

THE POISON OF GOA

PART ONE

The House of the Procuress

Rachel turned round and saw the sun in the distance, about to sink behind the Malabar hill and the new docks under construction, in the square that a patch of water made at the extremity of the street. The globe of that unusual sun was swollen and disproportionate. It spread a light like wine-dregs over the yellow-tinted and abnormally uplifted waves, as if by an unhealthy fusion. The air was damp and oppressive, and the dust, falling back slowly, made a sad golden mist.

Perhaps there's a tornado in preparation, Rachel thought.

Then she took one of the lateral streets that brought her back toward the Mazagon district. But the idea of her mediocre hotel in that suburb of Bombay, haunted by cosmopolitan adventurers, filled her with disgust and she sensed the secret hope of catastrophe that people who have arrived at a difficult juncture in life experience.

For more than an hour she had been walking at hazard, aimlessly, under the colored awnings and prominent balconies, between the bazaars, the shops selling cashmere veils, the basket-weavers and the wood-lacquerers. Sometimes a cunning face brightened as she passed, a bronzed hand held an object out to her with an offer formulated in English or Hindustani. She crossed paths with men of all races. How alone she was among so many strangers! Where would she go tomorrow?

It seemed to her that she was no longer exciting the astonishment in the busy evening crowd that a European woman alone and on foot ordinarily causes in a street in the black city of Bombay. The passers-by were more rapid. The shutters of shops were banging. The horses of the carriages carrying excursionists toward the Esplanade and the gardens of Kolaba were rearing up and then galloping with a singular speed. A seller of balls of dough and colored sweets, who was running, bumped into Rachel, and she glimpsed an expression of fearful hatred on his ash-gray face. The head and shoulders of an Englishwoman appeared at the window of a palanquin, precipitately giving her porters the order to retrace their steps. A Persian in an astrakhan bonnet who had just stood up in his shop and rolled up the tube of his water-pipe shouted something she did not understand to Rachel, pointing at the sky.

In front of the Chinese bazaar the crowd was so dense, and the atmosphere so unbreathable, that the young woman turned left along the walls of the prison.

She found herself face to face with two men who were passing by. They were Europeans, doubtless English. One of them had an enormous pearl in his cravat, like a poisonous insect that had just alighted. Of the other, who had the black garment of a clergyman hiding his collar, she could see nothing except the gold of spectacle rims and the ivory of teeth. The expression on their faces changed abruptly, taking on the joyous idiocy and hypocritical licentiousness that animates a certain category of men in the presence of feminine beauty.

They had stopped, ready to engage in conversation, but Rachel hastened her steps. She had a desire to run. She knew full well that she transported, in the undulation of her body and the magnetic warmth of her blood, an element of pleasure that made her possession desirable.

A Jewess, she thought. *One scorns her with all the more force because one desires her and one would like to enjoy her.*

And she murmured to herself the words she had often read in a Hebrew book that her father possessed, which related the misfortunes of her race: "O Lord Sabaoth, just God, enable me to see the chastisement of these persecutors and tyrants that make us perish, for I have confided my cause to you."

She raised her head and saw that she had returned without suspecting it to the narrow street not far from the temple of Monbadevi where the blind alley opened that she had sworn not to go along, the cul-de-sac whose threshold she did not want to cross at any price. She had thought, however, that she had taken an opposite direction. She recognized the beggar sitting cross-legged at the corner of the uncrossable cul-de-sac. He was gazing with blind eyes, slightly above human height. Drops of sweat were pearly on his naked torso and only the bizarre agitation of his toes interrupted the perfect immobility of his body.

She retraced her steps precipitately.

Look where the just God had brought her! No, no, not that. She had been told, and she believed it, that the greatest sin for a woman was to give herself to a man for money. Money was the pollution that one cannot wash away.

And yet, what would become of her? Was she not about to be thrown on to the street the next day by the proprietor of her hotel?

"Just God, show me the way."

She smiled bitterly. She had just passed a public drinking-fountain and the sole of her foot, where she knew that she had a hole, had just made contact with a little water, with the sad sound of poverty that she knew so well. Her foot seemed heavy, as if it had a sole of lead. She thought about the young women who were once marked with a cross by means of a red-hot iron. She too had beneath her heel the sign of condemned creatures. No one could see it when she walked, but the sign groaned, and Rachel knew that she was linked by the foot to the ugliness of life.

