrs. Fisher, her gaze diverted to Mrs. Arbuthnot, who inspired trust and liking even in Tube officials, felt that she would be idiotic to lose the opportunity of being in Italy in the particular conditions offered, and that she and this calm-browed woman between them would certainly be able to curb the other one when she had her attacks. So she said, taking Mrs. Arbuthnot’s offered hand, “Very well. I waive references.”

Pt She waived references.

Pt The two as they walked to the station in Kensington High Street could not help thinking that this way of putting it was lofty. Even Mrs. Arbuthnot, spendthrift of excuses for lapses, thought Mrs. Fisher might have used other words; and Mrs. Wilkins, by the time she got to the station, and the walk and the struggle on the crowded pavement with other people’s umbrellas had warmed her blood, actually suggested waiving Mrs. Fisher.

Pt “If there is any waiving to be done, do let us be the ones who waive,” she said eagerly.

Pt But Mrs. Arbuthnot, as usual, held on to Mrs. Wilkins; and presently, having cooled down in the train, Mrs. Wilkins announced that at San Salvatore Mrs. Fisher would find her level. "I see her finding her level there," she said, her eyes very bright.

Pt Whereupon Mrs. Arbuthnot, sitting with her quiet hands folded, turned over in her mind how best she could help Mrs. Wilkins not to see quite so much; or at least, if she must see, to see in silence.

Chapter 4

Pt It had been arranged that Mrs. Arbuthnot and Mrs. Wilkins, travelling together, should arrive at San Salvatore on the evening of March 31st - the owner, who told them how to get there, appreciated their disinclination to begin their time in it on April 1st - and Lady Caroline and Mrs. Fisher, as yet unacquainted and therefore under no obligations to bore each other on the journey, for only towards the end would they find out by a process of sifting who they were, were to arrive on the morning of April 2nd. In this way everything would be got nicely ready for the two who seemed, in spite of the equality of the sharing, yet to have something about them of guests.

Pt There were disagreeable incidents towards the end of March, when Mrs. Wilkins, her heart in her mouth and her face a mixture of guilt, terror and determination, told her husband that she had been invited to Italy, and he declined to believe it. Of course he declined to believe it. Nobody had ever invited his wife to Italy before. There was no precedent. He required proofs. The only *proof* was Mrs. Arbuthnot, and Mrs. Wilkins had produced her; but after what entreaties, what passionate persuading! Mrs. Arbuthnot had not imagined she would have to face Mr. Wilkins and say things to him that were short of the truth, and it brought home to her what she had for some time suspected, that she was slipping more and more away from God.

Pt Indeed, the whole of March was filled with unpleasant, *anxious* moments. It was an uneasy month. Mrs. Arbuthnot's conscience, made super-*sensitive* by years of pampering, could not reconcile what she was doing with its own high standard of what was right. It gave her little peace. It nudged her at her prayers. It punctuated her entreaties for divine guidance with disconcerting questions, such as, "Are you not a hypocrite? Do you really mean that? Would you not, frankly, be disappointed if that prayer were granted?"

Pt The prolonged wet, raw weather was on the side too of her conscience, producing far more sickness than usual among the poor. They had bronchitis; they had fevers; there was no end to the distress. And here she was going off, spending precious money on going off, simply and solely to be happy. One woman. One woman being happy, and these piteous multitudes . . .

Pt She was unable to look the vicar in the face. He did not know, nobody knew, what she was going to do, and from the very beginning she was unable to look anybody in the face. She excused herself from making speeches appealing for money. How could she stand up and ask people for money when she herself was spending so much on her own selfish pleasure? Nor did it help her or quiet her that, having actually told Frederick, in her desire to make up for what she was squandering, that she would be grateful if he would let her have some money, he instantly gave her a cheque for £100. He asked no questions. She was scarlet. He looked at her a moment and then looked away. It was a relief to Frederick that she should take some money. She gave it all immediately to the organisation she worked with, and found herself more tangled in doubts than ever.

Pt Mrs. Wilkins, on the contrary, had no doubts. She was quite certain that it was a most proper thing to have a holiday, and altogether right and beautiful to spend one's own hard-collected savings on being happy.

Pt "Think how much nicer we shall be when we come back," she said to Mrs. Arbuthnot, encouraging that pale lady.

Pt No, Mrs. Wilkins had no doubts, but she had fears; and March was for her too an anxious month, with the unconscious Mr. Wilkins coming back daily to his dinner and eating his fish in the silence of imagined security.

Pt Also things happen so awkwardly. It really is astonishing, how awkwardly they happen. Mrs. Wilkins, who was very careful all this month to give Mellersh only the food he liked, buying it and hovering over its cooking with a zeal more than common, succeeded so well that Mellersh was pleased; definitely pleased; so much pleased that he began to think that he might, after all, have married the right wife instead of, as he had frequently suspected, the wrong one. The result was that on the third Sunday in the month - Mrs. Wilkins had made up her trembling mind that on the fourth Sunday, there being five in that March and it being on the fifth of them that she and Mrs. Arbuthnot were to start, she would tell Mellersh of her invitation - on the third Sunday, then, after a very well-cooked lunch in which the Yorkshire pudding had melted in his mouth and the apricot tart had been so perfect that he ate it all, Mellersh, smoking his cigar by the brightly burning fire the while hail gusts banged

on the window, said: "I am thinking of taking you to Italy for Easter." And paused for her astounded and grateful ecstasy.

Pt None came. The silence in the room, except for the hail hitting the windows and the gay roar of the fire, was complete. Mrs. Wilkins could not speak. She was dumbfounded. The next Sunday was the day she had meant to break her news to him, and she had not yet even prepared the form of words in which she would break it.

Pt Mr. Wilkins, who had not been abroad since before the war, and was noticing with increasing disgust, as week followed week of wind and rain, the peculiar persistent vileness of the weather, had slowly conceived a desire to get away from England for Easter. He was doing very well in his business. He could afford a trip. Switzerland was useless in April. There was a familiar sound about Easter in Italy. To Italy he would go; and as it would cause comment if he did not take his wife, take her he must - besides, she would be useful; a second person was always useful in a country whose language one did not speak for holding things, for waiting with the luggage.

Pt He had expected an explosion of gratitude and excitement. The absence of it was incredible. She could not, he concluded, have heard. Probably she was absorbed in some foolish day-dream. It was regrettable how childish she remained.

Pt He turned his head - their chairs were in front of the fire - and looked at her. She was staring straight into the fire, and it was no doubt the fire that made her face so red.

Pt "I am thinking," he repeated, raising his clear, cultivated voice and speaking with acerbity, for inattention at such a moment was deplorable, "of taking you to Italy for Easter. Did you not hear me?"

Pt Yes, she had heard him, and she had been wondering at the extraordinary coincidence - really most extraordinary - she was just going to tell him how - how she had been invited - a friend had invited her - Easter, too - Easter was in April, wasn't it? - her friend had a - had a house there.

Pt In fact Mrs. Wilkins, driven by terror, guilt and surprise, had been more incoherent if possible than usual.

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1 - Capítulo 1

En Tudo começou numa tarde de fevereiro, num clube feminino de Londres. O clube era desconfortável, e a tarde, deprimente. A Sra. Wilkins tinha vindo de Hampstead para fazer compras e almoçara ali. Na sala de fumantes, pegou o The Times de uma mesa e viu isto na Coluna das Angústias:

En Para pessoas que amam glicínias e sol. Aluga-se, mobiliado, para o mês de abril, um pequeno castelo medieval italiano na costa do Mediterrâneo. Os criados necessários permanecerão. Z, Caixa Postal 1000, The Times.

En Foi assim que tudo começou. Mas, como acontece com tantas outras ideias, quem a teve não percebeu, naquele momento, o que estava fazendo.

En A Sra. Wilkins não percebeu que seu abril já havia sido decidido por ela. Largou o jornal com raiva e resignação, foi até a janela e olhou tristemente para a rua molhada.

En Lugares assim não eram para ela, nem mesmo pequenos castelos medievais. As margens do Mediterrâneo em abril, com glicínias e sol, eram só para os ricos. E, no entanto, o anúncio era para as pessoas que valorizavam essas coisas, portanto também era para ela, pois ela as amava profundamente. Mas era pobre. Possuía apenas noventa libras, economizadas aos poucos de sua mesada para vestuário. O marido lhe dissera para guardá-las para um dia de chuva. O pai lhe dava £100 por ano para roupas, de modo que suas roupas eram baratas e simples. O marido as chamava de modestas e adequadas, mas as outras pessoas achavam que pareciam horríveis.

En O Sr. Wilkins era advogado e gostava de economizar dinheiro, exceto quando se tratava de comida. Isso ele não chamava de economia; chamava de má administração doméstica. Mas elogiava a economia que fazia a Sra. Wilkins usar roupas velhas e estragadas. "Nunca se sabe quando virá um dia de chuva", dizia ele. "Aí você pode ficar contente por ter algum dinheiro guardado. Nós dois podemos."

En Olhando pela janela do clube para a Shaftesbury Avenue, a Sra. Wilkins ficou ali parada, triste, por algum tempo. Pensou no Mediterrâneo

em abril, nas glicínias, e na vida afortunada dos ricos. Ao mesmo tempo, observava a chuva suja caindo sobre os guarda-chuvas e ônibus apressados. Então se perguntou se aquele seria o dia de chuva que Mellersh tantas vezes lhe dissera para esperar. Talvez, pensou, fosse plano da Providência que ela usasse suas economias para escapar daquele clima e ir para o pequeno castelo medieval. É claro que seria apenas parte de suas economias. E, se o castelo era antigo, talvez estivesse em ruínas, o que deveria torná-lo mais barato. Isso não a incomodaria em nada, pois partes arruinadas não custam mais caro. Na verdade, baixam o preço. Mas isso era um disparate em que pensar.

En Ela se afastou da janela com a mesma mistura de irritação e resignação. Atravessou a sala, planejando pegar sua capa impermeável e o guarda-chuva, disputar espaço num ônibus lotado, passar pela Shoolbred's a caminho de casa, e comprar linguados para o jantar de Mellersh. Mellersh era difícil de agradar com peixe e só gostava de linguado, exceto salmão. Foi então que viu a Sra. Arbuthnot, uma mulher que conhecia de vista. A Sra. Arbuthnot também morava em Hampstead e pertencia ao clube. Estava sentada à mesa do meio, onde ficavam os jornais e revistas, e lia a primeira página do The Times com muita atenção.

En A Sra. Wilkins nunca tinha falado com a Sra. Arbuthnot. A Sra. Arbuthnot pertencia a um grupo da igreja e gostava de estudar, classificar e cadastrar os pobres. A Sra. Wilkins e Mellersh, quando saíam, iam a festas de pintores impressionistas, comuns em Hampstead. A irmã de Mellersh havia se casado com um deles e morava perto do Heath, de modo que a Sra. Wilkins fora introduzida num círculo social que lhe parecia muito estranho. Aprendera a temer os quadros. Precisava dizer algo sobre eles, mas nunca sabia o quê. Costumava dizer "Maravilhoso" e sentir que não era suficiente. Mas ninguém se importava. Ninguém a ouvia. Ninguém a notava. Ela era o tipo de pessoa invisível numa festa. Suas roupas a tornavam quase imperceptível, seu rosto era esquecível, sua fala era tímida, e ela não falava muito. Se suas roupas, seu rosto e suas palavras significavam tão pouco, pensava ela, o que restava dela numa festa?

En Além disso, ela estava sempre com Wilkins, um homem bem-barbeado e bonito, que dava mais importância a qualquer festa só por estar presente. Wilkins era muito respeitável. Sabia-se que seus

sócios mais antigos o tinham em alta conta. As amigas de sua irmã o admiravam. Ele dava opiniões sensatas sobre arte e artistas. Era breve, cuidadoso, e nunca dizia nem demais nem de menos. Parecia manter um registro de tudo o que dizia. Era tão claramente confiável que as pessoas que o conheciam nessas festas muitas vezes ficavam insatisfeitas com seus próprios advogados. Depois de algum tempo, deixavam-nos e iam procurar Wilkins.

En Naturalmente, a Sra. Wilkins era ignorada. A irmã dele disse, de modo firme e definitivo, que ela deveria ficar em casa. Mas Wilkins não podia deixar a esposa em casa. Era advogado de famílias, e homens como ele sempre exibem suas esposas. Durante a semana, ele a levava a festas, e aos domingos a levava à igreja. Ainda era bastante jovem, com apenas trinta e nove anos, e queria conhecer mais senhoras idosas para seu trabalho. Por isso não podia dar-se ao luxo de faltar à igreja. Foi ali que a Sra. Wilkins passou a conhecer a Sra. Arbuthnot, embora nunca conversassem.

En Ela observava a Sra. Arbuthnot conduzir as crianças pobres até os bancos da igreja. Todo domingo, ela vinha da Escola Dominical pouco antes do coro. Sentava meninos e meninas ordenadamente em seus lugares, fazia-os ajoelhar para a oração e depois levantar de novo quando a porta da sacristia se abria e o coro e o clero saíam. Estavam prontos para dizer as orações e os mandamentos. A Sra. Arbuthnot tinha um rosto triste, mas era claramente boa em seu trabalho. Isso fazia a Sra. Wilkins se perguntar coisas. Mellersh lhe dissera que uma pessoa eficiente não se sentiria deprimida, e que fazer bem o próprio trabalho tornaria alguém alegre e animado.

En A Sra. Arbuthnot não era alegre nem animada, embora muito do que fazia com as crianças da Escola Dominical parecesse automático. Mas quando a Sra. Wilkins se afastou da janela e a viu no clube, ela não estava agindo de modo nenhum automático. Fitava intensamente um ponto da primeira página do The Times, segurando o jornal imóvel, com os olhos fixos. Apenas fitava. Seu rosto era, como sempre, o de uma Madona paciente e desiludida.

En Num impulso repentino, que ela própria achou estranho, a Sra. Wilkins, tímida e relutante, não seguiu para o vestiário e depois para a Schoolbred's em busca do peixe de Mellersh. Em vez disso, parou junto

à mesa e sentou-se bem em frente à Sra. Arbuthnot, embora nunca tivesse falado com ela antes em toda a sua vida.

En Era uma daquelas mesas de refeitório, longas e estreitas, de modo que ficaram muito próximas uma da outra.

En Mas a Sra. Arbuthnot não ergueu os olhos. Continuou fitando um ponto no The Times, como se estivesse sonhando.

En A Sra. Wilkins observou-a por um minuto e tentou reunir coragem para falar. Queria perguntar se a Sra. Arbuthnot tinha visto o anúncio. Não sabia por que queria perguntar, mas queria. Parecia tolice não conseguir falar com ela. Parecia gentil. Parecia infeliz. Por que duas pessoas infelizes não haveriam de se ajudar com uma conversa sincera sobre o que sentiam e o que ainda esperavam? A Sra. Wilkins também pensou que a Sra. Arbuthnot talvez estivesse lendo o mesmo anúncio. Os olhos dela estavam na mesma parte do jornal. Estaria imaginando a mesma coisa, com sua cor, seu perfume, sua luz, e o mar tocando suavemente pequenas pedras quentes? Cor, perfume, luz e mar, em vez da Shaftesbury Avenue, dos ônibus molhados, do setor de peixes da Shoolbred's, do metrô até Hampstead, do jantar, e depois amanhã o mesmo, e depois de amanhã o mesmo, e sempre o mesmo...

En De repente, a Sra. Wilkins se inclinou sobre a mesa. "A senhora está lendo sobre o castelo medieval e as glicínias?", ouviu-se perguntar.

En Naturalmente, a Sra. Arbuthnot ficou surpresa, mas a Sra. Wilkins ficou ainda mais surpresa consigo mesma por ter perguntado.

En A Sra. Arbuthnot ainda não tinha reparado na figura maltrapilha e magra à sua frente, com o rostinho sardento e os grandes olhos cinzentos quase escondidos por um chapéu amassado, próprio para tempo chuvoso. Olhou para ela por um instante sem responder. Tinha lido sobre o castelo medieval e as glicínias dez minutos antes, e desde então perdera-se em sonhos de luz, cor, perfume, e o mar tocando suavemente entre pequenas pedras quentes...

En "Por que me pergunta isso?", disse ela com sua voz séria, pois o trabalho com os pobres a tornara calma e paciente.

En A Sra. Wilkins corou e ficou com um ar muito tímido e assustado. "Oh, só porque eu também vi, e pensei que talvez... pensei que de alguma forma...", disse com dificuldade.

En A Sra. Arbuthnot estava acostumada a classificar as pessoas em categorias, então olhou pensativamente para a Sra. Wilkins e se perguntou em que grupo deveria colocá-la.

En "E eu a conheço de vista", continuou a Sra. Wilkins. Como muitas pessoas tímidas, uma vez que começava, continuava falando e se assustava a cada palavra. "Todo domingo... eu a vejo todo domingo na igreja..."

En "Na igreja?", repetiu a Sra. Arbuthnot.

En "E isso parece uma coisa tão maravilhosa... esse anúncio sobre as glicínias... e..."

En A Sra. Wilkins devia ter pelo menos trinta anos, mas parou e se remexeu desconfortável na cadeira, como uma colegial estranha e envergonhada.

En "Parece tão maravilhoso", disse de repente, "e... é um dia tão triste..."

En Então olhou para a Sra. Arbuthnot com os olhos de um cão encurralado.

En "Coitada dessa mulher", pensou a Sra. Arbuthnot. Sua vida era dedicada a ajudar as pessoas e facilitar as coisas para elas. "Ela precisa de um conselho."

En Então se preparou pacientemente para dá-lo.

En "Se me vê na igreja", disse ela, gentil e cuidadosa, "suponho que a senhora também mora em Hampstead?"

En "Ah, sim", disse a Sra. Wilkins. Depois repetiu, o pescoço longo e fino curvando-se um pouco, como se pensar em Hampstead a fizesse baixar a cabeça. "Ah, sim."

En "Onde?", perguntou a Sra. Arbuthnot. Quando precisava de um conselho, naturalmente queria primeiro reunir os fatos.

En Mas a Sra. Wilkins pousou suavemente a mão sobre a parte do The Times onde estava o anúncio, como se as palavras impressas fossem preciosas, e disse apenas: "Talvez seja por isso que isto pareça tão maravilhoso."

En "Não... eu acho que é maravilhoso de qualquer forma", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot, esquecendo os fatos e soltando um pequeno suspiro.

En "Então a senhora estava lendo?"

En "Sim", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot, com um olhar sonhador voltando aos olhos.

En "Não seria maravilhoso?", sussurrou a Sra. Wilkins.

En "Maravilhoso", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot. Seu rosto se iluminou, depois voltou a ficar calmo. "Muito maravilhoso", disse. "Mas não adianta perder tempo pensando nessas coisas."

En "Ah, mas adianta sim", respondeu a Sra. Wilkins, rápida e surpreendentemente. Era surpreendente porque não combinava com seu casaco e saia simples, o chapéu amassado e os cabelos soltos. "E só de pensar nelas já vale a pena... é uma mudança tão grande de Hampstead... e às vezes eu acredito, eu realmente acredito, que se a gente pensa com bastante intensidade, a gente consegue as coisas."

En A Sra. Arbuthnot a observava pacientemente. Se tivesse que colocá-la em algum grupo, que tipo seria?

En "Talvez", disse, inclinando-se um pouco para a frente, "a senhora me diga seu nome. Se vamos ser amigas" - deu seu sorriso sério - "como espero que sejamos, devemos começar pelo começo."

En "Ah, sim... que gentileza sua. Sou a Sra. Wilkins", disse a Sra. Wilkins. "Não espero", acrescentou, corando quando a Sra. Arbuthnot nada disse, "que isso signifique alguma coisa para a senhora. Às vezes nem para mim parece significar nada. Mas" - olhou ao redor, como se pedisse ajuda - "eu sou a Sra. Wilkins."

En Não gostava do próprio nome. Parecia pequeno e mesquinho, com um toque zombeteiro no final, como o rabo enroscado de um pug. Mas era assim. Nada podia fazer a respeito. Era Wilkins, e continuaria Wilkins. O marido lhe dizia para usar sempre Sra. Mellersh-Wilkins, mas ela só fazia isso quando ele podia ouvi-la. Achava que Mellersh piorava ainda mais Wilkins, como uma vila com a palavra Chatsworth nos portões, fazendo a vila parecer mais grandiosa do que era.

En Quando ele sugeriu pela primeira vez acrescentar Mellersh, ela recusou pela razão acima. Depois de uma pausa - Mellersh era

cauteloso e quase nunca falava sem antes fazer uma pausa - , ele disse, bastante irritado: "Mas eu não sou uma vila", e olhou para ela como um homem olha quando teme, talvez pela centésima vez, ter se casado com uma tola.

En "É claro que você não é uma vila", disse a Sra. Wilkins a ele. Nunca tinha pensado que ele fosse. Não era essa a sua intenção ao dizer aquilo. Estava apenas pensando.

En Quanto mais ela explicava, mais Mellersh se convencia, como já acontecera muitas vezes antes, de que talvez tivesse se casado com uma tola. Tiveram uma longa discussão. Não se podia bem chamar de discussão, na verdade: um lado permanecia calado com dignidade, e o outro não parava de se desculpar. Discutiram sobre se a Sra. Wilkins pretendia insinuar que o Sr. Wilkins era uma vila.

En "Acredito", pensou ela quando finalmente terminou - tinha demorado muito - "que qualquer pessoa discutiria por qualquer coisa se não tivesse ficado separada nem por um único dia em dois anos inteiros. O que nós dois precisamos é de férias."

En "Meu marido", continuou a Sra. Wilkins para a Sra. Arbuthnot, tentando se explicar, "é advogado. Ele..." Procurou outra coisa para dizer sobre Mellersh e encontrou: "Ele é muito bonito."

En "Bem", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot gentilmente, "isso deve lhe dar grande prazer."

En "Por quê?", perguntou a Sra. Wilkins.

En "Porque", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot, um pouco surpresa, pois estava acostumada a que os pobres concordassem com ela sem questionar, "porque a beleza é um dom como qualquer outro, e se for bem usada..."

En Ela parou de falar. A Sra. Wilkins olhou para ela com seus grandes olhos cinzentos. A Sra. Arbuthnot sentiu de repente que talvez tivesse se acostumado a explicar as coisas de modo simples e instrutivo, como uma babá, porque tinha uma plateia que precisava concordar, tinha medo de interromper e, na verdade, estava sob seu domínio.

En Mas a Sra. Wilkins não estava escutando. Naquele instante, uma imagem estranha lhe atravessou a mente. Viu duas pessoas sentadas juntas sob uma grande glicínia pendente que crescia sobre os galhos de

uma árvore que ela não conhecia. Eram ela mesma e a Sra. Arbuthnot. Podia vê-las. Atrás delas, brilhando ao sol, havia muros antigos e cinzentos, um castelo medieval. Viu tudo aquilo.

En Então ficou olhando fixamente para a Sra. Arbuthnot e não ouviu uma palavra do que ela dizia. A Sra. Arbuthnot também ficou olhando para a Sra. Wilkins, detida pela expressão em seu rosto. Estava cheio de excitação, e parecia brilhante e trêmulo, como água ao sol quando o vento a agita. Se estivesse numa festa, as pessoas teriam observado a Sra. Wilkins com interesse.

En Elas se entreolharam. A Sra. Arbuthnot parecia surpresa e curiosa. A Sra. Wilkins parecia alguém que tivera uma grande revelação. Claro. Era assim que se podia fazer. Ela mesma não podia bancar aquilo sozinha, e mesmo que pudesse, não poderia ir para lá sozinha. Mas ela e a Sra. Arbuthnot juntas...

En Inclinou-se sobre a mesa. "Por que não tentamos conseguir?", sussurrou.

En A Sra. Arbuthnot arregalou os olhos. "Conseguir?", repetiu.

En "Sim", disse a Sra. Wilkins, ainda com medo de ser ouvida. "Não apenas ficar aqui sentadas dizendo como é maravilhoso, e depois voltar para casa em Hampstead sem fazer nada. Não apenas voltar como sempre e pensar no jantar e no peixe, como fazemos há anos e anos e continuaremos fazendo por anos e anos. Na verdade", disse, corando até a raiz dos cabelos, porque suas próprias palavras a assustavam, embora não conseguisse parar, "parece que isso não tem fim. Por isso deveria haver uma pausa, um tempo livre, para todo mundo. Seria realmente altruísta ir embora e ser feliz por um tempinho, porque voltaríamos muito melhores. Depois de um tempo, todo mundo precisa de férias."

En "Mas o que quer dizer com 'conseguir'?", perguntou a Sra. Arbuthnot.

En "Alugá-lo", disse a Sra. Wilkins.

En "Alugá-lo?"

En "Arrendá-lo. Contratá-lo. Tê-lo."

En "Mas quer dizer você e eu?"

En "Sim. Entre nós duas. Dividir. Aí custaria só a metade, e a senhora parece querer isso tanto quanto eu, como se precisasse de descanso e de algo feliz acontecendo com a senhora."

En "Mas nós nem nos conhecemos."

En "Mas pense em como nos conheceríamos bem se fôssemos embora juntas por um mês! E eu economizei para um dia de chuva, e imagino que a senhora também. Este é o dia de chuva... olhe só..."

En "Ela não está em seu juízo perfeito", pensou a Sra. Arbuthnot; e no entanto se sentia estranhamente comovida.

En "Pense em ir embora por um mês inteiro, longe de tudo, para o paraíso..."

En "Ela não devia dizer coisas assim", pensou a Sra. Arbuthnot. "O vigário..." E no entanto se sentia estranhamente comovida. Seria verdadeiramente maravilhoso descansar, ter uma pausa.

En O hábito logo a acalmou novamente. Anos de trabalho com os pobres a fizeram dizer, com um tom gentil mas um pouco superior: "Mas veja bem, o paraíso não fica em outro lugar. Está aqui e agora. É o que nos é ensinado."

En Ela ficou muito séria, como fazia quando tentava, com paciência, ajudar e ensinar os pobres. "O paraíso está dentro de nós", disse com sua voz suave e baixa. "É o que nos ensina a mais alta autoridade. E a senhora conhece os versos sobre os pontos afins, não conhece..."

En "Ah, sim, eu os conheço", disse a Sra. Wilkins, impaciente.

En "Os pontos afins do céu e do lar", continuou a Sra. Arbuthnot, que gostava de terminar suas frases. "O paraíso está em nosso lar."

En "Não está", disse a Sra. Wilkins, de novo com surpresa.

En A Sra. Arbuthnot ficou pega de surpresa. Então disse com brandura: "Ah, mas está. Está lá se escolhermos que esteja, se o construirmos."

En "Eu escolho, e eu construo, e não está", disse a Sra. Wilkins.

En Então a Sra. Arbuthnot nada disse, porque ela também às vezes tinha dúvidas sobre lares. Olhou para a Sra. Wilkins com inquietação e

sentiu forte necessidade de classificá-la. Se ao menos pudesse colocar a Sra. Wilkins no lugar certo, achava que voltaria a se sentir firme. Por alguma razão, começava a se sentir desequilibrada. Não tinha férias havia anos. O anúncio a fizera sonhar, e o entusiasmo da Sra. Wilkins era contagiante. Ao ouvir sua fala estranha e repentina, e observar seu rosto radiante, sentia como se estivesse despertando de um sono.

En A Sra. Wilkins estava claramente desequilibrada, mas a Sra. Arbuthnot já tinha encontrado pessoas desequilibradas antes. Encontrava-as com frequência, e elas nunca abalavam sua própria estabilidade. Mas essa mulher a estava deixando trêmula. Era como se abandonar suas ideias seguras de Deus, Marido, Lar e Dever, e ir embora só para ser feliz, pudesse ser bom e desejável ao mesmo tempo. É claro que não era. É claro que não era. Ela também tinha economias na Caixa Econômica dos Correios, e era absurdo pensar que algum dia as sacaria para gastar consigo mesma. Certamente não podia esquecer seu dever, nem esquecer os pobres e seu sofrimento e suas doenças, assim, sem mais? Sem dúvida uma viagem à Itália seria maravilhosa, mas há muitas coisas maravilhosas que alguém pode querer fazer. Para que serve a força de vontade, senão para nos ajudar a não as fazer?

En Para a Sra. Arbuthnot, os grandes fatos da vida eram claros e fixos: Deus, Marido, Lar, Dever. Depois de um período de grande sofrimento, ela apoiara a mente nesses fatos como num travesseiro. Temia ser despertada desse estado simples e pacífico. Por isso, procurou com afinco um jeito de encaixar a Sra. Wilkins em sua mente. Isso a ajudaria a se sentir calma e clara de novo. Depois de refletir sobre o último comentário dela, e se sentindo cada vez mais inquieta e afetada por ela, decidiu, por ora, colocá-la sob o título Nervos. Poderia até pertencer à categoria Histeria, que poderia levar à Loucura. Mas a Sra. Arbuthnot tinha aprendido a não classificar as pessoas depressa demais em sua categoria final. Mais de uma vez descobrira, com pesar, que havia errado. Depois era muito difícil mudar de ideia, e sentia profundo remorso.

En Sim, Nervos. A Sra. Arbuthnot achava que a Sra. Wilkins provavelmente não tinha nenhum trabalho regular para outras pessoas, nenhum trabalho que a tirasse de si mesma. Parecia não ter direção, e era empurrada de um lado para o outro por sentimentos e impulsos repentinos. Nervos era quase certamente a categoria dela, ou seria em

breve, se ninguém a ajudasse. Coitadinha, pensou a Sra. Arbuthnot, e seu equilíbrio voltou à medida que sua compaixão crescia. Por causa da mesa, não conseguia ver quão compridas eram as pernas da Sra. Wilkins. Via apenas seu rostinho ansioso e tímido, seus ombros magros, e a esperança infantil em seus olhos por algo que ela acreditava que a faria feliz. Mas coisas assim não traziam felicidade verdadeira. A Sra. Arbuthnot aprendera, em sua longa vida com Frederick, seu marido, com quem se casara aos vinte anos e agora tinha trinta e três, onde a verdadeira alegria podia ser encontrada. Só se encontrava vivendo cada dia, e cada hora, para outras pessoas. Só se encontrava aos pés de Deus, onde ela tantas vezes levava suas decepções e aflições, e de onde saía consolada.

En Frederick tinha sido o tipo de marido que manda a esposa cedo para os pés de Deus. O passo dele até Deus fora curto, embora doloroso. Olhando para trás, parecia curto, mas na verdade tomara todo o primeiro ano de casamento. Cada passo fora uma luta, e na época ela sentia que cada um deles estava manchado com o sangue de seu coração. Mas isso já tinha passado. Havia muito encontrara a paz. Frederick, um dia seu noivo amado e adorado jovem marido, agora vinha logo depois de Deus em seus deveres e em sua paciência. Ali ele permanecia em sua mente, em segundo lugar em importância, uma coisa exsangue, embranquecida por suas orações. Por anos, só conseguira ser feliz esquecendo a felicidade. Queria continuar assim. Queria fechar as portas a qualquer coisa que a lembrasse de beleza, ou que a fizesse voltar a ansiar e desejar.

En "Eu gostaria muito de sermos amigas", disse com seriedade. "Não vem me visitar, ou não me deixa ir vê-la, de vez em quando? Sempre que quiser conversar. Vou lhe dar meu endereço" - procurou na bolsa - "assim a senhora não esquece." Encontrou um cartão e o estendeu.

En A Sra. Wilkins não pegou o cartão.

En "É tão engraçado", disse a Sra. Wilkins, como se não a tivesse ouvido, "mas consigo nos ver as duas... a senhora e eu... neste abril, no castelo medieval."

En A Sra. Arbuthnot voltou a sentir-se inquieta. "É mesmo?", disse, tentando manter a calma diante daqueles estranhos e brilhantes olhos cinzentos. "É mesmo?"

En "A senhora nunca vê as coisas de repente, antes de acontecerem?", perguntou a Sra. Wilkins.

En "Nunca", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot.

En Tentou sorrir. Tentou dar o sorriso gentil, sábio e compreensivo que usava ao ouvir os pontos de vista limitados e parciais dos pobres. Mas não conseguiu. O sorriso apenas tremeu e desapareceu.

En "Claro", disse baixinho, como se temesse que o vigário e a Caixa Econômica pudessem ouvir. "Seria muito bonito, muito bonito."

En "Mesmo que fosse errado", disse a Sra. Wilkins, "seria só por um mês."

En "Isso..." começou a Sra. Arbuthnot, vendo claramente como tal ideia era errada. Mas a Sra. Wilkins a interrompeu antes que pudesse terminar.

En "De qualquer forma", disse a Sra. Wilkins, interrompendo-a, "tenho certeza de que é errado ser boa por tempo demais, até a pessoa ficar infeliz. E dá para ver que a senhora tem sido boa por anos, porque parece tão infeliz" - a Sra. Arbuthnot tentou protestar - "e eu não fiz nada além de deveres e coisas para os outros desde que era menina. Não acredito que ninguém me ame mais do que antes. E eu anseio, ah, eu anseio por outra coisa."

En Será que ela ia chorar? A Sra. Arbuthnot se sentiu muito incomodada e com pena dela. Esperava que não fosse chorar ali, naquela sala hostil, com estranhos entrando e saindo.

En Mas a Sra. Wilkins puxou nervosamente um lenço que não queria sair do bolso. Por fim, só conseguiu fingir que assoava o nariz. Depois piscou rapidamente, olhou para a Sra. Arbuthnot com uma expressão trêmula, meio tímida, meio assustada, de desculpa, e sorriu.

En "A senhora acredita", sussurrou, tentando controlar a boca e claramente envergonhada, "que eu nunca falei assim com ninguém antes, em toda a minha vida? Não consigo entender. Simplesmente não sei o que me deu."

En "É o anúncio", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot, assentindo com seriedade.

En "Sim", disse a Sra. Wilkins, enxugando os olhos discretamente, "e porque as duas somos tão..." Assoou o nariz de novo, um pouco. "Infelizes."

2 - Capítulo 2

En compreensão e busca das palavras exatas.

En Depois de experimentar muitas palavras sobre viver para os outros, oração e paz nas mãos de Deus, a Sra. Wilkins encontrou as palavras certas. Eram simples: não faria mal nenhum responder ao anúncio. Era só uma consulta, sem nenhum compromisso. O que perturbava a Sra. Arbuthnot era que ela não sugeria isso apenas para consolar a Sra. Wilkins. Sugeria porque ela mesma ansiava pelo castelo medieval.

En Isso a perturbava profundamente. Estava acostumada a guiar os outros, aconselhá-los e apoiá-los, com exceção de Frederick, a quem já entregara a Deus fazia muito tempo. E, no entanto, agora era ela mesma quem estava sendo guiada e influenciada por um anúncio e por uma mulher estranha que mal conhecia. Era muito perturbador. Não conseguia entender por que de repente queria algo tão egoísta, quando não sentia esse desejo havia anos.

En "Não há mal nenhum em perguntar", disse ela em voz baixa, como se outros estivessem ouvindo e julgando.

En "Não é como se isso nos comprometesse a nada", disse a Sra. Wilkins em voz baixa, embora sua voz tremesse.

En Levantaram-se ao mesmo tempo. A Sra. Arbuthnot ficou surpresa ao ver como a Sra. Wilkins era alta. Foram até uma escrivania, e a Sra. Arbuthnot escreveu a Z, Caixa Postal 1000, The Times, pedindo detalhes. Pediu todos os detalhes, mas o único que de fato lhes importava era o valor do aluguel. Ambas sentiram que a Sra. Arbuthnot deveria escrever a carta e cuidar do lado prático. Estava acostumada a organizar as coisas, era mais velha, e era mais calma. Também sabia que era mais sensata. A Sra. Wilkins também não tinha dúvida disso. O jeito como a Sra. Arbuthnot repartia o cabelo parecia demonstrar grande calma e sabedoria.

En Mas, mesmo sendo a Sra. Arbuthnot mais sensata, mais velha e mais calma, sua nova amiga ainda assim parecia empurrar as coisas para frente. Estava confusa, mas incitava à ação. Tinha um estranho poder de afetar as outras pessoas. Arrastava-as consigo. Sua mente

saltava depressa para conclusões, e muitas vezes erradas. A ideia de que a Sra. Arbuthnot era infeliz era uma dessas conclusões erradas. Isso era inquietante.

En Ainda assim, fosse como fosse, e por mais incerta que parecesse, a Sra. Arbuthnot se viu compartilhando o entusiasmo e o anseio da Sra. Wilkins. Depois que a carta foi colocada na caixa de correio do saguão e não podia mais ser recuperada, as duas mulheres sentiram-se culpadas.

En "Isso só mostra", sussurrou a Sra. Wilkins enquanto se afastavam da caixa de correio, "como fomos perfeitamente boas a vida inteira. Na primeira vez que fazemos algo que nossos maridos não sabem, sentimos culpa."

En "Receio não poder dizer que tenho sido perfeitamente boa", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot com brandura. Sentiu-se incomodada com esse novo exemplo dos palpites apressados da Sra. Wilkins, porque não tinha dito nada sobre se sentir culpada.

En "Ah, mas tenho certeza que sim. Consigo ver a senhora sendo boa, e é por isso que não é feliz."

En "Ela não deveria dizer coisas assim", pensou a Sra. Arbuthnot. "Preciso tentar ajudá-la a parar."

En Em voz alta, disse com seriedade: "Não sei por que a senhora continua dizendo que não sou feliz. Quando me conhecer melhor, acho que vai ver que sou. E tenho certeza de que a senhora não quer realmente dizer que a bondade, quando alcançada, torna uma pessoa infeliz."

En "Sim, é isso que quero dizer", disse a Sra. Wilkins. "A nossa espécie de bondade torna. Nós a alcançamos, e somos infelizes. Há espécies infelizes de bondade e espécies felizes. A espécie que teremos no castelo medieval, por exemplo, é a espécie feliz."

En "Isso, se formos", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot com cautela. Sentia que era preciso conter a Sra. Wilkins. "Afinal, só escrevemos para perguntar. Qualquer um pode fazer isso. Acho bem possível que descubramos que as condições são impossíveis, e mesmo que não sejam, amanhã talvez não queiramos mais ir."

En "Eu consigo nos ver lá", foi a resposta da Sra. Wilkins.

