

# **SUMMER**

**BEING VOLUME TWO OF**  
*The Soul Enchanted*

By  
**ROMAIN ROLLAND**

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# PART ONE

## I

On the half-light of the room, with its closed shutters, Annette was sitting on her bed, smiling, with her white dressing-gown wrapped about her. Her unbound hair, which she had just washed, covered her shoulders. Through the open windows could be seen the motionless, golden warmth of an August mid-afternoon; without observing it, one felt out there the torpor of the Jardin de Boulogne sleeping in the sunlight. Annette shared in this beatitude. She could rest there for hours, stretched out, without stirring, without thinking, without needing to think. It was enough for her to know that there were two of her; and she did not even make an effort to talk with the "little one" who was inside her, because—of this she was sure—he felt what she felt, they understood one another without speaking. Waves of tenderness passed through the happy somnolence of her body. And then she relapsed again into a happy smile.

But if her mind was drowsy, her senses had retained a marvelous clairvoyance; they followed from moment to moment the fine vibrations of the air and the light. . . . A fragrant odor of strawberries in the garden. . . . She enjoyed it with her nostrils and her tongue. Her amused ear caught the slightest sound, the leaves brushed by a breeze, a footstep on

the gravel, a voice in the street, a bell ringing for vespers. And the rumble ascending from the great crowds: Paris in 1900 . . . the summer of the Exposition. In the vat of the Champ de Mars thousands of human grapes were fermenting in the sun. . . . Far enough away, yet close enough to the monstrous bubbling to feel its presence and to be safe from it, Annette rejoiced in the contrast of the peace and the shade of her nest. Vain tumult! The truth dwells within me. . . .

## II

Her hearing, subtle and wandering like that of a cat, seized upon every sound that passed, one after another, and idly let it fall again; from the floor below she caught the ring of the doorbell and recognized the little steps of Sylvie, who was always in a hurry. Annette would have preferred to be left alone. But she was so solidly settled in her happiness that, no matter who came, nothing could disturb her.

It was only eight days since Sylvie had received her news. Since last spring she had heard nothing from her sister. A personal adventure that had not affected her very much had yet been enough to fill her thoughts: she had not realized how long the silence had been. But when the affair was settled and she found her mind free again, with time to think of it, she began to be troubled. She went to her aunt at the Boulogne house for news. She was very much surprised to hear that Annette had come back some time before. She was rather inclined to give the forgetful soul a good snubbing, but Annette tactfully turned her to another subject that surprised her; gently but feelingly, she had simply told her the whole story. Sylvie found it very difficult to listen to the end. That Annette,

the sensible Annette, had done this mad thing and refused to marry afterwards, no, it was unheard of, she simply wouldn't tolerate it! . . . This little Lucretia was scandalized. She railed at Annette; she called her an idiot. Annette remained calm. It was plain that nothing could make her change her mind. Sylvie realized that she had no hold on this obstinate soul: she would have liked to give her a good whipping! . . . But how was it possible to remain angry with such a lovable person who listened as you spoke with such a disarming smile! And then the mysterious charm of this maternity. . . . Sylvie anathematized it as a calamity, but she was too much a woman not to be touched. . . .

And to-day she had come again, with her mind made up to give Annette a good raking over the coals, to break down her stupid resistance, to oblige her to insist on marriage. . . . "If you don't, if you don't, I shall be furious! . . ." She came in like a gust of wind, smelling of rice-powder and battle. And to make a start, without saying good-morning, she began scolding about this mad way of passing one's days, shut up in the dark. But catching sight of the happy eyes of Annette, who stretched out her arms to her, she ran to her and hugged her. She went on scolding: "Fool! Silly! Arch-fool! . . . With her sweeping hair over her long white dressing-gown she looks like an angel. . . . But what a mistake it would be to think she was! . . . The sanctimonious wretch! The little scamp! . . ."

