



## Appendix 1:

### **Willem Frederik Hermans: ‘An Emancipation’**

[translation by Ina Rilke]

1

I was born in Aleppo. It will come as no surprise to most people, then, that my father was a potter. I remember at a very young age hearing the rumble of the stones turning in the basement and asking what it could be. They told me, but simple though their answer was, I could neither believe it nor understand. And later on, when I had seen it all and knew they weren't having me on, I would still lie awake at night and yearn, half-secretly to myself, that one day this sound would turn out to be made by something else, something overwhelming and awesome - I didn't know what, but was convinced it would be beyond my imagination. Later on, I dreamed about it. What I had dreamed I could never recall, but after such a dream I often felt an irresistible urge to go down to the cellar and take a look. And then, in the glow of flickering oil wicks, the stink of which, already on the stairs, overpowered that of the damp walls, I saw my father's slaves, naked but for a loincloth, with their curved shoulders jiggling up and down in time to their feet kicking the flywheel.

I never looked at them for long. Reality having reasserted itself before my eyes, I would go back to bed, relieved and disappointed at once, but still with hope in my heart of better dreams to come, although I knew that other boys dreamed of completely different things.

At school I acquired - unsurprisingly - more beatings than instruction. After a few years I stopped going. My witlessness was harder than any rod.

I got up late and then sauntered off into the city. I looked in the stalls, in the basements of butchers and craftsmen, at vendors with a mule or two going down the streets ringing their bells.

But this didn't satisfy me either; it was too ordinary. And in the afternoon, walking down narrow streets mercilessly sliced by the sun into a light half and a dark half, I gazed at the white walls of the houses, façades I had known for a long time without ever daring to investigate what lay behind them. I wondered whether other cities would be just the same as this one, for I was sure I would never find the courage to go there myself. Realising this, I would go back to school for a while, but soon got sick of it.

My father was too busy with his own affairs to keep track of what I was up to, although he could guess, and put a stop to it one day by setting me to work in the pottery. Amid the jeers and laughter of the slaves, who knew I was the black sheep of the family and that my father would sooner encourage their teasing than forbid it, I was made to sit, barefoot, on a narrow wooden bench at a wheel. 'You can start by learning how to turn it smoothly,' my father said, and left me to it.

With my feet I tried to get the stone to go round in steady motion, while the slaves shot clay pellets at my ears. They laughed at me for not even being allowed to try shaping a lump of clay into a fine cylinder. 'Yes, young master,' said the old hunchback next to me, 'it's a lot like the

way my mother taught me to eat. By putting an empty spoon in my mouth.' I said nothing, but my face flushed red with anger and I kicked my feet to make the wheel spin even faster, while I felt their projectiles assailing my back and my ears.

Still, I got the hang of it eventually, after a fashion. But I never progressed past the stage of turning a coarse pot. Whenever I tried a vase I would be so moved by the sight of the evolving shapes and the miracle that it was me creating them, that my hands began to shake and everything was ruined.

After such a botched attempt I would go back to doing nothing for a long time. I just sat there with my eyes on the window slits of the cellar, which were level with the pavement, watching the passersby outside. All I could see was their feet going past like so many separate animals with five front paws and no hind paws. If I thought a slim ankle belonged to a pretty girl I shot a clay pellet at it; they never stooped down.

My father's attitude to my behaviour is easily summed up: he said nothing. But he said nothing in such a terrifying way that it became clearer to me by the day what he would have said had he spoken. I had to go away, get out of his sight once and for all, the sooner the better. What was I to him? Nothing. What he had done for me? Everything. I had not accepted his devotion. I had exhausted his patience. I had to vanish.

How? That was the whole point – that I didn't know how. And why was that? Because I didn't really dare. Because I was convinced that I wouldn't find my fortune outside Aleppo either. That going away would only make me more miserable.

But what if my father surmised that I was scared? That would be too much of a blow to my pride. I had to find a means of escape, something that would keep a hold on me, that would offer the best chance of never coming back. And I found an opportunity: I became a soldier.

## 2

It was on our way across the desert to Basra that I met Mohammed. He was older than I was, had also served for much longer, but unlike the other older men accompanying us recruits, he had not made it to the rank of officer.

This struck me as curious about Mohammed. He was tall and imposing, with the face of the prophet, wrapped like a treasure by his beard and turban.

