

THE BOOK OF EXCEEDED BOUNDS

A Play

by

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2000

Characters

The PAINTER

The MODEL

The READER

Scene

The PAINTER'S Studio

DRAMATURGICAL PAGE

My portrait was painted when I was around 4. I remember it vividly because I remember the book my mother was reading to me. It was an elementary science book that had dinosaurs in it and things about the earth and what makes plants green. That was what she chose to read to me while I was sitting for a portrait.

Jeremiah Ostriker, cosmologist

Alexander had such an admiration for the beauty of his favorite mistress, Campaspe, that he gave orders she should be painted by Apelles; and then, discovering that the artist, while executing the commission, had fallen in love with the woman, he presented her to him, greatminded as he was, and still greater because he conquered himself. Nor was he influenced by regard for the feelings of his favorite in having been recently the mistress of a monarch and now belonged to a painter.

Pliny, Natural History

TUDA. I turn my head a little, acting natural. I bend it, I raise it . . . careful not to show that it is I, the model, who suggest. That's what we have to do with certain artists.

Luigi Pirandello, Diana and Tuda

To model is to act--modelling is itself a performance.

Svetlana Alpers, Rembrandt's Enterprise

Having one's picture painted is like the creation of another self. It has been said that lovers are never tired of each other's company, because they are always talking of themselves. This seems to be the bond of connection (a delicate one it is!) between the painter and the sitter--they are always thinking and talking of the same thing, the picture, in which their self-love finds an equal counter-part.

William Hazlitt, "On Sitting for One's Picture"

In the particular acts of painting and posing, there were elements of the sado-masochistic. However, it would have been difficult to determine exactly what acts were sadistic and/or masochistic on whose side and why.

James Lord, A Giacometti Portrait

DRAMATURGICAL PAGE (cont.)

The sitting began; and Harriet, smiling and blushing, and afraid of not keeping her attitude and countenance, presented a very sweet mixture of youthful expression to the steady eyes of the artist. But there was no doing anything, with Mr. Elton fidgeting behind her and watching every touch. Emma gave him credit for stationing himself where he might gaze and gaze again without offence; but was really obliged to put an end to it, and request him to place himself elsewhere. It then occurred to her to employ him in reading.

"If he would be so good as to read to them, it would be a kindness indeed! It would amuse away the difficulties of her part."

Jane Austen, Emma

The best head in my Dante picture was swept in with the greatest speed and spirit while Pierret was reading me a canto from Dante which I knew already but to which he lent, by his accent, an energy that electrified me.

Eugène Delacroix

In the nineteenth century painters discovered the need of always having a model in front of them, in the twentieth century they discovered that they must never look at a model.

Gertrude Stein

Phidias, according to Cicero, did not look for his models among men but in his mind--'in ipsius mente.'

Maurice Raynal

ALEXANDER. But what think you of Apelles? Did ye ever see any so perplexed? He neither answered directly to any question nor looked steadfastly upon anything. I hold my life the painter is in love.

HEPHESTION. It may be. For commonly we see it incident in artificers to be enamored of their own works. Especially painters, who playing with their own conceits, still mending it, never end it, till they be caught with it.

John Lyly, Campaspe

There's a strict rule among stage set designers which you should follow in your painting: don't place anything on the stage unless you expect your actors to use it. Paraphernalia carry too many associations: they start to tell their own story.

Jan DeRuth, Painting the Nude

DRAMATURGICAL PAGE (cont.)

Portraits are models complicated by artists.
Charles Baudelaire

(The PAINTER's studio. The MODEL, sitting for the PAINTER, is being read to by the READER.

The PAINTER stands behind his easel, up-right. (The stretch of stage between the easel and the wings, right, is curtained off.) Nothing of him is visible but his legs and painting hand, which is constantly in motion except on those (not infrequent) occasions when he comes out from behind the easel to make some adjustment in the MODEL's surroundings or pose.

The MODEL is seated, down-left, on a chair placed on a platform (the "model stand").

The READER is seated, center, on a chair not unlike the MODEL's, but smaller and shabbier, which is also placed on a platform (the "reading stand"), quite similar to the model stand, but (again) smaller and shabbier.

Out before the READER on the reading stand rises the yard-high lower section of a broken-off, white, wooden COLONNETTE*, in one of the ridges of whose jagged top surface is propped up, as if on a bookrest, the bound HANDWRITTEN VOLUME from which, at rise, the READER is reading to the MODEL.

This book on the COLONNETTE is illuminated by a tripod-based STUDIO LAMP that casts its light over the READER's shoulder onto her page.

Opposite the STUDIO LAMP, and helping to focus its beam on the READER's volume, is a large, freestanding REFLECTOR of the sort used in outdoor fashion shoots to catch and redirect ambient light.

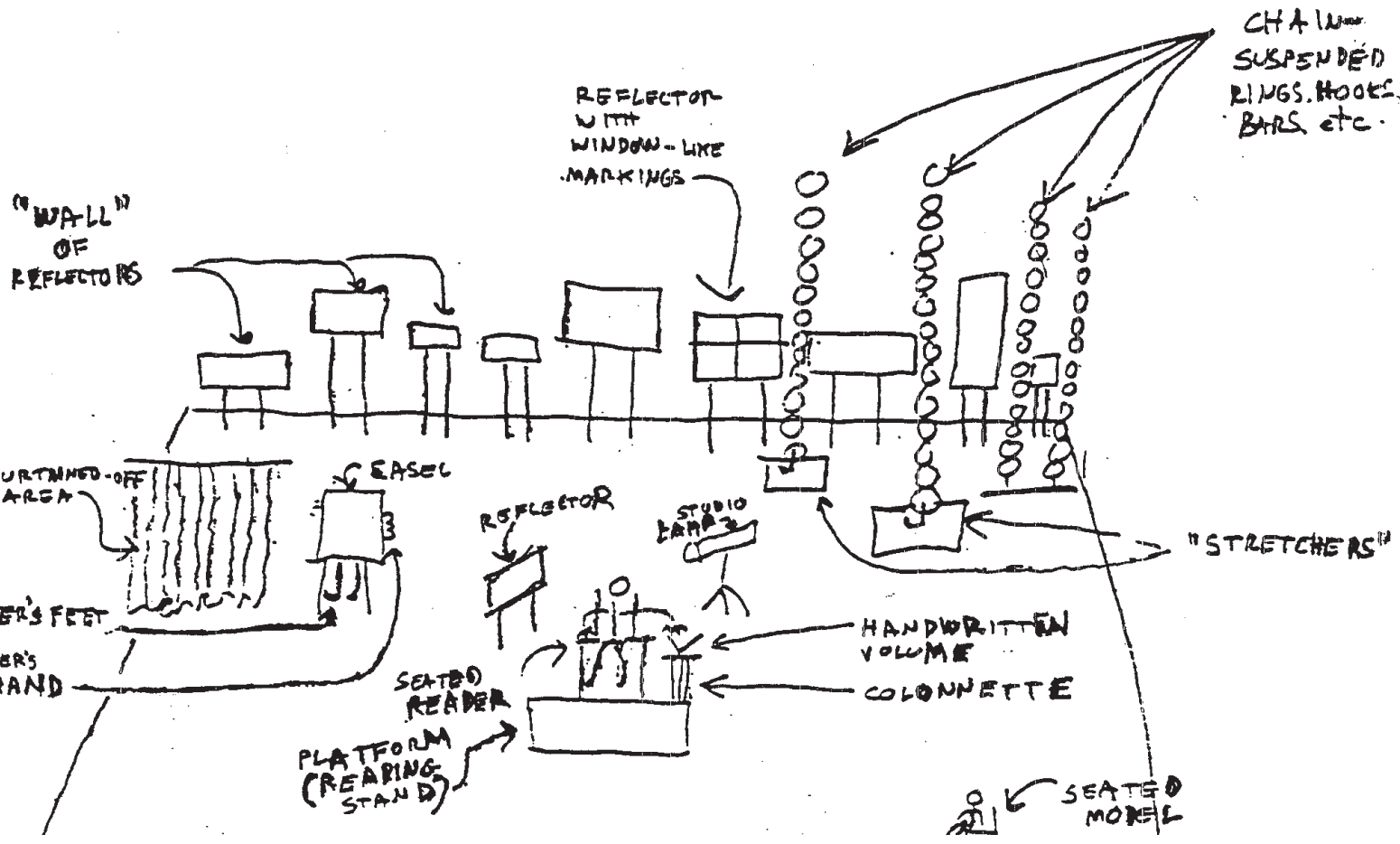
A whole line of such REFLECTORS, of different heights and proportions, runs along--or rather, comprises--the upstage "wall" of the playing area. One of these REFLECTORS, thanks to its sash-like markings and position in the "wall," might easily be mistaken for a window; it is, however, a reflector.

From the flies, at different heights off the floor and at various positions around the model stand, hang a number of hooks, rings, trapeze bars, and loops of chain, from which, on several occasions during the course of the action, the PAINTER will suspend objects he wishes to add to the scene.

*Certain physical objects with recurring "roles" in the action are designated in the stage directions by underlined capital letters.

Already at rise, from 5 or 6 of the hooks hang "STRETCHERS": rectangular wooden frameworks of various sizes, over which lengths of canvas to be painted on may be "stretched" and stapled.

The disposition of persons and objects about the stage as described so far is thus:



The MODEL is young and pretty. The READER is not so young and not so pretty--but, on closer inspection, also not so very different-looking from the other woman. Later, when more of the READER's costume becomes visible, a like similarity-in-difference may also be observed between it and the MODEL's costume, an unbelted, white, generically "Greek" shift. At present, though, the READER's costume is largely concealed beneath a coarse, bulky SHAWL, covered over in what appears to be a pattern of different-sized rectangles.

