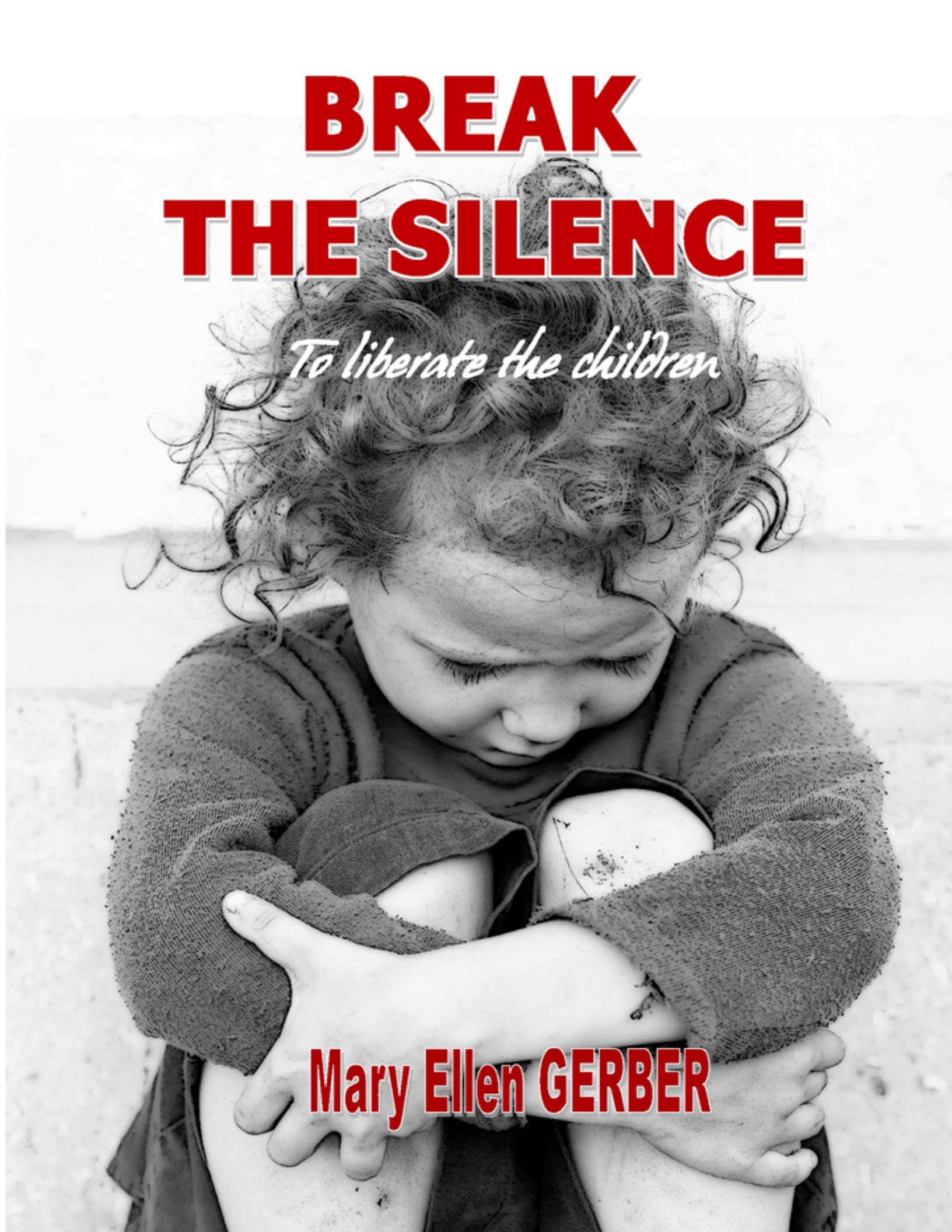


BREAK THE SILENCE

To liberate the children

Mary Ellen GERBER



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PREAMBLE

This book is not a novel. This is the true story,
sincere, and amazing, that branded with a
red hot iron, the second part of my
life and that of many
children.

PREFACE

"A book is a detonator that is used to make people react"
Les Combustibles
Amelie Nothomb

In the tradition of knights whose quests were fraught with challenges and adversities stopping only at death, Mary- Ellen Gerber (MEG) is at once both the standard-bearer and the rear of a silent army.

