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She heard him before she saw him. She was on her round of Godiva Ward, checking on the children, listening to coughs, peering into pinched, white faces, tapping and listening at scrawny chests, when the sound of piano-playing reached her from the day room. There was an old grand piano there, half hidden by potted palms, one of several vestiges of the hospital's former grandeur as a superior hotel. It was rarely tuned and suffered from sea air, being surrounded by so many open windows. Someone accompanied the carols on it at Christmas, the children played musical statues to it at birthday parties and occasionally a charitable local artiste would subject them to a recital of pieces with evocative titles like *War March of the Priests*, *Rustle of Spring* or *Moscow Bells*. Pub-style sing-songs were, of course, out of the question, given the ragged state of most inmates' lungs, but patients chancing on the venerable instrument for the first time sometimes lifted the lid out of curiosity to pick out a melody with one erratic finger. Vera Lynn songs were popular – *White Cliffs of Dover* and *We'll Meet Again* – but Sally had noticed that it was the older, less overtly morale-boosting songs that people thumped out time and again – *Smoke Gets in Your Eyes* or *You've Got me Crying Again*.

The music this morning was serious stuff, played sitting down, and with both hands. She knew little of proper music – her father always switched the radio off when a concert was broadcast – but she recognised a waltz when she heard one.