En Tudo isso deixou a Sra. Arbuthnot sentindo-se instável. Enquanto caminhava pelas ruas molhadas rumo a uma reunião onde deveria falar, estava muito abalada. Tentara parecer calma e prática diante da Sra. Wilkins, escondendo seu próprio entusiasmo. Mas por dentro, sentia-se profundamente comovida. Sentia-se feliz, culpada e assustada ao mesmo tempo. Sem se dar conta, tinha os sentimentos de uma mulher que acaba de deixar um encontro secreto com o amante. Até parecia assim quando chegou atrasada à reunião. Seu rosto habitualmente aberto parecia quase furtivo ao olhar para as pessoas de expressão dura que esperavam ouvi-la pedir dinheiro para os pobres de Hampstead, embora cada uma delas achasse que precisava de ajuda também. Parecia estar escondendo algo vergonhoso, mas maravilhoso. Sua expressão habitual, aberta e honesta, havia desaparecido. Em seu lugar havia uma felicidade escondida e nervosa, que uma plateia mais mundana teria confundido com uma paixão recente.

En Beleza, beleza, beleza... as palavras não paravam de soar em seus ouvidos enquanto ela ficava de pé na tribuna e falava de coisas tristes para a pequena plateia. Nunca tinha ido à Itália. Era realmente para aquilo que suas economias deveriam servir, afinal? Não gostava do jeito como a Sra. Wilkins falava do destino, como se ela não tivesse escolha e como se tentar ou até pensar sobre isso não importasse. E mesmo assim aquilo a afetava. Os olhos da Sra. Wilkins pareciam os de alguém capaz de ver o futuro. A Sra. Arbuthnot sabia que algumas pessoas eram assim, e se a Sra. Wilkins realmente a tivesse visto no castelo medieval, então talvez lutar contra isso fosse inútil. Ainda assim, gastar suas economias com prazer - o dinheiro viera de uma fonte ruim, mas ela ao menos acreditara que seu destino final seria bom. Iria agora desviá-lo de seu propósito adequado, a única razão pela qual o guardara, e gastá-lo em proporcionar prazer a si mesma?

En A Sra. Arbuthnot continuou falando. Conhecia tão bem esse tipo de discurso que poderia tê-lo dito dormindo. Ao fim da reunião, com os olhos cheios de sonhos secretos, mal notou que ninguém tinha se comovido nem um pouco, e menos ainda a ponto de doar dinheiro.

En Mas o vigário notou. Ficou desapontado. A Sra. Arbuthnot costumava se sair muito melhor do que isso. E, ainda mais incomum, percebeu que ela nem parecia se importar.

En "Não consigo imaginar", disse a ela ao se despedirem. Falou de mau humor, pois estava aborrecido tanto com a plateia quanto com ela. "No que essas pessoas estão se transformando? Nada parece comovê-las."

En "Talvez precisem de férias", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot. O vigário achou aquela uma resposta estranha e insatisfatória.

En "Em fevereiro?", ele gritou atrás dela, com sarcasmo.

En "Ah não... só em abril", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot por cima do ombro.

En "Muito estranho", pensou o vigário. "Muito estranho mesmo." Depois foi para casa e não foi muito gentil com a esposa.

En Naquela noite, a Sra. Arbuthnot orou pedindo orientação. Pensou que deveria pedir claramente que o castelo medieval já tivesse sido alugado por outra pessoa, para que o assunto ficasse resolvido. Mas perdeu a coragem. E se Deus atendesse sua oração? Não, não podia pedir isso. Não podia correr esse risco. Além disso, se gastasse suas economias atuais com férias, logo poderia juntar mais. Frederick muitas vezes lhe dava dinheiro, e por um tempo suas doações às obras de caridade da paróquia seriam menores. Mais tarde, as próximas economias seriam purificadas pelo modo como fossem usadas.

En A Sra. Arbuthnot não tinha dinheiro próprio. Vivia dos rendimentos de Frederick, e até suas economias vinham do trabalho dele. Isso a perturbava profundamente. Frederick escrevia, todo ano, memórias muito populares sobre as amantes de reis. Havia tantas mulheres assim na história que ele sempre tinha material de sobra. Publicara um livro a cada ano de casamento, e ainda restavam muitas mais mulheres sobre quem escrever. A Sra. Arbuthnot nada podia fazer além de viver daquele dinheiro. Certa vez, depois do sucesso de suas memórias sobre Du Barry, ele lhe deu um sofá horrível, de almofadas macias, e ela detestava que esse símbolo de uma pecadora francesa já morta ficasse dentro de sua própria casa.

En A Sra. Arbuthnot acreditava que a moralidade era a base da felicidade, por isso a perturbava que ela e Frederick vivessem de dinheiro proveniente da culpa, mesmo que fosse uma culpa antiga, de muito tempo atrás. Quanto mais uma dessas mulheres era esquecida, mais gente lia o livro de Frederick, e mais dinheiro ele dava à esposa.

Depois de acrescentar um pouco às suas economias, ela gastava o resto com os pobres. Esperava que um dia as pessoas parassem de querer histórias sobre a maldade, e então Frederick precisaria de ajuda ele mesmo. Em sua mente, a paróquia enriquecia por causa das vidas más de mulheres como Du Barry, Montespan, Pompadour, Ninon de l'Enclos e Maintenon. Os pobres eram o meio pelo qual o dinheiro era limpo e purificado. A Sra. Arbuthnot não podia fazer mais nada. Tentara encontrar a resposta certa, mas era difícil demais, então deixou nas mãos de Deus, assim como deixara Frederick nas mãos de Deus. Não gastava nada consigo mesma, exceto o grande sofá macio de sua casa. Os pobres eram os que mais ganhavam. Suas botas eram, de certo modo, fortalecidas pelos pecados. Ainda assim, fora muito difícil. Orara sobre isso até se cansar. Deveria recusar-se a tocar naquele dinheiro por vir de atos errados? Mas e as botas dos pobres? Perguntou ao vigário o que ele pensava, e depois de uma conversa cuidadosa, muito cuidadosa, ficou claro que ele era a favor das botas.

En Pelo menos a Sra. Arbuthnot conseguira convencer Frederick a publicar as memórias sob outro nome. Ele só começara esse trabalho de tanto sucesso depois do casamento deles. Quando ela se casou com ele, ele era um respeitável funcionário da biblioteca do Museu Britânico. Assim, ela não estava publicamente associada aos livros. As pessoas de Hampstead gostavam de lê-los, e não faziam ideia de que o autor vivia entre elas. O próprio Frederick era quase desconhecido em Hampstead, até mesmo de vista. Nunca ia a eventos sociais locais. Quaisquer diversões que tivesse eram em Londres, e nunca falava sobre elas nem sobre as pessoas que conhecia. Só o vigário sabia de onde vinha o dinheiro da paróquia, e disse que era questão de honra não mencionar isso.

En Ao menos a pequena casa deles não estava cheia das mulheres más dos livros de Frederick, pois ele fazia seu trabalho longe de casa. Tinha duas salas perto do Museu Britânico, onde estudava seus temas, e ia até lá todas as manhãs. Voltava para casa muito depois de a esposa já estar dormindo. Às vezes não voltava para casa de jeito nenhum. Às vezes ela não o via por dias. Então, de repente, ele aparecia no café da manhã, tendo entrado com sua chave na noite anterior. Estava alegre, generoso, e satisfeito em lhe dar presentes. Parecia um homem bem-nutrido e contente com a vida. A Sra. Arbuthnot era sempre gentil, e

cuidava para que o café dele ficasse exatamente do jeito que ele gostava.

En Ele parecia muito feliz. A Sra. Arbuthnot muitas vezes pensava que a vida ainda era um mistério, por mais que as pessoas tentassem organizá-la. Algumas pessoas nunca podiam ser compreendidas. Frederick era uma delas. Não se parecia em nada com o homem que ela conhecera no início. Não parecia mais precisar das coisas que uma vez dissera serem as mais importantes: amor, lar, partilha de pensamentos, e se importar com as mesmas coisas. Depois de seus esforços dolorosos para trazê-lo de volta àquela antiga proximidade, ela se machucara muito, e o Frederick que pensava ter desposado parecia mudado quase além do reconhecimento. No fim, colocou-o ao lado de sua cama como o principal objeto de suas orações e o deixou nas mãos de Deus. Amara-o demais para fazer qualquer outra coisa. Ele não sabia que, toda vez que saía de casa, sua bênção o acompanhava, como um pequeno eco daquele amor já terminado. Ela não ousava pensar nele como fora nos primeiros e maravilhosos dias que passaram juntos. Seu filho morrera, e ela não tinha mais ninguém só seu para amar plenamente. Os pobres se tornaram seus filhos, e Deus se tornou aquele a quem ela amava. Às vezes se perguntava que vida poderia ser mais feliz do que essa, mas seu rosto, especialmente seus olhos, permanecia triste.

En "Talvez quando envelhecermos... talvez quando os dois formos bem velhos..." pensou ela, com uma esperança triste.

3 - Capítulo 3

En O dono do velho castelo era um inglês, o Sr. Briggs. Estava em Londres naquela época. Escreveu dizendo que o castelo tinha camas suficientes para oito pessoas, sem contar os criados. Também tinha três salas de estar, ameias, masmorras e luz elétrica. O aluguel era de £60 por um mês, e os salários dos criados eram à parte. Ele também queria referências. Queria provas de que a segunda metade do aluguel seria paga, já que a primeira metade tinha de ser paga adiantada. Também queria uma carta de um advogado, um médico ou um clérigo para comprovar que eram pessoas respeitáveis. Foi muito educado e disse que isso era normal, apenas uma formalidade.

En A Sra. Arbuthnot e a Sra. Wilkins não tinham pensado em referências, e jamais haviam imaginado que o aluguel pudesse ser tão alto. Tinham imaginado algo como três guinéus por semana, ou até menos, já que o lugar era pequeno e antigo.

En Sessenta libras por um mês.

En Isso as chocou.

En A Sra. Arbuthnot pensou em todas as botas que sessenta libras poderiam comprar. Além do aluguel, havia os salários dos criados, comida e passagens de trem. As referências eram um problema; não podiam fornecê-las sem tornar seu plano público demais.

En Ambas tinham pensado que seria melhor dizer a suas próprias amigas, em círculos separados, que cada uma iria ficar na casa de uma amiga que tinha uma casa na Itália. A Sra. Wilkins disse que isso seria verdade o bastante, mas a Sra. Arbuthnot não achava que fosse totalmente verdadeiro. A Sra. Wilkins também disse que essa era a única maneira de manter Mellersh tranquilo. Ele ficaria zangado se ela gastasse dinheiro só para chegar até a Itália. Ela não queria imaginar o que ele diria se soubesse que ela estava alugando parte de um castelo medieval para si mesma. Ele levaria dias para dizer tudo aquilo, mesmo sendo o dinheiro dela, e não dele.

En "Mas imagino", disse ela, "que o seu marido seja igual. Imagino que todos os maridos são parecidos, no fim das contas."

En A Sra. Arbuthnot não disse nada. Sua razão era o oposto da razão da Sra. Wilkins. Frederick ficaria contente que ela fosse embora. Ele não se importaria nem um pouco. Até ria do prazer dela pela vida e diria para ela se divertir e não ter pressa de voltar, mas de um jeito frio que magoaria. Ela achava que era melhor ser sentida falta por Mellersh do que ser mandada embora por Frederick. Fazer falta e ser necessária, por qualquer motivo, parecia-lhe melhor do que estar completamente sozinha, sem fazer falta e sem ser necessária a ninguém.

En Assim, ela não disse nada e deixou a Sra. Wilkins seguir com sua ideia. Por um dia inteiro, as duas pensaram que a única coisa a fazer era desistir do castelo medieval. Só quando tomaram essa decisão dolorosa é que perceberam de verdade o quanto o queriam.

En Então a Sra. Arbuthnot, que era boa em encontrar soluções para problemas, achou um jeito de resolver a questão das referências. Ao mesmo tempo, a Sra. Wilkins de repente viu como baixar o aluguel.

En O plano da Sra. Arbuthnot era simples e funcionou perfeitamente. Ela mesma levou todo o aluguel ao proprietário. Tirou o dinheiro de sua Caixa Econômica e de novo pareceu tímida e pesarosa, como se o caixa devesse saber que ela estava usando aquele dinheiro para o próprio prazer. Depois foi ao endereço perto do Oratório de Brompton, onde vivia o proprietário, com as seis notas de dez libras na bolsa. Entregou-as a ele e disse que não queria pagar só a metade. Quando ele viu seu cabelo repartido, seus olhos escuros e suaves, e suas roupas simples, e ouviu sua voz séria, disse a ela para não se incomodar em escrever pedindo aquelas referências.

En "Vai ficar tudo bem", disse ele, escrevendo um recibo do aluguel. "Sente-se, por favor. Dia horrível, não é? A senhora vai ver que o velho castelo tem muito sol, seja lá o que mais lhe falte. Seu marido vai também?"

En A Sra. Arbuthnot não estava acostumada a nada além da honestidade, então essa pergunta a perturbou. Começou a murmurar, e na mesma hora o proprietário pensou que ela devia ser viúva. Achou que fosse viúva de guerra, pois as outras viúvas eram velhas. Sentiu-se tolo por não ter adivinhado antes.

En "Ah, sinto muito", disse ele, corando até a raiz do cabelo louro. "Não quis dizer... hã, hã, hã..."

En Olhou para o recibo que tinha escrito. "Sim, acho que está tudo certo", disse, levantando-se e entregando-o a ela. Depois pegou as seis notas que ela lhe estendia e sorriu, pois a Sra. Arbuthnot era encantadora de se olhar. "Agora", disse ele, "eu estou mais rico, e a senhora está mais feliz. Eu tenho dinheiro, e a senhora tem San Salvatore. Fico imaginando qual dos dois é melhor."

En "Acho que o senhor já sabe", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot com seu doce sorriso.

En Ele riu e abriu a porta para ela. Foi uma pena que o encontro tivesse acabado. Ele teria gostado de convidá-la para almoçar. Ela o fazia pensar em sua mãe, sua babá, e em muitas coisas gentis e reconfortantes, mas também era diferente delas.

En "Espero que a senhora goste do velho lugar", disse ele, segurando a mão dela por um instante à porta. Mesmo através da luva, a mão dela parecia reconfortante. Ele pensou que era o tipo de mão que as crianças gostariam de segurar no escuro. "Em abril, sabe, fica cheio de flores. E depois há o mar. A senhora precisa usar branco. Vai combinar muito bem. Há vários retratos da senhora lá."

En "Retratos?"

En "Madonas, sabe. Há uma na escada que se parece exatamente com a senhora."

En A Sra. Arbuthnot sorriu, se despediu e agradeceu. Imediatamente, sem esforço nenhum, colocou-o na categoria certa: ele era um artista de natureza enérgica e vivaz.

En Apertaram as mãos e ela foi embora, e ele desejou que não tivesse ido. Depois que ela partiu, pensou que deveria ter pedido referências, nem que fosse só para que ela não o achasse pouco profissional por não fazê-lo. Mas seria como pedir referências a uma santa com auréola quanto a pedir a essa dama séria e gentil.

En Rose Arbuthnot.

En A carta dela, que marcara o encontro, estava sobre a mesa.

En Nome bonito.

En Assim aquele problema estava resolvido. Mas ainda havia o outro: o efeito muito duro do custo sobre as economias delas, especialmente as da Sra. Wilkins, que eram bem menores que as da Sra. Arbuthnot. Foi então que a Sra. Wilkins teve uma ideia repentina que lhe mostrou como resolver a questão. Depois de conseguirem San Salvatore, cujo belo nome religioso ambas amavam, colocariam um anúncio no The Times e procurariam mais duas senhoras com o mesmo desejo que o delas, para se juntarem a elas e dividir o custo.

En Assim, na mesma hora, a pressão sobre suas economias seria cortada pela metade. A Sra. Wilkins estava disposta a gastar todo o seu dinheiro no plano, mas sabia que, se custasse até mesmo seis pence a mais do que suas noventa libras, ela estaria numa posição terrível. Imagine ter de ir até Mellersh e dizer: "Devo dinheiro." Já seria ruim o bastante se algum dia tivesse de dizer: "Não tenho mais economias", mas ao menos assim poderia se consolar sabendo que o dinheiro fora dela. Então, embora estivesse disposta a gastar seu último centavo, não gastaria um único tostão que não fosse verdadeiramente seu. Sentia que, se sua parte do aluguel fosse reduzida a quinze libras, ainda lhe sobraria o bastante para os outros custos. Poderiam também economizar bastante em comida, por exemplo colhendo azeitonas de suas próprias árvores e comendo-as, e talvez pescando.

En Perceberam que poderiam reduzir bastante o aluguel tendo mais gente. Mas não queriam dividir um quarto com uma desconhecida. Queriam paz e descanso. Assim, só queriam mais duas senhoras. Receberam apenas duas respostas ao anúncio.

En "Bem, só queremos duas mesmo", disse a Sra. Wilkins, recuperando-se rapidamente, pois tinha imaginado que muita gente queria vir.

En "Acho que escolher teria sido uma coisa boa", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot.

En "Quer dizer, porque assim não teríamos ficado com Lady Caroline Dester."

En "Não foi isso que eu disse", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot, com brandura.

En "Não precisamos dela", disse a Sra. Wilkins. "Só mais uma pessoa já nos ajudaria muito com o aluguel. Não somos obrigadas a ter duas."

En "Mas por que não haveríamos de ficar com ela? Ela realmente parece ser exatamente o que precisamos."

En "Sim... parece isso, pela carta dela", disse a Sra. Wilkins, incerta.

En Ela achava que se sentiria muito tímida perto de Lady Caroline. Por mais estranho que pareça, a Sra. Wilkins nunca tinha conhecido ninguém da aristocracia, embora eles pareçam estar em toda parte.

En Elas entrevistaram Lady Caroline e a outra candidata, a Sra. Fisher.

En Lady Caroline foi ao clube na Shaftesbury Avenue. Parecia querer uma coisa acima de tudo: se afastar de todos que já conhecera. Quando viu o clube, e a Sra. Arbuthnot, e a Sra. Wilkins, soube que era exatamente aquilo que queria. Estaria na Itália, um lugar que amava. Não ficaria em hotéis, que odiava. Não ficaria na casa de amigos, de quem não gostava. Estaria com desconhecidas que jamais mencionariam ninguém que ela conhecesse, porque não as conheciam e não podiam conhecê-las. Fez algumas perguntas sobre a quarta mulher e ficou satisfeita com as respostas. A Sra. Fisher, do Prince of Wales Terrace, era viúva. Ela também não conheceria as amigas de Lady Caroline. Lady Caroline nem sabia onde ficava o Prince of Wales Terrace.

En "Fica em Londres", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot.

En "Fica?", disse Lady Caroline.

En Tudo parecia muito calmo e repousante.

En A Sra. Fisher não pôde ir ao clube porque, escreveu ela, não conseguia caminhar sem uma bengala. Assim, a Sra. Arbuthnot e a Sra. Wilkins foram visitá-la.

En "Mas se ela não consegue ir ao clube, como vai conseguir ir à Itália?", perguntou-se a Sra. Wilkins em voz alta.

En "Vamos ouvir isso da própria boca dela", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot.

En Da própria Sra. Fisher, só souberam, depois de perguntas cuidadosas, que ficar sentada em trens não era o mesmo que andar por aí, e isso elas já sabiam. Mas, tirando a bengala, ela parecia uma quarta pessoa muito boa: quieta, culta e de idade. Era bem mais velha do que

elas, e mais velha também que Lady Caroline, embora não tão velha a ponto de ter perdido a mente ativa. Era muito correta, e ainda usava roupas pretas completas, mesmo o marido tendo morrido onze anos antes. Sua casa estava cheia de fotografias autografadas de famosas personalidades vitorianas já falecidas. Disse que os conheceu todos quando era jovem. Seu pai fora um crítico famoso, e em sua casa ela conheceu quase todos os grandes nomes da literatura e das artes. Carlyle tinha franzido a testa para ela, Matthew Arnold a segurara no colo, e Tennyson a provocara sobre o comprimento de sua trança. Mostrou-lhes com entusiasmo as fotografias em suas paredes e apontou as assinaturas com a bengala. Não falou de seu próprio marido, e não perguntou sobre os dela, o que foi um grande alívio. Até parecia achar que elas também eram viúvas, pois quando perguntou quem seria a quarta senhora e soube que era Lady Caroline Dester, disse: "Ela também é viúva?" Quando explicaram que Lady Caroline ainda não tinha se casado, a Sra. Fisher disse calmamente: "Tudo a seu tempo."

En O jeito distante da Sra. Fisher era, na verdade, um bom sinal. Ela parecia interessada principalmente nas pessoas famosas que tinha conhecido e em suas fotografias memoriais. Boa parte do encontro foi dedicada às suas lembranças de Carlyle, Meredith, Matthew Arnold, Tennyson e muitos outros. Disse que só queria ficar sentada em silêncio ao sol e recordar. Era também isso que a Sra. Arbuthnot e a Sra. Wilkins queriam de uma companheira de aluguel. A companheira perfeita ficaria sentada em silêncio ao sol, recordando, e só despertaria no sábado à noite para pagar sua parte. A Sra. Fisher também disse que gostava de flores, e certa vez, quando esteve na casa do pai por um fim de semana em Box Hill...

En "Quem morava em Box Hill?", interrompeu a Sra. Wilkins. Estava profundamente empolgada por conhecer alguém que realmente conhecesse as grandes figuras do passado, os tinha visto, ouvido falar e tocado.

En A Sra. Fisher olhou para ela por cima dos óculos, com certa surpresa. A Sra. Wilkins estava tão ansiosa por chegar às partes importantes das lembranças da Sra. Fisher que não parava de interromper com perguntas. Temia que a Sra. Arbuthnot a contivesse e ela perdesse metade da história, mas para a Sra. Fisher, suas perguntas pareciam ignorantes.

En "Meredith, é claro", disse a Sra. Fisher, com certa aspereza. "Lembro-me de um fim de semana em particular", continuou. "Meu pai me levava lá com frequência, mas sempre me lembro especialmente deste..."

En "A senhora conheceu Keats?", perguntou a Sra. Wilkins, ansiosa.

En Depois de uma pausa, a Sra. Fisher disse, com certa frieza, que nunca tinha conhecido nem Keats nem Shakespeare.

En "Ah, é claro... que tolce a minha!", exclamou a Sra. Wilkins, corando intensamente. "É que os grandes escritores mortos ainda parecem vivos. Dá a impressão de que poderiam entrar na sala a qualquer momento. Aí a gente esquece que estão mortos. Na verdade, sabe-se muito bem que não estão mortos... nem de longe tão mortos quanto a senhora e eu estamos agora", disse ela à Sra. Fisher, que a observava por cima dos óculos.

En A Sra. Wilkins continuou falando, mesmo que suas palavras fizessem pouco sentido, porque a Sra. Fisher continuava a observá-la por cima dos óculos. "Achei que vi Keats outro dia em Hampstead, atravessando a rua na frente daquela casa... a senhora sabe, a casa onde ele morou..."

En A Sra. Arbuthnot disse que precisavam ir.

En A Sra. Fisher não fez nada para impedi-las.

En "Eu realmente achei que o vi", disse a Sra. Wilkins, tentando fazê-las acreditar nela, uma depois da outra. Seu rosto não parava de mudar de cor, e ela não conseguia parar de falar por causa dos óculos da Sra. Fisher e de seu olhar fixo. "Acredito mesmo que o vi... ele estava vestido com..."

En Até a Sra. Arbuthnot agora olhou para ela e, com a voz mais gentil que conseguiu, disse que iriam se atrasar para o almoço.

En Nesse ponto, a Sra. Fisher pediu referências. Não queria ficar trancada por quatro semanas com alguém que via coisas. Era verdade que havia três salas de estar, além do jardim e das ameias em San Salvatore, então ela poderia se manter afastada da Sra. Wilkins se fosse preciso. Mas ainda assim seria desagradável se a Sra. Wilkins de repente dissesse que viu o Sr. Fisher. O Sr. Fisher estava morto, e a Sra.

Fisher queria que ele continuasse morto. Não queria ouvir que ele estava andando pelo jardim. O que ela realmente queria saber era se a Sra. Wilkins era saudável e normal. Seria uma mulher comum, sensata? A Sra. Fisher sentia que, com pelo menos um endereço, poderia descobrir o que precisava. Assim, pediu referências, e as outras pareceram chocadas. A Sra. Wilkins ficou logo séria. A Sra. Fisher então disse: "É o costume."

En A Sra. Wilkins recuperou a voz primeiro. "Mas", disse ela, "não deveríamos nós pedir referências da senhora?"

En A Sra. Arbuthnot também achou que essa era a atitude certa. Afinal, elas é que estavam recebendo a Sra. Fisher no grupo delas, não a Sra. Fisher recebendo-as no dela?

En Em resposta, a Sra. Fisher se apoiou na bengala, foi até a escrivaninha e escreveu três nomes com letra firme. Mostrou-os à Sra. Wilkins. Os nomes eram tão respeitados, tão importantes, quase sagrados, que só de lê-los já bastava. Eram o Presidente da Royal Academy, o Arcebispo de Canterbury, e o Governador do Banco da Inglaterra. Quem ousaria incomodar homens assim para perguntar se uma de suas amigas era mesmo correta?

En "Eles me conhecem desde que eu era pequena", disse a Sra. Fisher. Parecia que todo mundo conhecia a Sra. Fisher desde que ela era pequena, ou desde quando ela era pequena.

En "Acho que referências não são coisas nada agradáveis entre mulheres decentes e comuns", disse a Sra. Wilkins de repente. Sentiu-se corajosa porque estava encurralada. Sabia que a única referência que poderia dar com segurança era a Shoolbred's, e não confiava muito nela, já que dependeria apenas do peixe de Mellersh. "Não somos gente de negócios. Não precisamos desconfiar umas das outras..."

En A Sra. Arbuthnot disse isso com gentileza, mas com dignidade: "Receio que referências trariam ao nosso plano de férias uma atmosfera que não é bem o que queremos. Acho que não vamos pedir as suas, nem oferecer as nossas. Suponho, então, que a senhora não vai querer se juntar a nós."

En Então estendeu a mão para se despedir.

En A Sra. Fisher olhou para a Sra. Arbuthnot, que conseguia fazer até os funcionários do metrô confiarem nela e gostarem dela. A Sra. Fisher sentiu que seria tolice desperdiçar a chance de ir à Itália sob condições tão especiais. Também pensou que ela e essa mulher calma poderiam controlar a outra quando ela tivesse suas crises. Então pegou a mão da Sra. Arbuthnot e disse: "Muito bem. Abro mão das referências."

En Ela abriu mão das referências.

En Enquanto as duas mulheres caminhavam até a estação na Kensington High Street, não puderam deixar de sentir que aquilo soara orgulhoso e grandioso. Até a Sra. Arbuthnot, que costumava achar desculpas para os erros dos outros, pensou que a Sra. Fisher poderia ter escolhido palavras diferentes. Quando a Sra. Wilkins chegou à estação, a caminhada e a disputa com os guarda-chuvas alheios na calçada lotada a haviam aquecido, e ela chegou até a sugerir que desistissem da Sra. Fisher, em vez disso.

En "Se algo tem que ser deixado de lado, por favor, que sejamos nós a fazê-lo", disse ansiosamente.

En Mas a Sra. Arbuthnot, como sempre, ficou do lado da Sra. Wilkins. Depois de se acalmar no trem, a Sra. Wilkins disse que a Sra. Fisher encontraria seu verdadeiro lugar em San Salvatore. "Eu a vejo encontrando o seu nível lá", disse, com os olhos muito brilhantes.

En Então a Sra. Arbuthnot ficou sentada, com as mãos quietas entrelaçadas, pensando em como poderia ajudar a Sra. Wilkins a ver um pouco menos, ou pelo menos a ver em silêncio, se é que precisava ver alguma coisa.

4 - Capítulo 4

En Ficou combinado que a Sra. Arbuthnot e a Sra. Wilkins, viajando juntas, chegariam a San Salvatore na noite de 31 de março. O proprietário, que explicara como chegar até lá, entendia que elas não queriam começar sua estadia no dia 1º de abril. Lady Caroline e a Sra. Fisher, que ainda não se conheciam, deveriam chegar na manhã de 2 de abril. Isso daria tempo para preparar tudo bem para as duas mulheres que, embora dividindo tudo igualmente, ainda pareciam um pouco convidadas.

En Perto do fim de março, houve momentos desagradáveis. A Sra. Wilkins, assustada mas decidida, contou ao marido que fora convidada para a Itália, e ele não acreditou nela. Claro que não acreditou. Ninguém jamais convidara sua esposa para a Itália antes. Ele queria provas. A única prova era a Sra. Arbuthnot, e a Sra. Wilkins a trouxera depois de muita insistência. A Sra. Arbuthnot nunca imaginara que teria de enfrentar o Sr. Wilkins e dizer coisas que não eram inteiramente verdadeiras. Isso a fez sentir, como já começara a suspeitar, que estava se afastando cada vez mais de Deus.

En Durante todo o mês de março, teve muitos momentos infelizes e angustiados. Foi um mês perturbado. A consciência da Sra. Arbuthnot havia se tornado muito sensível depois de anos de tanto cuidado, e não conseguia aceitar como certo o que ela estava fazendo. Dava-lhe pouca paz. Perturbava suas orações. Enquanto pedia orientação a Deus, a consciência também fazia perguntas como: "Você não é uma hipócrita? Você realmente quer isso? Não ficaria decepcionada se essa oração fosse atendida?"

En O tempo longo, úmido e frio também perturbava sua consciência, pois causava muito mais doença entre os pobres. Havia gente com bronquite e febre, e o sofrimento não tinha fim. E ali estava ela, gastando dinheiro para ir embora só para ser feliz. Uma mulher feliz, enquanto tantas outras sofriam...

En Não conseguia encarar o vigário. Ele não sabia, e ninguém sabia, o que ela estava planejando, e desde o início ela não conseguia olhar ninguém no rosto. Recusou-se a fazer discursos pedindo dinheiro. Como poderia pedir dinheiro aos outros quando ela mesma gastava tanto com

o próprio prazer? Não ajudou nada quando contou a Frederick, esperando compensar o que estava desperdiçando, que ficaria grata se ele lhe desse algum dinheiro. Ele imediatamente lhe deu um cheque de £100. Não fez perguntas. Ela ficou vermelha de vergonha. Ele a olhou por um instante e depois desviou o olhar. Frederick ficou aliviado por ela aceitar algum dinheiro. Ela deu tudo de uma vez à organização com que trabalhava, e então se sentiu mais confusa do que nunca.

En A Sra. Wilkins não sentia nenhuma dúvida. Tinha certeza de que tirar férias era a coisa certa a fazer, e que era bom e bonito gastar as próprias economias, ganhas com esforço, para ser feliz.

En "Pense em como seremos mais agradáveis quando voltarmos", disse à Sra. Arbuthnot, tentando animar a mulher pálida.

En A Sra. Wilkins não tinha dúvidas, mas tinha medos. Março também foi um mês de ansiedade para ela, enquanto o desavisado Sr. Wilkins voltava para casa todo dia para jantar e comia seu peixe com tranqüila e segura confiança.

En A Sra. Wilkins se esforçou muito para cozinhar apenas o que Mellersh gostava. Ele ficou satisfeito e achou que tinha se casado com a esposa certa. No terceiro domingo, disse que queria levá-la à Itália na Páscoa. A Sra. Wilkins ficou chocada, pois planejava contar a ele sobre seu próprio convite no domingo seguinte.

En Nenhuma palavra veio. O quarto ficou em silêncio, exceto pelo granizo nas janelas e pelo fogo alegre na lareira. A Sra. Wilkins não conseguia falar. Estava atônita. O domingo seguinte era o dia em que planejava contar-lhe as novidades, e ainda nem pensara nas palavras exatas.

En O Sr. Wilkins não saía do país desde antes da guerra. À medida que semana após semana se passava com vento e chuva, ele foi ficando cada vez mais enojado com o clima. Por fim, resolveu deixar a Inglaterra na Páscoa. Seus negócios iam bem, então podia bancar uma viagem. A Suíça não servia em abril. A Itália parecia certa para a Páscoa. Ele iria para lá, e levaria a esposa também, pois não levá-la pareceria estranho. Além disso, ela seria útil. Num país onde ele não conhecia o idioma, outra pessoa poderia ajudar a carregar as coisas e esperar com a bagagem.

En Ele esperava que ela gritasse de gratidão e empolgação. Quando não o fez, achou que ela não devia ter ouvido. Provavelmente estava perdida em algum sonho bobo. Era triste que ainda fosse tão infantil.

En Ele virou a cabeça. As cadeiras deles ficavam em frente à lareira, e ele olhou para ela. Ela estava fitando as chamas, e ele achou que o fogo devia estar deixando o rosto dela vermelho.

En "Estou pensando", repetiu, levantando sua voz clara e educada e falando com aspereza, pois não escutar num momento assim era muito ruim, "em levá-la à Itália na Páscoa. Você não me ouviu?"

En Sim, ela o tinha ouvido. Estava pensando naquela coincidência espantosa. Era verdadeiramente espantosa. Estava prestes a contar-lhe como fora convidada. Uma amiga também a convidara para a Páscoa. A Páscoa era em abril, não era? Sua amiga tinha uma casa lá.

En Na verdade, a Sra. Wilkins, assustada pelo terror, pela culpa e pela surpresa, estava ainda mais confusa do que de costume.

Chapter 1

B1 Português (simplified)

Tudo começou numa tarde de fevereiro, num clube feminino de Londres. O clube era desconfortável, e a tarde, deprimente. A Sra. Wilkins tinha vindo de Hampstead para fazer compras e almoçara ali. Na sala de fumantes, pegou o The Times de uma mesa e viu isto na Coluna das Angústias:

Original English

It began in a Woman's Club in London on a February afternoon - an uncomfortable club, and a miserable afternoon - when Mrs. Wilkins, who had come down from Hampstead to shop and had lunched at her club, took up The Times from the table in the smoking-room, and running her listless eye down the Agony Column saw this:

Original Português

Tudo começou em um clube de senhoras em Londres, numa tarde de fevereiro - um clube desconfortável e uma tarde miserável - , quando a Sra. Wilkins, que descera de Hampstead para fazer compras e almoçara no clube, pegou o The Times sobre a mesa da sala de fumantes e, percorrendo sem interesse a seção de anúncios pessoais, viu o seguinte:

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B1 Português (simplified)

Para pessoas que amam glicínias e sol. Aluga-se, mobiliado, para o mês de abril, um pequeno castelo medieval italiano na costa do Mediterrâneo. Os criados necessários permanecerão. Z, Caixa Postal 1000, The Times.

Original English

To Those who Appreciate Wistaria and Sunshine. Small mediaeval Italian Castle on the shores of the Mediterranean to be Let Furnished for the month of April. Necessary servants remain. Z, Box 1000, The Times.

Original Português

Para aqueles que apreciam glicínias e sol. Pequeno castelo italiano medieval às margens do Mediterrâneo, mobiliado, para alugar no mês de abril. Permanecem os criados necessários. Z, Caixa 1000, The Times.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Foi assim que tudo começou. Mas, como acontece com tantas outras ideias, quem a teve não percebeu, naquele momento, o que estava fazendo.

Original English

That was its conception; yet, as in the case of many another, the conceiver was unaware of it at the moment.

Original Português

Foi assim que a ideia nasceu; contudo, como acontece com tantas outras, naquele momento quem a concebera não tinha consciência disso.

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B1 Português (simplified)

A Sra. Wilkins não percebeu que seu abril já havia sido decidido por ela. Largou o jornal com raiva e resignação, foi até a janela e olhou tristemente para a rua molhada.

Original English

So entirely unaware was Mrs. Wilkins that her April for that year had then and there been settled for her that she dropped the newspaper with a gesture that was both irritated and resigned, and went over to the window and stared drearily out at the dripping street.

Original Português

Tão completamente alheia estava a Sra. Wilkins ao fato de que seu mês de abril daquele ano fora decidido ali mesmo e naquele instante que largou o jornal com um gesto a um só tempo irritado e resignado, foi até a janela e contemplou desolada a rua escorrendo de chuva.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Lugares assim não eram para ela, nem mesmo pequenos castelos medievais. As margens do Mediterrâneo em abril, com glicínias e sol, eram só para os ricos. E, no entanto, o anúncio era para as pessoas que valorizavam essas coisas, portanto também era para ela, pois ela as amava profundamente. Mas era pobre. Possuía apenas noventa libras, economizadas aos poucos de sua mesada para vestuário. O marido lhe dissera para guardá-las para um dia de chuva. O pai lhe dava £100 por ano para roupas, de modo que suas roupas eram baratas e simples. O marido as chamava de modestas e adequadas, mas as outras pessoas achavam que pareciam horríveis.

Original English

Not for her were mediaeval castles, even those that are specially described as small. Not for her the shores in April of the Mediterranean, and the wistaria and sunshine. Such delights were only for the rich. Yet the advertisement had been addressed to persons who appreciate these things, so that it had been, anyhow, addressed too to her, for she certainly appreciated them; more than anybody knew; more than she had ever told. But she was poor. In the whole world she possessed of her very own only ninety pounds, saved from year to year, put by carefully pound by pound, out of her dress allowance. She had scraped this sum together at the suggestion of her husband as a shield and refuge against a rainy day. Her dress allowance, given her by her father, was £100 a year, so that Mrs. Wilkins's clothes were what her husband, urging her to save, called modest and becoming, and her acquaintance to each other, when they spoke of her at all, which was seldom for she was very negligible, called a perfect sight.