With her 78 years and her soft, high-toned voice, she created the crazy project to house, feed, care for, and educate as many as five hundred children in India, and she defends with ardour the fate of the abused and silenced children.

Her adventure is a true contemporary epic crusade where good intentions evolve with destiny. MEG has all the qualities of a heroin yet refuses the accolade as she defends herself. Faced with the insidious attacks of her sworn enemies, she risks her reputation, her freedom, and her life. She never gives up. Counter attacking bravely, she builds a virtual wall around those she protects.

Renouncing the future that she had imagined, she composed with simple words, a powerful indictment as a weapon.

Journeying at her side, we are surprised at the determination of MEG, we are moved by the setbacks she suffered and admire her fierce resistance. While we can discern through her journey a naivety that only the pure have, we can also admire the absolute stubbornness of her chivalrous and noble heart.

The twists, travel, denials, betrayals, successes, and failures that are the fabric of this story, are all reasons for

MEG to one day become the archer whose arrow is aimed at powerful criminals preying upon third world children. Far from being a sterile diatribe, her testimony for the prosecution indeed gives the floor to the innocent, denouncing the judicial shortcomings, corruption, and negligence, so often used to the criminal's advantage.

If MEG reaches her target, she will at least give the child "trafficked as merchandise," the status of a protected species that we do not hesitate to attribute to animals in danger of extinction. Her story, without literary pretensions, is not ephemeral claptrap; it is a work of public enlightenment. Her purpose is to render harmless, sexual predators and traffickers of children.

Everything starts with a childhood marked by a death. That of a loving mother who will be replaced by a cruel stepmother worthy of a fairy tale. From this universe of coercion where she is suffering from isolation and indifference, emerges a secret and tenacious wish: to help children whose vital, emotional, and educational needs are neglected by their miserable environment, by families, decimated by disease or any natural catastrophe.

A few decades later, in India, on the way she had traced with neither thought nor care, comes the crucial moment that disrupts her life and changes its course. One warm night under the moonlight walks the first of the witnesses. MEG is then engaged in a war without mercy ending years of ignorant satisfaction.

The aftermath appears as the archetypal fight between vice and virtue. For the innocent heroine of this human tragedy, all her existence, all that Amma "(the name given her by the child's "Mother") has patiently built is reduced to nothing. All seems lost. Except hope. MEG is not naive. The truth is

simply beyond the respectable distance of the imagination when we need to explore the darkness. Just past the unconscious denial of "reality" is an ultimate mission that is emerging for the vivid contrast between good and evil it embodies. In the Manichean confrontation, providence redistributes the cards and saves, in extremis, the one who thought to finish her days with her large family of children.

The story does not end there. This book was necessary to try in its own way to curb the current scourge she stigmatizes - those politicians who put their duty to protect children before their prerogatives. For the men of the Church, instead of dogmas and doctrines against freedom, convey the idea of a respectful and humane comportment for the next generation. All together, they are busy castigating in the name of the morally consensual and other forbidden loves, where as the priority is to put a stop to individual violations.

MEG, the musketeer, found the courage to fight and oppose her detractors. After being "one against all", she took, with children, the oath "One for all and all for one" the romanticism of which in no way undermines the solidarity it implies. Of course, she is not the only one in the world to denounce the horror; however, her testimony warns us that while wanting to do well, we are all likely one day to maintain and endorse (through our donations and as a volunteer) charitable missions that are organized networks of sexual slavery.

Many foundations are fighting for the protection of children in this world. More or less supported by government departments, sponsors, laws, and media, they require a more cohesive and comprehensive action. So can this singular story reach the ultimate goal of humanity that wavers in its values, and unite spirits to break the silence?

May this tragic experience serve the justice of men and the dignity of the child?

This book is a hefty tome. Not by its length and thickness, by the uplifting content that creates its weight. It is a stone thrown into the brackish waters of the conspirators who are still in charge today. In the case of "Paul Dean" is a split personality and/or other mental disorders that will not escape the psychiatrists, yet the man is still a dangerous Mr. Hyde with the philanthropic appearance of Dr. Jekyll. An illusionist that the "well-meaning" perceive as a man of God.

