“Woyzeck belongs in the great constellation of European authors, in the company of Jahn, Pirani, Kafka and Svevo. … (This translation is a literary and intellectual event of singular importance.)”

—Nový Revýdov
Musil did not finish *The Man Without Qualities*, although he often said he intended to. There is no way of telling from either the parts published in his lifetime or his posthumous papers how he would have done so, or indeed whether he could have done so to his own satisfaction. This is because of the novel’s rigorously experimental structure, consisting of an “open architecture” that could be developed in many directions from any given point. The novel does contain coherent individual threads and incidents, but Musil firmly rejected the idea of a plotted narrative whole. Therefore, while the drafts of the twenty chapters in Part 1 of “From the Posthumous Papers” carry on from where “Into the Millennium” left off, the material in
Part 2 is not preliminary to a final version in the usual sense, but consists rather of notes, sketches, and drafts that Musil was keeping in suspension for possible use in some form at some place in the ultimate text, a version he never decided upon and that must forever remain the object of tantalizing speculation.

We have a fortuitous, if unhappy, benchmark for this posthumous material: When Musil had to leave Vienna in 1938, he took with him into exile in Switzerland material that he considered most useful for his further work on *The Man Without Qualities*. Everything left behind in Vienna was destroyed during the war. (A further loss was suffered when two of Musil’s surviving notebooks were stolen from an editors car in Italy in 1970, before they could be transcribed.)

The extent to which Musil regarded this novel as experimental was extraordinary. He had begun work on it in earnest in 1924 and was most reluctant when the urging of
publishers and worsening external conditions forced him to publish parts of it in 1931 and 1933 (pages 1-1130 in this edition). From his point of view, the entire text ought to have remained “open” from the beginning until it had all been written and he could then revise the text as a whole. He complained that partial publication removed those parts of the novel from the possibility of further alteration, as well as distorting the shape (again, a never defined, “open” shape) he had in mind for the whole work. As it was, in 1938, in less than robust health and apparently apprehensive that he would again be forced into premature publication, he withdrew the first twenty chapters that appear in “From the Posthumous Papers” when they were already set in galleys, in order to rework them still further. These chapters were intended not to conclude the novel but to continue “Into the Millennium.” like Goethe, Musil had a strange sense of having infinite time
stretching out before him in which to complete his task. One is tempted to see in his solitary and stubborn pursuit of his ideal more than a little of Kafka’s Hunger Artist.

Musil’s purpose in writing *The Man Without Qualities* was a moral one. He had set out to explore possibilities for the right life in a culture that had lost both its center and its bearings but could not tear itself away from its outworn forms and habits of thought, even while they were dissolving. Musil equated ethics and aesthetics, and was convinced that a union of “precision and soul,” the language and discoveries of science with one’s inner life of perceptions and feelings, could be, and must be, achieved. He meant this novel to be experienced as a moral lever to move the world, as Emerson and Nietzsche intended their writing to be experienced, in such a way that (in Rilke’s words) “you must change your life.” Musil’s anguish becomes palpable as he pursues this search
for the right life using the tools of scientific skepticism, while remaining all too aware of the apparently inherent limitations of human societies and, especially, of human nature. Fortunately, this anguish is leavened by a sparkling wit of language and situation, as when a character is described as wearing “a wig of split hairs.”

The search for the right life leads to an increasing inwardness in the novel. Musil intended to have Ulrich and Agathe somehow rejoin the world after the failure of their attempt to achieve a *unio mystica*, but as the reader will see, this was left completely up in the air among a welter of conflicting possibilities. Much of the material in Part 2 consists of startlingly dramatic or even melodramatic nuclei that Musil weighed using at some point. He frequently inserts identical or slightly varied material in different places, obviously to try it out in alternative contexts, but without committing himself. Always an
analytical thinker and a methodical worker, Musil used an elaborate and cryptic system of referencing and cross-referencing codes and notations, some of them still undeciphered, to remind himself of the many interconnections. These markings are ubiquitous, indicating how thoroughly the different parts of the work were simultaneously present in his mind. These codes are to be found in the German edition but have been suppressed here in the interest of readability.

Among the experiments Musil tries out, for example, are the possibilities of Ulrich having sexual relations, sometimes aggressive and perverse, with his sister, Agathe, his cousin Diotima, and Clarisse, his friend Wal ters wife. Moosbrugger, the sex murderer who haunts the entire novel, is somehow freed by Clarisse in one version, while Ulrich’s attempt to free him himself, together with some hired criminals, fails in another. Moosbrugger is executed, and Hans Sepp
commits suicide (under a train in one place, by gunshot in another). Ulrich’s escape to the idyllic Italian island is now with Agathe, now with Clarisse; the idyll fails with Agathe, fails with Clarisse. Clarisse looms much larger in these drafts than in the main text; here the stages of her growing insanity are carefully detailed. Ulrich appears crueler, more morally indolent, as his successive failures are recorded. (Musil should not be identified with Ulrich; as is made quite clear here, in his role as narrator Musil is usually critical of Ulrich.) These posthumous papers also shed a great deal of light on Musil’s concept of mysticism and the “Other Condition.”

Musil had suffered a stroke in 1936, and the tone of Part 1 of “From the Posthumous Papers,” written after that, is markedly different from the earlier sections of the novel; quieter, strikingly inward, more difficult, the writing often of a rare beauty. In the selection of drafts, notes, and sketches presented
in Part 2, which cover the span of time between 1920 and 1942, Musil makes clear how the faults of his characters are intended to mirror the larger faults of the age; as he says, these figures live on an arc without being able to close the circle. As the age comes unglued and spirals toward war, so do the characters spiral more clearly toward failure, helplessness, madness, and suicide, even as they press forward in their firm belief in a better future, if only they could find the key. *The Man Without Qualities* is not a pessimistic work.

The contents of “From the Posthumous Papers” have riot been previously translated into English. Much of what is presented here became available in German for the first time only with the publication of the 1978 German edition of Musil’s collected works. This new German edition is not definitive, but it completely supersedes the edition of the 1950s on which the first, incomplete, English
translation was based. The guiding principle in selecting the material for translation in “From the Posthumous Papers” was to present to the English-speaking public in readable form the major narrative portions of the posthumous material in the 1978 German edition, as well as selections that illuminate Musil’s methods of thinking and working. Scholarly completeness could not be the goal in any case, since the 1978 German edition offers only a major selection from the extant posthumous papers, together with some scholarly apparatus. There exists in manuscript even more material relating to The Man Without Qualities than is in the German edition: The various Musil research centers finished the painstaking process of transcribing these papers only in 1990, and this transcription, 34 megabytes of data (not all of it relating to the novel), has been made available in German on a CD-ROM disk. Omitted in what follows, aside
from the cross-referencing codes, are (1) longer repetitive variations of chapters or sections in which the changes are slight—Musil was an obsessive rewriter and polisher; and (2) many brief notes, jottings, and indications that are too sketchy to be informative except to the specialist.

Except for the galley drafts of the first twenty chapters, this material is for the most part not polished or “written up” in final form; some of it is quite sketchy, some merely jotted notes. Over the years, Musil changed the names of some of his characters and switched others, and this can be confusing. The essence of the characters, however, seems to have been fixed from the early stages, so these name changes are purely verbal. Ulrich was originally called “Anders,” then called “Achilles”; the names, but not the characters, of Lindner and Meingast were reversed. Clarisse’s brother is called Siegmund in the main text, Siegfried and Wotan here.
In the interest of readability the names, with one or two obvious exceptions, have been changed to be consistent with those used previously in the novel and are spelled out—Musil usually refers to them by their initials—as are most of the numerous other abbreviations. Given the fragmentary nature of the texts in Part 2, and for the sake of readability, elisions have not been indicated; with very minor exceptions they are between selections, not within selections. Items between slashes or in parentheses are Musil’s; material in square brackets is mine. Double and triple ellipsis points in the text reproduce those in the German edition.

The only major departure from the 1978 German edition in how this material appears has to do with the ordering of the contents of Part 2. The German edition presents this material in reverse chronology, beginning with what Musil was working on at his death and proceeding backward to the earliest sketches.
It seemed to me that since Musil was thinking about this material experimentally and not chronologically, such an ordering is not necessarily indicated, especially in the absence of the authors ultimate intentions about the work as a whole.