Original Português

Castelos medievais não eram para ela, nem mesmo os especialmente descritos como pequenos. Também não eram para ela, em abril, as margens do Mediterrâneo, nem as glicínias e o sol. Tais delícias eram apenas para os ricos. E, no entanto, o anúncio se dirigia a pessoas que apreciavam essas coisas; portanto, de algum modo, dirigia-se também a ela, pois certamente as apreciava - mais do que ninguém sabia, mais do que jamais contara. Mas era pobre. Em todo o mundo, possuía como coisa exclusivamente sua apenas noventa libras, economizadas ano após ano, guardadas com cuidado, libra por libra, de sua mesada para roupas. Reunira essa quantia por sugestão do marido, como escudo e refúgio contra um dia de dificuldade. A mesada para roupas, dada por seu pai, era de £100 por ano; assim, as roupas da Sra. Wilkins eram o que o marido,

ao incentivá-la a poupar, chamava de discretas e adequadas, e o que seus conhecidos, entre si, quando chegavam a falar dela - o que era raro, pois ela tinha pouquíssima importância - , chamavam de um verdadeiro horror.

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B1 Português (simplified)

O Sr. Wilkins era advogado e gostava de economizar dinheiro, exceto quando se tratava de comida. Isso ele não chamava de economia; chamava de má administração doméstica. Mas elogiava a economia que fazia a Sra. Wilkins usar roupas velhas e estragadas. "Nunca se sabe quando virá um dia de chuva", dizia ele. "Aí você pode ficar contente por ter algum dinheiro guardado. Nós dois podemos."

Original English

Mr. Wilkins, a solicitor, encouraged thrift, except that branch of it which got into his food. He did not call that thrift, he called it bad housekeeping. But for the thrift which, like moth, penetrated into Mrs. Wilkins's clothes and spoilt them, he had much praise. "You never know," he said, "when there will be a rainy day, and you may be very glad to find you have a nest-egg. Indeed we both may."

Original Português

O Sr. Wilkins, advogado, incentivava a parcimônia, exceto naquele ramo dela que chegava à sua comida. A isso não chamava parcimônia; chamava má administração da casa. Mas tecia muitos elogios à parcimônia que, como traça, se infiltrava nas roupas da Sra. Wilkins e as estragava. "Nunca se sabe", dizia ele, "quando virá um dia de aperto, e talvez você se alegre muito ao descobrir que tem um pé-de-meia. Na verdade, talvez nós dois nos alegremos."

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B1 Português (simplified)

Olhando pela janela do clube para a Shaftesbury Avenue, a Sra. Wilkins ficou ali parada, triste, por algum tempo. Pensou no Mediterrâneo em abril, nas glicínias, e na vida afortunada dos ricos. Ao mesmo tempo, observava a chuva suja caindo sobre os guarda-chuvas e ônibus apressados. Então se perguntou se aquele seria o dia de chuva que Mellersh tantas vezes lhe dissera para esperar. Talvez, pensou, fosse plano da Providência que ela usasse suas economias para escapar daquele clima e ir para o pequeno castelo medieval. É claro que seria apenas parte de suas economias. E, se o castelo era antigo, talvez estivesse em ruínas, o que deveria torná-lo mais barato. Isso não a incomodaria em nada, pois partes arruinadas não custam mais caro. Na verdade, baixam o preço. Mas isso era um disparate em que pensar.

Original English

Looking out of the club window into Shaftesbury Avenue - hers was an economical club, but convenient for Hampstead, where she lived, and for Shoolbred's, where she shopped - Mrs. Wilkins, having stood there some time very drearily, her mind's eye on the Mediterranean in April, and the wistaria, and the enviable opportunities of the rich, while her bodily eye watched the really extremely horrible sooty rain falling steadily on the hurrying umbrellas and splashing omnibuses, suddenly wondered whether perhaps this was not the rainy day Mellersh - Mellersh was Mr. Wilkins - had so often encouraged her to prepare for, and whether to get out of such a climate and into the small mediaeval castle wasn't perhaps what Providence had all along intended her to do with her savings. Part of her savings, of course; perhaps quite a small part. The castle, being mediaeval, might also be dilapidated, and dilapidations were surely cheap. She wouldn't in the least mind a few of them, because you didn't pay for dilapidations which were already there; on the contrary - by reducing the price you had to pay they really paid you. But what nonsense to think of it . .

Original Português

Da janela do clube, olhando para Shaftesbury Avenue - o clube era econômico, mas conveniente tanto para Hampstead, onde morava, quanto para Shoolbred's, onde fazia compras - , a Sra. Wilkins, depois de permanecer ali por algum tempo muito desolada, com os olhos da mente voltados para o Mediterrâneo em abril, as glicínias e as oportunidades invejáveis dos ricos, enquanto os olhos do corpo acompanhavam a chuva enegrecida pela fuligem, realmente pavorosa, que caía sem parar sobre guarda-chuvas apressados e ônibus espirrando água, perguntou-se de

repente se aquele não seria, talvez, o dia de dificuldade para o qual Mellersh - Mellersh era o Sr. Wilkins - tantas vezes a incentivara a se preparar, e se sair daquele clima e entrar no pequeno castelo medieval não seria, talvez, o que a Providência sempre pretendia que ela fizesse com suas economias. Com uma parte delas, é claro; talvez uma parte bem pequena. Por ser medieval, o castelo também podia estar meio arruinado, e ruínas certamente eram baratas. Ela não se importaria nem um pouco com algumas, porque não se pagava pelas ruínas que já estavam ali; ao contrário - ao reduzirem o preço a pagar, eram elas que na verdade pagavam a você. Mas que disparate pensar nisso...

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B1 Português (simplified)

Ela se afastou da janela com a mesma mistura de irritação e resignação. Atravessou a sala, planejando pegar sua capa impermeável e o guarda-chuva, disputar espaço num ônibus lotado, passar pela Shoolbred's a caminho de casa, e comprar linguados para o jantar de Mellersh. Mellersh era difícil de agradar com peixe e só gostava de linguado, exceto salmão. Foi então que viu a Sra. Arbuthnot, uma mulher que conhecia de vista. A Sra. Arbuthnot também morava em Hampstead e pertencia ao clube. Estava sentada à mesa do meio, onde ficavam os jornais e revistas, e lia a primeira página do The Times com muita atenção.

Original English

She turned away from the window with the same gesture of mingled irritation and resignation with which she had laid down The Times, and crossed the room towards the door with the intention of getting her mackintosh and umbrella and fighting her way into one of the overcrowded omnibuses and going to Shoolbred's on her way home and buying some soles for Mellersh's dinner - Mellersh was difficult with fish and liked only soles, except salmon - when she beheld Mrs. Arbuthnot, a woman she knew by sight as also living in Hampstead and belonging to the club, sitting at the table in the middle of the room on which the newspapers and magazines were kept, absorbed, in her turn, in the first page of The Times.

Original Português

Ela se afastou da janela com o mesmo gesto de irritação e resignação com que havia deixado o jornal The Times, e atravessou o cômodo em direção à porta, com a intenção de pegar sua capa de chuva e seu guarda-chuva, e abrir caminho em um dos ônibus lotados, para ir até a loja de Shoolbred no caminho de casa e comprar alguns linguados para o jantar de Mellersh - Mellersh era exigente com peixes e só gostava de linguados, exceto salmão - quando ela viu a Sra. Arbuthnot, uma mulher que ela reconhecia por morar também em Hampstead e pertencer ao clube, sentada à mesa no meio do cômodo, onde eram guardados os jornais e revistas, absorta, por sua vez, na primeira página do The Times.

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B1 Português (simplified)

A Sra. Wilkins nunca tinha falado com a Sra. Arbuthnot. A Sra. Arbuthnot pertencia a um grupo da igreja e gostava de estudar, classificar e cadastrar os pobres. A Sra. Wilkins e Mellersh, quando saíam, iam a festas de pintores impressionistas, comuns em Hampstead. A irmã de Mellersh havia se casado com um deles e morava perto do Heath, de modo que a Sra. Wilkins fora introduzida num círculo social que lhe parecia muito estranho. Aprendera a temer os quadros. Precisava dizer algo sobre eles, mas nunca sabia o quê. Costumava dizer "Maravilhoso" e sentir que não era suficiente. Mas ninguém se importava. Ninguém a ouvia. Ninguém a notava. Ela era o tipo de pessoa invisível numa festa. Suas roupas a tornavam quase imperceptível, seu rosto era esquecível, sua fala era tímida, e ela não falava muito. Se suas roupas, seu rosto e suas palavras significavam tão pouco, pensava ela, o que restava dela numa festa?

Original English

Mrs. Wilkins had never yet spoken to Mrs. Arbuthnot, who belonged to one of the various church sets, and who analysed, classified, divided and registered the poor; whereas she and Mellersh, when they did go out, went to the parties of impressionist painters, of whom in Hampstead there were many. Mellersh had a sister who had married one of them and lived up on the Heath, and because of this alliance Mrs. Wilkins was drawn into a circle which was highly unnatural to her, and she had learned to dread pictures. She had to say things about them, and she didn't know what to say. She used to murmur, "Marvellous," and feel that it was not enough. But nobody minded. Nobody listened. Nobody took any notice of Mrs. Wilkins. She was the kind of person who is not noticed at parties. Her clothes, infested by thrift, made her practically invisible; her face was non-arresting; her conversation was reluctant; she was shy. And if one's clothes and face and conversation are all negligible, thought Mrs. Wilkins, who recognised her disabilities, what, at parties, is there left of one?

Original Português

A Sra. Wilkins jamais falara com a Sra. Arbuthnot, que pertencia a um dos vários círculos da igreja e analisava, classificava, dividia e registrava os pobres; ela e Mellersh, por sua vez, quando saíam, iam às festas de pintores impressionistas, dos quais havia muitos em Hampstead. Mellersh tinha uma irmã que se casara com um deles e morava lá no Heath; por causa dessa aliança, a Sra. Wilkins fora arrastada para um círculo extremamente contrário à sua natureza e aprendera a temer quadros. Precisava dizer coisas a respeito deles, e não sabia o que dizer. Costumava murmurar "Maravilhoso" e sentir que não bastava. Mas

ninguém se importava. Ninguém escutava. Ninguém prestava atenção à Sra. Wilkins. Era o tipo de pessoa que não se nota em festas. Suas roupas, infestadas de parcimônia, tornavam-na praticamente invisível; seu rosto não chamava a atenção; sua conversa era acanhada; ela era tímida. E, se as roupas, o rosto e a conversa de alguém são todos insignificantes, pensava a Sra. Wilkins, que reconhecia suas limitações, o que resta dessa pessoa numa festa?

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B1 Português (simplified)

Além disso, ela estava sempre com Wilkins, um homem bem-barbeado e bonito, que dava mais importância a qualquer festa só por estar presente. Wilkins era muito respeitável. Sabia-se que seus sócios mais antigos o tinham em alta conta. As amigas de sua irmã o admiravam. Ele dava opiniões sensatas sobre arte e artistas. Era breve, cuidadoso, e nunca dizia nem demais nem de menos. Parecia manter um registro de tudo o que dizia. Era tão claramente confiável que as pessoas que o conheciam nessas festas muitas vezes ficavam insatisfeitas com seus próprios advogados. Depois de algum tempo, deixavam-nos e iam procurar Wilkins.

Original English

Also she was always with Wilkins, that clean-shaven, fine-looking man, who gave a party, merely by coming to it, a great air. Wilkins was very respectable. He was known to be highly thought of by his senior partners. His sister's circle admired him. He pronounced adequately intelligent judgments on art and artists. He was pithy; he was prudent; he never said a word too much, nor, on the other hand, did he ever say a word too little. He produced the impression of keeping copies of everything he said; and he was so obviously reliable that it often happened that people who met him at these parties became discontented with their own solicitors, and after a period of restlessness extricated themselves and went to Wilkins.

Original Português

Além disso, ela estava sempre ao lado de Wilkins, aquele homem bem-apessoado, de rosto escanhado, que conferia grande distinção a uma festa pelo simples fato de comparecer. Wilkins era muito respeitável. Sabia-se que seus sócios mais antigos o tinham em alta conta. O círculo da irmã o admirava. Ele formulava juízos adequadamente inteligentes sobre arte e artistas. Era conciso; era prudente; nunca dizia uma palavra a mais nem, por outro lado, uma palavra a menos. Dava a impressão de guardar cópias de tudo o que dizia; e sua confiabilidade era tão evidente que muitas pessoas que o conheciam nessas festas ficavam insatisfeitas com os próprios advogados e, após um período de inquietação, desvencilhavam-se deles e passavam a procurar Wilkins.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Naturalmente, a Sra. Wilkins era ignorada. A irmã dele disse, de modo firme e definitivo, que ela deveria ficar em casa. Mas Wilkins não podia deixar a esposa em casa. Era advogado de famílias, e homens como ele sempre exibem suas esposas. Durante a semana, ele a levava a festas, e aos domingos a levava à igreja. Ainda era bastante jovem, com apenas trinta e nove anos, e queria conhecer mais senhoras idosas para seu trabalho. Por isso não podia dar-se ao luxo de faltar à igreja. Foi ali que a Sra. Wilkins passou a conhecer a Sra. Arbuthnot, embora nunca conversassem.

Original English

Naturally Mrs. Wilkins was blotted out. "She," said his sister, with something herself of the judicial, the digested, and the final in her manner, "should stay at home." But Wilkins could not leave his wife at home. He was a family solicitor, and all such have wives and show them. With his in the week he went to parties, and with his on Sundays he went to church. Being still fairly young - he was thirty-nine - and ambitious of old ladies, of whom he had not yet acquired in his practice a sufficient number, he could not afford to miss church, and it was there that Mrs. Wilkins became familiar, though never through words, with Mrs. Arbuthnot.

Original Português

Naturalmente, a Sra. Wilkins desaparecia por completo. "Ela", dizia a irmã dele, com algo de sentencioso, ponderado e definitivo nos modos, "deveria ficar em casa." Mas Wilkins não podia deixar a esposa em casa. Era advogado de famílias, e todos os advogados assim têm esposas e as exibem. Durante a semana levava a sua às festas; aos domingos, à igreja. Como ainda era bastante jovem - tinha trinta e nove anos - e ambicionava conquistar senhoras idosas como clientes, das quais ainda não reunira número suficiente em sua prática, não podia se dar ao luxo de faltar à igreja; e foi ali que a Sra. Wilkins se familiarizou, embora jamais por palavras, com a Sra. Arbuthnot.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Ela observava a Sra. Arbuthnot conduzir as crianças pobres até os bancos da igreja. Todo domingo, ela vinha da Escola Dominical pouco antes do coro. Sentava meninos e meninas ordenadamente em seus lugares, fazia-os ajoelhar para a oração e depois levantar de novo quando a porta da sacristia se abria e o coro e o clero saíam. Estavam prontos para dizer as orações e os mandamentos. A Sra. Arbuthnot tinha um rosto triste, mas era claramente boa em seu trabalho. Isso fazia a Sra. Wilkins se perguntar coisas. Mellersh lhe dissera que uma pessoa eficiente não se sentiria deprimida, e que fazer bem o próprio trabalho tornaria alguém alegre e animado.

Original English

She saw her marshalling the children of the poor into pews. She would come in at the head of the procession from the Sunday School exactly five minutes before the choir, and get her boys and girls neatly fitted into their allotted seats, and down on their little knees in their preliminary prayer, and up again on their feet just as, to the swelling organ, the vestry door opened, and the choir and clergy, big with the litanies and commandments they were presently to roll out, emerged. She had a sad face, yet she was evidently efficient. The combination used to make Mrs. Wilkins wonder, for she had been told by Mellersh, on days when she had only been able to get plaise, that if one were efficient one wouldn't be depressed, and that if one does one's job well one becomes automatically bright and brisk.

Original Português

Ela a via conduzir as crianças pobres aos bancos da igreja. A Sra. Arbuthnot entrava à frente da procissão da escola dominical exatamente cinco minutos antes do coro, acomodava com ordem meninos e meninas nos lugares designados, punha-os de joelhos para a oração preliminar e tornava a pô-los de pé no instante em que, ao som crescente do órgão, a porta da sacristia se abria e surgiam o coro e o clero, cheios das ladainhas e dos mandamentos que logo fariam ressoar. Ela tinha um rosto triste, mas era evidentemente eficiente. A combinação costumava intrigar a Sra. Wilkins, pois Mellersh lhe dissera, nos dias em que ela só conseguira comprar solha, que, se uma pessoa fosse eficiente, não ficaria abatida, e que fazer bem o próprio trabalho a tornava automaticamente alegre e diligente.

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B1 Português (simplified)

A Sra. Arbuthnot não era alegre nem animada, embora muito do que fazia com as crianças da Escola Dominical parecesse automático. Mas quando a Sra. Wilkins se afastou da janela e a viu no clube, ela não estava agindo de modo nenhum automático. Fitava intensamente um ponto da primeira página do The Times, segurando o jornal imóvel, com os olhos fixos. Apenas fitava. Seu rosto era, como sempre, o de uma Madona paciente e desiludida.

Original English

About Mrs. Arbuthnot there was nothing bright and brisk, though much in her way with the Sunday School children that was automatic; but when Mrs. Wilkins, turning from the window, caught sight of her in the club she was not being automatic at all, but was looking fixedly at one portion of the first page of The Times, holding the paper quite still, her eyes not moving. She was just staring; and her face, as usual, was the face of a patient and disappointed Madonna.

Original Português

Sobre a Sra. Arbuthnot, não havia nada de vibrante ou animado, embora muito do que ela fazia com as crianças da escola dominical fosse automático; mas quando a Sra. Wilkins, virando-se da janela, a viu no clube, ela não estava sendo nada automática, mas sim olhando fixamente para uma parte da primeira página do The Times, segurando o jornal completamente imóvel, sem mover os olhos. Ela estava apenas encarando; e seu rosto, como de costume, era o rosto de uma Madona paciente e desapontada.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Num impulso repentino, que ela própria achou estranho, a Sra. Wilkins, tímida e relutante, não seguiu para o vestiário e depois para a Schoolbred's em busca do peixe de Mellersh. Em vez disso, parou junto à mesa e sentou-se bem em frente à Sra. Arbuthnot, embora nunca tivesse falado com ela antes em toda a sua vida.

Original English

Obeying an impulse she wondered at even while obeying it, Mrs. Wilkins, the shy and the reluctant, instead of proceeding as she had intended to the cloakroom and from thence to Schoolbred's in search of Mellersh's fish, stopped at the table and sat down exactly opposite Mrs. Arbuthnot, to whom she had never yet spoken in her life.

Original Português

Obedecendo a um impulso que a espantava enquanto lhe obedecia, a tímida e relutante Sra. Wilkins, em vez de seguir como planejara até o vestiário e dali para Shoolbred's, em busca do peixe de Mellersh, deteve-se junto à mesa e sentou-se exatamente diante da Sra. Arbuthnot, a quem jamais dirigira a palavra em toda a vida.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Era uma daquelas mesas de refeitório, longas e estreitas, de modo que ficaram muito próximas uma da outra.

Original English

It was one of those long, narrow refectory tables, so that they were quite close to each other.

Original Português

Era uma daquelas longas e estreitas mesas de refeitório, de modo que estavam bem próximas umas das outras.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Mas a Sra. Arbuthnot não ergueu os olhos. Continuou fitando um ponto no The Times, como se estivesse sonhando.

Original English

Mrs. Arbuthnot, however, did not look up. She continued to gaze, with eyes that seemed to be dreaming, at one spot only of The Times.

Original Português

A Sra. Arbuthnot, no entanto, não levantou a cabeça. Ela continuou a fitar, com olhos que pareciam sonhar, apenas um ponto específico do jornal The Times.

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B1 Português (simplified)

A Sra. Wilkins observou-a por um minuto e tentou reunir coragem para falar. Queria perguntar se a Sra. Arbuthnot tinha visto o anúncio. Não sabia por que queria perguntar, mas queria. Parecia tolice não conseguir falar com ela. Parecia gentil. Parecia infeliz. Por que duas pessoas infelizes não haveriam de se ajudar com uma conversa sincera sobre o que sentiam e o que ainda esperavam? A Sra. Wilkins também pensou que a Sra. Arbuthnot talvez estivesse lendo o mesmo anúncio. Os olhos dela estavam na mesma parte do jornal. Estaria imaginando a mesma coisa, com sua cor, seu perfume, sua luz, e o mar tocando suavemente pequenas pedras quentes? Cor, perfume, luz e mar, em vez da Shaftesbury Avenue, dos ônibus molhados, do setor de peixes da Shoolbred's, do metrô até Hampstead, do jantar, e depois amanhã o mesmo, e depois de amanhã o mesmo, e sempre o mesmo...

Original English

Mrs. Wilkins watched her a minute, trying to screw up courage to speak to her. She wanted to ask her if she had seen the advertisement. She did not know why she wanted to ask her this, but she wanted to. How stupid not to be able to speak to her. She looked so kind. She looked so unhappy. Why couldn't two unhappy people refresh each other on their way through this dusty business of life by a little talk - real, natural talk, about what they felt, what they would have liked, what they still tried to hope? And she could not help thinking that Mrs. Arbuthnot, too, was reading that very same advertisement. Her eyes were on the very part of the paper. Was she, too, picturing what it would be like - the colour, the fragrance, the light, the soft lapping of the sea among little hot rocks? Colour, fragrance, light, sea; instead of Shaftesbury Avenue, and the wet omnibuses, and the fish department at Shoolbred's, and the Tube to Hampstead, and dinner, and to-morrow the same and the day after the same and always the same . . .

Original Português

A Sra. Wilkins a observou por um minuto, tentando reunir coragem para falar com ela. Ela queria perguntar se ela tinha visto o anúncio. Ela não sabia por que queria perguntar isso, mas ela queria. Que tolice não conseguir falar com ela. Ela parecia tão gentil. Ela parecia tão infeliz. Por que duas pessoas infelizes não poderiam se confortar mutuamente em sua jornada por essa árida existência, através de uma conversa - uma conversa real, natural, sobre o que sentiam, o que gostariam, o que ainda tentavam esperar? E ela não conseguia deixar de pensar que a Sra. Arbuthnot também estava lendo aquele mesmo anúncio. Seus olhos estavam fixos na parte específica do jornal. Será que ela também estava

imaginando como seria - a cor, a fragrância, a luz, o suave murmúrio do mar entre pequenas pedras quentes? Cor, fragrância, luz, mar; em vez de Shaftesbury Avenue, e os ônibus molhados, e o setor de peixes na loja Shoolbred's, e o metrô para Hampstead, e o jantar, e amanhã o mesmo, e o dia seguinte o mesmo, e sempre o mesmo...

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B1 Português (simplified)

De repente, a Sra. Wilkins se inclinou sobre a mesa. "A senhora está lendo sobre o castelo medieval e as glicínias?", ouviu-se perguntar.

Original English

Suddenly Mrs. Wilkins found herself leaning across the table. "Are you reading about the mediaeval castle and the wistaria?" she heard herself asking.

Original Português

De repente, a Sra. Wilkins se viu inclinada sobre a mesa. "Você está lendo sobre o castelo medieval e a glicínia?", ela ouviu a si mesma perguntar.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Naturalmente, a Sra. Arbuthnot ficou surpresa, mas a Sra. Wilkins ficou ainda mais surpresa consigo mesma por ter perguntado.

Original English

Naturally Mrs. Arbuthnot was surprised; but she was not half so much surprised as Mrs. Wilkins was at herself for asking.

Original Português

Naturalmente, a Sra. Arbuthnot ficou surpresa; mas ela não ficou nem metade tão surpresa quanto a Sra. Wilkins ficou consigo mesma por ter feito a pergunta.

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B1 Português (simplified)

A Sra. Arbuthnot ainda não tinha reparado na figura maltrapilha e magra à sua frente, com o rostinho sardento e os grandes olhos cinzentos quase escondidos por um chapéu amassado, próprio para tempo chuvoso. Olhou para ela por um instante sem responder. Tinha lido sobre o castelo medieval e as glicínias dez minutos antes, e desde então perdera-se em sonhos de luz, cor, perfume, e o mar tocando suavemente entre pequenas pedras quentes...

Original English

Mrs. Arbuthnot had not yet to her knowledge set eyes on the shabby, lank, loosely-put-together figure sitting opposite her, with its small freckled face and big grey eyes almost disappearing under a smashed-down wet-weather hat, and she gazed at her a moment without answering. She was reading about the mediaeval castle and the wistaria, or rather had read about it ten minutes before, and since then had been lost in dreams - of light, of colour, of fragrance, of the soft lapping of the sea among little hot rocks . . .

Original Português

Até onde sabia, a Sra. Arbuthnot jamais pusera os olhos na figura malvestida, esguia e desengonçada sentada à sua frente, com o rostinho sardento e os grandes olhos cinzentos quase ocultos sob um chapéu de chuva achatado e amassado; por isso fitou-a por um instante sem responder. Estava lendo sobre o castelo medieval e as glicínias - ou, melhor, lera a respeito dez minutos antes e desde então se perdera em sonhos de luz, cor, perfume e do suave marulhar das águas entre pequenos rochedos aquecidos pelo sol...

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Por que me pergunta isso?", disse ela com sua voz séria, pois o trabalho com os pobres a tornara calma e paciente.

Original English

"Why do you ask me that?" she said in her grave voice, for her training of and by the poor had made her grave and patient.

Original Português

"Por que você me pergunta isso?", disse ela com sua voz grave, pois sua experiência com e entre os pobres a havia tornado séria e paciente.

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B1 Português (simplified)

A Sra. Wilkins corou e ficou com um ar muito tímido e assustado. "Oh, só porque eu também vi, e pensei que talvez... pensei que de alguma forma...", disse com dificuldade.

Original English

Mrs. Wilkins flushed and looked excessively shy and frightened. "Oh, only because I saw it too, and I thought perhaps - I thought somehow - " she stammered.

Original Português

A Sra. Wilkins corou e aparentava estar excessivamente tímida e assustada. "Oh, só porque eu também o vi, e eu pensei, talvez... eu pensei de alguma forma - " ela gaguejou.

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B1 Português (simplified)

A Sra. Arbuthnot estava acostumada a classificar as pessoas em categorias, então olhou pensativamente para a Sra. Wilkins e se perguntou em que grupo deveria colocá-la.

Original English

Whereupon Mrs. Arbuthnot, her mind being used to getting people into lists and divisions, from habit considered, as she gazed thoughtfully at Mrs. Wilkins, under what heading, supposing she had to classify her, she could most properly be put.

Original Português

Em seguida, a Sra. Arbuthnot, cuja mente estava acostumada a classificar as pessoas em listas e categorias, por hábito, e enquanto observava atentamente a Sra. Wilkins, ponderou, imaginando que, se tivesse que classificá-la, em qual categoria ela poderia ser adequadamente incluída.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"E eu a conheço de vista", continuou a Sra. Wilkins. Como muitas pessoas tímidas, uma vez que começava, continuava falando e se assustava a cada palavra. "Todo domingo... eu a vejo todo domingo na igreja..."

Original English

"And I know you by sight," went on Mrs. Wilkins, who, like all the shy, once she was started plunged on, frightening herself to more and more speech by the sheer sound of what she had said last in her ears. "Every Sunday - I see you every Sunday in church - "

Original Português

"E eu conheço a sua cara", continuou a Sra. Wilkins, que, como todas as pessoas tímidas, uma vez que começava a falar, não parava mais, assustando-se cada vez mais com o próprio som do que acabara de dizer. "Todos os domingos - eu vejo você todos os domingos na igreja - "

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Na igreja?", repetiu a Sra. Arbuthnot.

"E isso parece uma coisa tão maravilhosa... esse anúncio sobre as glicínias... e..."

Original English

"In church?" echoed Mrs. Arbuthnot.

"And this seems such a wonderful thing - this advertisement about the wistaria - and - "

Original Português

"Na igreja?", repetiu a Sra. Arbuthnot.

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Original Português

"E isso parece uma coisa tão maravilhosa - este anúncio sobre a glicínia - e - "

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B1 Português (simplified)

A Sra. Wilkins devia ter pelo menos trinta anos, mas parou e se remexeu desconfortável na cadeira, como uma colegial estranha e envergonhada.

Original English

Mrs. Wilkins, who must have been at least thirty, broke off and wriggled in her chair with the movement of an awkward and embarrassed schoolgirl.

Original Português

A Sra. Wilkins, que devia ter pelo menos trinta anos, interrompeu e se contorceu na cadeira, com a agitação de uma aluna desajeitada e constrangida.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Parece tão maravilhoso", disse de repente, "e... é um dia tão triste..."

Então olhou para a Sra. Arbuthnot com os olhos de um cão encurralado.

Original English

"It seems so wonderful," she went on in a kind of burst, "and - it is such a miserable day . . ."

And then she sat looking at Mrs. Arbuthnot with the eyes of an imprisoned dog.

Original Português

"Parece tão maravilhoso", continuou ela, num tom quase desesperado, "e - é um dia tão terrível..."

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Original Português

E então, ela sentou-se, olhando para a Sra. Arbuthnot com os olhos de um cão aprisionado.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Coitada dessa mulher", pensou a Sra. Arbuthnot. Sua vida era dedicada a ajudar as pessoas e facilitar as coisas para elas. "Ela precisa de um conselho."

Original English

"This poor thing," thought Mrs. Arbuthnot, whose life was spent in helping and alleviating, "needs advice."

Original Português

"Essa pobre mulher", pensou a Sra. Arbuthnot, cuja vida era dedicada a ajudar e amenizar as dificuldades, "precisa de conselhos."

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B1 Português (simplified)

Então se preparou pacientemente para dá-lo.

"Se me vê na igreja", disse ela, gentil e cuidadosa, "suponho que a senhora também mora em Hampstead?"

Original English

She accordingly prepared herself patiently to give it.

"If you see me in church," she said, kindly and attentively, "I suppose you live in Hampstead too?"

Original Português

Ela, portanto, se preparou com paciência para fazê-lo.

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Original Português

"Se você me encontrar na igreja", disse ela, de forma gentil e atenta, "suposto que você também mora em Hampstead?"

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Ah, sim", disse a Sra. Wilkins. Depois repetiu, o pescoço longo e fino curvando-se um pouco, como se pensar em Hampstead a fizesse baixar a cabeça. "Ah, sim."

Original English

"Oh yes," said Mrs. Wilkins. And she repeated, her head on its long thin neck drooping a little as if the recollection of Hampstead bowed her, "Oh yes."

Original Português

"Sim", disse a Sra. Wilkins. E repetiu, com a cabeça apoiada em seu longo e fino pescoço, inclinando-se um pouco, como se a lembrança de Hampstead a curvasse, "Sim".

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Onde?", perguntou a Sra. Arbuthnot. Quando precisava de um conselho, naturalmente queria primeiro reunir os fatos.

Original English

"Where?" asked Mrs. Arbuthnot, who, when advice was needed, naturally first proceeded to collect the facts.

Original Português

"Onde?", perguntou a Sra. Arbuthnot, que, quando precisava de conselhos, naturalmente começava por recolher os fatos.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Mas a Sra. Wilkins pousou suavemente a mão sobre a parte do The Times onde estava o anúncio, como se as palavras impressas fossem preciosas, e disse apenas: "Talvez seja por isso que isto pareça tão maravilhoso."

Original English

But Mrs. Wilkins, laying her hand softly and caressingly on the part of The Times where the advertisement was, as though the mere printed words of it were precious, only said, "Perhaps that's why this seems so wonderful."

Original Português

Mas a Sra. Wilkins, pousando a mão com suavidade e carinho sobre a parte do The Times em que estava o anúncio, como se as simples palavras impressas fossem preciosas, apenas disse: "Talvez seja por isso que pareça tão maravilhoso."

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Não... eu acho que é maravilhoso de qualquer forma", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot, esquecendo os fatos e soltando um pequeno suspiro.

"Então a senhora estava lendo?"

"Sim", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot, com um olhar sonhador voltando aos olhos.

"Não seria maravilhoso?", sussurrou a Sra. Wilkins.

Original English

"No - I think that's wonderful anyhow," said Mrs. Arbuthnot, forgetting facts and faintly sighing.

"Then you were reading it?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Arbuthnot, her eyes going dreamy again.

"Wouldn't it be wonderful?" murmured Mrs. Wilkins.

Original Português

"Não, acho que isso é maravilhoso, de qualquer forma", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot, esquecendo os fatos e suspirando levemente.

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Original Português

"Então, você estava lendo?"

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Original Português

"Sim", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot, com os olhos voltando a ficar sonolentos.

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Original Português

"Seria maravilhoso, não seria?", murmurou a Sra. Wilkins.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Maravilhoso", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot. Seu rosto se iluminou, depois voltou a ficar calmo. "Muito maravilhoso", disse. "Mas não adianta perder tempo pensando nessas coisas."

Original English

"Wonderful," said Mrs. Arbuthnot. Her face, which had lit up, faded into patience again. "Very wonderful," she said. "But it's no use wasting one's time thinking of such things."

Original Português

"Maravilhoso", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot. Seu rosto, que havia se iluminado, voltou a mostrar sinais de paciência. "Muito maravilhoso", disse ela. "Mas não vale a pena perder tempo pensando nessas coisas."

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Ah, mas adianta sim", respondeu a Sra. Wilkins, rápida e surpreendentemente. Era surpreendente porque não combinava com seu casaco e saia simples, o chapéu amassado e os cabelos soltos. "E só de pensar nelas já vale a pena... é uma mudança tão grande de Hampstead... e às vezes eu acredito, eu realmente acredito, que se a gente pensa com bastante intensidade, a gente consegue as coisas."

Original English

"Oh, but it is," was Mrs. Wilkins's quick, surprising reply; surprising because it was so much unlike the rest of her - the characterless coat and skirt, the crumpled hat, the undecided wisp of hair straggling out. "And just the considering of them is worth while in itself - such a change from Hampstead - and sometimes I believe - I really do believe - if one considers hard enough one gets things."

Original Português

"Ah, mas sim", foi a resposta rápida e surpreendente de Sra. Wilkins; surpreendente porque era tão diferente de tudo o resto - o casaco e o vestido sem graça, o chapéu amassado, o fio de cabelo indeciso que escorregava. "E mesmo apenas pensar sobre elas já vale a pena - uma mudança tão grande em relação a Hampstead - e às vezes eu acredito - eu realmente acredito - que, se se pensar o suficiente, se consegue tudo."

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B1 Português (simplified)

A Sra. Arbuthnot a observava pacientemente. Se tivesse que colocá-la em algum grupo, que tipo seria?

Original English

Mrs. Arbuthnot observed her patiently. In what category would she, supposing she had to, put her?

Original Português

A Sra. Arbuthnot observava-a com paciência. Em que categoria, supondo que tivesse que, ela a classificaria?

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Talvez", disse, inclinando-se um pouco para a frente, "a senhora me diga seu nome. Se vamos ser amigas" - deu seu sorriso sério - "como espero que sejamos, devemos começar pelo começo."

Original English

"Perhaps," she said, leaning forward a little, "you will tell me your name. If we are to be friends" - she smiled her grave smile - "as I hope we are, we had better begin at the beginning."

Original Português

"Talvez", disse ela, inclinando-se um pouco, "você me diga seu nome. Se pretendemos ser amigas - e espero que sim - é melhor começarmos do princípio."

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Ah, sim... que gentileza sua. Sou a Sra. Wilkins", disse a Sra. Wilkins. "Não espero", acrescentou, corando quando a Sra. Arbuthnot nada disse, "que isso signifique alguma coisa para a senhora. Às vezes nem para mim parece significar nada. Mas" - olhou ao redor, como se pedisse ajuda - "eu sou a Sra. Wilkins."

Original English

"Oh yes - how kind of you. I'm Mrs. Wilkins," said Mrs. Wilkins. "I don't expect," she added, flushing, as Mrs. Arbuthnot said nothing, "that it conveys anything to you. Sometimes it - it doesn't seem to convey anything to me either. But" - she looked round with a movement of seeking help - "I am Mrs. Wilkins."

Original Português

"Ah, sim - que gentileza. Eu sou a Sra. Wilkins", disse a Sra. Wilkins. "Não espero", acrescentou, corando, enquanto a Sra. Arbuthnot não dizia nada, "que isso signifique algo para você. Às vezes - parece que não significa nada para mim também. Mas", - ela olhou ao redor, procurando ajuda - "eu sou a Sra. Wilkins."

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B1 Português (simplified)

Não gostava do próprio nome. Parecia pequeno e mesquinho, com um toque zombeteiro no final, como o rabo enroscado de um pug. Mas era assim. Nada podia fazer a respeito. Era Wilkins, e continuaria Wilkins. O marido lhe dizia para usar sempre Sra. Mellersh-Wilkins, mas ela só fazia isso quando ele podia ouvi-la. Achava que Mellersh piorava ainda mais Wilkins, como uma vila com a palavra Chatsworth nos portões, fazendo a vila parecer mais grandiosa do que era.

Original English

She did not like her name. It was a mean, small name, with a kind of facetious twist, she thought, about its end like the upward curve of a pugdog's tail. There it was, however. There was no doing anything with it. Wilkins she was and Wilkins she would remain; and though her husband encouraged her to give it on all occasions as Mrs. Mellersh-Wilkins she only did that when he was within earshot, for she thought Mellersh made Wilkins worse, emphasising it in the way Chatsworth on the gate-posts of a villa emphasises the villa.

Original Português

Ela não gostava do seu nome. Era um nome mesquinho e pequeno, com um certo tom irônico, pensava ela, como a curva ascendente da cauda de um cão pug. Mas ali estava, então. Não havia nada a fazer a respeito. Ela era Wilkins, e continuaria sendo Wilkins; e embora seu marido a incentivasse a usá-lo em todas as ocasiões como Sra. Mellersh-Wilkins, ela só o fazia quando ele estava perto o suficiente, pois ela achava que Mellersh tornava Wilkins ainda pior, enfatizando-o da mesma forma que Chatsworth enfatiza a villa nas portarias de uma residência.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Quando ele sugeriu pela primeira vez acrescentar Mellersh, ela recusou pela razão acima. Depois de uma pausa - Mellersh era cauteloso e quase nunca falava sem antes fazer uma pausa - , ele disse, bastante irritado: "Mas eu não sou uma vila", e olhou para ela como um homem olha quando teme, talvez pela centésima vez, ter se casado com uma tola.

Original English

When first he suggested she should add Mellersh she had objected for the above reason, and after a pause - Mellersh was much too prudent to speak except after a pause, during which presumably he was taking a careful mental copy of his coming observation - he said, much displeased, "But I am not a villa," and looked at her as he looks who hopes, for perhaps the hundredth time, that he may not have married a fool.