A word on the ensuing action.

The texts that are now read aloud by the READER to the MODEL (some entries apparently from the diary of the ancient Greek painter, Apelles, followed by a long account of Apelles' love for his sitter, Campaspe) will time and again seem aimed at getting the MODEL to modify her pose or assume a new one--and time and again the READER will, by an emphasis or gesture, seem to be hinting to the MODEL that she should make such a change.*

But invariably these hints of the READER's are disregarded. Either the MODEL does not change pose or, if she does, it is not along any lines suggested by the text she hears. The MODEL declines to act out or illustrate or "take her place in" the events of the read story. She does not lay hold of, or even so much as direct her gaze toward, the various story-related objects that are heaped up around her over the course of the reading. If anything, her movements give the impression of standing in some sort of relation to the inner experience of the READER--though in what relation it would be difficult to say.

Only gradually will it emerge that the MODEL's aim throughout has been to confront the READER with a running image of the READER's own constantly changing "position" toward what she reads--could the READER but recognize her own "positions" when assumed, as actual bodily postures, by another.

*Only a few of these "hinting" gestures and emphases of the READER's will be spelled out in the stage directions. Occasions for further ones will be indicated by double asterisks (**) in the text she reads. And still others will no doubt occur to the actress herself.

So, for example, at moments when the MODEL appears impatient, absorbed, alienated, etc., it is the READER's own impatience, absorption, or alienation at that moment which the MODEL is attempting to "throw back" at her.

In a word, what the MODEL throughout "models" is the READER's experience of reading.

Inevitably, since so much of the play's "dialogue" consists of a read tale, for long stretches a reader of the play is likely to feel that he or she is reading a tale--a narrative rather than a theatrical production; a story, not a script. But the "dramatic action" here is not that recounted of Apelles and Campaspe; rather, it is the READER's ceaseless struggle with her own act of recounting, together with the MODEL's and (it will eventually emerge) the PAINTER's efforts to bring this struggle home to her by flashing it back at her.

Since the READER's experience of this struggle changes constantly, the pose of the MODEL "mirroring" her must be ever in flux (to the point where the audience may at last begin to wonder how the PAINTER can possibly be "capturing" this "sitter" always on the move).

As with the READER's "hinting" gestures (see p.3 note, above), not every "mirroring" move or pose of the MODEL's can or need be specified in the script. At each turn of the read story it will be necessary for the actors and director:

- (1) to imagine the READER's likely response to what she hears (bearing in mind--something the audience only learns later--that the READER is herself an ex-model of the PAINTER's, that she resents her demotion to her present post, that she tends to hear the Campaspe-Apelles story as commenting on her own relations with the PAINTER, etc.)

and then:

- (2) to devise some physical-ization by which the MODEL can give this latest attitude of the READER back to her in the form of a physical "attitude."

At certain key junctures, at least the general thrust of this physicalizing work will be indicated. For example, here at the outset, the movements performed by the MODEL during the initial series of readings (the extracts from "Apelles' Diary") have about them an air of constant, restless self-correction: the MODEL strikes a pose, turns from it, then a moment later turns away from her own turning away, etc.

At times, as will be specified, this routine of ceaseless postural self-revision on the part of the MODEL accelerates to a mere turning this way and that, which suggests now impatience, now a vain search for a comfortable position. But, considering that, as has been explained above (pp. 3 - 5), the MODEL's actions aim throughout to give the READER back a picture of her own changing state, this restlessness of the MODEL's must ultimately be understood as reflecting certain dissatisfactions on the part of the READER with the reading she must do, e. g., her inability to "sit still" for the demands reading places on her, her discomfort at being "confined" to a reader's "role," etc.)

THE READER

(reading from the HANDWRITTEN VOLUME
propped up before her on the COLONNETTE)

23rd Bōdrōmion

This great while now at a stay.

(The MODEL turns restlessly in her chair.)

Startled, the READER breaks off, looks up, then starts her reading over again from the top:)

23rd Bōdrōmion

This great while now at a stay. To represent a breaking awareness: Sole wonder by my commission exacted, sole triumph that yet eludes the Attic brush. Thornier than so, you will urge--and it is true! Crack open this daybook anywhere and you shall find one after another of the outworks stormed in vain by Stesichorus of Antiphon or Diophantus the Epicyrene fallen to my hand.

As for example:

(The MODEL turns restlessly in her chair.)

As for example:

(turns page)

19th Thargēlion

Method of Apelles of Cōs for evoking the flutter of drapery.

(turns page)

21st Pynepsion

Method of Apelles of Cōs for implying the features of an averted face--

(turns several pages)

--such, and how many other such, frontiers of art
 have I not brushed past? Ah, but one had then
the drapery, had then the features (though turned)
 full under gaze, one saw what was being asked of one.

What does a breaking awareness ask of one?

Does it ask anything? Would I know it if I
 fell over it? Who shall model me such a thing?

(The MODEL turns restlessly this way
 and that.)

Startled, the READER loses her place,
 goes back:)

What does a breaking awareness ask of one?

Who shall model me such a thing? "Fair Campaspe,
 I would paint the dawn; be so kind, therefore,
 as to--" Well, as to what? The term of my
 commission draws on apace; my hand draws up in air.

(turns page)

25th Bōdrōmion

Over the so-called "traditional solutions"
 we need not linger long. The visage suddenly
aglow (but looking as if the glow rode in
 with the visage). The eyes touched by a gleam
 (that is to say: by a cadmium-yellow highlight
 shrewdly placed). The hands shown flung
backwards and up--along such paths you shall not
 journey far! But, then: far to seek
were already far astray! What is asked here

but that one open one's eyes, and-- Aye,

but upon what? And what, here, is "opening"?

(On each of the following diary entries the MODEL turns this way and that and, simultaneously, the READER pages forward in her book, so that each time one cannot be quite sure whether it is the MODEL's restless turning that provokes the READER to try another passage or the READER's restless paging that gives the MODEL a turn.)

26th Bōdrōmion

She there before me. My brush at a stay.

(The MODEL turns restlessly as the READER pages forward.)

28th Bōdrōmion

She yet before me. My brush yet at a stay.

(Again the MODEL turns restlessly as the READER pages ahead.)

29th Bōdrōmion

She ever before me. My brush as ever at a--

(Suddenly the MODEL slumps forward--crumples, really: Her head drops between her knees; her arms flap down limp at her sides.)

Stay! Master of the Breaking Awareness, would you paint the dawn? Why, Apelles, then--bring up the sun!

Now I see how to go on.

(Noisily interrupting the reading, the PAINTER comes out from behind the easel with what appears to be a PRINTED BOOK in his hand.

If the MODEL's and the READER's costumes have a generic "Greek" air about them (see p.3), this is also the impression one receives from the PAINTER's outfit:

a poncho that suggests a chlamys, perhaps, or perhaps a chiton-like workshirt; and, on his head, something that, without actually being a visored Greek helmet cum horsehair plume, distantly evokes one. Thanks, perhaps, to this last touch, the PAINTER more resembles a Greek soldier than artist.

The PAINTER goes straight to the READER, who, anticipating his demand, shuts the HANDWRITTEN VOLUME she has been reading from and holds it forth to him.)

THE READER

(to the PAINTER)

And past time, too! Plainly, this

(flourishing the HANDWRITTEN VOLUME)

chronicle of wrong turns and wasted hours isn't doing it for her; and, with the glass of your commission now nearly run--

(The PAINTER snatches the HANDWRITTEN VOLUME out of the READER's hand mid-flourish and sets the PRINTED BOOK down before her on the COLONNETTE. (In the moment of exchange, the two volumes can be seen to be nearly, but not quite, identical.)

Then, as if it burned his fingers, the PAINTER flings the HANDWRITTEN VOLUME offstage, where, to judge by the sound we hear, it apparently crashes into and shatters some glass objects--although the ensuing tinkle of breaking glass goes on too long and diminishes by too many fine gradations to be quite plausibly the upshot of one incoming book.

The READER, meanwhile, oblivious to all this racket, is already absorbed in the new (PRINTED) BOOK she has just been given.

For a moment, the PAINTER watches her.

Then he comes up behind the still slumped-over MODEL, lays his hands on her shoulders, and, in one motion, lifts her out of her slump into a sitting position--a pose she holds only briefly, however: the moment the READER resumes reading aloud, the MODEL will be back in action, "mirroring" her.

The PAINTER now crosses to the freestanding REFLECTOR just upstage of the READER, lifts it away from where it has been helping focus the beam of the STUDIO LAMP on the READER's page, and carries it around to upstage of the MODEL, from where it will henceforth illuminate her.

The READER is temporarily blinded by the glare from the newly positioned REFLECTOR and must give over leafing through the PRINTED BOOK on the COLONNETTE until the PAINTER has re-angled the REFLECTOR so that it no longer shines light in her eyes.

While the READER is recovering her sight, the PAINTER strides over to the COLONNETTE, firmly opens the PRINTED BOOK resting on it to a particular page and smooths that page down flat.

He then signals the READER to resume reading and, as she does so, he goes around the stage, taking down and threading onto his arm one after another--all but one--of the STRETCHERS suspended from overhead hooks (see p.2). The single STRETCHER that he leaves in place (overlooks?) hangs down midway between READER and MODEL, sideways to the audience.

NOTE: Between here and p.22 , the objects the PAINTER either brings onstage or transfers from the vicinity of the READER to that of the MODEL will cause the area around the model stand more and more to be seen as "the studio of the Greek artist, Apelles"--i. e., as the site of the very events being recounted in the tale the READER concurrently reads--with the consequence that the PAINTER and MODEL themselves must increasingly suggest the "Apelles" and "Campaspe" of the tale.)