Excluding the blacklisting of paedophiles of all kinds, the story of the adventures of MEG reveals what can happen in the back rooms of "humanitarian" and alerts the donors about the subversive use of their generosity. The opponents are rich and still active. Bound by debauchery and the vulnerability of their past complicity, they care more than ever to promote the saintly image that serves as their bait. The method has already been proven: to further mystify the new "mugs" that present themselves, they just need to show off their usurped titles of glory and express honesty and dedication.

However, if the players in the shade think they have a bright future ahead of them, they are sadly mistaken. The time will come when their actions will be exposed and punished, as they should be, because the mission for MEG and her successors will only end at this price. In so much as they add lies to lies, they will make the fatal error of a further offence, unless their exertions of vengeance will one day sign a confession of their guilt.

For the victims, now of an age to take to up this battle and hold, their word will no longer be contestable as their speeches are repeated from one country to another, from

province to province, witnesses to witnesses to infinity and always identical. "Break the silence".

Marie Montard

DEDICATION

No words will ever be strong enough to convey the horror of the atrocities that Paul Dean committed on young children, many of them orphans, who had narrowly escaped the tropical cyclone that ravaged the Bay of Bengal in 1999.

Mary-Allen's harrowing account of the unspeakable felonies that Paul Dean cunningly performed on the very same children that he was supposed to help and protect reaches far out beyond one's wildest imagination.

Yet I can assure you that Mary-Allen didn't make up one single line of this unusual book.

Thirty years ago, in another part of India, I met the man who signed his letters "Doctor Brother Paul", and just like Mary-Allen, I believed in this con man who showed off all the attributes of a compassionate being.

While pretending to take care of leprosy patients and handicapped children, this tyrannical man engaged in the same depraved felonies and embezzlements that Mary-Allen denounces in her remarkable book.

With all my heart, I hope that this true story will somehow move mountains of bureaucracy and stop Paul Dean from ever performing evil acts on children again.

Thank you, Mary-Allen, for all the healing love that you unrelentingly bestow on all your children from Odisha!

With positive vibes and affection,

Nathalie Nellens

A TRIBUTE

Anil. It was almost thirty years ago...

I often thought about him, and I will remember that July morning. It was early, but the pani-wallah had already passed by my room carrying his load of water. I was still immersed in my dreams under my mosquito net when I heard an agitated conversation from the room nextdoor... I could not understand what was being said because the conversation took place in Hindi, yet I knew immediately that something serious had happened.

My sister came in, "Anil is dead," she said...

It was a terrible shock. The news was like a bomb.

Anil, this beautiful kid, at times had a melancholic look, his face lighting up when he smiled. A kid of 12 who spent every day for a while at my sister's house, where sitting in a chair, he would watch what we were doing, smiling ... he smiled everywhere he went.

His suicide upset me, for what are the reasons that can push a kid of 12 years to commit suicide? It seemed inconceivable.

A twelve years old, fulfilling the serious actions that caused his death, an adult gesture, a gesture of despair, a thought out gesture, in any case...

Nathalie told me that Anil lived with someone called Brother Paul, who found him in a railway station. Anil was an orphan. Had Brother Paul treated him badly?

He was sometimes violent with children and beat them. However, at the time, she obviously knew no more!

One Sunday evening we went to treat a medical emergency somewhere in the countryside. When my sister and I came home, a neighbour came to tell us that Anil had called that night, and that he had spent a long time in my sister's house waiting for us, and as we did not return had gone home.

On Monday morning, we learned of the suicide of Anil.

For the remainder of my stay with my sister in Titilagarh, it was hard to get used to the idea that he would never visit us again, tonight, nor tomorrow, never more. When I heard bicycle brakes or someone stopping before the house, I always expected Anil to enter with his beautiful smile that made him shine from within, despite the tragedies of his life.

Therefore, I can only congratulate you, Mary-Ellen, for this great initiative to dedicate this book to the memory of Anil.

Sylvianne Nellens

Chapter 1.

THE BEGINNING

I had a happy childhood in a united family.

My father was a native of Alsace, my mother from Yonne in Burgundy, where we often went to visit her relatives in the town of Avallon. In April 1937 I came into the world, my father a career soldier assigned to Meknes, in Morocco where I was born. During the war, my mother joined the AFAT (Female Auxiliary Corp. of the Army) where she was occupied transmitting messages in Morse code.

My mother had received an education until the age of twenty with the help of her godmother, who had offered her this opportunity. This was unusual because, at that time, in working class families girls generally received no further education after they left school at the age of 14.

