On April 20, 1918, while inscribing a copy of *Swann’s Way* to Jacques de Lacretelle, Proust revealed some of the keys that inspired his characters and his fictional musical compositions. Regarding Vinteuil’s sonata, Proust said this: “To whatever extent that I drew on reality, a very limited extent, in fact, the little phrase from this Sonata is . . . the charming but mediocre theme from a Violin and Piano Sonata by Saint-Saëns, a composer I dislike. (I’ll show you the precise passage, which recurs several times and was a triumph for Jacques Thibaud.)” Proust listed other works that he “wouldn’t be surprised” had contributed to the music, such as Wagner’s “Good Friday Spell,” from *Parsifal*, and later, at the Saint-Euverte soirée, “when violin and piano lament like two birds calling to one another, I was thinking of the Franck’s Sonata, especially as played by Enesco (Franck’s Quartet appears in later volumes). The tremolos passages played over the little phrase at the Verdurins’ were suggested by the Prelude to *Lohengrin*, but the phrase itself at that moment by a piece by Schubert. At the same Verdurin soirée, it becomes a ravishing piano piece by Fauré.” See *Marcel Proust, Selected Letters*, 4: 39

Proust’s remark about not liking Saint-Saëns may reflect his condemnation of what the novelist regarded as the composer’s jingoism when he supported prohibiting all performances of German music during World War 1. The letter to Lacretelle was written almost six months before the end of the war.