She shook her. Weariedly, contentedly, Annette let her have her way. Sylvie stopped in the middle of her tirade, took her sister's forehead between her hands and pushed back her hair. "She is fresh, she is pink, never have I seen her with such

beautiful color. And that look of triumph! Good reason for it! Aren't you ashamed?"

"Not in the least!" said Annette. "I am happier than I have ever been before. And so strong, so well. For the first time in my life I feel complete, I desire nothing more. This longing that is going to be fulfilled for a child goes back so far in my life! Ever since I was a child myself. . . . Yes, when I was seven years old I was already dreaming of it."

"That's a fib," said Sylvie. "Only six months ago you told me you had never felt that maternity was your vocation."

"Do you really think that? Did I really say that?" said Annette, disconcerted. "It's true, I did say it. But I haven't lied, just the same, either now or then. . . . How explain it? I am not pretending. I remember clearly."

"I know how it is," said Sylvie. "When I have a fancy for something, I often immediately remember that I have never wanted anything but that since the day I was born."

Annette frowned; she was not satisfied. "The nature I feel to-day is my real nature. It always has been, but I didn't dare confess it to myself before the time came; I was afraid I was mistaken. Now . . . Oh! now, I see that it is even more beautiful than I had hoped. And it is my whole self. I want nothing more."

"When you wanted Roger or Tullio," said Sylvie maliciously, "you wanted nothing more."

"Oh, you don't understand anything! . . . Can the two things be compared? When I was in love (what you call 'love'), it



wasn't I who wished it, I was forced. . . . How I suffered from that force that held me, without being able to resist it! . . . And now you see how my little one has come to my rescue when I was struggling in the bonds of the misery they call love, how he came, how he has saved me. My little liberator!"

Sylvie began to laugh. She had not in the least understood her sister's reasons. But she did not need any reasons to understand her maternal instinct: on that subject the two sisters would always be in accord. They began to chat affectionately about the little unknown creature (was it going to be a man or a woman?)—discussing a thousand nothings, serious and foolish, about its coming, things about which a woman never wearies of chattering.

They had been talking this way for a long time when Sylvie remembered that she had come to administer her lesson, not to sing a duet. "Annette," she said, "enough of this nonsense! There is a time for everything. Roger owes you marriage, and you must insist on it."

Annette made a weary gesture. "Why go back to that? I have told you that Roger offered it to me and that I refused."

"Well, when one has been stupid one should recognize it and change."

"I have no desire to change."

"Why don't you want to? You loved this man. I am sure you still love him. What has happened?"

Annette was unwilling to reply. Sylvie insisted, tactlessly seeking for the deep, personal reasons for their disagreement. Annette made an impatient gesture. Sylvie looked at her, astonished. Annette's expression was angry, her brows were knitted, her eyes full of irritation.

"What's the matter with you?"

"Nothing," said Annette, turning aside hastily.

Sylvie had touched a wound that she wanted to forget. Through an inconsistency she could not have explained, but which came from the depths of her nature, she who rejoiced at the coming of the child bore a grudge against the man who had given it to her; she could not forgive herself because her senses had been taken by surprise, because of the passion that had betrayed her in this way—she could not forgive the man who had seized such an opportunity. This instinctive recoil had been the true, hidden reason (hidden from her as from the others) for her flight from Roger and her refusal to see him again. In the depths of her being she hated him because she had loved him. But as her mind was straightforward she repressed these instincts which she felt to be evil. Why was Sylvie forcing her to become aware of them? . . .

Sylvie looked at her and insisted no more. Annette, calm again, ashamed of what she had allowed to become visible, of what she had seen herself, tried to change the subject and said quietly, "I don't want to marry. I am not made for these exclusive bonds. You may tell me that millions of women get used to them, that I exaggerate their seriousness. But I am made in such a way that I take everything seriously. If I give

myself, I give myself, too much, and then I am smothered; I feel as if I were drowning with a stone around my neck. Perhaps I am not strong enough. My personality is not firmly established. Ties that are too close are bind-weeds that drain my energy; and there is not enough left for me. I try to please the 'other person,' to be like the image of what he wants me to be, and this ends badly. For in renouncing too much of one's nature one loses one's self-respect and cannot live any more; or one revolts and causes suffering. No, I am an egoist, Sylvie. I was made to live alone."

