

overjoyed, took off my raincoat immediately and followed him step by step up the stairs.

Once upstairs, we knocked at the door, and went into the room. I was introduced, and S took his leave, going out of the room with Murry, and closing the door behind him. Mansfield told me to sit down, which I did, and then she sat down too. This long complicated procedure seemed to happen in an instant. In fact I was not even consciously aware of it taking place. I am just presuming now, in retrospect, that we must have gone through all these motions. Everything seemed so blurred to me at the time. And now when I recall it in my memory, it still seems blurred. Whenever we enter a brightly-lit house from a dark street, or when we leave a dim house and walk into the brilliant sunshine, we feel dizzy with the sudden brightness. We have to stand still for a while before we can see what is in front of us. Our senses are overwhelmed by excessive light. It is not only excessive light; strong colours too have the effect of 'overwhelming' our senses. That evening my senses may not have been overwhelmed by the brilliance of Mansfield's personality, but the lighting in her room and the strikingly bright colours of her jewellery and the clothes she was wearing confused my unprepared senses for an instant. It was perhaps understandable.

I do not have a particularly clear impression of her room. While she was talking to me, I was unable to detach myself and scrutinise my surroundings. All I remember is that the room was rather small. A large bed occupied most of it. Several oil-paintings hung on the papered walls, probably again the work of the landlady. She sat with me on the couch, against the wall to the left of the bed. Because she was sitting upright and I was reclining, she seemed to be much taller than I was (indeed, who would not seem small in her presence?). I suspect that the two lamp-shades were red. Otherwise why should I always associate her room with the image of 'red candles burning on high'? But the setting was in the end unimportant. What mattered was Mansfield herself and that 'purest aesthetic feeling' that she inspired in me. She enabled me to use the magic key to Paradise given me by God; she added new treasure to my soul. But even such high-flown language as this is inadequate to describe her as she was on that night! It is difficult enough to describe my own impressions of her that day, let alone to conjure up in words the very essence of her personality. Once upon a time there was a man who dreamed that he had journeyed to paradise. He was beside himself with joy. The moment he rose from his bed the next morning he went to see his friends, wanting to describe to them in detail his wonderful dream. But instead he found himself quite tongue-tied and incapable of uttering a single word. None of the expressions he had learned in this world seemed to him adequate to describe the paradise of his dream. This filled him with such frustration