A further problem was that in chronological order, whether forward or backward, the random mixture of elements in Part 2 of “From the Posthumous Papers” would put off the general reader, for whom this edition is intended. That would be unfortunate, since these pages contain some of Musil’s most powerful and evocative writing. Re-arranging the contents of Part 2 according to character groupings, narrative sections, and Musil’s notes about the novel makes this material much more accessible, and given the author’s experimental attitude toward these fragments this rearrangement seems not unreasonable. Readers who wish to see this material presented in roughly chronological
reverse order—some of it can be dated only approximately—should consult the German edition.

The original choice of material to include here was made in extensive consultation with Professor Philip Payne of the University of Lancaster, England, to whom I would like to express my appreciation. I owe a profound debt of gratitude to Professor Adolf Frise, editor of the German edition, for his constant friendly encouragement and advice. Without his work, and without the unflagging patience and skill with which he and the various Musil research teams in Vienna, Klagenfurt, Saarbrücken, and Reading deciphered Musil’s difficult manuscripts, no Musil edition would have been possible. And without the determination, persistence, fine German, and ear and eye for quality of Carol Janeway, Sophie Wilkins’s and my editor at Knopf, this translation would never have come to fruition.
Musil had given chapters 39 through 58 to the printer. He revised them in galley proofs in 1937-1938, then withdrew them to work on them further. They were intended to continue “Into the Millennium,” of 1932-1933, but not conclude it.
AFTER THE ENCOUNTER

As the man who had entered Agathe’s life at the poet’s grave, Professor August Lindner, climbed down toward the valley, what he saw opening before him were visions of salvation.

If she had looked around at him after they parted she would have been struck by the man’s ramrod-stiff walk dancing down the stony path, for it was a peculiarly cheerful, assertive, and yet nervous walk. Lindner carried his hat in one hand and occasionally passed the other hand through his hair, so free and happy did he feel.

“How few people,” he said to himself, “have a truly empathic soul!” He depicted to
himself a soul able to immerse itself completely in a fellow human being, feeling his inmost sorrows and lowering itself to his innermost weaknesses. “What a prospect!” he exclaimed to himself. “What a miraculous proximity of divine mercy, what consolation, and what a day for celebration!” But then he recalled how few people were even able to listen attentively to their fellow creatures; for he was one of those right-minded people who descend from the unimportant to the trivial without noticing the difference. “How rarely, for instance, is the question ‘How are you?’ meant seriously,” he thought. “You need only answer in detail how you really feel, and soon enough you find yourself looking into a bored and distracted face!”

Well, he had not been guilty of this error! According to his principles the particular and indispensable doctrine of health for the strong was to protect the weak; without such a benevolent, self-imposed limitation,
the strong were all too easily susceptible to brutality; and culture, too, needed its acts of charity against the dangers inherent within itself. “Whoever tries to tell us what universal education’ is supposed to be,” he affirmed for himself through inner exclamation, mightily refreshed by a sudden lightning bolt loosed against his fellow pedagogue Hagauer, “should truly first be advised: experience what another person feels like! Knowing through empathy means a thousand times more than knowing through books!” He was evidently giving vent to an old difference of opinion, aimed on the one hand at the liberal concept of education and on the other at the wife of his professional brother, for Lindner’s glasses gazed around like two shields of a doubly potent warrior. He had been self-conscious in Agathe’s presence, but if she were to see him now he would have seemed to her like a commander, but a commander of troops that were by no
means frivolous. For a truly manly soul is ready to assist, and it is ready to assist because it is manly. He raised the question whether he had acted correctly toward the lovely woman, and answered himself: “It would be a mistake if the proud demand for subordination to the law were to be left to those who are too weak for it; and it would be a depressing prospect if only mindless pedants were permitted to be the shapers and protectors of manners and morals; that is why the obligation is imposed upon the vital and strong to require discipline and limits from their instincts of energy and health: they must support the weak, shake up the thoughtless, and rein in the licentious!” He had the impression he had done so.

As the pious soul of the Salvation Army employs military uniform and customs, so had Lindner taken certain soldierly ways of thinking into his service; indeed, he did not even flinch from concessions to the “man of
power” Nietzsche, who was for middle-class minds of that time still a stumbling block, but for Lindner a whetstone as well. He was accustomed to say of Nietzsche that it could not be maintained that he was a bad person, but his doctrines were surely exaggerated and ill equipped for life, the reason for this being that he rejected empathy; for Nietzsche had not recognized the marvelous counterbalancing gift of the weak person, which was to make the strong person gentle. And opposing to this his own experience, he thought with joyful purpose: “Truly great people do not pay homage to a sterile cult of the self, but call forth in others the feeling of their sublimity by bending down to them and indeed, if it comes to that, sacrificing themselves for them!” Sure of victory and with an expression of amicable censure that was meant to encourage them, he looked into the eyes of a pair of young lovers who, intricately intertwined, were coming up toward him.
But it was a quite ordinary couple, and the young idler who formed its male component squeezed his eyelids shut as he responded to this look of Lindner’s, abruptly stuck out his tongue, and said: “Nyaa!” Lindner, unprepared for this mockery and vulgar menace, was taken aback; but he acted as if he did not notice. He loved action, and his glance sought a policeman, who ought to have been in the vicinity to guarantee honors public safety; but as he did so his foot struck a stone, and the sudden stumbling motion scared off a swarm of sparrows that had been regaling themselves at God’s table over a pile of horse manure. The explosion of wings was like a warning shot, and he was just able at the last moment, before falling ignominiously, to hop over the double obstacle with a balletically disguised jump. He did not look back, and after a while was quite satisfied with himself. “One must be hard as a diamond and tender as a mother!” he thought,
using an old precept from the seventeenth century.

Since he also esteemed the virtue of modesty, at no other time would he have asserted anything like this in regard to himself; but there was something in Agathe that so excited his blood! Then again, it formed the negative pole of his emotions that this divinely tender female whom he had found in tears, as the angel had found the maiden in the dew...oh, he did not want to be presumptuous, and yet how presumptuous yielding to the spirit of poetry does make one! And so he continued in a more restrained manner: that this wretched woman was on the point of breaking an oath placed in the hands of God—for that is how he regarded her desire for a divorce. Unfortunately, he had not made this forcefully clear when they had stood face-to-face—God, what nearness again in these words!—unfortunately, he had not presented this idea with sufficient
firmness; he merely remembered having spoken to her in general about loose morals and ways of protecting oneself against them. Besides, the name of God had certainly not passed his lips, unless as a rhetorical flourish; and the spontaneity, the dispassionate, one might even say the irreverent, seriousness with which Agathe had asked him whether he believed in God offended him even now as he remembered it. For the truly pious soul does not permit himself to simply follow a whim and think of God with crude directness. Indeed, the moment Lindner thought of this unreasonable question he despised Agathe as if he had stepped on a snake. He resolved that if he should ever be in the situation of repeating his admonitions to her, he would follow only the dictates of that powerful logic which is in keeping with earthly matters and which has been placed on earth for that purpose, because not every ill-bred person can be permitted to ask God
to trouble Himself on behalf of his long-established confusions; and so he began to make use of this logic straightaway, and many expressions occurred to him that it would be appropriate to use to a person who has stumbled. For instance, that marriage is not a private affair but a public institution; that it has the sublime mission of evolving feelings of responsibility and empathy, and the task (which hardens a people) of exercising mankind in the bearing of difficult burdens; perhaps indeed, although it could only be adduced with the greatest tact, that precisely by lasting over a fairly long period of time, marriage constituted the best protection against the excesses of desire. He had an image of the human being, perhaps not wrongly, as a sack full of devils that had to be kept firmly tied shut, and he saw unshakable principles as the tie.