But my respect for him was all the greater for his not being an officer. Otherwise there would have been no question of any rapprochement between us; the officers were arrogant and cruel.

He was my friend, Mohammed was. And he was in agreement with that. We laid ourselves to sleep among the kneeling camels, which gave strange, abrupt cries during the night, like the unfathomable anguish of a newborn infant, and at such times we had long conversations. The mess-ups I told him about made him laugh. But not at me personally. He laughed the way someone laughs about his own mistakes of long ago: with a shade of ruefulness, but also with contentment at having overcome the failures, or no longer caring about them.

'Do you really think, Bahloul,' he asked me, 'that it would have made a huge difference to you if you had become a source of joy to your father? Do you really think that would have made you happy?'

'No,' I said. 'It wouldn't be so bad if I'd been able to think of something else worth doing, but I couldn't even do that. Perhaps I didn't even make a serious attempt. And why try, anyway.'

Shouldn't the love of my father have been the sole guide to my gaining respect and happiness? He who taught me to pray as a boy. He sent me to school. He wanted me to rise above him, to create more beauty using my mind than he could using his hands. It didn't work. Then he tried making me into his successor, which was what he had intended for my younger brother. That too came to nothing. It was all my fault, I'm aware of that. And why did I make such a mess of things? Was there nothing else I was after?

Mohammed broke in: 'It's quite obvious - that was not what you were after.' And he laughed softly. This surprised me, and I was at a loss how to continue. His words of encouragement didn't help either. 'So?' he asked finally. 'You were doing fine with your sermon just now, why don't you go on? It's a pleasure to hear my own language again after twenty years. But I for my part was never one to ask myself riddles. Nowadays I don't do it at all any more, thank goodness'.

'Well, I don't envy you,' I said, infuriated by the advantage he had over me.

'Oh, don't you now, young man? Well, you don't need to, either, not if you just listen to me for a moment. Look here: that riddle of yours - whatever it was that you wanted - is easy enough to solve. You were after nothing but your own failure! Not that you knew it, not until now. But now you do, and you'd better take it to heart. Or is it that you sometimes don't know, and you're too stupid to see what comes of what you're doing, or just don't want to admit it?'

'I can see it perfectly well,' I snapped. 'I just told you everything I did was a failure, didn't I? But why should I regard that as an achievement? Yes, I said I didn't know what I was after, but what I do know is that it wasn't failure.'

'Ah, now we're getting somewhere, Bahloul,' laughed Mohammed. 'Shall I tell you how it works? Striving for something means knowing what your aim is; and that is precisely what people who practise failure don't know. That is the one thing that sets them apart from everybody else. What happens to the man who seeks failure and knows it, is a story I might tell you another time. But I don't think it will be necessary. Sleep well!'

### 3

It would take him more than a story to make this clear to me.

Reaching Basra, we encamped at the old, long-disused barracks on the outskirts of the city by the open countryside, where the houses were empty because the occupants had moved seaward along with the silting-up of the river. The city was like a reptile slowly crawling forward, leaving a trail of droppings and dead skin. Sand drifts sloped against the barracks' bare walls, which were white only in blazing sunshine. The roof, made of red, friable tiles, was crumbling towards the top. Inside there was nothing but evil-smelling straw; we preferred to sleep in the open.

Why were we there, for what purpose? Was it only to keep the hyenas and vultures away from the corpses of our comrades?

But even that we did not do. The vultures were quite amusing at times. We would pass the time trying to catch one in a noose, the point being to twist the bird's neck before it managed to break your arms with its wings. Or we would set it free with a smouldering bunch of hay tied under its tail.

After a few days Mohammed said: 'Come with me, Bahloul. Or do you want to stay here, sleeping in your own filth at night, as far as the vermin let you get any sleep at all? Come with me, I've struck a deal with the chief. We can go and sleep in town if we like. As long as we turn up at roll-call now and then; but when is roll-call?'

I went with him. So this was it: the famous 'other life' was about to begin.

What amazed me was the way people watched us as we went down the streets in our martial gear: with awe, fear, respect. I put my hands behind my back and looked straight ahead, flanked on my right by Mohammed. I was shown respect! They were looking at me! It was to Mohammed that I owed this moment of glory. Without him I would have been a nobody, even as a soldier.

