

## **AI-Generated Graded Readers**

Masaru Uchida, Gifu University

Publication webpage:

[https://www1.gifu-u.ac.jp/~masaru/a1/ai-generated\\_graded\\_readers.html](https://www1.gifu-u.ac.jp/~masaru/a1/ai-generated_graded_readers.html)

Publication date: May 23, 2026

### **About This Edition**

This book is a simplified English adaptation created for extensive reading practice.

The text was translated from Japanese into English and simplified using ChatGPT for intermediate English learners as part of an educational project.

Target reading level: CEFR A2-B1

The adaptation aims to improve readability while preserving the narrative content and spirit of the original work.

### **Content Note**

This adaptation is based on a historical literary work. It may contain expressions, attitudes, or depictions that some readers may consider inappropriate or offensive by today's standards. Such elements have been retained or reflected where necessary in order to preserve the historical and literary character of the original work.

### **Source Text**

Original work: Kagi (鍵)

Author: Tanizaki Jun'ichirō (谷崎潤一郎)

Source: Aozora Bunko (青空文庫)

<https://www.aozora.gr.jp/>

Original Japanese text available at:

<https://www.aozora.gr.jp/cards/001383/card56846.html>

The original work is in the public domain in Japan.

### **Copyright and Use**

This simplified English edition is an educational adaptation intended for non-commercial use only.

The source text is provided by Aozora Bunko, a digital library that makes Japanese public domain literature freely available.

For information about Aozora Bunko and its usage policies, see:

<https://www.aozora.gr.jp/guide/kijyunn.html>

This edition is an AI-assisted translation and simplification prepared for educational purposes.

### **Disclaimer**

This edition is an independent educational adaptation and is not affiliated with or endorsed by Aozora Bunko.

Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, *The Key [Kagi]* (Simplified Edition, Adapted and Simplified from Japanese by ChatGPT)

## Part 1 — The Key and the First Diary Game

January 1 — Husband's Diary.

From this year, I have decided to write more openly in this diary. Until now, I did not write much about my private life with my wife. I was afraid that she might read this diary in secret and become angry. But now I will not be afraid of that any more.

My wife must know where I keep this diary. It is in a drawer in my study. The drawer is locked, but she may also know where I hide the key. I change the hiding place from time to time, but she is a woman who likes secrets. She often knows things and pretends not to know them. She keeps many thoughts deep inside her heart.

She was born in an old Kyoto family. She was brought up in an old way, with many strict ideas about how a woman should act. She still thinks that a good woman should be quiet, careful, and modest. She may feel that reading her husband's diary is a shameful thing. But I am not sure that this will stop her. If I begin to write more private things, will she really be able not to read?

I sometimes think I have wanted her to read it all along. If I really did not want her to read it, why did I leave the diary in the same drawer? Why did I hide the key in places she might find? Perhaps I wanted to make the search more interesting for her. If I simply put the diary on the table, she would think, "He wants me to read this." Then she might not believe anything in it.

Ikuko, my dear wife, I do not know if you are reading these words. If I ask you, you will surely say, "I would never read another person's diary." So there is no use asking. But if you are reading it, please believe this: I am not writing a false diary. I am writing what I truly think and feel. No, perhaps saying this only

makes you doubt me more, so I will stop.

I will not write only pleasant things for you. I will also write things that may hurt you or make you angry. I began this diary because you never speak openly with me about our life as husband and wife. We have been married for more than twenty years. We even have a grown daughter. Yet even now, you keep silent about the deepest part of our marriage.

I love you deeply. I have written this before, and it is still true. But my body is not as strong as yours. I am fifty-six years old, and you are forty-five. I am not an old man yet, but I become tired very easily. After we are together as husband and wife, I sometimes feel weak for the whole next day. I cannot think clearly, and I have no energy.

This does not mean that I do not want you. It is the opposite. I love you too much, and this is the trouble. I want to satisfy you, but I cannot always do it. I am also jealous. Even the thought that another man might know your body or your desire is painful to me. I know you would be angry if I said this aloud, but I must write it here.

You have a strange power over me. You do not seem to know it, but I know it well. I knew other women when I was young, and because of that I can see how special you are. Sometimes I think that if other men knew your charm, they would gather around you. This thought frightens me. At the same time, it excites me in a dark and dangerous way.

I try many ways to wake my own desire. I ask you for small acts of love that may help me. But you dislike such things. You say they are not natural. You want everything to be simple, proper, and old-fashioned. You also know that I love your feet, and you know that your feet are beautiful. Because you know this, you almost never show them to me.

Even in hot weather, you often wear socks. When I ask only to kiss the top of your foot, you say, "No, that is dirty," or "You should not touch such a place." Then I have no way to help myself. I am writing many complaints at the beginning of the New Year, and I feel some shame. But I think these things must be written. Tomorrow night is the first important night of the year for us as husband and wife,

and I know you will not want to ignore it.

January 4 — Ikuko's Diary.

Today something strange happened. During the first three days of the New Year, I did not clean my husband's study. This afternoon, while he was out for a walk, I went into the room to clean it. In front of the bookshelf, near the vase with the narcissus flowers, I found a key on the floor. It may have been nothing, but I cannot believe he dropped that key by accident.

My husband is a very careful man. For many years he has written a diary every day, and he has never once dropped the key like that. Of course, I have long known that he keeps his diary in the drawer of his small desk. I have also known that he locks the drawer. I even know some of the places where he hides the key. Sometimes it is between books, and sometimes it is under the carpet.

But knowing where something is and reading it are not the same thing. I know the place of the diary and the key, but I have never opened the diary. I know the line I must not cross. It hurts me a little that my husband does not trust me. He seems to think he must lock the diary and hide the key, or he cannot feel safe.

Why, then, did he leave the key there today? Has something changed in his mind? Does he now want me to read his diary? Perhaps he thinks that if he asks me directly, I will refuse. So instead he may be saying, without words, "If you want to read it, read it in secret. Here is the key." Or perhaps he is saying, "I know you may read it, and from now on I will pretend not to know."

But it does not matter. Even if that is what he wants, I will not read it. I do not want to enter the deepest part of his mind. I do not like other people to look too deeply into my heart, and I do not want to do that to him. Also, if he wants me to read the diary, the diary itself may not be fully true. He may have written things there for my eyes.

Let him write and think what he wants. I will do the same. In fact, I have also begun to keep a diary this year. A person like me does not speak her heart to others. Because of that, I must at least speak to myself. But I will not make the foolish

mistake of letting my husband know about this diary.

I will write only when he is away. I will hide this notebook in a place he will never imagine. One reason I began writing is simple: I enjoy the feeling that I know about his diary, while he does not know about mine. This gives me a secret advantage. I know this is not a noble feeling, but it is true.

Two nights ago, we had the first private night of the year. How shameful it is to write such a thing. My father often taught me to be careful even when I was alone. If he knew I was writing this, he would be very sad. But I will write it, because I must tell the truth to myself.

As usual, my husband seemed very happy. As usual, I was not satisfied. Afterward I felt deeply unpleasant. My husband is ashamed that his body is not strong enough, and he often says he is sorry. But at the same time, he attacks me because I am too cold. He says that I have strong desire, but that my way is too plain, too fixed, and too much like work.

He says I do not love him half as much as he loves me. He says I treat him like a thing I need, and not even a very useful thing. He says that if I truly loved him, I would show more passion. He says I should help him more and try to wake his feeling. He even calls me cold and cruel.

I understand why he says this, at least a little. But I was taught from childhood that a woman should be quiet and passive before a man. I do have passion, but it stays deep inside me. It does not burn brightly on the outside. If I try to force it out, it disappears at once. My passion is pale and hidden, not bright and open.

These days I often think that my husband and I may have been wrong for each other from the beginning. I may have had a better partner somewhere, and so may he. Our tastes and feelings are too different. I married him because my parents told me to do so, and I thought this was what marriage meant. But now I sometimes look at him and feel a strong discomfort for no clear reason.

That feeling began on our first night as husband and wife. I still remember it clearly. When he took off his glasses, his face suddenly looked strange to me. It looked pale and dead. He came close and looked at my face for a long time. I saw his smooth skin and the small hairs around his mouth, and I felt cold inside.

Since then, even now, I do not like looking at his face for a long time in bright light. I want to turn off the lamp. But he wants the room bright, especially at such times. He wants to look closely at my body. I do not know other men, so I cannot say if all men are like this. But his way of loving me is too heavy, too sticky, and too much for me.

## Part 2 — Kimura Enters the House

January 7 — Husband's Diary.

Today Kimura came to give New Year greetings. I was reading Faulkner's *Sanctuary*, so I only greeted him for a short time and then went back upstairs to my study. Kimura stayed in the living room with Ikuko and Toshiko. After three o'clock, the three of them went out to see *Sabrina*. They came back together around six, and Kimura stayed for dinner with us.

During dinner, everyone except Toshiko drank a little brandy. I think Ikuko drinks more these days than she used to. I was the one who taught her to drink, but she was ready for it from the beginning. If someone offers her a glass, she accepts it quietly and drinks quite a lot. She does become drunk, but her drunkenness stays inside her, so other people may not notice it.

Tonight Kimura poured brandy for her. At first he offered it to Toshiko, but Toshiko said, "I cannot drink. Please give it to Mama." So Kimura poured for Ikuko instead. Ikuko's face became a little pale, but she did not look drunk. Kimura and I looked redder than she did. In fact, Kimura may be weaker with drink than my wife.

I have felt for some time that Toshiko avoids Kimura. Perhaps she has noticed that Kimura shows more warmth toward her mother than toward her. I have tried to tell myself that this is only my jealousy. But I do not think it is only that. Ikuko is usually cold toward male guests, and she does not like meeting them. Yet with Kimura, she is different.

None of us has ever said it aloud, but Kimura looks a little like James Stewart.

I know that Ikuko likes James Stewart. She never says so, but she always goes to see films with him in them. At first I asked Kimura to visit because I was thinking of him as a possible husband for Toshiko. I also asked Ikuko to watch the two young people quietly.

But Toshiko does not seem very interested in this marriage. She avoids being alone with Kimura. When he comes, she usually keeps her mother with them. Even when they go to a film, she asks Ikuko to go too. I tell Ikuko, "You should not go with them. Let the young people go alone." But she says Toshiko asks her to come.

If Toshiko truly asks this, there may be a deeper reason. Perhaps she feels that Kimura likes her mother more than her. Perhaps she is even helping her mother meet him. I cannot help feeling that there is some silent agreement between Ikuko and Toshiko. Ikuko may think she is only watching the young people as a mother. But I feel that she is already drawn to Kimura.

January 8 — Ikuko's Diary.

Last night I was drunk, but my husband was even more drunk than I was. He asked me again and again to kiss his eyelids. Recently he had not asked for this so strongly, but last night he would not stop. Because of the brandy, I was not quite myself, and I gave in. That part was not so terrible, but while I was doing it, I accidentally saw what I should not see.

I saw his face without his glasses. Usually, when I kiss his eyelids, I close my own eyes too. But last night I opened my eyes for a moment. His pale, smooth skin filled my sight, as if it had become much larger. I felt a cold fear run through me. I also felt my own face become pale.

Fortunately, he soon put his glasses on again. He wanted to look closely at my hands and feet, as he often does. I quietly turned off the lamp beside the bed. He reached out and tried to turn it on again, but I pushed the lamp farther away. In the dark, he asked me to let him look once more. When he could not find the lamp, he gave up.

After that came a long embrace, longer than usual. I half hate my husband strongly, and half love him strongly. We do not truly suit each other, but I cannot love another man. The old idea of a wife's faithfulness is fixed deep inside me. I was born with it, and I cannot easily go against it.

I do not know what to do with his heavy and strange way of loving me. Yet I know clearly that he loves me with great force. Because of that, I feel I must answer him in some way. How much better it would be if he still had the strength he once had. Why has that strength become so weak?

He says it is because my desire is too strong. He says I pull him along until he loses control. He says women can bear such things more easily, but men suffer because they must also use their minds. When he says this, I feel ashamed. But my nature is my nature, and I cannot change it by will alone.

If he truly loves me, he must still try to make me happy. But there is one thing I want him to understand. I cannot bear his unnecessary games. They do not help me at all, and they only spoil my feeling. I want things to be quiet, dark, and old-fashioned. I want neither his face nor my face to be seen clearly.

January 13 — Husband's Diary.

Around half past four, Kimura came again. He said he had received some dried mullet roe from his home and had brought some to us. After that, he talked with Ikuko and Toshiko for about an hour. He then seemed ready to leave, so I went downstairs and asked him to stay for dinner. He did not refuse, and he sat down again.

While dinner was being prepared, I went back upstairs. Toshiko took care of the kitchen work alone, and Ikuko remained in the living room. We did not have special food, but we had the gift from Kimura and some fermented fish that Ikuko had bought at the market the day before. So we soon began drinking brandy. Ikuko does not like sweets, but she likes the kinds of food that go well with drink.

Kimura brought the food as a gift, but I suspect he planned from the beginning to stay for dinner. I still do not understand his mind. Is he drawn more to Ikuko or

to Toshiko? If I were Kimura, I know which one would draw me more. It would be the mother, not the daughter, even though the mother is older.

But Kimura may not be so simple. Perhaps his real goal is still Toshiko. Since Toshiko does not seem eager to marry him, he may be trying to win the mother first. Through the mother, he may hope to move the daughter's mind. Yet I must also ask myself another question. Why did I invite him to stay tonight?

This is strange even to me. I was already jealous of Kimura on the seventh. Perhaps the jealousy began even earlier, near the end of last year. But at the same time, I think I was secretly enjoying that jealousy. When I feel jealous, my desire wakes. So jealousy is not only pain for me. In a certain way, it is also useful.

On the night of the seventh, I used my jealousy of Kimura and succeeded with Ikuko. I have now learned that Kimura may be necessary for our married life. He is like a medicine that wakes me. But I want Ikuko to understand one thing. She may go near danger, very near, but she must not truly cross the line.

The nearer to danger she goes, the better. I want her to make me jealous almost to the point of madness. She may even make me wonder whether she has gone too far. But I do not think she will ever be truly bold. Still, if she can try to excite me in that way, it will also be for her own happiness.

January 17 — Husband's Diary.

Since that night, Kimura has not come again. But Ikuko and I have been drinking brandy every evening. If I offer it to her, she can drink quite a lot. I like watching her try hard to hide her drunkenness. She keeps her face cold and pale, and there is something very attractive in that.

At first I hoped to make her drink enough to fall asleep. But she does not fall so easily into that trap. When she is drunk, she becomes even more stubborn. She refuses to let me touch her feet. She gives me only what she herself wants to give. In the end, even the brandy becomes another part of our silent battle.

Part 3 — Brandy and the First Collapse

January 20 — Ikuko's Diary.

I have had a headache all day. It is not exactly the pain of too much drink, but I think I drank a little too much yesterday. I must be more careful. My body does not show drunkenness quickly in front of other people, but afterward I suffer for it.

Kimura is worried because the amount of brandy I drink is slowly increasing. These days he does not pour more than two glasses for me. He says, "Is that not enough for tonight?" and tries to stop me. My husband is the opposite. He wants me to drink more than before, and he knows I do not refuse when someone pours for me.

