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trains destined for the front, which had moved out of danger before the general instruction, were being systematically unloaded, and a portion of the contents doled out to thousands of emaciated men, women, and children. The rest would be as methodically returned to the warehouses.

Gisela arrived in Berlin half an hour before the Kaiser.

The city was as dark as interstellar space and she would have been forced to spend the night in the Anhalt Bahnhof if Mariette had not met her. They walked from the station, keeping close to the walls of the silent houses and entering Unter den Linden from the Friedrichstrasse. There was not a sound but the high whirr of airplanes keeping guard over a city that seemed stifled in the embrace of death, its life current switched off by the proudest achievement of its pestilent laboratories.

Mariette did not take the trouble to lower her hard incisive voice as she told her sister the brief story of the revolution in Berlin.