THE READER

(reading from the PRINTED BOOK)

The commission, when at last it came,

(turns the page)

came as no surprise; the surprise was that it had not come till now. Apelles, after all, had won his fame as a painter of ladies; indeed, it was to a picture of a woman--the much-praised early canvas "Galatea As Yet Stone"--that he owed his post as Alexander's court painter: such a shine had the Emperor taken to this production that he snapped up masterpiece and master in a single lot. And yet, once brought on board, Apelles had been employed by the Conqueror solely upon images of conquest, while to such lesser hands as Stesichorus of Antiphon and Diophantus the Epicyrene fell portrayal of Alexander's mistress, Campaspe. What wonder, then, that when at last he got the nod, the long-snubbed painter did not stop to ask: How is it one is only now first . . . ?--oh, no! but simply leapt at the chance--even though the precise terms of the commission were such as might daunt a greater (could Greek art have boasted a greater) master than himself.

(With all the STRECHERS he has taken down since p.10 threaded on one arm, the PAINTER goes back behind his easel to resume work.)

"I want you to give her me" (quoth Alexander) "in the moment of its **first dawning on her that she loves me."

(**And here is the first of those occasions foretold on p.3 when, by an emphasis or gesture, the READER hints to the MODEL that she should get her pose in line with what is being read to her--a hint that the MODEL utterly ignores.

The sites of many other such disregarded hints will subsequently be indicated in the text by double asterisks (**), as explained on p.3 note.)

With the vast aesthetic issues raised by this charge--what might such a "first dawning" look like? Does it "look like" anything? Would I know it if I fell over it?--Apelles was content to soldier on alone: How to portray a breaking awareness was, after all, the great unmet challenge of Greek art; and Apelles, no less than his royal master, was a fearless pusher-out of bounds.

(turns the page)

But with the other and, one might suppose, purely practical side of the question--"You say, 'in the moment of its first dawning': Well, Sire, and when was that?"--the painter thought he might expect some help; and this his patron either could or would not supply.

(The PAINTER, a paint-smear'd rectangular PALETTE hooked round his thumb, comes out from behind the easel, heads over to the STUDIO LAMP that shines on the READER's page, and sets about re-angling it toward the MODEL.)

On the time, the place, the circumstances of Campaspe's first glimmers, her royal lover could shed scant light--and here he claimed to be only passing on the puzzlement of the girl herself. "She thinks it may have been **while tracing my wanderings on a wall-map. Or maybe: as she watched a column to my fame going up. Or just possibly, Apelles, it was while **gazing on one of your pictures of me at historic junctures that love first struck." "But, Sire, if the Lady herself can offer no guidance--" "Ah, but, surely, there is the whole interest of the thing!" cried Alexander.

(Finding his efforts to adjust the STUDIO LAMP hampered by the PALETTE hooked round his thumb, the PAINTER hangs the PALETTE up by its finger-hole from one of the overhead hooks that dangle down just over the reading stand.)

His hands now free, the PAINTER resumes his manipulations of the STUDIO LAMP, which he proceeds to swing round and refocus on the MODEL.)

"I look to you to get it out of her; and even to that end, have given orders that all three candidates--pictures, pillar, chart--be brought round to, or recreated in, your studio. Do but once more set her down amid each in turn of these settings--where--first--and watch if the scene we desire do not compose itself before your eyes."

(Having got the refocussed STUDIO LAMP shining on the MODEL, the PAINTER withdraws behind the easel. He has, apparently, forgotten about the PALETTE, which he leaves dangling from an overhead hook just upstage of the READER.)

Apelles bows low and goes home to await the arrival of his sitter.

(turns the page)

Try as he may, he cannot muster much enthusiasm for his sovereign's scheme and would no doubt be greatly eased to learn with how little interest its success or failure was attended by the sovereign himself. For the truth is, Alexander has never sounded his mistress touching her birth of love and in fact desires no picture of her at that or any other moment. What he desires is to be shut of the over-ardent girl, and to no end but this has bid her sit for Apelles. For, as the Emperor well knew, no man--and of all men least, a painter of ladies--could look long on Campaspe without forgetting that much else in the world deserved a glance. Apelles would fall in love with his subject; **she, with the rigors of his perusal; and their sovereign would "selflessly" bestow either on each. (That such an outcome must redound to the glory of the bestower--Master of World Cedes Flame to Master of Brush--cannot have escaped the notice of a prince no less fervent to push out the frontiers of magnanimity than empire.)

heaped high with the promised bric-à-brac, in which, now he has actually clapped eyes on it, he less than ever understands how the Emperor can place such hopes.

The window through which ****she'd** first glimpsed her master--possibly! The torch whose ray upon a care-marked cheek--worth a try! But that any of all this time-worn rubble--yellowed chart, shattered pillar, or, worst of all, these long-unthought-of pictures of his--should ever have sparked, should even now be dreamt capable of re-sparking--! "Let who will seek for answers in such a place," vows the Master, "when the moment is right, I'm just going to out and ask."

(turns the page)

But now, ****with** Campaspe actually there before him under a skylight

(During what follows, the PAINTER comes round from behind the easel; goes to the sole remaining STRETCHER, which hangs down sideways between READER and MODEL; reaches up and gives the STRETCHER a tilt that transforms it into a skeletal skylight, opening on the MODEL; and withdraws behind the easel.)

thrown back to admit the day, he finds the last thing he wants to hear about is her love for someone else, and so asks nothing--says, indeed, nothing, all that first morning; offers neither guidance nor stricture; makes no move toward (nay, nor mention of) the still-undeployed bric-à-brac sent round by Alexander--but simply keeps well back of the easel, emerging only every now and then to reslant the noon.

(The READER, perhaps unconsciously, pauses a moment to let the PAINTER, Apelles-like, come forth and "reslant the noon" (i. e., adjust the STRETCHER/skylight). When he does not do so, she resumes reading:)

"Well, he is **viewing me in different lights; they often begin so," thinks Campaspe (who, like many a model since, took herself for an insider of the painting life), and sits back to await the early sketches.

But alas! No "early sketches" are forthcoming. For, as his sitter cannot but mark, all that first morning Apelles' hand, drawn up over the waiting canvas, does not once stir.

(The PAINTER comes out from behind the easel, up-right, and crosses all the way down-right to get a fresh perspective on the MODEL, down-left.

The READER pauses, waiting for the PAINTER to take some further action; but the PAINTER merely holds up down-right and continues to stare across the stage at the MODEL.

Seeing this, the READER turns back to her book. The moment her eyes drop to the page, the PAINTER shifts his gaze from the MODEL to her.

The READER backs up a little in the text and resumes reading:)

All that first morning, Apelles' hand, drawn up over the waiting canvas, does not once stir. "And wherefore stir," the painter tells himself, "seeing that, of this 'breaking awareness' one has been set to catch, as yet appears no trace"--or, as he later put it to the diary kept ever upon his easel:

18th Bōdrōmion

Nothing see, nothing paint.

So he reasons; but the true reason of his unmoving hand is: Alexander was right. Apelles had indeed lost his heart at first sitting--nay, at first glance--and, having fallen in love with his subject, he can no longer see her. Now, since it is the way of the painter's hand to go with what it sees, Apelles' hand--that day, and for many a day thereafter--goes nowhere. Every morning he plunks down before the model; and every evening--always with the words: "Sufficient unto the day!"--he rises up, no farther along than at first.

(The PAINTER suddenly leaves off staring at the READER and hastens back behind the easel, where, from now until noted, the tempo of his painting visibly accelerates.

The READER turns the page.)

It was far otherwise on those (not infrequent) occasions when his sitter was called away to Alexander in the field: Then, in the absence of every prospect, with an empty model stand out before him, he finds himself putting down Campaspe as never yet, Campaspe to the life. On those mornings brimming over with absence, his daybook fills with image upon image--Campaspe in charcoal, Campaspe in tempera, Campaspe: gouaches, Campaspe: écorchés--and every last one of them, for some reason, show the girl reading in this very diary they grace--a volume, need one add, that, in actuality, she has never so much as once taken in hand.

Of all this furtive output its absent subject suspects nothing. For the decamped Campaspe is no sooner back returned than Apelles' urgent hand once more drops to his side.

(The recent upsurge in painting activity behind the easel here drops off to practically nothing.)

To the girl herself, who (as intended) has fallen hard for Apelles--or shall we say: for those hard perusals that seem never to advance to the touch--the reason of her painter's deadlock seems obvious: "Does he make no move? Alas! I have not moved him!"--and from that hour she resolves on a more active course. "For, after all," she muses, "come at it as you will-- Am I his inspiration? Then ought I to breathe life into that hand. His collaborator?" (A pleasing thought, this, ever to models; though what can even the most patient sitter know of the artist's path?) "Then it is for me to link hands with his. Even if I be to him no more than 'the material,' shall not the true artist yield to **the promptings of the material? No, any way you look at it, it rests with me to make the first move!"

Whereupon, starting up from the place of the subject, she **flings herself passionately into pose after pose, abiding in each only long enough to judge the effect:

Will a **seductive Campaspe set her painter's brush aflutter? No? Well, let us try what a **mopish Campaspe may achieve. Nothing there either? Why, surely, then, **Campaspe in ecstasy must draw the artist's eye, and his hand after it.