(Although she was not in any sense lying, she was uttering pretexts that masked the truth from herself.)

"You amuse me," said Sylvie. "You are the last woman to live without love."

"I hate it," said Annette. "But it will not catch me again now. I am protected from it."

"Beautifully protected!" said Sylvie. "He won't protect you in the least; you will have to protect him. You don't want to bind yourself, but have you thought of the fetters this little bundle is going to mean for you?"

"Happiness! With my arms filled, these arms that have been empty so long!"

"You are talking without thinking. Who is going to bring him up?"

"I."

"What about the father? He has rights over his child."

A new cloud of irritation passed over Annette's brows. . . . Rights! Rights over his child! . . . His child! The child of that man, that blind moment which he has already forgotten and which binds me for life! . . . Never! . . . My child is mine! . . . She said, "My child belongs to me."

"He will belong to whom he likes."

"Oh, I know whom he's going to like!"

"Seducer! And suppose that, in spite of everything, he reproaches you some day for depriving him of a father!"

"I shall fill his heart so full that there won't remain the tiniest place for regrets for anyone else."

"You are a monster of egoism."

"I said I was."

"You will be punished."

"Well, so much the worse for me if I can't make him love me! What's to prevent me from loving him and why shouldn't he love me?"

"If you really love him you should think first of his future. Plenty of other people have been obliged to accept a disagreeable marriage for the sake of the child."

"You revolt me," said Annette, "praising those women who condemn themselves to a false marriage, sometimes one built on hatred, out of love for the child. You remind me of that mother who told her daughter she had endured hell for her

sake by remaining married. The daughter replied: 'Do you think hell is a good home for a child?'"

"The child needs a father."

"But how about the thousands of people who have gone without one? How many have never known one at all! How many have lost their fathers in early childhood and have been brought up by their mothers alone! Are they inferior to other people? The child needs a protecting love. Why should not mine be enough?"

"You overestimate your strength. Do you know what is awaiting you?"

"I know, I know! The little arms of a child about my neck."

"But do you know the price the world will make you pay for it? It would be much better for you to be married and an adulteress four times over than to have people brand you with the name of an unmarried mother. To dare to assume the pains and responsibilities of motherhood without having first accepted the stamp of their official marriage is something for which a woman of their class is never pardoned. It would be all right for me. What people like myself do is of no consequence. Your bourgeois people even find that it pays to have things so. They are ready enough to praise free love in the working-class, as they do in *Louise*, but a girl of the bourgeoisie belongs in a private preserve. You are their property. They can buy you by contract, before a lawyer; you can't give yourself in the presence of heaven and say, 'It's my right.' Good Lord, where

would we end if property revolted against its master and said, 'I am free! Let anyone who wishes come and cultivate me.'"

Even when she was indignant Sylvie could not speak seriously.

Annette smiled and said, "Customs are made by man. I know. He condemns the woman who dares to have her children outside of marriage without dedicating herself for life to the father of her children. But for many women this means slavery, for they do not love their husbands. Many a woman would remain free and alone with her little ones if she had the courage. I shall try to have it."

Sylvie said, with a touch of pity, "Poor innocent! Your life has been shielded from hardships by the double windows of this bourgeoisie that shuts you in with its prejudices—and its privileges also. Once you leave it, you will never be allowed to enter it again, and you will have a glimpse then of what life is!"

"Well, Sylvie, that's only fair; you are right in saying that I have been privileged; it will be good for me to have my share in what you suffer."

"Too late! One must learn that in childhood. At your age it's no longer possible. Luckily you are rich, you will never know material suffering. But the other, moral suffering . . . your class will cast you out, public opinion will condemn you, every day you will have to endure some little insult. . . . You have a proud and tender heart. It will bleed."