I have never lost control in front of my husband or Kimura. I keep the drink down and do not show much on my face. But hiding the drink inside me makes the pain worse later. I must remember that I am not as safe as I look. I must not let my husband's wishes carry me too far.

January 28 — Husband's Diary.

Tonight Ikuko suddenly lost consciousness. Kimura had come, and the four of us were sitting around the dinner table. During the meal, Ikuko left the room. At first I did not think much of it, because when she drinks too much, she sometimes goes away and stays hidden for a while.

But she did not come back. Kimura looked worried and said, "What has happened to her?" I answered lightly, "She will come back soon." Still, the time became too long. Kimura could not stay calm, so he went to look for her. A little later, he called from the hall, "Miss Toshiko, something is wrong. Please come."

Toshiko had already finished her meal and gone to her room. She came out quickly when Kimura called her. He said, "It is strange. I cannot find your mother anywhere." Toshiko began to search the house. At last they found Ikuko in the bathroom. She was sitting in the bath, with both hands on the edge, and her face

lying down on her arms.

Toshiko called to her, “Mama, do not sleep there.” But Ikuko did not answer. Then Kimura came running to me and said, “Sir, this is serious.” I went down into the bathroom and felt her pulse. It was weak, but very fast. It beat nearly one hundred times in a minute.

I took off my clothes and stepped into the bath. I lifted Ikuko out and laid her on the wooden floor of the bathroom. Toshiko wrapped her mother’s body in a large bath towel. Then she said, “We must prepare the bed,” and went to the bedroom. Kimura stood near the door, moving in and out, not knowing what to do.

I said to him, “Please help me.” These words seemed to give him courage, and he came in. I told him, “We must dry her quickly, or she will catch cold. Please help me with the towels.” So the two of us dried her body. Even in that sudden trouble, I did not forget to watch Kimura. I let him take care of the upper part of her body, while I took the lower part.

I told him what to do, and I watched his hands and face carefully. I wanted to know how he looked when he touched her. Toshiko came back with night clothes. But when she saw Kimura helping me, she said, “I will prepare a hot-water bottle,” and left the room again. Kimura and I dressed Ikuko and carried her to the bedroom.

Kimura then said, “If it is a fainting spell, perhaps a hot-water bottle is not good.” We talked for a while about whether we should call the doctor. I did not want a doctor to see Ikuko in such a shameful condition. But her heart seemed weak, so at last we called Dr. Kodama. He came, examined her, and said there was no serious danger.

The doctor gave her an injection and told us not to worry too much. He left at about two in the morning. By then the house was quiet, and the night was very cold. The trouble had passed, but my mind was not calm. Something new had begun in me. I could not stop thinking about what had happened in the bathroom.

January 29 — Ikuko’s Diary.

I remember drinking too much last night and feeling sick. I remember going to the toilet. I also have a faint memory of going toward the bathroom and falling there. After that, everything is unclear. It is as if the night has been covered by a thick fog.

Early this morning, when I opened my eyes, I was in bed. Someone must have carried me there. My head has felt heavy all day, and I have not had the strength to get up. I wake for a short time, then fall back into dreams. This has happened again and again.

Toward evening, I felt a little better. With difficulty, I have written these few lines. I do not have the strength to write more. I will stop now and sleep again.

#### Part 4 — The Husband's Secret Act

January 29 — Husband's Diary.

Since last night's accident, Ikuko has not got up once. After Dr. Kodama left, I walked with him to the door. Outside, the sky was full of stars, and the cold air was sharp. When I came back to the bedroom, the room was warm because Kimura had put much coal into the stove. He then said he should go home, though it was already very late.

I told him he could sleep in the living room, but he refused. He said his house was near and that it was no trouble. To tell the truth, I was glad. A certain plan had already begun to rise in my mind. When Kimura finally left, and when I was sure Toshiko would not come back, I went close to Ikuko's bed.

I touched her pulse. It was now steady. She seemed to be in a deep sleep, though with her one can never be sure. Perhaps she was really sleeping. Perhaps she was only pretending to sleep. But even if she was pretending, that was not a problem for me. In fact, the thought made my heart beat faster.

First I made the fire in the stove stronger. Then I slowly took the black cover from the floor lamp. The room became brighter. I moved the lamp nearer to

Ikuko's bed, so that her whole body lay inside the circle of light. Then I went upstairs quietly, took the bright reading lamp from my study desk, and brought it back to the bedroom.

I had thought of this for a long time. Last autumn I changed the lamp in my study to a brighter one, saying that my eyes were weak and I needed better light for reading. That was partly true. But the deeper reason was different. I had long wanted, at least once, to see Ikuko clearly under that white light.

Everything went as I had expected. I undressed her and placed her under the two lights. I looked at her as carefully as if I were studying a map. For a while, I could only stand there in surprise. After more than twenty years of marriage, this was the first time I had ever seen her whole body so clearly.

Until then, I had known her mostly by touch and by imagination. She had never allowed me to look at her in this way. Now I saw that my imagination had not been wrong. But what surprised me most was the cleanness and smoothness of her skin. She was forty-five years old and had borne a child, yet her body still had a strange, quiet beauty.

I kept looking at her for more than an hour. I also began to think that she was not fully asleep. Perhaps she had woken in the middle and was too ashamed to move. Perhaps she had decided to pretend to sleep until the end. I wanted to believe this, even if it was only my own dream. The thought that she knew everything and still kept silent gave me a dark pleasure.

At the same time, I wondered if I should write this down. If she reads this diary, she will know what I did while she was helpless. Then she may stop drinking. But if she stops drinking at once, that will prove that she has read the diary. So perhaps she will not be able to stop. The diary itself may become another lock around her.

I tried many things that she usually refused. I touched and kissed the parts she normally hid from me. Once I dropped my glasses on her body, and she seemed to wake for a moment. I was frightened and quickly made the room dark. Then I gave her sleeping medicine with warm water. She drank it as if she were half inside a dream.

After that she seemed to sleep again, or to act as if she was sleeping. I then did

what I had most wanted to do. I was excited in a way I had not felt for a long time. I was not the weak and timid man I usually am with her. I felt stronger, and I thought that making her drunk again might be the only way to continue our married life.

But something strange happened. Even after everything, she did not seem fully awake. Her eyes opened a little, but they did not look directly at me. Her hands moved slowly, as if she were walking in sleep. Then, very faintly, she said one word: "Kimura." She said it only once, but I heard it clearly.

What did that word mean? Was it only the speech of a sleeping woman? Was she dreaming that she was with Kimura? Or did she say it on purpose, to make me hear it? Perhaps she wanted to tell me, "If you do this to me when I am drunk, I will dream of Kimura." I cannot know. But the word stayed in my ears.

That night, around eight, Kimura telephoned. He asked how Ikuko was and said he had meant to visit her. I told him she was still sleeping because I had given her medicine. I said she did not seem to be suffering and that he did not need to worry. Of course, I did not tell him what had happened after he left.

January 30 — Ikuko's Diary.

I am still in bed. It is half past nine in the morning. My husband seems to have left for work about thirty minutes ago. Before he left, he came softly into the bedroom. I pretended to sleep. He listened to my breathing for a while, then kissed my foot once more and went out.

The maid came in and asked how I felt. I asked her to bring a hot towel, and I washed my face at the small washstand in the room. I also asked for milk and one soft-boiled egg. When I asked where Toshiko was, the maid said she was in her room. But Toshiko did not come to see me.

I feel better now and could get up if I wished. Still, I have decided to stay in bed and write. I am trying to remember what happened the night before last. Why did I become so drunk? Partly it may have been my condition, but the brandy was also different. It was a new bottle my husband had bought, and it tasted too smooth.

When I drink too much and feel sick, I do not want anyone to see me. So I hide in the toilet. That night I must have stayed there for a long time. I was not exactly suffering. I was in a strange, soft state, as if I were far away from my own body. Then I must have gone to the bathroom to wash myself, but after that my memory breaks.

Later, in bed, I moved between sleep and waking. My head hurt badly, but inside that pain I entered a strange world. In that world, I felt that the man near me was not my husband but Kimura. I knew, somewhere in my mind, that this was not fully true. I knew that the real man was probably my husband. Yet my body felt as if it were with Kimura.

I also remember waking for a moment. I was lying under a very bright light, and my clothes had been taken away. My husband must have brought the lamp from his study. He had looked at me in great detail. I feel shame when I think that he saw parts of me that I myself have never looked at carefully. I am angry too, but the anger is mixed with something I do not understand.

He must have given me some sleeping medicine after that. I remember taking it because I wanted the pain in my head to stop. Then the dream, or half-dream, came again. If that brandy can make me enter such a dream, I almost want to drink it again. But one question remains. How could I see Kimura so clearly in a dream, when I have never truly seen him in that way?

January 30 — Husband's Diary.

After noon, Kimura telephoned me at school. He asked how Ikuko was. I told him she had still been in bed when I left, but that she was probably all right now. I also said, "Come tonight and drink with us again." He sounded shocked and told me I should be more careful. Still, he said he would come to see her.

He came at four in the afternoon. Ikuko was already up and sitting in the living room. Kimura said he would not stay long, but I strongly asked him to remain. Ikuko listened beside us and smiled a little. She did not look displeased. Kimura also did not really try to leave.

Tonight the same thing happened again. Ikuko left the room, hid in the toilet, went to the bathroom, and collapsed there. Dr. Kodama came and gave her an injection. Toshiko withdrew as before, and Kimura helped in the proper way before going home. After he left, I repeated my own secret actions. Most strange of all, Ikuko again said the same word in her half-sleep: "Kimura." Was she dreaming, or was she making a fool of me?

## Part 5 — Toshiko Leaves Home

February 9 — Ikuko's Diary.

Today Toshiko asked us to let her live away from home. She said she wanted a quiet place to study. She had already found a good house for this. It was the house of an old French woman who had taught her French at Doshisha. Toshiko still goes to her for private lessons.

The French woman's husband is Japanese, but he is ill and stays in bed. The woman teaches at Doshisha and gives lessons to support him. Since her husband became ill, she does not take many students at home. But there is a separate room in the house that is not being used. It has eight mats and was once her husband's study.

If Toshiko lives there, the old woman will feel safer when she must go out and leave her sick husband at home. The house has a telephone and a gas bath. Some small changes can be made so Toshiko can reach the toilet and bath without passing through the sick man's room. The rent will be cheap, and the old woman seems to want this arrangement very much.

I can understand why Toshiko wants to leave. These days Kimura comes almost every three days, and then the brandy begins again. Each time, I drink too much and fall in the bathroom. Toshiko must be tired of this. She must also have noticed the bright lights in our bedroom late at night, and she must wonder what her parents are doing.

But I do not know if that is the only reason. Perhaps she has another reason

she is hiding from us. I told her, "Ask Papa yourself. If he agrees, I will not stop you." I did not want to decide it alone. Still, I felt that our home was slowly becoming a place where even our daughter could no longer breathe easily.

February 14 — Husband's Diary.

Today, while Ikuko was in the kitchen, Kimura told me something strange. He asked, "Do you know about a camera called a Polaroid?" He explained that with this camera, the picture comes out almost at once. It does not need the long usual work of developing film. It is easy to use and easy to carry.

He said that if one uses a flash, one can take pictures quickly without a stand. At present, few people in Japan have such a camera. But a friend of his has one, and also has film for it. Then Kimura said, "If you need it, I can borrow it for you." When I heard this, one idea came to me at once.

But why did Kimura think I would be pleased to hear about such a camera? How did he know that this would interest me? He must know more about the secrets between my wife and me than I imagined. Perhaps he has guessed them from small signs. Perhaps Ikuko, without words, has already told him more than she thinks.

February 16 — Ikuko's Diary.

Around four this afternoon, something worried me. I keep my diary in a drawer in the living room. No one else uses that drawer. I place the notebook under old family papers, so it looks safe. I usually write when my husband is out, but sometimes I cannot wait. If he is upstairs in his study, I sometimes write downstairs.

His study is just above the living room. I cannot hear clearly what he is doing, but I feel I can often guess. I know when he is reading, writing, thinking, or perhaps writing his own diary. I also feel that he can guess what I am doing. Sometimes the quietness upstairs becomes too deep. Then I feel that he is listening

hard to the room below.

Because of this, I write with a brush on soft Japanese paper. I do not use a pen on Western paper, because that makes more sound. Today, however, I became too interested in what I was writing. For one or two seconds, I forgot to watch the upstairs room. Then my husband came down to use the toilet and passed in front of the living room.

Perhaps he did not come quietly on purpose. Perhaps I simply failed to hear him because I was not paying attention. But I noticed him only after he had reached the bottom of the stairs. I was writing at the table. I quickly hid the diary and the brush case under it. He did not see the notebook, but I think he may have heard the thin paper make a small sound.

If he heard that sound, he may guess what I was doing. I must be careful from now on. But if he has already guessed that I keep a diary, what can I do? Changing the hiding place may not help. This house is not large. If he truly searches, he will find it somewhere.

The only safe way may be not to leave the house when he is at home. But that is not always possible. Kimura has asked me to go with him to see *The Red and the Black* at Asahi Hall. I do want to go. Before I go, I must think of some way to know whether my husband has opened my diary while I am away.

February 18 — Husband's Diary.

Last night I heard Ikuko say "Kimura" for the fourth time. I no longer think it is only sleep talk. She must be acting as if she is talking in sleep. But why does she do it? Perhaps she wants me to understand that she is not really asleep. Perhaps she wants to say that she must imagine Kimura, or else she cannot feel anything.

Or perhaps she is giving me the jealousy I asked for. Perhaps she is saying, "This too is only a way to excite you. I am still a faithful wife." I cannot know which meaning is true. Maybe both are true at the same time. This uncertainty is exactly what gives me pain and pleasure together.

Today Toshiko finally moved out. She went to Madame Okada's house in

Tanaka Sekiden-cho. Ikuko said yesterday that Toshiko should wait until the twenty-first, because the day would be luckier. But Toshiko did not listen. The work on the house is not completely finished, and the telephone has not yet been changed. Still, she went.

Kimura came to help move her things. Ikuko was sleeping deeply this morning after last night, so she did not help. In the evening she finally got up. Toshiko's new place is only five or six minutes from here on foot. Kimura's own room is also near that area, so he will be even closer to Toshiko now. Or perhaps I should say he will be closer to Ikuko.

After helping with the move, Kimura came upstairs to my study. He called from the stairs, "May I come in?" Then he entered and put the Polaroid camera before me. He said, "I have brought the thing I promised." He spoke quietly, as if this were only a small favor. But I felt that a dangerous tool had entered my hands.

February 19 — Ikuko's Diary.

I cannot understand Toshiko's mind. Sometimes she seems to love me, and sometimes she seems to hate me. But I am sure of one thing: she hates her father. She seems to misunderstand the private life between her parents. She thinks her father is the one with the stronger and stranger desire, and that I am only being pulled along by him.

To tell the truth, I helped her think this. Yesterday, when she came to the bedroom to say goodbye before leaving, she said only one thing: "Mama, Papa will kill you." Toshiko is usually silent like me, so those words were unusual. She may truly worry that my weak chest will become worse because of him. Yet the way she said it sounded cold and sharp, not warm.

I wonder if she has a secret jealousy of me. Though she is more than twenty years younger, perhaps she feels that she is not as attractive as her mother. She has said from the beginning that she dislikes Kimura. But perhaps she only says this because she knows I like the kind of man he is. Perhaps her true feeling is the opposite. Perhaps, deep inside, she is beginning to see me as an enemy.