We decided to look for a place to stay around the harbour. 'Why the harbour, Mohammed?' I didn't even put the question. I knew what he wanted. I could tell he was planning to desert, across the sea, far away. With me! With me! I was Mohammed's friend! Mohammed, who was so much older and who knew life.

I was his friend, and he would get me through it; all of it.

'Getting through life.' That was the art he would teach me. And it proved to be a pleasurable art. Mohammed drank. Now that we were alone he made no bones about it. On the waterfront not far from our house stood a ramshackle house with a basement. 'In that basement you can get all that is enjoyable, unhealthy and forbidden,' Mohammed said. And he added: 'Better than your father's basement, eh?'

I agreed, but felt, for the first time, an inexplicable nostalgia for home, where the stone wheels thudded as they turned and where, during the day, the slaves who had worked all night lay snoring on a heap of straw in a dark corner.

Here the walls were covered with old but still colourful carpets. There were thick cushions on the floor, on which the secret sinners lay resting. Or they lounged on divans, with pipe and burner within reach on elegant stools. Beyond this back room was another space, off limits to all but insiders, where the walls were hung with goatskins bulging with wine. But everyone was an insider here.

Halimah served the drinkers. They often made passes at her, and she would laugh and show little resistance, but least of all to Mohammed, whom she knew from long ago.

For the first time in my life I tasted wine. I soon learnt to love it and had only one reservation: that it didn't make me drunk. A few cups were enough for Mohammed to feel drowsy, so that he talked less and less, and what little he did say was hard to follow because of his slurred speech and the singing and laughter all around.

'Bahloul,' he said on that first night, 'wine and her...' And he scowled in her direction, because she was acting as if he wasn't there. But she came towards us, sat herself down between us and threw her arms around our shoulders. The others scuffled noisily.

'Good, good,' muttered Mohammed. Halimah took her arm from my shoulder and lifted the cup to Mohammed's mouth. He was on the brink of sleep already, and when he finally toppled over, Halimah turned to me.

'I like Mohammed,' she said. 'He's an old friend of mine. But I like you even more.' And then: 'What can I offer you, Bahloul? A pipe?'

'No Halimah,' I said, feeling brash. 'No *opiuni* for me. Because not a single woman I might see in my dreams would be as beautiful as you.'

‘Shush,’ she said, smiling, and clapped her hand over my mouth (her fingers touching my teeth for an instant). ‘I told you I was Mohammed’s friend, didn’t I? The women in your dreams may not be as beautiful as I am, but they could give you everything I can’t, you poor thing!’

But she leaned still closer and pressed her lips to mine while softly stroking my hand. I felt myself go faint. I couldn’t hold myself up any more, and slumped over backwards with my head on her lap, sobbing. I looked up past her breasts at her face. ‘I’m not drunk, Halimah, but I can’t help crying anyway. Please, just let me lie here and cry. I’m not drunk, and yet I’m sad. What is it you want?’ she said, bending over me. ‘Shall I ask Mohammed if it’s alright for me to share myself between the two of you?’ I shook my head no, but she was already prodding Mohammed awake. I saw him give a sleepy nod with his head. Halimah stood up and pulled me along. And I went with her, although I didn’t want to. As I followed her, picking my way among the slumbering drunkards, I kept telling myself: ‘This is not what I want, no, I don’t want it to be like this.’ But I did everything she thought I wanted from her anyway.

#### 4

The next morning, in the tingling haze of the awakening city, I made my way to the place Mohammed and I had rented to sleep in. It was of an angular yet indeterminate shape, overhanging the glistening water. The windows were black squares, leaky along the sills like drooling mouths. There were also black streaks running from the roof down the grimy chalk of the walls. It was the home of an old woman with several ugly daughters. She also had a son, apparently, but he never showed his face. Our small room was just under the roof. It had a single window overlooking the street, which ran at right angles to the river, with steps going down to the water. The furniture consisted of two grimy bunks. One bunk would have been enough, because Mohammed and I never slept there at the same time.

It all started that morning. I came across him just as I was going inside. I shivered, not only because I was tired. Nothing makes better sense than fear: if it’s unfounded, you win.

Had Mohammed been drunk when he nodded his assent? Would he remember what he had agreed to? He was bound to know what had happened during the night. He had probably woken up after a couple of hours, got up and staggered home to sleep some more. He had not found me there.

‘Was she to your liking?’