How this dutiful man, whose corporeal part could not be said to project in any
direction but height, had acquired the conviction that one had to rein oneself in at every step was indeed a riddle, which could only be solved, though then quite easily, when one knew its benefit. When he had reached the foot of the hill a procession of soldiers crossed his path, and he looked with tender compassion at the sweaty young men, who had shoved their caps back on their heads, and with faces dulled from exhaustion looked like a procession of dusty caterpillars. At the sight of these soldiers, his horror at the frivolity with which Agathe had dealt with the problem of divorce was dreamily softened by a joyful feeling that such a thing should be happening to his free-thinking colleague Hagauer; and this stirring in any event served to remind him again of how indispensable it was to mistrust human nature. He therefore resolved to make ruthlessly plain to Agathe—should the occasion actually, and through no fault of his own,
arise—that selfish energies could in the last analysis have only a destructive effect, and that she should subordinate her personal despair, however great it might be, to moral insight, and that the true basic touchstone of life is living together.

But whether the occasion was once again to offer itself was evidently just the point toward which Lindner’s mental powers were so excitedly urging him. “There are many people with noble qualities, which are just not yet gathered into an unshakable conviction,” he thought of saying to Agathe; but how should he do so if he did not see her again; and yet the thought that she might pay him a visit offended all his ideas about tender and chaste femininity. “It simply has to be put before her as strongly as possible, and immediately!” he resolved, and because he had arrived at this resolution he also no longer doubted that she really would appear. He strongly admonished himself to selflessly
work through with her the reasons she would advance to excuse her behavior before he went on to convince her of her errors. With unwavering patience he would strike her to the heart, and after he had imagined that to himself too, a noble feeling of fraternal attention and solicitude came over his own heart, a consecration as between brother and sister, which, he noted, was to rest entirely on those relations that the sexes maintain with each other. “Hardly any men,” he cried out, edified, “have the slightest notion how deep a need noble feminine natures have for the noble man, who simply deals with the human being in the woman without being immediately distracted by her exaggerated desire to please him sexually!” These ideas must have given him wings, for he had no idea how he had got to the terminus of the trolley line, but suddenly there he was; and before getting in he took off his glasses in order to wipe them free of the condensation
with which his heated inner processes had coated them. Then he swung himself into a corner, glanced around in the empty car, got his fare ready, looked into the conductors face, and felt himself entirely at his post, ready to begin the return journey in that admirable communal institution called the municipal trolley. He discharged the fatigue of his walk with a contented yawn, in order to stiffen himself for new duties, and summed up the astonishing digressions to which he had surrendered himself in the sentence: “Forgetting oneself is the healthiest thing a human being can do!”
Against the unpredictable stirrings of a passionate heart there is only one reliable remedy: strict and absolutely unremitting planning; and it was to this, which he had acquired early, that Lindner owed the successes of his life as well as the belief that he was by nature a man of strong passions and hard to discipline. He got up early in the morning, at the same hour summer and winter, and at a washbasin on a small iron table washed his face, neck, hands, and one seventh of his body—every day a different seventh, of course—after which he rubbed the rest with a wet towel, so that the bath, that time-consuming and voluptuous
procedure, could be limited to one evening every two weeks. There was in this a clever victory over matter, and whoever has had occasion to consider the inadequate washing facilities and uncomfortable beds that famous people who have entered history have had to endure will hardly be able to dismiss the conjecture that there must be a connection between iron beds and iron people, even if we ought not exaggerate it, since otherwise we might soon be sleeping on beds of nails. So here, moreover, was an additional task for reflection, and after Lindner had washed himself in the glow of stimulating examples he also took advantage of drying himself off to do a few exercises by skillful manipulation of his towel, but only in moderation. It is, after all, a fateful mistake to base health on the animal part of one’s person; it is, rather, intellectual and moral nobility that produce the body’s capacity for resistance; and even if this does not always apply to the individual,
it most certainly applies on a larger scale, for the power of a people is the consequence of the proper spirit, and not the other way around. Therefore Lindner had also bestowed upon his rubbings-down a special and careful training, which avoided all the uncouth grabbing that constitutes the usual male idolatry but on the contrary involved the whole personality, by combining the movements of his body with uplifting inner tasks. He especially abhorred the perilous worship of smartness that, coming from abroad, was already hovering as an ideal before many in his fatherland; and distancing himself from this was an integral part of his morning exercises. He substituted for it, with great care, a statesmanlike attitude in the calisthenic application of his limbs, combining the tensing of his willpower with timely yielding, the overcoming of pain with commonsense humanity, and if perchance, in a concluding burst of courage, he jumped over
an upside-down chair, he did so with as much reserve as self-confidence. Such an unfolding of the whole wealth of human talents made his calisthenics, in the few years since he had taken them up, true exercises in virtue for him.

That much can also be said in passing against the bane of transitory self-assertion that, under the slogan of body care, has taken possession of the healthy idea of sports, and there is even more to be said against the peculiarly feminine form of this bane, beauty care. Lindner flattered himself that in this, too, he was one of the few who knew how to properly apportion light and shadow, and thus, as he was ever ready to remove from the spirit of the times an unblemished kernel, he also recognized the moral obligation of appearing as healthy and agreeable as he possibly could. For his part, he carefully groomed his beard and hair every morning, kept his nails short and
meticulously clean, put lotion on his skin and a little protective ointment on the feet that in the course of the day had to endure so much: given all this, who would care to deny that it is lavishing too much attention on the body when a worldly woman spends her whole day at it? But if it really could not be otherwise—he gladly approached women tenderly, because among them might be wives of very wealthy men—than that bathwaters and facials, ointments and packs, ingenious treatments of hands and feet, masseurs and friseurs, succeed one another in almost unbroken sequence, he advocated as a counterweight to such one-sided care of the body the concept of inner beauty care—inner care, for short—which he had formulated in a public speech. May cleanliness thus serve as an example to remind us of inner purity; rubbing with ointment, of obligations toward the soul; hand massage, of that fate by which we are bound; and pedicure, that even in
that which is more deeply concealed we should offer a fair aspect. Thus he transferred his image to women, but left it to them to adapt the details to the needs of their sex.

Of course it might have happened that someone who was unprepared for the sight Lindner offered during his health and beauty worship and, even more, while he was washing and drying himself, might have been moved to laughter: for seen merely as physical gestures, his movements evoked the image of a multifariously turning and twisting swan’s neck, which, moreover, consisted not of curves but of the sharp element of knees and elbows; the shortsighted eyes, freed from their spectacles, looked with a martyred expression into the distance, as if their gaze had been snipped off close to the eye, and beneath his beard his soft lips pouted with the pain of exertion. But whoever understood how to see spiritually might well experience the spectacle of seeing inner and
outer forces begetting each other in ripely considered counterpoint; and if Lindner was thinking meanwhile of those poor women who spend hours in their bathrooms and dressing rooms and solipsistically inflame their imaginations through a cult of the body, he could seldom refrain from reflecting on how much good it would do them if they could once watch him. Harmless and pure, they welcome the modern care of the body and go along with it because in their ignorance they do not suspect that such exaggerated attention devoted to their animal part might all too easily awaken in it claims that could destroy life unless strictly reined in!

Indeed, Lindner transformed absolutely everything he came in contact with into a moral imperative; and whether he was in clothes or not, every hour of the day until he entered dreamless sleep was filled with some momentous content for which that hour had been permanently reserved. He slept for
seven hours; his teaching obligations, which the Ministry had limited in consideration of his well-regarded writing activity, claimed three to five hours a day, in which was included the lecture on pedagogy he held twice weekly at the university; five consecutive hours—almost twenty thousand in a decade!—were reserved for reading; two and a half served for the setting down on paper of his own articles, which flowed without pause like a clear spring from the inner rocks of his personality; mealtimes claimed an hour every day; an hour was dedicated to a walk and simultaneously to the elucidation of major questions of life and profession, while another was dedicated to the traveling back and forth determined by his profession and consecrated also to what Lindner called his “little musings,” concentrating the mind on the content of an activity that had recently transpired or that was to come; while other fragments of time were reserved, in part
permanently, in part alternating within the framework of the week, for dressing and undressing, gymnastics, letters, household affairs, official business, and profitable socializing. And it was only natural that this planning of his life not only was carried out along its more general disciplinary lines but also involved all sorts of particular anomalies, such as Sunday with its nondaily obligations, the longer cross-country hike that took place every two weeks, or the bathtub soak, and it was natural, too, for the plan to contain the doubling of daily activities that there has not yet been room to mention, to which belonged, by way of example, Lindner's association with his son at mealtimes, or the character training involved in patiently surmounting unforeseen difficulties while getting dressed at speed.

