

## Beyond the Balcony: Audiowork Translation

The text below forms part of the audiowork and are short extracts from:

*Pierre Prins et L'Epoque Impressionniste: Sa Vie Son Oeuvre, Par son Fils* (Floury, Paris, 1949)

Read by Sophie Prins Gapinski.

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*Dès que l'on agitait devant moi certaines questions touchant le souvenir toujours très vif de ma mère.*

As soon as certain questions pertaining to the still very vivid memory of my mother were discussed in front of me.

*Souvenirs singuliers chez un garçonnet de douze ans.*

Curious memories of a little boy.

*Non point tant des traits que de l'âme dolente et tendre d'un être chéri*

Not so much features as the doleful soul of a tender and beloved being

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*Puis, me faisant pivoter, il tendait déjà le bras vers un grand tableau que je n'avais pas encore remarqué.*

Then, turning me around, he was already pointing towards a large painting I hadn't yet noticed.

*"Regarde", me dit-il, "Qui reconnais-tu là-bas?"*

"Look", he said to me, "Who do you recognise over there?"

*C'était... 'Le balcon'*

It was... "The balcony"

*"Voilà ta chère maman, là, à droite, avant que tu ne sois son fils"*

"That is your beloved mummy, there, on the right, before you were her son"

*Cette jeune fille? Ma mère?...*

This young girl? My mother?...

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*Je cherchais en vain quelque chose de déjà vu dans les traits de la plus menue des deux figures féminines.*

I was looking, to no avail for something familiar in the features of the smallest of the two female characters.

*Je ne retrouvais là, ni le visage, ni le reflet de l'âme que je chérissais toujours, pas même les tresses blondes à l'alsacienne, si souvent caressées aux heures de rémission, où la joie me blottissait entre des bras, dont l'étreinte, chaque jour, faiblissait.*

I could not find, in the painting, either the face or the likeness of the soul I cherished, not even the blond Alsatian style braids, so often stroked at times of respite, when joy was nestling me in arms, whose embrace, each day, was growing weaker.

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*Des années plus tard je devais revoir "Le balcon" au Luxembourg, puis au Louvre*

Years later, I was to see "The Balcony" again, first in the Luxembourg, then in the Louvre

*"Que va devenir le portrait de maman?"*

"What will become of mummy's portrait?"

*Comme si... mon inconscient égoïsme... avait craint la disparition du tableau... avant celle de son peintre*

As if... my unaware selfishness... had feared the disappearance of the painting, before that of its artist.

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*"Est-ce que je pourrais revenir la voir, pour... m'y habituer?"*

"Could I possibly come back to see her to... to accustom myself to seeing her?"

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<i>Des années plus tard je devais revoir 'Le balcon' au Luxembourg, puis au Louvre,</i>	Years later, I was to see "The Balcony" again, first in the Luxembourg, then in the Louvre,
<i>J'en possède la photographie dédiée par Manet.</i>	I have the photograph of it signed by Manet.
<i>Elle m'a souvent accordé à la contempler des instants graves</i>	It often drew me to gaze at it, for solemn moments
<i>On m'avait dit que notre ami souffrait beaucoup, et j'en parlais souvent,</i>	I was told our friend was suffering greatly and I was often talking about him
<i>Le jour que sa mort me fut annoncée, je demandais: "Que va devenir le portrait de maman?"</i>	The day I was told of his death, I asked "What will become of mummy's portrait?"

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<i>Ma curiosité et mon anxiété</i>	My curiosity and my anxiety.
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<i>Je le trouvais tout changé au point d'en rester interdit,</i>	I found him greatly altered, so much so as to be bewildered
<i>Les enfants dissimulent mal leurs impressions devant les grandes personnes.</i>	Children find it hard to conceal their feelings in front of adults.

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<i>... certainement, car son regard, généralement rieur, s'attrista.</i>	... certainly, for his gaze, usually cheerful became saddened
<i>Mais à demi allongé sur un divan, il m'avait attiré à lui et me demandait ses yeux bleus fixés sur les miens</i>	But half lying on a divan, he had drawn me to him and, his blue-grey eyes fixed on mine, was asking
<i>"Ton père m'a dit que tu gardais fidèlement le souvenir de ta maman, c'est très bien; il ne faut jamais oublier ceux qui vous ont aimé"</i>	"Your father told me that you were faithfully holding onto the memory of your mummy That is a very fine thing to do; One must never forget those who loved us"

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<i>"Est-ce-que je pourrais revenir la voir, pour m'y habituer?"</i>	"Could I come back to see her to... to accustom myself to seeing her?"
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<i>"Regarde" me dit-il, "Qui reconnais-tu là-bas?"</i>	"Look", he said to me, "Who do you recognise over there?"
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<i>Comme si, mon inconscient égoïsme, avait craint la disparition du tableau, avant celle de son peintre"</i>	It was as if... my unaware selfishness... was fearing the disappearance of the painting, before that of the artist
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