"It will bleed, but one enjoys happiness all the more if one has to pay for it. I want nothing but health and an honest mind. Public opinion has no terrors for me."

"But what if your child suffers from it?"

"Would they dare? Well, we shall fight together against the cowards."

Sitting upright again on her bed, she shook her hair like a lioness.

Sylvie studied her, did her best to preserve her look of severity, was unable to do so, laughed, shrugged her shoulders and sighed, "Poor little idiot!"

Annette coaxingly asked her, "Will you help us?"

Sylvie hugged her furiously. And she shook her fist at the wall. "Beware, anyone who touches you!"

She left. Annette, fatigued by the discussion, fell back into her reverie. This time she had won in the encounter with her sister. But one disturbing thing remained from the conversation, one word uttered by Sylvie . . . Would the child some day reproach her? . . .

Stretched out on her back, with her hands crossed over her breast, she listened to what was within her. The tiny creature was beginning to stir. Annette, with her lips closed, spoke to him as she had so often done. She asked him if she was doing right in keeping him for herself alone; she begged him instantly to tell her if she was right, if he was satisfied: for she would do nothing for which he could blame her. Whereupon the child,

naturally enough, replied that she was doing right, that he was satisfied. He said he wanted to be hers, hers alone, and that in order to dedicate herself to him she should remain free and live with him alone. She and he. . . .

Annette laughed with happiness. Her heart was so full that she could not speak. And with her head heavy and intoxicated with her joy she fell asleep. . . .

### III

As soon as Annette's condition began to be visible, Sylvie obliged her sister to move away from Paris. It was the beginning of autumn; before long her friends would be coming back from their vacations. Surprisingly enough, Annette offered no resistance. She was not afraid of public opinion, but anything that might mean discord just now would have been intolerable to her; nothing must disturb her harmony!

She allowed herself to be conducted by Sylvie to a place on the Côte d'Azur, but she did not stay there. It offered her no peaceful seclusion. The neighborhood of the sea made her feel uncomfortable. Annette was a landswoman. She could marvel at the ocean, but she could not live on familiar terms with it. She submitted to the powerful fascination of its breath, but this breath was not beneficial to her. It reawoke in her too many hidden anxieties; it aroused what she did not wish to be conscious of . . . not yet, not now. . . . There are beings whom we do not love because, they say, we are afraid to love them. (Does that mean we do love them?) Annette fought against the sea because she was fighting against herself, against a dangerous Annette from whom she was trying to escape. . . .



She set out again northward, to the neighborhood of the Savoyard lakes, and took quarters for the winter in a little town at the foot of the mountains. Sylvie was only informed after she was settled. Kept in Paris by her work, she could only make her sister brief, occasional visits, and it troubled her to know that Annette was alone in this forsaken spot. But Annette, during this time, could not be alone enough, nor could the spot be sufficiently forsaken. She would have found a hermitage delightful. The richer her inner life was, the more need she felt for a clear, soundless atmosphere. She did not suffer, as Sylvie supposed, from being abandoned to strange hands in her condition. In the first place, she had so much affection to give that no one seemed to her a stranger, and, as sympathy attracts sympathy, she did not long remain a stranger to anyone else. It was not that the country-people, who had little curiosity, put themselves out to know her. They bowed back and forth, exchanged a few cordial words as they passed, or from their doorsteps or over the hedges. They wished each other well. Probably in case of need she could not have counted too far on this good will, but, such as it was, it still meant a good deal in the daily round. The days were lighter for it. Annette found the cool kindness of these good souls, of whom she knew nothing and who left her alone, more to her taste than the tyrannical exactions of relatives and friends who assume over us the rights of heavy-handed guardians.

Mid-November. . . . Sitting by the window, sewing, she looked out at the new-fallen snow over the fields and the white-capped trees. But her eyes returned to a wedding announcement. . . . The marriage of Roger Brissot to a young girl of the political world in Paris. (Annette knew her.) . . .

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