The semaphore of the Malabar hill launched its sad and regular flame over Bombay. The dock workers were flowing, as they did every evening, toward Ahmadadah railway station, making an anguished rumor as they walked. Rachel wanted to escape that flood; but at the corner of a street along which she had already passed she saw, a few paces away, the two Englishmen she had passed a few minutes before. They were looking around, and when they saw her they cried, almost at the same time: "There she is!"

Rachel recognized in a second the expression of stupid concupiscence in their features and the idea of having to exchange words with them caused her to feel ill.

She started to run, followed by the sigh of her shoe. She went to the right, and then to the left. As rapid as her, the night, surging from who knows where, a gray and singular night, descended upon the city galvanized by the storm.

Rachel suddenly perceived the Victoria Docks, toward which she descended between rotting houses.

No one was following her any longer. In the low shops, semi-naked men, chisels in hand, were encrusting little pieces of nacre in small planks of precious wood. At the sound of Rachel's footsteps they raised their impassive faces, but seemed not to see her. Their presence had something so hallucinatory that Rachel hastened her pace. A sickening odor of musk was emitted from the houses and mingled with the odor of mud and tar that came from the fermented water of the basins. She was about to reach the quays and had only to follow them in order to come back toward Mazagon and her hotel.

But she stopped. It seemed to her that a voice had just called to her. It was not a voice expressing itself in syllables but a sort of internal appeal that commanded her to go back. Then she went back up the street she had just descended, among the spectral wood-engravers, under the decomposed vaults of balconies.

She started to march without knowing where she was going, through the streets of the black city, until she ceased to take her bearings. And in the shadows of her memory the image emerged clearly of an engraving whose terrible subject had impressed her in her childhood.

At the summit of a whirlpool, a fantastic maelstrom, a ship was posed whose masts were broken. One understood that the ship, launched with great speed, was about to plunge, via a white line of foam, into the depths of the gulf. At the prow of the ship, a tiny human figure was expressing his despair with

his open arms, and his futile appeal to an indifferent divinity. The sky was a uniform gray, like the laden sky of catastrophe that Rachel had above her at that moment. The sea was streaked with broad stripes and blisters, like the sea at which she had just gazed, and that crudely drawn gulf communicated a sensation of the inevitable and the irremediable.

Rachel had made puerile wishes that the pilot with open arms might benefit from some unexpected current and escape by swimming from those spirals that had to terminate, she believed, in an unimaginable hell.

Why was she thinking about that forgotten engraving? She shrugged her shoulders. But in a second consciousness, something told her that she was launched above the gulf. The crepuscular streets were the sloping lines by which the ship was descending. She had opened her arms in vain, appeal to humans and God. The depths of the gulf were close at hand.

And suddenly, she recognized the place where she was. She had just passed alongside the temple of Monbadevi. A little further on was the beggar with the upraised eyes and the cul-de-sac where the house of the procuress Antonia opened, the house where she was expected at this very moment.

So, that place was like a magnetic pole that was attracting the unfortunate wreck that she had become. The will of destiny intended to take the place of her broken will. Since she had begun to reflect, the manner in which events evolved had always filled her with astonishment. How had she arrived at having no other means of salvation than that house? How had that Antonia known about her solitude and her need for money?

When one falls down in a desert, the birds of prey, it appears, by virtue of a special instinct, come from infinite distances toward the creature on which they want to nourish themselves. Procuresses must have an analogous instinct that guided them directly to young women who have fallen in the solitude of little hotels.

“A house on the model of the houses of London and Paris,” Antonia with the shiny tresses and the violet silk dress had said to her the day before, raising her index finger as she talked to make the flame of an enormous diamond sparkle.

She only made introductions, and only to render a service. One went into her house, one left again, no one had seen you. The women she received were, in truth, the best there were in Bombay society. Doesn't everyone need money nowadays? As for the men, they were senior English functionaries, important businessmen from Bombay and the surrounding area. The very next day she was expecting a rich Portuguese from Goa, a very curious individual about whom there was a legend. A man who only liked Jewesses—and how he liked them! Was Rachel not both Portuguese and Jewish at the same time? A little good will and her fortune might be made.