‘Spare me that nonsense,’ I said, not only out of fear.

‘Don’t take me wrong, I’m serious. I don’t begrudge you a bit of fun. She’s mine, anyway. Ha! I’m only lending her to you, see? You’d better appreciate it, my friend, because I wouldn’t grant every man this favour. Aren’t you even going to thank me?’

I laughed, but not wholeheartedly.

Watching him go, I saw him heading to the place I had just left. I was as enraged as a sleepy child by my failure to retaliate with: ‘It’s not a favour you can grant.’ Or, better still: ‘Why don’t you just give her to me? Lending is for Jews and Lombards. Small gifts keep a friendship going.’ How absurd to rebel against him now! What would be in it for me?

Just before I fell asleep it flashed through my mind what he had said during one of our long conversations before going to sleep. ‘Do you ever think of your father, Bahloul? Not that I’m against it, no, on the contrary, I’m all for it. Truly, the efforts of parents are not in vain. There

are things you can learn from them - only they're not what they have in mind. You can learn how to subjugate, humiliate, betray, oppress. That is what they instil in you when you're young; it's the only way children can grow up to be fathers, both oppressors and oppressed. *That* is what we learn from the English. We still lack experience, but that will get better. Your parent or guardian is your best teacher: the less you obey him, the more you take after him. You called me your second father, if you remember, so you probably think it rather audacious of me to tell you all this, no? You may already be thinking: aha, he realises that I'll get the better of him one day. But I know you too well for that. Which is why I dare to say this to you: you're one of those who go East when Mecca lies to the West.'

I slept until woken by the landlady screaming at her daughters. Or was it by my own stench? I opened the window. No need to put my clothes on, as I hadn't even undressed. But I adjusted my belt with particular care and took up my sword.

I went to sit on the pavement in front of the house and started polishing the sword with a strip of cloth which the woman had torn off her skirt at my command

The angle of the sun was such that I was in the shade. I polished the blade with listless strokes, only to have something to do while collecting my thoughts. I often paused to gaze out over the sun-filled harbour. The water lapped gently against the lowest step of the street. Women stood ankle-deep in the river washing clothes, and then trudged past me, some with a pitcher on their head. A fisherman hoisted the flapping sail of his tartan. The ferry (large baskets sliding along cables across the river) plied to and fro between the banks.

It reminded me of the ideas I once had about getting away even further than Basra.

As things stood, I would probably not want to do that for the time being. It might be different if I didn't succeed in making Halimah mine and mine alone. Was I quite sure about this? Oh well, I might as well be content with my share. Life flowed more easily here than at home. I had a small treasure - my comparative liberty - to cherish during the day, and a great one to cherish at night!

After all, I couldn't always be with Halimah and I couldn't hold her in my arms all the time.

At night, at any rate, she was mine. And during the day I could sit on the waterfront and think what it would be like to be with her, with her alone, on a ship sailing away to places unknown.

I put Mohammed out of my mind. I wouldn't let on, but he no longer existed for me. I would go with him, show him a thousand times that he was my friend, talk to him a lot like before, drink with him, share his opium visions, but as far as I was concerned he didn't exist. What could be simpler and more soothing to me than to act as if he didn't exist?

What else could I do? I would never get the better of him. Nor was there any point in trying. Because that would mean the end of peace for me, it would mean being at the receiving end of his wiles all over again.

I went back to polishing the sabre, and by the time it gleamed the sun was so low that I was no longer sitting in the shade, and like a child with a shiny object I tilted the blade to cast flashes on the houses across the way.

## 5

Life went on like this for Mohammed and me for months.

Halimah's nights were for me, her days for Mohammed. Our indolence was interrupted only by roll-call at the barracks. But that was as regular as the tides, and it was soon of little account.

The only variety came from the times that we were incapacitated for duty through drink or opium or both. But also the trouble that gave us soon left us cold.

What were we doing in the desert? Even the officers were deserting, vanishing one by one into shady premises by the harbour. Some of them were never seen again.

The worst was that we were short of money. Especially for me. I gave Halimah presents, and although she was satisfied with little, I couldn't resist giving her as much finery as possible. Embroidered girdles to wind sinuously round her hips, silver pins for her hair. When she was with me they were sometimes all she wore.

'What about when Mohammed's with you?'

'I wear them just the same, of course. Why not?'