Original Português

Quando ele inicialmente sugeriu que ela incluísse o nome de Mellersh, ela se opôs, por causa do que mencionou. Após uma pausa - Mellersh era muito cauteloso para falar, a menos que após uma pausa, durante a qual presumivelmente ele estava fazendo uma cópia mental cuidadosa de sua próxima observação - , ele disse, visivelmente irritado: "Mas eu não sou uma casa de campo", e olhou para ela, da mesma forma que alguém que, talvez pela centésima vez, espera não ter se casado com um tolo.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"É claro que você não é uma vila", disse a Sra. Wilkins a ele. Nunca tinha pensado que ele fosse. Não era essa a sua intenção ao dizer aquilo. Estava apenas pensando.

Original English

Of course he was not a villa, Mrs. Wilkins assured him; she had never supposed he was; she had not dreamed of meaning . . . she was only just thinking . . .

Original Português

É claro que não era uma villa, assegurou a Sra. Wilkins; ela nunca havia imaginado que fosse; ela não havia sequer sonhado com o significado... ela estava apenas começando a pensar...

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B1 Português (simplified)

Quanto mais ela explicava, mais Mellersh se convencia, como já acontecera muitas vezes antes, de que talvez tivesse se casado com uma tola. Tiveram uma longa discussão. Não se podia bem chamar de discussão, na verdade: um lado permanecia calado com dignidade, e o outro não parava de se desculpar. Discutiram sobre se a Sra. Wilkins pretendia insinuar que o Sr. Wilkins era uma vila.

Original English

The more she explained the more earnest became Mellersh's hope, familiar to him by this time, for he had then been a husband for two years, that he might not by any chance have married a fool; and they had a prolonged quarrel, if that can be called a quarrel which is conducted with dignified silence on one side and earnest apology on the other, as to whether or no Mrs. Wilkins had intended to suggest that Mr. Wilkins was a villa.

Original Português

Quanto mais ela explicava, mais forte se tornava a esperança de Mellersh, já familiar a ele, pois ele já era casado há dois anos, de que não tivesse, de fato, se casado com um tolo; e houve uma discussão prolongada, se podemos chamar de discussão aquilo que se desenvolve com um silêncio digno de um lado e um pedido de desculpas sincero do outro, sobre se a Sra. Wilkins realmente pretendia sugerir que o Sr. Wilkins era um tolo.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Acredito", pensou ela quando finalmente terminou - tinha demorado muito - "que qualquer pessoa discutiria por qualquer coisa se não tivesse ficado separada nem por um único dia em dois anos inteiros. O que nós dois precisamos é de férias."

Original English

"I believe," she had thought when it was at last over - it took a long while - "that anybody would quarrel about anything when they've not left off being together for a single day for two whole years. What we both need is a holiday."

Original Português

"Eu acredito", ela pensou, quando finalmente terminou - demorou muito - "que qualquer pessoa discutiria sobre qualquer coisa quando não estivessem juntos há um dia inteiro por dois anos completos. O que nós dois precisamos é de uma pausa."

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Meu marido", continuou a Sra. Wilkins para a Sra. Arbuthnot, tentando se explicar, "é advogado. Ele..." Procurou outra coisa para dizer sobre Mellersh e encontrou: "Ele é muito bonito."

Original English

"My husband," went on Mrs. Wilkins to Mrs. Arbuthnot, trying to throw some light on herself, "is a solicitor. He - " She cast about for something she could say elucidatory of Mellersh, and found: "He's very handsome."

Original Português

"Meu marido", continuou a Sra. Wilkins para a Sra. Arbuthnot, tentando esclarecer a sua própria situação, "é um advogado. Ele - " Ela procurou algo que pudesse explicar a situação de Mellersh, e encontrou: "Ele é muito bonito."

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Bem", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot gentilmente, "isso deve lhe dar grande prazer."

"Por quê?", perguntou a Sra. Wilkins.

Original English

"Well," said Mrs. Arbuthnot kindly, "that must be a great pleasure to you."

"Why?" asked Mrs. Wilkins.

Original Português

"Bem", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot, com gentileza, "isso deve ser uma grande alegria para você."

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Original Português

"Por quê?", perguntou a Sra. Wilkins.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Porque", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot, um pouco surpresa, pois estava acostumada a que os pobres concordassem com ela sem questionar, "porque a beleza é um dom como qualquer outro, e se for bem usada..."

Original English

"Because," said Mrs. Arbuthnot, a little taken aback, for constant intercourse with the poor had accustomed her to have her pronouncements accepted without question, "because beauty - handsomeness - is a gift like any other, and if it is properly used - "

Original Português

"Porque", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot, ligeiramente surpresa, já que a constante interação com os pobres a tinha acostumado a ter suas opiniões aceitas sem questionamento, "porque a beleza - a aparência - é um dom como qualquer outro, e se for usado adequadamente..."

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B1 Português (simplified)

Ela parou de falar. A Sra. Wilkins olhou para ela com seus grandes olhos cinzentos. A Sra. Arbuthnot sentiu de repente que talvez tivesse se acostumado a explicar as coisas de modo simples e instrutivo, como uma babá, porque tinha uma plateia que precisava concordar, tinha medo de interromper e, na verdade, estava sob seu domínio.

Original English

She trailed off into silence. Mrs. Wilkins's great grey eyes were fixed on her, and it seemed suddenly to Mrs. Arbuthnot that perhaps she was becoming crystallised into a habit of exposition, and of exposition after the manner of nursemaids, through having an audience that couldn't but agree, that would be afraid, if it wished, to interrupt, that didn't know, that was, in fact, at her mercy.

Original Português

Ela silenciou. Os grandes olhos cinzentos de Sra. Wilkins estavam fixos nela, e, de repente, Sra. Arbuthnot percebeu que talvez estivesse se tornando uma espécie de hábito de exposição, e de exposição como as babás, devido à presença de um público que, inevitavelmente, concordaria, que temeria, se quisesse, interromper, que não sabia, que, na verdade, estava sob seu controle.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Mas a Sra. Wilkins não estava escutando. Naquele instante, uma imagem estranha lhe atravessou a mente. Viu duas pessoas sentadas juntas sob uma grande glicínia pendente que crescia sobre os galhos de uma árvore que ela não conhecia. Eram ela mesma e a Sra. Arbuthnot. Podia vê-las. Atrás delas, brilhando ao sol, havia muros antigos e cinzentos, um castelo medieval. Viu tudo aquilo.

Original English

But Mrs. Wilkins was not listening; for just then, absurd as it seemed, a picture had flashed across her brain, and there were two figures in it sitting together under a great trailing wistaria that stretched across the branches of a tree she didn't know, and it was herself and Mrs. Arbuthnot - she saw them - she saw them. And behind them, bright in sunshine, were old grey walls - the mediaeval castle - she saw it - they were there . . .

Original Português

Mas a Sra. Wilkins não estava prestando atenção; pois, naquele momento, de forma absurda, uma imagem havia surgido em sua mente, e nela havia duas figuras sentadas juntas sob uma grande glicínia que se estendia pelos galhos de uma árvore que ela não conhecia, e eram ela e a Sra. Arbuthnot - ela as via - ela as via. E atrás delas, brilhantes sob o sol, havia paredes antigas e cinzentas - o castelo medieval - ela as via - elas estavam ali.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Então ficou olhando fixamente para a Sra. Arbuthnot e não ouviu uma palavra do que ela dizia. A Sra. Arbuthnot também ficou olhando para a Sra. Wilkins, detida pela expressão em seu rosto. Estava cheio de excitação, e parecia brilhante e trêmulo, como água ao sol quando o vento a agita. Se estivesse numa festa, as pessoas teriam observado a Sra. Wilkins com interesse.

Original English

She therefore stared at Mrs. Arbuthnot and did not hear a word she said. And Mrs. Arbuthnot stared too at Mrs. Wilkins, arrested by the expression on her face, which was swept by the excitement of what she saw, and was as luminous and tremulous under it as water in sunlight when it is ruffled by a gust of wind. At this moment, if she had been at a party, Mrs. Wilkins would have been looked at with interest.

Original Português

Ela, portanto, encarou a Sra. Arbuthnot e não ouviu uma única palavra que ela dizia. A Sra. Arbuthnot também encarou a Sra. Wilkins, intrigada pela expressão em seu rosto, que era tomada pela excitação do que via, e brilhava e tremia sob essa luz, como a água sob o sol quando é agitada por uma rajada de vento. Nesse momento, se ela estivesse em uma festa, a Sra. Wilkins teria sido observada com interesse.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Elas se entreolharam. A Sra. Arbuthnot parecia surpresa e curiosa. A Sra. Wilkins parecia alguém que tivera uma grande revelação. Claro. Era assim que se podia fazer. Ela mesma não podia bancar aquilo sozinha, e mesmo que pudesse, não poderia ir para lá sozinha. Mas ela e a Sra. Arbuthnot juntas...

Original English

They stared at each other; Mrs. Arbuthnot surprised, inquiringly, Mrs. Wilkins with the eyes of some one who has had a revelation. Of course. That was how it could be done. She herself, she by herself, couldn't afford it, and wouldn't be able, even if she could afford it, to go there all alone; but she and Mrs. Arbuthnot together . . .

Original Português

Olharam-se. A Sra. Arbuthnot, surpresa, perguntou à Sra. Wilkins com os olhos de quem teve uma revelação. Claro. Era assim que podia ser feito. Ela mesma, ela sozinha, não podia pagar, e não conseguiria, mesmo que pudesse, ir lá sozinha; mas ela e a Sra. Arbuthnot juntas...

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B1 Português (simplified)

Inclinou-se sobre a mesa. "Por que não tentamos conseguir?", sussurrou.

A Sra. Arbuthnot arregalou os olhos. "Conseguir?", repetiu.

Original English

She leaned across the table. "Why don't we try and get it?" she whispered.

Mrs. Arbuthnot became even more wide-eyed. "Get it?" she repeated.

Original Português

Ela se inclinou sobre a mesa. "Por que não tentamos conseguir isso?", sussurrou.

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Original Português

A Sra. Arbuthnot ficou ainda mais espantada. "Conseguir isso?", repetiu.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Sim", disse a Sra. Wilkins, ainda com medo de ser ouvida. "Não apenas ficar aqui sentadas dizendo como é maravilhoso, e depois voltar para casa em Hampstead sem fazer nada. Não apenas voltar como sempre e pensar no jantar e no peixe, como fazemos há anos e anos e continuaremos fazendo por anos e anos. Na verdade", disse, corando até a raiz dos cabelos, porque suas próprias palavras a assustavam, embora não conseguisse parar, "parece que isso não tem fim. Por isso deveria haver uma pausa, um tempo livre, para todo mundo. Seria realmente altruísta ir embora e ser feliz por um tempinho, porque voltaríamos muito melhores. Depois de um tempo, todo mundo precisa de férias."

Original English

"Yes," said Mrs. Wilkins, still as though she were afraid of being overheard. "Not just sit here and say How wonderful, and then go home to Hampstead without having put out a finger - go home just as usual and see about the dinner and the fish just as we've been doing for years and years and will go on doing for years and years. In fact," said Mrs. Wilkins, flushing to the roots of her hair, for the sound of what she was saying, of what was coming pouring out, frightened her, and yet she couldn't stop, "I see no end to it. There is no end to it. So that there ought to be a break, there ought to be intervals - in everybody's interests. Why, it would really be being unselfish to go away and be happy for a little, because we would come back so much nicer. You see, after a bit everybody needs a holiday."

Original Português

"Sim", disse a Sra. Wilkins, como se tivesse medo de ser ouvida. "Não apenas sentar aqui e dizer 'Que maravilha!', e então ir para Hampstead sem ter feito nada; não voltar para casa como de costume, e cuidar do jantar e do peixe como sempre fizemos, e continuaremos a fazer por muitos e muitos anos. Na verdade", disse a Sra. Wilkins, corando das pontas dos cabelos, pelo som do que estava dizendo, pelo que estava prestes a revelar, que a assustava, mas ela não conseguia parar, "não vejo como isso pode acabar. Não há fim para isso. Então, deveria haver uma pausa, deveria haver intervalos - para o bem de todos. Na verdade, seria um ato de generosidade ir embora e ser feliz por um tempo, porque voltaríamos muito melhores. Você vê, depois de um tempo, todo mundo precisa de uma folga."

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Mas o que quer dizer com 'conseguir'?", perguntou a Sra. Arbuthnot.

"Alugá-lo", disse a Sra. Wilkins.

"Alugá-lo?"

"Arrendá-lo. Contratá-lo. Tê-lo."

"Mas quer dizer você e eu?"

Original English

"But - how do you mean, get it?" asked Mrs. Arbuthnot.

"Take it," said Mrs. Wilkins.

"Take it?"

"Rent it. Hire it. Have it."

"But - do you mean you and I?"

Original Português

"Mas - como você quer dizer, 'conseguir isso'?", perguntou a Sra. Arbuthnot.

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Original Português

"Pegar", disse a Sra. Wilkins.

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Original Português

"Ficarmos com ele?"

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Original Português

"Alugá-lo. Arrendá-lo. Tê-lo para nós."

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Original Português

"Mas - você quer dizer você e eu?"

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Sim. Entre nós duas. Dividir. Aí custaria só a metade, e a senhora parece querer isso tanto quanto eu, como se precisasse de descanso e de algo feliz acontecendo com a senhora."

Original English

"Yes. Between us. Share. Then it would only cost half, and you look so - you look exactly as if you wanted it just as much as I do - as if you ought to have a rest - have something happy happen to you."

Original Português

"Sim. Entre nós. Dividir. Assim, custaria apenas metade, e você parece - você parece exatamente como se quisesse isso tanto quanto eu - como se precisasse de um descanso - como se algo bom precisasse acontecer com você."

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Mas nós nem nos conhecemos."

Original English

"Why, but we don't know each other."

Original Português

"Mas, nós não nos conhecemos."

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Mas pense em como nos conheceríamos bem se fôssemos embora juntas por um mês! E eu economizei para um dia de chuva, e imagino que a senhora também. Este é o dia de chuva... olhe só..."

Original English

"But just think how well we would if we went away together for a month! And I've saved for a rainy day, and I expect so have you, and this is the rainy day - look at it - "

Original Português

"Mas, imagine só como seria bom se fôssemos embora juntas por um mês! E eu economizei para uma emergência, e eu imagino que você também, e este é o momento - veja - "

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Ela não está em seu juízo perfeito", pensou a Sra. Arbuthnot; e no entanto se sentia estranhamente comovida.

"Pense em ir embora por um mês inteiro, longe de tudo, para o paraíso..."

Original English

"She is unbalanced," thought Mrs. Arbuthnot; yet she felt strangely stirred.

"Think of getting away for a whole month - from everything - to heaven - "

Original Português

"Ela está instável", pensou Sra. Arbuthnot; mas ela se sentiu estranhamente agitada.

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Original Português

"Imagine ficar longe de tudo por um mês inteiro - para o paraíso - "

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Ela não devia dizer coisas assim", pensou a Sra. Arbuthnot. "O vigário..."
E no entanto se sentia estranhamente comovida. Seria verdadeiramente maravilhoso descansar, ter uma pausa.

Original English

"She shouldn't say things like that," thought Mrs. Arbuthnot. "The vicar - "
Yet she felt strangely stirred. It would indeed be wonderful to have a rest, a cessation.

Original Português

"Ela não deveria dizer coisas assim", pensou Sra. Arbuthnot. "O vigário - "
Mas ela se sentiu estranhamente agitada. Seria, de fato, maravilhoso ter um descanso, uma pausa.

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B1 Português (simplified)

O hábito logo a acalmou novamente. Anos de trabalho com os pobres a fizeram dizer, com um tom gentil mas um pouco superior: "Mas veja bem, o paraíso não fica em outro lugar. Está aqui e agora. É o que nos é ensinado."

Original English

Habit, however, steadied her again; and years of intercourse with the poor made her say, with the slight though sympathetic superiority of the explainer, "But then, you see, heaven isn't somewhere else. It is here and now. We are told so."

Original Português

O hábito, no entanto, a estabilizou novamente; e anos de contato com os pobres a fizeram dizer, com a leve e simpática superioridade da explicadora, "Mas, veja, o paraíso não está em outro lugar. Ele está aqui e agora. Nós somos informadas disso."

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B1 Português (simplified)

Ela ficou muito séria, como fazia quando tentava, com paciência, ajudar e ensinar os pobres. "O paraíso está dentro de nós", disse com sua voz suave e baixa. "É o que nos ensina a mais alta autoridade. E a senhora conhece os versos sobre os pontos afins, não conhece..."

Original English

She became very earnest, just as she did when trying patiently to help and enlighten the poor. "Heaven is within us," she said in her gentle low voice. "We are told that on the very highest authority. And you know the lines about the kindred points, don't you - "

Original Português

Ela se tornou muito séria, assim como fazia quando tentava ajudar e iluminar os pobres. "O paraíso está dentro de nós", disse ela, em sua voz suave e baixa. "Nós somos informadas disso, na autoridade mais alta. E você conhece as linhas sobre os pontos relacionados, não é - "

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Ah, sim, eu os conheço", disse a Sra. Wilkins, impaciente.

Original English

"Oh yes, I know them," interrupted Mrs. Wilkins impatiently.

Original Português

"Ah, sim, eu conheço", interrompeu Sra. Wilkins, impacientemente.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Os pontos afins do céu e do lar", continuou a Sra. Arbuthnot, que gostava de terminar suas frases. "O paraíso está em nosso lar."

Original English

"The kindred points of heaven and home," continued Mrs. Arbuthnot, who was used to finishing her sentences. "Heaven is in our home."

Original Português

"Os pontos relacionados do paraíso e do lar", continuou Sra. Arbuthnot, que estava acostumada a terminar suas frases. "O paraíso está em nosso lar."

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Não está", disse a Sra. Wilkins, de novo com surpresa.

Original English

"It isn't," said Mrs. Wilkins, again surprisingly.

Original Português

"Não é", disse Sra. Wilkins, surpreendentemente novamente.

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B1 Português (simplified)

A Sra. Arbuthnot ficou pega de surpresa. Então disse com brandura: "Ah, mas está. Está lá se escolhermos que esteja, se o construirmos."

Original English

Mrs. Arbuthnot was taken aback. Then she said gently, "Oh, but it is. It is there if we choose, if we make it."

Original Português

A Sra. Arbuthnot ficou desconcertada. Então disse com brandura: "Ah, mas está, sim. Está lá, se o escolhermos, se o construirmos."

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Eu escolho, e eu construo, e não está", disse a Sra. Wilkins.

Original English

"I do choose, and I do make it, and it isn't," said Mrs. Wilkins.

Original Português

"Eu o escolho e o construo, e ele não está lá", disse a Sra. Wilkins.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Então a Sra. Arbuthnot nada disse, porque ela também às vezes tinha dúvidas sobre lares. Olhou para a Sra. Wilkins com inquietação e sentiu forte necessidade de classificá-la. Se ao menos pudesse colocar a Sra. Wilkins no lugar certo, achava que voltaria a se sentir firme. Por alguma razão, começava a se sentir desequilibrada. Não tinha férias havia anos. O anúncio a fizera sonhar, e o entusiasmo da Sra. Wilkins era contagiante. Ao ouvir sua fala estranha e repentina, e observar seu rosto radiante, sentia como se estivesse despertando de um sono.

Original English

Then Mrs. Arbuthnot was silent, for she too sometimes had doubts about homes. She sat and looked uneasily at Mrs. Wilkins, feeling more and more the urgent need to getting her classified. If she could only classify Mrs. Wilkins, get her safely under her proper heading, she felt that she herself would regain her balance, which did seem very strangely to be slipping all to one side. For neither had she had a holiday for years, and the advertisement when she saw it had set her dreaming, and Mrs. Wilkins's excitement about it was infectious, and she had the sensation, as she listened to her impetuous, odd talk and watched her lit-up face, that she was being stirred out of sleep.

Original Português

Então, a Sra. Arbuthnot ficou em silêncio, pois ela também, às vezes, tinha dúvidas sobre a casa. Sentou-se e olhou com apreensão para a Sra. Wilkins, sentindo cada vez mais a necessidade urgente de classificá-la. Se ela pudesse apenas classificar a Sra. Wilkins, colocá-la em sua categoria apropriada, ela sentiu que ela mesma recuperaria o equilíbrio, que parecia estranhamente estar escorregando para um lado. Pois nenhuma delas tinha férias nos últimos anos, e o anúncio que viu a fez sonhar, e o entusiasmo da Sra. Wilkins sobre isso era contagiante, e ela sentiu, enquanto ouvia sua fala impetuosa e excêntrica e observava seu rosto iluminado, que estava sendo despertada do sono.

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B1 Português (simplified)

A Sra. Wilkins estava claramente desequilibrada, mas a Sra. Arbuthnot já tinha encontrado pessoas desequilibradas antes. Encontrava-as com frequência, e elas nunca abalavam sua própria estabilidade. Mas essa mulher a estava deixando trêmula. Era como se abandonar suas ideias seguras de Deus, Marido, Lar e Dever, e ir embora só para ser feliz, pudesse ser bom e desejável ao mesmo tempo. É claro que não era. É claro que não era. Ela também tinha economias na Caixa Econômica dos Correios, e era absurdo pensar que algum dia as sacaria para gastar consigo mesma. Certamente não podia esquecer seu dever, nem esquecer os pobres e seu sofrimento e suas doenças, assim, sem mais? Sem dúvida uma viagem à Itália seria maravilhosa, mas há muitas coisas maravilhosas que alguém pode querer fazer. Para que serve a força de vontade, senão para nos ajudar a não as fazer?

Original English

Clearly Mrs. Wilkins was unbalanced, but Mrs. Arbuthnot had met the unbalanced before - indeed she was always meeting them - and they had no effect on her own stability at all; whereas this one was making her feel quite wobbly, quite as though to be off and away, away from her compass points of God, Husband, Home and Duty - she didn't feel as if Mrs. Wilkins intended Mr. Wilkins to come too - and just for once be happy, would be both good and desirable. Which of course it wasn't; which certainly of course it wasn't. She, also, had a nest-egg, invested gradually in the Post Office Savings Bank, but to suppose that she would ever forget her duty to the extent of drawing it out and spending it on herself was surely absurd. Surely she couldn't, she wouldn't ever do such a thing? Surely she wouldn't, she couldn't ever forget her poor, forget misery and sickness as completely as that? No doubt a trip to Italy would be extraordinarily delightful, but there were many delightful things one would like to do, and what was strength given to one for except to help one not to do them?

Original Português

Era evidente que a Sra. Wilkins estava desequilibrada, mas a Sra. Arbuthnot já encontrara gente desequilibrada antes - na verdade, encontrava-a o tempo todo - , e essas pessoas não exerciam efeito algum sobre sua própria estabilidade; esta, porém, fazia-a sentir-se bastante vacilante, como se partir para longe, para longe de seus pontos cardeais - Deus, Marido, Lar e Dever - (ela não tinha a impressão de que a Sra. Wilkins pretendesse levar também o Sr. Wilkins) e, só uma vez, ser feliz fosse algo bom e desejável. O que, naturalmente, não era; o que, naturalmente, com toda a certeza, não era. Ela também possuía um

pé-de-meia, aplicado aos poucos na Caixa Econômica dos Correios, mas supor que algum dia esqueceria o dever a ponto de retirá-lo e gastá-lo consigo mesma era, sem dúvida, absurdo. Por certo não poderia, não faria jamais uma coisa dessas? Por certo não esqueceria, não poderia jamais esquecer os pobres a quem assistia, esquecer tão completamente a miséria e a doença? Sem dúvida, uma viagem à Itália seria extraordinariamente agradável; mas havia muitas coisas agradáveis que uma pessoa gostaria de fazer, e para que lhe era dada a força, senão para ajudá-la a não fazê-las?

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B1 Português (simplified)

Para a Sra. Arbuthnot, os grandes fatos da vida eram claros e fixos: Deus, Marido, Lar, Dever. Depois de um período de grande sofrimento, ela apoiara a mente nesses fatos como num travesseiro. Temia ser despertada desse estado simples e pacífico. Por isso, procurou com afincos um jeito de encaixar a Sra. Wilkins em sua mente. Isso a ajudaria a se sentir calma e clara de novo. Depois de refletir sobre o último comentário dela, e se sentindo cada vez mais inquieta e afetada por ela, decidiu, por ora, colocá-la sob o título Nervos. Poderia até pertencer à categoria Histeria, que poderia levar à Loucura. Mas a Sra. Arbuthnot tinha aprendido a não classificar as pessoas depressa demais em sua categoria final. Mais de uma vez descobrira, com pesar, que havia errado. Depois era muito difícil mudar de ideia, e sentia profundo remorso.

Original English

Steadfast as the points of the compass to Mrs. Arbuthnot were the great four facts of life: God, Husband, Home, Duty. She had gone to sleep on these facts years ago, after a period of much misery, her head resting on them as on a pillow; and she had a great dread of being awakened out of so simple and untroublesome a condition. Therefore it was that she searched with earnestness for a heading under which to put Mrs. Wilkins, and in this way illumine and steady her own mind; and sitting there looking at her uneasily after her last remark, and feeling herself becoming more and more unbalanced and infected, she decided pro tem, as the vicar said at meetings, to put her under the heading Nerves. It was just possible that she ought to go straight into the category Hysteria, which was often only the antechamber to Lunacy, but Mrs. Arbuthnot had learned not to hurry people into their final categories, having on more than one occasion discovered with dismay that she had made a mistake; and how difficult it had been to get them out again, and how crushed she had been with the most terrible remorse.

Original Português

Para a Sra. Arbuthnot, as quatro verdades fundamentais da vida eram tão inabaláveis quanto os pontos cardeais: Deus, marido, lar, dever. Ela havia adormecido nessas verdades há anos, após um período de grande sofrimento, com a cabeça apoiada nelas como em um travesseiro; e ela temia profundamente ser despertada de tal condição simples e sem preocupações. Por isso, ela procurava com afincos um título sob o qual colocar a Sra. Wilkins, e dessa forma iluminar e fortalecer sua própria mente; e, sentada ali, olhando-a com apreensão após seu último comentário, e sentindo-se cada vez mais desequilibrada e afetada, ela

decidiu, provisoriamente, como o vigário dizia nas reuniões, colocá-la sob o título "Nervos". Era possível que ela deveria ser colocada diretamente na categoria "Histeria", que muitas vezes era apenas o corredor para a "Loucura", mas a Sra. Arbutnot havia aprendido a não apressar as pessoas em suas categorias finais, tendo, em diversas ocasiões, descoberto com desespero que havia cometido um erro; e como havia sido difícil tirá-las dessa situação, e como ela havia se sentido esmagada pelo mais terrível remorso.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Sim, Nervos. A Sra. Arbuthnot achava que a Sra. Wilkins provavelmente não tinha nenhum trabalho regular para outras pessoas, nenhum trabalho que a tirasse de si mesma. Parecia não ter direção, e era empurrada de um lado para o outro por sentimentos e impulsos repentinos. Nervos era quase certamente a categoria dela, ou seria em breve, se ninguém a ajudasse. Coitadinha, pensou a Sra. Arbuthnot, e seu equilíbrio voltou à medida que sua compaixão crescia. Por causa da mesa, não conseguia ver quão compridas eram as pernas da Sra. Wilkins. Via apenas seu rostinho ansioso e tímido, seus ombros magros, e a esperança infantil em seus olhos por algo que ela acreditava que a faria feliz. Mas coisas assim não traziam felicidade verdadeira. A Sra. Arbuthnot aprendera, em sua longa vida com Frederick, seu marido, com quem se casara aos vinte anos e agora tinha trinta e três, onde a verdadeira alegria podia ser encontrada. Só se encontrava vivendo cada dia, e cada hora, para outras pessoas. Só se encontrava aos pés de Deus, onde ela tantas vezes levava suas decepções e aflições, e de onde saía consolada.

Original English

Yes. Nerves. Probably she had no regular work for others, thought Mrs. Arbuthnot; no work that would take her outside herself. Evidently she was rudderless - blown about by gusts, by impulses. Nerves was almost certainly her category, or would be quite soon if no one helped her. Poor little thing, thought Mrs. Arbuthnot, her own balance returning hand in hand with her compassion, and unable, because of the table, to see the length of Mrs. Wilkins's legs. All she saw was her small, eager, shy face, and her thin shoulders, and the look of childish longing in her eyes for something that she was sure was going to make her happy. No; such things didn't make people happy, such fleeting things. Mrs. Arbuthnot had learned in her long life with Frederick - he was her husband, and she had married him at twenty and was now thirty-three - where alone true joys are to be found. They are to be found, she now knew, only in daily, in hourly, living for others; they are to be found only - hadn't she over and over again taken her disappointments and discouragements there, and come away comforted? - at the feet of God.

Original Português

Sim. Nervosismo. Provavelmente, ela não tinha um emprego fixo, pensou a Sra. Arbuthnot; nenhum trabalho que a levasse para fora de si mesma. Evidentemente, ela estava à deriva - levada por ventos, por impulsos. Nervosismo era quase certamente sua condição, ou seria em breve, se ninguém a ajudasse. Que pobre criatura, pensou a Sra. Arbuthnot,

enquanto seu próprio equilíbrio retornava em conjunto com sua compaixão, e incapaz, devido à mesa, de ver o comprimento das pernas da Sra. Wilkins. Tudo o que ela via era seu pequeno, ansioso, tímido rosto, e seus ombros finos, e o olhar de anseio infantil em seus olhos por algo que ela estava certa de que a faria feliz. Não; essas coisas não faziam as pessoas felizes, essas coisas passageiras. A Sra. Arbuthnot havia aprendido, ao longo de sua longa vida com Frederick - ele era seu marido, e ela o havia casado aos vinte anos e agora tinha trinta e três - onde os verdadeiros prazeres são encontrados. Eles são encontrados, ela agora sabia, apenas na vida diária, na vida a cada hora, dedicando-se aos outros; eles são encontrados apenas - não havia ela, repetidamente, levado suas decepções e desilusões para lá, e saído confortada? - aos pés de Deus.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Frederick tinha sido o tipo de marido que manda a esposa cedo para os pés de Deus. O passo dele até Deus fora curto, embora doloroso. Olhando para trás, parecia curto, mas na verdade tomara todo o primeiro ano de casamento. Cada passo fora uma luta, e na época ela sentia que cada um deles estava manchado com o sangue de seu coração. Mas isso já tinha passado. Havia muito encontrara a paz. Frederick, um dia seu noivo amado e adorado jovem marido, agora vinha logo depois de Deus em seus deveres e em sua paciência. Ali ele permanecia em sua mente, em segundo lugar em importância, uma coisa exsangue, embranquecida por suas orações. Por anos, só conseguira ser feliz esquecendo a felicidade. Queria continuar assim. Queria fechar as portas a qualquer coisa que a lembrasse de beleza, ou que a fizesse voltar a ansiar e desejar.

Original English

Frederick had been the kind of husband whose wife betakes herself early to the feet of God. From him to them had been a short though painful step. It seemed short to her in retrospect, but it had really taken the whole of the first year of their marriage, and every inch of the way had been a struggle, and every inch of it was stained, she felt at the time, with her heart's blood. All that was over now. She had long since found peace. And Frederick, from her passionately loved bridegroom, from her worshipped young husband, had become second only to God on her list of duties and forbearances. There he hung, the second in importance, a bloodless thing bled white by her prayers. For years she had been able to be happy only by forgetting happiness. She wanted to stay like that. She wanted to shut out everything that would remind her of beautiful things, that might set her off again longing, desiring....

Original Português

Frederick era o tipo de marido a quem a esposa se entregava prontamente à oração. Para ele, a transição foi rápida, mas dolorosa. Parecia rápida para ela, em retrospecto, mas realmente levou todo o primeiro ano do casamento, e cada passo foi uma luta, e cada passo estava, ela sentia na época, manchado com seu próprio sangue. Tudo isso estava no passado. Ela havia encontrado a paz há muito tempo. E Frederick, o marido amado, o jovem esposo que ela adorava, havia se tornado apenas o segundo em sua lista de obrigações e tolerâncias. Ali estava ele, o segundo em importância, uma figura sem vida, quase descorada pelas suas orações. Por anos, ela só conseguia ser feliz esquecendo a felicidade. Ela queria permanecer assim. Ela queria se fechar para tudo que pudesse lembrá-la de coisas belas, que pudessem reacender seu desejo...

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Eu gostaria muito de sermos amigas", disse com seriedade. "Não vem me visitar, ou não me deixa ir vê-la, de vez em quando? Sempre que quiser conversar. Vou lhe dar meu endereço" - procurou na bolsa - "assim a senhora não esquece." Encontrou um cartão e o estendeu.

Original English

"I'd like so much to be friends," she said earnestly. "Won't you come and see me, or let me come to you sometimes? Whenever you feel as if you wanted to talk. I'll give you my address" - she searched in her handbag - "and then you won't forget." And she found a card and held it out.

Original Português

"Eu gostaria muito de ser amiga," disse ela, com sinceridade. "Você não viria me visitar, ou eu poderia ir te visitar às vezes? Sempre que você sentir vontade de conversar. Eu te darei meu endereço" - ela procurou na bolsa - "e assim você não se esquecerá." E ela encontrou um cartão e o ofereceu.

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B1 Português (simplified)

A Sra. Wilkins não pegou o cartão.

Original English

Mrs. Wilkins ignored the card.

Original Português

A Sra. Wilkins ignorou o cartão.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"É tão engraçado", disse a Sra. Wilkins, como se não a tivesse ouvido, "mas consigo nos ver as duas... a senhora e eu... neste abril, no castelo medieval."

Original English

"It's so funny," said Mrs. Wilkins, just as if she had not heard her, "but I see us both - you and me - this April in the mediaeval castle."

Original Português

"É tão engraçado", disse a Sra. Wilkins, como se não a tivesse ouvido, "mas vejo a nós duas - você e eu - neste mês de abril, no castelo medieval."

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B1 Português (simplified)

A Sra. Arbuthnot voltou a sentir-se inquieta. "É mesmo?", disse, tentando manter a calma diante daqueles estranhos e brilhantes olhos cinzentos. "É mesmo?"

Original English

Mrs. Arbuthnot relapsed into uneasiness. "Do you?" she said, making an effort to stay balanced under the visionary gaze of the shining grey eyes. "Do you?"

Original Português

A Sra. Arbuthnot voltou a sentir-se desconfortável. "Você vê?" ela perguntou, tentando manter o equilíbrio sob o olhar penetrante dos olhos cinzentos brilhantes. "Você vê?"

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B1 Português (simplified)

"A senhora nunca vê as coisas de repente, antes de acontecerem?", perguntou a Sra. Wilkins.

"Nunca", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot.

Original English

"Don't you ever see things in a kind of flash before they happen?" asked Mrs. Wilkins.

"Never," said Mrs. Arbuthnot.

Original Português

"Você nunca tem visões antes dos eventos?" perguntou a Sra. Wilkins.

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Original Português

"Nunca," respondeu a Sra. Arbuthnot.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Tentou sorrir. Tentou dar o sorriso gentil, sábio e compreensivo que usava ao ouvir os pontos de vista limitados e parciais dos pobres. Mas não conseguiu. O sorriso apenas tremeu e desapareceu.

Original English

She tried to smile; she tried to smile the sympathetic yet wise and tolerant smile with which she was accustomed to listen to the necessarily biased and incomplete views of the poor. She didn't succeed. The smile trembled out.

Original Português

Ela tentou sorrir; tentou sorrir aquele sorriso compreensivo, sábio e tolerante, com que ela estava acostumada a ouvir as opiniões, muitas vezes tendenciosas e incompletas, dos mais pobres. Não conseguiu. O sorriso vacilou.

[Back to B1](#) [Original English](#)

B1 Português (simplified)

"Claro", disse baixinho, como se temesse que o vigário e a Caixa Econômica pudessem ouvir. "Seria muito bonito, muito bonito."

Original English

"Of course," she said in a low voice, almost as if she were afraid the vicar and the Savings Bank were listening, "it would be most beautiful - most beautiful -"

Original Português

"Claro", disse ela, em um tom baixo, quase como se estivesse com medo do vigário e do Banco de Poupança a ouvirem, "seria absolutamente maravilhoso - absolutamente maravilhoso".

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Mesmo que fosse errado", disse a Sra. Wilkins, "seria só por um mês."

Original English

"Even if it were wrong," said Mrs. Wilkins, "it would only be for a month."

Original Português

"Mesmo que fosse errado", disse Sra. Wilkins, "seria apenas por um mês."

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Isso..." começou a Sra. Arbuthnot, vendo claramente como tal ideia era errada. Mas a Sra. Wilkins a interrompeu antes que pudesse terminar.

Original English

"That - " began Mrs. Arbuthnot, quite clear as to the reprehensibleness of such a point of view; but Mrs. Wilkins stopped her before she could finish.

Original Português

"Aquilo", começou Sra. Arbuthnot, bem clara quanto à reprovabilidade desse ponto de vista; mas Sra. Wilkins a interrompeu antes que ela pudesse terminar.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"De qualquer forma", disse a Sra. Wilkins, interrompendo-a, "tenho certeza de que é errado ser boa por tempo demais, até a pessoa ficar infeliz. E dá para ver que a senhora tem sido boa por anos, porque parece tão infeliz" - a Sra. Arbuthnot tentou protestar - "e eu não fiz nada além de deveres e coisas para os outros desde que era menina. Não acredito que ninguém me ame mais do que antes. E eu anseio, ah, eu anseio por outra coisa."

Original English

"Anyhow," said Mrs. Wilkins, stopping her, "I'm sure it's wrong to go on being good for too long, till one gets miserable. And I can see you've been good for years and years, because you look so unhappy" - Mrs. Arbuthnot opened her mouth to protest - "and I - I've done nothing but duties, things for other people, ever since I was a girl, and I don't believe anybody loves me a bit - a bit - the b-better - and I long - oh, I long - for something else - something else - "

Original Português

"De qualquer forma", disse Sra. Wilkins, interrompendo-a, "estou certa de que é errado ficar boa demais por muito tempo, até se tornar infeliz. E eu vejo que você tem sido boa por anos e anos, porque parece tão infeliz" - Sra. Arbuthnot abriu a boca para protestar - "e eu - eu - tenho feito apenas obrigações, coisas para os outros, desde que era menina, e eu não acredito que ninguém me ame - um pouco - o b-melhor - e eu anseio - oh, eu anseio - por algo mais - algo mais".

