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As I was waking up, it came to me why my boss had seemed annoyed when I asked him for two days off: today is Saturday. I'd sort of forgotten, but as I was getting up, it came to me. And, naturally, my boss thought about the fact that I'd be getting four days' vacation that way, including Sunday, and he couldn't have been happy about that. But, in the first place, it isn't my fault if they buried Maman yesterday instead of today, and second, I would have had Saturday and Sunday off anyway. Obviously, that still doesn't keep me from understanding my boss's point of view.

I had a hard time getting up, because I was tired from the day before. While I was shaving, I wondered what I was going to do and I decided to go for a swim. I caught the streetcar to go to the public beach down at the harbor. Once there, I dove into the channel. There were lots of young people. In the water I ran into Marie Cardona, a former typist in our office whom I'd had a thing for at the time. She did too, I think. But she'd left soon afterwards and we didn't have the time. I helped her onto a float and as I did, I brushed against her breasts.

I was still in the water when she was already lying flat on her stomach on the float. She turned toward me. Her hair was in her eyes and she was laughing. I hoisted myself up next to her. It was nice, and, sort of joking around, I let my head fall back and rest on her stomach. She didn't say anything so I left it there. I had the whole sky in my eyes and it was blue and gold. On the back of my neck I could feel Marie's heart beating softly. We lay on the float for a long time, half asleep. When the sun got too hot, she dove off and I followed. I caught up with her, put my arm around her waist, and we swam together. She laughed the whole time. On the dock, while we were drying ourselves off, she said, "I'm darker than you." I asked her if she wanted to go to the movies that evening. She laughed again and told me there was a Fernandel movie she'd like to see. Once we were dressed, she seemed very surprised to see I was wearing a black tie and she asked me if I was in mourning. I told her Maman had died. She wanted to know how long ago, so I said, "Yesterday." She gave a little start but didn't say anything. I felt like telling her it wasn't my fault, but I stopped myself because I remembered that I'd already said that to my boss. It didn't mean anything. Besides, you always feel a little guilty.

By that evening Marie had forgotten all about it. The movie was funny in parts, but otherwise it was just too stupid. She had her leg pressed against mine. I was fondling her breasts. Toward the end of the show, I gave her a kiss, but not a good one. She came back to my place.

When I woke up, Marie had gone. She'd explained to me that she had to go to her aunt's. I remembered that it was Sunday, and that bothered me: I don't like Sundays. So I rolled over, tried to find the salty smell Marie's hair had left on the pillow, and slept until ten. Then I smoked a few cigarettes, still in bed, till noon. I didn't feel like having lunch at Céleste's like I usually did because they'd be sure to ask questions and I don't like that. I fixed myself some eggs and ate them out of the pan, without bread because I didn't have any left and I didn't feel like going downstairs to buy some.

After lunch I was a little bored and I wandered around the apartment. It was just the right size when Maman was here. Now it's too big for me, and I've had to move the dining room table into my bedroom. I live in just one room now, with some saggy straw chairs, a wardrobe whose mirror has gone yellow, a dressing table, and a brass bed. I've let the rest go. A little later, just for something to do, I picked up an old newspaper and read it. I cut out an advertisement for Kruschen Salts and stuck it in an old notebook where I put things from the papers that interest me. I also washed my hands, and then I went out onto the balcony.

My room looks out over the main street in the neighborhood. It was a beautiful afternoon. Yet the pavement was wet and slippery, and what few people there were were in a hurry. First, it was families out for a walk: two little boys in sailor suits, with trousers below the knees, looking a little cramped in their stiff clothes, and a little

girl with a big pink bow and black patent-leather shoes. Behind them, an enormous mother, in a brown silk dress, and the father, a rather frail little man I know by sight. He had on a straw hat and a bow tie and was carrying a walking stick. Seeing him with his wife, I understood why people in the neighborhood said he was distinguished. A little later the local boys went by, hair greased back, red ties, tight-fitting jackets, with embroidered pocket handkerchiefs and square-toed shoes. I thought they must be heading to the movies in town. That was why they were leaving so early and hurrying toward the streetcar, laughing loudly.

After them, the street slowly emptied out. The matinees had all started, I guess. The only ones left were the shopkeepers and the cats. The sky was clear but dull above the fig trees lining the street. On the sidewalk across the way the tobacconist brought out a chair, set it in front of his door, and straddled it, resting his arms on the back. The streetcars, packed a few minutes before, were almost empty. In the little café Chez Pierrot, next door to the tobacconist's, the waiter was sweeping up the sawdust in the deserted restaurant inside. It was Sunday all right.

I turned my chair around and set it down like the tobacconist's because I found that it was more comfortable that way. I smoked a couple of cigarettes, went inside to get a piece of chocolate, and went back to the window to eat it. Soon after that, the sky grew dark and I thought we were in for a summer storm. Gradually, though, it

cleared up again. But the passing clouds had left a hint of rain hanging over the street, which made it look darker. I sat there for a long time and watched the sky.

At five o'clock some streetcars pulled up, clanging away. They were bringing back gangs of fans from the local soccer stadium. They were crowded onto the running boards and hanging from the handrails. The streetcars that followed brought back the players, whom I recognized by their little athletic bags. They were shouting and singing at the tops of their lungs that their team would never die. Several of them waved to me. One of them even yelled up to me, "We beat 'em!" And I nodded, as if to say "Yes." From then on there was a steady stream of cars.

The sky changed again. Above the rooftops the sky had taken on a reddish glow, and with evening coming on the streets came to life. People were straggling back from their walks. I recognized the distinguished little man among the others. Children were either crying or lagging behind. Almost all at once moviegoers spilled out of the neighborhood theaters into the street. The young men among them were gesturing more excitedly than usual and I thought they must have seen an adventure film. The ones who had gone to the movies in town came back a little later. They looked more serious. They were still laughing, but only now and then, and they seemed tired and dreamy. But they hung around anyway, walking up and down the sidewalk across the street. The local girls, bareheaded, were walking arm in

arm. The young men had made sure they would have to bump right into them and then they would make cracks. The girls giggled and turned their heads away. Several of the girls, whom I knew, waved to me.

Then the street lamps came on all of a sudden and made the first stars appearing in the night sky grow dim. I felt my eyes getting tired from watching the street filled with so many people and lights. The street lamps were making the pavement glisten, and the light from the streetcars would glint off someone's shiny hair, or off a smile or a silver bracelet. Soon afterwards, with the streetcars running less often and the sky already blue above the trees and the lamps, the neighborhood emptied out, almost imperceptibly, until the first cat slowly made its way across the now deserted street. Then I thought maybe I ought to have some dinner. My neck was a little stiff from resting my chin on the back of the chair for so long. I went downstairs to buy some bread and spaghetti, did my cooking, and ate standing up. I wanted to smoke a cigarette at the window, but the air was getting colder and I felt a little chilled. I shut my windows, and as I was coming back I glanced at the mirror and saw a corner of my table with my alcohol lamp next to some pieces of bread. It occurred to me that anyway one more Sunday was over, that Maman was buried now, that I was going back to work, and that, really, nothing had changed.