In 1946, my father was assigned to Thionville in Lorraine. Then, both my parents left the army. Mom gave birth to my little sister in that year and my father became the manager of the canteen at a steel factory in Seremange in the Fensch valley. That is where I grew up.

Mom wanted her children to pursue their studies, as she herself had been able to do. Each occasion was a good opportunity to improve our instruction. In addition, for each of our birthdays, my mother would subscribe to magazines for us in our own age group. My father loved to read "Rustica", a gardening magazine, and conceived virtually his future garden. Mom escaped in love stories of the week in "Intimite", my brother and my sister read Mickey Mouse

comics and for my part, I devoured the magazine "Lisette". As the oldest, I took piano lessons.

Yet my real preference a thousand times closer to my heart was to sing with mom all the songs or operettas we heard on the radio, about which we invented parodies.

I also had three years of being in the class of a very psychologically adept teacher. In my school, each teacher followed their students to the next grade until the Certificate of Education. This teacher, we called "Mimi". She had a wonderful ability to understand me and understand my character, such that forty-seven years later, at a meeting of alumni, a classmate told me:

"She didn't speak to us the same way she spoke to you with a soft gentle voice".

Her approach worked well because I was very often the first of the class. When you are kind and gentle with me, I can give everything. Conversely, when you are brusque, when you do not trust me, I seal up hermetically, I shut down, and I do not give anything.

TRAGEDY AND LOVE

Yet, despite all of my happiness, everything changed the year of my 14th birthday...

My mother suffered from a malignant brain tumour. She needed surgery. The surgeon who performed the operation had immediately closed the skull because the tumour was too large. Following this intervention, my mother lost her sight. I can still hear the sound of her white cane as she tapped the ground when I accompanied her for daily walks. However, she remained cheerful and sensitive to others despite the suffering she endured. Before departing on her last voyage, mom was worried about the future of her children and her husband.

In the army, my mother became a friend of a woman called Claude, who then became mom's intimate friend. My mother had Claude and my father promise to marry after her death so that happiness would continue to reign among us. We loved each other tremendously. Mom figured she might as well go in peace.

After nine months of illness, the suffering ceased. She was only 36 years old when she ultimately closed her beautiful blue eyes. It was on December 23, 1951.

Immediately after her death, mom's cousin Jacky, ten years my senior, military and medical student, gave me some advice that has proven very useful in my life, such as never smoke, never drink alcohol or very little occasionally, and never be intimidated to do so by other people. He also explained to me the serious consequences of these problems. I was very careful and I remembered verbatim the

valuable advice that helped me always to remain in control of myself, in different circumstances. I felt a deep friendship for this cousin who supported me in my heartbreak.

The summer after Mom died, my cousin Jacky, who had just received a promotion in his medical career, suggested to my father that I needed a change and a holiday so perhaps it was an opportunity to visit family that was scattered all over France.

My father granted his permission immediately.

I was surprised at how quickly my father had agreed with Jackie's proposal knowing there was work to do at home with my brother and sister. However, my father insisted, assuring me he had everything organized for me to pass a relaxing carefree holiday.

As a gentleman, Jacky collected me from Seremange, he lived in Bordeaux. A route through France was prepared starting from Lorraine to Gerardmer in the brightness of gorse in bloom, the colour of the sun. Then, we went to Alsace and Liepvre to visit my paternal grandparents, to Colmar to my uncle's vineyards. Then to Paris and Claude's house, my mom's friend, pending the completion of the promise made to my mother. However, according to Claude, my father preferred to wait a little.

Then finally, went back to Bordeaux to my great-aunt and my great-uncle, Jacky's parents. The discovery of this city was memorable for me. The tower of Saint Michel and its sixty incredibly well preserved mummies. Sainte Catherine Street, the heart of the city, with strollers and its fine shops. Place of the Quinconces with beautiful horses, columns overlooking the Garonne, and the Public Garden with lovers "who kiss on park benches", sung by the great Georges Brassens in 1952, a song we listened to while looking at each other from the corners of our eyes, smiling...

On that day, Cupid, lurking for some time, was not making family distinctions; he launched his arrow making double whammy. Our eyes, oh so eloquent, exchanged the same feelings, allowing Jacky a lingering delicate little kiss on a corner of my mouth secretly wishing, marking forever the seal of my first love. As I was only fifteen years, this idyll remained platonic and indelible.