Rachel was not indignant, for one does not have the courage to be indignant when one is burned by the hole in one's shoe and the frayed elbow of one's dress. Under the ecclesiastical unction of the words, under the hypocritical pity, under the flash of the diamond, she had contented herself with lowering her head. She lowered it again now in the increasingly compact darkness of the street, and felt herself penetrated by a kind of moral torpor. She was not free. An imperious genius had brought her. It was the just God of her prayers who wanted her to fall.

Above the street, something that the abrupt wind had just snatched up passed like a bird and fell somewhere, noisily. At the same time Rachel felt splashes of warm water over her body, which transpierced her, and the sounds of the city were drowned out by the rattle of large raindrops on the rooftops.

She searched for a shelter between the wooden columns supporting the balconies. She almost tumbled over the beggar with upraised eyes and in the shadows it seemed to her that he was staring attentively at her forehead as if he had seen a particular sign there.

The cul-de-sac where no gas-lamp had yet been lit extended lugubriously before her. A muffled music of a khinnara and a tom-tom, mingled with piercing female cries, gave the place a character of hidden debauchery, of inferior joy.

Rachel recognized the house from which lamplight was filtering and perceived between the poorly-close shutters outbursts of voices, the sound of a violent argument. Something dangerous and crapulous reached her.

Impelled by curiosity, she took a few steps forward and was surprised to raise her hand to touch the metal knocker suspended from the door.

But at that moment the door opened brutally, at a single stroke. By the light of a lantern inside the house, Rachel found herself face to face with a woman who was running out. She must have been an Englishwoman. She was bare-headed, her blonde hair in disorder. She was twisting a light shawl round her neck, with a mechanical gesture. Her eyes went alternately to the streets steaming with rain and Rachel, who was in front of her. She was murmuring insults between her teeth.

She had already descended the two steps of the threshold and was about to launch herself forward when she changed her mind.

She leaned toward Rachel in a familiar fashion, and, expelling alcoholic breath into her face, she said to her, in a tone of popular pity: "Don't go into Antonia's. It's better to get soaked in the street. The man from Goa's here this evening, the one who only likes Jewesses..."

The whore's familiarity had the effect on Rachel of a physical pollution by which she remained petrified. But at the word *Goa*, the city in which she had been born, she had a singular impression that she had been summoned by a voice that it was necessary to obey.

For a second she had the vision of the blonde turning the corner of the cul-de-sac, her garments so stuck to her body by cataracts of water that she seemed naked. There was a deafening burst of the tom-tom. And she went into the house, murmuring:

"O Sabaoth, just God..."

The Man from Goa

Scarcely had she gone in than Rachel perceived that dread was in the house. She had that perception by virtue of the oblique glance that the mulatto maidservant darted toward the stop of a staircase that led to the first floor, as if some redoubtable possibly might surge forth therefrom. She saw the dread in the faces of excessively made-up women who were in a drawing room rutilant with fake gold, behind a door-curtain, arguing passionately. Rachel was struck by the plaster face of one of them, where the rouge of lips decomposed by the heat made an atrocious rictus. She noticed that another, careless of her dress raised above the knee, was lying on a sofa, nonchalantly and gracefully blowing the smoke of a cigarette toward the ceiling. A Hindu orchestra of four or five white-clad musicians was in another room. They had just completed the tune they had been playing when Rachel came in, and the natouva, who was standing up, betrayed his anxiety by the back-and-forth movement of his enormous turban, made of a scaffolding of muslin.

Rachel hardly had time to dart a glance around the room to observe the ostentation of the dirty gilt of the house "on the model of those of London and of Paris." The walls of the vestibule where she was were covered in mirrors, as if the reproduction on the human form were the symbol of the luxury of Europe. There were mirrors in the drawing room where the women were, and the one where the musicians were, with the result that everything was multiplied, and dread radiated on all sides. Wine had been recently distributed, and its odor mingled with that of tobacco, and the odor of musk that the old wooden houses of Bombay emit. Several empty champagne-bottles were lined up at the foot of the staircase, beside a heap of soiled mosquito-nets.

The ridge of Antonia's nose was more inclined than the previous day. The ecclesiastical character of her face was more accentuated, but fury triumphed over hypocrisy therein. She affected a smiling calm, and made the rapid movements of someone who wants to dominate a complicated situation by her presence of mind; but sometimes, like the mulatto maid, she darted an anxious glance toward the top of the stairs.

