

band in the distance. I did not want to wake fully but listened to the beautiful music as if in a dream. Later I found out they were playing the overture to Bizet's "Carmen" and his Arlesienne Suite, the overture to Mendelssohn's "Midsummer Night's Dream", the overture to Johann Strauss' "Die Fledermaus" and to Smetana's "The Bartered Bride" and Schubert's "Unfinished Symphony". This music remains a magical and personal inspiration. Getting up in the morning was always a problem – I was a very dreamy child. I would lie in my bed and invent gadgets that would dress me and wash me and do all the tasks I was supposed to do, time passed as my mind would become involved in all sorts of similar fantasies (little did I realise how automated things would eventually become).

Not long after, an awful tragedy struck at the heart of our family. One day my mother was sitting in her favourite cafe, when she thought she recognised an acquaintance in the distance. As she stood up to wave to him, she collapsed. I happened to be there at the time. There was a great deal of fuss around her and she was brought back to our house. The family doctor could only pronounce her dead of an apparent heart attack. She was 50 years old. One can only imagine what a terrible shock this was for our father, as the marriage had been a very happy one; the suddenness with which fate had struck this blow was devastating for him and for us. It was a very grey and miserable morning as we accompanied my father to her burial. And sadly, now I do not have any clear memories of my mother, as I was only seven years when she died. The