All those miles travelled happily together had generated in us memories of a holiday in paradise. Our affection for each other was visible to others, to the point where Aunt Theresa while visiting Jacky's parents exclaimed:

"These two get along remarkably well - it would not surprise me if eventually there's a wedding".

What she did not know is that we had already chosen the name of our first daughter... on park benches.

Back in Lorraine with Jacky after six weeks of absence, I understood the real reason for my father's rapid acceptance of my vacation, because everything had changed during this time. My little sister was placed with friends, my brother was in a vacation camp, and my father had moved or sold the family's belongings including my piano that Mom and I played on with four hands.

The loss of my piano greatly affected me, for me it was as if the one last tangible link of union with my mom finally disappeared leaving only memories for souvenirs.

My father took the management of another canteen in Fontoy, and hired a waitress with whom he established a relationship. Their actions denoted they had already made plans for their future...

Her name was Ginette. Jacky and I were thusly surprised to meet her. As Jacky was leaving returning to Bordeaux in two days time, we both stayed in a room talking, crying, and wondering what would be our future now. Then, I found

myself alone with this new situation and was put to work immediately doing all the household tasks and taking care of customers in my father's new canteen.

I was thinking about Jacky and the memories that we had built together. Yet at that time, communications were not those of today, the days seemed very long without him, having no one to confide in.

A YOUTH OF LABOR

Since then, events had unfortunately gone as I had foreseen. After barely a year had passed after the death of mom, my father married Ginette, this unknown, sixteen years his junior, who completely subjugated him, while in the couple he formed with my mother, he was the head of the family.

I did not understand this sudden change in him. In the first week of their marriage, I realized that I no longer had the protection of my father. I discovered that his promises made to my dying mom and family about the future of his children had vanished giving free rein to the will of his young wife. This first year of my father's new life was revealing and decisive for me.

I felt completely orphaned, unloved, abused, and that's when I realized how difficult it is to live and build without the love and protection of a mother. Thus was born within me an idea, a desire that has never left me and I came to realize it much later: it was the desire to found an orphanage for destitute children, unhappy, without love or protection around them.

In addition to the fact that Ginette had managed to put the property of my father in her name, she then quickly removed from HER home all the members of my maternal and paternal family, my cousin Jacky as well as the three children. My little sister six years old was placed in a foster home. My brother aged ten years went to a military school children's troupe where he learned the trade of mechanic helicopter pilot, which enabled him to exercise an interesting job in the army.

As for me, I was in college: it was the year of my elementary certificate. I had just finished the first quarter of

the seventh class, however instead of returning to the class in January; I was removed from school to work with Ginette and do all the heavy work in the new cafe that my father had bought on behalf of his new wife, in Audun le Roman, Meurthe- et-Moselle.

The day I was sixteen, I had to clean out the urinals in her cafe, I had to clean them every day, they were disgusting and nauseous, so dirty, smelly and yellowish.

As a birthday gift, what could be better! I wept bitterly.

A man came to urinate and was surprised at my tears:

- What's the matter little one? He asked.
- It's my birthday and I have to clean out this filthy toilet.
- Whatever you do in life, always do it with a smile and with your heart. You'll see, it will be better! He advised me.

I never saw this man again. Strangely, I felt like it was a message sent by my mother. This principle has always remained rooted in me. Thereafter, I accepted the trials and tribulations with much more confidence.

It is funny how some comments or thoughts can register in our minds and change our attitude towards life...

That same day, my father, Ginette, and I took our lunch. They talked about a problem that I thought I could provide a solution for. No sooner had I said:

- "I think..."

Ginette interrupted me:

- "Shut up! You, you do not even have the right to think! Instead, to waste your time thinking and always reading, from now on, you're going to work harder, then I will be less angry with you."

When she was tired of me, or rather, when all the tedious heavy work was done, she would drive me out of her house, leaving me only five francs in my pocket, (ten cents) just

enough to take the bus to Metz, the big city thirty miles away, where I thought I had a better chance of finding work.

Ginette chased me away... fourteen times! Each time, I found the work I needed to be housed, fed, and appreciated by my employers.

