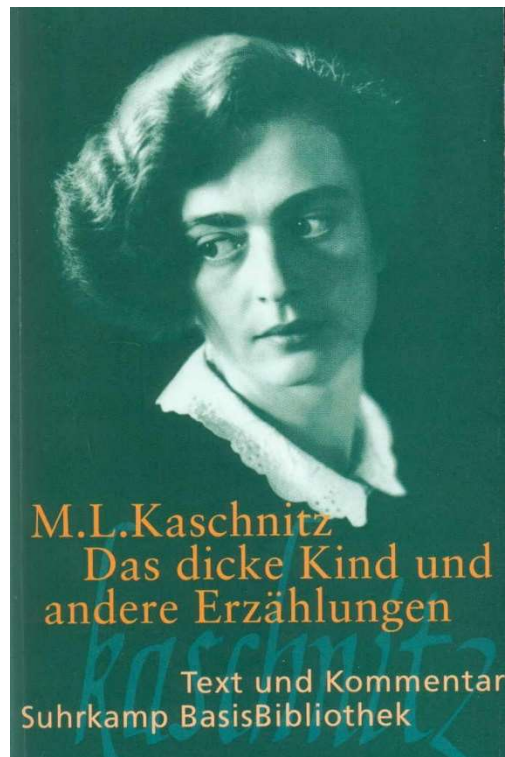


Extracts from:  
**'A Tambourine, a Horse'**  
and  
**'Long Shadows'**  
by Marie Luise Kaschnitz

**Translation:**  
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Fiction; short stories

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## From 'A Tambourine, a Horse'

*Note: This short story was originally published in 1952; it follows an eleven-year-old girl in a German town towards the end of the Second World War. This extract is taken from roughly a third of the way through the story. It is nighttime and foreign soldiers have banged on the door because they believe a fugitive is in hiding in the girl's house. The soldiers have searched almost everywhere and are now demanding entry to a locked storeroom.*

And now here they are, standing in front of the chamber again, this time at night, and with a fugitive supposedly hiding in there, the soldiers rattle the door handle and the child's foster mother sends her for the tambourine, which has its own special place in the kitchen cupboard and is easy to find. The child carries the thing up the stairs as fast as she can, that familiar jingling and jangling feels wrong so she wraps her apron round the little bells and holds the dancing keys tight. Electric lights burn everywhere, but outside the staircase window the gardens, meadows and the edge of the forest lie in a ghostly half-light, and slowly the child begins to feel a sense of foreboding, a silent fear that things could turn out badly and never again be as they were. Her foster father takes the tambourine from her, his hands shaking so badly that the keys agitate in a flurry of drumming, a sound that triggers the soldiers' fury, and their fright. Now all four have revolvers in their hands, and they all talk over one another in a language the child doesn't understand. Finally, the only one who can speak a bit of German shouts: open up!, her foster father has already reached into the tambourine and pulled out a key, but it's the wrong one. And the second one he offers the soldiers doesn't fit the chamber lock either, nor the third, nor the fourth. But it has to be here, her foster mother says over and over, beginning to

weep. She's forgotten that she gave the child the key for safekeeping, the child has forgotten too, she will only remember much later. It's clear that the soldiers believe the whole drawn-out procedure is nothing more than a ruse, now they are rummaging around in the tambourine angrily, at this point almost all the remaining keys are very small, like those for suitcases or padlocks. And then the child, crouched on the floor to pick up the keys angrily thrown away by the soldiers, hears two sharp reports and thinks someone outside, in the sinisterly altered everyday-landscape, must be shooting at the windows. Something heavy falls towards her, a body, which is stuck, crumpled between the soldiers' legs, and a head, sliding lower, which comes to rest right next to her hand. It takes a while for the child to recognise the worn, brushed-shiny jacket and the white curls ringing the rosy, bald pate of her foster father. Mother has fallen onto her face, her frail body is thrust aside by the men, and the child, observed by no-one, slides down the stairs on her stomach. Later, she will not be able to say how she got out of the house, just that three things are connected in her memory: the icy brushing of the wet grass against her calves, the heavy blows of the soldiers breaking open the chamber upstairs, and the rattling of the tambourine, which the child has in her hand again without understanding why or wherefore.

# From 'Long Shadows'

*Note: This story was originally published in 1960. The main character, a teenage girl, is desperate to escape the boredom of a family holiday in Italy. The extract is taken from approximately halfway through the story; our heroine has been given permission to walk into town alone and is revelling in her newfound freedom.*

Parents and sisters completely forgotten, along with her own sense of self, a person with a name and an age, the schoolgirl Rosie Walter, year 12, could try harder; nothing of that remains, instead, a free-roaming spirit defiantly in love with the sun, the salty air, the doing or not-doing as you please, an adult just like the Shah, who unfortunately never goes for walks, otherwise you could happen upon him here and, together, without any birdbrained chatter, look out for steamships passing by in the distance. The path turns into a staircase winding around the cliff, Rosie sits on a step, feels the cracked stone with all ten fingers, sniffs the mint that she rubs between her palms. The sun is blazing, the sea flashing and blinding. Pan is sitting on a mound of gorse; Rosie's education, however, is patchy, she knows nothing of him. Pan creeps after the nymph, but Rosie sees only the boy, the twelve year old, here he is again for God's sake, she's extremely annoyed. He leaps down the cliff steps silently, on dust-grey feet, now without his little dog.

What do you want? says Rosie, go home, she wants to continue on her way, which now stretches along the cliff face without any sort of railing, below lies the abyss, and the sea. The boy doesn't even bother with his *Ecco il mare, ecco l'isola*, but he also doesn't allow her to send him home, he follows her, and now a peculiar, almost beseeching sound escapes him, there is something

slightly inhuman about it, and it startles Rosie. What's the matter with him, she thinks, what does he want? she wasn't born yesterday but it surely can't be that, he's at most twelve years old, a child. Although, actually, it can be that, the boy has heard too much from older friends, big brothers, from that conversation in town, that eternally whispered conversation of foreign girls, so lovelorn and submissive, wandering unescorted through the vineyards and olive groves, no husband, no brother pulling a revolver, and the magic words *amore amore* calling forth their tears, their kisses. Autumn conversations, these, and winter conversations in the cold, forlorn café or on the wet, grey, utterly deserted beach, conversations that rekindle the embers of summer. Just wait, my boy, in two years, or three years, a girl will come for you too, walking across the market square, you're at the window and she smiles up at you. Then go after her, boy, don't be shy, grab her, what's that you say, she doesn't want to, well she's only pretending, she does want to.

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