I have also been thinking about my diary. If hiding it is useless, I at least want to know whether my husband reads it. I need some sign that only I can understand. At first I thought of putting a toothpick between the pages, so it would fall if he opened the book. But he is careful and sly about such things. The second time, he would put it back exactly.

So I tried another method. I cut a piece of clear tape and placed it across the cover, sealing the diary shut. To read inside, he must remove the tape. Even if he puts on new tape, it will be almost impossible to put it in exactly the same place. Also, the paper cover is easy to damage. If he removes the tape, I will see the mark. In this way, he cannot read my diary without leaving a trace.

## Part 6 — Photographs and Sealed Diaries

February 24 — Husband's Diary.

Since Toshiko began living away from home, Kimura has no clear reason to visit us so often. Still, he comes every two or three days, almost as before. Sometimes I telephone him myself. Toshiko also seems to come home once a day, but she never stays long. The shape of our house has changed, but the same people still move around it.

I have already used the Polaroid camera on two nights. I took pictures of Ikuko while she was asleep, or while she seemed to be asleep. I moved her body into several positions and took pictures from different sides. I wanted to see what she herself never lets me see. I wanted to keep proof of what I had seen.

I had four reasons for taking the pictures. First, I felt strong interest in the act of taking them. Second, I thought I might put the pictures in my diary. If Ikuko read the diary, she would find them there. Then she would be forced to see the beauty of her own body, which she had never wanted to know.

Third, I wanted her to understand why I wanted to look at her so much. A husband of fifty-six still longs so strongly for the body of his forty-five-year-old wife. Surely this is not common. Perhaps she would be moved by that thought.

Perhaps she would understand me better.

My fourth reason was darker. I wanted to shame her and then watch how long she could pretend not to know. But the camera is not very good. The lens is not bright, and it is hard for me to take clear pictures. The film is also old, and I must use a flash each time. Because of this, the pictures are not good enough for my second and third purposes.

For now, the camera serves only the first and fourth purposes. I can enjoy taking the pictures, and I can test Ikuko's silence. But I have not yet put the pictures in my diary. If the pictures were clearer, I might do so at once. As they are now, I must wait and think.

February 27 — Ikuko's Diary.

Although today was Sunday, Kimura came at half past nine in the morning. He asked if I wanted to go and see *The Red and the Black*. At this time of year, teachers are busy because students are preparing for entrance examinations. Kimura says that March will be easier, but this month he must often stay at school and help students after class.

Kimura is said to have a very good sense for examinations. When he tells students, "This part may appear," it often does. I do not know much about study, but I can understand that he has a sharp sense. In that way, my husband is not near him. My husband thinks and doubts too much, but Kimura sees things quickly.

Sunday is the easiest day for Kimura, but it is not easy for me. My husband is usually at home all day on Sunday. Kimura had also spoken to Toshiko before coming here, so Toshiko came later and joined us. Her face seemed to say, "I do not want to go, but I will go for Mama, because it would look bad if only the two of them went."

Kimura said, "If we do not go early on Sunday, there will be no seats." My husband, from beside us, strongly told me to go. "I will be at home all day," he said. "Go if you want to. You said you wanted to see that film." I understood why he was saying this. I had expected such a situation, so the three of us went together.

We entered the theater at half past ten and came out after one. I asked Kimura and Toshiko to come home for lunch, but they both returned to their own places. My husband had said he would be home all day, but after I returned, he went out for a walk around three and did not come back until evening. As soon as he left, I took out my diary.

The clear tape was almost in the same place as before. At first, the cover did not seem damaged. But when I looked with a magnifying glass, I saw two or three small marks. He must have removed the tape very carefully, but he could not hide everything. I had also placed a small toothpick inside, between certain pages, and it too had moved.

Now there is no doubt. My husband has opened my diary. Should I stop writing it, or should I continue? I began this diary because I did not want to speak my heart to other people. I wanted to speak only to myself. But now I know that another person may read it.

Still, that person is my husband. On the surface, we will both continue to pretend that he does not read it. So perhaps I should go on writing. From now on, this diary can become a way to speak to him indirectly. There are things I cannot say to his face, but I can say them here. I only hope he will never openly say that he has read it.

I also want him to believe one thing. I have not read his diary. I know where it is. Sometimes I have touched it softly. Once or twice, I may even have opened the cover. But I have never read even one word. This is the truth, and he should know that I am old-fashioned enough to keep that rule.

February 27 — Husband's Diary.

My guess was right. Ikuko has been keeping a diary. I have not written about this until today, but I began to suspect it several days ago. One afternoon, when I was going downstairs, I passed the living room and saw her through the glass. At the same time, I heard the sound of thin paper being hurriedly crushed and hidden.

It was not the sound of one or two sheets. It sounded like a whole small

notebook being pushed under a cushion or something like that. We almost never use such soft paper in this house. I guessed at once what she was using it for. Today, while she was out at the film, I searched the living room and found the diary easily.

To my surprise, she had sealed it with clear tape. She had already expected that I might find it. I did not read it. I only wanted to see if I could remove the tape without leaving a mark. I almost wanted to warn her, "Tape is not enough. Someone may read this without your knowing."

But I failed. She had planned better than I expected. I removed the tape as carefully as I could, but I left marks on the cover. I also could not replace the tape perfectly. She will surely notice. Still, I repeat: I opened the diary, but I did not read even one word.

The truth is that I am afraid to read it. I am afraid to learn what she has written about Kimura. Ikuko, if you are writing about him, please do not write the real truth. Even if it is a lie, write that Kimura is only a tool to excite me and nothing more. I do not want to know more than that.

This morning Kimura came to take Ikuko to the film because I had asked him to do so. I wanted her to be out of the house for two or three hours. I had noticed that she now avoids leaving home when I am here. Toshiko went with them, as usual. I do not understand that girl's mind. She is like her mother, but even more difficult.

Tonight, after Toshiko moved out, the four of us ate together for the first time. Toshiko left early. After brandy, Ikuko became as she usually does. Late at night, when Kimura was leaving, I returned the Polaroid camera to him. I told him that the camera was useful, but ordinary film might be easier for better pictures.

Then I asked whether he could develop the pictures himself. He looked troubled for a moment. I said, "You understand what kind of pictures I mean, do you not? They are pictures that other people must not see." He answered that perhaps a darkroom could be made at his lodging. He said he would ask the owner.

February 28 — Husband's Diary.

At eight this morning, while Ikuko was still sleeping deeply, Kimura came on his way to school. I was still in bed, but when I heard his voice, I got up and went into the living room. He said, "Sir, it is all right." At first I did not understand what he meant. Then I realized he was talking about the darkroom.

At his lodging, they have not been using the bath recently. Because of that, the bathroom is empty. There is running water there, and it can be used freely. Kimura said that it should be possible to develop the pictures there. I asked him to prepare everything as soon as he could.

March 3 — Husband's Diary.

Kimura says he is busy with examinations, but he seems even more eager than I am. Last night I took out my old camera, the Zeiss Ikon, which I had not used for a long time. I used a whole roll of thirty-six pictures in one night. Today Kimura came again, looking as if nothing special had happened.

He came into my study and asked, "Is it all right?" He looked at my face carefully. To tell the truth, even then I still had not fully decided whether I should give him the film. He has already seen Ikuko's body many times for short moments. But he has never looked at it slowly in clear pictures. If I let him develop these pictures, will I not be pushing him too far?

I also thought about what Ikuko might feel if she saw them. She would surely be angry, or at least pretend to be angry, because I had taken such pictures without her knowing and then asked another man to develop them. But she might also think that, since I had allowed Kimura to see them, I had almost allowed something more. When I imagined this, I felt terrible jealousy.

Yet that jealousy also gave me pleasure. In the end, I decided to take the risk. I handed the film to Kimura and said, "Please develop this. Do everything yourself, and never show it to anyone. After I see the pictures, I will choose the interesting ones and ask you to make them larger." Kimura must have been strongly excited inside, but he only said, "Yes," and left with a calm face.

## Part 7 — Ikuko Finds the Photographs

March 7 — Ikuko's Diary.

Today I found the key again in front of the bookshelf in my husband's study. This is the second time this year. The first time was on January 4, when I went into the study to clean and found it near the vase. This morning the flowers in the vase had become old, so I went to change them. The key was lying in the same place as before.

I felt at once that this had some meaning. I opened the drawer and took out my Husband's Diary.

To my surprise, it was sealed with clear tape, just as I had sealed mine. I understood what he meant. He was saying, in the opposite way, "Open it if you can." The cover of his diary was smooth and hard, so I thought it might be easier to remove the tape from it.

I must say clearly that I did not want to read the diary. I was only curious to see whether I could take off the tape without leaving a mark. I tried very carefully. But however gently I pulled, a small mark remained. Even on smooth paper, the place where the tape had been could not be hidden completely.

I put on a new piece of tape afterward. Of course, my husband will notice it. He will surely think I opened the diary and read it. But I swear that I did not read even one word. I have said this many times, and I say it again. I do not want to hear or read the private things my husband wants to tell me in that way.

Still, I opened the diary quickly to see how thick it had become. This too was only curiosity. I saw the pages for a moment, with my husband's thin, nervous writing running across them. I looked at the writing as one might look at ants moving on the ground, and I meant to close the book at once. But then I noticed several pictures pasted on the pages.

I closed my eyes quickly and shut the diary. I had the feeling that the pictures

were shameful. What were they? Where had he found them? Why had he pasted them into his diary? Then a very unpleasant thought came to me. Perhaps the person in those pictures was myself.

During these past nights, while I was deep in sleep or half-sleep, I sometimes felt that the room suddenly became bright. At the time, I thought I was seeing a strange dream. It felt as if someone were taking a picture of me with a flash. Sometimes that person seemed to be my husband. Sometimes, in the dream, it almost seemed to be Kimura.

Now I think it may not have been a dream. My husband may really have taken pictures of me. It could not have been Kimura, of course. It must have been my husband. I remember that he once said, "You do not know how beautiful your own body is. I should take a picture and show you." Perhaps he has now done exactly that.

Sometimes, when I am deeply asleep, I have a faint feeling that my clothes are being removed. Until now I thought this too might be only a dream. But if those pictures are of me, then it was not a dream. It was true. My husband has been looking at me and taking pictures while I did not fully know what was happening.

I cannot allow such a thing when I am awake. Yet if it happens while I do not know, perhaps I can bear it. My husband likes to look at me. This is a poor and shameful taste, but if it helps him, perhaps I must accept it as part of a wife's duty. I am his wife, and if this strange act helps him love me, I may have to endure it.

At the same time, I do not understand why looking was not enough for him. Why did he have to take pictures? Why did he have to make them larger and paste them into his diary? He knows better than anyone that two opposite things live inside me. I have strong desire, but I also have strong shame. He knows this, and still he tries to force me to see myself.

Another question troubles me even more. Who made the larger pictures? My husband cannot easily do that work himself. Did he ask another person? Did some other person see those pictures before I did? If he let another person look at them, what was his purpose? Was this only a cruel joke against me, or did it have a deeper meaning?

March 10 — Husband's Diary.

I do not know whether I should write this here. If Ikuko reads it, I do not know what will happen. But I must confess that something strange has begun in my mind and body. I say "I think" something strange has begun, because perhaps it is only nervous fear. Perhaps I am making too much of it.

I was not always weak in that part of married life. But after middle age, I had to answer Ikuko's strong desire for many years. Because of that, my strength became used up too early. Now my desire is still great, but the body that should support it is weak. So I have been using unnatural ways to excite myself and keep up with her.

Since the beginning of this year, everything has changed. I discovered Kimura as a kind of strong medicine for my jealousy. I also discovered brandy as another medicine. Because of these two things, my desire has become so strong that even I am surprised. I have also spoken with Dr. Soma and begun to use medicine to help my body. Sometimes I even give myself other injections without telling him.

But I do not think the medicine is the main reason. The real reason is my excited mind. Jealousy makes a fire in me. The memory of Ikuko's body under bright light drives me forward. These things lead me almost into madness. For the moment, I am more reckless than she is.

Each night I feel that I have entered a happiness I never imagined before. I cannot help being thankful for it. But at the same time, I feel that such happiness cannot last. A punishment will come. I am cutting away my own life little by little. Already, I feel signs of that punishment in both my mind and body.

Last Monday morning, Kimura came on his way to school. I got out of bed and tried to go to the living room. Then a strange thing happened. The stove pipe, the paper doors, the sliding doors, the pillars, and all the straight lines in the room looked double. They also seemed a little bent. I rubbed my eyes, but the world did not return to normal.

I have felt light dizziness before, especially in summer. But this was different.

Dizziness usually passes after a few minutes. This did not pass. Since that morning, things have still looked a little double. It is not so bad that I cannot walk, and no one notices it. Still, it is unpleasant and frightening.

Sometimes my body also suddenly loses balance. I feel as if I may fall to one side. The strange feeling begins at the back of my head, just above the neck. It is as if an empty hole has opened there. I tell myself that this may only be nerves. But yesterday another strange thing happened, and it frightened me even more.

Around three in the afternoon, I tried to telephone Kimura. I call his school almost every day, but suddenly I could not remember the number. I could not remember the name of the school either. Then I tried to remember Kimura's full name, and even that would not come. I could remember that Ikuko was my wife and Toshiko was my daughter, but many other names disappeared.

For twenty or thirty minutes, names of people and places were gone from my head. I knew the facts, but I could not find the words. I knew there was a French woman with a Japanese husband, and that Toshiko rented a room in her house. But I could not remember the woman's name. I even could not remember the name of the place where our own house stands.

Then the missing words came back. No one noticed anything. I said nothing to anyone. But the fear remains. What if it happens again? What if it lasts not twenty minutes, but one day, two days, or forever? Then I might not be able to teach at the university. I might not even be able to go out alone or speak properly with people.

If Ikuko reads this, what will she do? Will she feel fear for my future and try to control herself? I do not think so. Even if her reason tells her to stop, her body will not listen. Perhaps she will think I am only trying to frighten her so she will attack me less. But the truth is that I myself can no longer stop. I am afraid of illness, yet for the first time in my life, I feel that I have found a reason to live.

Part 8 — Toshiko Sees the Secret

March 14 — Ikuko's Diary.

This morning, while my husband was out, Toshiko came to the house. She looked serious and said, "Mama, I have something to tell you." I asked what it was. She looked straight into my eyes and said, "Yesterday I saw some photographs at Kimura's room." At first I did not understand what she meant, so I asked her to explain.

Toshiko said she had gone to Kimura's room because she had promised to borrow a French book from him. Kimura was not there, but she went in and took the book from the shelf. When she opened it, several small photographs fell out from between the pages. Then she asked me, "Mama, what do those pictures mean?" I still answered that I did not know, but by then I could guess.

The photographs must have been like the ones I had seen in my Husband's Diary.

They must have been pictures of me in a shameful state. But I could not say this to Toshiko. She looked as if she believed something much worse. She seemed to think that the pictures proved some secret relationship between Kimura and me.

Toshiko said, "Mama, I am always on your side. Please tell me the truth." I felt that if I stayed silent, her thoughts would become even darker. So I said, "This is not something a daughter should enter too deeply." Then I told her that her father had taken the pictures, not Kimura. I said her father had a strange but strong love for me.