I have always loved young children and commerce, which is why, at first, I wanted a job with a family for a little warmth, and at the same time, I lightened the load of mothers by taking care of their children. I was highly appreciated by them because I have always done my job conscientiously, in good humor without ever counting my hours.

So, I worked to help mothers, in an organization that employed young girls to help mothers after childbirth. Every week, I went on a mission to live at their home and ease the work of a mother of a large family. I liked this a lot. However, Ginette caught me quickly...

During this painful time, I thought a lot about Jacky, too. One day, before I was taken out of school, he had crossed France from Bordeaux to Thionville to see me at the gate of the college.

Too excited, confused, and surprised, I did not take advantage of the ten minutes permission granted to speak with him to tell him that I loved him madly. If only I knew how to express myself, he might have waited until I was twenty-one... However, being ten years my senior, I knew he needed a bachelor's life that was normal - and plus he was a very handsome man. Me, what could I offer him, a platonic romance? I was only fifteen. Then I no longer heard from him. Two years later, while I was in Audun, I received a wedding invitation, after the event, sent by his mother.

Ginette then exclaimed angrily:

"He compromised you. You should sue him."

She had attacked my Jacky, it was too much, for the first time, I stood up to my stepmother, and I shut her up by saying firmly:

“ I love him and I want him to be happy with or without me.”

She said nothing and left me alone with my grief. What did she mean by "he compromised you?" He had always respected me; he had always helped me as much as he could. So, she had nothing to reproach him for.

Bitter shrew!

My family told me that months later, a little girl was born in Jacky's home...

Alone in my attic, I screamed in pain:

“God! I wish it could be me instead of this woman giving birth to his child!”

However, that's the way it was...

Being born in April with a temperature of forty-two degrees celsius in the shade and having lived in the sun until the age of eight, I suffered much from the cold winters in Lorraine. I particularly remember February 1956 when the temperature dropped at least twenty-eight degrees for the entire month. I had frostbitten toes. I was limping, and had to serve Ginette's customers who were stranded by ice overnight in the café, which at the same time was also the bus stop.

In the village, Ginette knew of restaurant owners who had a restaurant in Nice. I do not know by what luck they asked me if I wanted to come and work with them in Nice in their establishment during the summer season for six months. I left the next morning, no problem!

It was early May. Once more, my new bosses appreciated me very much, and I was happy. As I spoke a little English, third level of College, I was in charge of serving the English-speaking clients.

One day, a very nice woman, Nancy, and her son, Colin came to the hotel for their holidays. He was the spitting image of Elvis Presley and he was my age. As soon as the presentations were over (with their Yorkshire accents!), a real friendship welded together all three of us. After a few days, Nancy spoke with me in engaging confidence. She had a small grocery store that she was willing to offer me for my living by becoming the girl who would marry her son.

I was surprised. Usually, mothers with an only son willingly flex their claws at the approach of petticoats that come too close to their offspring. This then, was completely the opposite!

However, I liked my Elvis and a small platonic romance began. At the end of their vacation, two weeks later, Colin and Nancy really wanted to take me with them.

I was not ready. I just escaped from Ginette's nastiness. I wanted to see the world, live my life without commitment in the beautiful landscape of Nice. Both sadly walked away, leaving me in Nice.

My happiness was always short with Ginette. In July, my boss received a telegram: "Ellen must immediately return to Audun". Not knowing what was the reason, she immediately asked for one, because we were in the middle of the tourist season and the hotel restaurant was full. The reason - amazing - was that my sister, then aged eleven, had been sent back home from the foster home where she lived, because she was still wetting her bed. I had to go back to take care of her. My boss, furious, replied:

"I will not let your daughter go for such a reason, you are there, and you can take care of your younger daughter

yourself!"

Second telegram: "Mr. Gerber will pick up his daughter tomorrow".

My boss did not answer, and asked me:

"Do you want to go back?"

"NO, that's enough, I do not want to! This has been going on for too long, every three months, they take me from my job. Then a month later, after doing all the heavy work in the house, I have to look for employment again."

"OK. Well, you're going to work in our home in Cimiez, instead of staying at the restaurant and when your father comes, I will say that you're gone."

This was done. Thus, I found myself maintaining a beautiful villa with a large garden overlooking the sea, with the other servants.

Ten days after the due date, my father still had not passed to collect me. My boss told me on the phone:

"He will not come now and we miss you at the restaurant, there is so much to do."