But Apelles' hand is still as at first. And Campaspe, after no long interval flat out of ideas--or rather: of attitudes--is on the point of lapsing into an immobility profound as his own, when suddenly

(turns the page)

her eye is drawn to the pile-up of royal bric-à-brac sent round by Alexander as likely rekindling her first of love. To these, Apelles--of their power standing no more in doubt but, now that he loves himself, in dread--has made no move to direct her attention; has, indeed, swept into a corner. But he might have rested easy. In Campaspe these relics waken not former love but present hope: Might it be that, after all, one had not to bring it all up out of one's depths, that just possibly all this mise-en-scène had been put about with oneself in view? Wild with surmise, she steps up first

(turns the page)

to the wall-map of her conqueror's conquests;

(During what follows, the PAINTER comes out from behind his easel, crosses to the rectangular PALETTE he earlier left hanging by its finger-hole over the READER's head, transfers the PALETTE to a hook over the MODEL's head, and steps back to gauge the effect. Something is not quite right . . .

Suddenly, on a hunch, he rehangs the PALETTE upside down.

Thus inverted, the paint-smearred PALETTE, which before had suggested an abstract design, does indeed look (a little) like a map of the world.)

**lifts wondering eyes to the exact isthmus where Alexander touched Asia first; traces with reverent hand his way through the Scythian wilds; and at last **sprawls out in the posture of an allegorical framing-figure, something to the tune of "Prostrate Phrygia Hails Her Conquering Liege."

(The PAINTER starts out for, and makes it most of the way back to, his easel . . .)

But flail about as she may, her transaction with the wall-map puts her in mind of nothing so much as . . . well, a slide-lecture. Nor seems Apelles himself more deeply stirred--not, at least, to judge by the entry he now lifts his diary down off the easel to record:

23rd Bōdrōmion

This great while now at a stay.

or by his yet-unmoving hand.

She draws up next

(. . . but, hearing these last words, turns on his heel and comes back out onstage.)

before a shopworn replica of the triumphal column

(During what follows, the PAINTER goes to the READER; unceremoniously kicks the COLONNETTE, on which her book rests, out from under it (the READER just manages to catch the volume before it falls); brings the COLONNETTE over to the model stand; and sets it down in front of the MODEL.)

destined one day to mark the bourne where Alexander shall touch westmost earth--and finds herself in trouble right off the bat. A girl **twined round a pillar? Please! The effect is ironically sexual at best, flat-out prurient, more like--

(Once more, as on p.20, the PAINTER starts for, and makes it most of the way back to, his easel . . .)

--neither of these exactly the impression Campaspe hopes to produce (she tells herself) on Alexander nor (she does not yet think to tell herself) on Apelles, whose hand, whether to render or reprove, yet takes no flight.

Which brings her down at last to Apelles' old pictures, little shy of a wallful,

(. . . but, hearing these last words, turns on his heel and comes back out onstage.

During what follows, he:

- (1) looks around, momentarily at a loss;
- (2) in a single motion, snatches the SHAWL off the READER's back and flicks it inside out;
- (3) suspends the SHAWL, lining-side out, from a row of overhanging hooks upstage of the MODEL (and of the dangling PALETTE) so that it hangs as a background DROPCLOTH.

(It is only now that the READER's overgarment--the SHAWL--has been ripped away that we can make out the underlying similarity between her costume--a belted, black, generically "Greek" shift--and the MODEL's: the unbelted, white, quasi-Greek shift described on p.3 .)

Strung up thus, lining-side out, the SHAWL/DROPCLOTH displays a pattern of variously sized and spaced rectangular patches that (faintly) suggest a wallful of paintings.

NOTE: With this transfer of the SHAWL/DROPCLOTH to the general vicinity of the model stand, the (apparent) redefinition of this region of the stage as "Apelles' Studio," foretold on p. 10, seems complete. That is, one after another of the objects formerly located near, or associated with, the READER has now (apparently) gone over to stand for some feature of Apelles' studio, as described in (or implied by) the read story, to wit:

The (slant-hung) STRETCHER suggests Apelles' skylight.

The (re-directed) STUDIO LAMP and REFLECTOR suggest Apelles' lighting arrangements.

The (inverted) PALETTE suggests the map sent round to Apelles by Alexander.

The (repositioned) COLONNETTE suggests the column sent round to Apelles by Alexander.

The (suspended) SHAWL/DROPCLOTH suggests the wallful of Apelles' early paintings sent round to Apelles by Alexander.

It bears repeating, however, that, as was first noted on p. 3, the MODEL makes no move to take her place as "Campaspe" in the "Apelles' Studio" setting evoked by these objects.)

among them, some of the Master's noblest conceptions.

Not one of these had Apelles laid eyes on since the hour of its varnishing, and, if truth be told, he had as soon forgo the sight of them now.

(She turns the page.)

For, of all likely rekindlers of her love for the Emperor that he has been bid lay before Campaspe, of none more than these pictures does he dread the effect, knowing, as he does, the power of his own brush.

But this torment the jealous Master might have spared himself: On images of her sovereign in glory, Campaspe has supped full. And now, **running her eye back over these highpoints of a career all highpoints--"Alexander Sparing the Hearth of Pindar," "Alexander Pacing Off the Streetgrid of Alexandria," "Alexander's Sharp Way With the Gordian Snarl"--she finds she can manage no response but a spectatorial: To each she brings, **on each she bends, the rote attentiveness of the practiced gallery-haunter--and this, by the seventh or eighth go-round, she herself feels is starting to wear a little thin.

(Slowly the PAINTER starts off back toward the easel, pausing and turning round every few steps to assess from different angles the stage "picture" he has composed.)

With elation Apelles notes in his easelside diary the impuissance of these last, as of all prior, mementos to respark Campaspe's love of the Emperor. For, of their failure to do so, might not the best (or at least the simplest) explanation be that she now loves him?

(turns the page)

And suddenly the idea for quite another picture than the present commission begins to form in his mind:

(Passing the READER on his way back to the easel, the PAINTER registers that her black shift is in disarray--a disarray into which he must have thrown it when he snatched the SHAWL/DROPCLOTH off her back on p.21 .

He pauses briefly to straighten the garment, achieving, with a single flick, an "artistic" rearrangement of its folds.

He then resumes and completes his exit back behind the easel.)

under a thrown-back skylight, before a wallful of his own earlier paintings, by such emblems of her master's mastery attended as a chart of the conquests, a stone to the last of these--Campaspe Overlooking The Splendors Of Alexander; in other words, **the very scene now before him! Here, it seems to him, is the sole rendering it will ever be in his power to give of the cherished motif, his furthest of mastery, an end to striving--the very picture of his love! Might Alexander conceivably be prevailed on to accept it in lieu of--? "But I dream," sighs the painter. "The terms of the commission are plain, and plainly I have not met them. Even in this hour when first I grasp Campaspe loves me, no less clear it dawns that she and I must part." For, however the lover may wish to detain, the artist understands that he must turn from, a subject he can do nothing with.

When next Campaspe is sent for to the ever-waging Alexander, Apelles sends with her a message to the effect that, every effort to fix love's birth-hour having proved futile, he must regretfully give over the commission.

But to all talk of "giving over," Alexander--hastening round to the painter's studio the very morning of his return from the field--puts a quick end. For what do you know if Campaspe has not **fished up the Missing Moment.

"We can forget about the wall-map, the column, the portrait-series. Her love for me," quoth the Earth-Subduer, "she now feels sure, was born of her first **paging through a chronicle of my deeds; and it is even thus, book-in-hand, that you must strive to capture her." Forcing down all he feels at the prospect of "capturing" Campaspe, Apelles bows low and requests the loan of the happy volume. "Ah, well, now, as for that," sighs Alexander, "the book is lost--dropped from sight during the recent Pannonian troubles.

(The PAINTER strides on purposefully--but then either does not see, or perhaps forgets, what it was he came striding on in search of, and reluctantly withdraws behind the easel.)

But that one over there"--gesturing toward Apelles' easel--"being all but identical to it, may well serve our turn." "Sire, that is my diary," says Apelles. "Is it so?" quoth Alexander; and, lifting the volume from the easel, reads off: "The Book of Exceeded Bounds--title as well suited to your Master's ventures as your own! Do you give us a Campaspe plunged deep in this!"--and, handing back the diary to the diarist, withdraws.

Now to you or me, who have been granted a glimpse,
Campaspe's "sudden recollection" of having--oh, yes!
picked up love out of a book, must look a little strange--~~must~~,
in fact, look like nothing so much as a trick of the
Emperor's to make sure that fobbed-off mistress and

(Again, as on p.25 , the PAINTER strides on purposefully, and again either does not see, or possibly forgets, what it was he came striding on in search of--this time it just eludes him. Reluctantly, he withdraws behind the easel.)

As for any suggestion that all this makes rather an ill return for the Emperor's splendid, magnanimous-- But love is already a little bored with this line of thinking. "Let me but once have glimpsed the love I bear **dawn on her," the painter tells himself, "and he shall have that image of breaking awareness which is, after all, what alone he craves of my hand." Whereupon, putting an abrupt close to the account he has just offered his diary of Alexander's scheme to place even that very diary before Campaspe, he turns over the page

(She turns the page.)

and there, on the volume's last leaf, inks in the words of love he has longed to speak from the first.

When next Campaspe mounts the stand, Apelles informs the girl that, in her absence, he has hit on the perfect pose for her--and gestures toward a book on her chair,

(The PAINTER's head suddenly pops out from behind his canvas: something about these last words)

turned face down open to its final page. To which, the sitter's first reaction is, well . . . **miffed. Does this not, she wonders, cast her in rather an unalluring--well, let us call the thing by its right name: rather a bookish--light? Paramour Amid the Paragraphs. Sleek Favorite With Fat Tome. . .

(The PAINTER comes out from behind the easel, goes straight to the READER, and puts out his hand to relieve her of the PRINTED BOOK, with the evident intention of transferring it to the MODEL as a "posing" prop.)

