

## BOOK OF CONSOLATIONS

### PREFACE

I've written this book to help you.

I know you're in trouble, though you haven't told anyone.

All the same, I know. Today everyone who's got any sense is in trouble. Being stuck in front of the TV makes you feel very lonely. This is what gave me the idea to write a book on how to get on top of difficulties, how to take hold of life in a happier way.

I want to console you, you see.

Not with lies. Lies never last more than three days. Only truth is worthy of man. It is truth that keeps us going. Just grieving is inadequate. There's a certain amount of stubborn foolishness in it. But there's a kind of truth that wipes the tears from our eyes. Life isn't about getting a good deal – though this can probably be learnt, with ease. Enjoying life isn't a privilege or a crime. Nor is it the secret of the idle. Love of life is not pure indulgence; it's wisdom. And serenity.

No-one else's, just yours.

You either learn it on your own or you don't.

That's how I learnt it, by myself, in the course of fifty-five years. This book wants to teach you not to be afraid of your problems, but instead to consider them as messages. As a chance to see things more clearly and thus take possession of life. To help you recognise the significance of why you're here on Earth. I have good news for you: the fact that you're alive is of great significance. You also need to learn, however, where this significance lies. No-one but you can find that out. Each person is a total exception. My intention with this book is not to convince you of anything. I'd just like to show you my opinion on certain questions and tell you the magic words I murmur when surrounded by problems, a thing that frequently happens to me too – very naturally.

Yet my aim is not to convince you of my own truth and subsequently to found a party, to convert or to change you. That wouldn't work. No-one can be changed. You have to find your own system yourself if that's really what you want. That's why I haven't structured this book around a theory. I'd like to roam, to think in your presence and continue to learn, playing with and for you, my reader, my imaginary child. This is me and nothing more. These are my thoughts on life. I'd like you to realize, while reading the book, that you can learn to vouch for yourself. I'd like to give you something to read that in all present, past and future worlds will lie on the shelf beside your bed, taking care of you. The way I see it, you probably won't read *Consolations* from beginning to end, but will leaf through it at random to see what I have written on the things that happen to concern you. At other times, wearier than usual and unable to concentrate on a novel, you may feel like something personal, a human touch. Or you just want to be with me.