Toshiko could not understand this. To her, her father had only shamed me and also troubled Kimura for no reason. I told her, "You say Papa shamed me, but I do not feel it in that way. Papa still loves me deeply. He wanted another man to see that his wife is still young and beautiful for her age. That may be a little sick, but I can understand it."

I think I spoke well, though it was very difficult to say such things to my own daughter. I also felt that I had to protect my husband. If he reads this diary, as I am sure he will, I hope he will understand how hard I tried to defend him. Still, Toshiko was not satisfied. She said, "Is that all? Papa knows how Kimura feels

about you. He is very cruel.”

I did not answer that. Toshiko then said that Kimura’s leaving the pictures inside the book could not be only carelessness. She said Kimura is not the kind of man who makes such a simple mistake. Perhaps he wanted her to find them. Perhaps he wanted to give her some role in this matter. She said many things about Kimura’s character, but I will not write them here. It is better for my husband if I do not.

March 18 — Husband’s Diary.

Tonight I came home after ten o’clock because there had been a dinner for Sasaki’s return from abroad. Ikuko had been out since evening. I was told that she had gone somewhere with Toshiko and Kimura. I did not know exactly where they had gone, and at first I did not ask too much. I felt both anger and pleasure in not knowing.

Later, news came that something had happened at Toshiko’s room in Sekidencho. When I arrived there, Ikuko was lying quietly on a bed placed on the floor near the piano. Beside her was a low table, and cups and plates were scattered over it. Her going-out clothes were hanging on the wall. She was wearing only a bright under-robe, and the scene looked strange and almost unreal.

Kimura said only, “Miss Toshiko and I brought her here.” Ikuko’s body had been wiped, but her robe was still damp. Her hair was loose and wet around her neck. This was different from the times when she had fallen in our own bathroom. Then her hair had always been tied. I wondered if this new disorder was Kimura’s taste.

Kimura seemed to know the house well. He brought things from the bathroom, boiled water, and helped me prepare what was needed. After about an hour, I said, “We cannot leave her here.” Kimura said the people in the main house were asleep and knew nothing. Her pulse was better, so I decided to take her home.

Kimura went out to call a car. Then he said, “I will carry her to the car.” I lifted Ikuko and placed her on his back. I put her clothes over her robe, and together we

crossed the garden to the front gate. The smell of brandy had soaked into her robe and clothes, and the inside of the car felt heavy with it. I held her across my knees on the way home.

Kimura helped carry her into our bedroom. Before leaving, he said, "Sir, please trust me about tonight. Miss Toshiko knows everything." Then he asked, "May I go home now?" I answered only, "Yes." After he left, I remembered that Toshiko had been at our house. I looked in the living room and in her old room, but she had already gone back to Sekiden-cho without saying anything.

I went upstairs to my study and quickly wrote down what had happened so far. As I wrote, I imagined what might happen later that night. I still did not know the whole truth. Perhaps it was better not to know too soon. The space between truth and doubt was already working strongly inside me.

March 19 — Husband's Diary.

I did not sleep at all until dawn. I kept thinking about last night's sudden event. What did it mean? I had not yet heard any explanation from Kimura, Toshiko, or Ikuko. I had not had a chance to ask, but in truth I did not want to ask too quickly. Before hearing the facts, I wanted to think alone.

I imagined many possible stories. Perhaps this had happened in one way; perhaps it had happened in another. Each thought brought jealousy and anger, but it also woke a strong desire in me. If I knew the facts too clearly, that strange pleasure might disappear. So I stayed in the dark on purpose.

Near dawn, Ikuko began to speak in her half-sleep again. This time she said "Kimura" many times. Sometimes the word was strong, and sometimes it was weak. It came again and again, broken but clear. Her voice was not quite like the old sleepy voice. It sounded deeper, as if she were calling someone from inside herself.

I do not know whether she was really asleep. Perhaps she was awake and acting. Perhaps she wanted me to hear the name. But by then the question itself almost did not matter. I felt jealousy and anger, but then both seemed to melt away.

For a short time, I no longer knew whether I was myself or Kimura.

Afterward, I felt a terrible dizziness. It was stronger than before. The world seemed to turn and shake. I had already noticed strange signs in my eyes and head, but this was worse. Still, even fear could not destroy the strange feeling that last night had given me. I felt that my danger and my happiness had become one thing.

March 19 — Ikuko's Diary.

I will write down the details of last night, so that I do not forget them. I knew my husband would come home late because of the dinner for Mr. Sasaki. Before he left, I told him that we might go out to see a film. Around half past four, Kimura came to invite me. Toshiko came a little later, around five.

When I asked why she was late, Toshiko said the time was not good for a film. She said we should eat first. Then she said, "Mama, today I will take care of everything. Come and eat at my place in Sekiden-cho. You have never really sat there and relaxed." She had bought chicken, vegetables, and tofu. She also took the bottle of brandy that was still more than half full.

I told her, "It is better not to take that. Papa is not home today." But Toshiko said, "It will feel lonely without it, when we have such good food." So the three of us went to her room. I did not feel completely easy, but I followed them. The room was small, and the meal felt different from eating at home. Perhaps that difference made me less careful.

I do not remember everything clearly. We ate, and then the brandy was opened. At first I meant to drink only a little. But the talk went on, and the glasses were filled again. Kimura was there, Toshiko was there, and my husband was not. I felt as if I had stepped into another room of my life, one that was close to my own life but not the same.

After that, my memory becomes broken. I remember feeling hot, then suddenly weak. I remember water, hair, and someone's hands. I remember voices, but I cannot put them in order. Perhaps I was carried. Perhaps I spoke. Perhaps I called Kimura's name. I cannot say clearly what was dream and what was real.

When I woke more fully, I was back at home. My husband was near me. I knew that something important had happened, but I did not yet know what shape it had. I also knew that from now on, the four of us could not return to the simple positions we had before. My husband, Kimura, Toshiko, and I had all moved one step farther into the same dark road.

## Part 9 — The Triangle Becomes Clearer

March 24 — Husband's Diary.

Last night Ikuko fell again at the house in Sekiden-cho. After dinner, Toshiko and Kimura came and said they were taking her to a film. When she had not come home after eleven, I already guessed that something had happened. I thought of telephoning, but that seemed foolish. So I waited for them to call me, and while I waited, I felt both anger and excitement.

After midnight, Toshiko came alone. She had a taxi waiting outside. She entered the house and said, "Mama has done it again." According to her, after the film, she and Ikuko had walked Kimura back to his room. Then Kimura said he would walk them back to Sekiden-cho. The three of them went there, and somehow Kimura came inside.

Toshiko said she made tea. Then someone noticed that a little Courvoisier was still left in the bottle. She said she put only a small spoonful into each cup. But soon Ikuko and Kimura began drinking from small glasses, and at last the bottle was empty. The bath happened to be ready again, and after that things moved in the same order as before.

I asked Toshiko, "Did you leave the two of them there alone?" She answered, "Yes. The telephone had not been changed yet, so I had to go outside to call. Also, I thought we would need a car, so I went to find one." Then she added, as if speaking to herself, that she had left more than twenty minutes earlier. I understood what she wanted me to imagine.

I did not answer her directly. I only said, "Thank you. Stay here and watch the

house.” Then I prepared an injection and went to Sekiden-cho in the taxi. During the ride, I tried not to think about what might have happened in that room while Toshiko was away. But the more I tried not to think, the more strongly the pictures came into my mind.

When I arrived, Ikuko was lying there in the same under-robe as before. Her clothes hung loosely on the wall. Kimura brought hot water and a basin. Ikuko looked more deeply drunk than the last time, but I could see too clearly that this was partly an act. Her pulse was stronger than it should have been if she were truly in danger.

I no longer felt it was necessary to give her a serious injection. I only acted as if I were giving camphor, and gave her a vitamin injection instead. Kimura noticed and whispered, “Sir, is that all right?” I answered, “Yes. Tonight she does not seem so bad.” I said this calmly, but inside I was watching all three of them. I still did not know how much they had planned together.

Later that night, Ikuko called Kimura’s name again and again. This time her voice was different. It was not the weak voice of a person talking in sleep. It was deeper and stronger, almost like a cry. When I thought that Kimura had changed her into this bold woman in only one night, I felt strong jealousy. At the same time, I almost felt grateful to him.

Afterward, near dawn, I had terrible dizziness. Ikuko’s face, neck, shoulders, and arms all seemed double. It looked as if another Ikuko were lying on top of her body. Soon I must have slept, but even in my dream she was still double. Her eyes, nose, lips, and feet floated separately in the air, bright and sharp like painted signs outside a theater.

March 26 — Ikuko’s Diary.

I have now met Kimura three times when my husband was not present. Last night, in the alcove at Sekiden-cho, there was a new bottle of Courvoisier. It had not been opened. When I asked Toshiko if she had bought it, she said no. She said it had been there when she returned from outside.

Kimura said he knew nothing about it either. He said, "It must be the professor. It is one of his strange jokes." Toshiko said, "If Papa did it, it is very cruel." Perhaps my husband did secretly place the bottle there. That seems likely. But it is also possible that Toshiko or Kimura bought it. I cannot know the truth.

On Wednesdays and Fridays, Madame goes to Osaka to teach, and she returns around eleven. On the earlier night, when the brandy began, Toshiko disappeared at the right moment and went into Madame's part of the house. I did not write this before because I feared my husband might misunderstand. But now there seems no reason to hide it. Last night, too, Toshiko disappeared quite early.

I do not remember clearly what happened after I lost consciousness. But no matter how drunk I was, I believe I still kept the last line. I do not yet have the courage to cross it, and I believe Kimura does not either. Kimura told me that he had lent my husband the Polaroid camera because he knew my husband wanted to look at me when I was drunk. But my husband was not satisfied with that camera.

Kimura said my husband then used a better camera and made him develop the pictures. He thinks my husband's real aim was to make him suffer. My husband wanted to excite him, tempt him, and then force him to endure it. He also knew that Kimura's suffering would reach me and make me suffer too. In this way, my husband found pleasure in both our pain.

Kimura said he hated my husband for this, but he did not want to betray him. He said he wanted to suffer with me and go deeper into that suffering. I asked him why he had left the photographs in the French book where Toshiko could find them. He said he expected Toshiko to act if she saw them. He knew her character and thought she might make something happen.

I asked Kimura something that I had never asked any man before. I said I wanted to believe that I had remained faithful to my husband. Only Kimura could answer that question. He told me to believe it. He said he had come very close to me, as my husband wished, but he had not crossed the final line. When I heard this, I felt relief.

I told Kimura that I both hate and love my husband. The more I hate him, the

more my love also grows. If my husband uses Kimura in this painful way only to make me happy, then I cannot easily betray him. I asked Kimura to think of himself and my husband as one body. Perhaps my husband contains Kimura, and Kimura contains my husband. Perhaps they are two men, but also one.

March 28 — Husband's Diary.

Today I went to the university eye doctor. I did not want to go, but Dr. Soma strongly advised it. I was told that my dizziness comes from hardening of the blood vessels in the brain. Because of this, too much blood comes to the brain, and dizziness, double sight, and confused consciousness may happen. In worse cases, I may faint.

The doctor asked whether I felt dizzy when I rose suddenly, turned my body quickly, or got up at night. I said yes. He said the blood flow near the inner ear may also be poor. Then Dr. Soma examined me in internal medicine. For the first time, they took my blood pressure, examined my heart, and checked my kidneys.

Dr. Soma looked serious. He said my blood pressure was very high. The upper number was over two hundred, and the lower number was also too high. He told me to stop using unnecessary medicines for strength. He said I should take medicine to lower my blood pressure. He also told me to avoid alcohol, strong foods, salty foods, and excitement.

I will write this openly in my diary and see how Ikuko reacts. For the moment, I will not obey the doctor. Until Ikuko herself gives me some sign, things will continue in the same direction. I think she will read this, pretend not to read it, and then become even bolder. That is the fate of her body, and I cannot stop it.

I too cannot go back now. Since the last events, Ikuko has become more active in her silent way. She still does not speak, but her movements say many things. She acts as if she is half asleep and half awake, so the room does not need to be dark. I once kept some distance between Kimura and Ikuko. But little by little, that distance has become smaller.

The smaller the distance becomes, the stronger my jealousy grows. The

stronger my jealousy grows, the more power I feel. Now the three of them, and perhaps Toshiko too, may think of the next step before I do. We are four dark-minded people, all deceiving one another, yet all moving in the same direction. Each of us has a different reason, but all of us seem to be pushing Ikuko farther.

March 30 — Ikuko's Diary.

This afternoon Toshiko came and invited me out. We met Kimura at the end of the Arashiyama train line, and the three of us went to Arashiyama. Toshiko says the idea was hers, and I must say it was a good one. Because school is on vacation, Kimura has free time.

We walked near the river, took a boat, rested near Togetsu Bridge, and looked at the garden of Tenryuji. For the first time in a long while, I breathed healthy outside air. I would like to do such things again. My husband has loved books since he was young, and he almost never took me to places like this.

In the evening, we returned. At Hyakumanben, the three of us got off the train and went separately to our own homes. The day had been so fresh and pleasant that I did not feel like sitting around the brandy table at night. I wanted to keep the clean feeling of the air and the river inside me.

March 31 — Ikuko's Diary.

Last night my husband and I went to bed without drinking. In the middle of the night, under the bright white light, I let the toes of my left foot show a little from under the bedding. I did it on purpose. My husband noticed at once and came to my bed.

It was unusual that we succeeded without the help of alcohol and with the light still bright. My husband clearly became excited by this strange change. These days he goes out every day for one or two hours. I think he does this not only for exercise, but also to give me time to read his diary. When he goes out, I feel as if he is saying, "Read it now."

The more he seems to invite me, the more I refuse to read it. But if he gives me chances to read his diary, I should also give him chances to read mine. Perhaps we are both opening doors while pretending to lock them. Perhaps this is the true meaning of our diaries now.

March 31 — Husband's Diary.

Last night Ikuko gave me great surprise and joy. She did not pretend to be drunk. She did not ask me to turn off the light. Instead, she silently invited me in many ways and showed me what she wanted. I had not known she understood so many methods.

I do not yet know what this sudden change means. I will understand it little by little. But today the dizziness was so strong that I went to Dr. Kodama and had my blood pressure checked again. He looked shocked. He said the pressure was extremely high. He told me I must stop all work at once and rest completely.

Part 10 — Ikuko Changes Her Outer Life

April 1 — Ikuko's Diary.

Today Toshiko brought Miss Kawai to the house. Miss Kawai teaches dressmaking, and she also makes women's clothes as private work. Toshiko often asks her to make clothes. I have never worn Western clothes, except for a school uniform when I was young. My taste is old-fashioned, and my body seems better suited to kimono, but Toshiko has strongly told me to try one Western outfit.

I felt shy about this, so I asked Miss Kawai to come while my husband was out. Toshiko and Miss Kawai chose the cloth and the style. I told them that my legs were not very straight, so I wanted the skirt to be long, a little below the knees. Miss Kawai said my legs were not so unusual and that many Western women had legs like mine. At last we chose a gray and dark red check outfit from a fashion picture.