Her annoyance, however, vanishes the moment she makes out the title of the turned-down volume: "The Book of Exceeded Bounds--but this is his diary!" exults Campaspe--who has watched the painter confide many a lost morning to its leaves--and is, as never yet, moved. For, during this last long absence, her feelings have grown plainer: Even in the Conqueror's embrace, it is of the painter's colder, more assessing perusal that she dreams. And now--see!

(The PAINTER's fingers are actually closing around the PRINTED BOOK to transfer it from READER to MODEL when it only first occurs to him that if he now takes the READER's book away, reading will come to a halt.)

Her painter, it seems, returns her passion; for what else can be meant by his thus thrusting his daybook upon her but that he proposes to "share his days" with her, to "put his life into her hands."

(Slowly, reluctantly, the PAINTER unclenches his fingers from the READER's book, draws back his hand, and--)

Her heart full, Campaspe **takes up the diary-volume left face downward on her chair by Apelles, **turns it over, and--

(The READER has her hand on her page to turn it, and--)

THE PAINTER

BREAK!

(The PAINTER withdraws--this time not just back behind the easel but all the way offstage right. During the dialogue between READER and MODEL that follows, we hear him rummaging about noisily offstage, in search of, it will appear, the HANDWRITTEN VOLUME.)

The READER looks up, startled, at the sound of the PAINTER's voice.

The MODEL, the moment she is "out from under" reading, as on p. 8 slumps forward--crumples, really: i. e., she lets her legs splay, her arms flap down limp and straight at her sides, and her head drop forward between her knees.

From this position, during the ensuing dialogue, she performs a series of head-rolls, her face periodically heaving into view long enough for her to deliver a line, and then rolling down and away again.

The READER, meanwhile, PRINTED BOOK in hand, goes over to the STUDIO LAMP trained on the MODEL, switches it off, and returns to her chair. She observes the exercising MODEL for a moment. Then:)

THE READER

Is it me?

(The MODEL looks up, puzzled.)

I'm new at this, remember. Very new. So, if my

(gesturing with the PRINTED BOOK)

rendition doesn't exactly bring you out of your chair--

(Her eye is caught by the PRINTED BOOK she gestures with.)

Or might the problem just possibly be with---?

(flourishes the PRINTED BOOK out at the MODEL)

This just not doing it for you?

THE MODEL

I'd prefer a Nina Simone record.

THE READER

Because, I have to tell you, I am just not getting back from you any very clear-- At no moment could you be described as falling in with . . . falling into

THE MODEL

And yet, one is, at every moment, doing as bid.

THE READER

Oh, now there I really must--! Did you, catching word of a reflective Campaspe, a seductive Campaspe, set about to reflect? seduce? Had world-map or boundary-shaft the power to bring you into play? In all that welter

(points to the hanging SHAWL/DROPCLOTH)

of episodes and moments, was aught that called forth an answering move from you? Even toward the end, when, really, what was asked of one but to sit there quietly and read a book-- Off on a tangent! All at sea! Scarce once have we seen you assume the position you were meant to assume.

THE MODEL

Is it, then, so very obvious what one is meant to assume?

"Step where I go!" looks a plain enough word. But . . .
word of whom; and on whom enjoined?

THE READER

(giving her a long look)

Yes, I thought that might be what you were up to.

THE MODEL

"Up to?"

THE READER

And, listen, it can be done; I have known it done!

Not, to be sure, after this head-on, frontal

All that flinging oneself about into now one, now some further--

No, no! If you would change the course of painting
from the model stand, you must be seen to have--not shaped,

but shaded the course of the image: for this, just this
other tilt of visage; the subtle averting of a brow

from a ray Even in this wise--as no more than

a model, and by no other means than "modelling on"--you may
bring your painter to

(throws up her hands at the abundance
of examples)

switch brushes mid-stroke; scumble in an unlikely terre verte;

turn his hand from one passage of the canvas to another or from

one to another manner of treating the same passage (an overworked
impasto, say, now giving place to a more alla prima approach).

THE MODEL

How is it possible--?

THE READER

One . . . breaks pose slightly.

THE MODEL

No, no, I mean: how possible that, after all this while--?

THE READER

(going on with her own previous speech)

But--slightly, yes? Nothing like on the scale you have hitherto-- For example, I remember one morning I could see from the stand the trouble he was giving himself over this shadow catching me from behind--

(The MODEL, completely taken by surprise, leaves off her head-rolls and sits up straight.)

THE MODEL

You've . . . modelled for him?

THE READER

Cast an eye!

(pointing to and naming one after another "picture" (i. e., rectangular patch of color) on "the wall" (i. e., the hanging SHAWL/DROPCLOTH))

"A Moment Before the Moment," "Glimmerings of a Gleam," "Any Second Now"--these and how many another of his firstlings proclaim I sat for him--and would be sitting still,

were it not for-- Well, for what, exactly? Listen, I don't suppose he let fall anything as to why I was-- I mean, yes, plainly, one was no longer young enough, no longer fair enough--no longer the "Campaspe" in the transaction

THE MODEL

Ah, surely, a demotion is about the last thing-- Do you not emerge as more than ever (some might say: as only now first) his true collaborator?

THE READER

Well . . . in a sense . . . I suppose . . . Well, yes, all right; I don't know what would be meant by "collaboration" if not even such power to power lent as now, from the reading stand--no more than a reader, and no otherwise than by reading on--one may yet dream to exert.

(The MODEL rises, crosses to beneath the cluster of dangling hooks, rings, bars, etc., and, treating it as so much workout equipment, launches into an eclectic yoga-stretching-gymnastics exercise routine.)

THE MODEL

Listen, I'm not sure you quite grasp what is going on here. This story you have been handed--

THE READER

Ah, yes: Apelles and the firm-drawn Campaspe--there I must confess myself a little at a loss.

THE MODEL

No, no; by "the story you have been handed," I mean--

THE READER

And in all fairness: if you can hardly be said to have "moved with the tale," neither does it exactly leap out at one what, in this instance, "moving with the tale" might amount to. He,

(gestures toward the easel)

I guess, provides the Apelles--

THE MODEL

Actually, something closer to the Alexander, if all were--

THE READER

But--the Campaspe, now: this would be you? be me? be you passing over into--? I must say, if there's some clear relation in which you and I stand to all this--

THE MODEL

Ah, well, now, as for "the relation in which you and I stand"--

THE READER

(going on with her own previous speech)

--I don't find the fit.

(The READER rises, sets the PRINTED BOOK down on her chair, and comes over to join the MODEL in her workout on the "exercise equipment" (the hooks, rings, bars, etc., hanging from the flies).)

Of course, he's never been the most discerning judge of what next to send one's way. Over time, many of his happiest choices have been those that simply gave one back to oneself: "Galatea, Don't Just Stand There!" "Narcissus, Call Home!" Tales wherein lies a tale!

But, listen, it all depends on what is to be represented that day--and, of course, who is to do the representing. He's had to roll with some pretty strange punches. (The girl before me, I'm told, did her best work to the thrum of studio furnishings catalogues, if you can imagine such a taste)

THE MODEL

Listen, I don't know how to say this except just to say it: What the painter is actually painting here is--

THE READER

(going on with her own previous speech)

Of course, at some point, pride of authorship kicks in--

THE MODEL

Pride of--?

(Stunned, she leaves off swinging from the overhead apparatus, mid-swing)

Wait a minute. He writes this stuff?

(She rises and starts off over the stage toward the reading stand.)

THE READER

Well, but for the very occasional piece or two sent his way
by a sharp-eyed confederate

(Arrived at the reading stand, the MODEL
takes up the PRINTED BOOK which the READER
set down on her chair on p.34 and flourishes it
at the READER.)

THE MODEL

But this, of Campaspe and Apelles . . . ?

THE READER

Speaking as one who has kept up with his output from the
first, I think I may say: I recognize the hand.

THE MODEL

His "output"? We're talking, then, about a sustained, copious--?

THE READER

Volumesful! An entire library! By some reckonings,
he's turned out more as a writer than a painter. In fact,
but for this

(gestures toward the easel)

high commission yet hanging over us, I'm not sure but what he'd
just as soon brush his easel aside, lean back, and . . .

(leaves it hanging)

THE MODEL

Yes?

THE READER

Well, and watch his words hit home. Come, has it not seemed to you far more a writer's eye than a painter's before which we have been summoned--I, that he may judge how it rings; you, that he may watch how it strikes? There is why, prefer as you may the Nina Simone record, you get the reading. We're not his studio, we're his readership. The "scene" we model . . . is the reception of a word. I said so once to his face. Can you guess his response? "How I should like to have painted you in the moment of that dawning first!"

(The MODEL opens the PRINTED BOOK she has taken off the chair on the reading stand.)

THE MODEL

Handwritten!

(She sinks into the READER's chair and begins to page through the "PRINTED" BOOK.*)

THE READER

(going on with her own previous speech)

But, then, one often feels that he'd sooner be painting anyone or anything than whatever it is he just then has in view; that there is always this "other motif" toward which his eye, left to itself, must wander off; that his true subject is . . . elsewhere.

*Though this volume has just been revealed as handwritten, I will continue to refer to it as the "PRINTED" BOOK (with "PRINTED" henceforth in quotation marks) so as to avoid any confusion with the other volume designated as HANDWRITTEN all this while.

(The READER turns and sees the MODEL seated in the chair on the reading stand, about to turn a page in the "PRINTED" BOOK.

She leaves off swinging from the overhead exercise equipment (the hanging rings, hooks, bars, etc.) and rises:)

But--that's it!