Such calisthenics for the character are not only possible but also extremely useful, and Lindner had a spontaneous preference
for them. “In the small things I do right I see an image of all the big things that are done right in the world” could already be read in Goethe, and in this sense a mealtime can serve as well as a task set by fate as the place for the fostering of self-control and for the victory over covetousness; indeed, in the resistance of a collar button, inaccessible to all reflection, the mind that probes more deeply could even learn how to handle children. Lindner of course did not by any means regard Goethe as a model in everything; but what exquisite humility had he not derived from driving a nail into a wall with hammer blows, undertaking to mend a torn glove himself, or repair a bell that was out of order: if in doing these things he smashed his fingers or stuck himself, the resulting pain was outweighed, if not immediately then after a few horrible seconds, by joy at the industrious spirit of mankind that resides even in such trifling dexterities and their
acquisition, although the cultivated person today imagines himself (to his general disad-
vantage) as above all all that. He felt with plea-
ure the Goethean spirit resurrected in him, and enjoyed it all the more in that thanks to
the methods of a more advanced age he also felt superior to the great classic master’s
practical dilettantism and his occasional del-
light in discreet dexterity. Lindner was in
fact free of idolatry of the old writer, who had
lived in a world that was only halfway en-
lightened and therefore overestimated the
Enlightenment, and he took Goethe as a
model more in charming small things than in
serious and great things, quite apart from the
seductive Ministers notorious sensuality.

His admiration was therefore carefully
meted out. There had nevertheless been
evident in it for some time a remarkable
peevishness that often stimulated Lindner to
reflection. He had always believed that his
view of what was heroic was more proper
than Goethe’s. Lindner did not think much of Scaevolas who stick their hands in the fire, Lucretias who run themselves through, or Judiths who chop the heads off the oppressors of their honor—themes that Goethe would have found meaningful anytime, although he had never treated them; indeed, Lindner was convinced, in spite of the authority of the classics, that those men and women, who had committed crimes for their personal convictions, would nowadays belong not on a pedestal but rather in the courtroom. To their inclination to inflict severe bodily injury he opposed an “internalized and social” concept of courage. In thought and discourse he even went so far as to place a duly pondered entry on the subject into his classbook, or the responsible reflection on how his housekeeper was to be blamed for precipitate eagerness, because in that state one should not be permitted to follow one’s own passions only, but also had to
take the other person’s motives into account. And when he said such things he had the impression of looking back, in the well-fitting plain clothes of a later century, on the bombastic moral costume of an earlier one.

He was by no means oblivious to the aura of absurdity that hovered around such examples, but he called it the laughter of the spiritual rabble, and he had two solid reasons for this. First, not only did he maintain that every occasion could be equally well exploited for the strengthening or weakening of human nature, but it seemed to him that occasions of the smaller kind were better suited for strengthening it than the large ones, since the human inclination to arrogance and vanity is involuntarily encouraged by the shining exercise of virtue, while its inconspicuous everyday exercise consists simply of pure, unsalted virtue. And second, systematic management of the people’s moral good (an expression Lindner loved, along with the
military expression “breeding and discipline,” with its overtones of both peasantry and being fresh from the factory) would also not despise the “small occasions,” for the reason that the godless belief advanced by “liberals and Freemasons” that great human accomplishments arise so to speak out of nothing, even if it is called Genius, was already at that time going out of fashion. The sharpened focus of public attention had already caused the “hero,” whom earlier times had made into a phenomenon of arrogance, to be recognized as a tireless toiler over details who prepares himself to be a discoverer through unremitting diligence in learning, as an athlete who must handle his body as cautiously as an opera singer his voice, and who as political rejuvenator of the people must always repeat the same thing at countless meetings. And of this Goethe, who all his life had remained a comfortable citizen-aristocrat, had had no idea, while he,
Lindner, saw it coming! So it was comprehensible, too, that Lindner thought he was protecting Goethe’s better part against the ephemeral part when he preferred the considerate and companionable, which Goethe had possessed in such gratifying measure, to the tragic Goethe; it might also be argued that it did not happen without reflection when, for no other reason than that he was a pedant, he considered himself a person threatened by dangerous passions.

Truly, it shortly afterward became one of the most popular human possibilities to subject oneself to a “regimen,” which may be applied with the same success to overweight as it is to politics and intellectual life. In a regimen, patience, obedience, regularity, equanimity, and other highly respectable qualities become the major components of the individual in his private, personal capacity, while everything that is unbridled, violent, addictive, and dangerous, which he, as a
crazy romantic, cannot dispense with either, has its admirable center in the “regimen.” Apparently this remarkable inclination to submit oneself to a regimen, or lead a fatiguing, unpleasant, and sorry life according to the prescription of a doctor, athletic coach, or some other tyrant (although one could just as well ignore it with the same failure rate), is a result of the movement toward the worker-warrior-anthill state toward which the world is moving: but here lay the boundary that Lindner was not able to cross, nor could he see that far, because his Goethean heritage blocked it.

To be sure, his piety was not of a sort that could not have been reconciled to this movement; he did leave the divine to God, and undiluted saintliness to the saints; but he could not grasp the thought of renouncing his personality, and there hovered before him as an ideal for the world a community of fully responsible moral personalities, which
as God’s civil army would certainly have to struggle against the inconstancy of baser nature and make everyday life a shrine, but would also decorate this shrine with the masterpieces of art and science. Had someone counted Lindner’s division of the day, it would have struck him that whatever the version, it added up to only twenty-three hours; sixty minutes of a full day were lacking, and of these sixty minutes, forty were invariably set aside for conversation and kindly investigation into the striving and nature of other people, as part of which he also counted visits to art exhibitions, concerts, and entertainments. He hated these events. Almost every time, their content affronted his mind; as he saw it, it was the infamous overwrought nerves of the age that were letting off steam in these overblown and aimless constructions, with their superfluous stimulants and genuine suffering, with their insatiable and inconstancy, their inquisitiveness
and unavoidable moral decay. He even smiled dis-concertedly into his scanty beard when on such occasions he saw “ordinary men and women” idolize culture with flushed cheeks. They did not know that the life force is enhanced by being circumscribed, not by being fragmented. They all suffered from the fear of not having time for everything, not knowing that having time means nothing more than not having any time for everything. Lindner had realized that the bad nerves did not come from work and its pressure, which in our age are blamed for them, but that on the contrary they came from culture and humanitarianism, from breaks in routine, the interruption of work, the free minutes in which the individual would like to live for himself and seek out something he can regard as beautiful, or fun, or important: these are the moments out of which the miasmas of impatience, unhappiness, and meaninglessness arise. This was
what he felt, and if he had had his way—that is, according to the visions he had at such moments—he would sweep away all these art workshops with an iron broom, and festivals of labor and edification, tightly tied to daily activity, would take the place of such so-called spiritual events; it really would require no more than excising from an entire age those few minutes a day that owed their pathological existence to a falsely understood liberality. But beyond making a few allusions, he had never summoned up the decisiveness to stand up for this seriously and in public.