The clothes will probably cost less than ten thousand yen. But I will also need shoes, and perhaps a few small things to wear with the outfit. I do not know why I am doing this. Perhaps I only want to try what Toshiko says. Perhaps I want to see another self, one who does not belong only to this old house and this old marriage.

April 2, April 3, April 4, and April 5 — Ikuko's Diary.

On April 2, I went out in the afternoon and came home in the evening. On April 3, I went out at ten in the morning and bought shoes at a shop in Kawaramachi. On April 4 and April 5, I again went out in the afternoon and came home in the evening. I write only these short facts on purpose, because I know my husband will probably read this diary.

April 5 — Husband's Diary.

Ikuko is changing every day. Almost every afternoon, and sometimes from the morning, she goes out alone and spends four or five hours away from home. She comes back before dinner, and then we eat together. She does not want brandy these days. She is usually quite clear-headed when she returns.

I can guess that this has something to do with Kimura, because Kimura is free at this time. But I do not know where she goes. Today, a little after two, Toshiko suddenly came to the house and asked, "Where is Mama?" I said, "She is always out at this time. Is she not at your place?" Toshiko answered, "Neither Mama nor Kimura has come. I wonder where they are."

I do not believe Toshiko knows nothing. She must be part of this matter, or at least she must know more than she says. Still, she acted well. Her face showed surprise, but her surprise may have been made for me. Perhaps all three of them are working together, each in a different way. I sit upstairs and imagine them, and that imagining is already enough to trouble me.

April 6 — Ikuko's Diary.

I went out again in the afternoon and came home in the evening. These days, when I leave the house, my husband is usually at home. He sits in his study, with a book open before him. But I do not think he is really reading. I think his mind follows me from the moment I leave until the moment I return.

I also think he goes downstairs while I am away and reads my diary from the drawer. But if he does, he will find almost nothing about my recent actions. I have written only, "I went out in the afternoon and came home in the evening." I do this because I want him to wonder. I want the empty space in my diary to speak more strongly than words.

I am in fact meeting Kimura at a certain place. I wanted to meet him in the clear light of day, without brandy, without half-sleep, and without my husband standing between us. Until now, whenever I came near the most important moment with Kimura, I was always drunk or confused. I wanted to know whether the Kimura of my dreams was the same as the real Kimura. I wanted to see him with my own eyes, in ordinary daylight.

What I found was strange and joyful. The real Kimura was almost exactly the same as the image I had seen in my dreams. His young arms, his strong chest, and his pale skin were just as I had imagined. Because of this, he no longer seemed mixed with my husband. I had once said that my husband and Kimura were almost one person, but I now take those words back.

My husband and Kimura are not one. My husband is thin, weak-looking, and dry in his body. Kimura is also slim, but his body has health and life in it. My husband's skin seems cold and metallic to me, but Kimura's skin seems warm and alive. Day by day, my dislike for my husband grows stronger.

Even now, I have not crossed the final line. Will my husband believe that? Perhaps he will not, but it is true. Yet I must also admit that the "final line" has become a very narrow thing in my mind. I keep only the old formal line of faithfulness, because my old upbringing still holds me there. Outside that one line, I have allowed many things.

April 8 — Husband's Diary.

This afternoon I was walking along Shijo Street toward the west. Near Fujii Daimaru, I suddenly saw Ikuko. She had just come out of a shop and was walking ahead of me. She was only five or six yards away, and her back was toward me. It was half past four, so she was probably on her way home.

I think she saw me before I saw her and tried to avoid me. I usually walk toward Higashiyama, not Shijo, so she must have been surprised to find me there. I walked faster until I was close behind her. I did not call out, and she did not turn around. We walked like that for some time, with only a short distance between us.

I looked into the shop she had just left. It sold women's accessories: lace gloves, nylon gloves, earrings, pendants, and other things. I thought such a shop had nothing to do with a woman who never wore Western clothes. Then I noticed something and was shocked. Pearl earrings were hanging from both of Ikuko's ears.

When did she learn to wear such things with a kimono? Had she bought them that day and put them on at once, or had she already worn them before when I did not see? Recently she has also been wearing a short coat over her kimono. She used to hate modern fashions, but this new style did not look bad on her. In fact, the earrings suited her better than I expected.

I felt both jealousy and thanks, as I often do now. I was angry that another person had perhaps found this new beauty in my wife before I did. But I also felt thankful, because that person had shown me something I had missed. Ikuko walked on without turning back. Later, when she came home, the earrings were gone from her ears. She still carried the small package from the shop, but she did not open it in front of me.

April 10 — Ikuko's Diary.

I wonder how much my husband writes in his diary about his dangerous

condition. I have not read his diary, so I can only imagine. But for one or two months, I have seen that something is wrong with him. His face has become a bad color. He often loses balance on the stairs, forgets names, stops suddenly while walking, or holds a pillar and closes his eyes.

His writing has also become strange. He makes mistakes in dates, names, and addresses. Sometimes he writes one month when he means another, or writes a family name in a wrong way. I quietly correct small mistakes on envelopes before sending them. But I cannot know what mistakes there are inside the letters. Perhaps other people have already noticed that his head is not normal.

I asked Dr. Kodama to examine him quietly. Dr. Kodama said he had also wanted to speak to me. My husband had already gone to Dr. Soma, but Dr. Soma had warned him too strongly, so he now avoided that doctor. Dr. Kodama said my husband's blood pressure was frighteningly high. He said he had told my husband clearly that his condition was very serious.

I cannot say that I have no responsibility. If my endless demands had not existed, perhaps my husband would not have gone so far. But I have also served him as a faithful wife and have endured many hard things to please him. It is useless now to decide which of us is more to blame. We have pushed and tempted each other until neither of us can stop.

I will also write something else, though I do not know what will happen if my husband reads it. My husband is not the only one whose body is in danger. I too have been worried since the end of January. Long ago, when Toshiko was about ten, I had a lung illness and coughed blood two or three times. It healed naturally, but now I have had similar signs again.

I have seen small amounts of bright red blood in my phlegm two or three times. My body feels heavy, and my face and hands often feel hot. I do not want to take my temperature, and I do not want to see a doctor. I also feel tired every afternoon, and sometimes my chest aches in a strange way. To resist that tiredness, I need Kimura even more.

Part 11 — Evening Meetings and Physical Decline

April 13 — Husband's Diary.

I had expected Ikuko's hours outside the house to change soon, and I was right. Kimura's school has begun again, so daytime meetings must now be harder for them. For some time, she had gone out early in the afternoon. But these last two days she had been quieter, and yesterday evening, around five, Toshiko came first. Almost at once, Ikuko began to prepare herself, as if everything had already been planned.

From upstairs, I could tell what was happening. Ikuko came near the sliding door of my study and said, "I am going out for a little while. I will come back soon." I only answered, "Yes." Then she added, from the stairs, that Toshiko was there and that I could eat dinner with Toshiko. I asked, with a little malice, "What about you?" She said she would eat after she returned, unless I wanted to wait for her.

I told her that I would eat first and that she could eat outside if she wished. Suddenly I wanted to see how she was dressed, so I came out into the hall and looked down the stairs. She had already reached the bottom, but I saw her clearly. She was wearing the pearl earrings inside the house now. She was also putting on white lace gloves, one already on her left hand and the other still in her right hand.

She had not expected me to come out, and she looked a little embarrassed. Toshiko said, "Mama, they look good on you." I understood then what had been inside the package Ikuko had brought home the other day. After she left, the house felt strangely empty. It was unusual for Ikuko to be out at dinner time, and it was also unusual for Toshiko and me to sit at the table alone.

Toshiko began at once. "Papa, do you know where Mama is going?" she asked. I said I did not know and did not want to know that much. Then she said sharply, "Osaka." I almost leaned forward and repeated the word, but I stopped myself. I tried to answer calmly, "Oh, is that so?" But inside, the word struck me hard.

Toshiko said the place was about forty minutes by train from Sanjo, then five or six minutes on foot from Kyobashi. She offered to tell me more, but I did not

want her to continue too freely. So I asked why she knew about it. She said Kimura had wanted a place not too far from Kyoto, but safer from people's eyes. She had asked a modern friend who knew about such things and had helped him find it.

While she spoke, she poured Courvoisier for me. Recently I had not been drinking much brandy, but that night she had put the bottle on the table. I drank partly to hide my confusion. Then she asked what I thought. She wanted to know whether I would believe it if someone told me that Ikuko was still faithful to me.

I asked if Ikuko had spoken with her about such things. Toshiko said no. She said she had heard it from Kimura. Kimura had told her that Ikuko still remained faithful to me. Toshiko said she did not believe such foolish words. She poured more brandy into my glass, and I drank it without hesitation.

I said that I believed Ikuko without being told. Even if Kimura himself said he had taken her from me, I would not believe it. Ikuko was not the kind of woman who could deceive me. Toshiko laughed softly. Then she began to say that even if Ikuko had not crossed the final line, there were other ways to receive a kind of satisfaction, perhaps even dirtier ways.

I stopped her angrily. I told her there were things a child must not say to a parent. I called her rude and spoiled, and told her to go home. She said, "I will go." She had been putting rice into her bowl, but she threw it back into the rice box and left. After she had gone, my heart did not calm for a long time.

The word "Osaka" stayed in my body like a small wound. I had imagined many things before, but I had tried not to make them clear. Now Toshiko had suddenly made them clear for me. I imagined the house, the room, the air inside it, and the way Ikuko and Kimura might be together there. I tried not to think, but every effort only made the pictures stronger.

I also wondered why Toshiko had told me so suddenly. Was it truly her own will? Or had Ikuko made her say it? Perhaps Ikuko had written these things in her diary, but feared that I would not read them, or would pretend not to read them. Perhaps she used Toshiko to force me to understand. The most painful question was whether Ikuko had now given everything to Kimura and was asking me, through Toshiko, to accept it.

Ikuko came home at nine. At eleven, when I entered the bedroom, she was already in bed. To my surprise, she was more active than I had expected. I had to become the one who received, not the one who led. Her manner, her timing, and her silent skill showed that she was putting her whole self into the act. I could not decide whether this proved her faithfulness or her change.

April 15 — Husband's Diary.

I can feel that my mind is becoming worse day by day. Since the New Year, I have thrown away almost everything else and have thought only of pleasing Ikuko. Now I have almost no interest in anything except that one part of life. I cannot think about one matter for even five minutes. My head fills only with thoughts of my wife.

I used to read in every kind of condition, but now I pass whole days without reading. I still sit at my desk because long habit keeps me there. My eyes look at the book, but I am not truly reading. The letters shine and shake, and many of them look double. I read the same line again and again and still do not take in the meaning.

I have become a creature that lives only at night. During the day, when I sit in my study, I feel tired and deeply uneasy. Walking outside helps a little, but even walking is becoming hard. Dizziness often makes me feel as if I may fall backward in the street. Because my legs are weak too, I now walk slowly with a cane and rest on benches near quiet places.

Today, when I came back from a walk, Ikuko was in the living room with Miss Kawai, the dressmaker. I tried to enter for tea, but Ikuko said, "Please do not come in now. Go upstairs." When I looked in, I saw that she was being fitted for Western clothes. She kept telling me to go upstairs, so I went to my study.

A little later, I heard her say from downstairs, "I am going out for a while." Then she and Miss Kawai left the house. From the upstairs window, I watched the two women walking along the road. This was the first time I had seen Ikuko in Western clothes. I understood that the earrings and gloves had been preparation

for this.

To be honest, the clothes did not truly suit her. Miss Kawai was smaller and less graceful, but she knew how to wear Western clothes. Ikuko did not. Her earrings and lace gloves had looked interesting with kimono, but with Western clothes they looked added on. The clothes, the body, and the small ornaments did not yet work together.

Yet that very awkwardness had a strange charm for me. Ikuko wore Western clothes as if she were still wearing kimono. Her shoulders, hands, neck, and steps all kept their old Japanese softness. Her legs were not straight, and the line from knee to ankle bent outward a little. I watched that bent line under the skirt and found it strangely attractive. As she walked away, I was already thinking of the night.

April 16 — Ikuko's Diary.

This morning I went to Nishiki to buy food. For a long time I had left such work to the maid, but I felt that I had been neglecting my duty as a wife. I bought bamboo shoots, broad beans, and snow peas at the vegetable shop I often used before. Seeing the bamboo shoots reminded me that this spring has passed without my even noticing the cherry blossoms. Last year, Toshiko and I walked near the canal and saw the flowers, but this year two or three months have gone by like a dream.

I came home at eleven and changed the flowers in my husband's study. Today I used mimosa flowers that Madame had sent from her garden. My husband seemed to have just woken up and came upstairs while I was arranging them. He used to rise early, but these days he often sleeps late. He asked, in a sleepy voice, whether I was going out from morning tomorrow. I gave only a small unclear answer.

Around two, a strange man came to the door. He said he was from the Ishizuka treatment office and that he was a shiatsu therapist. None of us had asked for such a person, I thought, but the maid said my husband had told her to call him. My

husband had complained that his shoulders were terribly stiff and that he could hardly turn his neck. The maid had strongly advised this therapist, and at last he had agreed.

The man was around fifty, thin, wearing dark glasses, and not pleasant to look at. He gave treatment to my husband in the bedroom for about two hours. He climbed onto the bed while my husband lay there, which I disliked very much. After he left, I asked my husband how he felt. He said he felt a little better, though the pressure had hurt and was not exactly pleasant.

The therapist said he would come again tomorrow. My husband said he might try one or two more times. He must be suffering more than he admits. Still, when he asked about tomorrow morning, I found it hard to say that I was going out again today. But I had a reason I could not change. Around half past four, I changed into Western clothes, put on my earrings, and showed my face at the bedroom door to say that I was going out.

## Part 12 — The First Stroke

April 17 — Ikuko's Diary.

Today was an important day for my husband, and it was also an important day for me. Perhaps I will remember this day until the end of my life. I would like to write every small detail, but I must still be careful. For now, I will not write too clearly how I spent the hours from morning to evening.

I had already decided how to spend this Sunday. I went to the usual house in Osaka and met Kimura. We spent a happy half day together, perhaps the happiest Sunday we had yet had. He asked me to do many things, and I did what he asked. I was surprised at how free and bold my own body had become.

Usually, when I meet him there, we do not waste time with ordinary talk. But today, at one moment, Kimura suddenly asked, "Ikuko, what are you thinking about?" I said, "Nothing." But in fact, my husband's face had passed before my eyes. I tried to push that image away, but Kimura noticed. He said, "I know. You

are thinking about the professor.”

Kimura then said that he too had been thinking about my husband. He said he had not visited for some time and that he should come soon. He had also asked his family to send more dried fish roe as a gift. After that, the talk stopped, and we returned to our own world. But now, when I think back, perhaps some hidden warning had come to both of us.

When I came home at five, my husband was out. The maid told me that the shiatsu man had come again and treated him from two until half past four. The man had stayed even longer than yesterday. He had told my husband that doctors and university professors could not easily cure high blood pressure. He had said that his own treatment would help more than medicine.

My husband believed him. He had even said that from now on the man should come every day and that he would stop seeing doctors. At half past six my husband returned from his walk. At seven, we ate together. There were bamboo shoots, beans, tofu, and a beef steak. He eats beef almost every day now, not because he likes it so much, but because he thinks he needs it.