(She rushes over to the model stand and plunks down in the MODEL's (former) chair for a more inclusive view of the reading MODEL.)

The very position he was trying to put you in just now when--

THE MODEL

(with a strange smile)

For all that his "true subject" is "elsewhere"?

THE READER

Now if you can just manage to hold it till-- Don't move!

I'm going to bring him back in!

(The READER half-rises from the chair on the model stand to set off in search of the PAINTER.

But before she can take her first step, the bustle of the returning PAINTER is heard offstage.)

It's him!

(She sits back down in the MODEL's chair and disposes herself to await the PAINTER's re-entry.

Suddenly she realizes that she and the MODEL have inadvertently switched positions and are now each seated in the other's chair.)

"Elsewhere . . . !"

(She jumps to her feet to change places with the MODEL.

But just then the PAINTER enters with the HANDWRITTEN VOLUME (which he tossed offstage on p. 9) under his arm and, seeing what is about to happen, signals to the two women to stay where they are.

The PAINTER goes over to the MODEL, seated in the READER's former chair, and starts to hand her the HANDWRITTEN VOLUME he has brought back onstage with him--but arrests the gesture when he sees the MODEL leafing through the "PRINTED" BOOK.

Roughly, he snatches the "PRINTED" BOOK away from the MODEL and thrusts the HANDWRITTEN VOLUME into her hands. (As on p. 9 , one is struck, at the moment of juxtaposition, by the similarity between the two volumes.)

He then fetches the COLONNETTE from over by the model stand and sets it down before the MODEL on the reading stand.

Roughly, he cracks open the HANDWRITTEN VOLUME in the MODEL's hand; roughly forces its spine into one of the ridges in the jagged top of the broken-off COLONNETTE; roughly presses the MODEL's hand down over the book to hold it open; roughly adjusts the MODEL's posture so that she leans in toward the HANDWRITTEN VOLUME; and roughly angles her head so that she gazes, not down into, but out over, the book on the COLONNETTE.

Disturbed by this rough treatment of the MODEL, the READER starts up from the model stand chair to protest.

Brusquely, the PAINTER gestures to the READER to sit back down. He then crosses to her with the "PRINTED" BOOK he has just taken off the MODEL and presses it into the READER's hands, cracked open to the page from which--he indicates by a gesture--he expects she will now resume reading.

He looks around the stage: has he forgotten anything . . . ?

His eye is caught by the REFLECTOR that, since p. 10 , has stood near the model stand. He now carries it over to the right of the reading stand, from where it will continue to direct light toward the repositioned MODEL.

He snaps back on the STUDIO LAMP, which, since p. 13 , has stood trained on the model stand; but--whether through neglect or for some other reason--he leaves the LAMP where it is, so that once more, as at the outset, it sheds light on the model stand's current occupant, the READER.

As a consequence of all these reversals and exchanges, the stage picture has now been modified as follows:

Center, on the reading stand, sits the MODEL, posing with the HANDWRITTEN VOLUME propped up before her on the COLONNETTE. To right of the reading stand, the REFLECTOR; to left of it, the STUDIO LAMP--whose beam, however, is angled away from the MODEL, so that it strikes . . .

. . . the READER, seated, "PRINTED" BOOK in hand, on the model stand, down-left, about which still hang, where they have been placed over the course of the action, the various "Apelles' Studio" furnishings, namely:

- (1) the "skylight" (= the tilted STRETCHER; see p. 15)
- (2) the "wall-map" (= the inverted PALETTE; see pp. 19-20)
- (3) the "wallful of pictures" (= the outspread, patterned SHAWL/DROPCLOTH; see pp. 21-22)

All this now provides a backdrop for--the READER.

The PAINTER signals the READER to resume reading and, while she is finding her place, withdraws behind the easel.

NOTE: For a while--from here through p.42 --the MODEL will, for the first time, be engaged in the same activity as the READER: she, too, now (silently) reads a book. This means that her "modelling" of the READER's "attitudes"--hitherto a matter of externalizing and physicalizing the READER's inner experience of reading--will henceforth have more the character of an overt (though never very literal) mimicking of the READER's outward acts: a figure with a book now mirrors the moves of--another figure with a book. No more than previously, however, does the MODEL fall in with the postures attributed by the read story to Campaspe, although, as before, the READER continues to hint, by the emphasis she imparts to those passages in the story marked **, that the MODEL should do so.

The READER has found her place in the "PRINTED" BOOK and now resumes reading.)

THE READER

Her heart full, Campaspe **takes up the diary-volume left face downward on her chair by Apelles, **turns it over, and--

But see! Here the sitter does a wholly unlooked-for thing. Having picked up Apelles' diary open to its final, love-bespeaking page, she does not plunge in there, but, rather, **leafs back to the very start of the volume and takes it from the top.

Apelles' heart soars: What surer sign could he ask that his mistress returns his passion? For was ever woman yet loved a man who did not want to know the story from page one? Avidly, Campaspe **tears into the diary. No less avidly Apelles marks her course, seizing on any least sign of how she takes what she finds, what she is up to now.

"Now she will be reading of my apprentice years;

(The READER turns the page--and is startled to see the MODEL, in perfect synchronization, turn hers.)

now (if that wondering gaze tell us aught), of my early technical breakthroughs;

(Again the READER turns the page--and again, at exactly the same moment, the MODEL does likewise.)

and no doubt by this she carries amid the sheet on sheet of sketches I have devised to hold my sitters rapt."

(Once more READER and MODEL turn their pages in unison.

The PAINTER comes round from behind his easel, goes over to the upstage row of REFLECTORS (see p.1), lifts one away, carries it downstage to the left of the reading stand, and sets it down opposite the REFLECTOR he earlier (p.40) placed to the right of the reading stand, thus "boxing in" the MODEL with a REFLECTOR on either side.

He then goes back behind the easel.

Slowly, the MODEL raises the HANDWRITTEN VOLUME off the COLONNETTE, apparently to bring it level with her gaze. But just as she gets it before her eyes, she flips it over and holds it up, text outward, as a shield against the additional glare resulting from her being now between two REFLECTORS.)

But now . . . is it his imagination or--? But there can be no doubt. Campaspe's joy, the further on she turns, **the fainter shows. And like enough! For, of course, what she longs to read upon her lover's page are words of love;

and of such, Apelles' diary--but for its last leaf--is bare.

So that now at length, having **turned through many a weary page

(**Encouraged, perhaps, by her recent string of "successes" on p. 42, the READER here deliberately seeks, by turning a page in her own volume, to induce the MODEL to do likewise and thereby fall in with illustrating the action read to her--but (as always) to no avail.)

with no note taken, she is just beginning to wonder whether she may not have mistook her man, when--

(The READER turns the page.)

lo! all at once she finds **she is come among one after another image of herself.

(Again the PAINTER comes out from behind his easel, crosses to the upstage row of REFLECTORS, lifts one away, brings it over to the reading stand and sets it down just upstage of the MODEL.

He then goes back behind his easel.

The MODEL is now "walled in" by REFLECTORS to her left, right, and behind.

As if these three "walls" were exerting pressure on it, the MODEL finds that the HANDWRITTEN VOLUME, which, since p.42, she has held out before her as a shield against glare, now seems borne in toward her face with massive, irresistible force.

During what follows, the MODEL "pushes back," but steadily loses ground.

At the last moment she succeeds in deflecting the oncoming volume away from her face toward her breast, thus winding up in what might appear a "cherishing" posture, had one not seen how it came about.

Disturbed, as on p.39, by the PAINTER's brusque treatment of his sitter, the READER lets her book drop to her lap and calls over to him:)

THE READER

Rainer! Don't you think it may be getting a little . . .
tight in there?

(Receiving no reply from behind the easel,
 the READER reluctantly takes up her book and
 resumes reading:)

She finds she is come among one after another image of herself.

On page after

(turns the page)

page, in medium after medium, forth she starts from his hand:

(turns the page)

13th Mūnychion

Campaspe in lost profile.

(turns the page)

15th Mūnychion

Campaspe in drypoint.

(turns the page)

19th Mūnychion

Campaspe; pounced cartoon.

And now her every qualm is fled. "How could I, amid such
 wealth, have doubted? What do I look on, what is imaged here,
 but love?"

But joy soon **gives place to fresh questions.

How is it that every one of these portrayals bears a date
 on which she was from his sight? And how is it every one of them
 shows her reading in a book, when she knows for a certainty
 that till this hour she has not sat for him book-in-hand?

Now, of course, on either of these points you or I might soon have shed some light. If Apelles' images of Campaspe all bear the dates of her times away from him, this is because only with her out of the picture might his efforts to picture her commence. And if each and every sketch shows her in a posture of reading never till this moment struck, what can this mean but that, without knowing it, each and every sketch looks forward to this moment?

(Again the PAINTER comes out from behind the easel, crosses to the upstage line of REFLECTORS, seizes one, and heads for the reading stand, where the MODEL sits walled in on three sides by the three REFLECTORS he has already built up into a "shack" around her. He heaves this latest (fourth) REFLECTOR high over the head of the screened-off MODEL and gently sets it down to be the "roof" of the "shack" that now, with this addition, completely encloses the MODEL, except for the missing downstage (fourth) wall.

This accomplished, the PAINTER withdraws behind the easel and resumes work.

The MODEL lets the HANDWRITTEN VOLUME, which she has held clutched to her breast since p.43, fall open onto her lap and, in the same motion, throws back her head so that her gaze strikes the underside of the "roof" that has just been lifted into place atop the "shack" of REFLECTORS.

As before (p.43), the READER is disturbed by the PAINTER's rough treatment (this time, near-immural) of the MODEL. She shuts her book with one finger in it to mark the place and calls over to the PAINTER:)

How is one supposed to breathe under the weight of all this . . . this . . . ?