Lindner suddenly looked up, for during these dreamy thoughts he had still been riding in the trolley; he felt irritated and depressed, as one does from being irresolute and blocked, and for a moment he had the confused impression that he had been thinking about Agathe the entire time. She was accorded the additional honor that an
annoyance that had begun innocently as pleasure in Goethe now fused with her, although no reason for this could be discerned. From habit, Lindner now admonished himself. “Dedicate part of your isolation to quiet reflection about your fellowman, especially if you should not be in accord with him; perhaps you will then learn to better understand and utilize what repels you, and will know how to be indulgent toward his weaknesses and encourage his virtue, which may simply be overawed,” he whispered with mute lips. This was one of the formulas he had coined against the dubious activities of so-called culture and in which he usually found the composure to bear them; but this did not happen, and this time it was apparently not righteousness that was missing. He pulled out his watch, which confirmed that he had accorded Agathe more time than was allotted. But he would not have been able to do so if in his daily schedule there had not been
those twenty leftover minutes set aside for unavoidable slippage. He discovered that this Loss Account, this emergency supply of time, whose precious drops were the oil that lubricated his daily works, even on this unusual day, would still hold ten spare minutes when he walked into his house. Did this cause his courage to grow? Another of his bits of wisdom occurred to him, for the second time this day: “The more unshakable your patience becomes,” said Lindner to Lindner, “the more surely you will strike your opponent to the heart!” And to strike to the heart was a pleasurable sensation, which also corresponded to the heroic in his nature; that those so struck never strike back was of no importance.
BROTHER AND SISTER THE NEXT MORNING

Ulrich and his sister came to speak of this man once more when they saw each other again the morning after Agathe’s sudden disappearance from their cousin’s party. On the previous day Ulrich had left the excited and quarrelsome gathering soon after she had, but had not got around to asking her why she had up and left him; for she had locked herself in, and was either already sleeping or purposely ignoring the listener with his soft inquiry as to whether she was still awake. Thus the day she had met the curious stranger had closed just as capriciously as it had begun. Nor was any information to be
had from her this morning. She herself did not know what her real feelings were. When she thought of her husband’s letter, which had forced its way to her and which she had not been able to bring herself to read again, although from time to time she noticed it lying beside her, it seemed to her incredible that not even a day had passed since she had received it; so often had her condition changed in the meantime. Sometimes she thought the letter deserved the horror tag “ghosts from the past”; still, it really frightened her, too. And at times it aroused in her merely a slight unease of the kind that can be aroused by the unexpected sight of a clock that has stopped; at other times, she was plunged into futile brooding that the world from which this letter came was claiming to be the real world for her. That which inwardly did not so much as touch her surrounded her outwardly in an invisible web that was not yet broken. She involuntarily
compared this with the things that had happened between her and her brother since the arrival of this letter. Above all they had been conversations, and despite the fact that one of them had even brought her to think of suicide, its contents had been forgotten, though they were evidently still ready to reawaken, and not surmounted. So it really did not matter much what the subject of a conversation was, and pondering her heart-stopping present life against the letter, she had the impression of a profound, constant, incomparable, but powerless movement. From all this she felt this morning partly exhausted and disillusioned, and partly tender and restless, like a fever patient after his temperature has gone down.

In this state of animated helplessness she said suddenly: “To empathize in such a way that one truly experiences another person’s mood must be indescribably difficult!” To her surprise, Ulrich replied immediately:
“There are people who imagine they can do it.” He said this ill-humoredly and offensively, having only half understood her. Her words caused something to move aside and make room for an annoyance that had been left behind the day before, although he ought to find it contemptible. And so this conversation came to an end for the time being.

The morning had brought a day of rain and confined brother and sister to their house. The leaves of the trees in front of the windows glistened desolately, like wet linoleum; the roadway behind the gaps in the foliage was as shiny as a rubber boot. The eyes could hardly get a hold on the wet view. Agathe was sorry for her remark, and no longer knew why she had made it. She sighed and began again: “Today the world reminds me of our nursery.” She was alluding to the bare upper rooms in their father’s house and the astonishing reunion they had both celebrated with them. That might be farfetched;
but she added: “It’s a person’s first sadness, surrounded by his toys, that always keeps coming back!” After the recent stretch of good weather, expectations had automatically been directed toward a lovely day, and this filled the mind with frustrated desire and impatient melancholy. Ulrich, too, now looked out the window. Behind the gray, streaming wall of water, will-o’-the-wisps of outings never taken, open green, and an endless world beckoned; and perhaps, too, the ghost of a desire to be alone once more and free again to move in any direction, the sweet pain of which is the story of the Passion and also the Resurrection of love. He turned to his sister with something of this still in the expression on his face, and asked her almost vehemently: “I’m surely not one of those people who can respond empathically to others?”

“No, you really aren’t!” she responded, and smiled at him.
“But just what such people presume,” he went on, for it was only now that he understood how seriously her words had been meant, “namely, that people can suffer together, is as impossible for them as it is for anyone else. At most they have a nursing skill in guessing what someone in need likes to hear—”

“In which case they must know what would help him,” Agathe objected.

“Not at all!” Ulrich asserted more stubbornly. “Apparently the only comfort they give is by talking: whoever talks a lot discharges another person’s sorrow drop by drop, the way rain discharges the electricity in a cloud. That’s die well-known alleviation of every grief through talking!”

Agathe was silent.

“People like your new friend,” Ulrich now said provocatively, “perhaps work the way many cough remedies do: they don’t get
rid of the sore throat but soothe its irritation, and then it often heals by itself!”

In any other situation he could have expected his sisters assent, but Agathe, who since yesterday had been in a peculiar frame of mind because of her sudden weakness for a man whose worth Ulrich doubted, smiled unyieldingly and played with her fingers. Ulrich jumped up and said urgently: “But I know him, even if only fleetingly; I’ve heard him speak several times!”

“You even called him a Vacuous fool,” Agathe interjected.

“And why not?” Ulrich defended it. “People like him know less than anyone about how to empathize with another person! They don’t even know what it means. They simply don’t feel the difficulty, the terrible equivocation, of this demand!”

Agathe then asked: “Why do you think the demand is equivocal?”
Now Ulrich was silent. He even lit a cigarette to underline that he was not going to answer; they had, after all, talked about it enough yesterday. Agathe knew this too. She did not want to provoke any new explanations. These explanations were as enchanting and as devastating as looking at the sky when it forms gray, pink, and yellow cities of marble cloud. She thought, “How fine it would be if he would only say: I want to love you as myself, and I can love you that way better than any other woman because you are my sister!’ “ But because he was not about to say it, she took a small pair of scissors and carefully cut off a thread that was sticking out somewhere, as if this were at that moment the only thing in the entire world that deserved her full attention. Ulrich observed this with the same attention. She was at this instant more seductively present to all his senses than ever, and he guessed something of what she was hiding, even if
not everything. For she meanwhile had had time to resolve: if Ulrich could forget that she herself was laughing at the stranger who presumed he could be of help here, he was not going to find it out from her now. Moreover, she had a happy presentiment about Lindner. She did not know him. But that he had offered his assistance selflessly and wholeheartedly must have inspired confidence in her, for a joyous melody of the heart, a hard trumpet blast of will, confidence, and pride, which were in salutary opposition to her own state, now seemed to be playing for her and refreshing her beyond all the comedy of the situation. “No matter how great difficulties may be, they mean nothing if one seriously wills oneself to deal with them!” she thought, and was unexpectedly overcome by remorse, so that she now broke the silence in something of the way a flower is broken off so that two heads can bend over it, and added as a second question to her
first: “Do you still remember that you always said that love thy neighbor is as different from an obligation as a cloudburst of bliss is from a drop of satisfaction?”

She was astonished at the vehemence with which Ulrich answered her: “I’m not unaware of the irony of my situation. Since yesterday, and apparently always, I have done nothing but raise an army of reasons why this love for one’s neighbor is no joy but a terribly magnificent, half-impossible task! So nothing could be more understandable than that you’re seeking protection with a person who has no idea about any of this, and in your position I’d do the same!”

“But it’s not true at all that I’m doing that!” Agathe replied curtly.

Ulrich could not keep himself from throwing her a glance that held as much gratitude as mistrust. “It’s hardly worth the bother of talking about,” he assured her. “I
really didn’t want to either.” He hesitated a moment and then went on: “But look, if you do have to love someone else the way you love yourself, however much you love him it really remains a self-deceiving lie, because you simply can’t feel along with him how his head or his finger hurts. It is absolutely unbearable that one really can’t be part of a person one loves, and it’s an absolutely simple thing. That’s the way the world is organized. We wear our animal skin with the hair inside and cannot shake it out. And this horror within the tenderness, this nightmare of coming to a standstill in getting close to one another, is something that the people who are conventionally correct, the let’s be precise’ people, never experience. What they call their empathy is actually a substitute for it, which they use to make sure they didn’t miss anything!”