There was also the dried fish roe from Kimura’s family. My husband said, “Since we have this, shall we drink a little?” We brought out the Courvoisier, but there was only a little left in the bottle. We each drank one small glass. He then went upstairs again. At half past ten, I told him the bath was ready.

After he had bathed, I also bathed. I had already bathed once in Osaka, but I did it again for appearance’s sake. When I entered the bedroom, he was already in bed. As soon as he saw me, he turned on the floor lamp. These days he does not like bright light except at such times, because his eyes seem troubled by his illness.

I had put on my pearl earrings after the bath. I lay down with my back toward him, so that he could see the back of my ears. This was only a small action, but he noticed it at once. He came to my bed and held me from behind. I closed my eyes and let him kiss the back of my ears again and again.

I cannot say that I loved him in the old way. In truth, I had come to dislike him deeply. Yet I did not feel only disgust. When I knew that he was so fully lost in me, I felt a strange interest in giving him joy. I could separate love from desire. I

could dislike him and still lead him into pleasure.

That night I repeated, with my husband, many of the movements I had learned with Kimura during the day. I was curious to feel the difference between the two men. At first I watched my husband almost coldly, thinking how poor and clumsy he was compared with Kimura. But little by little, I too became excited. At last I held him with the same strength with which I had held Kimura.

Then, suddenly, his body changed. It became loose and heavy, and he fell down over me. I called, "Are you all right?" But he could not answer. He made only a strange, unclear sound. A warm wetness touched my cheek. His mouth was open, and saliva was running from it. I understood at once that something terrible had happened.

April 18 — Ikuko's Diary.

I immediately remembered what Dr. Kodama had once told me to do in such a case. I was pressed under my husband's body, but I pulled myself out slowly. His body had become strangely heavy. I tried not to shake his head. First, I took off his glasses, because they were in the way. His face without glasses looked terrible to me, loose and half dead.

I got down from the bed and carefully turned him onto his back. I placed pillows and cushions under his upper body so that his head was a little higher. He was wearing nothing, and I was wearing only my earrings. But rest was the most important thing, so I left him as he was and covered him gently with night clothes. I soon saw that the left side of his body could not move.

I looked at the clock. It was three minutes past one in the morning. Then I turned off the bright light and left only the small lamp near the bed. I telephoned Toshiko in Sekiden-cho and also telephoned Dr. Kodama. I told Toshiko to wake an ice seller on the way and bring ice. I thought I was calm, but my hand shook while I held the telephone.

About forty minutes later, Toshiko arrived with the ice. I was in the kitchen looking for ice bags and an ice pillow. She put the ice down and quickly looked

at my face. Then she began to break the ice as if nothing unusual had happened. I told her shortly what had happened to her father. She did not look surprised. She only nodded and kept working.

We went to the bedroom and put the ice near his head and body as Dr. Kodama had taught me. Neither of us said more than was necessary. We also avoided looking directly at each other. It was as if each of us knew there were things that must not be spoken. The room was quiet except for his rough breathing.

Dr. Kodama came at two. I left Toshiko beside the bed and met him outside the room. There I told him, in a low voice, the condition in which my husband had become ill. I again felt my face grow hot with shame. Dr. Kodama examined him very carefully. He looked at his eyes with a light, checked the movement of his feet, took his temperature, and measured his blood pressure.

The doctor thought that bleeding had happened somewhere in the right side of the brain. This explained why the left side of the body was weak. His temperature was normal, and his blood pressure was a little over one hundred ninety. Dr. Kodama said the pressure had perhaps fallen because of the bleeding. He stayed for more than an hour and watched the change in his condition.

He took some blood from his arm and gave him several injections. He said he would come again in the afternoon. He also said that Dr. Soma should see him once. I had already thought the same thing. When I asked whether we should inform relatives, he said we could wait a little. Before he left, I asked him to send a nurse as soon as possible.

At seven in the morning, the maid came. Toshiko then went back to Sekidencho, saying she would return later. After she left, I telephoned Kimura's room and told him the details. He said he wanted to come, even for a short time. I told him it was better not to visit yet, because my husband's mind was not fully clouded and the sight of Kimura might excite him.

Around nine, my husband began to snore. He often snores, but this sound was different and frightening. Until then, I had felt that some dim consciousness still remained in him. Now he seemed to have entered a deep sleep, almost a coma. I telephoned Kimura again and said that, in this condition, he could probably come

into the sickroom without danger.

A little after noon, Kimura came. He had left school between lessons. He sat by the bed for about thirty minutes. I sat near him, and we spoke only a little. My husband's snoring grew louder, like a low thunder. For a moment I wondered whether it was truly sleep. Kimura seemed to think the same thing, but neither of us said it aloud.

At one o'clock, Kimura left. Soon after that, the nurse came. Her name was Koike, and she was a young woman of about twenty-four or twenty-five. Toshiko also returned. At last I had a little free time and ate something, because I had eaten nothing since the night before. At two, Dr. Soma came with Dr. Kodama and examined my husband.

Dr. Soma's opinion was almost the same as Dr. Kodama's. My husband had fallen into a deep sleep, and he now had a fever. The doctors spoke in medical words that I did not fully understand. After they left, the shiatsu man came again. Toshiko met him at the door and said coldly that his treatment had helped bring about this result. Then she sent him away.

In the afternoon, Toshiko told me to lie down for a while. The bedroom was now the sickroom, and the living room was full of people coming and going. So I borrowed my husband's study upstairs and lay down on bedding spread on the floor. But I could not sleep. Instead, I wrote down the events from yesterday morning until now. Then I hid the diary behind the bookshelf and went downstairs as if I had just woken.

A little before five, my husband seemed to wake from his deep sleep. He opened his eyes faintly from time to time. Nurse Koike said it was good that he had not slept more than twenty-four hours. Still, the left side of his body was not free. Around half past five, he moved his mouth as if he wanted to speak. The words were unclear, but he seemed to want to pass water. With Dr. Kodama's instructions, Nurse Koike used a tube and helped him.

At seven, we gave him a little milk and fruit juice through a feeding cup. At half past ten, the maid went home because she could not stay overnight. Toshiko asked what she should do. I knew she meant that her staying might make some

things less easy. I told her she could stay or go, as she wished, because the sick man seemed calm for the moment. She said, "I see," and left for Sekiden-cho at eleven. My husband lay half asleep, but it did not seem to be deep sleep.

### Part 13 — The Sickroom and the Night Visits

April 19 — Ikuko's Diary.

At midnight, Nurse Koike and I sat silently in the sickroom. I kept the lamp shaded so that the light would not fall on my husband's face. I read newspapers and magazines in the shadow, only to pass the time. I told Nurse Koike to go upstairs and rest, but she would not go. Only when dawn began, around five, did she finally go to sleep.

When light came through the cracks of the shutters, my husband seemed unable to sleep well. At some point, he opened his eyes and turned his face toward me. I could not tell whether he was looking for me, or whether he could see me and was pretending not to. His mouth moved, and he tried to say something. Most of the words were unclear, but one part sounded like "Kimura."

Perhaps I imagined it. Perhaps he only made a meaningless sound. But it seemed to me that he said that name two or three times. After that, he closed his eyes again. At seven, the maid came, and Toshiko came a little later. At eight, Nurse Koike came down from upstairs.

At half past eight, we gave him breakfast. It was soft rice porridge, egg yolk, and apple juice. I fed him with a spoon. He seemed to prefer that I, not the nurse, should take care of him. Around ten, he wanted to pass water, but he could not. When Nurse Koike tried to use a tube, he clearly disliked it and made signs with his right hand.

We tried to understand what he wanted. At last, it seemed that he was saying, "If a tube must be used, you must do it. Toshiko and the nurse should go away." Of course, I could not do such a thing. Only the nurse could handle it safely. Toshiko and I explained this to him again and again, and he finally allowed Nurse

Koike to help him.

At noon, he ate again, and his appetite seemed quite good. At half past twelve, Kimura came. I told him that my husband had woken from the deep sleep, that his mind seemed to be returning little by little, and that he had perhaps spoken Kimura's name. I asked Kimura not to enter the sickroom that day. He listened quietly and left from the entrance.

At one o'clock, Dr. Kodama came. He said the course of the illness was good, though we still had to be careful. My husband's blood pressure had fallen, and his fever had gone down. The doctor examined his legs and gave several injections. In the afternoon, people from the university began to hear about the illness, and flowers and fruit arrived. Madame from Sekiden-cho also came and brought lilacs from her garden.

Toshiko put the lilacs in a vase and carried them into the sickroom. She said, "Papa, Madame cut these from her garden for you." I did not like that she said it so clearly. The flowers came from the garden of the house where so many things had happened. My husband may have understood this, or he may not. Still, I felt uneasy when I saw the pale flowers near his bed.

April 20 — Ikuko's Diary.

After one in the morning, Nurse Koike went upstairs, and I stayed alone beside the bed. My husband seemed to be half asleep, but after a while I felt that he was awake. I looked at him quietly. His eyes were open, and he was not looking at my face. He seemed to be looking beyond me, toward the lilacs.

The room was mostly dark, but the edge of the lamplight touched the flowers. They looked white and faint in the shadow. I suddenly thought that the flowers might be bringing Sekiden-cho back into his mind. Perhaps he was remembering the garden, the separate room, and the nights that had passed there. I may have been thinking too much, but I quickly moved the light away from the flowers.

In the morning, I removed the lilacs and put roses there instead. At one o'clock, Dr. Kodama came again. My husband's fever was lower, but his blood pressure

had risen. The doctor said he needed calm and sleep. He decided to use Luminal to quiet him and help him sleep.

In the evening, Toshiko came. Around ten, my husband began to snore. It did not sound like the terrible snoring of the first night. It sounded more like ordinary sleep, and the medicine seemed to be working. Toshiko looked at his sleeping face and said he seemed to be resting well. Soon after that, she left, and the maid left too.

I sent Nurse Koike upstairs. Near eleven, the telephone rang. It was Kimura. He asked about my husband's condition. I told him that the medicine was working and that my husband was sleeping deeply. Then he asked if he might come and see "the face." I did not know whose face he meant.

I told him in a very low voice to wait in the garden if he came. He must not ring the front bell. If I did not come out to the back door, he should understand that it was not possible and go home. About fifteen minutes later, I heard quiet steps in the garden. My husband was still snoring. I let Kimura in through the back and spoke with him in the maid's room for about thirty minutes.

April 21 — Ikuko's Diary.

At one o'clock, Dr. Kodama came. The blood pressure had fallen a little more, but it was still not safe. The fever had finally returned to normal. My husband could now pass water with a bottle, though with difficulty. His appetite was good, but we still gave him only soft liquid food.

At two, I left him with Nurse Koike and went upstairs. I wrote my diary and slept until five. When I came down, Toshiko was there. At half past five, before dinner, Nurse Koike gave him another Luminal injection. We told him it was medicine to lower his blood pressure, not medicine to make him sleep.

At six, when the dinner tray was brought to the table beside his bed, he tried to say something. I could not understand him at first. I brought a spoonful of porridge to his mouth, but he stopped my hand. Toshiko tried to feed him, and then Nurse Koike tried, but the problem was not the feeding. At last I understood

that he was saying “beefsteak.”

The word seemed strange, but I understood what it meant. He was remembering the night before he fell ill. Perhaps he was asking for the food itself, or perhaps he was asking for the world connected with that night. I shook my head slightly so that the others would not notice. I meant, “Do not think about such things now. You must wait.” He seemed to understand, and after that he ate the porridge quietly.

At eight, Toshiko left. At nine, the maid left. At ten, my husband began to snore deeply. I sent Nurse Koike upstairs. At eleven, I heard steps in the garden. I let him in through the back door and spoke with him in the maid’s room. At midnight, he left. When I returned to the sickroom, the snoring was still going on.

April 22 — Ikuko’s Diary.

There was no great change in the illness today. The blood pressure was a little higher than yesterday. The sleeping medicine seems to help him at night, but during the day his mind is not quiet. He often looks as if some unclear thought is moving in his head. He becomes irritated easily because his mouth and body do not obey him.

Dr. Kodama says he should sleep more than twelve hours a day. But I think his true deep sleep is only six or seven hours. At other times he only seems to be sleeping. From long experience, I know that when he is not snoring, his sleep is shallow. Sometimes I even wonder whether the snoring itself is real.

With Dr. Kodama’s permission, we will begin giving Luminal twice a day from tomorrow. One injection will be in the morning, and one in the evening. I do not know whether this is only for the patient’s health. It also gives me hours when the sickroom becomes quiet. Tonight, as usual, Toshiko left, the maid left, his snoring began at ten, and at eleven I heard steps in the garden.

April 23 — Ikuko’s Diary.

It has been one week since my husband fell ill. At nine in the morning, after breakfast, Nurse Koike took the tray to the kitchen. For a short time, my husband and I were alone. He moved his lips and said, more clearly than before, "Diary, diary." I asked, "Do you want to write your diary? But that is still impossible."

He shook his head and said, "No." I asked, "Then is it not about your diary?" He answered, "Your diary." I repeated, "My diary?" He nodded and asked what I was doing with it. I pretended not to understand and said, "I have never kept a diary. You know that, do you not?"

He gave a weak little smile. It was the first smile I had seen on his face since he became ill, but it was not an easy smile. It was like a riddle. His face seemed to say, "I understand." I did not know whether he had forgotten our silent rule, or whether he had decided that the rule no longer mattered.

That morning, when Nurse Koike gave him the new injection, he asked what it was. She answered that it was for his blood pressure. In the afternoon, he slept less than we had hoped. The medicine did not work as strongly in the day as it did at night. After dinner, he received the second injection. At exactly eleven, I heard the sound in the garden again.

April 24 — Ikuko's Diary.

Today was the second Sunday since he became ill. Two or three visitors came in the morning, but I did not let them come upstairs. Dr. Kodama did not visit today. There was no special change in my husband's condition. Around two, Toshiko came, which was unusual, because recently she usually came only in the evening.

She said, "I thought there might be many visitors today." Then she looked at my face and said, "Mama, have you not many things to buy? Why do you not go out and breathe the Sunday air for a little while?" I wondered whether this was her own idea or whether someone had asked her to say it. At once I imagined Kimura waiting for me somewhere. I told myself that this was impossible, but the thought returned again and again.

I could not go far that day, but there was something I had to do. I told Toshiko I would go to the market and return within an hour. I left after three and took a taxi to Nishiki. First I bought food, so that there would be proof of my shopping. Then I went to a paper shop and bought good large paper and thick cover paper.

I had the paper cut to the size of my diary. I hid the package under the vegetables in my shopping bag. I also telephoned Kimura from a shop and spoke to him for only a minute or two. He said he had stayed home all day, but his voice sounded as if he had half expected an invitation. I returned home a little after four and hid the paper near the entrance.

I had bought the paper because of what my husband said yesterday. If he asks openly to see my diary, I can show him the book that ends on April 16. I will say that after he became ill, I was too busy with nursing to write. But I must never let him know about the pages after April 17. Therefore I must divide the diary into two books.

April 25 — Ikuko's Diary.

At midnight, after sending him out, I locked the back door. For about an hour I sat in the sickroom and listened to my husband's snoring. When I was sure he was deeply asleep, I went into the living room and began my work. I divided the diary into two books. The first ended on April 16 and went into the drawer. The second, beginning after April 17, I carried upstairs and hid behind the bookshelf.