(No response from behind the easel.

Reluctantly, the READER re-opens her book and resumes reading:)

But alas! from this archive of absences Campaspe takes quite another tale. "Have I fancied myself your collaborator? But see! it is only with my back-keeping that you would join strengths. Love me? How comes it, then, that solely as never glimpsed, only when well away do I first stir your hand?"--to these pained questions, which he now **sees forming in Campaspe's eyes, Apelles wants not for reply: "Loving you so I can no longer see you, I must, if ever I am to paint you, paint you away, lose sight of you, dismiss you from consideration. For only then--oh, but then, ampler than hand can gather, shall the truth of you swarm to an eye that, refused its fill, fills with images of all that has been refused it, never so present, so crying out to be represented, as in that season of refusal. Not, love, merely in your absence, but of your absence are my pictures made, being, as they are, what I make of your absence."

(Once more the PAINTER comes out from behind the easel, crosses to the upstage line of REFLECTORS, lays hold of the one whose sash-like markings and position in the line suggest a window, lifts it away, and takes it over to the reading stand, where the MODEL sits boxed in on three sides (upstage, left, right) and overhead by the "shack" of REFLECTORS he has thrown up around her.

He starts to place this latest, window-like REFLECTOR directly in front (downstage) of the MODEL, thus completing the "shack" and wholly walling her off from view.

But just before this "fourth wall" snaps into place, the MODEL puts her hand on the REFLECTOR's upper edge to delay her immural and looks expectantly toward the READER.

A beat.

Then, for the first time since being posed with it, the MODEL lowers her eyes to the (now concealed) HANDWRITTEN VOLUME in her lap.

Abruptly, the PAINTER knocks away the MODEL's obstructing hand, lifts the REFLECTOR the rest of the way up--thus finally closing her off from view--and retires back behind the easel.

As on earlier occasions (pp.39,43,45), the READER is disturbed by this (now overtly) brutal treatment of the other woman.

She slams shut the "PRINTED" BOOK and turns to the PAINTER:)

How can you--? For all the world as if . . . walled up alive!

(When, as before, there is no response from behind the easel but, if anything, a marked increase in painting activity, the READER reluctantly re-opens the "PRINTED" BOOK, finds her place--which this time takes a little longer, since she has neglected, before slamming it shut, to mark her page--and resumes reading.

NOTE: With the MODEL now completely walled in, the READER must henceforth pitch her voice a little higher and hit her emphases a little harder to be heard.)

"Of your absence, love, are my pictures made"---even by some such words might the painter have eased his sitter's pain. But Apelles does not speak these words. What need, seeing that he has already "said it all" in the declaration of love set down on the diary's last page,

78 toward which, over this swell of images-in-absence,
 she is all the while being borne? Let her but in the end
 (as, in the end, she must) wash up safe on its farther
 shore, and-- See! if even in that moment do not break
 upon her such day as never yet--

179 And suddenly the flaw in the whole conception
 breaks upon him. Campaspe is turning over the pages
 of his daybook from Day One. This means, that before
 ever she turns to his final, plain words of love,
 she must light first upon the just-prior entry, wherein
 Apelles gives out the whole idea of putting the diary
 in her hands to have been--not his, but Alexander's;
 180 and to the end--not that she might first know his love,
 but, rather, that she might know anew her love of
 the Emperor and be painted in this second knowing. In a word,
 to his sitter, all must appear to have been
for the sake of the picture!

181 And now, turning to Campaspe, he finds his worst fears
 confirmed. The tormented eyes she lifts him proclaim
 that she has even now read the all-but-final truth
 on the last leaf but one.

182 Well, but (you may urge), the pang is transient.
 Say she do--briefly! for the space of an entry!--deem all done
 at the hest of a patron, for the love of a picture:
 must she not, even the next moment, turn to that
 final leaf where it is all explained by love, and--

But alas! Stunned by what she has come to, Campaspe breaks off reading, one leaf shy of last, and lets the diary sink to her lap, open to those all-shattering, all-but-final words beyond which, it seems, she will now never--

(Here the pace of the READER's page-turning begins to accelerate, until by p.50 she will not be able to get through more than a phrase or two before it is time to turn the page again.)

"But don't stop there! This isn't the end of the story! Things now take a wholly unlooked-for . . . You as yet but gaze upon the leaf-before-last. Much--nay, all--turns on the turning of one more-- Therefore, once more--" turn! he wants to cry out.

And then suddenly he wants something else.

(All at once the MODEL's hand, with the HANDWRITTEN VOLUME clutched in it, comes punching up through the "roof" of the "shack" of REFLECTORS that has enclosed her since p.47 .

The startled READER looks over at the MODEL, whose upthrust hand, with the HANDWRITTEN VOLUME as its extension, searches, claws, gropes into the air

The READER seems to have had the wind knocked out of her by the MODEL's surprise "punch." Reflexively, her hand goes to her throat.)

Close in here So . . . close

(She looks to the PAINTER for some help, some relief, some sign

When none is forthcoming, she gasps in a deep breath and, by an immense effort of will, forces her eyes back down to her page and resumes reading:)

Suddenly, for the first time in a long time, Apelles is assailed by the desire to render what is before him: to give us the terrible moment of its first dawning upon his sitter that my role here has not been as I supposed. "A Breaking Awareness, would he glimpse? I'll break his awareness for him; paint her 'painfully discovering'; paint her pained; paint her pain! For has she not," he tells himself (his balked brush, as never yet in her presence, trembling into act), "has she not, even from the first, after the fashion of models, pressed to be one's collaborator? Let her, then, bring to the table a trouble which none but she can supply! For, after all," (his crabbed lines here lengthening to broad strokes), "it is an anguish passed off the moment she turns to the final leaf and reads my words of love--by which time, I have my image home. In the meantime--"

But the "meantime" proves painfuller than foreseen, as, now, hour by hour before that grief-struck visage, he feels his courage wane. "Turn, Campaspe, turn," he longs to cry out; but then . . . he is not quite done, he wants that mask of woe yet awhile under gaze; she must not put it off before he has got his conception fairly sketched in. "Turn, my subject, turn to your peace," he hears himself every moment on the point of urging--and every moment holds off; for--oh! it is not her peace but something quite other after which his hand hastens, of which his brush, it seems, can never have enough--

(Suddenly the MODEL's upward-groping hand opens, releasing the HANDWRITTEN VOLUME, which disappears down the hole she has punched in the "roof" of the REFLECTOR-"shack". Apparently it strikes against and shatters something within; for, as on p. 9 , we hear the sound of breaking glass.

The MODEL's upstretched hand vanishes down the hole in the roof of the "shack," as if setting off after the HANDWRITTEN VOLUME.

The tinkle and crash of breaking glass rapidly escalates beyond what a single incoming book could possibly produce--a warehouse of breaking glass, an arroyo of breaking glass, a universe of glass shattering against shattering glass--until at last it reaches the level of something like peals of "thunder."

In synchronization with these peals, the STUDIO LAMP flashes on and off, brighter than we have hitherto seen it flare or could imagine it flaring--the "lightning" to this "thunder."

On a final, deafening and blinding crash/flare, the STUDIO LAMP goes out, taking all the rest of the stage light with it.

The "thunder" quickly drops off to the original tinkle of breaking glass, then goes silent.

Darkness. Silence. Long pause.

Then, in the dark, someone (the READER) can be heard fumbling for something (the STUDIO LAMP.)

The READER gets the STUDIO LAMP switched on to its pre-"lightning" level, and by the scant light it sheds we can dimly make out that:

- (1) the "shack" of REFLECTORS has fallen in upon itself (the MODEL it enclosed is nowhere in sight);
- (2) the suspended SHAWL/DROPCLOTH (= wall of pictures) has come down and now partly covers the collapsed "shack";

- (3) the hanging STRETCHER (= studio skylight) is warped and askew;
- (4) the hanging rectangular PALETTE (= wall-map) has been knocked 45° off kilter, so that it now registers as neither clearly an abstract pattern nor clearly a map;
- (5) The "PRINTED" BOOK lies face down open on the model stand chair (where the READER must have left it when she set off in darkness on p. 51 to relight the STUDIO LAMP;
- (6) The PAINTER is still working away at his easel in the considerably less than half-light.

The READER re-angles the STUDIO LAMP, first so as to assess the damage to the "shack" and then so as to illuminate the still-laboring PAINTER, on whom she leaves the lamp trained, so that its beam henceforth falls diagonally across the stage from down-left to up-right.)

THE READER

(to the PAINTER; gesturing over toward the collapsed "shack")

is your work! You bring it all crashing down
 and her and--does it even enter your mind
 might like to lend a . . . take some . . . ?
 You . . . paint on! You've lost the light,
 subject's disappeared from view, the tumbledown structure
 which you've enclosed her has vanished beneath the
 s, and--you go right on working. Working on what?

(The READER crosses to confront the PAINTER, lays hold of the easel with the painting-in-progress upon it and swivels the easel partway around toward her, so that (only) she can see the picture. (The audience is left with a side-view of the stretcher's staple-studded edge.))

Apelles of Cōs! It's of me! And of me no otherwise engaged than in turning over a new leaf! But, Rainer, then--name of heaven!--why not just have sat me down with a book and done the scene? Was there really need to thrust me forth, drag in another--only then to work me back in as Reader of the Tale to that other? And why

(She crosses back to the model stand, snatches up the "PRINTED" BOOK off the chair, and flourishes it at the PAINTER.)

this tale,

(leafing rapidly through the "PRINTED" BOOK)

given over, as it so unsparingly--even, one may say, obsessively--is, to questions of-- Stay, though

(her eye, despite itself, here and there caught by a sentence on one of the pages she dismissively leafs through:)

"What can the sitter know of the artist's path?"