Agathe forgot that she had just said something that was as close to a lie as a non-
lie. She saw illuminated in Ulrich’s words the disillusion over the vision of sharing in each other, before which the usual proofs of love, goodness, and sympathy lost their meaning; and she understood that this was the reason he spoke of the world more often than of himself, for if it was to be more than idle dreaming, one must remove oneself along with reality like a door from its hinges. At this moment she was far away from the man with the sparse beard and timid severity who wanted to do her good. But she couldn’t say it. She merely looked at Ulrich and then looked away, without speaking. Then she did something or other, then they looked at each other again. After the shortest time the silence gave the impression of having lasted for hours.

The dream of being two people and one: in truth the effect of this fabrication was at many moments not unlike that of a dream that has stepped outside the boundaries of
night, and now it was hovering in such a state of feeling between faith and denial, in which reason had nothing more to say. It was precisely the body’s unalterable constitution by which feeling was referred back to reality. These bodies, since they loved each other, displayed their existence before the inquiring gaze, for surprises and delights that renewed themselves like a peacock’s tail sweeping back and forth in currents of desire; but as soon as one’s glance no longer lingered on the hundred eyes of the spectacle that love offers to love, but attempted to penetrate into the thinking and feeling being behind it, these bodies transformed themselves into horrible prisons. One found oneself again separated from the other, as so often before, not knowing what to say, because for everything that desire still had to say or repeat a far too remote, protective, covering gesture was needed, for which there was no solid foundation.
And it was not long before the bodily motions, too, involuntarily grew slower and congealed. The rain beyond the windows was still filling the air with its twitching curtain of drops and the lullaby of sounds through whose monotony the sky-high desolation flowed downward. It seemed to Agathe that her body had been alone for centuries, and time flowed as if it were flowing with the water from the sky. The light in the room now was like that of a hollowed-out silver die. Blue, sweetish scarves of smoke from heedlessly burning cigarettes coiled around the two of them. She no longer knew whether she was tender and sensitive to the core of her being or impatient and out of sorts with her brother, whose stamina she admired. She sought out his eyes and found them hovering in this uncertain atmosphere like two dead moons. At the same instant something happened to her that seemed to come not from her will but from outside: the surging
water beyond the windows suddenly became fleshy, like a fruit that has been sliced, and its swelling softness pressed between herself and Ulrich. Perhaps she was ashamed or even hated herself a little for it, but a completely sensual wantonness—and not at all only what one calls an unleashing of the senses but also, and far more, a voluntary and unconstrained draining of the senses away from the world—began to gain control over her; she was just able to anticipate it and even hide it from Ulrich by telling him with the speediest of all excuses that she had forgotten to take care of something, jumped up, and left the room.
Hardly had that been done when she resolved to look up the odd man who had offered her his help, and immediately carried out her resolution. She wanted to confess to him that she no longer had any idea what to do with herself. She had no clear picture of him; a person one has seen through tears that dried up in his company will not easily appear to someone the way he actually is. So on the way, she thought about him. She thought she was thinking clearheadedly, but actually it was fantasy. She hastened through the streets, bearing before her eyes the light from her brothers room. It had not been a
proper kind of light at all, she considered; she should rather say that all the objects in the room had suddenly lost their composure, or a kind of understanding that they must certainly have otherwise had. But if it were the case that it was only she herself who had lost her composure, or her understanding, it would not have been limited just to her, for there had also been awakened in the objects a liberation that was astir with miracles. “The next moment it would have peeled us out of our clothes like a silver knife, without our having moved a finger!” she thought.

She gradually let herself be calmed by the rain, whose harmless gray water bounced off her hat and down her coat, and her thoughts became more measured. This was perhaps helped, too, by the simple clothes she had hastily thrown on, for they directed her memory back to schoolgirl walks without an umbrella, and to guiltless states. As she walked she even thought unexpectedly of an
innocent summer she had spent with a girlfriend and the friend’s parents on a small island in the north: there, between the harsh splendors of sea and sky, she had discovered a seabirds’ nesting place, a hollow filled with white, soft bird feathers. And now she knew: the man to whom she was being drawn reminded her of this nesting place. The idea cheered her. At that time, to be sure, in view of the strict sincerity that is part of youth’s need for experience, she would have hardly let it pass that at the thought of the softness and whiteness she would be abandoning herself to an unearthly shudder, as illogically, indeed as youthfully and immaturity, as she was now allowing to happen with such assiduity. This shudder was for Professor Lindner; but the unearthly was also for him.

The intimation, amounting to certainty, that everything that happened to her was connected as in a fairy tale with something hidden was familiar to her from all the
agitated periods of her life; she sensed it as a nearness, felt it behind her, and was inclined to wait for the hour of the miracle, when she would have nothing to do but close her eyes and lean back. But Ulrich did not see any help in unearthly dreaminess, and his attention seemed claimed mostly by transforming, with infinite slowness, unearthly content into an earthly one. In this Agathe recognized the reason why she had now left him for the third time within twenty-four hours, fleeing in the confused expectation of something that she had to take into her keeping and allow to rest from the afflictions, or perhaps just from the impatience, of her passions. But then as soon as she calmed down she was herself again, standing by his side and seeing in what he was teaching her all the possibilities for healing; and even now this lasted for a while. But as the memory of what had “almost” happened at home—and yet not happened!—reasserted itself more vividly,
she was again profoundly at a loss. First she wanted to convince herself that the infinite realm of the unimaginable would have come to their aid if they had stuck it out for another instant; then she reproached herself that she had not waited to see what Ulrich would do; finally, however, she dreamed that the truest thing would have been simply to yield to love and make room for a place for overtaxed nature to rest on the dizzying Jacob’s ladder they were climbing. But hardly had she made this concession than she thought of herself as one of those incompetent fairytale creatures who cannot restrain themselves, and in their womanly weakness prematurely break silence or some other oath, causing everything to collapse amid thunderclaps.

If her expectation now directed itself again toward the man who was to help her find counsel, he not only enjoyed the great advantage bestowed on order, certainty, kindly strictness, and composed behavior by
an undisciplined and desperate mode of conduct, but this stranger also had the particular quality of speaking about God with certainty and without feeling, as if he visited God’s house daily and could announce that everything there that was mere passion and imagining was despised. So what might be awaiting her at Lindner’s? While she was asking herself this she set her feet more firmly on the ground as she walked, and breathed in the coldness of the rain so that she would become quite clearheaded; and then it started to seem highly probable to her that Ulrich, even though he judged Lindner one-sidedly, still judged him more correctly than she did, for before her conversations with Ulrich, when her impression of Lindner was still vivid, she herself had thought quite scornfully of this good man. She was amazed at her feet, which were taking her to him anyway, and she even took a bus going in the
same direction so she would get there sooner.

Shaken about among people who were like rough, wet pieces of laundry, she found it hard to hold on to her inner fantasy completely, but with an exasperated expression on her face she persevered, and protected it from being torn to shreds. She wanted to bring it whole to Lindner. She even disparaged it. Her whole relation to God, if that name was to be applied to such adventurousness at all, was limited to a twilight that opened up before her every time life became too oppressive and repulsive or, which was new, too beautiful. Then she ran into it, seeking. That was all she could honestly say about it. And it had never led to anything, as she told herself with a sigh. But she noticed that she was now really curious about how her unknown man would extricate himself from this affair that was being confided to him, so to speak, as God’s representative; for
such a purpose, after all, some omniscience must have rubbed off on him from the great Inaccessible One, because she had meanwhile firmly resolved, squeezed between all kinds of people, on no account to deliver a complete confession to him right away. But as she got out she discovered in herself, remarkably enough, the deeply concealed conviction that this time it would be different from before, and that she had also made up her mind to bring this whole incomprehensible fantasy out of the twilight and into the light on her own. Perhaps she would have quickly extinguished this overblown expression again if it had entered her consciousness at all; but all that was present there was not a word, but merely a surprised feeling that whirled her blood around as if it were fire.