Rachel saw her make a sign to the musicians to shut up, to the women to wait, and to the mulatto to keep watch because of an unknown danger, and she was drawn behind a third door by her, which she had not noticed.

To begin with, Rachel heard the word *providence* pronounced several times. Her arrival had something providential about it. It was even said that it was God who had brought her—but an interior voice had already told her that.

As she was about to let herself fall on to a worn sofa, Antonia seized her abruptly by the wrist, saying, in a falsely jesting tone: "No, not there. It's seen too much, that unfortunate sofa. It's caved in."

But Rachel understood, by the gleam in the brothel-keeper's eyes, that it was necessary to stand up courageously in order to be the instrument of providence and accomplish a difficult action.

Time was doubtless passing, for after a few ambiguous and general phrases, Antonia found the appropriate formula: "Let's put our cards on the table."

And that image of an open card game filled her with such great satisfaction that she repeated it several times.

She could have tried to dupe Rachel, obtain what she expected from her by means of some oral trap, but what was the point? Had she not seen the wretched hotel in Mazagon the day before? Did she not know the sordid proprietor, her compatriot? Could she not read in Rachel's eyes the expression of a hunted beast that she had seen in the eyes of other women coming to her house for the first time? If her expert hand palpated a firm shoulder, it felt at the same time the wear of a poor dress. Not the slightest trace of jewelry. The shawl wrapped over the arm for show was cheap Cashmere cloth that must have come from a little bazaar. She could not see the hole in the shoe desperately applied to the floor but she divined it through the foot, as if the clarity of poverty were incapable of being veiled by any terrestrial material.

Antonia therefore laid on the table the cards of the game in which everyone won.

On the first floor of the house there was a man she had known for a long time, one of her old clients, for whom she could answer as for herself. He was a Portuguese from Goa, the descendant of an ancient family.

At that point Antonia began to laugh.

She knew perfectly well what Rachel could respond. All the Portuguese in Goa descend from ancient families. There was not a porter in the harbor who was not called Albuquerque or Castro. But this one was an authentic descendant of the great Castros of old—a descendant who had come down slightly in the world. All the Portuguese had come down in the world at present. But what importance did that have for what one wanted of them, when they were rich? It was better to deal with fallen Portuguese than English puritans, who were all misers and scorned the women of whom they made use. This Castro was a little drunk at present? Well, so what? It was always better to deal with drunken men. He was also reproached for being very fat. A fine thing! She, Antonia had once loved a man with an immeasurably waistline and could not think about him without emotion. Rachel had little experience, but she ought to know that in fat there is a richness of nature that always goes with qualities of the heart, a kind of native goodness. The word goodness was not too strong.

At that point Antonia raised her arms as if to forestall arguments, which the silent statue that Rachel had become did not, however, seem to be about to formulate.

A woman, Antonia agreed, had just quit the house precipitately. Perhaps Rachel had heard that filthy mouth proffering insults and threats as she went away. The girl had been afraid, or rather, had pretended to be afraid. Oh, how one was punished for receiving out of pity the daughters of sailors and half-breeds from the port. It was via the intermediary of that Whitechapel whore that fear had afflicted the four or five others in the next room. They were putting on airs, but they'd seen many others!

Antonia was about to let her fury burst forth when she remembered what she had said about the aristocratic character of her female clients. She raised her diamond toward the lamplight, as if to assure herself of its purity, and leaned toward Rachel, lowering her voice.

"There are the peccadilloes of youth, assuredly. The traffic in negroes and Chinese on the coast... An old story of a woman, which no one knows, which everyone tells in a different manner, and is doubtless false. Childishness! I've known Pedre for a long time. As soon as he arrives in Bombay he comes here. He makes a noise sometimes, but it's to deafen himself, because he's timid."

Antonia was so charmed to have found the qualification *timid* for her guest that she repeated it several times.

It was at that moment that the sound of a cracked bell began to ring out. The bell-cord must have been tugged forcefully and irregularly, for it had desperate busts followed by shrill notes and brief silences. It translated the anger and impatience of the person who was pulling it.

The idea of a timid man becoming impatient in her house was insupportable to Antonia. She struck the wall several times with her fist, and in response to that signal, the Hindu orchestra caused a monotonous refrain to resound in the next room on three-string khinnaras, accompanied by tambourines.