I laughed at the time, but felt bitter frustration at not even having come up with something she could wear for me alone.

Mohammed never gave her anything, except a beating from time to time. Still, he always had more money than I had. I knew where he got it from, but I didn't follow his example. Nor was it necessary. He was generous in sharing what he had, despite knowing that I spent practically all of it on Halimah. Perhaps that was his intention.

It was true: I only had her on loan from him. There was nothing I could give her that was really mine, aside from my veneration. She had nothing of mine.

Sometimes I felt an urge to sing a very tender and new song for her, to a tune which would stay with her forever and which was so strange that she wouldn't even be able to hum it, so that nobody else would ever hear the melody.

But the tune I found was so unearthly that my voice couldn't keep to it, so I never sang for Halimah.

The only thing that was mine I wasn't able to give her. At first this made me sad, but the lazy life I was leading under Mohammed's resolute tutelage made me resign myself to the situation. Often, though, when I lay back, half asleep, I couldn't stop thinking of knives and death, and I would see the butcher's single stab turning a warm, quivering beast into a fountain of blood.

## 6

One day the army was relocated to guard the more populous part of the city. The life of ease and freedom from service enjoyed by Mohammed and me, it seemed, was over. But once again he came up with the answer. Which was not difficult, as it happened. The Union Jack fluttering beneath the scorching sun was fading fast. The white soldiers and officers were no more to be trusted than the rest. Some had already gone to the bad back home, others had less respect for their homeland than for the desert. One of those men was James. He had joined the army to get to know the East. Mohammed arranged for him to warn us when our presence was required.

'Did you really think,' Mohammed said with the same smile as that night when I first confided in him, 'did you really think I would leave you in the lurch now, after wanting to share everything with you? Or did you expect me to go back to toeing the line in dumb service? No,

Bahloul, he who masters the art of turning life to his own advantage, and practises it regardless of anything or anyone (it's impossible otherwise), he, I repeat, my dear Bahloul, he who masters this art is undaunted by anything other people consider a trial.'

The only response I could think of to this solemn lecture was: 'I hope to be a good pupil of yours.' And I didn't mean it as seriously as it seemed later on.

My last night with Halimah, though no different than all the others, is the one I remember most vividly.

Shortly after midnight, when Mohammed and most of the others were asleep, I followed her as usual up the damp, narrow stone staircase, with steps that were so slippery and hollow and so irregularly distanced from one another that I had trouble walking on them. I never got used to those steps even after climbing them all those times, or I pretended not to manage them, only to have an excuse to cling to Halimah's hips in the dark.

Once at the top she swept a curtain aside and stepped into the small, narrow room, lit only by the gaping window-frame. She stood by the window, with me at her back.

We gazed peacefully over the harbour. The moon hung like a tranquil silver flake in the stillness of space. The sails of the schooners downstream, ready to put to sea, swayed on the tepid night breeze like the fins of strange fish.

We craned further forward and saw the water lapping against the crooked side of the old house. It was too rippled, too far away for Halimah and me to see our reflection in it. Even that portrait wouldn't commemorate us. We drew ourselves up, and I began slowly unbraiding her hair. She stood very still that evening and smiled in a different way. Nor did she smile when I loosened her clothes. Her silhouette was sharply defined against the sky. And I knew that this meant more to me than seeing the outlines of the ships in the harbour. I hated them now; I would never want to leave. I whispered this in Halimah's ear, to banish my own sad thoughts. She didn't answer. She was staring at a pair of black vultures flying towards us in ghoulish slow motion, their ragged wing-beats seeming to comb the sky.

I nudged Halimah. I didn't want her looking at them and growing just as anxious about them as I was. She turned round and hugged me.

Around us there was not a sound but for the muffled hum from outside; or the creaking of beams, the rustle of animals; the sobs of a drinker who awoke, cursed, and fell asleep again, groaning.

We kissed for a long, silent while as our hands sought each other's bodies, pushing and pulling by turns.

Then I drew myself up. The moonlight shining on her breasts made pure, twin volcanos.

'Halimah,' I began, 'you never said who you love more, Mohammed or me. You can't love both of us the same. Tell me who it is, and then tell me why you give yourself to us both.'

I might have asked her this if I were sure that she would choose me. I was not sure, and asked her anyway. Was it the night, the moon and the silence moving me to bare my sorrow yet again?