The man toward whom such passionate emotions and fantasies were en route was meanwhile sitting in the company of his son, Peter, at lunch, which he still ate, following a
good rule of former times, at the actual hour of noon. There was no luxury in his surroundings, or, as it would be better to say in the German tongue, no excess\([\text{Oberfluss}, \text{literally, “overflow”}]\); for the German word reveals the sense that the alien word obscures. “Luxury” also has the meaning of the superfluous and dispensable that idle wealth might accumulate; “excess,” on the other hand, is not so much superfluous—to which extent it is synonymous with luxury—as it is overflowing, thus signifying a padding of existence that gently swells beyond its frame, or that surplus ease and magnanimity of European life which is lacking only for the extremely poor. Lindner discriminated between these two senses of luxury, and just as luxury in the first sense was absent from his home, it was present in the second. One already had this peculiar impression, although it could not be said where it came from, when the entry door opened and revealed the moderately
large foyer. If one then looked around, none of the arrangements created to serve mankind through useful invention was lacking: an umbrella stand, soldered from sheet metal and painted with enamel, took care of umbrellas. A runner with a coarse weave removed from shoes the dirt that the mud brush might not have caught. Two clothes brushes hung in a pouch on the wall, and the stand for hanging up outer garments was not missing either. A bulb illuminated the space; even a mirror was present, and all these utensils were lovingly maintained and promptly replaced when they were damaged. But the lamp had the lowest wattage by which one could just barely make things out; the clothes stand had only three hooks; the mirror encompassed only four fifths of an adult face; and the thickness as well as the quality of the carpet was just great enough that one could feel the floor through it without sinking into softness: even if it was
futile to describe the spirit of the place through such details, one only needed to enter to feel overcome by a peculiar general atmosphere that was not strict and not lax, not prosperous and not poor, not spiced and not bland, but just something like a positive produced by two negatives, which might best be expressed in the term “absence of prodigality.” This by no means excluded, upon one’s entering the inner rooms, a feeling for beauty, or indeed of coziness, which was everywhere in evidence. Choice prints hung framed on the walls; the window beside Lindners desk was adorned with a colorful showpiece of glass representing a knight who, with a prim gesture, was liberating a maiden from a dragon; and in the choice of several painted vases that held lovely paper flowers, in the provision of an ashtray by the nonsmoker, as well as in the many trifling details through which, as it were, a ray of sunshine falls into the serious circle of duty
represented by the preservation and care of a household, Lindner had gladly allowed a liberal taste to prevail. Still, the twelve-edged severity of the room’s shape emerged everywhere as a reminder of the hardness of life, which one should not forget even in amenity; and wherever something stemming from earlier times that was undisciplined in a feminine way managed to break through this unity—a little cross-stitch table scarf, a pillow with roses, or the petticoat of a lampshade—the unity was strong enough to prevent the voluptuous element from being excessively obtrusive. Nevertheless, on this day, and not for the first time since the day before, Lindner appeared at mealtime nearly a quarter of an hour late. The table was set; the plates, three high at each place, looked at him with the frank glance of reproach; the little glass knife rests, from which knife, spoon, and fork stared like barrels from gun carriages, and the rolled-up napkins in their
rings, were deployed like an army left in the lurch by its general. Lindner had hastily stuffed the mail, which he usually opened before the meal, in his pocket, and with a bad conscience hastened into the dining room, not knowing in his confusion what he was meeting with there—it might well have been something like mistrust, since at the same moment, from the other side, and just as hastily as he, his son, Peter, entered as if he had only been waiting for his father to come in.
THE DO-GODER AND THE DO-NO-GODER; BUT AGATHE TOO

Peter was a quite presentable fellow of about seventeen, in whom Lindners precipitous height had been infused and curtailed by a broadened body; he came up only as far as his father’s shoulders, but his head, which was like a large, squarish-round bowling ball, sat on a neck of taut flesh whose circumference would have served for one of Papa’s thighs. Peter had tarried on the soccer field instead of in school and had on the way home unfortunately got into conversation with a girl, from whom his manly beauty had wrung a half-promise to see him again: thus late, he had secretly slunk into the house and
to the door of the dining room, uncertain to the last minute how he was going to excuse himself; but to his surprise he had heard no one in the room, had rushed in, and, just on the point of assuming the bored expression of long waiting, was extremely embarrassed when he collided with his father. His red face flushed with still redder spots, and he immediately let loose an enormous flood of words, casting sidelong glances at his father when he thought he wasn’t noticing, while looking him fearlessly in the eye when he felt his father’s eyes on him. This was calculated behavior, and often called upon: its purpose was to fulfill the mission of arousing the impression of a young man who was vacant and slack to the point of idiocy and who would be capable of anything with the one exception of hiding something. But if that wasn’t enough, Peter did not recoil from letting slip, apparently inadvertently, words disrespectful of his father or otherwise displeasing to him,
which then had the effect of lightning rods attracting electricity and diverting it from dangerous paths. For Peter feared his father the way hell fears heaven, with the awe of stewing flesh upon which the spirit gazes down. He loved soccer, but even there he preferred to watch it with an expert expression and make portentous comments than to strain himself by playing. He wanted to become a pilot and achieve heroic feats someday; he did not, however, imagine this as a goal to be worked toward but as a personal disposition, like creatures whose natural attribute it is that they will one day be able to fly. Nor did it influence him that his lack of inclination for work was in contradiction to the teachings of school: this son of a well-known pedagogue was not in the least interested in being respected by his teachers; it was enough for him to be physically the strongest in his class, and if one of his fellow pupils seemed to him too clever, he was
ready to restore the balance of the relationship by a punch in the nose or stomach. As we know, one can lead a respected existence this way; but his behavior had the one disadvantage that he could not use it at home against his father; indeed, that his father should find out as little about it as possible. For faced with this spiritual authority that had brought him up and held him in gentle embrace, Peter’s vehemence collapsed into wailing attempts at rebellion, which Lindner senior called the pitiable cries of the desires. Intimately exposed since childhood to the best principles, Peter had a hard time denying their truth to himself and was able to satisfy his honor and valor only with the cunning of an Indian in avoiding open verbal warfare. He too, of course, used lots of words in order to adapt to his opponent, but he never descended to the need to speak the truth, which in his view was unmanly and garrulous.
So this time, too, his assurances and grimaces bubbled forth at once, but they met with no reaction from his master. Professor Lindner had hastily made the sign of the cross over the soup and begun to eat, silent and rushed. At times, his eye rested briefly and distractedly on the part in his son’s hair. On this day the part had been drawn through the thick, reddish-brown hair with comb, water, and a good deal of pomade, like a narrow-gauge railroad track through a reluctantly yielding forest thicket. Whenever Peter felt his father’s glance resting on it he lowered his head so as to cover with his chin the red, screamingly beautiful tie with which his tutor was not yet acquainted. For an instant later the eye could gently widen upon making such a discovery and the mouth follow it, and words would emerge about “submission to the slogans of clowns and fops” or “social toadiness and servile vanity,” which offended Peter. But this time nothing
happened, and it was only a while later, when the plates were being changed, that Lindner said kindly and vaguely—it was not even at all certain whether he was referring to the tie or whether his admonition was brought about by some unconsciously perceived sight—"People who still have to struggle a lot with their vanity should avoid anything striking in their outward appearance."

Peter took advantage of his father’s unexpected absentmindedness of character to produce a story about a poor grade he was chivalrously supposed to have received because, tested after a fellow pupil, he had deliberately made himself look unprepared in order not to outshine his comrade by demonstrating the incredible demands that were simply beyond the grasp of weaker pupils.

Professor Lindner merely shook his head at this.
But when the middle course had been taken away and dessert came on the table, he began cautiously and ruminatively: “Look, it’s precisely in those years when the appetites are greatest that one can win the most momentous victories over oneself, not for instance by starving oneself in an unhealthy way but through occasionally renouncing a favorite dish after one has eaten enough.”

Peter was silent and showed no understanding of this, but his head was again vividly suffused with red up to his ears.

“It would be wrong,” his father continued, troubled, “if I wanted to punish you for this poor grade, because aside from the fact that you are lying childishly, you demonstrate such a lack of the concept of moral honor that one must first make the soil tillable in order for the punishment to have an effect on it. So I’m not asking anything of you except that you understand this yourself,
and I’m sure that then you’ll punish yourself!”

This was the moment for Peter to point animatedly to his weak health and also to the overwork that could have caused his recent failures in school and that rendered it impossible for him to steel his character by renouncing dessert.