The last cards of the open game were uncovered.

It was necessary to hurry, for the man from Goa, in spite of his timidity, had one single character defect: he did not like to wait. Now, he was waiting for a woman up there in a drawing room, where dinner had been served. For good or bad reasons, none of Antonia's five-to-seven habitués had consented to be the evening companions requested. Antonia was counting on Rachel, sent moreover by providence with that sole aim.

The envoy of providence felt the vibrations of the bell and the orchestra in her brain. She heard the wind outside that was raging as it was engulfed in the narrow streets, and the pain that was pattering like an innumerable army of dwarf soldiers. And she saw once again the old engraving, with the helpless mariner descending into the gulf of the maelstrom, with no possibility of salvation.

"He's asked for a beautiful girl—well, he shall have one," said Antonia, darting an admiring glance at Rachel, in which there was nevertheless a reservation because of the modesty of her dress.

"Well, you wouldn't be sorry, I'll wager, to have a diamond like this one?" And she strove to laugh as she made the stone sparkle. "Yes, you really are a beautiful girl."

And, as if seized by a scruple regarding the quality of the merchandise that she was about to offer, she took Rachel by the shoulders and palpated the flesh of her arms, in order to assure herself of their firmness.

The beautiful girl gazed into the distance without responding. Her soul was in such disarray, her ignorance of the customs of the place where she found herself was so great, that she would not have been astonished if she had been asked to show the curve of her legs, or if her lips had been lifted to examine her teeth, as she had seen horse-dealers do with colts.

In spite of the noise of the orchestra and the tempest, the bell resounded at intervals.

With a rapid gesture, Antonia removed the hat that kept Rachel's hair prisoner. The aureole of that hair, of such a profound black that it appeared blue, collapsed over the veined marble of the forehead, rendering brighter by its darkness the unreal green light that shone in the young woman's eyes.

Antonia was impressed by that beauty, augmented by the palpitation of the lips, the milky pallor of the skin and the secret despair. Her capacity for pity was translated by a general remark: "Women suffer so much damage for men!" But she hastened to add, in order to correct that regret: "I know him. When he's drunk, one can get whatever one wants out of him."

Rachel saw again, as in a dream, the Hindu musicians in one room, and in the other, the group of women who looked at her. She noticed a creature with a thin neck who was swaying with a sort of vexation and pretention that made her resemble a pelican, and observed that behind her, on the sofa, the nonchalant young woman with uncovered legs was continuing to launch slow swirls of smoke toward the ceiling.

Almost pushed by Antonia, she went past the empty champagne bottles and up the spiral staircase; she took two or three steps along a corridor in which the sickening odor of musk was mingled with the reek of cooking, and a door opened wide in front of her.

"Here's the beautiful little friend," said Antonia to a man whose back was turned, who was supporting himself with one hand against the mantelpiece and pulling a bell-cord with the other, at the same time as he was looking at his teeth in the mirror at close range, as if he had discovered a chip, with the fixity that drunkards bring to their own contemplation.

On a card table, covered with a pale pink cloth, two places had been set, almost invisible under the shiny mass of two enormous resplendent champagne-buckets. A low bed was to the right, wide, obscene and hallucinatory, with a large rip in its mosquito-net, covered in an indefinable silk that was spotted in places by large stains. The light was coming from a lamp suspended from the ceiling, and as sad and brutal as that of a waiting room. The hand that was tugging the bell-cord suddenly fell, as if the mechanism animating it had broken. The man did not turn round, but his gaze, instead of being fixed on the chip in his tooth, focused on the image of the two women he could see in the mirror.

Undoubtedly, Antonia feared reproaches, a violent manifestation of her guest's impatience. She stammered two or three phrases in which there was mention of the dinner that would be served at the first request, and lovers who needed to coo tranquilly.

Rachel sensed that she disappeared behind her and the frisson of the door-curtain falling back and the little click of the door took on a singularly terrible significance for her.

In that second, she thought that there was still time to flee. The atrocious breath of fear filled the room, giving all the things the immobility they have in nightmares. That fear effaced from the air the sound of the rain streaming over the rooftops, the music of the Hindu tambourines, and a chorus of frogs singing in a nearby garden. It established a perfect silence, like those one imagines reigning in the illimitable spaces of the beyond.