Halimah did not answer. But she broke into laughter and held out her arms. 'I'd rather you took me in your arms again,' she said. I did so, and she kissed me harder than before to smother further questions. But I could see that she was close to tears. This roused a sudden cruelty in me, and I asked: 'Do you have other lovers besides Mohammed and me?'



She laughed again. 'Yes, lots,' she said. 'One of them says he'll buy me if I won't give myself for free. He'll even commit murder to make me his. Kill two birds with one stone, he says. What he means by that I don't know... You're not rich, are you Bahloul?'

I wasn't even able to say: 'I would be if I had you.' She appeared to take note of this; I don't know why.

It seemed that we would pass the night in this way, with the usual words, the usual gestures. But the night was shorter than usual.

I heard someone shouting my name. It was James, calling for me to come downstairs at once. I became anxious; would I be charged with inexcusable dereliction of duty? I threw my clothes on and said a hurried goodbye to Halimah, to whom I paid little attention at the time.

'Come along,' James said. 'Mohammed has been murdered. He was on guard duty: we saw him lying on the ground, dead. The hunt for the killer is already on.'

I laughed at him in the face, but it was only when I led the way down to the basement and he saw Mohammed sleeping that he believed me. I thought: 'The man who wanted Halimah and thought he'd kill two birds with one stone mistook someone else for Mohammed. What a shame.'

James left while I shook Mohammed awake. I told him was that we were looking for a murderer, not that he was the intended victim.

Outside, he said: 'Don't be so stupid, Bahloul. What good would it do to us if we found him? We might get promotion, and that would be the end of our freedom. Why don't we just go back, and besides...'

We noticed there was a lamp shining in our house. How could that be, at this early hour?

At the entrance the landlady, having heard us approaching, came forward. She stared at Mohammed as if he had risen from the dead, and burst into lamentation. We didn't know what was the matter, and made our way upstairs as if we hadn't heard anything. But she wouldn't let us go, and came after us, crying: 'Oh my God, oh my God, I knew you'd find out. Of course you realise that my son did it.' Behind her we saw a shadowy figure: the son.

Mohammed and I exchanged looks and said nothing. The woman stopped lamenting. Only the wailing and sobbing of her daughters could still be heard.

Mohammed said: 'We don't mind keeping our mouths shut.'

Hearing that, the woman took her hands from her face and stood stock still, staring at us. Then she ran off to fetch something and returned with fifty pieces of silver for each of us. I thought to myself: 'With any luck her son will make another attempt, with success this time.'

We turned around and walked up the street, probably with the same thing in mind.

I don't know what came over me when I stopped Mohammed and said: 'are you falling for this, Mohammed? Because we now can just as well report him anyway.'

He looked shocked. 'How mean of you, Bahloul,' was all he said.

'Mean, mean, what are you talking about? You're a traitor, you are. Do you want to be my conscience, is that it?' I grabbed him by the neck, and in the bleak light of morning I saw his face go rigid. Washing fluttered on the clothes lines strung across the street from housetop to housetop. He offered little resistance. His neck slackened like a wrung-out wineskin.

I took the money from his belt and went to the sentinel. I said: 'I know who the murderer is. His mother offered Mohammed and me a bribe. We accepted the money. But I was against the

treason, and Mohammed was for it. Then I killed him and took the money off him. Here it is, together with my share.'

The soldiers were rallied, and we set off with me leading the way as the guide. The woman threw up her arms, dumfounded, when I burst in with the gang. But I took no notice and slashed her wrist with my sabre. So swift was the blow that she seemed unconscious of it, and stood there extending the stump like a pitcher gushing red water. The son, with three soldiers restraining him, was led by me in triumph to the guard-house. I didn't know what I was doing, didn't think of the consequences; all I heard was the song for Halimah singing loudly in my head, with ample percussion accompaniment.

James appeared at my side.

'Bahloul,' he said, winking at me, 'that sudden fit of remorse, you don't expect me to believe it, do you? Shall I tell you what I think? That woman gave each of you a lot more than fifty pieces of silver. Perhaps you were afraid of Mohammed grabbing your share. So you beat him to it. You killed him for the money, so you could have the reward for catching the murderer all to yourself. You gave the headman part of the loot purely for show. Well?...' And he gave a crafty, knowing smile.

I didn't even defend myself.

Amsterdam, 23-29 April 1941.