The work took about an hour. A little after two, I returned to the sickroom. My husband had slept the whole time. At one in the afternoon, Dr. Kodama came. There was no special change, though the blood pressure still moved around a dangerous level. He said he wished it would fall more. During the day, my husband still could not sleep deeply enough. At eleven that night, I again heard the sound in the garden.

Part 14 — The Last Sunday Before Death

April 28 — Ikuko's Diary.

There is almost nothing new to write. My husband's condition has not changed much. He sleeps at night after the medicine, but I cannot always believe that he is truly asleep. Sometimes his breathing is heavy and regular, and sometimes I think he is only hiding inside that sound.

The house now moves according to a fixed order. Toshiko comes, stays for a while, and leaves. The maid also leaves at her usual time. I send Nurse Koike upstairs when the sick man seems quiet enough. At eleven, I hear a sound in the garden.

April 29 — Ikuko's Diary.

Again there is no large change. The days have become very alike. I feed him, watch his face, listen to his unclear words, and try to understand what his eyes are asking. Sometimes I think he is asking for me, sometimes for his diary, and sometimes for something he can no longer name.

At night, the same order repeats itself. Toshiko leaves, the maid leaves, and Nurse Koike goes upstairs. The room grows dark and quiet. I sit beside the bed and listen. At eleven, I hear the sound in the garden again.

April 30 — Ikuko's Diary.

Dr. Kodama came at one in the afternoon. He said there was no special change, but he did not look fully satisfied. My husband's blood pressure still moves around a high level, often between one hundred eighty and one hundred ninety. The doctor said he wished it would go lower.

He also said that early next week Dr. Soma should examine him once more. I agreed, but I do not know whether that will change anything. Doctors can measure the body, but they cannot see the hidden fire that still moves inside him. My husband's illness is in the brain and blood, but it is also in the heart, in memory,

and in jealousy.

During the day, he still does not sleep enough. The medicine works better at night. In the afternoon, his eyes often open, and he looks around with a troubled face. He cannot say what he wants, and this makes him angry. I feel pity for him, but I also feel afraid of what he may still be able to understand.

At night, the usual order came again. Toshiko left, the maid left, and Nurse Koike went upstairs. My husband's breathing became heavy. I sat still and waited. At eleven, I heard the sound in the garden.

May 1 — Ikuko's Diary.

Today was the third Sunday since my husband became ill. A little after two in the afternoon, Toshiko came, just as she had done on the Sunday before. I had almost expected it. She entered quietly and looked at her father, as if she were checking his sleep. Then she came close to me and spoke in a low voice.

She said, "Why do you not go out for a little while? You can buy something and breathe some outside air." I hesitated and said, "I wonder if I should." Toshiko answered, "Papa is all right. He has just fallen asleep. Go, Mama. Today the bath is ready at Sekiden-cho. You can stop there and take a bath too." When she said that, I felt there was some reason behind her words.

I said I would go out for only one or two hours. Around three, I took a shopping bag and left the house. I went straight to Sekiden-cho. Madame was away. Kimura was alone in the separate room. He told me that Toshiko had telephoned him earlier. She had said that Madame was going to Wakayama and would not return until late at night, and that she herself had to go to the sick man's house. She had asked him to come and watch the place for two or three hours.

The bath was not ready. So the bath had been only an excuse. Instead of the bath, Kimura was there. We had not spoken quietly together for almost half a month, and for a short time we were able to talk. But I could not feel calm. My mind kept moving back to the sickroom. I was afraid that my husband might wake while I was away.

I left Kimura at Sekiden-cho at five. Because I had little time, I quickly bought food at a nearby market and went home. Toshiko greeted me and said, "You are back early." I asked, "How is Papa?" She answered, "He is sleeping very well today. He has slept for more than three hours." I could indeed hear his terrible snoring from the sickroom.

Nurse Koike also came in. Her face was bright and fresh after a bath. She said, "Miss Toshiko kindly let me go to the public bath." At that moment, I felt a shock inside me. So that was it. Toshiko had sent me out, and she had also sent Nurse Koike out. For some time she had been alone with the sick man.

Of course, there was nothing strange in Nurse Koike's going to the public bath. Since my husband became ill, we have hardly used the bath at home. Nurse Koike, the maid, and I usually go to the public bath during the day, every second or third day. It may simply have been her turn. But I could not stop thinking that Toshiko had planned the time carefully.

Usually I would have noticed such a possibility. I know Nurse Koike takes a long time in the bath. She often needs almost an hour. But when Toshiko said the bath at Sekiden-cho was ready, my mind had jumped at once toward Kimura. I had lost my usual caution. Thinking that I had made a mistake, I went upstairs, pretending that I was going to take my usual nap.

As soon as I reached the study, I took out the second diary from behind the bookshelf. I looked at it carefully. I should have sealed it with clear tape, but I had not thought it necessary. If someone had read it, there was no sure sign. I could not find proof. For a moment, I told myself that this was only my fear.

How could they know that I had divided the diary into two books? How could they know that the later part was hidden upstairs? I had never told Toshiko. I had never told Kimura. I decided that I was imagining too much. I put the diary back and went downstairs.

But after Toshiko left for Sekiden-cho at eight, the fear returned. I went to the kitchen and asked the maid whether anyone had gone upstairs while I was out. To my surprise, she said, "Yes. Miss Toshiko went upstairs." According to the maid, about fifteen minutes after I had left, Nurse Koike went to the public bath. Soon

after that, Toshiko went upstairs for two or three minutes and came back down.

The maid also said something more troubling. She said Toshiko seemed to speak with my husband for a while. I asked, "But was he not snoring?" The maid answered that the snoring had suddenly stopped. Later, Toshiko went upstairs once more and came down again quickly. After that, Nurse Koike returned from the bath. When I came home, the snoring had begun again.

Now I must think through Toshiko's actions. First, she made an excuse and sent me out. Next, she sent Nurse Koike to the bath. Then either my husband woke by himself and told her something, or she asked him directly. Somehow she learned that my diary had been in the living-room drawer. She found the first book and brought it to him.

Then my husband must have told her that this book ended on April 16. He must have said that there was surely another book, the one written after April 17. He wanted that book. Toshiko then searched upstairs and found it behind the bookshelf. She may have shown it to him, or she may even have read it aloud. Then she put it back in the same place before Nurse Koike returned.

At first this seemed too much to happen in only two or three hours. But then I remembered the Sunday before, April 24. On that day too, Toshiko had urged me to go out in the afternoon. Perhaps she had already begun the search then. On April 23, my husband had said "diary" to me and had made it clear that he wanted to read mine. If I refused him, he may have turned to Toshiko.

I do not know how much Toshiko knew before this. She may have learned about my diary from Kimura. She may also have guessed it by herself. In any case, if my husband pointed toward the living room and said a few unclear words, she would understand quickly. She is my daughter, but in some ways she is more secretive and sharper than I am.

My immediate problem is what to do from now on. I do not want to stop this diary simply because someone has found it. But I also do not want it to be read too easily. From today, I will stop writing upstairs during the afternoon rest. Instead, I will write late at night, after the patient and Nurse Koike are asleep. Then I will hide the book in another place, somewhere they will not think of.

## Part 15 — After the Death

June 9 — Ikuko's Diary.

For a long time, I have not written in this diary. My last entry was for May 1. That was the day before my husband had his second attack and fell for the last time. Since then, thirty-eight days have passed. I stopped writing partly because many things had to be done after his sudden death. But there was another reason too. After he died, I lost the will to continue.

Even now, that feeling has not completely changed. I do not know whether I will keep a diary again after this. Perhaps this will be the last time. But since January 1, I had written almost every day for one hundred twenty-one days. To leave that diary broken off so suddenly seems wrong. I feel I must give it some kind of ending.

There is another reason. My husband and I were fighting a hidden battle through our diaries. If I read his diary from this year and place it beside mine, the shape of that battle becomes clear. Still, there are many things I did not write while he was alive. I could not write them then, because he might read them. Now I want to add some of those things and close the past.

My husband's death was sudden. I cannot say the exact time, but I think he died around three in the morning on May 2. Nurse Koike was sleeping upstairs. Toshiko had gone back to Sekiden-cho. In the sickroom, I was the only person with him. But even I was not beside his bed at the final moment.

Around two in the morning, I saw that he was snoring quietly, as he usually did after the medicine. I thought he was sleeping safely. I left the sickroom in secret and went into the living room. I had my diary hidden inside my clothes. I took it out and began to write about the events from the evening of April 30 through May 1.

Until April 30, after my husband became ill, I had written every day during my afternoon rest upstairs. I wrote what had happened from the previous

afternoon to that afternoon. But on Sunday, May 1, I learned that my second diary had been read by my husband and Toshiko. Because of that, I stopped writing during the day. I decided that from then on I would write late at night, after both the patient and Nurse Koike were asleep.

I had not yet found a safe hiding place. For a while, I thought of hiding the diary above the ceiling boards in the living-room closet. I did not know if this was a good plan, but I needed some place no one would expect. That night, after Toshiko and the maid had left, I went upstairs just before Nurse Koike went to sleep. I took the diary from behind the bookshelf, put it inside my clothes, and came down again.

In the living room, I began to write. The sickroom was only one wall away, but I was too interested in writing to listen carefully. Then, after some time, I noticed something strange. The snoring that I had heard a little earlier had stopped. I put down my brush and listened. No sound came from the next room.

I left the diary open on the table and stood up. When I entered the sickroom, he was lying quietly on his back. His face was turned straight toward the ceiling. Since the first attack, he had not worn his glasses. I had often had to see that bare face, the face that had frightened me since our first night as husband and wife.

The lamp in the sickroom was covered, so the light did not fall directly on him. Because of that, I could not see his face clearly at first. I sat down and looked at him for a moment. Something felt too quiet. I stood again, lifted the cloth from the lamp, and let the light fall on his face.

His eyes were half open. They were fixed toward the ceiling near the foot of the bed. They did not move. At once I thought, "He is dead." I went close and touched his hand. It was cold. The clock near the bed showed seven minutes past three. So I can only say that he died sometime between a little after two and three seven.

It seems that he died while sleeping, almost without pain. I stood there for several minutes and looked at his face without glasses. I was afraid, but I could not turn away. The memory of our honeymoon night suddenly came back to me with painful clearness. Then I quickly covered the lamp again and put the room

back into shadow.

The next day, both Dr. Soma and Dr. Kodama said they had not expected the second attack to come so soon. They said that, in former times, a person who had one brain attack often had another after two or three years, or sometimes after seven or eight years. But now medicine had improved, and many patients lived for years after one attack. They had hoped my husband might slowly recover and live for several more years.

I do not know whether the doctors truly believed that. No doctor can know the length of a person's life. Still, when I heard them, I did not feel great surprise. To be honest, I felt that the thing I had expected had happened at almost the time I expected it. Such guesses are often wrong, of course. But in the case of my husband and me, my guess was right.

I think Toshiko may have felt the same. She may also have thought that the end was not far away. Now I want to read my husband's diary and my own diary once more, side by side. I want to follow the road by which we came to this parting. I want to see how we loved each other, drowned in each other, deceived each other, and finally destroyed each other.

## Part 16 — Reading Both Diaries

### June 9 — Ikuko's Diary.

I have now read my husband's diary for this year and placed it beside my own. If I wanted to understand our marriage from the beginning, perhaps I should read all his old diaries too. He had kept diaries for many years before he married me. In a cupboard high in his study, I know there are many old notebooks covered with dust. But I do not have the strength or patience to read all of them.

Also, I do not think it is necessary. Until last year, he says, he usually avoided writing directly about our private life as husband and wife. It was only from January 1 of this year that he began to write about it openly. I also began my own diary at almost the same time. So if I compare his diary and mine from this year,

I can see the main road we walked together.

In his diary of January 1, he wrote that I was secretive by nature. He wrote that I often knew things but pretended not to know them. He also wrote that I did not easily say what was in my heart. I cannot deny this. In this matter, he understood me quite well.

I must also admit that my husband was, in general, more honest than I was. His writing contains fewer lies than mine. But that does not mean that everything he wrote was true. For example, at first he wrote as if he feared that I might read his diary. Then he almost confessed that he had wanted me to read it from the beginning.

I had understood this long before. On the morning of January 4, when he left the key near the flowers in his study, I knew what it meant. He wanted me to read the diary. He could not say so openly, so he used the key as a sign. But he did not need to make such a little trick. I had already been reading his diaries for many years.

In my diary of January 4, I wrote that I had never read his diary. I wrote that I did not want to enter the deepest part of his mind. I wrote that I did not like to search inside another person's heart. That was a lie. I do not like other people to know my heart, but I do like to look into another person's heart.

I began reading his diary soon after our marriage. I knew where he kept the notebook, and I knew where he hid the key. Sometimes I only opened the book and turned a few pages. In those days, much of his diary was about study and university matters, and it did not interest me deeply. Still, I enjoyed the fact that I was reading something that belonged to him.

This year everything changed. On January 2, when he went out for a walk, I opened the diary and saw at once that his way of writing had changed. He was now writing about me, about our bed, about his desire, and about his fears. Of course, I became strongly interested. From that day on, I followed his diary more carefully than before.

Why did I hide the fact that I was reading it? It was not only because I enjoy knowing things and pretending not to know them. I also understood what he

wanted. He wanted me to read the diary, but he wanted me to act as if I had not read it. He wanted a secret reader, not an open reader. I gave him exactly that.

When he called me his dear wife and wrote that he loved me, I believe he was telling the truth. I do not doubt his love. But I want him, even now, to know that I too loved him at first. It is true that I felt fear and disgust when I first saw his face without glasses. It is true that I often felt that we were badly matched. Still, none of this means that I did not love him.

I was brought up in an old family and taught old ideas. My parents gave me to him in marriage, and I believed that a wife must love her husband. Whether I liked it or not, he was the man I had to love. Because I had such old ideas, I even felt proud of trying to love him. When I felt dislike, I blamed myself for it and tried harder to love him.

I also had a strong body and strong desire. Because of that, I had no other way to live except through my husband. If I had a complaint, it was that he could not fully answer my desire. But even then, I felt more shame about myself than anger toward him. I did not stop loving him because he became weaker. In fact, his weakness often made my feeling for him stronger.

Then, at the beginning of this year, he opened a new door for me. He wrote things that he had never told me directly. He said he wanted to break my silence and my old idea of female modesty. Perhaps that was true. But I think there was another reason too. Perhaps he himself did not understand it fully.

Through his diary, I first learned how he saw me. He wrote that I had a special power as a woman. He wrote that if other men knew it, they might gather around me. He also wrote that this thought made him jealous. At first, I was shocked. But I soon understood the deeper meaning. By writing this, he was almost asking me to make him jealous.

This became clearer in his later entries. He wrote that jealousy was painful but also useful to him. He wrote that he enjoyed it in secret. He even wrote that Kimura could become a medicine for our marriage. When I read such words, I began to understand what he wanted from me. He wanted me to go near danger, but not too clearly and not too openly.

Already on January 1, I had begun to guess this. His fear of another man was not only fear. It was also a wish. He wanted to imagine another man near me, because that image gave him power. He wanted me to stay his wife, but he also wanted me to become the center of another man's desire. This was the strange path he opened.