(flips to another page)

"Only with her out of the picture might his effort to picture her first-- "

(flips to another page)

"Not merely in your absence, but of your absence, is my image-- "

(claps shut the "PRINTED" BOOK and taps on it triumphantly with her other hand)

Of me, the tale! Of me, the picture! Of me the tale that puts me in the picture, as--of course!--the other, my stand-in, I now see lost no opportunity of-- You have cast me down to mere reader of this drama once mine--ah, and but I might continue your confrère, further yet might have cast me!--to the end that you might picture the abjection of one thus cast down--"Campaspe on the Skids," shall we say. There's why you handed along splendor upon splendor of mine to her: I was to grasp all I'd lost and be "captured" grasping at loss, what was the expression . . .?

(leafs through the "PRINTED" BOOK until she lights upon:)

Yes, here: you would "paint me pained, paint my pain."

But what about

(gestures toward the collapsed pile of REFLECTORS)

her pain? Have you so much as given a thought to that poor girl, who, with all this mighty scene going up around, can only have supposed herself the focus of--?

Where is she in your calculations? Wait a minute.

Where is she? Sainted Apollo! She's underneath it all!

(The READER crosses to the collapsed "shack" and tries to see into it.)

The PAINTER swivels his canvas--which, since p.53, has stood sideways to the audience--back around into its original position facing him, and resumes work on it.

The READER sets down the "PRINTED" BOOK and begins to lay into the collapsed "shack," lifting away REFLECTOR after REFLECTOR (and thus inadvertently burying beneath the mounting pile of removed REFLECTORS the "PRINTED" BOOK she has just set down), until only a single REFLECTOR remains.)

Come out and see! You'll not believe what you have been sitting still for!

(The READER yanks aside the last REFLECTOR.)

There is no sign of the MODEL.

There is also no sign of any of the glass we earlier heard breaking; nor of the HANDWRITTEN VOLUME, whose release by the MODEL precipitated all the breaking-glass sound; nor of the chair on which the MODEL, when last glimpsed, was sitting. There is only the vacant reading stand.

The READER rounds on the PAINTER:)

What have you done with your subject?

(The READER waits a beat; then, receiving no reply, she crosses to the PAINTER, lays hold of the canvas he is back at work on, and, to force him to stop painting and answer her, lifts it straight off the easel.)

What have you done with--?

(The PAINTER's brush holds up in air.

This sudden removal of the canvas permits light to fall, for the first time, into the curtained area between the easel and the upstage-right wings.

In this suddenly illuminated pocket of stage space sits the MODEL, knees drawn up, on the reading stand chair. She holds open in her lap, and is reading to herself from, the HANDWRITTEN VOLUME. Her lips move soundlessly.*)

*In fact, she is silently mouthing--"rehearsing"--the text of the diary passage she will read aloud on pp. 58-60.

THE READER

(to the MODEL)

How! Gone for a reader, you, who not a moment since,
 sat to his--? Stay, though. "His reader now, who late
 under gaze"--- of whom else do I there proffer description?
 You give me back my own--and (might it prove?)
not for the first time? Could it be that what you've been
 modelling from the first is--? Your fidgets,

(reprising, on each of these three italicized
 phrases, the appropriate earlier "mirroring"
 gesture of the MODEL's)

my fretting at the lines of reading. Your reluctance
to take part in the scene, my aversion to the scene of reading.
Your immural, my confinement to a reader's role.
"At every turn, put her before herself, let her look
on her own--does she here grow fretful? Fret! Now stray
from her object? Stray!--until at last what is under her eyes
grow too plain to ignore. For, after all, how long
can this sitter-as-was go on reeling off a tale
so plainly her own to a 'model' so clearly of herself,
and yet fail to see what she is about"---such, or some such,
 must the directive have run. For, of course,

(turning to the PAINTER)

I recognize the hand, it being, after all, even the very hand
 that took my splendors off in another direction--bye-bye,
 pillar! so long, shawl--so as to confound me

with an ever-completer picture of myself out of myself,
 which you might then proceed to paint your figure of
 breaking awareness as only now--

(drops her eyes to the canvas in her
 hand and puts her finger on it)

--but there it is! yes! plain as noon!--as only now
 first coming to--

(. . . "see" or "grasp" or "recognize,"
 the READER no doubt means to conclude.

But just at this moment, turning back round
 toward the PAINTER with her finger resting on
 that feature of the canvas in her other hand
 to which she seeks to draw his attention,
 she passes within the beam of the STUDIO LAMP,
 which still falls, as since p.52 it has fallen,
 slantwise across the stage from down-left to
 up-right.

As if caught and held by the light she
 turns through, the READER is suddenly "frozen,"
 mid-turn, with her finger still resting on the
 detail of the canvas she has turned back to
 show the PAINTER.

The PAINTER rises, goes over to the READER
 "frozen" in the light, circles her to examine
 her "pose" from different angles, puts out his
 hand to make an adjustment--but then thinks
 better of it and pulls back his hand.

His circling of the READER has brought him
 to within arm's length of the canvasless
STRETCHER, now warped and askew (see p.52),
 that since p.15 has hung as a "studio skylight"
 between the reading and model stands.

He lifts the warped, canvasless STRETCHER
 down off its hook, returns to his easel,
 places the STRETCHER on the easel, takes up a
 brush, and sits down to begin a new work.

He raises his brush toward the STRETCHER
 to lay in the first stroke--but then arrests
 the gesture.

He signals to the MODEL, who has all this while been seated just right of the easel, silently mouthing the words she reads in the HANDWRITTEN VOLUME, that she is now to commence reading aloud from it to him as he paints.

There being no canvas stapled to the STRETCHER, it will eventually be possible, through the STRETCHER's bare framework, to make out the intent gaze of the PAINTER, as well as any "brushstrokes" he may set down upon the void it frames.

For the present, though, while his brush trembles with intent, he does not set about this "painting" on air but merely stares hard at his subject, the immobilized READER, as the MODEL begins to read to him.

Over the course of this reading, the PAINTER's attention will gradually be attracted away from the "modelling" READER to the reading MODEL, until, by p. 61, despite his struggles against the tendency, his gaze will have come squarely to rest on the reading MODEL.)

THE MODEL

(reading from the HANDWRITTEN VOLUME)

29th Bōdrōmion

Master of the Breaking Awareness, would you paint the dawn? Why, Apelles, then, bring up the sun! Now I see how to go on--but need not, I think, go on with this fiction of writing Apelles' diary in my own.

September 18, 1954

Sketch for a Sequel

Never in afteryears--not, at least, till today--could you once bring yourself to look on the withdrawn picture.

Unaccountable aversion! For, even in its abrupted state, this canvas has ever been viewed (by those fortunate enough to have viewed it) as marking an era; nor does there seem much doubt that your patron might easily have been prevailed on to accept it as fulfilling the terms of the commission. Yet . . . you held off--and hold off still. How is this? What explains your disrelish of a production widely deemed your greatest? Possibly the sheer weight of contrivance necessary to achieve the thing (all that rushing about to bring up a sun that, after all, had nowhere to go but up)? Or might it be that your "solution" at some point came to seem to you "nothing new"--not the further venture for consciousness once hoped, but . . . very conscious turning upon itself, waking to its own? Nor that nor this. No, if all this while later--your sitter ages ago unseated, her image long since hung out to dry--you continue to avert your eyes from what is, by all accounts, your fairest showing, surely--surely!--this is because you have shown nothing since--and are now coming to suspect you never will.

In which outcome there are not a few who would have you--"acquiesce," was I about to say? no,

make that: exult. How, these ask, should the work wherein you prove the utmost bourne of your tradition not prove your utmost work? "Only see what you have wrought!" these plead, not, perhaps, pausing to reflect that any "utmost work" of yours, whatever else it may represent, represents the end of the line for you as a painter--and who would willingly contemplate his own end?

But I guess there are days when that seems a more open question than others. And today must be one of them; for--see!, Master, if even now you have not put out upon your easel the long-shunned canvas; even now on its breaking light turned your broken light; long gaze vouchsafed; and-- "As well Apelles Passing From Their Sights have named it," breaks from you.

And suddenly, dwelling upon your own image in the light of this bitter re-naming, you see what you thought never to see more: you see how to go on. Already your eye opens on the fresh prospect; already your hand seizes on its next move; and now . . . see! if even from this most unconfiding of subjects, you do not yet contrive to draw--

("Contrive to draw"--what? Inspiration? Solace? Nourishment? A conclusion? Or possibly just: "contrive to draw"?)

The MODEL flips over the next-to-last page of the HANDWRITTEN VOLUME, but apparently the last page is blank.

The MODEL turns to the PAINTER with an inquiring look--which she holds.

The PAINTER, whose attention over the course of this last reading has wandered insensibly from the immobilized READER to the reading MODEL, now brings down his brush--till this moment held tremulous but inactive above the "canvas" (the empty STRETCHER)--and starts in to "paint" the MODEL, i. e., to drive his brush furiously over the framed void of the canvasless STRETCHER.

This first plunge taken, he holds up for a moment and can be glimpsed, through the STRETCHER's bare framework, meditating his next stroke.

In that moment, the lights--as if anxious not to disturb his meditations--slowly, unobtrusively, go down.

In the darkness, an abrupt shatter of broken glass, for an instant deafening, then at once subsiding to a tinkle.

Lights up.

A Nina Simone song--"For Myself," perhaps, or perhaps "The Other Woman" or "End of the Line"--fills the theatre.)