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Plein air

A WRITER'S DIARY

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Emilia was a very special woman. Ever since she was a child she had loved being alone and observing reality. She never got bored for a moment.

In her day, at the beginning of the 20th century, it was not usual for women to do many things on their own, like for example travel. But she rebelled against her family and told them, "If a man can, so can I - I'm going to Paris on my own."

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As soon as she arrived in Paris, Emilia visited the Moulin Rouge, a music hall, where she saw something that you couldn't see in her country: dancers showing their underwear.

And in the house of a writer she admired a lot, who was called Balzac, she gave free rein to her imagination, thinking that in the attic there lived a man who made violins with dry fish scales collected from the Seine.

Because in her city a woman could not sit in a baron on her own, Emilia went to the bar in a park and sat down. She felt completely happy and free.

When she saw that the couple at the next table had gone, she thought of the conversation they had been having, which she had listened to and noted down.

The man was telling the woman that he had been to Russia and that he had never seen such a difference between the rich and poor.

"While there are people starving to death, the tsars give their children books with sapphire-incrusted letters."

And the woman said, "How stupid! The most important thing about books is the words and the words are already in themselves precious stones."

Emilia was so wrapped up in her thoughts that it was getting dark and she had completely forgot about returning to her hotel.

Then she noticed the man who was at the park gate and thought: "Who can he be waiting for? One of those girls, who flash their underwear at the Moulin Rouge? His son, who is returning from America and has met a Red Indian who smokes a pipe? A poet friend who will recite a new poem for him? Which might go like this: 'The evening fades but the night is born...'"

But no. Emilia imagined that it was the man who made violins with dry fish scales and was secretly in love with the girl from the Moulin Rouge, but she didn't even look at him because he was poor, and that's why he went to sit at the table next to her to sell the patent for the violin to the tsar of Russia and begin a new life in Saint Petersburg.

While she was thinking all this she suddenly heard the voice of another man. It was the waiter, saying, "Madame, we're closing now, come back tomorrow if you want to."

And Emilia finished off her drink and said, "How happy am I! How beautiful freedom is! How lovely it is to make up stories!"

Without realising, she was turning into a writer.