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B1 Português (simplified)

Será que ela ia chorar? A Sra. Arbuthnot se sentiu muito incomodada e com pena dela. Esperava que não fosse chorar ali, naquela sala hostil, com estranhos entrando e saindo.

Original English

Was she going to cry? Mrs. Arbuthnot became acutely uncomfortable and sympathetic. She hoped she wasn't going to cry. Not there. Not in that unfriendly room, with strangers coming and going.

Original Português

Ela ia chorar? Sra. Arbuthnot se sentiu muito desconfortável e compreensiva. Ela esperava que não chorasse. Não ali. Não naquele quarto hostil, com estranhos entrando e saindo.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Mas a Sra. Wilkins puxou nervosamente um lenço que não queria sair do bolso. Por fim, só conseguiu fingir que assoava o nariz. Depois piscou rapidamente, olhou para a Sra. Arbuthnot com uma expressão trêmula, meio tímida, meio assustada, de desculpa, e sorriu.

Original English

But Mrs. Wilkins, after tugging agitatedly at a handkerchief that wouldn't come out of her pocket, did succeed at last in merely apparently blowing her nose with it, and then, blinking her eyes very quickly once or twice, looked at Mrs. Arbuthnot with a quivering air of half humble, half frightened apology, and smiled.

Original Português

Mas Sra. Wilkins, após puxar insistentemente um lenço que não saía do bolso, finalmente conseguiu apenas parecer que estava limpando o nariz com ele, e então, piscando os olhos várias vezes, olhou para Sra. Arbuthnot com uma expressão hesitante, meio humilde, meio assustada, e sorriu.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"A senhora acredita", sussurrou, tentando controlar a boca e claramente envergonhada, "que eu nunca falei assim com ninguém antes, em toda a minha vida? Não consigo entender. Simplesmente não sei o que me deu."

Original English

"Will you believe," she whispered, trying to steady her mouth, evidently dreadfully ashamed of herself, "that I've never spoken to any one before in my life like this? I can't think, I simply don't know, what has come over me."

Original Português

"Você acredita", sussurrou, tentando se recompor, evidentemente muito envergonhada, "que eu nunca falei com ninguém antes na vida daquela maneira? Eu não consigo pensar, eu simplesmente não sei, o que aconteceu comigo."

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B1 Português (simplified)

"É o anúncio", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot, assentindo com seriedade.

Original English

"It's the advertisement," said Mrs. Arbuthnot, nodding gravely.

Original Português

"É o anúncio", disse Sra. Arbuthnot, assentindo solenemente.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Sim", disse a Sra. Wilkins, enxugando os olhos discretamente, "e porque as duas somos tão..." Assoou o nariz de novo, um pouco. "Infelizes."

Original English

"Yes," said Mrs. Wilkins, dabbing furtively at her eyes, "and us both being so - " - she blew her nose again a little - "miserable."

Original Português

"Sim", disse Sra. Wilkins, dando tapinhas furtivas nos olhos, "e nós duas sendo tão - " - ela limpou o nariz novamente - "infelizes."

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Chapter 2

B1 Português (simplified)

compreensão e busca das palavras exatas.

Original English

Of course Mrs. Arbuthnot was not miserable - how could she be, she asked herself, when God was taking care of her? - but she let that pass for the moment unrepudiated, because of her conviction that here was another fellow-creature in urgent need of her help; and not just boots and blankets and better sanitary arrangements this time, but the more delicate help of comprehension, of finding the exact right words.

Original Português

É claro que a Sra. Arbuthnot não estava infeliz - como poderia estar, ela se perguntou - quando Deus estava cuidando dela? - mas ela deixou essa ideia passar, pelo momento, sem questionamento, porque de sua convicção que ali estava outro ser humano em necessidade urgente de sua ajuda; e não apenas botas, cobertores e melhores condições sanitárias, desta vez, mas a ajuda mais delicada: a compreensão, a encontrar as palavras certas.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Depois de experimentar muitas palavras sobre viver para os outros, oração e paz nas mãos de Deus, a Sra. Wilkins encontrou as palavras certas. Eram simples: não faria mal nenhum responder ao anúncio. Era só uma consulta, sem nenhum compromisso. O que perturbava a Sra. Arbuthnot era que ela não sugeria isso apenas para consolar a Sra. Wilkins. Sugeriria porque ela mesma ansiava pelo castelo medieval.

Original English

The exact right words, she presently discovered, after trying various ones about living for others, and prayer, and the peace to be found in placing oneself unreservedly in God's hands - to meet all these words Mrs. Wilkins had other words, incoherent and yet, for the moment at least, till one had had more time, difficult to answer - the exact right words were a suggestion that it would do no harm to answer the advertisement. Non-committal. Mere inquiry. And what disturbed Mrs. Arbuthnot about this suggestion was that she did not make it solely to comfort Mrs. Wilkins; she made it because of her own strange longing for the mediaeval castle.

Original Português

As palavras certas, ela descobriu, em pouco tempo, depois de tentar várias sobre viver pelos outros, orar e encontrar a paz ao se colocar totalmente nas mãos de Deus - para responder a essas palavras, a Sra. Wilkins tinha outras, incoerentes, mas, pelo menos por enquanto, difíceis de responder - as palavras certas eram uma sugestão de que não faria mal responder ao anúncio. Sem compromisso. Meramente uma pergunta. E o que perturbou a Sra. Arbuthnot sobre essa sugestão foi que ela não a fazia unicamente para confortar a Sra. Wilkins; ela a fazia por seu próprio estranho desejo pelo castelo medieval.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Isso a perturbava profundamente. Estava acostumada a guiar os outros, aconselhá-los e apoiá-los, com exceção de Frederick, a quem já entregara a Deus fazia muito tempo. E, no entanto, agora era ela mesma quem estava sendo guiada e influenciada por um anúncio e por uma mulher estranha que mal conhecia. Era muito perturbador. Não conseguia entender por que de repente queria algo tão egoísta, quando não sentia esse desejo havia anos.

Original English

This was very disturbing. There she was, accustomed to direct, to lead, to advise, to support - except Frederick; she long since had learned to leave Frederick to God - being led herself, being influenced and thrown off her feet, by just an advertisement, by just an incoherent stranger. It was indeed disturbing. She failed to understand her sudden longing for what was, after all, self-indulgence, when for years no such desire had entered her heart.

Original Português

Isto era muito perturbador. Ela, acostumada a dar ordens, a liderar, a aconselhar, a apoiar - exceto Frederick, que ela já havia aprendido a deixar nas mãos de Deus - estava sendo, ela mesma, influenciada e desorientada, por um simples anúncio, por um estranho incoerente. Era, de fato, perturbador. Ela não conseguia entender seu súbito desejo por algo que, afinal, era autoindulgência, quando, por anos, nenhum tal desejo havia entrado em seu coração.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Não há mal nenhum em perguntar", disse ela em voz baixa, como se outros estivessem ouvindo e julgando.

Original English

"There's no harm in simply asking," she said in a low voice, as if the vicar and the Savings Bank and all her waiting and dependent poor were listening and condemning.

Original Português

"Não há mal em simplesmente perguntar", disse ela, em voz baixa, como se o vigário, o banco de poupança e todos os pobres que esperavam e dependiam dela estivessem ouvindo e condenando.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Não é como se isso nos compromettesse a nada", disse a Sra. Wilkins em voz baixa, embora sua voz tremesse.

Original English

"It isn't as if it committed us to anything," said Mrs. Wilkins, also in a low voice, but her voice shook.

Original Português

"Não é como se isso nos obrigasse a nada", disse a Sra. Wilkins, também em voz baixa, mas sua voz tremia.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Levantaram-se ao mesmo tempo. A Sra. Arbuthnot ficou surpresa ao ver como a Sra. Wilkins era alta. Foram até uma escrivaninha, e a Sra. Arbuthnot escreveu a Z, Caixa Postal 1000, The Times, pedindo detalhes. Pediu todos os detalhes, mas o único que de fato lhes importava era o valor do aluguel. Ambas sentiram que a Sra. Arbuthnot deveria escrever a carta e cuidar do lado prático. Estava acostumada a organizar as coisas, era mais velha, e era mais calma. Também sabia que era mais sensata. A Sra. Wilkins também não tinha dúvida disso. O jeito como a Sra. Arbuthnot repartia o cabelo parecia demonstrar grande calma e sabedoria.

Original English

They got up simultaneously - Mrs. Arbuthnot had a sensation of surprise that Mrs. Wilkins should be so tall - and went to a writing-table, and Mrs. Arbuthnot wrote to Z, Box 1000, The Times, for particulars. She asked for all particulars, but the only one they really wanted was the one about the rent. They both felt that it was Mrs. Arbuthnot who ought to write the letter and do the business part. Not only was she used to organising and being practical, but she also was older, and certainly calmer; and she herself had no doubt too that she was wiser. Neither had Mrs. Wilkins any doubt of this; the very way Mrs. Arbuthnot parted her hair suggested a great calm that could only proceed from wisdom.

Original Português

Ambas se levantaram ao mesmo tempo - a Sra. Arbuthnot sentiu uma surpresa ao perceber que a Sra. Wilkins era tão alta - e foram até uma mesa de escrita, e a Sra. Arbuthnot escreveu para Z, Caixa 1000, The Times, para obter mais informações. Ela pediu todas as informações, mas a única que realmente importava era a sobre o aluguel. Ambas sentiram que era a Sra. Arbuthnot quem deveria escrever a carta e cuidar dos detalhes. Não só ela era acostumada a organizar e ser prática, mas também era mais velha, e certamente mais calma; e ela própria não tinha dúvidas de que era mais sábia. A Sra. Wilkins também não tinha dúvidas disso; a própria maneira como a Sra. Arbuthnot penteava o cabelo sugeria uma calma profunda que só poderia vir da sabedoria.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Mas, mesmo sendo a Sra. Arbuthnot mais sensata, mais velha e mais calma, sua nova amiga ainda assim parecia empurrar as coisas para frente. Estava confusa, mas incitava à ação. Tinha um estranho poder de afetar as outras pessoas. Arrastava-as consigo. Sua mente saltava depressa para conclusões, e muitas vezes erradas. A ideia de que a Sra. Arbuthnot era infeliz era uma dessas conclusões erradas. Isso era inquietante.

Original English

But if she was wiser, older and calmer, Mrs. Arbuthnot's new friend nevertheless seemed to her to be the one who impelled. Incoherent, she yet impelled. She appeared to have, apart from her need of help, an upsetting kind of character. She had a curious infectiousness. She led one on. And the way her unsteady mind leaped at conclusions - wrong ones, of course; witness the one that she, Mrs. Arbuthnot, was miserable - the way she leaped at conclusions was disconcerting.

Original Português

Mas, se ela era mais sábia, mais velha e mais calma, a nova amiga da Sra. Arbuthnot, de alguma forma, parecia ser a que impulsionava as coisas. De maneira incoerente, mas impulsionava. Parecia ter, além da necessidade de ajuda, um temperamento perturbador. Tinha uma curiosa capacidade de contagiar. Ela levava as pessoas a fazerem coisas. E a maneira como sua mente instável saltava para conclusões - e, claro, erradas; veja a conclusão de que a Sra. Arbuthnot estava infeliz - a maneira como ela saltava para conclusões era desconcertante.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Ainda assim, fosse como fosse, e por mais incerta que parecesse, a Sra. Arbuthnot se viu compartilhando o entusiasmo e o anseio da Sra. Wilkins. Depois que a carta foi colocada na caixa de correio do saguão e não podia mais ser recuperada, as duas mulheres sentiram-se culpadas.

Original English

Whatever she was, however, and whatever her unsteadiness, Mrs. Arbuthnot found herself sharing her excitement and her longing; and when the letter had been posted in the letter-box in the hall and actually was beyond getting back again, both she and Mrs. Wilkins felt the same sense of guilt.

Original Português

Independentemente do que ela fosse, e independentemente de sua instabilidade, a Sra. Arbuthnot se viu compartilhando sua excitação e seu desejo; e, quando a carta foi posta na caixa de correio na entrada e já estava fora de alcance, ambas sentiram o mesmo sentimento de culpa.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Isso só mostra", sussurrou a Sra. Wilkins enquanto se afastavam da caixa de correio, "como fomos perfeitamente boas a vida inteira. Na primeira vez que fazemos algo que nossos maridos não sabem, sentimos culpa."

Original English

"It only shows," said Mrs. Wilkins in a whisper, as they turned away from the letter-box, "how immaculately good we've been all our lives. The very first time we do anything our husbands don't know about we feel guilty."

Original Português

"Isso apenas mostra", disse a Sra. Wilkins em um sussurro, enquanto se afastavam da caixa de correio, "quão impecavelmente boas temos sido em nossas vidas. A primeira vez que fazemos algo que nossos maridos não sabem, sentimos culpa."

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Receio não poder dizer que tenho sido perfeitamente boa", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot com brandura. Sentiu-se incomodada com esse novo exemplo dos palpites apressados da Sra. Wilkins, porque não tinha dito nada sobre se sentir culpada.

Original English

"I'm afraid I can't say I've been immaculately good," gently protested Mrs. Arbuthnot, a little uncomfortable at this fresh example of successful leaping at conclusions, for she had not said a word about her feeling of guilt.

Original Português

"Tenho medo de que eu não possa dizer que tenho sido impecavelmente boa", protestou a Sra. Arbuthnot, um pouco desconfortável com este novo exemplo de saltos para conclusões, pois ela não havia mencionado seu próprio sentimento de culpa.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Ah, mas tenho certeza que sim. Consigo ver a senhora sendo boa, e é por isso que não é feliz."

Original English

"Oh, but I'm sure you have - I see you being good - and that's why you're not happy."

Original Português

"Ah, mas tenho certeza que sim - eu vejo você sendo boa - e é por isso que você não está feliz."

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Ela não deveria dizer coisas assim", pensou a Sra. Arbuthnot. "Preciso tentar ajudá-la a parar."

Original English

"She shouldn't say things like that," thought Mrs. Arbuthnot. "I must try and help her not to."

Original Português

"Ela não deveria dizer coisas assim", pensou a Sra. Arbuthnot. "Eu preciso tentar ajudá-la a não dizer."

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B1 Português (simplified)

Em voz alta, disse com seriedade: "Não sei por que a senhora continua dizendo que não sou feliz. Quando me conhecer melhor, acho que vai ver que sou. E tenho certeza de que a senhora não quer realmente dizer que a bondade, quando alcançada, torna uma pessoa infeliz."

Original English

Aloud she said gravely, "I don't know why you insist that I'm not happy. When you know me better I think you'll find that I am. And I'm sure you don't mean really that goodness, if one could attain it, makes one unhappy."

Original Português

Em voz alta, ela disse solenemente: "Eu não entendo por que você insiste que eu não sou feliz. Quando você me conhece melhor, eu acho que vai perceber que sou. E tenho certeza de que você não quer dizer que a bondade, se fosse possível alcançá-la, nos deixaria infelizes."

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Sim, é isso que quero dizer", disse a Sra. Wilkins. "A nossa espécie de bondade torna. Nós a alcançamos, e somos infelizes. Há espécies infelizes de bondade e espécies felizes. A espécie que teremos no castelo medieval, por exemplo, é a espécie feliz."

Original English

"Yes, I do," said Mrs. Wilkins. "Our sort of goodness does. We have attained it, and we are unhappy. There are miserable sorts of goodness and happy sorts - the sort we'll have at the mediaeval castle, for instance, is the happy sort."

Original Português

"Sim, eu quero", disse a Sra. Wilkins. "Nossa espécie de bondade faz isso. Nós a alcançamos, e somos infelizes. Existem tipos de bondade miseráveis e tipos felizes - o tipo que teremos no castelo medieval, por exemplo, é o tipo feliz."

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Isso, se formos", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot com cautela. Sentia que era preciso conter a Sra. Wilkins. "Afimal, só escrevemos para perguntar. Qualquer um pode fazer isso. Acho bem possível que descubramos que as condições são impossíveis, e mesmo que não sejam, amanhã talvez não queiramos mais ir."

Original English

"That is, supposing we go there," said Mrs. Arbuthnot restrainingly. She felt that Mrs. Wilkins needed holding on to. "After all, we've only written just to ask. Anybody may do that. I think it quite likely we shall find the conditions impossible, and even if they were not, probably by to-morrow we shall not want to go."

Original Português

"Isso, supondo que vamos lá", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot, com cautela. Ela sentia que precisava manter a Sra. Wilkins focada. "Afimal, nós só estamos escrevendo para perguntar. Qualquer um pode fazer isso. Acho que é bem provável que encontremos as condições impossíveis, e mesmo que não fossem, provavelmente, até amanhã, não teremos vontade de ir."

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Eu consigo nos ver lá", foi a resposta da Sra. Wilkins.

Original English

"I see us there," was Mrs. Wilkins's answer to that.

Original Português

"Eu nos vejo lá", foi a resposta da Sra. Wilkins.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Tudo isso deixou a Sra. Arbuthnot sentindo-se instável. Enquanto caminhava pelas ruas molhadas rumo a uma reunião onde deveria falar, estava muito abalada. Tentara parecer calma e prática diante da Sra. Wilkins, escondendo seu próprio entusiasmo. Mas por dentro, sentia-se profundamente comovida. Sentia-se feliz, culpada e assustada ao mesmo tempo. Sem se dar conta, tinha os sentimentos de uma mulher que acaba de deixar um encontro secreto com o amante. Até parecia assim quando chegou atrasada à reunião. Seu rosto habitualmente aberto parecia quase furtivo ao olhar para as pessoas de expressão dura que esperavam ouvi-la pedir dinheiro para os pobres de Hampstead, embora cada uma delas achasse que precisava de ajuda também. Parecia estar escondendo algo vergonhoso, mas maravilhoso. Sua expressão habitual, aberta e honesta, havia desaparecido. Em seu lugar havia uma felicidade escondida e nervosa, que uma plateia mais mundana teria confundido com uma paixão recente.

Original English

All this was very unbalancing. Mrs. Arbuthnot, as she presently splashed through the dripping streets on her way to a meeting she was to speak at, was in an unusually disturbed condition of mind. She had, she hoped, shown herself very calm to Mrs. Wilkins, very practical and sober, concealing her own excitement. But she was really extraordinarily moved, and she felt happy, and she felt guilty, and she felt afraid, and she had all the feelings, though this she did not know, of a woman who has come away from a secret meeting with her lover. That, indeed, was what she looked like when she arrived late on her platform; she, the open-browed, looked almost furtive as her eyes fell on the staring wooden faces waiting to hear her try and persuade them to contribute to the alleviation of the urgent needs of the Hampstead poor, each one convinced that they needed contributions themselves. She looked as though she were hiding something discreditable but delightful. Certainly her customary clear expression of candour was not there, and its place was taken by a kind of suppressed and frightened pleasedness, which would have led a more worldly-minded audience to the instant conviction of recent and probably impassioned lovemaking.

Original Português

Tudo isso a deixava bastante perturbada. A Sra. Arbuthnot, enquanto se aventurava pelas ruas molhadas, indo para uma reunião onde deveria falar, estava em um estado de espírito particularmente agitado. Ela, esperava, havia se mostrado muito calma para a Sra. Wilkins, muito

prática e sóbria, escondendo sua própria excitação. Mas, na verdade, estava extraordinariamente emocionada, sentia-se feliz, sentia-se culpada, sentia-se com medo, e tinha todas as sensações, embora não soubesse, de uma mulher que havia saído de um encontro secreto com seu amante. Na verdade, era assim que ela se parecia quando chegou atrasada à plataforma; a Sra. Arbuthnot, com seus olhos expressivos, parecia quase furtiva enquanto seus olhos se fixavam nos rostos de madeira que esperavam ouvi-la tentar persuadi-los a contribuir para aliviar as necessidades urgentes dos pobres de Hampstead, cada um convencido de que precisavam de contribuições também. Parecia que estava escondendo algo vergonhoso, mas agradável. Com certeza, sua habitual expressão clara de honestidade não estava presente, e em seu lugar havia um tipo de alegria reprimida e assustada, que teria levado um público mais experiente à convicção imediata de um envolvimento amoroso recente e, provavelmente, apaixonado.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Beleza, beleza, beleza... as palavras não paravam de soar em seus ouvidos enquanto ela ficava de pé na tribuna e falava de coisas tristes para a pequena plateia. Nunca tinha ido à Itália. Era realmente para aquilo que suas economias deveriam servir, afinal? Não gostava do jeito como a Sra. Wilkins falava do destino, como se ela não tivesse escolha e como se tentar ou até pensar sobre isso não importasse. E mesmo assim aquilo a afetava. Os olhos da Sra. Wilkins pareciam os de alguém capaz de ver o futuro. A Sra. Arbuthnot sabia que algumas pessoas eram assim, e se a Sra. Wilkins realmente a tivesse visto no castelo medieval, então talvez lutar contra isso fosse inútil. Ainda assim, gastar suas economias com prazer - o dinheiro viera de uma fonte ruim, mas ela ao menos acreditara que seu destino final seria bom. Iria agora desviá-lo de seu propósito adequado, a única razão pela qual o guardara, e gastá-lo em proporcionar prazer a si mesma?

Original English

Beauty, beauty, beauty . . . the words kept ringing in her ears as she stood on the platform talking of sad things to the sparsely attended meeting. She had never been to Italy. Was that really what her nest-egg was to be spent on after all? Though she couldn't approve of the way Mrs. Wilkins was introducing the idea of predestination into her immediate future, just as if she had no choice, just as if to struggle, or even to reflect, were useless, it yet influenced her. Mrs. Wilkins's eyes had been the eyes of a seer. Some people were like that, Mrs. Arbuthnot knew; and if Mrs. Wilkins had actually seen her at the mediaeval castle it did seem probable that struggling would be a waste of time. Still, to spend her nest-egg on self-indulgence - The origin of this egg had been corrupt, but she had at least supposed its end was to be creditable. Was she to deflect it from its intended destination, which alone had appeared to justify her keeping it, and spend it on giving herself pleasure?

Original Português

Beleza, beleza, beleza... as palavras continuavam a ecoar em seus ouvidos enquanto ela falava sobre coisas tristes para a reunião, que contava com pouca gente. Ela nunca havia ido à Itália. Será que esse era realmente o destino de seu "pé-de-meia" depois de tudo? Embora não aprovasse a forma como a Sra. Wilkins estava introduzindo a ideia de predestinação em seu futuro imediato, como se ela não tivesse escolha, como se lutar ou até mesmo refletir fosse inútil, isso ainda a influenciava. Os olhos da Sra. Wilkins eram os olhos de uma vidente. A Sra. Arbuthnot sabia que algumas pessoas eram assim; e se a Sra. Wilkins realmente a

tivesse visto no castelo medieval, parecia provável que lutar seria uma perda de tempo. No entanto, gastar seu "pé-de-meia" em auto-indulgência... A origem desse "pé-de-meia" havia sido corrupta, mas ela pelo menos havia imaginado que seu fim seria credível. Ela estava prestes a desviá-lo de seu destino pretendido, que, por si só, já havia justificado sua posse, e gastá-lo em dar-se prazer?

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B1 Português (simplified)

A Sra. Arbuthnot continuou falando. Conhecia tão bem esse tipo de discurso que poderia tê-lo dito dormindo. Ao fim da reunião, com os olhos cheios de sonhos secretos, mal notou que ninguém tinha se comovido nem um pouco, e menos ainda a ponto de doar dinheiro.

Original English

Mrs. Arbuthnot spoke on and on, so much practised in the kind of speech that she could have said it all in her sleep, and at the end of the meeting, her eyes dazzled by her secret visions, she hardly noticed that nobody was moved in any way whatever, least of all in the way of contributions.

Original Português

A Sra. Arbuthnot continuou falando, tão hábil em falar sobre esse tipo de assunto que poderia dizer tudo em seus sonhos. E, no final da reunião, com os olhos cegados por suas visões secretas, ela mal notou que ninguém estava nem remotamente interessado, muito menos em fazer contribuições.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Mas o vigário notou. Ficou desapontado. A Sra. Arbuthnot costumava se sair muito melhor do que isso. E, ainda mais incomum, percebeu que ela nem parecia se importar.

Original English

But the vicar noticed. The vicar was disappointed. Usually his good friend and supporter Mrs. Arbuthnot succeeded better than this. And, what was even more unusual, she appeared, he observed, not even to mind.

Original Português

Mas o vigário notou. O vigário ficou desapontado. Normalmente, sua boa amiga e apoiadora, a Sra. Arbuthnot, tinha mais sucesso do que isso. E, o que era ainda mais incomum, ela, ele observou, nem sequer parecia se importar.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Não consigo imaginar", disse a ela ao se despedirem. Falou de mau humor, pois estava aborrecido tanto com a plateia quanto com ela. "No que essas pessoas estão se transformando? Nada parece comovê-las."

Original English

"I can't imagine," he said to her as they parted, speaking irritably, for he was irritated both by the audience and by her, "what these people are coming to. Nothing seems to move them."

Original Português

"Não consigo imaginar", disse ele a ela, ao se despedirem, falando de forma irritada, pois ele estava irritado tanto com o público quanto com ela: "o que essas pessoas estão buscando. Nada parece tocá-las."

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Talvez precisem de férias", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot. O vigário achou aquela uma resposta estranha e insatisfatória.

"Em fevereiro?", ele gritou atrás dela, com sarcasmo.

"Ah não... só em abril", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot por cima do ombro.

Original English

"Perhaps they need a holiday," suggested Mrs. Arbuthnot; an unsatisfactory, a queer reply, the vicar thought.

"In February?" he called after her sarcastically.

"Oh no - not till April," said Mrs. Arbuthnot over her shoulder.

Original Português

"Talvez elas precisem de férias", sugeriu a Sra. Arbuthnot; uma resposta insatisfatória, um comentário estranho, pensou o vigário.

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Original Português

"Em fevereiro?", chamou ele sarcasticamente.

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Original Português

"Não, apenas em abril", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot, virando-se.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Muito estranho", pensou o vigário. "Muito estranho mesmo." Depois foi para casa e não foi muito gentil com a esposa.

Original English

"Very odd," thought the vicar. "Very odd indeed." And he went home and was not perhaps quite christian to his wife.

Original Português

"Muito estranho", pensou o vigário. "Muito, muito estranho." E ele foi para casa e, talvez, não tenha sido tão devoto com sua esposa.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Naquela noite, a Sra. Arbuthnot orou pedindo orientação. Pensou que deveria pedir claramente que o castelo medieval já tivesse sido alugado por outra pessoa, para que o assunto ficasse resolvido. Mas perdeu a coragem. E se Deus atendesse sua oração? Não, não podia pedir isso. Não podia correr esse risco. Além disso, se gastasse suas economias atuais com férias, logo poderia juntar mais. Frederick muitas vezes lhe dava dinheiro, e por um tempo suas doações às obras de caridade da paróquia seriam menores. Mais tarde, as próximas economias seriam purificadas pelo modo como fossem usadas.

Original English

That night in her prayers Mrs. Arbuthnot asked for guidance. She felt she ought really to ask, straight out and roundly, that the mediaeval castle should already have been taken by some one else and the whole thing thus be settled, but her courage failed her. Suppose her prayer were to be answered? No; she couldn't ask it; she couldn't risk it. And after all - she almost pointed this out to God - if she spent her present nest-egg on a holiday she could quite soon accumulate another. Frederick pressed money on her; and it would only mean, while she rolled up a second egg, that for a time her contributions to the parish charities would be less. And then it could be the next nest-egg whose original corruption would be purged away by the use to which it was finally put.

Original Português

Naquela noite, em suas orações, a Sra. Arbuthnot pediu orientação. Ela sentia que realmente deveria perguntar, de forma direta e clara, que o castelo medieval já tivesse sido tomado por alguém e que a situação, assim, fosse resolvida, mas sua coragem falhou. E se sua oração fosse atendida? Não; ela não podia pedir isso; ela não podia correr esse risco. E, afinal, quase disse isso a Deus - se ela gastasse seu presente "pé-de-meia" em uma viagem, poderia logo acumular outro. Frederick ofereceu dinheiro a ela; e isso significaria, enquanto ela acumulava um segundo, que suas contribuições para as obras de caridade da paróquia seriam, por um tempo, menores. E então, talvez, fosse o próximo "pé-de-meia" cuja origem corrupta pudesse ser purgada pelo uso que lhe fosse dado.

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B1 Português (simplified)

A Sra. Arbuthnot não tinha dinheiro próprio. Vivia dos rendimentos de Frederick, e até suas economias vinham do trabalho dele. Isso a perturbava profundamente. Frederick escrevia, todo ano, memórias muito populares sobre as amantes de reis. Havia tantas mulheres assim na história que ele sempre tinha material de sobra. Publicara um livro a cada ano de casamento, e ainda restavam muitas mais mulheres sobre quem escrever. A Sra. Arbuthnot nada podia fazer além de viver daquele dinheiro. Certa vez, depois do sucesso de suas memórias sobre Du Barry, ele lhe deu um sofá horrível, de almofadas macias, e ela detestava que esse símbolo de uma pecadora francesa já morta ficasse dentro de sua própria casa.

Original English

For Mrs. Arbuthnot, who had no money of her own, was obliged to live on the proceeds of Frederick's activities, and her very nest-egg was the fruit, posthumously ripened, of ancient sin. The way Frederick made his living was one of the standing distresses of her life. He wrote immensely popular memoirs, regularly, every year, of the mistresses of kings. There were in history numerous kings who had had mistresses, and there were still more numerous mistresses who had had kings; so that he had been able to publish a book of memoirs during each year of his married life, and even so there were great further piles of these ladies waiting to be dealt with. Mrs. Arbuthnot was helpless. Whether she liked it or not, she was obliged to live on the proceeds. He gave her a dreadful sofa once, after the success of his Du Barri memoir, with swollen cushions and soft, receptive lap, and it seemed to her a miserable thing that there, in her very home, should flaunt this re-incarnation of a dead old French sinner.

Original Português

Para a Sra. Arbuthnot, que não tinha dinheiro próprio, era obrigado a viver com os rendimentos das atividades de Frederick, e seu próprio "pé-de-meia" era o fruto, amadurecendo após a morte, de antigos pecados. A forma como Frederick ganhava a vida era uma das maiores preocupações de sua vida. Ele escrevia memórias populares, regularmente, todos os anos, sobre as amantes de reis. Havia inúmeros reis que tiveram amantes, e ainda mais amantes que tiveram reis; assim, ele conseguiu publicar um livro de memórias durante cada ano de seu casamento, e mesmo assim, havia grandes pilhas de outras mulheres esperando para serem tratadas. A Sra. Arbuthnot estava impotente. Seja ela quisesse ou não, era obrigado a viver com os rendimentos. Ele lhe deu um sofá terrível, após o sucesso de seu livro sobre Du Barri, com

almofadas inchadas e macias, e pareceu-lhe uma coisa miserável que, em sua própria casa, aquele "reencarnação" de uma velha pecadora francesa pudesse estar ali.

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B1 Português (simplified)

A Sra. Arbuthnot acreditava que a moralidade era a base da felicidade, por isso a perturbava que ela e Frederick vivessem de dinheiro proveniente da culpa, mesmo que fosse uma culpa antiga, de muito tempo atrás. Quanto mais uma dessas mulheres era esquecida, mais gente lia o livro de Frederick, e mais dinheiro ele dava à esposa. Depois de acrescentar um pouco às suas economias, ela gastava o resto com os pobres. Esperava que um dia as pessoas parassem de querer histórias sobre a maldade, e então Frederick precisaria de ajuda ele mesmo. Em sua mente, a paróquia enriquecia por causa das vidas más de mulheres como Du Barry, Montespan, Pompadour, Ninon de l'Enclos e Maintenon. Os pobres eram o meio pelo qual o dinheiro era limpo e purificado. A Sra. Arbuthnot não podia fazer mais nada. Tentara encontrar a resposta certa, mas era difícil demais, então deixou nas mãos de Deus, assim como deixara Frederick nas mãos de Deus. Não gastava nada consigo mesma, exceto o grande sofá macio de sua casa. Os pobres eram os que mais ganhavam. Suas botas eram, de certo modo, fortalecidas pelos pecados. Ainda assim, fora muito difícil. Orara sobre isso até se cansar. Deveria recusar-se a tocar naquele dinheiro por vir de atos errados? Mas e as botas dos pobres? Perguntou ao vigário o que ele pensava, e depois de uma conversa cuidadosa, muito cuidadosa, ficou claro que ele era a favor das botas.

Original English

Simply good, convinced that morality is the basis of happiness, the fact that she and Frederick should draw their sustenance from guilt, however much purged by the passage of centuries, was one of the secret reasons of her sadness. The more the memoiréd lady had forgotten herself, the more his book about her was read and the more free-handed he was to his wife; and all that he gave her was spent, after adding slightly to her nest-egg - for she did hope and believe that some day people would cease to want to read of wickedness, and then Frederick would need supporting - on helping the poor. The parish flourished because, to take a handful at random, of the ill-behaviour of the ladies Du Barri, Montespan, Pompadour, Ninon de l'Enclos, and even of learned Maintenon. The poor were the filter through which the money was passed, to come out, Mrs. Arbuthnot hoped, purified. She could do no more. She had tried in days gone by to think the situation out, to discover the exact right course for her to take, but had found it, as she had found Frederick, too difficult, and had left it, as she had left Frederick, to God. Nothing of this money was spent on her house or dress; those remained, except for the great soft sofa, austere. It was the poor who profited. Their very boots were stout with sins. But how difficult it had been. Mrs. Arbuthnot, groping for guidance, prayed about it to exhaustion. Ought

she perhaps to refuse to touch the money, to avoid it as she would have avoided the sins which were its source? But then what about the parish's boots? She asked the vicar what he thought, and, through much delicate language, evasive and cautious, it did finally appear that he was for the boots.

Original Português

Simplesmente boa, convencida de que a moralidade é a base da felicidade, o fato de que ela e Frederick deveriam tirar seu sustento da culpa, embora essa culpa tivesse sido atenuada ao longo dos séculos, era uma das razões secretas de sua tristeza. Quanto mais a senhora esquecia de si mesma, mais seu livro sobre ela era lido e mais generoso ele era com sua esposa; e todo o dinheiro que ela recebia era gasto, após adicionar um pouco ao seu "pé-de-meia" - pois ela esperava e acreditava que, um dia, as pessoas deixariam de querer ler sobre a maldade, e então Frederick precisaria de apoio - em ajudar os pobres. A paróquia prosperava porque, para citar alguns exemplos, devido ao comportamento inadequado das senhoras Du Barri, Montespan, Pompadour, Ninon de l'Enclos, e até mesmo da erudita Maintenon. Os pobres eram o filtro através do qual o dinheiro passava, para, como esperava a Sra. Arbuthnot, sair purificado. Ela não podia fazer mais. Tinha tentado, em tempos passados, pensar na situação, descobrir o curso exato que deveria seguir, mas tinha encontrado, como tinha encontrado Frederick, que era muito difícil, e tinha deixado, como tinha deixado Frederick, para Deus. Nenhum desses valores era gasto em sua casa ou em suas roupas; essas permaneciam, exceto pelo grande e macio sofá, austero. Eram os pobres que se beneficiavam. Seus próprios sapatos eram robustos com pecados. Mas como era difícil. A Sra. Arbuthnot, buscando orientação, orava sobre isso até a exaustão. Talvez ela devesse recusar-se a tocar o dinheiro, evitando-o como evitaria os pecados de onde ele vinha? Mas, então, o que aconteceria com os "sapatos" da paróquia? Ela perguntou ao vigário o que ele achava, e, através de uma linguagem delicada, evasiva e cautelosa, acabou-se que ele era a favor dos "sapatos".

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B1 Português (simplified)

Pelo menos a Sra. Arbuthnot conseguira convencer Frederick a publicar as memórias sob outro nome. Ele só começara esse trabalho de tanto sucesso depois do casamento deles. Quando ela se casou com ele, ele era um respeitável funcionário da biblioteca do Museu Britânico. Assim, ela não estava publicamente associada aos livros. As pessoas de Hampstead gostavam de lê-los, e não faziam ideia de que o autor vivia entre elas. O próprio Frederick era quase desconhecido em Hampstead, até mesmo de vista. Nunca ia a eventos sociais locais. Quaisquer diversões que tivesse eram em Londres, e nunca falava sobre elas nem sobre as pessoas que conhecia. Só o vigário sabia de onde vinha o dinheiro da paróquia, e disse que era questão de honra não mencionar isso.

Original English

At least she had persuaded Frederick, when first he began his terrible successful career - he only began it after their marriage; when she married him he had been a blameless official attached to the library of the British Museum - to publish the memoirs under another name, so that she was not publicly branded. Hampstead read the books with glee, and had no idea that their writer lived in its midst. Frederick was almost unknown, even by sight, in Hampstead. He never went to any of its gatherings. Whatever it was he did in the way of recreation was done in London, but he never spoke of what he did or whom he saw; he might have been perfectly friendless for any mention he ever made of friends to his wife. Only the vicar knew where the money for the parish came from, and he regarded it, he told Mrs. Arbuthnot, as a matter of honour not to mention it.

Original Português

Pelo menos, ela convenceu Frederick, quando ele começou sua terrível e bem-sucedida carreira - ele começou apenas após o casamento; quando ela o casou, ele era um oficial íntegro ligado à biblioteca do Museu Britânico - a publicar os memórias sob outro nome, para que ela não fosse publicamente marcada. Em Hampstead, as pessoas leram os livros com entusiasmo, e não tinham ideia de que o autor vivia em meio a elas. Frederick era quase desconhecido, mesmo por vislumbre, em Hampstead. Ele nunca ia a nenhum dos seus encontros. Tudo o que ele fazia em termos de lazer era feito em Londres, mas ele nunca falava sobre o que fazia ou sobre quem via; ele poderia ter sido completamente sem amigos, já que qualquer menção que ele fazia de amigos para sua esposa. Apenas o vigário sabia de onde vinha o dinheiro para a paróquia, e ele, como disse à Sra. Arbuthnot, considerava isso uma questão de honra não mencionar.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Ao menos a pequena casa deles não estava cheia das mulheres más dos livros de Frederick, pois ele fazia seu trabalho longe de casa. Tinha duas salas perto do Museu Britânico, onde estudava seus temas, e ia até lá todas as manhãs. Voltava para casa muito depois de a esposa já estar dormindo. Às vezes não voltava para casa de jeito nenhum. Às vezes ela não o via por dias. Então, de repente, ele aparecia no café da manhã, tendo entrado com sua chave na noite anterior. Estava alegre, generoso, e satisfeito em lhe dar presentes. Parecia um homem bem-nutrido e contente com a vida. A Sra. Arbuthnot era sempre gentil, e cuidava para que o café dele ficasse exatamente do jeito que ele gostava.