Then, I went back to my work. Upon my return, happiness was in the room. My boss, staff and former clients who all knew me, applauded me and kissed me warmly. This time, I wept with joy.

The next day, my father came. I was only nineteen years old, and I was still a minor. I cried with sadness and especially about my own helplessness in the situation, yet the joy that I had experienced the night before I kept in my heart. Other people recognized my values. That was the only thing that mattered to me, this fact strengthened my confidence in myself.

It was with great sadness and eyes full of tears that I left, my boss also distressed and disconcerted about me from

my father's attitude. I promised to return to this place of happiness in the beautiful city that I left behind.

My father put me on the train for Ventimiglia/Metz, the same day, telling me:

"I still have a few days on the Cote d'Azur."

Arriving at Metz, I had to change trains to Audun le Roman. Completely lost in my thoughts, with mixed various feelings and especially about what I would find on my arrival, without realizing it, I took a train in the opposite direction and I went north. Instinctively, I took the direction of England, to Colin. When I realized my mistake, I could have kept on going without a worry since I knew that a warm family would welcome me with open arms, then I thought that my little sister would certainly be unhappy and needed me. For that reason, I turned back and somehow, I took the last train to Audun, which would arrive late about eleven at night.

When I arrived at Ginette's cafe, which ironically was called "Café of Peace". I knocked at all the doors, but no one opened them and her apartment was upstairs... Consequently, I had to spend the night in a hotel.

The next day I found the hostility that I had somehow forgotten during my happy weeks.

THE RETURN OF OBLIGATIONS

My sister and I had to sleep in the attic and I had to buy our food with the money that I had earned in Nice in order to pay back the expenses incurred by my father to collect me. I had to do our cooking and wash the dishes at specific hours in order not to disturb "Madam" and then go immediately to our attic. When I had not completed the washing up on time, I had to take the dishes down to the cellar and wash them later, at the indicated times. When my father came back, in front of Ginette, he told me:

"You did not obey me and I had to collect you."

Without another word, he took his boxing gloves, gave me another pair, and told me:

"Now, defend yourself."

Former boxing champion of France and then coach in this sport, he knew exactly what he was doing and knocked me out after a moment. The next day and the following, my arms were blue from the blows. I did not say I was hurt, but I deliberately wore sleeveless blouses to do all the work and serve clients who asked me questions.

I responded sarcastically:

"This is my father's way of showing how much he loves me, with a boxing match."

This is where I learned from the customers some important information:

"During your absence, we often see Ginette's sister, who comes here on holiday, always well dressed, without doing

anything and then returns to her mother or maybe her grandmother..."

Indeed, Ginette behaved with her like a mother more than as a big sister.

This "sister" was the same age as my brother, only fifteen days his senior, and she could do what she wanted.

This girl died in a car accident the day of her 21st birthday.

Years, jobs, referrals, and confrontations succeeded each other. I just kept on smiling.

The thirteenth time my father came to see me in Metz, he said coldly:

"This time, I am not asking you to come home; you can stay here and keep your job. However, as I know that you are very hard working and thrifty, I'm asking you to give me your savings for the last three months because we need to buy a jukebox for the cafe."

I had to obey and give him 100,000 francs (old francs).

I had saved every cent of this money to return to Nice and maybe find Colin, because he had written to me asking me to be his Valentine. It was a large sum for given monetary erosion due to inflation, the purchasing power of 100,000 francs in 1956 was therefore the same as approx; \$2000 in 2013.

I gritted my teeth and said to myself:

"The moment I reach my majority, I'll go away without saying where I am, that way I will not be caught by Ginette." I learned much later that the following year Colin had returned to Nice with a friend to pick me up. This time, I would have been ready to follow. However, the memory of Jacky still haunted me. I still loved him so much. I always felt him present. He would certainly feel the same because my

thoughts were so vivid. I would have followed Colin not for reasons of love. I did not want to escape for avoiding a situation of pain and frustration. Yet there were tiny facts that bothered me. The first is that he was six months my junior. I needed a more mature man than him to protect me. The second was the cold in Yorkshire is difficult to tolerate unless you are born there. Of course, I would have found the warmth of these simple and loving people who had already given me their entire affection. The flame of their heart would offset the cold outside; however, I felt such an attitude towards them would be unfair and deliberately dishonest.