With a clairvoyance multiplied tenfold, Rachel thought that it was sufficient for her to turn round, to open the door, to go downstairs and traverse the vestibule in order to be in the street blessed by the descent of the cleansing water. She thought that her hat was still in the room into which she had initially penetrated. She would gladly abandon it in order to avoid explanations, to be free more rapidly, to forget that wretched scene. With a single surge, in a few bounds she could reach the street. But there are certain qualities of terror that develop curiosity. Now, what might happen attracted her by its unknowability. She

could only see the man's formidable back. She looked into the mirror in order to distinguish the features of his face, and what she perceived nailed her to the spot, open-mouthed with astonishment.

The man was staring at her, immobilized and magnetized. He had a cranium like a sugar-loaf, with bushy moist hair. His face was broad, yellow and bathed at the base by a floating double chin. His lips were thick and very red. But what struck Rachel was an expression of keen intelligence abruptly upset by terror. The eyes, small and black, with a fulgorant glare, were immeasurably wide open and projected the eyebrows almost to the hairline. They reflected the most abject fear.

Rachel saw that the man's left hand, which was resting on the mantelpiece, began to tremble, and she made out the little sound that the metal of a ring made against the marble.

And suddenly, the man made a half-turn in order to face Rachel and see her more clearly; but he did it with the rapidity that one has when one loses sight of a redoubtable adversary and fears being struck by him during the second when one is no longer immobilizing him with one's gaze.

Face to face with Rachel, only separated from her by the card table, he considered her avidly. And she, lucidly, observed that he was in his shirt sleeves, devoid of a collar, that the fabric of the shirt was a very fine silk, and overflowed the trousers stretched by his raised pot belly. She noted that his hands were laden with rings, and that his chest was frightfully hairy.

But the man's terror was only augmented by the contemplation of the young woman. His face expressed the fact that he had the confirmation of something redoubtable that he had seen in the mirror, something perhaps feared for a long time and glimpsed in the mirror of meditation. He took his eyes off Rachel again to look to his right at a little door near the fireplace, and it was visible that he was thinking of quitting the room precipitately. But he remembered that the door was that of a toilet that had no other exit, and with a rapid gesture, letting a hoarse gasp escape from his throat, he seized one of the bottles of champagne that were on the table by the neck and snatched it out of its bucket.

He had a weapon now; but the danger he was in, and against which he wanted to defend himself, was so inconceivable, of such an ineluctable nature, that he judged it very feeble, very paltry. Stuck to the mantelpiece, with his left hand forward, beating the air to protect himself, he was more pitiful than terrible; he seemed so scantily redoubtable that Rachel did not think of protecting herself against the champagne bottle, and she even felt any desire to leave vanishing within her.

The breath that emerged from the frightened man's breast became less precipitate, and his eyes less wide; he put the bottle down on the table, slowly. Interior reflection pacified his features, consolidated his limbs, rendered him the usage, temporarily annihilated, of his thought. He considered, by turns, the furniture and the two places set on the table, and his eyes paused on the stained silk of the bed as if on a benevolent altar.

He moved his head up and down slowly, and Rachel understood that he was evoking memories, making comparisons, weighing up some coincidence unknown to her in which her resemblance to another woman must play a role.

The man sketched an ill-assured and prudent gesture toward Rachel, as if he wanted to touch her with his finger, in order to make sure of the reality of her form. He did not conclude the gesture, sensing its ridiculousness. He opened his mouth to emit an explanatory remark, but he realized the impossibility of expressing himself.

All the same, he stammered: "I beg your pardon."

The sound of his own voice troubled him, stirred his nerves. He suddenly let himself fall into a chair. His features resumed the puerile expression formed of ugliness and rejuvenation that tears give to aged men.

At that moment, a sudden squall of rain clattered against the window hidden by curtains, and the song of the frogs rose up more distinctly, like a desperate hymn.

The man got up, with a certain difficulty. He passed his hand over his forehead. He took his collar from the mantelpiece, knotted his cravat and put his jacket on. He took from his inside pocket a long chaplet of large wooden beads, which he threw around his neck, and then he turned to Rachel a face bathed with sweat, but which had become calm again.

It was unnecessary for her to be afraid. She was going to sit down tranquilly facing him. The table was laid. They were going to have dinner. He would try to explain to her the cause of a folly of which he was ashamed.

And it was only then that Rachel recognized him.