Original English

And at least her little house was not haunted by the loose-lived ladies, for Frederick did his work away from home. He had two rooms near the British Museum, which was the scene of his exhumations, and there he went every morning, and he came back long after his wife was asleep. Sometimes he did not come back at all. Sometimes she did not see him for several days together. Then he would suddenly appear at breakfast, having let himself in with his latchkey the night before, very jovial and good-natured and free-handed and glad if she would allow him to give her something - a well-fed man, contented with the world; a jolly, full-blooded, satisfied man. And she was always gentle, and anxious that his coffee should be as he liked it.

Original Português

E, pelo menos, sua pequena casa não era assombrada pelas mulheres desregradas, pois Frederick fazia seu trabalho longe de casa. Ele tinha duas salas perto do Museu Britânico, que era o local de suas exumações, e lá ia todos os dias, e voltava muito depois que sua esposa dormia. Às vezes, ele nem voltava. Às vezes, ela não o via por vários dias seguidos. Então, de repente, aparecia no café da manhã, tendo entrado com sua chave na noite anterior, muito jovial, de bom humor, generoso e feliz se ela permitisse que ele lhe desse algo - um homem bem alimentado, satisfeito com o mundo; um homem alegre, cheio de vida, satisfeito. E ela sempre era gentil, e ansiava que seu café fosse preparado como ele gostava.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Ele parecia muito feliz. A Sra. Arbuthnot muitas vezes pensava que a vida ainda era um mistério, por mais que as pessoas tentassem organizá-la. Algumas pessoas nunca podiam ser compreendidas. Frederick era uma delas. Não se parecia em nada com o homem que ela conhecera no início. Não parecia mais precisar das coisas que uma vez dissera serem as mais importantes: amor, lar, partilha de pensamentos, e se importar com as mesmas coisas. Depois de seus esforços dolorosos para trazê-lo de volta àquela antiga proximidade, ela se machucara muito, e o Frederick que pensava ter desposado parecia mudado quase além do reconhecimento. No fim, colocou-o ao lado de sua cama como o principal objeto de suas orações e o deixou nas mãos de Deus. Amara-o demais para fazer qualquer outra coisa. Ele não sabia que, toda vez que saía de casa, sua bênção o acompanhava, como um pequeno eco daquele amor já terminado. Ela não ousava pensar nele como fora nos primeiros e maravilhosos dias que passaram juntos. Seu filho morreria, e ela não tinha mais ninguém só seu para amar plenamente. Os pobres se tornaram seus filhos, e Deus se tornou aquele a quem ela amava. Às vezes se perguntava que vida poderia ser mais feliz do que essa, mas seu rosto, especialmente seus olhos, permanecia triste.

Original English

He seemed very happy. Life, she often thought, however much one tabulated was yet a mystery. There were always some people it was impossible to place. Frederick was one of them. He didn't seem to bear the remotest resemblance to the original Frederick. He didn't seem to have the least need of any of the things he used to say were so important and beautiful - love, home, complete communion of thoughts, complete immersion in each other's interests. After those early painful attempts to hold him up to the point from which they had hand in hand so splendidly started, attempts in which she herself had got terribly hurt and the Frederick she supposed she had married was mangled out of recognition, she hung him up finally by her bedside as the chief subject of her prayers, and left him, except for those, entirely to God. She had loved Frederick too deeply to be able now to do anything but pray for him. He had no idea that he never went out of the house without her blessing going with him too, hovering, like a little echo of finished love, round that once dear head. She didn't dare think of him as he used to be, as he had seemed to her to be in those marvellous first days of their love-making, of their marriage. Her child had died; she had nothing, nobody of her own to lavish herself on. The poor became her children, and God the object of her love. What could be happier than such a life, she sometimes asked herself; but her face, and

particularly her eyes, continued sad.

Original Português

Ele parecia muito feliz. A vida, ela pensava frequentemente, por mais que se tentasse compreendê-la, ainda era um mistério. Havia sempre pessoas impossíveis de classificar. Frederick era uma delas. Ele não parecia ter a menor semelhança com o Frederick original. Ele não parecia precisar de nenhuma das coisas que ele costumava dizer que eram tão importantes e belas - amor, lar, completa comunhão de pensamentos, completa imersão nos interesses um do outro. Depois de aqueles primeiros e dolorosos tentos de mantê-lo no ponto de onde eles haviam começado a vida juntos de forma tão esplêndida, tentos nos quais ela mesma havia se machucado muito e o Frederick que ela imaginava ter casado era irreconhecível, ela finalmente o pendurou ao lado de sua cama como o principal objeto de suas orações, e o deixou, exceto por aqueles, inteiramente a Deus. Ela havia amado Frederick tanto que agora não podia fazer mais senão orar por ele. Ele não tinha ideia de que nunca saía de casa sem a bênção dela, pairando, como um pequeno eco de amor acabado, ao redor daquela cabeça, que antes era tão querida. Ela não ousava pensar nele como ele era, como ele parecia ser nos maravilhosos primeiros dias de seu amor, de seu casamento. Seu filho havia morrido; ela não tinha mais ninguém para se dedicar. Os pobres se tornaram seus filhos, e Deus, o objeto de seu amor. O que poderia ser mais feliz do que isso, ela se perguntava às vezes, mas seu rosto, e especialmente seus olhos, continuavam tristes.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Talvez quando envelhecermos... talvez quando os dois formos bem velhos..." pensou ela, com uma esperança triste.

Original English

"Perhaps when we're old . . . perhaps when we are both quite old . . ." she would think wistfully.

Original Português

"Talvez quando formos velhos... talvez quando ambos estivermos bem velhos...", pensava ela, melancólica.

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Chapter 3

B1 Português (simplified)

O dono do velho castelo era um inglês, o Sr. Briggs. Estava em Londres naquela época. Escreveu dizendo que o castelo tinha camas suficientes para oito pessoas, sem contar os criados. Também tinha três salas de estar, ameias, masmorras e luz elétrica. O aluguel era de £60 por um mês, e os salários dos criados eram à parte. Ele também queria referências. Queria provas de que a segunda metade do aluguel seria paga, já que a primeira metade tinha de ser paga adiantada. Também queria uma carta de um advogado, um médico ou um clérigo para comprovar que eram pessoas respeitáveis. Foi muito educado e disse que isso era normal, apenas uma formalidade.

Original English

The owner of the mediaeval castle was an Englishman, a Mr. Briggs, who was in London at the moment and wrote that it had beds enough for eight people, exclusive of servants, three sitting-rooms, battlements, dungeons, and electric light. The rent was £60 for the month, the servants' wages were extra, and he wanted references - he wanted assurances that the second half of his rent would be paid, the first half being paid in advance, and he wanted assurances of respectability from a solicitor, or a doctor, or a clergyman. He was very polite in his letter, explaining that his desire for references was what was usual and should be regarded as a mere formality.

Original Português

O proprietário do castelo medieval era um inglês, o Sr. Briggs, que se encontrava em Londres na época e escreveu que o local tinha camas suficientes para oito pessoas, sem contar os funcionários, três salas de estar, ameias, masmorras e iluminação elétrica. O aluguel era de 60 libras por mês, os salários dos funcionários eram adicionais, e ele exigia referências - ele queria garantias de que a segunda metade do aluguel seria paga, com a primeira a ser paga antecipadamente, e ele exigia garantias de respeitabilidade de um advogado, ou um médico, ou um clérigo. Ele foi muito cortês em sua carta, explicando que seu desejo por referências era o normal e deveria ser considerado apenas uma formalidade.

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B1 Português (simplified)

A Sra. Arbuthnot e a Sra. Wilkins não tinham pensado em referências, e jamais haviam imaginado que o aluguel pudesse ser tão alto. Tinham imaginado algo como três guinéus por semana, ou até menos, já que o lugar era pequeno e antigo.

Original English

Mrs. Arbuthnot and Mrs. Wilkins had not thought of references, and they had not dreamed a rent could be so high. In their minds had floated sums like three guineas a week; or less, seeing that the place was small and old.

Original Português

A Sra. Arbuthnot e a Sra. Wilkins não tinham pensado em referências, e elas sequer tinham imaginado que o aluguel poderia ser tão alto. Em suas mentes, haviam surgido valores como três guinéus por semana; ou menos, considerando que o lugar era pequeno e antigo.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Sessenta libras por um mês.

Isso as chocou.

Original English

Sixty pounds for a single month.

It staggered them.

Original Português

Sessenta libras por um único mês.

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Original Português

Isso as deixou atônitas.

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B1 Português (simplified)

A Sra. Arbuthnot pensou em todas as botas que sessenta libras poderiam comprar. Além do aluguel, havia os salários dos criados, comida e passagens de trem. As referências eram um problema; não podiam fornecê-las sem tornar seu plano público demais.

Original English

Before Mrs. Arbuthnot's eyes rose up boots: endless vistas, all the stout boots that sixty pounds would buy; and besides the rent there would be the servants' wages, and the food, and the railway journeys out and home. While as for references, these did indeed seem a stumbling-block; it did seem impossible to give any without making their plan more public than they had intended.

Original Português

Diante dos olhos da Sra. Arbuthnot, surgiram botas: vistas intermináveis, todas as botas robustas que sessenta libras poderiam comprar; e além do aluguel, haveria os salários dos funcionários, a comida e as viagens de trem de ida e volta. Enquanto que, em relação às referências, elas realmente pareciam um obstáculo; parecia impossível fornecer alguma sem tornar seu plano mais público do que pretendiam.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Ambas tinham pensado que seria melhor dizer a suas próprias amigas, em círculos separados, que cada uma iria ficar na casa de uma amiga que tinha uma casa na Itália. A Sra. Wilkins disse que isso seria verdade o bastante, mas a Sra. Arbuthnot não achava que fosse totalmente verdadeiro. A Sra. Wilkins também disse que essa era a única maneira de manter Mellersh tranquilo. Ele ficaria zangado se ela gastasse dinheiro só para chegar até a Itália. Ela não queria imaginar o que ele diria se soubesse que ela estava alugando parte de um castelo medieval para si mesma. Ele levaria dias para dizer tudo aquilo, mesmo sendo o dinheiro dela, e não dele.

Original English

They had both - even Mrs. Arbuthnot, lured for once away from perfect candour by the realisation of the great saving of trouble and criticism an imperfect explanation would produce - they had both thought it would be a good plan to give out, each to her own circle, their circles being luckily distinct, that each was going to stay with a friend who had a house in Italy. It would be true as far as it went - Mrs. Wilkins asserted that it would be quite true, but Mrs. Arbuthnot thought it wouldn't be quite - and it was the only way, Mrs. Wilkins said, to keep Mellersh even approximately quiet. To spend any of her money just on the mere getting to Italy would cause him indignation; what he would say if he knew she was renting part of a mediaeval castle on her own account Mrs. Wilkins preferred not to think. It would take him days to say it all; and this although it was her very own money, and not a penny of it had ever been his.

Original Português

Ambas - até mesmo a Sra. Arbuthnot, seduzida, mais uma vez, para longe da perfeita honestidade pela realização da grande economia de tempo e críticas que uma explicação imperfeita produziria - haviam pensado que seria um bom plano divulgar, cada uma para seu próprio círculo, que elas estavam indo ficar com uma amiga que tinha uma casa na Itália. Isso seria verdade, na medida em que fosse verdade - a Sra. Wilkins afirmou que seria totalmente verdade, mas a Sra. Arbuthnot pensou que não seria totalmente - e era a única maneira, disse a Sra. Wilkins, de manter Mellersh aproximadamente quieto. Gastar qualquer dinheiro apenas para chegar à Itália causaria indignação; o que ele diria se soubesse que ela estava alugando parte de um castelo medieval por conta própria. A Sra. Wilkins preferia não pensar nisso. Levaria dias para ele dizer tudo; e isso, embora fosse seu próprio dinheiro, e nenhum centavo dele havia sido gasto.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Mas imagino", disse ela, "que o seu marido seja igual. Imagino que todos os maridos são parecidos, no fim das contas."

Original English

"But I expect," she said, "your husband is just the same. I expect all husbands are alike in the long run."

Original Português

"Mas, imagino", disse ela, "seu marido é igual. Imagino que todos os maridos são parecidos, no final das contas."

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B1 Português (simplified)

A Sra. Arbuthnot não disse nada. Sua razão era o oposto da razão da Sra. Wilkins. Frederick ficaria contente que ela fosse embora. Ele não se importaria nem um pouco. Até ria do prazer dela pela vida e diria para ela se divertir e não ter pressa de voltar, mas de um jeito frio que magoaria. Ela achava que era melhor ser sentida falta por Mellersh do que ser mandada embora por Frederick. Fazer falta e ser necessária, por qualquer motivo, parecia-lhe melhor do que estar completamente sozinha, sem fazer falta e sem ser necessária a ninguém.

Original English

Mrs. Arbuthnot said nothing, because her reason for not wanting Frederick to know was the exactly opposite one - Frederick would be only too pleased for her to go, he would not mind it in the very least; indeed, he would hail such a manifestation of self-indulgence and worldliness with an amusement that would hurt, and urge her to have a good time and not to hurry home with a crushing detachment. Far better, she thought, to be missed by Mellersh than to be sped by Frederick. To be missed, to be needed, from whatever motive, was, she thought, better than the complete loneliness of not being missed or needed at all.

Original Português

A Sra. Arbuthnot permaneceu em silêncio, pois a razão pela qual não queria que Frederick soubesse era exatamente o oposto: Frederick ficaria muito feliz com a sua partida, não se importaria nem um pouco; de fato, ele receberia tal demonstração de indulgência e mundo com um divertimento que a magoaria, e a incentivaria a aproveitar e não voltar para casa com um desapego sufocante. Era muito melhor, pensou, ser lembrada por Mellersh do que ser esquecida por Frederick. Ser lembrada, ser necessária, por qualquer motivo, era, na sua opinião, melhor do que a completa solidão de não ser lembrada ou necessária.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Assim, ela não disse nada e deixou a Sra. Wilkins seguir com sua ideia. Por um dia inteiro, as duas pensaram que a única coisa a fazer era desistir do castelo medieval. Só quando tomaram essa decisão dolorosa é que perceberam de verdade o quanto o queriam.

Original English

She therefore said nothing, and allowed Mrs. Wilkins to leap at her conclusions unchecked. But they did, both of them, for a whole day feel that the only thing to be done was to renounce the mediaeval castle; and it was in arriving at this bitter decision that they really realised how acute had been their longing for it.

Original Português

Ela, portanto, permaneceu em silêncio, permitindo que a Sra. Wilkins chegasse às suas conclusões sem intercorrências. Mas ambas, durante um dia inteiro, sentiram que a única coisa a ser feita era renunciar ao castelo medieval; e foi ao chegar a essa decisão amarga que elas realmente perceberam o quão intenso havia sido o seu desejo por ele.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Então a Sra. Arbuthnot, que era boa em encontrar soluções para problemas, achou um jeito de resolver a questão das referências. Ao mesmo tempo, a Sra. Wilkins de repente viu como baixar o aluguel.

Original English

Then Mrs. Arbuthnot, whose mind was trained in the finding of ways out of difficulties, found a way out of the reference difficulty; and simultaneously Mrs. Wilkins had a vision revealing to her how to reduce the rent.

Original Português

Então, a Sra. Arbuthnot, cuja mente estava treinada para encontrar soluções para dificuldades, encontrou uma solução para a dificuldade em questão; e, simultaneamente, a Sra. Wilkins teve uma visão que revelou a ela como reduzir o aluguel.

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B1 Português (simplified)

O plano da Sra. Arbuthnot era simples e funcionou perfeitamente. Ela mesma levou todo o aluguel ao proprietário. Tirou o dinheiro de sua Caixa Econômica e de novo pareceu tímida e pesarosa, como se o caixa devesse saber que ela estava usando aquele dinheiro para o próprio prazer. Depois foi ao endereço perto do Oratório de Brompton, onde vivia o proprietário, com as seis notas de dez libras na bolsa. Entregou-as a ele e disse que não queria pagar só a metade. Quando ele viu seu cabelo repartido, seus olhos escuros e suaves, e suas roupas simples, e ouviu sua voz séria, disse a ela para não se incomodar em escrever pedindo aquelas referências.

Original English

Mrs. Arbuthnot's plan was simple, and completely successful. She took the whole of the rent in person to the owner, drawing it out of her Savings Bank - again she looked furtive and apologetic, as if the clerk must know the money was wanted for purposes of self-indulgence - and, going up with the six ten pound notes in her hand-bag to the address near the Brompton Oratory where the owner lived, presented them to him, waiving her right to pay only half. And when he saw her, and her parted hair and soft dark eyes and sober apparel, and heard her grave voice, he told her not to bother about writing round for those references.

Original Português

O plano da Sra. Arbuthnot era simples e completamente bem-sucedido. Ela levou todo o aluguel pessoalmente ao proprietário, retirando-o do seu banco de poupança - novamente, ela parecia furtiva e apologética, como se o funcionário soubesse que o dinheiro era para fins de indulgência - e, indo até o endereço perto da Oratória de Brompton, onde o proprietário morava, apresentou-o a ele, renunciando ao seu direito de pagar apenas metade. E, quando ele a viu, com o seu cabelo solto e os olhos escuros e suaves e a vestimenta sóbria, e ouviu a sua voz grave, ele disse a ela que não precisava se preocupar em procurar referências.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Vai ficar tudo bem", disse ele, escrevendo um recibo do aluguel. "Sente-se, por favor. Dia horrível, não é? A senhora vai ver que o velho castelo tem muito sol, seja lá o que mais lhe falte. Seu marido vai também?"

Original English

"It'll be all right," he said, scribbling a receipt for the rent. "Do sit down, won't you? Nasty day, isn't it? You'll find the old castle has lots of sunshine, whatever else it hasn't got. Husband going?"

Original Português

"Vai ficar tudo bem", disse ele, escrevendo um recibo pelo aluguel. "Sente-se, por favor? Dia horrível, não é? Você vai encontrar que o castelo antigo tem muito sol, independentemente do que mais ele não tenha. O marido vai?"

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B1 Português (simplified)

A Sra. Arbuthnot não estava acostumada a nada além da honestidade, então essa pergunta a perturbou. Começou a murmurar, e na mesma hora o proprietário pensou que ela devia ser viúva. Achou que fosse viúva de guerra, pois as outras viúvas eram velhas. Sentiu-se tolo por não ter adivinhado antes.

Original English

Mrs. Arbuthnot, unused to anything but candour, looked troubled at this question and began to murmur inarticulately, and the owner at once concluded that she was a widow - a war one, of course, for other widows were old - and that he had been a fool not to guess it.

Original Português

A Sra. Arbuthnot, acostumada apenas à sinceridade, pareceu perturbada com essa pergunta e começou a murmurar sem conseguir articular, e o proprietário concluiu imediatamente que ela era uma viúva - uma viúva da guerra, é claro, pois as viúvas eram velhas - e que ele havia sido um tolo por não adivinhar.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Ah, sinto muito", disse ele, corando até a raiz do cabelo louro. "Não quis dizer... hã, hã, hã..."

Original English

"Oh, I'm sorry," he said, turning red right up to his fair hair. "I didn't mean - h'm, h'm, h'm - "

Original Português

"Oh, desculpe", disse ele, ficando vermelho até os cabelos. "Eu não quis dizer... h'm, h'm, h'm..."

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B1 Português (simplified)

Olhou para o recibo que tinha escrito. "Sim, acho que está tudo certo", disse, levantando-se e entregando-o a ela. Depois pegou as seis notas que ela lhe estendia e sorriu, pois a Sra. Arbuthnot era encantadora de se olhar. "Agora", disse ele, "eu estou mais rico, e a senhora está mais feliz. Eu tenho dinheiro, e a senhora tem San Salvatore. Fico imaginando qual dos dois é melhor."

Original English

He ran his eye over the receipt he had written. "Yes, I think that's all right," he said, getting up and giving it to her. "Now," he added, taking the six notes she held out and smiling, for Mrs. Arbuthnot was agreeable to look at, "I'm richer, and you're happier. I've got money, and you've got San Salvatore. I wonder which is best."

Original Português

Ele olhou para o recibo que havia escrito. "Sim, acho que está tudo bem", disse, levantando-se e entregando-o a ela. "Agora", acrescentou, pegando as seis notas que ela segurava e sorrindo, pois a Sra. Arbuthnot era agradável de se ver, "eu estou mais rico, e você está mais feliz. Eu tenho dinheiro, e você tem San Salvatore. Fico curioso para saber qual é o melhor."

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Acho que o senhor já sabe", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot com seu doce sorriso.

Original English

"I think you know," said Mrs. Arbuthnot with her sweet smile.

Original Português

"Eu acho que você sabe", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot com o seu sorriso doce.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Ele riu e abriu a porta para ela. Foi uma pena que o encontro tivesse acabado. Ele teria gostado de convidá-la para almoçar. Ela o fazia pensar em sua mãe, sua babá, e em muitas coisas gentis e reconfortantes, mas também era diferente delas.

Original English

He laughed and opened the door for her. It was a pity the interview was over. He would have liked to ask her to lunch with him. She made him think of his mother, of his nurse, of all things kind and comforting, besides having the attraction of not being his mother or his nurse.

Original Português

Ele riu e abriu a porta para ela. Era uma pena que a entrevista tivesse terminado. Ele gostaria de convidá-la para almoçar. Ela o fez pensar na sua mãe, na sua enfermeira, em todas as coisas boas e reconfortantes, além de ter o atrativo de não ser sua mãe ou sua enfermeira.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Espero que a senhora goste do velho lugar", disse ele, segurando a mão dela por um instante à porta. Mesmo através da luva, a mão dela parecia reconfortante. Ele pensou que era o tipo de mão que as crianças gostariam de segurar no escuro. "Em abril, sabe, fica cheio de flores. E depois há o mar. A senhora precisa usar branco. Vai combinar muito bem. Há vários retratos da senhora lá."

Original English

"I hope you'll like the old place," he said, holding her hand a minute at the door. The very feel of her hand, even through its glove, was reassuring; it was the sort of hand, he thought, that children would like to hold in the dark. "In April, you know, it's simply a mass of flowers. And then there's the sea. You must wear white. You'll fit in very well. There are several portraits of you there."

Original Português

"Espero que goste do lugar antigo", disse ele, segurando a mão dela por um momento na porta. O simples toque da mão dela, mesmo através da luva, era reconfortante; era o tipo de mão, pensou ele, que as crianças gostariam de segurar no escuro. "Em abril, sabe, é simplesmente uma explosão de flores. E depois, há o mar. Você deve usar branco. Você se encaixará muito bem. Há vários retratos seus lá."

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Retratos?"

"Madonas, sabe. Há uma na escada que se parece exatamente com a senhora."

Original English

"Portraits?"

"Madonnas, you know. There's one on the stairs really exactly like you."

Original Português

"Retratos?"

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Original Português

"Madonas, sabe. Tem um na escada que é exatamente como você."

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B1 Português (simplified)

A Sra. Arbuthnot sorriu, se despediu e agradeceu. Imediatamente, sem esforço nenhum, colocou-o na categoria certa: ele era um artista de natureza enérgica e vivaz.

Original English

Mrs. Arbuthnot smiled and said good-bye and thanked him. Without the least trouble and at once she had got him placed in his proper category: he was an artist and of an effervescent temperament.

Original Português

A Sra. Arbuthnot sorriu e se despediu, agradecendo-o. Sem o menor problema, ela o colocou na sua categoria apropriada: ele era um artista e de um temperamento vibrante.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Apertaram as mãos e ela foi embora, e ele desejou que não tivesse ido. Depois que ela partiu, pensou que deveria ter pedido referências, nem que fosse só para que ela não o achasse pouco profissional por não fazê-lo. Mas seria como pedir referências a uma santa com auréola quanto a pedir a essa dama séria e gentil.

Original English

She shook hands and left, and he wished she hadn't. After she was gone he supposed that he ought to have asked for those references, if only because she would think him so unbusiness-like not to, but he could as soon have insisted on references from a saint in a nimbus as from that grave, sweet lady.

Original Português

Ela apertou a mão e foi embora, e ele desejou que ela não tivesse. Depois que ela foi, ele supôs que deveria ter pedido aquelas referências, pelo menos porque ela pensaria que ele era tão pouco profissional por não o fazer, mas ele poderia tão bem insistir em referências de uma santa com um halo quanto daquela gentil senhora.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Rose Arbuthnot.

A carta dela, que marcara o encontro, estava sobre a mesa.

Nome bonito.

Original English

Rose Arbuthnot.

Her letter, making the appointment, lay on the table.

Pretty name.

Original Português

Rose Arbuthnot.

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Original Português

A carta, marcando o compromisso, estava sobre a mesa.

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Original Português

Nome bonito.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Assim aquele problema estava resolvido. Mas ainda havia o outro: o efeito muito duro do custo sobre as economias delas, especialmente as da Sra. Wilkins, que eram bem menores que as da Sra. Arbuthnot. Foi então que a Sra. Wilkins teve uma ideia repentina que lhe mostrou como resolver a questão. Depois de conseguirem San Salvatore, cujo belo nome religioso ambas amavam, colocariam um anúncio no The Times e procurariam mais duas senhoras com o mesmo desejo que o delas, para se juntarem a elas e dividir o custo.

Original English

That difficulty, then, was overcome. But there still remained the other one, the really annihilating effect of the expense on the nest-eggs, and especially on Mrs. Wilkins's, which was in size, compared with Mrs. Arbuthnot's, as the egg of the plover to that of the duck; and this in its turn was overcome by the vision vouchsafed to Mrs. Wilkins, revealing to her the steps to be taken for its overcoming. Having got San Salvatore - the beautiful, the religious name, fascinated them - they in their turn would advertise in the Agony Column of The Times, and would inquire after two more ladies, of similar desires to their own, to join them and share the expenses.

Original Português

Assim, aquela dificuldade estava superada. Mas ainda restava a outra: o efeito verdadeiramente devastador da despesa sobre os pés-de-meia - sobretudo o da Sra. Wilkins, que, comparado ao da Sra. Arbuthnot, era em tamanho como o ovo de uma tarambola diante do de uma pata. Essa dificuldade, por sua vez, foi vencida por uma visão concedida à Sra. Wilkins, que lhe revelou os passos necessários. Tendo conseguido San Salvatore - o nome belo e religioso as fascinava - , elas mesmas anunciariam na seção de anúncios pessoais do The Times e procurariam outras duas senhoras, com desejos semelhantes aos seus, para se juntarem a elas e dividirem as despesas.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Assim, na mesma hora, a pressão sobre suas economias seria cortada pela metade. A Sra. Wilkins estava disposta a gastar todo o seu dinheiro no plano, mas sabia que, se custasse até mesmo seis pence a mais do que suas noventa libras, ela estaria numa posição terrível. Imagine ter de ir até Mellersh e dizer: "Devo dinheiro." Já seria ruim o bastante se algum dia tivesse de dizer: "Não tenho mais economias", mas ao menos assim poderia se consolar sabendo que o dinheiro fora dela. Então, embora estivesse disposta a gastar seu último centavo, não gastaria um único tostão que não fosse verdadeiramente seu. Sentia que, se sua parte do aluguel fosse reduzida a quinze libras, ainda lhe sobraria o bastante para os outros custos. Poderiam também economizar bastante em comida, por exemplo colhendo azeitonas de suas próprias árvores e comendo-as, e talvez pescando.

Original English

At once the strain of the nest-eggs would be reduced from half to a quarter. Mrs. Wilkins was prepared to fling her entire egg into the adventure, but she realised that if it were to cost even sixpence over her ninety pounds her position would be terrible. Imagine going to Mellersh and saying, "I owe." It would be awful enough if some day circumstances forced her to say, "I have no nest-egg," but at least she would be supported in such a case by the knowledge that the egg had been her own. She therefore, though prepared to fling her last penny into the adventure, was not prepared to fling into it a single farthing that was not demonstrably her own; and she felt that if her share of the rent was reduced to fifteen pounds only, she would have a safe margin for the other expenses. Also they might economise very much on food - gather olives off their own trees and eat them, for instance, and perhaps catch fish.

Original Português

De repente, o esforço para manter o "pé-de-meia" seria reduzido de metade para um quarto. A Sra. Wilkins estava disposta a investir todo o seu "pé-de-meia" na aventura, mas percebeu que, se custasse até seis pence acima dos seus noventa libras, sua situação seria terrível. Imagine ir ao Mellersh e dizer: "Eu devo". Seria terrível o suficiente se, algum dia, as circunstâncias a obrigassem a dizer: "Eu não tenho nenhum 'pé-de-meia'", mas, pelo menos, ela teria a tranquilidade de saber que o "pé-de-meia" era seu. Portanto, embora estivesse disposta a investir cada centavo na aventura, ela não estava disposta a investir uma única farthinha que não fosse demonstradamente sua; e ela sentia que, se sua parte do aluguel fosse reduzida a apenas quinze libras, ela teria uma margem segura para

os outros gastos. Além disso, elas poderiam economizar muito na alimentação - colher azeitonas das suas próprias árvores e comê-las, por exemplo, e talvez pescar.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Perceberam que poderiam reduzir bastante o aluguel tendo mais gente. Mas não queriam dividir um quarto com uma desconhecida. Queriam paz e descanso. Assim, só queriam mais duas senhoras. Receberam apenas duas respostas ao anúncio.

Original English

Of course, as they pointed out to each other, they could reduce the rent to an almost negligible sum by increasing the number of sharers; they could have six more ladies instead of two if they wanted to, seeing that there were eight beds. But supposing the eight beds were distributed in couples in four rooms, it would not be altogether what they wanted, to find themselves shut up at night with a stranger. Besides, they thought that perhaps having so many would not be quite so peaceful. After all, they were going to San Salvatore for peace and rest and joy, and six more ladies, especially if they got into one's bedroom, might a little interfere with that. speech first However, there seemed to be only two ladies in England at that moment who had any wish to join them, for they had only two answers to their advertisement.

Original Português

É claro, como diziam uma à outra, poderiam reduzir o aluguel a uma quantia quase insignificante aumentando o número de participantes; se quisessem, podiam ter outras seis senhoras em vez de duas, pois havia oito camas. Mas, supondo que as oito camas estivessem distribuídas aos pares em quatro quartos, não era bem o que desejavam ver-se trancadas à noite com uma desconhecida. Além disso, pensavam que talvez tanta gente não fosse muito tranquila. Afinal, iam a San Salvatore em busca de paz, descanso e alegria, e mais seis senhoras, especialmente se entrassem no quarto de alguém, talvez interferissem um pouco nisso. Contudo, parecia haver naquele momento apenas duas senhoras na Inglaterra dispostas a se juntar a elas, pois tinham recebido somente duas respostas ao anúncio.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Bem, só queremos duas mesmo", disse a Sra. Wilkins, recuperando-se rapidamente, pois tinha imaginado que muita gente queria vir.

Original English

"Well, we only want two," said Mrs. Wilkins, quickly recovering, for she had imagined a great rush.

Original Português

"Bem, nós só queremos duas", disse a Sra. Wilkins, rapidamente se recuperando, pois ela havia imaginado uma grande correria.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Acho que escolher teria sido uma coisa boa", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot.

"Quer dizer, porque assim não teríamos ficado com Lady Caroline Dester."

"Não foi isso que eu disse", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot, com brandura.

Original English

"I think a choice would have been a good thing," said Mrs. Arbuthnot.

"You mean because then we needn't have had Lady Caroline Dester."

"I didn't say that," gently protested Mrs. Arbuthnot.

Original Português

"Eu acho que ter uma escolha seria bom", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot.

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Original Português

"Você quer dizer porque então não precisaríamos ter Lady Caroline Dester."

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Original Português

"Eu não disse isso", protestou suavemente a Sra. Arbuthnot.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Não precisamos dela", disse a Sra. Wilkins. "Só mais uma pessoa já nos ajudaria muito com o aluguel. Não somos obrigadas a ter duas."

Original English

"We needn't have her," said Mrs. Wilkins. "Just one more person would help us a great deal with the rent. We're not obliged to have two."

Original Português

"Não precisamos dela", disse a Sra. Wilkins. "Apenas uma pessoa a mais nos ajudaria muito com o aluguel. Não estamos obrigadas a ter duas."

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Mas por que não haveríamos de ficar com ela? Ela realmente parece ser exatamente o que precisamos."

"Sim... parece isso, pela carta dela", disse a Sra. Wilkins, incerta.

Original English

"But why should we not have her? She seems really quite what we want."

"Yes - she does from her letter," said Mrs. Wilkins doubtfully.

Original Português

"Mas por que não deveríamos tê-la? Ela parece realmente o que nós queremos."

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Original Português

"Sim - pela carta, parece que sim", disse a Sra. Wilkins, em dúvida.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Ela achava que se sentiria muito tímida perto de Lady Caroline. Por mais estranho que pareça, a Sra. Wilkins nunca tinha conhecido ninguém da aristocracia, embora eles pareçam estar em toda parte.

Original English

She felt she would be terribly shy of Lady Caroline. Incredible as it may seem, seeing how they get into everything, Mrs. Wilkins had never come across any members of the aristocracy.

Original Português

Ela sentiu que seria muito tímida com Lady Caroline. Incrivelmente, a Sra. Wilkins nunca havia encontrado membros da aristocracia, apesar de tudo.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Elas entrevistaram Lady Caroline e a outra candidata, a Sra. Fisher.

Original English

They interviewed Lady Caroline, and they interviewed the other applicant, a Mrs. Fisher.

Original Português

Elas entrevistaram Lady Caroline, e elas entrevistaram a outra candidata, a Sra. Fisher.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Lady Caroline foi ao clube na Shaftesbury Avenue. Parecia querer uma coisa acima de tudo: se afastar de todos que já conhecera. Quando viu o clube, e a Sra. Arbuthnot, e a Sra. Wilkins, soube que era exatamente aquilo que queria. Estaria na Itália, um lugar que amava. Não ficaria em hotéis, que odiava. Não ficaria na casa de amigos, de quem não gostava. Estaria com desconhecidas que jamais mencionariam ninguém que ela conhecesse, porque não as conheciam e não podiam conhecê-las. Fez algumas perguntas sobre a quarta mulher e ficou satisfeita com as respostas. A Sra. Fisher, do Prince of Wales Terrace, era viúva. Ela também não conheceria as amigas de Lady Caroline. Lady Caroline nem sabia onde ficava o Prince of Wales Terrace.

Original English

Lady Caroline came to the club in Shaftesbury Avenue, and appeared to be wholly taken up by one great longing, a longing to get away from everybody she had ever known. When she saw the club, and Mrs. Arbuthnot, and Mrs. Wilkins, she was sure that here was exactly what she wanted. She would be in Italy - a place she adored; she would not be in hotels - places she loathed; she would not be staying with friends - persons she disliked; and she would be in the company of strangers who would never mention a single person she knew, for the simple reason that they had not, could not have, and would not come across them. She asked a few questions about the fourth woman, and was satisfied with the answers. Mrs. Fisher, of Prince of Wales Terrace. A widow. She too would be unacquainted with any of her friends. Lady Caroline did not even know where Prince of Wales Terrace was.

Original Português

A Lady Caroline chegou ao clube na Shaftesbury Avenue, e parecia estar completamente absorta em um único desejo: a de se livrar de todos aqueles que conhecia. Quando viu o clube, a Sra. Arbuthnot e a Sra. Wilkins, ela ficou certa de que ali estava exatamente o que precisava. Estaria na Itália - um lugar que adorava; não estaria em hotéis - lugares que detestava; não estaria hospedada na casa de amigos - pessoas que não gostava; e estaria na companhia de estranhos que nunca mencionariam uma única pessoa que ela conhecia, simplesmente porque não as conheciam, não poderiam conhecê-las, e não as conheceriam. Ela perguntou algumas coisas sobre a quarta mulher, e ficou satisfeita com as respostas. A Sra. Fisher, da Prince of Wales Terrace. Uma viúva. Ela também não conheceria nenhuma de suas amigas. A Lady Caroline nem sequer sabia onde ficava a Prince of Wales Terrace.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Fica em Londres", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot.

"Fica?", disse Lady Caroline.

Tudo parecia muito calmo e repousante.

Original English

"It's in London," said Mrs. Arbuthnot.

"Is it?" said Lady Caroline.

It all seemed most restful.

Original Português

"Está em Londres", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot.

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Original Português

"É?", perguntou a Lady Caroline.

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Original Português

Tudo parecia incrivelmente tranquilo.

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B1 Português (simplified)

A Sra. Fisher não pôde ir ao clube porque, escreveu ela, não conseguia caminhar sem uma bengala. Assim, a Sra. Arbuthnot e a Sra. Wilkins foram visitá-la.

Original English

Mrs. Fisher was unable to come to the club because, she explained by letter, she could not walk without a stick; therefore Mrs. Arbuthnot and Mrs. Wilkins went to her.

Original Português

A Sra. Fisher não pôde comparecer ao clube, pois, conforme explicou em uma carta, não conseguia andar sem uma bengala; portanto, a Sra. Arbuthnot e a Sra. Wilkins foram até ela.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Mas se ela não consegue ir ao clube, como vai conseguir ir à Itália?", perguntou-se a Sra. Wilkins em voz alta.

"Vamos ouvir isso da própria boca dela", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot.

Original English

"But if she can't come to the club how can she go to Italy?" wondered Mrs. Wilkins, aloud.

"We shall hear that from her own lips," said Mrs. Arbuthnot.

Original Português

"Mas, se ela não pode vir ao clube, como poderá ir para a Itália?", perguntou a Sra. Wilkins, em voz alta.

