

a magnet. István said the barman had invented an amazing cocktail—only surpassed by the one called 'Flying' in the Vier Jahreszeiten bar in Munich—which it would be criminal to miss. He stalked in, waved the all-clear from the top of some steps, and we settled in a strategic corner while the demon-barman went mad with his shaker. There was nobody else in the bar; it was getting late and the muffled lilt of the waltz from *Die Fledermaus* hinted that everyone was in the dining-room. We sipped with misgiving and delight among a Regency neo-Roman décor of cream and ox-blood and gilding: Corinthian capitals spread their acanthus leaves and trophies of quivers, and hunting horns, lyres and violins were caught up with festoons between the pilasters. Our talk, as we sipped, ran on secrecy and disguise. "Perhaps I should pretend to have toothache," Angéla said, after the second cocktail, and wrapped the new kerchief round her head in a concealing bandage; "or," holding it stretched across her face below the eyes, "wear a yashmak. Or simply cover the whole thing up." She wrapped her head in the kerchief and tied it in a bow on top like a Christmas pudding. The barman imperturbably set down a third round of glasses and then vanished just as Angéla re-emerged, shaking her hair loose, to find the drinks there as though by magic. I suggested the helmet of darkness of Perseus. István thought Siegfried's Tarnhelm would be better still; then she could not only become invisible but turn into someone else: King Carol, Greta Garbo, Horthy, Mussolini and Groucho Marx were suggested, then the Prince of Wales, Jack Dempsey, Queen Marie and Charlie Chaplin; Laurel and Hardy, perhaps; one of the two; she would have to choose, but she insisted on both.

This led to talk of seeing double; the drinks were beginning to work. We left, walking with care and suitable stealth, and on air; then dived into a hooded carriage that would have been a sleigh in winter and clip-clopped to a discreet Gypsy restaurant outside the town, returning to our fine vaulted quarters fired with paprika and glissandoes.

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How exhilarating it was next morning to be woken by the discord of reciprocally schismatic bells while the half-shuttered July sunlight scattered stripes across the counterpane! Furred and frogged, the