I did not step onto that path at once. At first, I only watched it from far away. I was still the old wife, careful, ashamed, and proud of my own faithfulness. But once he had shown me the road, I could not forget it. The diary had become more than a record. It had become a hand that pushed me forward while pretending only to write.

## Part 17 — Ikuko's Self-Examination

June 10 — Ikuko's Diary.

On January 8, I wrote that I half hated my husband strongly and half loved him strongly. I also wrote that he and I did not truly suit each other. Yet in the same entry, I wrote that I could not love another man. I said that the old idea of a wife's faithfulness was fixed deep inside me, and that I could not go against it.

When I read those words now, I see how far I was still from my later self. I had begun to speak badly of my husband, and that alone was already a great change for me. For more than twenty years, I had forced myself to hide every complaint. I had been taught by my parents that a wife must serve her husband and keep her heart under control. So even when I disliked him, I tried to think that the fault was in me.

But by January, my husband had opened a way for me to speak differently. He had taught me, through his diary, that making him jealous might also please him. I began to think that if I made him suffer in that way, I was not being a bad wife. I could tell myself that I was still serving him. This thought was dangerous, but at the time it seemed almost like a duty.

Even then, I was not yet ready to say that I loved Kimura. Perhaps, deep inside,

I had already begun to feel drawn toward him. But I did not know it clearly. I only thought that, for my husband's sake, I should let Kimura come a little nearer to my thoughts. I believed that I was doing this unwillingly, because my husband himself wanted it.

Then I read my husband's entry of January 13. There he wrote that he wanted me to make him jealous almost to the point of madness. He wrote that I might go very near danger. He even wrote that the nearer I went, the better. When I read those words, something in my mind turned sharply.

Before that, when he wrote on January 7 that I might already love Kimura, I felt only disgust. I thought, "How ugly. How can he push me toward such a thing?" But after the words of January 13, my feeling changed. I began to think about Kimura with a new interest. I do not know whether that interest had already existed before my husband pushed me, or whether his words created it.

For some time after that, I still lied to myself. I said in my heart, "I am doing this only for my husband." I said, "I am only trying to help him, because this is what he wants." I told myself that a small interest in Kimura was only a tool, not a real feeling. But the more I repeated this, the less I believed it.

The night of January 28 was the first time that the border became unclear. I drank too much and lost myself. I was not fully asleep, but I was not fully awake either. In that half-dream, I felt Kimura near me. At the same time, somewhere deep inside, I knew that the man beside me might really be my husband.

My husband wondered in his diary whether I had truly slept or only pretended to sleep. The truth is not so simple. I was not only pretending. But I was not fully without knowledge either. I moved inside a fog, and in that fog I allowed thoughts that I would never have allowed in clear daylight.

When I said Kimura's name, it was not a simple sleeping word. It was also not a fully planned act. I heard myself say it, as if another woman inside me had spoken. I felt shame at once. But I also felt, in a hidden part of my heart, that it was good my husband had heard it.

That first time, the word came from the middle place between dream and will. But the second time was different. On the night of January 30, I used the half-

sleep on purpose. I let myself look as if I were dreaming, and I said Kimura's name so that my husband could hear. I was still not completely clear in my head, but I knew enough to use that unclear state.

My husband wrote that perhaps I was making a fool of him. Perhaps he was right. In that word, "Kimura," there were two wishes. One was the wish to be with Kimura. The other was the wish that my husband himself would give Kimura to me, or at least open the way. I could not say such things while awake, so I let the word come out as if it were a dream.

This is shameful to write now, but it is better to be clear. I was still protecting my old idea of faithfulness on the outside. I still told myself that I could not betray my husband. Yet I had already begun to use his desire, his jealousy, and his illness of the heart for my own desire. I was walking toward Kimura while telling myself that I was walking for my husband.

My husband made this road, but I chose to walk on it. That is the point I must not hide from myself. It is too easy to say that he tempted me and that I only obeyed. It is also too easy to say that I alone destroyed him. The truth is darker and more mixed. He pushed me forward, and I let myself be pushed because I wanted to go.

When I look back now, I see that January was already the beginning of my fall. But at that time, I did not feel I was falling. I felt I was answering my husband's secret wish. I felt I was finding a strange way to remain a wife. That was the most dangerous lie, because it allowed me to move toward Kimura while still calling myself faithful.

## Part 18 — Kimura, Toshiko, and Controlled Jealousy

June 10 — Ikuko's Diary.

On February 14, Kimura told my husband about the Polaroid camera. My husband wrote that he did not understand how Kimura knew such a camera would please him. I also did not understand it at the time. I did not know that my husband

wanted to take pictures of me. Even if I had guessed it, I had no chance then to speak secretly with Kimura about such a thing.

At that time, I was often drunk at night and was carried by Kimura's arms. But that was almost all. I did not talk with him freely. I had no real chance to tell him the secrets of my married life. So if someone gave Kimura the idea, it was probably not I. I now think the person was Toshiko.

Toshiko had already asked, on February 9, to live away from home. She said she wanted a quiet place to study. But I think there was another reason. She was tired of the bright lights in our bedroom late at night. She may even have watched the room secretly. If she did, she must have seen more than I myself clearly knew.

The stove made a loud sound on those nights, so it would not have been hard for her to move quietly near the room. She may have seen my husband move me under the strong light. She may have seen how much pleasure he took in looking at me. If she saw all this, she may also have told Kimura. Later events make this seem very likely to me.

Then I must ask another question. Why did Kimura tell my husband about the camera? One reason may be that he wanted to please my husband and gain his trust. But that cannot have been the only reason. Kimura may have guessed that if my husband began taking pictures, he himself might later see them. Perhaps he even expected that my husband would not be satisfied with the Polaroid camera and would need ordinary film developed.

This is almost what happened. My husband soon used a better camera, and Kimura became the person who developed the pictures. I do not know if Kimura saw every detail of this future from the beginning. But I think he had some clear idea of the direction. His sense was always sharp. He could see where people's desires might lead before they saw it themselves.

On February 19, I wrote that I could not understand Toshiko's mind. That was not fully true. Even then, I understood part of it. I had already guessed that she had probably told Kimura about the private things she saw in our house. I also knew that she secretly loved Kimura. Because of that, she had begun to feel hidden anger toward me.

Toshiko thought her father was forcing me too far. She believed that my body was weak and that I could not bear so much strain. In that way, she worried about my health and hated her father. But when she saw that her father was pushing Kimura and me nearer to each other, and that Kimura and I did not truly resist, she began to hate me too. She could not forgive either of us.

I sensed this quite early. Toshiko is even more secretive than I am. She knew that she was more than twenty years younger than I was, but she also knew that, in beauty and charm, she did not feel sure of winning against me. She knew that Kimura's feeling was turned more toward the mother than toward the daughter. Because of that, she first helped bring us together, while waiting for a chance to make her own plan.

I still do not know how much Toshiko and Kimura planned together from the beginning. For example, when Toshiko moved to Sekiden-cho, did she choose that place only because she wanted to escape the house? Or did she also choose it because Kimura's room was near? Was that Kimura's idea, or did Toshiko think of it by herself? Kimura later said that Toshiko prepared the table and he only sat down to eat. But I do not fully trust him about this.

Just as Toshiko was jealous of me, I was also jealous of Toshiko. I hid that feeling from everyone, and I did not write about it in my diary. Partly this was because I am secretive by nature. But there was another reason. I believed that I was still better than my daughter in the power that mattered to Kimura, and I did not want to wound my own pride by admitting fear.

There was one more reason I hid my jealousy. I was afraid my husband might learn that I had any reason to be jealous of Toshiko. If he thought Kimura also loved Toshiko, his jealousy would become less pure and less strong. My husband himself had sometimes wondered whether Kimura might really want the daughter and only use the mother to reach her. I did not want him to keep that doubt.

I wanted my husband to believe one thing only: Kimura loved me alone. I wanted him to believe that Kimura would give up anything for me. If my husband believed that, then his jealousy of Kimura would be stronger and simpler. It would become a clean fire in him. That was what he needed, and it was also what I had

begun to need.

This may sound cruel, but I must write it honestly. I worked to control my husband's jealousy. I did not want it to become weak by spreading in many directions. I wanted it to be fixed on Kimura and me. If Toshiko entered that picture too clearly, the force would change. The game would no longer be the same.

I do not know whether Toshiko understood this. Perhaps she did. Perhaps she helped me for a while because she believed that helping me would later help herself. Perhaps she wanted to make me go far enough that I could not return, and then use that fact in her own way. She is my daughter, but I cannot say I know her heart. In this matter, she may have been more dangerous than either my husband or me.

## Part 19 — The Truth About the Diaries

June 11 — Ikuko's Diary.

In his entry of February 27, my husband wrote, "My guess was right. My wife is keeping a diary." He also wrote that he had begun to suspect it only a few days before. I do not believe that. I think he had known it clearly for a long time, and I think he had already read many parts of it. He may have written as if he had only just discovered it, because he wanted to keep our secret game alive.

I also lied in my own diary. I wrote that I would never make the foolish mistake of letting him know that I kept a diary. I wrote that I began it only because I wanted to speak to myself. Those words were not true. I did want to speak to myself, but I also wanted my husband to read what I wrote.

Why, then, did I use quiet paper? Why did I hide the notebook and seal it with clear tape? I can give no high reason. I did it because I liked secrets. I liked making a thing difficult, even when I wanted it to be found. My husband laughed at this secret side of me, but he was the same kind of person.

Both of us knew that the other person might read the diary. Still, we built many

small walls on the road. We hid keys, sealed covers, changed hiding places, and pretended not to know. We wanted the other person to reach the secret, but we also wanted the way to be slow and unclear. We wanted to wonder, “Has the other one reached the center, or not yet?”

That was our strange taste. The tape and the hiding places were not only for myself. They also answered my husband’s taste. If I had left the diary open on the table, he would not have enjoyed it. If he had left his diary open for me, I would not have trusted it. We needed locks, keys, traces, and lies in order to believe the game.

On April 10, I wrote for the first time that my husband’s health was not normal. I wrote that I had noticed his strange condition for one or two months. That much was true. In fact, I may have known that something was wrong with him even before he knew it himself. I saw his face, his eyes, his walking, and his sudden forgetting, and I understood that danger was near.

But at first I pretended not to notice. One reason was that I did not want to make him more nervous. If I spoke too directly, his fear might become stronger. But there was a deeper reason. I was more afraid that fear would make him careful and quiet. I was afraid that he would stop the very acts that still joined him to me.

I did worry about his life. I cannot say I felt nothing for him. But at that time, my own hunger was more immediate to me than his danger. I wanted him to forget the fear of death. I wanted to keep using Kimura as the strong medicine that excited his jealousy. I wanted to keep the fire burning, even while I knew the fire might burn him up.

In March, I often wrote that I had still kept the final line with Kimura. I wrote this to make my husband believe in my faithfulness. But the truth is different. The last wall between Kimura and me was removed on March 25. The serious conversation between Kimura and me in my diary of March 26 was made for my husband’s eyes. It was not the simple truth.

Around April 4, 5, and 6, another change happened inside me. Until then, I had still tried to deceive myself. I told myself that I was doing wrong only because my husband silently asked it of me. I told myself that, in a strange way, I was still

being a good wife. I made my own fall look like service to my husband.

But around that time I threw away that mask. I clearly admitted to myself that my love was with Kimura, not with my husband. After that, my diary became more dangerous. It no longer only followed my husband's wishes. It began to guide him toward the place I wanted him to go.

On April 10, I wrote that my own body was also in danger. I wrote that I had seen blood and that an old lung illness might have returned. This was not true. Long ago, when Toshiko was about ten, I did have such an illness and did cough blood. But it healed, and it had not returned.

The blood, the tiredness, the pain in the chest, and the fear that I might become worse were all inventions. I wrote them for a clear reason. I wanted my husband to think, "She too is risking her life." I wanted him to feel that if I was going toward danger, he should not step back from danger either.

After that day, my diary was written mainly for that purpose. If necessary, I was even ready to act as if I had coughed blood. I wanted to excite him without rest. I wanted his jealousy, fear, and desire to rise again and again. Even after his first attack, I did not stop. I still used small tricks to keep his jealousy alive.

Kimura had long said, in his indirect way, that my husband's body might not last long. He did not speak like a doctor, but his sense was sharp. I think I trusted Kimura's feeling more than the doctors' words. Perhaps Toshiko trusted it too. We all knew, or half knew, that my husband's end was coming nearer.

So I must ask myself plainly what I did. Did I only follow the path my husband had opened? Or did I push him forward after I knew where that path would end? I cannot excuse myself completely. I used the diaries, the secrets, Kimura, Toshiko, and even my husband's illness. I did not simply fall. I also chose.

## Part 20 — The Unsettled Ending

June 11 — Ikuko's Diary.

Still, I cannot deny one thing. A dark and hungry desire lived in my body from

the beginning. But how did a wish for my husband's death enter my heart? When did it enter? Through what small opening did it come in?

Was it because my husband bent my mind little by little? He had a strange, twisted, and evil side. He did not push me all at once. He pushed me slowly, day after day, through love, jealousy, shame, and secret writing. Perhaps even a simple heart would become bent if it were pulled in that way for long enough.

Or was the cause already inside me? Perhaps I only looked like an old-fashioned and faithful woman because of my family and my upbringing. Perhaps my parents' lessons, my Kyoto house, and the old rules only covered something more dangerous. Perhaps my true heart was frightening from the beginning. I cannot answer this yet.

At the same time, I sometimes feel that, in the end, I was still faithful to my dead husband. This may sound strange, but it may be true. I gave him the kind of happiness he himself wanted. He wanted jealousy, danger, secrecy, and the fear of losing me. I gave him all these things until the end.

If that is so, perhaps he lived the life he chose. Perhaps he did not die only because I led him there. Perhaps he went forward with open eyes, even after he knew the danger. He wanted that strange happiness more than safety. In that sense, I may have served him as a wife until the last night.

But I cannot let myself escape too easily. I knew his body was weak. I knew his blood pressure was dangerous. I knew that excitement might kill him. Still, I did not stop. I used his weakness, and I used the diary, because I wanted my own happiness too.

There are also many questions about Toshiko and Kimura. I still do not know how much they planned together. I once wrote that Toshiko found the Osaka house because Kimura asked if she knew such a place. She said she asked one of her modern friends and found it that way. But is that the whole truth?

Perhaps Toshiko had used that same house before. Perhaps she was still using it with someone. I do not know. She is my daughter, but I cannot see to the bottom of her heart. She may have helped me because she loved me. She may also have helped me because she wanted to move the story toward her own future.

Kimura's plan is now this. At a suitable time, he will formally marry Toshiko. Then he, Toshiko, and I will live together in this house. To the world, Toshiko will be his wife. In truth, she will accept that form in order to protect her mother.

I do not know whether Toshiko truly agrees to this from love, from sacrifice, from pride, or from some colder plan of her own. I also do not know whether Kimura loves me alone, or whether he has another design that I cannot yet see. Everything is still covered by mist. My husband is dead, but the key has not opened the whole secret.

I will stop here. I have written enough to close this diary, though nothing is truly closed. My husband's diary and my diary have answered each other for a short time, and now his voice is silent. Mine must also become silent. What remains is not written on paper, but hidden in the lives of the three people who are still here.