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Original Português

"Iremos saber disso diretamente dela", disse a Sra. Arbuthnot.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Da própria Sra. Fisher, só souberam, depois de perguntas cuidadosas, que ficar sentada em trens não era o mesmo que andar por aí, e isso elas já sabiam. Mas, tirando a bengala, ela parecia uma quarta pessoa muito boa: quieta, culta e de idade. Era bem mais velha do que elas, e mais velha também que Lady Caroline, embora não tão velha a ponto de ter perdido a mente ativa. Era muito correta, e ainda usava roupas pretas completas, mesmo o marido tendo morrido onze anos antes. Sua casa estava cheia de fotografias autografadas de famosas personalidades vitorianas já falecidas. Disse que os conhecera todos quando era jovem. Seu pai fora um crítico famoso, e em sua casa ela conhecera quase todos os grandes nomes da literatura e das artes. Carlyle tinha franzido a testa para ela, Matthew Arnold a segurara no colo, e Tennyson a provocara sobre o comprimento de sua trança. Mostrou-lhes com entusiasmo as fotografias em suas paredes e apontou as assinaturas com a bengala. Não falou de seu próprio marido, e não perguntou sobre os delas, o que foi um grande alívio. Até parecia achar que elas também eram viúvas, pois quando perguntou quem seria a quarta senhora e soube que era Lady Caroline Dester, disse: "Ela também é viúva?" Quando explicaram que Lady Caroline ainda não tinha se casado, a Sra. Fisher disse calmamente: "Tudo a seu tempo."

Original English

From Mrs. Fisher's lips they merely heard, in reply to delicate questioning, that sitting in trains was not walking about; and they knew that already. Except for the stick, however, she appeared to be a most desirable fourth - quiet, educated, elderly. She was much older than they or Lady Caroline - Lady Caroline had informed them she was twenty-eight - but not so old as to have ceased to be active-minded. She was very respectable indeed, and still wore a complete suit of black though her husband had died, she told them, eleven years before. Her house was full of signed photographs of illustrious Victorian dead, all of whom she said she had known when she was little. Her father had been an eminent critic, and in his house she had seen practically everybody who was anybody in letters and art. Carlyle had scowled at her; Matthew Arnold had held her on his knee; Tennyson had sonorously rallied her on the length of her pig-tail. She animatedly showed them the photographs, hung everywhere on her walls, pointing out the signatures with her stick, and she neither gave any information about her own husband nor asked for any about the husbands of her visitors; which was the greatest comfort. Indeed, she seemed to think that they also were widows, for on inquiring who the fourth lady was to be, and being told it was a Lady Caroline Dester, she said, "Is she a widow too?" And on their

explaining that she was not, because she had not yet been married, observed with abstracted amiability, "All in good time."

Original Português

Dos lábios da Sra. Fisher, em resposta a perguntas delicadas, ouviram apenas que ficar sentada em trens não era andar de um lado para o outro; e isso elas já sabiam. Tirando a bengala, contudo, ela parecia uma quarta companheira muito desejável - quieta, instruída, idosa. Era bem mais velha que elas ou que Lady Caroline - Lady Caroline informara ter vinte e oito anos - , mas não tão velha que tivesse deixado de possuir uma mente ativa. Era, de fato, muito respeitável e ainda vestia um traje inteiramente preto, embora o marido tivesse morrido, contou ela, onze anos antes. Sua casa estava cheia de fotografias autografadas de ilustres vitorianos já mortos, todos os quais afirmava ter conhecido quando pequena. Seu pai fora um crítico eminente e, na casa dele, ela vira praticamente todo mundo que era alguém nas letras e nas artes. Carlyle franzira o cenho para ela; Matthew Arnold a tivera no colo; Tennyson a provocara com voz sonora por causa do comprimento de sua trança. Mostrou-lhes animadamente as fotografias penduradas por todas as paredes, apontando as assinaturas com a bengala, e não deu informação alguma sobre o próprio marido nem pediu qualquer notícia sobre os maridos das visitantes; o que foi o maior alívio. Na verdade, parecia supor que elas também eram viúvas, pois, ao perguntar quem seria a quarta senhora e ouvir que era Lady Caroline Dester, disse: "Ela também é viúva?" E, quando lhe explicaram que não, porque ainda não se casara, observou com amabilidade distraída: "Tudo a seu tempo."

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B1 Português (simplified)

O jeito distante da Sra. Fisher era, na verdade, um bom sinal. Ela parecia interessada principalmente nas pessoas famosas que tinha conhecido e em suas fotografias memoriais. Boa parte do encontro foi dedicada às suas lembranças de Carlyle, Meredith, Matthew Arnold, Tennyson e muitos outros. Disse que só queria ficar sentada em silêncio ao sol e recordar. Era também isso que a Sra. Arbuthnot e a Sra. Wilkins queriam de uma companheira de aluguel. A companheira perfeita ficaria sentada em silêncio ao sol, recordando, e só despertaria no sábado à noite para pagar sua parte. A Sra. Fisher também disse que gostava de flores, e certa vez, quando esteve na casa do pai por um fim de semana em Box Hill...

Original English

But Mrs. Fisher's very abstractedness - and she seemed to be absorbed chiefly in the interesting people she used to know and in their memorial photographs, and quite a good part of the interview was taken up by reminiscent anecdote of Carlyle, Meredith, Matthew Arnold, Tennyson, and a host of others - her very abstractedness was a recommendation. She only asked, she said, to be allowed to sit quiet in the sun and remember. That was all Mrs. Arbuthnot and Mrs. Wilkins asked of their sharers. It was their idea of a perfect sharer that she should sit quiet in the sun and remember, rousing herself on Saturday evenings sufficiently to pay her share. Mrs. Fisher was very fond, too, she said, of flowers, and once when she was spending a week-end with her father at Box Hill -

Original Português

Mas a extrema abstração da Sra. Fisher - e parecia que ela estava principalmente absorvida nas pessoas interessantes que conhecia e em suas fotografias de memória, e uma boa parte da entrevista foi dedicada a anedotas nostálgicas sobre Carlyle, Meredith, Matthew Arnold, Tennyson e uma infinidade de outros - essa sua extrema abstração era uma vantagem. Ela, disse, só queria poder sentar-se em silêncio ao sol e recordar. Era tudo o que a Sra. Arbuthnot e a Sra. Wilkins esperavam de seus companheiras. Era a ideia delas de uma companheira perfeita que ela se sentasse em silêncio ao sol e lembrasse, despertando-se aos sábados à noite o suficiente para pagar sua parte. A Sra. Fisher também, disse, gostava muito de flores, e uma vez, quando estava passando um fim de semana com seu pai em Box Hill -

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Quem morava em Box Hill?", interrompeu a Sra. Wilkins. Estava profundamente empolgada por conhecer alguém que realmente conhecera as grandes figuras do passado, os tinha visto, ouvido falar e tocado.

Original English

"Who lived at Box Hill?" interrupted Mrs. Wilkins, who hung on Mrs. Fisher's reminiscences, intensely excited by meeting somebody who had actually been familiar with all the really and truly and undoubtedly great - actually seen them, heard them talking, touched them.

Original Português

"Quem morava em Box Hill?", interrompeu a Sra. Wilkins, que se agarrava às reminiscências da Sra. Fisher, intensamente entusiasmada por conhecer alguém que realmente conhecia todas as pessoas realmente e inegavelmente grandes - que as tinha visto, ouvido falar e tocado.

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B1 Português (simplified)

A Sra. Fisher olhou para ela por cima dos óculos, com certa surpresa. A Sra. Wilkins estava tão ansiosa por chegar às partes importantes das lembranças da Sra. Fisher que não parava de interromper com perguntas. Temia que a Sra. Arbuthnot a contivesse e ela perdesse metade da história, mas para a Sra. Fisher, suas perguntas pareciam ignorantes.

Original English

Mrs. Fisher looked at her over the top of her glasses in some surprise. Mrs. Wilkins, in her eagerness to tear the heart out quickly of Mrs. Fisher's reminiscences, afraid that at any moment Mrs. Arbuthnot would take her away and she wouldn't have heard half, had already interrupted several times with questions which appeared ignorant to Mrs. Fisher.

Original Português

A Sra. Fisher olhou para ela, por cima dos óculos, com alguma surpresa. A Sra. Wilkins, em sua ânsia por extrair o coração rapidamente das reminiscências da Sra. Fisher, temendo que a Sra. Arbuthnot a levasse embora a qualquer momento e ela não tivesse ouvido metade, já havia interrompido várias vezes com perguntas que pareciam ignorantes para a Sra. Fisher.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Meredith, é claro", disse a Sra. Fisher, com certa aspereza. "Lembro-me de um fim de semana em particular", continuou. "Meu pai me levava lá com frequência, mas sempre me lembro especialmente deste..."

Original English

"Meredith of course," said Mrs. Fisher rather shortly. "I remember a particular week-end" - she continued. "My father often took me, but I always remember this week-end particularly - "

Original Português

"Meredith, é claro", disse a Sra. Fisher, de forma concisa. "Eu me lembro de um fim de semana particular", - continuou. "Meu pai frequentemente me levava, mas eu sempre me lembro deste fim de semana particularmente - "

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B1 Português (simplified)

"A senhora conheceu Keats?", perguntou a Sra. Wilkins, ansiosa.

Depois de uma pausa, a Sra. Fisher disse, com certa frieza, que nunca tinha conhecido nem Keats nem Shakespeare.

Original English

"Did you know Keats?" eagerly interrupted Mrs. Wilkins.

Mrs. Fisher, after a pause, said with sub-acid reserve that she had been unacquainted with both Keats and Shakespeare.

Original Português

"Você conhecia Keats?", interrompeu ansiosamente a Sra. Wilkins.

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Original Português

A Sra. Fisher, após uma pausa, disse com um tom sub-ácido que não tinha conhecido Keats nem Shakespeare.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Ah, é claro... que tolíce a minha!", exclamou a Sra. Wilkins, corando intensamente. "É que os grandes escritores mortos ainda parecem vivos. Dá a impressão de que poderiam entrar na sala a qualquer momento. Aí a gente esquece que estão mortos. Na verdade, sabe-se muito bem que não estão mortos... nem de longe tão mortos quanto a senhora e eu estamos agora", disse ela à Sra. Fisher, que a observava por cima dos óculos.

Original English

"Oh of course - how ridiculous of me!" cried Mrs. Wilkins, flushing scarlet. "It's because" - she floundered - "it's because the immortals somehow still seem alive, don't they - as if they were here, going to walk into the room in another minute - and one forgets they are dead. In fact one knows perfectly well that they're not dead - not nearly so dead as you and I even now," she assured Mrs. Fisher, who observed her over the top of her glasses.

Original Português

"Ah, é claro - como é ridículo de minha parte!", exclamou a Sra. Wilkins, corando. "É porque - ela hesitou - é porque os mortos, de alguma forma, ainda parecem vivos, não é? Como se estivessem aqui, prestes a entrar na sala a qualquer momento - e se esquece-se que estão mortos. Na verdade, sabe-se perfeitamente que não estão mortos - nem tanto quanto nós, agora", assegurou a Sra. Fisher, que a observava por cima dos óculos.

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B1 Português (simplified)

A Sra. Wilkins continuou falando, mesmo que suas palavras fizessem pouco sentido, porque a Sra. Fisher continuava a observá-la por cima dos óculos. "Achei que vi Keats outro dia em Hampstead, atravessando a rua na frente daquela casa... a senhora sabe, a casa onde ele morou..."

Original English

"I thought I saw Keats the other day," Mrs. Wilkins incoherently proceeded, driven on by Mrs. Fisher's look over the top of her glasses. "In Hampstead - crossing the road in front of that house - you know - the house where he lived - "

Original Português

"Eu pensei que vi Keats outro dia", prosseguiu incoerentemente a Sra. Wilkins, impulsionada pelo olhar da Sra. Fisher por cima dos óculos. "Em Hampstead - atravessando a rua em frente àquela casa - você sabe - a casa onde ele morava - "

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B1 Português (simplified)

A Sra. Arbuthnot disse que precisavam ir.

A Sra. Fisher não fez nada para impedi-las.

Original English

Mrs. Arbuthnot said they must be going.

Mrs. Fisher did nothing to prevent them.

Original Português

A Sra. Arbuthnot disse que precisavam ir.

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Original Português

A Sra. Fisher não fez nada para impedi-las.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Eu realmente achei que o vi", disse a Sra. Wilkins, tentando fazê-las acreditar nela, uma depois da outra. Seu rosto não parava de mudar de cor, e ela não conseguia parar de falar por causa dos óculos da Sra. Fisher e de seu olhar fixo. "Acredito mesmo que o vi... ele estava vestido com..."

Original English

"I really thought I saw him," protested Mrs. Wilkins, appealing for belief first to one and then to the other while waves of colour passed over her face, and totally unable to stop because of Mrs. Fisher's glasses and the steady eyes looking at her over their tops. "I believe I did see him - he was dressed in a - "

Original Português

"Eu realmente pensei que o vi", protestou a Sra. Wilkins, buscando acreditar primeiro em uma e depois na outra, enquanto ondas de cor passavam pelo seu rosto, e totalmente incapaz de parar devido aos óculos da Sra. Fisher e aos olhos fixos nela. "Eu acredito que o vi - ele estava vestido com um - "

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B1 Português (simplified)

Até a Sra. Arbuthnot agora olhou para ela e, com a voz mais gentil que conseguiu, disse que iriam se atrasar para o almoço.

Original English

Even Mrs. Arbuthnot looked at her now, and in her gentlest voice said they would be late for lunch.

Original Português

Mesmo a Sra. Arbuthnot olhou para ela agora, e, com sua voz mais gentil, disse que elas estariam atrasadas para o almoço.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Nesse ponto, a Sra. Fisher pediu referências. Não queria ficar trancada por quatro semanas com alguém que via coisas. Era verdade que havia três salas de estar, além do jardim e das ameias em San Salvatore, então ela poderia se manter afastada da Sra. Wilkins se fosse preciso. Mas ainda assim seria desagradável se a Sra. Wilkins de repente dissesse que viu o Sr. Fisher. O Sr. Fisher estava morto, e a Sra. Fisher queria que ele continuasse morto. Não queria ouvir que ele estava andando pelo jardim. O que ela realmente queria saber era se a Sra. Wilkins era saudável e normal. Seria uma mulher comum, sensata? A Sra. Fisher sentia que, com pelo menos um endereço, poderia descobrir o que precisava. Assim, pediu referências, e as outras pareceram chocadas. A Sra. Wilkins ficou logo séria. A Sra. Fisher então disse: "É o costume."

Original English

It was at this point that Mrs. Fisher asked for references. She had no wish to find herself shut up for four weeks with somebody who saw things. It is true that there were three sitting-rooms, besides the garden and the battlements at San Salvatore, so that there would be opportunities of withdrawal from Mrs. Wilkins; but it would be disagreeable to Mrs. Fisher, for instance, if Mrs. Wilkins were suddenly to assert that she saw Mr. Fisher. Mr. Fisher was dead; let him remain so. She had no wish to be told he was walking about the garden. The only reference she really wanted, for she was much too old and firmly seated in her place in the world for questionable associates to matter to her, was one with regard to Mrs. Wilkins's health. Was her health quite normal? Was she an ordinary, everyday, sensible woman? Mrs. Fisher felt that if she were given even one address she would be able to find out what she needed. So she asked for references, and her visitors appeared to be so much taken aback - Mrs. Wilkins, indeed, was instantly sobered - that she added, "It is usual."

Original Português

Foi nesse momento que a Sra. Fisher solicitou referências. Ela não desejava se encontrar presa por quatro semanas com alguém que tivesse uma visão peculiar. É verdade que havia três salas de estar, além do jardim e das muralhas em San Salvatore, para que houvesse oportunidades de se retirar de Sra. Wilkins; mas seria desagradável para a Sra. Fisher, por exemplo, se a Sra. Wilkins, de repente, afirmasse ter visto o Sr. Fisher. O Sr. Fisher estava morto; que ele permanecesse assim. Ela não desejava ser informada de que ele estava vagueando pelo jardim. A única referência que ela realmente queria, pois era muito velha e firmemente estabelecida em seu lugar no mundo, era uma em relação à

saúde da Sra. Wilkins. Sua saúde era normal? Era uma mulher comum, ordinária e sensata? A Sra. Fisher sentiu que, se lhe fossem fornecidas apenas algumas informações, ela conseguiria descobrir o que precisava. Então, ela solicitou referências, e seus visitantes pareciam estar muito surpresos - a própria Sra. Wilkins, de fato, ficou imediatamente mais comedida - e ela acrescentou: "É o normal."

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B1 Português (simplified)

A Sra. Wilkins recuperou a voz primeiro. "Mas", disse ela, "não deveríamos nós pedir referências da senhora?"

Original English

Mrs. Wilkins found her speech first. "But," she said, "aren't we the ones who ought to ask for some from you?"

Original Português

A Sra. Wilkins foi a primeira a falar. "Mas", disse ela, "não são nós quem deveríamos pedir algumas a você?"

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B1 Português (simplified)

A Sra. Arbuthnot também achou que essa era a atitude certa. Afinal, elas é que estavam recebendo a Sra. Fisher no grupo delas, não a Sra. Fisher recebendo-as no dela?

Original English

And this seemed to Mrs. Arbuthnot too the right attitude. Surely it was they who were taking Mrs. Fisher into their party, and not Mrs. Fisher who was taking them into it?

Original Português

E isso pareceu à Sra. Arbuthnot a atitude correta. Afinal, eram elas que estavam convidando a Sra. Fisher para sua companhia, e não a Sra. Fisher que estava convidando elas?

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B1 Português (simplified)

Em resposta, a Sra. Fisher se apoiou na bengala, foi até a escrivaninha e escreveu três nomes com letra firme. Mostrou-os à Sra. Wilkins. Os nomes eram tão respeitados, tão importantes, quase sagrados, que só de lê-los já bastava. Eram o Presidente da Royal Academy, o Arcebispo de Canterbury, e o Governador do Banco da Inglaterra. Quem ousaria incomodar homens assim para perguntar se uma de suas amigas era mesmo correta?

Original English

For answer Mrs. Fisher, leaning on her stick, went to the writing-table and in a firm hand wrote down three names and offered them to Mrs. Wilkins, and the names were so respectable, more, they were so momentous, they were so nearly august, that just to read them was enough. The President of the Royal Academy, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Governor of the Bank of England - who would dare disturb such personages in their meditations with inquiries as to whether a female friend of theirs was all she should be?

Original Português

Em resposta, a Sra. Fisher, apoiada em sua bengala, foi até a mesa de escrita e, com uma mão firme, escreveu três nomes e os ofereceu à Sra. Wilkins. E os nomes eram tão respeitáveis, tão importantes, tão quase augustos, que apenas lê-los já era suficiente. O Presidente da Academia Real, o Arcebispo de Canterbury e o Governador do Banco da Inglaterra - quem ousaria perturbar tais personalidades em suas meditações com perguntas sobre se uma amiga delas era tudo o que deveria ser?

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Eles me conhecem desde que eu era pequena", disse a Sra. Fisher. Parecia que todo mundo conhecia a Sra. Fisher desde que ela era pequena, ou desde quando ela era pequena.

Original English

"They have known me since I was little," said Mrs. Fisher - everybody seemed to have known Mrs. Fisher since or when she was little.

Original Português

"Eles me conhecem desde que eu era criança", disse a Sra. Fisher - todos pareciam conhecer a Sra. Fisher desde ou quando ela era criança.

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Acho que referências não são coisas nada agradáveis entre mulheres decentes e comuns", disse a Sra. Wilkins de repente. Sentiu-se corajosa porque estava encurralada. Sabia que a única referência que poderia dar com segurança era a Shoolbred's, e não confiava muito nela, já que dependeria apenas do peixe de Mellersh. "Não somos gente de negócios. Não precisamos desconfiar umas das outras..."

Original English

"I don't think references are nice things at all between - between ordinary decent women," burst out Mrs. Wilkins, made courageous by being, as she felt, at bay; for she very well knew that the only reference she could give without getting into trouble was Shoolbred, and she had little confidence in that, as it would be entirely based on Mellersh's fish. "We're not business people. We needn't distrust each other - "

Original Português

"Eu não acho que referências sejam coisas agradáveis entre - entre mulheres comuns e decentes", explodiu a Sra. Wilkins, encorajada por estar, como ela sentia, em desvantagem; pois ela bem sabia que a única referência que poderia dar sem se meter em problemas era Shoolbred, e ela tinha pouca confiança nisso, pois seria totalmente baseada no peixe de Mellersh. "Nós não somos pessoas de negócios. Não precisamos nos desconfiar - "

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B1 Português (simplified)

A Sra. Arbuthnot disse isso com gentileza, mas com dignidade: "Receio que referências trariam ao nosso plano de férias uma atmosfera que não é bem o que queremos. Acho que não vamos pedir as suas, nem oferecer as nossas. Suponho, então, que a senhora não vai querer se juntar a nós."

Original English

And Mrs. Arbuthnot said, with a dignity that yet was sweet, "I'm afraid references do bring an atmosphere into our holiday plan that isn't quite what we want, and I don't think we'll take yours up or give you any ourselves. So that I suppose you won't wish to join us."

Original Português

E a Sra. Arbuthnot disse, com uma dignidade que ainda era doce, "Tenho medo que as referências tragam uma atmosfera para nosso plano de férias que não é o que queremos, e eu não acho que aceitaremos as suas nem ofereceremos as nossas. Então, suponho que você não desejará se juntar a nós."

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B1 Português (simplified)

Então estendeu a mão para se despedir.

Original English

And she held out her hand in good-bye.

Original Português

E ela estendeu a mão em despedida.

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B1 Português (simplified)

A Sra. Fisher olhou para a Sra. Arbuthnot, que conseguia fazer até os funcionários do metrô confiarem nela e gostarem dela. A Sra. Fisher sentiu que seria tolice desperdiçar a chance de ir à Itália sob condições tão especiais. Também pensou que ela e essa mulher calma poderiam controlar a outra quando ela tivesse suas crises. Então pegou a mão da Sra. Arbuthnot e disse: "Muito bem. Abro mão das referências."

Original English

Then Mrs. Fisher, her gaze diverted to Mrs. Arbuthnot, who inspired trust and liking even in Tube officials, felt that she would be idiotic to lose the opportunity of being in Italy in the particular conditions offered, and that she and this calm-browed woman between them would certainly be able to curb the other one when she had her attacks. So she said, taking Mrs. Arbuthnot's offered hand, "Very well. I waive references."

Original Português

Então, a Sra. Fisher, com o olhar voltado para a Sra. Arbuthnot, que inspirava confiança e afeição até mesmo nos funcionários do metrô, sentiu que seria tolo perder a oportunidade de estar na Itália nessas condições, e que ela e essa mulher de semblante calmo seriam certamente capazes de controlar a outra quando ela tivesse suas crises. Então, ela disse, tomando a mão oferecida pela Sra. Arbuthnot: "Muito bem. Eu aborro as referências."

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B1 Português (simplified)

Ela abriu mão das referências.

Original English

She waived references.

Original Português

Ela aborrava as referências.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Enquanto as duas mulheres caminhavam até a estação na Kensington High Street, não puderam deixar de sentir que aquilo soara orgulhoso e grandioso. Até a Sra. Arbuthnot, que costumava achar desculpas para os erros dos outros, pensou que a Sra. Fisher poderia ter escolhido palavras diferentes. Quando a Sra. Wilkins chegou à estação, a caminhada e a disputa com os guarda-chuvas alheios na calçada lotada a haviam aquecido, e ela chegou até a sugerir que desistissem da Sra. Fisher, em vez disso.

Original English

The two as they walked to the station in Kensington High Street could not help thinking that this way of putting it was lofty. Even Mrs. Arbuthnot, spendthrift of excuses for lapses, thought Mrs. Fisher might have used other words; and Mrs. Wilkins, by the time she got to the station, and the walk and the struggle on the crowded pavement with other people's umbrellas had warmed her blood, actually suggested waiving Mrs. Fisher.

Original Português

Enquanto as duas caminhavam até a estação na High Street, em Kensington, elas não conseguiam deixar de pensar que essa forma de dizer era pretensiosa. Até mesmo a Sra. Arbuthnot, conhecida por usar desculpas para suas falhas, pensou que a Sra. Fisher poderia ter usado outras palavras; e a Sra. Wilkins, quando chegou à estação, e a caminhada e a luta no calçadão lotado com as pessoas, com os guarda-chuvas alheios, já havia aquecido seu sangue, sugeriu que a Sra. Fisher fosse "abrigada".

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B1 Português (simplified)

"Se algo tem que ser deixado de lado, por favor, que sejamos nós a fazê-lo", disse ansiosamente.

Original English

"If there is any waiving to be done, do let us be the ones who waive," she said eagerly.

Original Português

"Se houver algo a ser abrigado, que seja nós quem o faça", disse ela, ansiosamente.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Mas a Sra. Arbuthnot, como sempre, ficou do lado da Sra. Wilkins. Depois de se acalmar no trem, a Sra. Wilkins disse que a Sra. Fisher encontraria seu verdadeiro lugar em San Salvatore. "Eu a vejo encontrando o seu nível lá", disse, com os olhos muito brilhantes.

Original English

But Mrs. Arbuthnot, as usual, held on to Mrs. Wilkins; and presently, having cooled down in the train, Mrs. Wilkins announced that at San Salvatore Mrs. Fisher would find her level. "I see her finding her level there," she said, her eyes very bright.

Original Português

Mas a Sra. Arbuthnot, como de costume, segurava a Sra. Wilkins; e, pouco depois, após se acalmar no trem, a Sra. Wilkins anunciou que, em San Salvatore, a Sra. Fisher encontraria seu lugar. "Eu vejo ela encontrando seu lugar lá", disse ela, com os olhos brilhando.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Então a Sra. Arbuthnot ficou sentada, com as mãos quietas entrelaçadas, pensando em como poderia ajudar a Sra. Wilkins a ver um pouco menos, ou pelo menos a ver em silêncio, se é que precisava ver alguma coisa.

Original English

Whereupon Mrs. Arbuthnot, sitting with her quiet hands folded, turned over in her mind how best she could help Mrs. Wilkins not to see quite so much; or at least, if she must see, to see in silence.

Original Português

Nesse momento, a Sra. Arbuthnot, sentada com as mãos quietas dobradas, pensava em como poderia ajudar a Sra. Wilkins a não ver tanto; ou, pelo menos, se fosse inevitável, a ver em silêncio.

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Chapter 4

B1 Português (simplified)

Ficou combinado que a Sra. Arbuthnot e a Sra. Wilkins, viajando juntas, chegariam a San Salvatore na noite de 31 de março. O proprietário, que explicara como chegar até lá, entendia que elas não queriam começar sua estadia no dia 1º de abril. Lady Caroline e a Sra. Fisher, que ainda não se conheciam, deveriam chegar na manhã de 2 de abril. Isso daria tempo para preparar tudo bem para as duas mulheres que, embora dividindo tudo igualmente, ainda pareciam um pouco convidadas.

Original English

It had been arranged that Mrs. Arbuthnot and Mrs. Wilkins, travelling together, should arrive at San Salvatore on the evening of March 31st - the owner, who told them how to get there, appreciated their disinclination to begin their time in it on April 1st - and Lady Caroline and Mrs. Fisher, as yet unacquainted and therefore under no obligations to bore each other on the journey, for only towards the end would they find out by a process of sifting who they were, were to arrive on the morning of April 2nd. In this way everything would be got nicely ready for the two who seemed, in spite of the equality of the sharing, yet to have something about them of guests.

Original Português

Tinha sido combinado que a Sra. Arbuthnot e a Sra. Wilkins, viajando juntas, chegariam a San Salvatore na noite de 31 de março - a proprietária, que lhes indicou o caminho, apreciou sua relutância em começar a estadia em 1º de abril - e a Lady Caroline e a Sra. Fisher, ainda desconhecidas e, portanto, sem obrigações de se entediar mutuamente durante a viagem, chegariam na manhã de 2 de abril. Desta forma, tudo estaria perfeitamente preparado para as duas, que, apesar da aparente igualdade, pareciam ter algo em comum, como hóspedes.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Perto do fim de março, houve momentos desagradáveis. A Sra. Wilkins, assustada mas decidida, contou ao marido que fora convidada para a Itália, e ele não acreditou nela. Claro que não acreditou. Ninguém jamais convidara sua esposa para a Itália antes. Ele queria provas. A única prova era a Sra. Arbuthnot, e a Sra. Wilkins a trouxera depois de muita insistência. A Sra. Arbuthnot nunca imaginara que teria de enfrentar o Sr. Wilkins e dizer coisas que não eram inteiramente verdadeiras. Isso a fez sentir, como já começara a suspeitar, que estava se afastando cada vez mais de Deus.

Original English

There were disagreeable incidents towards the end of March, when Mrs. Wilkins, her heart in her mouth and her face a mixture of guilt, terror and determination, told her husband that she had been invited to Italy, and he declined to believe it. Of course he declined to believe it. Nobody had ever invited his wife to Italy before. There was no precedent. He required proofs. The only proof was Mrs. Arbuthnot, and Mrs. Wilkins had produced her; but after what entreaties, what passionate persuading! Mrs. Arbuthnot had not imagined she would have to face Mr. Wilkins and say things to him that were short of the truth, and it brought home to her what she had for some time suspected, that she was slipping more and more away from God.

Original Português

Houve incidentes desagradáveis no final de março, quando a Sra. Wilkins, com o coração na mão e o rosto uma mistura de culpa, terror e determinação, contou ao marido que havia sido convidada para a Itália, e ele se recusou a acreditar. Claro, ele se recusou a acreditar. Ninguém havia convidado sua esposa para a Itália antes. Não havia precedentes. Ele exigia provas. A única prova era a Sra. Arbuthnot, e a Sra. Wilkins a havia apresentado; mas depois de tantas súplicas, de tanta persuasão apaixonada! A Sra. Arbuthnot não imaginava que teria que enfrentar o Sr. Wilkins e dizer-lhe coisas que eram mais do que a verdade, e isso a fez perceber o que ela havia suspeitado há algum tempo: que ela estava se afastando cada vez mais de Deus.

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B1 Português (simplified)

Durante todo o mês de março, teve muitos momentos infelizes e angustiados. Foi um mês perturbado. A consciência da Sra. Arbuthnot havia se tornado muito sensível depois de anos de tanto cuidado, e não conseguia aceitar como certo o que ela estava fazendo. Dava-lhe pouca paz. Perturbava suas orações. Enquanto pedia orientação a Deus, a consciência também fazia perguntas como: "Você não é uma hipócrita? Você realmente quer isso? Não ficaria decepcionada se essa oração fosse atendida?"

Original English

Indeed, the whole of March was filled with unpleasant, anxious moments. It was an uneasy month. Mrs. Arbuthnot's conscience, made super-sensitive by years of pampering, could not reconcile what she was doing with its own high standard of what was right. It gave her little peace. It nudged her at her prayers. It punctuated her entreaties for divine guidance with disconcerting questions, such as, "Are you not a hypocrite? Do you really mean that? Would you not, frankly, be disappointed if that prayer were granted?"

Original Português

De fato, todo o mês de março foi preenchido por momentos desagradáveis e ansiosos. Foi um mês incômodo. A consciência da Sra. Arbuthnot, exacerbada por anos de indulgência, não conseguia conciliar o que ela estava fazendo com seu próprio alto padrão de moralidade. Isso lhe causava pouco sossego. Ela a incomodava em suas orações. Ela interrompia suas súplicas por orientação divina com perguntas perturbadoras, como: "Você não é um hipócrita? Você realmente quer isso? Você não ficaria, francamente, desapontada se essa oração fosse concedida?"

[Back to B1](#) [Original English](#)

B1 Português (simplified)

O tempo longo, úmido e frio também perturbava sua consciência, pois causava muito mais doença entre os pobres. Havia gente com bronquite e febre, e o sofrimento não tinha fim. E ali estava ela, gastando dinheiro para ir embora só para ser feliz. Uma mulher feliz, enquanto tantas outras sofriam...

Original English

The prolonged wet, raw weather was on the side too of her conscience, producing far more sickness than usual among the poor. They had bronchitis; they had fevers; there was no end to the distress. And here she was going off, spending precious money on going off, simply and solely to be happy. One woman. One woman being happy, and these piteous multitudes . . .

Original Português

O clima chuvoso e frio também contribuiu para o desconforto. Houve muito mais doenças do que o normal entre os pobres. Eles tinham bronquite; tinham febre; não havia fim para o sofrimento. E ali estava ela, partindo, gastando dinheiro precioso em sua própria felicidade. Uma mulher, buscando a felicidade, enquanto essas pessoas miseráveis...

[Back to B1](#) [Original English](#)

B1 Português (simplified)

Não conseguia encarar o vigário. Ele não sabia, e ninguém sabia, o que ela estava planejando, e desde o início ela não conseguia olhar ninguém no rosto. Recusou-se a fazer discursos pedindo dinheiro. Como poderia pedir dinheiro aos outros quando ela mesma gastava tanto com o próprio prazer? Não ajudou nada quando contou a Frederick, esperando compensar o que estava desperdiçando, que ficaria grata se ele lhe desse algum dinheiro. Ele imediatamente lhe deu um cheque de £100. Não fez perguntas. Ela ficou vermelha de vergonha. Ele a olhou por um instante e depois desviou o olhar. Frederick ficou aliviado por ela aceitar algum dinheiro. Ela deu tudo de uma vez à organização com que trabalhava, e então se sentiu mais confusa do que nunca.

Original English

She was unable to look the vicar in the face. He did not know, nobody knew, what she was going to do, and from the very beginning she was unable to look anybody in the face. She excused herself from making speeches appealing for money. How could she stand up and ask people for money when she herself was spending so much on her own selfish pleasure? Nor did it help her or quiet her that, having actually told Frederick, in her desire to make up for what she was squandering, that she would be grateful if he would let her have some money, he instantly gave her a cheque for £100. He asked no questions. She was scarlet. He looked at her a moment and then looked away. It was a relief to Frederick that she should take some money. She gave it all immediately to the organisation she worked with, and found herself more tangled in doubts than ever.

Original Português

Ela não conseguia encarar o vigário. Ele não sabia, ninguém sabia, o que ela pretendia fazer, e desde o início, ela não conseguia encarar ninguém. Ela se desculpou por fazer discursos pedindo dinheiro. Como poderia se levantar e pedir dinheiro quando ela mesma estava gastando tanto em seu próprio prazer egoísta? E não ajudou nem a ela, nem a acalmar seus pensamentos, que, tendo dito a Frederick, em seu desejo de compensar o que estava desperdiçando, que seria grata se ele lhe desse algum dinheiro, ele lhe deu imediatamente um cheque de £100. Ele não fez perguntas. Ela ficou vermelha. Ele olhou para ela por um momento e então desviou o olhar. Era um alívio para Frederick que ela recebesse algum dinheiro. Ela o entregou imediatamente à organização com a qual trabalhava, e se viu ainda mais confusa do que antes.

[Back to B1](#) [Original English](#)

B1 Português (simplified)

A Sra. Wilkins não sentia nenhuma dúvida. Tinha certeza de que tirar férias era a coisa certa a fazer, e que era bom e bonito gastar as próprias economias, ganhas com esforço, para ser feliz.

Original English

Mrs. Wilkins, on the contrary, had no doubts. She was quite certain that it was a most proper thing to have a holiday, and altogether right and beautiful to spend one's own hard-collected savings on being happy.

Original Português

A Sra. Wilkins, ao contrário, não tinha dúvidas. Ela estava completamente certa de que era uma coisa muito apropriada ter uma folga, e, de maneira geral, certo e belo gastar suas economias para ser feliz.

[Back to B1](#) [Original English](#)

B1 Português (simplified)

"Pense em como seremos mais agradáveis quando voltarmos", disse à Sra. Arbuthnot, tentando animar a mulher pálida.

Original English

"Think how much nicer we shall be when we come back," she said to Mrs. Arbuthnot, encouraging that pale lady.

Original Português

"Pensem em como seremos muito mais felizes quando voltarmos", disse ela à Sra. Arbuthnot, encorajando aquela loira.

[Back to B1](#) [Original English](#)

B1 Português (simplified)

A Sra. Wilkins não tinha dúvidas, mas tinha medos. Março também foi um mês de ansiedade para ela, enquanto o desavisado Sr. Wilkins voltava para casa todo dia para jantar e comia seu peixe com tranqüila e segura confiança.

Original English

No, Mrs. Wilkins had no doubts, but she had fears; and March was for her too an anxious month, with the unconscious Mr. Wilkins coming back daily to his dinner and eating his fish in the silence of imagined security.

Original Português

Não, a Sra. Wilkins não tinha dúvidas, mas tinha receios; e março também era um mês ansioso para ela, com o inconsciente Sr. Wilkins voltando diariamente para o jantar e comendo seu peixe em silêncio, com a falsa sensação de segurança.

[Back to B1](#) [Original English](#)

B1 Português (simplified)

A Sra. Wilkins se esforçou muito para cozinhar apenas o que Mellersh gostava. Ele ficou satisfeito e achou que tinha se casado com a esposa certa. No terceiro domingo, disse que queria levá-la à Itália na Páscoa. A Sra. Wilkins ficou chocada, pois planejava contar a ele sobre seu próprio convite no domingo seguinte.

Original English

Also things happen so awkwardly. It really is astonishing, how awkwardly they happen. Mrs. Wilkins, who was very careful all this month to give Mellersh only the food he liked, buying it and hovering over its cooking with a zeal more than common, succeeded so well that Mellersh was pleased; definitely pleased; so much pleased that he began to think that he might, after all, have married the right wife instead of, as he had frequently suspected, the wrong one. The result was that on the third Sunday in the month - Mrs. Wilkins had made up her trembling mind that on the fourth Sunday, there being five in that March and it being on the fifth of them that she and Mrs. Arbuthnot were to start, she would tell Mellersh of her invitation - on the third Sunday, then, after a very well-cooked lunch in which the Yorkshire pudding had melted in his mouth and the apricot tart had been so perfect that he ate it all, Mellersh, smoking his cigar by the brightly burning fire the while hail gusts banged on the window, said: "I am thinking of taking you to Italy for Easter." And paused for her astounded and grateful ecstasy.

Original Português

Além disso, as coisas acontecem de forma tão estranha. É realmente surpreendente, como as coisas acontecem de forma tão estranha. A Sra. Wilkins, que se esforçou muito durante este mês para dar a Mellersh apenas a comida que ele gostava, comprando-a e supervisionando sua preparação com um zelo incomum, teve tanto sucesso que Mellersh ficou satisfeito; definitivamente satisfeito; tanto que começou a pensar que, afinal, poderia ter se casado com a esposa certa, em vez de, como ele frequentemente suspeitava, com a errada. O resultado foi que, no terceiro domingo do mês - a Sra. Wilkins havia decidido, com sua mente tremendo, que no quarto domingo, já que havia cinco em março e que o quarto deles seria o dia em que ela e a Sra. Arbuthnot iriam, ela diria a Mellersh sobre o convite - no terceiro domingo, então, após um almoço muito bem preparado, no qual o pudim de Yorkshire derreteu em sua boca e a torta de ameixa foi tão perfeita que ele comeu tudo, Mellersh, fumando seu cachimbo ao lado do fogo, enquanto os ventos de gelo batiam na janela, disse: "Estou pensando em levá-la para a Itália para a Páscoa." E fez uma

pausa, esperando a euforia e a surpresa de sua esposa.

[Back to B1](#) [Original English](#)

B1 Português (simplified)

Nenhuma palavra veio. O quarto ficou em silêncio, exceto pelo granizo nas janelas e pelo fogo alegre na lareira. A Sra. Wilkins não conseguia falar. Estava atônita. O domingo seguinte era o dia em que planejava contar-lhe as novidades, e ainda nem pensara nas palavras exatas.

Original English

None came. The silence in the room, except for the hail hitting the windows and the gay roar of the fire, was complete. Mrs. Wilkins could not speak. She was dumbfounded. The next Sunday was the day she had meant to break her news to him, and she had not yet even prepared the form of words in which she would break it.

Original Português

Ninguém apareceu. O silêncio no quarto, exceto pelo barulho da chuva contra as janelas e o alegre crepitar da lareira, era completo. A Sra. Wilkins não conseguia falar. Estava completamente atônita. O próximo domingo era o dia em que ela pretendia contar a ele a notícia, e ela ainda não havia sequer preparado as palavras com que faria isso.

[Back to B1](#) [Original English](#)

B1 Português (simplified)

O Sr. Wilkins não saía do país desde antes da guerra. À medida que semana após semana se passava com vento e chuva, ele foi ficando cada vez mais enojado com o clima. Por fim, resolveu deixar a Inglaterra na Páscoa. Seus negócios iam bem, então podia bancar uma viagem. A Suíça não servia em abril. A Itália parecia certa para a Páscoa. Ele iria para lá, e levaria a esposa também, pois não levá-la pareceria estranho. Além disso, ela seria útil. Num país onde ele não conhecia o idioma, outra pessoa poderia ajudar a carregar as coisas e esperar com a bagagem.

Original English

Mr. Wilkins, who had not been abroad since before the war, and was noticing with increasing disgust, as week followed week of wind and rain, the peculiar persistent vileness of the weather, had slowly conceived a desire to get away from England for Easter. He was doing very well in his business. He could afford a trip. Switzerland was useless in April. There was a familiar sound about Easter in Italy. To Italy he would go; and as it would cause comment if he did not take his wife, take her he must - besides, she would be useful; a second person was always useful in a country whose language one did not speak for holding things, for waiting with the luggage.

Original Português

O Sr. Wilkins, que não saía de Inglaterra desde antes da guerra e estava notando, com crescente desgosto, a peculiar e persistente feiúra do tempo, semana após semana de vento e chuva, havia lentamente concebido o desejo de se afastar da Inglaterra para a Páscoa. Ele estava indo muito bem em seus negócios. Podia pagar uma viagem. A Suíça não era uma boa opção em abril. Havia algo familiar na Páscoa na Itália. Ele iria para a Itália; e, como seria estranho se não levasse sua esposa, ele precisava levá-la - além disso, ela seria útil; ter outra pessoa sempre é útil em um país cujo idioma não se fala, para segurar coisas, para esperar com a bagagem.

[Back to B1](#) [Original English](#)

B1 Português (simplified)

Ele esperava que ela gritasse de gratidão e empolgação. Quando não o fez, achou que ela não devia ter ouvido. Provavelmente estava perdida em algum sonho bobo. Era triste que ainda fosse tão infantil.

Original English

He had expected an explosion of gratitude and excitement. The absence of it was incredible. She could not, he concluded, have heard. Probably she was absorbed in some foolish day-dream. It was regrettable how childish she remained.

Original Português

Ele esperava uma explosão de gratidão e entusiasmo. A ausência disso era incrível. Ele concluiu que ela não havia ouvido. Provavelmente, ela estava absorta em algum sonho infantil. Era lamentável como ela permanecia tão infantil.

[Back to B1](#) [Original English](#)

B1 Português (simplified)

Ele virou a cabeça. As cadeiras deles ficavam em frente à lareira, e ele olhou para ela. Ela estava fitando as chamas, e ele achou que o fogo devia estar deixando o rosto dela vermelho.

Original English

He turned his head - their chairs were in front of the fire - and looked at her. She was staring straight into the fire, and it was no doubt the fire that made her face so red.

Original Português

Ele virou a cabeça - seus assentos estavam em frente à lareira - e olhou para ela. Ela estava olhando fixamente para a lareira, e, sem dúvida, era a lareira que tingia seu rosto de vermelho.

[Back to B1](#) [Original English](#)

B1 Português (simplified)

"Estou pensando", repetiu, levantando sua voz clara e educada e falando com aspereza, pois não escutar num momento assim era muito ruim, "em levá-la à Itália na Páscoa. Você não me ouviu?"

Original English

"I am thinking," he repeated, raising his clear, cultivated voice and speaking with acerbity, for inattention at such a moment was deplorable, "of taking you to Italy for Easter. Did you not hear me?"

Original Português

"Estou pensando", ele repetiu, levantando sua voz clara e cultivada, falando com acidez, pois a falta de atenção naquele momento era deplorável, "em levá-la para a Itália para a Páscoa. Você não ouviu?"

[Back to B1](#) [Original English](#)

B1 Português (simplified)

Sim, ela o tinha ouvido. Estava pensando naquela coincidência espantosa. Era verdadeiramente espantosa. Estava prestes a contar-lhe como fora convidada. Uma amiga também a convidara para a Páscoa. A Páscoa era em abril, não era? Sua amiga tinha uma casa lá.

Original English

Yes, she had heard him, and she had been wondering at the extraordinary coincidence - really most extraordinary - she was just going to tell him how - how she had been invited - a friend had invited her - Easter, too - Easter was in April, wasn't it? - her friend had a - had a house there.

Original Português

Sim, ela havia ouvido, e estava se perguntando sobre a extraordinária coincidência - realmente, a mais extraordinária - ela estava prestes a contar a ele como - como ela havia sido convidada - uma amiga a havia convidado - a Páscoa também - a Páscoa era em abril, não era? - a amiga dela tinha - tinha uma casa lá.

[Back to B1](#) [Original English](#)

B1 Português (simplified)

Na verdade, a Sra. Wilkins, assustada pelo terror, pela culpa e pela surpresa, estava ainda mais confusa do que de costume.

Original English

In fact Mrs. Wilkins, driven by terror, guilt and surprise, had been more incoherent if possible than usual.

Original Português

Na verdade, a Sra. Wilkins, impulsionada pelo terror, pela culpa e pela surpresa, havia sido mais incoerente do que de costume.

[Back to B1](#) [Original English](#)

Glossary: New Words

Priority words from the simplified reading, selected by CEFR level, rarity and editorial usefulness. Each entry shows up to six real sentences from this book; every return link opens that exact sentence in the simplified version.

actual /'æktʃuəl/ (4 occurrences)

Português: real; efectiva; verdadeiro

Simple English: Existing in reality rather than being imagined or theoretical.

Example: *The actual results of the experiment surprised the entire research team greatly.*

Uses in this book:

1. Mrs. Fisher's distant manner was actually a good sign. [Back to B1](#)

Address /ə'drɛs/ (5 occurrences)

Português: endereço; morada; abordar

Simple English: The details of where someone lives or works.

Example: *Write your address here.*

Uses in this book:

1. I'll give you my address" - she looked in her handbag - "and then you won't forget." She found a card and held it out. [Back to B1](#)
2. Then she went to the address near the Brompton Oratory where the owner lived, with the six ten-pound notes in her hand-bag. [Back to B1](#)
3. Mrs. Fisher felt that if she had even one address, she could find out what she needed. [Back to B1](#)

advance /əd'væns/ (2 occurrences)

Português: antecedência; avanço; adiantamento

Simple English: A forward movement of soldiers toward an objective or position.

Example: *The army decided to advance their position at dawn for a surprise attack.*

Uses in this book:

1. He wanted proof that the second half of the rent would be paid, since the first half had to be paid in advance. [Back to B1](#)

anger /'æŋgər/ (7 occurrences)

Português: raiva; ira; fúria

Simple English: To cause someone to feel strong displeasure or rage.

Example: *His rude comments never fail to anger her during meetings.*

Uses in this book:

1. She dropped the newspaper in anger and resignation, then went to the window and sadly looked out at the wet street. [Back to B1](#)

Anxious /'æŋkʃəs/ (5 occurrences)

Português: ansioso; ancioso; impaciente

Simple English: Feeling worried about something that might happen.

Example: *I am anxious about my exam results coming next week.*

Forms in this book: anxious, anxiously

Uses in this book:

1. March was also an anxious month for her, while the unaware Mr. Wilkins came home every day to dinner and ate his fish in quiet, safe trust. [Back to B1](#)

Atmosphere /'ætməsfɪər/ (1 occurrence)

Português: atmosfera; ambiente; clima

Simple English: The layer of gases surrounding a planet naturally.

Example: *The atmosphere of Earth protects us from harmful solar radiation.*

Uses in this book:

1. Mrs. Arbuthnot said this kindly but with dignity: "I'm afraid references would bring an atmosphere into our holiday plan that is not quite what we want. [Back to B1](#)

attitude /'ætɪtju:d/ (1 occurrence)

Português: atitude; postura

Simple English: A person's usual way of thinking or feeling.

Example: *His positive attitude helped him overcome many challenges.*

Uses in this book:

1. Mrs. Arbuthnot thought this was the right attitude too. [Back to B1](#)

beyond /bɪˈpnd/ (10 occurrences)

Português: além

Simple English: At or to the side that is further; exceeding a point.

Example: *Her talents go beyond just singing; she can also dance beautifully.*

Uses in this book:

1. After her painful efforts to bring him back to that old closeness, she was badly hurt, and the Frederick she thought she had married seemed changed almost beyond recognition. [Back to B1](#)

brief /brɪf/ (3 occurrences)

Português: breve; sucinta; resumo

Simple English: A short document summarizing one side's facts in court.

Example: *The lawyer submitted a brief outlining their arguments in the case.*

Uses in this book:

1. He was brief, careful, and never said too much or too little. [Back to B1](#)

catch /kætʃ/ (10 occurrences)

Português: pegar; apanhar; pegá

Simple English: To successfully grab a moving object that is thrown.

Example: *He managed to catch the ball just before it hit the ground.*

Forms in this book: catch, catching

Uses in this book:

1. The advertisement had made her dream, and Mrs. Wilkins's excitement was catching. [Back to B1](#)

2. They might also save a lot on food, for example by picking olives from their own trees and eating them, and perhaps catching fish. [Back to B1](#)

comfort /ˈkʌmfərt/ (18 occurrences)

Português: conforto; confortar; consolo

Simple English: To lessen someone's emotional pain by showing kindness.

Example: *I tried to comfort my friend after she lost her beloved pet.*

Forms in this book: comfort, comforted, comforting, comforts

Uses in this book:

1. It was found only at the feet of God, where she had often taken her disappointments and troubles and come away comforted. [Back to B1](#)
2. What upset Mrs. Arbuthnot was that she did not suggest it only to comfort Mrs. Wilkins. [Back to B1](#)
3. She made him think of his mother, his nurse, and many kind and comforting things, but she was also different from them. [Back to B1](#)
4. Even through her glove, her hand felt comforting. [Back to B1](#)
5. Imagine going to Mellersh and saying, "I owe money." It would be bad enough if she had to say one day, "I have no savings," but at least then she could comfort herself that the money had been hers. [Back to B1](#)
6. She did not tell them about her own husband, and she did not ask about theirs, which was a great comfort. [Back to B1](#)

courage (3 occurrences)

Português: coragem; bravura; força

Simple English: the ability to face danger or difficulty

Example: *It took courage to tell the truth.*

Uses in this book:

1. Mrs. Wilkins watched her for a minute and tried to find the courage to speak. [Back to B1](#)
2. But she lost courage. [Back to B1](#)

critic /'krɪtɪk/ (1 occurrence)

Português: crítico

Simple English: Someone who evaluates and expresses opinions on art, performances, or creative works.

Example: *The film critic wrote a review of the latest blockbuster movie.*

Uses in this book:

1. Her father had been a famous critic, and at his house she had met nearly everyone important in literature and art. [Back to B1](#)

decent /'di:sənt/ (3 occurrences)

Português: decente; digno; aceitável

Simple English: Treating others with respect and honesty consistently in behavior.

Example: *It's important to be decent and fair in all your dealings.*

Uses in this book:

1. "I don't think references are nice things at all between ordinary decent women," said Mrs. Wilkins suddenly. [Back to B1](#)

Depressed /dɪ'prest/ (1 occurrence)

Português: deprimido; depressão; comprimida

Simple English: Feeling very unhappy and having no hopefulness.

Example: *He felt depressed after losing his job unexpectedly last month.*

Uses in this book:

1. Mellersh had told her that a person who was efficient would not feel depressed, and that doing one's work well would make one bright and lively. [Back to B1](#)

Desire /dɪ'zaɪər/ (1 occurrence)

Português: desejo; deseja; vontade

Simple English: To feel a sexual or strong romantic attraction.

Example: *He felt a strong desire to be with her all the time.*

Uses in this book:

1. She could not understand why she suddenly wanted something so selfish, when she had not felt that desire for years. [Back to B1](#)

detail /'di:teɪl/ (7 occurrences)

Português: detalhe; pormenor; detalhar

Simple English: To explain something thoroughly with specific information.

Example: *In her presentation, she will detail the findings of her latest research project.*

Forms in this book: detail, details

Uses in this book:

1. They went to a writing table, and Mrs. Arbuthnot wrote to Z, Box 1000, The Times, asking for details. [Back to B1](#)
2. She asked for all the details, but the only one they really cared about was the rent. [Back to B1](#)

efficient /ɪ'fɪʃənt/ (2 occurrences)

Português: eficiente

Simple English: Achieving maximum productivity with minimal wasted resources.

Example: *The new machine is more efficient than the old one, saving time and energy.*

Uses in this book:

1. Mellersh had told her that a person who was efficient would not feel depressed, and that doing one's work well would make one bright and lively.

[Back to B1](#)

Elderly /'ɛldərli/ (1 occurrence)

Português: idosos; pessoas idosas; terceira idade

Simple English: Advanced in age, often associated with frailty.

Example: *The elderly man enjoyed sharing his life stories with us.*

Uses in this book:

1. But apart from the stick, she seemed a very good fourth: quiet, educated, and elderly. [Back to B1](#)

excuse /ɪk'skju:s/ (6 occurrences)

Português: desculpa; Desculpe; perdoe

Simple English: To forgive someone for an error or offense.

Example: *Please excuse my mistake; I didn't mean to offend anyone.*

Forms in this book: excuse, excused, excuses

Uses in this book:

1. Even Mrs. Arbuthnot, who often found excuses for mistakes, thought Mrs. Fisher might have chosen different words. [Back to B1](#)

figure /'fɪgər/ (5 occurrences)

Português: figura; figurar; descobrir

Simple English: Shape of a person's body, often considered attractive.

Example: *She has an elegant figure that many people admire at events.*

Forms in this book: figure, figures

Uses in this book:

1. Mrs. Arbuthnot had not yet seen the shabby, thin figure opposite her, with its small freckled face and big grey eyes almost hidden by a squashed wet-weather hat. [Back to B1](#)

finding /'faɪndɪŋ/ (6 occurrences)

Português: encontrar; achando; achar

Simple English: A piece of information discovered from research.

Example: *The key finding of the study suggests that diet greatly affects mental health.*

Uses in this book:

1. understanding and finding the exact right words. [Back to B1](#)
2. Then Mrs. Arbuthnot, who was good at finding solutions to problems, found a way to solve the reference problem. [Back to B1](#)
3. "I see her finding her level there," she said, with very bright eyes. [Back to B1](#)

flame (2 occurrences)

Português: chama; fogo; labareda

Simple English: the bright burning gas of a fire

Example: *A small flame burned in the candle.*

Forms in this book: flame, flames

Uses in this book:

1. She was staring into the flames, and he thought the fire was probably making her face look red. [Back to B1](#)

flash /flæʃ/ (2 occurrences)

Português: flash; piscar; instantâneo

Simple English: To shine brightly for a brief and sudden time.

Example: *The camera will flash when you take the picture at night.*

Uses in this book:

1. At that moment, a strange picture flashed into her mind. [Back to B1](#)

Forward /'fɔ:rwərd/ (10 occurrences)

Português: encaminhar; frente; avançar

Simple English: To send received email or message to another person.

Example: *Please forward the email to everyone on the team.*

Uses in this book:

1. "Perhaps," she said, leaning forward a little, "you will tell me your name."
[Back to B1](#)
2. But even if Mrs. Arbuthnot was wiser, older, and calmer, her new friend still seemed to push things forward. [Back to B1](#)

fully /'fʊli/ (10 occurrences)

Português: totalmente; plenamente; inteiramente

Simple English: To the greatest possible extent or degree.

Example: *Please make sure to fully complete the application form before submitting.*

Uses in this book:

1. Her child had died, and she had no one of her own to love fully. [Back to B1](#)
2. Mrs. Wilkins said this would be true enough, but Mrs. Arbuthnot did not think it would be fully true. [Back to B1](#)
3. Mrs. Arbuthnot had never thought she would have to face Mr. Wilkins and say things that were not fully true. [Back to B1](#)

gain /geɪn/ (2 occurrences)

Português: ganho; ganhar; ganham

Simple English: To obtain or achieve something desired or needed.

Example: *He hopes to gain valuable experience from this internship opportunity.*

Forms in this book: gain, gained

Uses in this book:

1. The poor gained the most. [Back to B1](#)

grand /grænd/ (6 occurrences)

Português: Grand; mil; grão

Simple English: Impressive in size, style, or appearance; very large.

Example: *The grand hotel had beautiful architecture and luxurious accommodations.*

Forms in this book: grand, grander

Uses in this book:

1. She thought Mellersh made Wilkins even worse, like a villa with the word Chatsworth on its gate-posts, making the villa seem grander than it was. [Back to B1](#)
2. As the two women walked to the station in Kensington High Street, they could not help feeling that this sounded proud and grand. [Back to B1](#)

handle /'hændl/ (4 occurrences)

Português: lidar com; identificador; manipular

Simple English: To deal with a situation or problem successfully.

Example: *It is important to handle conflicts with care and understanding.*

Forms in this book: handle, handled

Uses in this book:

1. Both felt that Mrs. Arbuthnot should write the letter and handle the practical side. [Back to B1](#)

harm /hɑ:rm/ (3 occurrences)

Português: prejudicar; dano; mal

Simple English: To physically hurt or damage someone or something.

Example: *The storm could harm crops and cause flooding in low areas.*

Forms in this book: harm, harming

Uses in this book:

1. They were simple: it could do no harm to answer the advertisement. [Back to B1](#)
2. "There's no harm in asking," she said quietly, as if others were listening and judging. [Back to B1](#)

Holy /'houli/ (3 occurrences)

Português: Santo; sagrado; Santa

Simple English: Sacred and respected within a religious context or belief system.

Example: *The church is a holy place for many people to worship.*

Uses in this book:

1. The names were so respected, so important, almost holy, that just reading them was enough. [Back to B1](#)

honour (2 occurrences)

Português: honra; respeito; privilégio

Simple English: great respect or a special privilege

Example: *It was an honour to meet her.*

Uses in this book:

1. The vicar alone knew where the parish money came from, and he said it was a matter of honour not to mention it. [Back to B1](#)

impatient /ɪm'peɪənt/ (3 occurrences)

Português: impaciente; impacientes

Simple English: Easily annoyed by delay; eager for something to happen.

Example: *He grew impatient waiting for the train to arrive on time.*

Forms in this book: impatient, impatiently

Uses in this book:

1. "Oh yes, I know them," said Mrs. Wilkins impatiently. [Back to B1](#)

interrupt /,Intə'rʌpt/ (12 occurrences)

Português: interromper; interrupção; atrapalhar

Simple English: To temporarily stop or hinder a process or activity.

Example: *I'm sorry to interrupt, but I have an important question to ask.*

Forms in this book: interrupt, interrupted, interrupting

Uses in this book:

1. Mrs. Arbuthnot suddenly felt that perhaps she had grown used to explaining things in a simple, instructive way, like a nursemaid, because she had an audience that had to agree, was afraid to interrupt, and was, in truth, under her power. [Back to B1](#)
2. "Who lived at Box Hill?" interrupted Mrs. Wilkins. [Back to B1](#)
3. Mrs. Wilkins was so eager to get to the important parts of Mrs. Fisher's memories that she kept interrupting with questions. [Back to B1](#)

lean /li:n/ (10 occurrences)

Português: magra; enxuta; inclinar

Simple English: To bend from straight position to rest against support.

Example: *You can lean against the wall while waiting for the bus.*

Forms in this book: leaned, leaning

Uses in this book:

1. Suddenly, Mrs. Wilkins leaned across the table. [Back to B1](#)
2. "Perhaps," she said, leaning forward a little, "you will tell me your name." [Back to B1](#)
3. She leaned across the table. [Back to B1](#)
4. In reply, Mrs. Fisher leaned on her stick, went to the writing-table, and wrote three names in a firm hand. [Back to B1](#)

Limited /'lɪmɪtɪd/ (1 occurrence)

Português: limitado; limita; restrito

Simple English: Very small in quantity or available for use.

Example: *The store has a limited selection of books this week.*

Uses in this book:

1. She tried to give the kind, wise, and understanding smile she used when listening to the limited and one-sided views of poor people. [Back to B1](#)

loose (1 occurrence)

Português: solta; frouxo; perder

Uses in this book:

1. This was surprising because it did not match her plain coat and skirt, crumpled hat, and loose hair. [Back to B1](#)

lower /'ləʊər/ (12 occurrences)

Português: inferior; abaixar; menor

Simple English: To make something smaller in amount, degree, or size.

Example: *The company decided to lower their prices to attract more customers.*

Forms in this book: lower, lowered, lowering

Uses in this book:

1. In fact, they lower the price. [Back to B1](#)
2. At the same time, Mrs. Wilkins suddenly saw how to lower the rent. [Back to B1](#)
3. She felt that if her share of the rent was lowered to fifteen pounds, she would still have enough left for other costs. [Back to B1](#)

material /mə'tɪriəl/ (1 occurrence)

Português: material

Simple English: The substance used to make something.

Example: *This material is very strong.*

Uses in this book:

1. There were many such women in history, so he always had enough material. [Back to B1](#)

means /mi:nz/ (2 occurrences)

Português: significa; meios; quer dizer

Simple English: A method, system, or object used to achieve a goal.

Example: *Education is one of the means to achieve a successful career.*

Uses in this book:

1. "I don't expect," she added, blushing when Mrs. Arbuthnot said nothing, "that it means anything to you. [Back to B1](#)

2. The poor were the means by which the money was cleaned and made pure.

[Back to B1](#)

Mistake /mi'steik/ (7 occurrences)

Português: erro; engano; equívoco

Simple English: An action or judgment that is incorrect or wrong.

Example: *Learning from a mistake is often more important than getting everything right.*

Forms in this book: mistake, mistakes

Uses in this book:

1. Even Mrs. Arbuthnot, who often found excuses for mistakes, thought Mrs. Fisher might have chosen different words. [Back to B1](#)

neat /ni:t/ (6 occurrences)

Português: arrumado; puro; pura

Simple English: Well-organized and tidy in appearance or arrangement.

Example: *She keeps her office neat, with everything in its proper place.*

Forms in this book: neat, neater, neatly

Uses in this book:

1. She seated the boys and girls neatly in their places, made them kneel for prayer, and then stand again as the vestry door opened and the choir and clergy came out. [Back to B1](#)

nerve /nɜːrv/ (3 occurrences)

Português: nervo; coragem; descaramento

Simple English: Long thread-like structure transmitting messages between brain, body.

Example: *The nerve sends signals from the hand to the brain quickly.*

Uses in this book:

1. After thinking about her last remark, and feeling more and more uneasy and affected by her, she decided for the moment to put her under the heading Nerves. [Back to B1](#)
2. Yes, Nerves. [Back to B1](#)
3. Nerves was almost certainly her category, or would be soon if no one helped her. [Back to B1](#)

patient /ˈpeɪjənt/ (11 occurrences)

Português: paciente; doente; pacientes

Simple English: A person receiving medical care.

Example: *The doctor saw the patient.*

Forms in this book: patient, patiently

Uses in this book:

1. Her face was, as always, like a patient and disappointed Madonna. [Back to B1](#)
2. "Why do you ask me that?" she said in her serious voice, because her work with poor people had made her calm and patient. [Back to B1](#)
3. So she got ready patiently to give it. [Back to B1](#)
4. Mrs. Arbuthnot watched her patiently. [Back to B1](#)
5. She became very serious, as she did when she tried patiently to help and teach poor people. [Back to B1](#)

pick (6 occurrences)

Português: escolher; buscar; picareta

Forms in this book: pick, picked, picking

Uses in this book:

1. In the smoking-room, she picked up The Times from a table and saw this in the Agony Column: [Back to B1](#)

2. They might also save a lot on food, for example by picking olives from their own trees and eating them, and perhaps catching fish. [Back to B1](#)

plain /pleɪn/ (10 occurrences)

Português: planície; liso; simples

Simple English: Simple in design, without pattern or decoration.

Example: *He prefers plain shirts over those with bright patterns or designs.*

Forms in this book: plain, plainly

Uses in this book:

1. Her father gave her £100 a year for clothes, so her clothes were cheap and plain. [Back to B1](#)
2. This was surprising because it did not match her plain coat and skirt, crumpled hat, and loose hair. [Back to B1](#)
3. When he saw her parted hair, soft dark eyes, and plain clothes, and heard her serious voice, he told her not to bother writing for those references. [Back to B1](#)

pointed /'pɔɪntɪd/ (6 occurrences)

Português: apontou; aguçado; pontiagudo

Simple English: Having an end or tip that is sharp or tapered.

Example: *He used a pointed pencil to draw the fine details of the picture.*

Uses in this book:

1. She eagerly showed them the photographs on her walls and pointed to the signatures with her stick. [Back to B1](#)

position /pə'zɪʃən/ (2 occurrences)

Português: posição; posicionar; cargo

Simple English: An opinion held in opposition to another in a dispute.

Example: *His position on the matter was clearly articulated during the debate.*

Uses in this book:

1. Mrs. Wilkins was ready to spend all her money on the plan, but she knew that if it cost even sixpence more than her ninety pounds, she would be in a terrible position. [Back to B1](#)

power /'paʊər/ (6 occurrences)

Português: poder; potência; energia

Simple English: Energy obtained to operate machines or equipment.

Example: *Solar power is becoming a popular choice for renewable energy.*

Uses in this book:

1. Mrs. Arbuthnot suddenly felt that perhaps she had grown used to explaining things in a simple, instructive way, like a nursemaid, because she had an audience that had to agree, was afraid to interrupt, and was, in truth, under her power. [Back to B1](#)

2. She had a strange power to affect other people. [Back to B1](#)

praise /preɪz/ (11 occurrences)

Português: louvor; louvar; elogios

Simple English: To express admiration or approval toward someone or something.

Example: *The teacher will praise students who submit their projects on time.*

Forms in this book: praise, praised, praising

Uses in this book:

1. But he praised the saving that made Mrs. Wilkins wear old, spoiled clothes. [Back to B1](#)

price /praɪs/ (4 occurrences)

Português: preço

Simple English: The amount of money something costs.

Example: *The price is too high.*

Forms in this book: price, prices

Uses in this book:

1. In fact, they lower the price. [Back to B1](#)

print /prɪnt/ (2 occurrences)

Português: imprimir; impressão; cópia

Simple English: Image or design transferred from engraved or prepared surface.

Example: *The print on the wall was created using traditional screen printing techniques.*

Uses in this book:

1. But Mrs. Wilkins softly laid her hand on the part of *The Times* where the advertisement was, as if the printed words were precious, and only said, "Perhaps that's why this seems so wonderful." [Back to B1](#)

proof /pru:f/ (3 occurrences)

Português: prova; comprovante

Simple English: Information or evidence proving the truth of something.

Example: *The scientist provided proof that supported her groundbreaking theory about climate change.*

Uses in this book:

1. He wanted proof that the second half of the rent would be paid, since the first half had to be paid in advance. [Back to B1](#)

2. He wanted proof. [Back to B1](#)

3. The only proof was Mrs. Arbuthnot, and Mrs. Wilkins had brought her after much pleading. [Back to B1](#)

pure /pjʊər/ (4 occurrences)

Português: puro; pura; puros

Simple English: Not combined or mixed with anything else; clean or unmixed.

Example: *She prefers pure water without any additives or flavors in it.*

Uses in this book:

1. Later, the next savings would be made pure by how she used them. [Back to B1](#)

2. The poor were the means by which the money was cleaned and made pure. [Back to B1](#)

recover /rɪˈkʌvər/ (2 occurrences)

Português: recuperar

Simple English: To regain full health after illness, injury, or surgery.

Example: *She hopes to recover quickly after her surgery next week.*

Forms in this book: recovered, recovering

Uses in this book:

1. "Well, we only want two," said Mrs. Wilkins, quickly recovering, because she had imagined many people would want to come. [Back to B1](#)

register /ˈrɛdʒɪstər/ (1 occurrence)

Português: registrar; registo; cadastrar

Simple English: To record one's name on an official institutional list.

Example: *You need to register for the course before attending the first class.*

Uses in this book:

1. Mrs. Arbuthnot belonged to a church group and liked to study, classify, and register poor people. [Back to B1](#)

remark /rɪˈmɑːrk/ (6 occurrences)

Português: observação; comentário; obs

Simple English: To express one's opinion through a statement.

Example: *He made a remark about the quality of the food at the restaurant.*

Forms in this book: remark, remarks

Uses in this book:

1. After thinking about her last remark, and feeling more and more uneasy and affected by her, she decided for the moment to put her under the heading Nerves. [Back to B1](#)

root /ru:t/ (3 occurrences)

Português: raiz; radicular; torcer

Simple English: The part of a plant that grows underground to get nutrients.

Example: *The root of the plant spreads deep into the soil for stability.*

Forms in this book: rooted, roots

Uses in this book:

1. In fact," she said, turning red to the roots of her hair, because her own words frightened her, though she could not stop, "there seems to be no end to it. [Back to B1](#)

seat /si:t/ (12 occurrences)

Português: assento; sede; banco

Simple English: Something you sit on.

Example: *Please take a seat.*

Forms in this book: seat, seated, seats

Uses in this book:

1. She seated the boys and girls neatly in their places, made them kneel for prayer, and then stand again as the vestry door opened and the choir and clergy came out. [Back to B1](#)

senior /'si:njər/ (1 occurrence)

Português: sênior; altos; veterano

Simple English: Higher in age, rank, or position.

Example: *She is a senior manager.*

Uses in this book:

1. People knew his senior partners thought highly of him. [Back to B1](#)

sense /sens/ (8 occurrences)

Português: sentido; senso; sensação

Simple English: Natural ability to perceive touch, sight, taste, smell.

Example: *My sense of smell helps me enjoy food more.*

Uses in this book:

1. Mrs. Wilkins went on talking, even though her words made little sense, because Mrs. Fisher kept looking at her over her glasses. [Back to B1](#)

sensitive /'sensɪtv/ (1 occurrence)

Português: sensível; confidenciais; minúsculas

Simple English: Aware of others' feelings and responsive with care emotionally.

Example: *She is sensitive to how her friends feel during difficult times.*

Uses in this book:

1. Mrs. Arbuthnot's conscience had become very sensitive after years of being spoiled, and it could not accept what she was doing as right. [Back to B1](#)

sentence /'sentəns/ (6 occurrences)

Português: sentença; frase; sentencio

Simple English: A group of words expressing an idea.

Example: *Write a complete sentence.*

Forms in this book: sentence, sentences

Uses in this book:

1. "The kindred points of heaven and home," continued Mrs. Arbuthnot, who liked to finish her sentences. [Back to B1](#)

shame (3 occurrences)

Português: vergonha; pena; lástima

Uses in this book:

1. She was red with shame. [Back to B1](#)

steady /'stedɪ/ (7 occurrences)

Português: constante; firme; estável

Simple English: Not changing significantly over time.

Example: *She maintained a steady pace while running during the marathon event.*

Uses in this book:

1. If she could only put Mrs. Wilkins in the right place, she thought she would feel steady again. [Back to B1](#)
2. Her face kept changing colour, and she could not stop talking because of Mrs. Fisher's glasses and her steady gaze. [Back to B1](#)

struggle /'strʌɡəl/ (8 occurrences)

Português: luta; lutar; esforço

Simple English: A great effort to fight back or break free.

Example: *He had to struggle against the strong current to swim back to the shore.*

Forms in this book: struggle, struggled, struggling

Uses in this book:

1. Every step had been a struggle, and she felt at the time that each one was stained with her heart's blood. [Back to B1](#)

2. By the time Mrs. Wilkins reached the station, her walk and the struggle with other people's umbrellas on the crowded pavement had warmed her up, and she even suggested giving up Mrs. Fisher instead. [Back to B1](#)

subject /səb'dʒekt/ (5 occurrences)

Português: assunto; sujeito; objecto

Simple English: The topic being discussed or studied.

Example: *History is my favorite subject.*

Forms in this book: subject, subjects

Uses in this book:

1. He had two rooms near the British Museum, where he studied his subjects, and he went there every morning. [Back to B1](#)

2. In the end, she placed him beside her bed as the main subject of her prayers and left him to God. [Back to B1](#)

suspect /sə'spekt/ (2 occurrences)

Português: suspeito; suspeitar; desconfiar

Simple English: To think someone may have committed a crime.

Example: *I suspect he took the money when nobody was looking.*

Uses in this book:

1. This made her feel, as she had already begun to suspect, that she was moving further and further away from God. [Back to B1](#)

tone /toun/ (3 occurrences)

Português: tom; tônus; tonificar

Simple English: A musical sound described by its pitch and quality.

Example: *The tone of her voice was soothing and calm during the performance.*

Uses in this book:

1. Years of working with poor people made her say, with a kind but slightly superior tone, "But you see, heaven is not somewhere else. [Back to B1](#)

trip /trip/ (4 occurrences)

Português: viagem; desengate; tropeçar

Simple English: A journey.

Example: *We took a trip to Rome.*

Forms in this book: trip, trips

Uses in this book:

1. No doubt a trip to Italy would be wonderful, but there are many wonderful things one might want to do. [Back to B1](#)
2. His business was doing well, so he could afford a trip. [Back to B1](#)

trust /trʌst/ (10 occurrences)

Português: confiar; confiança; fideicomisso

Simple English: To believe someone is honest or reliable.

Example: *I trust her completely.*

Forms in this book: trust, trusted, trusting

Uses in this book:

1. She knew the only reference she could give safely was Shoolbred, and she had little trust in it, since it would depend only on Mellersh's fish. [Back to B1](#)
2. Mrs. Fisher looked at Mrs. Arbuthnot, who could make even Tube officials trust and like her. [Back to B1](#)
3. March was also an anxious month for her, while the unaware Mr. Wilkins came home every day to dinner and ate his fish in quiet, safe trust. [Back to B1](#)

unknown (2 occurrences)

Português: desconhecido

Uses in this book:

1. Frederick himself was almost unknown in Hampstead, even by sight. [Back to B1](#)

urge /ɜːrɪdʒ/ (4 occurrences)

Português: exortar; instar; impulso

Simple English: To strongly recommend or encourage someone to take action.

Example: *I urge you to apply for that scholarship before the deadline.*

Forms in this book: urged, urging

Uses in this book:

1. She was confused, yet she urged action. [Back to B1](#)

wage /weɪdʒ/ (3 occurrences)

Português: salário; travar; empreender

Simple English: The amount of money paid to a worker for their labor.

Example: *Her wage increased after she worked there for over two years successfully.*

Uses in this book:

1. The rent was £60 for one month, and the servants' wages were extra. [Back to B1](#)
2. Besides rent, there were servants' wages, food, and train tickets. [Back to B1](#)

whisper /ˈwɪspər/ (20 occurrences)

Português: sussurro; sussurrar; cochichar

Simple English: To speak very quietly so others nearby cannot easily hear.

Example: *She had to whisper so the teacher wouldn't hear their conversation.*

Forms in this book: whisper, whispered, whispering, whispers

Uses in this book:

1. "Wouldn't it be wonderful?" whispered Mrs. Wilkins. [Back to B1](#)
2. "Why don't we try to get it?" she whispered. [Back to B1](#)
3. "Will you believe," she whispered, trying to control her mouth and clearly ashamed, "that I have never spoken like this to anyone before in my life?" [Back to B1](#)
4. "It only shows," whispered Mrs. Wilkins as they turned away from the letter-box, "how perfectly good we've been all our lives. [Back to B1](#)

wise /waɪz/ (8 occurrences)

Português: sábio; sensato; prudente

Simple English: Having deep knowledge and experience; capable of giving good advice.

Example: *My grandfather is wise; he gives the best advice based on his experience.*

Forms in this book: wise, wiser

Uses in this book:

1. She tried to give the kind, wise, and understanding smile she used when listening to the limited and one-sided views of poor people. [Back to B1](#)
2. She also knew she was wiser. [Back to B1](#)
3. But even if Mrs. Arbuthnot was wiser, older, and calmer, her new friend still seemed to push things forward. [Back to B1](#)