“The French philosopher Comte,” Professor Lindner replied calmly, “was accustomed after dining, without particular inducement, to chew on a crust of dry bread instead of dessert, just to remember those who do not have even dry bread. It is an admirable trait, which reminds us that every exercise of abstemiousness and plainness has profound social significance!”

Peter had long had a most unfavorable impression of philosophy, but now his father added literature to his bad associations by continuing: “The writer Tolstoy, too, says
that abstemiousness is the first step toward freedom. Man has many slavish desires, and in order for the struggle against all of them to be successful, one must begin with the most elemental: the craving for food, idleness, and sensual desires.” Professor Lindner was accustomed to pronounce any of these three terms, which occurred often in his admonitions, as impersonally as the others; and long before Peter had been able to connect anything specific with the expression “sensual desires” he had already been introduced to the struggle against them, alongside the struggles against idleness and the craving for food, without thinking about them any more than his father, who had no need to think further about them because he was certain that basic instruction in these struggles begins with self-determination. In this fashion it came about that on a day when Peter did not yet know sensual longing in its most desired form but was already slinking about
its skirts, he was surprised for the first time by a sudden feeling of angry revulsion against the loveless connection between it and idleness and the craving for food that his father was accustomed to make; he was not allowed to come straight out with this but had to lie, and cried: “I’m a plain and simple person and can’t compare myself with writers and philosophers!”—whereby, in spite of his agitation, he did not choose his words without reflection.

His tutor did not respond.

“I’m hungry!” Peter added, still more passionately.

Lindner put on a pained and scornful smile.

“I’ll die if I don’t get enough to eat!” Peter was almost blubbering.

“The first response of the individual to all interventions and attacks from without
occurs through the instrument of the voice!” his father instructed him.

And the “pitiable cries of the desires,” as Lindner called them, died away. On this particularly manly day Peter did not want to cry, but the necessity of developing the spirit for voluble verbal defense was a terrible burden to him. He could not think of anything more at all to say, and at this moment he even hated the lie because one had to speak in order to use it. Eagerness for murder alternated in his eyes with howls of complaint. When it had got to this point, Professor Lindner said to him kindly: “You must impose on yourself serious exercises in being silent, so that it is not the careless and ignorant person in you who speaks but the reflective and well-brought-up one, who utters words that bring joy and firmness!” And then, with a friendly expression, he lapsed into reflection. “I have no better advice, if one wants to make others good”—he finally
revealed to his son the conclusion he had come to—"than to be good oneself; Matthias Claudius says too: 'I can't think of any other way except by being oneself the way one wants children to be'!" And with these words Professor Lindner amiably but decisively pushed away the dessert, although it was his favorite—rice pudding with sugar and chocolate—without touching it, through such loving inexorability forcing his son, who was gnashing his teeth, to do the same.

At this moment the housekeeper came in to report that Agathe was there. August Lindner straightened up in confusion. "So she did come!" a horribly distinct mute voice said to him. He was prepared to feel indignant, but he was also ready to feel a fraternal gentleness that combined in sympathetic understanding with a delicate sense of moral action, and these two countercurrents, with an enormous train of principles, staged a wild chase through his entire body before he
was able to utter the simple command to show the lady into the living room. “You wait for me here!” he said to Peter severely, and hastily left. But Peter had noticed something unusual about his father’s behavior, he just didn’t know what; in any event, it gave him so much rash courage that after the latter’s departure, and a brief hesitation, he scooped into his mouth a spoonful of the chocolate that was standing ready to be sprinkled, then a spoonful of sugar, and finally a big spoonful of pudding, chocolate, and sugar, a procedure he repeated several times before smoothing out all the dishes to cover his tracks. And Agathe sat for a while alone in the strange house and waited for Professor Lindner; for he was pacing back and forth in another room, collecting his thoughts before going to encounter the lovely and perilous female. She looked around and suddenly felt anxious, as if she had lost her way climbing among the branches of a dream tree and had
to fear not being able to escape in one piece from its world of contorted wood and myriad leaves. A profusion of details confused her, and in the paltry taste they evinced there was a repellent acerbity intertwined in the most remarkable way with an opposite quality, for which, in her agitation, she could not immediately find words. The repulsion was perhaps reminiscent of the frozen stiffness of chalk drawings, but the room also looked as if it might smell in a grandmotherly, cloying way of medicines and ointments; and old-fashioned and unmanly ghosts, fixated with unpleasant maliciousness upon human suffering, were hovering within its walls. Agathe sniffed. And although the air held nothing more than her imaginings, she gradually found herself being led further and further backward by her feelings, until she remembered the rather anxious “smell of heaven,” that aroma of incense half aired and emptied of its spices which clung to the
scarves of the habits her teachers had once worn when she was a girl being brought up together with little friends in a pious convent school without at all succumbing to piety herself. For as edifying as this odor may be for people who associate it with what is right, its effect on the hearts of growing, worldly-oriented, and resistant girls consisted in a vivid memory of smells of protest, just as ideas and first experiences were associated with a man’s mustache or with his energetic cheeks, pungent with cologne and dusted with talc. God knows, even that odor does not deliver what it promises! And as Agathe sat on one of Lindners renunciative upholstered chairs and waited, the empty smell of the world closed inescapably about her with the empty smell of heaven like two hollow hemispheres, and an intimation came over her that she was about to make up for a negligently endured class in the school of life.
She knew now where she was. Afraid yet ready, she tried to adapt to these surroundings and think of the teachings from which she had perhaps let herself be diverted too soon. But her heart reared up at this docility like a horse that refuses to respond to encouragement, and began to run wild with terror, as happens in the presence of feelings that would like to warn the understanding but can’t find any words. Nevertheless, after a while she tried again, and in support thought of her father, who had been a liberal man and had always exhibited a somewhat superficial Enlightenment style and yet, in total contradiction, had made up his mind to send her to a convent school for her education. She was inclined to regard this as a kind of conciliatory sacrifice, an attempt, propelled by a secret insecurity, to do for once the opposite of what one thinks is one’s firm conviction: and because she felt a kinship with any kind of inconsistency, the situation
into which she had got herself seemed to her for an instant like a daughters secret, unconscious act of repetition. But even this second, voluntarily encouraged shudder of piety did not last; apparently she had definitively lost her ability to anchor her animated imaginings in a creed when she had been placed under that all-too-clerical care: for all she had to do was inspect her present surroundings again, and with that cruel instinct youth has for the distance separating the infinitude of a teaching from the finiteness of the teacher, which indeed easily leads one to deduce the master from the servant, the sight of the home surrounding her, in which she had imprisoned herself and settled full of expectation, suddenly and irresistibly impelled her to laughter.

Yet she unconsciously dug her nails into the wood of the chair, for she was ashamed of her lack of resolution. What she most wanted to do was suddenly and as quickly as
possible fling into the face of this unknown man everything that was oppressing her, if he would only finally deign to show himself: The criminal trafficking with her father’s will—absolutely unpardonable, if one regarded it undefiantly. Hagauer’s letters, distorting her image as horribly as a bad mirror without her being quite able to deny the likeness. Then, too, that she wanted to destroy this husband without actually killing him; that she had indeed once married him, but not really, only blinded by self-contempt. There were in her life nothing but unusual incompletions; and finally, bringing everything together, she would also have to talk about the presentiment that hovered between herself and Ulrich, and this she could never betray, under any circumstances! She felt as churlish as a child who is constantly expected to perform a task that is too difficult. Why was the light she sometimes glimpsed always immediately
extinguished again, like a lantern bobbing through a vast darkness, its gleam alternately swallowed up and exposed? She was robbed of all resolution, and superfluously remembered that Ulrich had once said that whoever seeks this light has to cross an abyss that has no bottom and no bridge. Did he himself, therefore, in his inmost soul, not believe in the possibility of what it was they were seeking together? This was what she was thinking, and although she did not really dare to doubt, she still felt herself deeply shaken. So no one could help her except the abyss itself! This abyss was God: oh, what did she know! With aversion and contempt she examined the tiny bridge that was supposed to lead across, the humility of the room, the pictures hung piously on the walls, everything feigning a confidential relationship with Him. She was just as close to abasing herself as she was to turning away in horror. What she would probably most have
liked to do was run away once more; but when she remembered that she always ran away she thought of Ulrich again and seemed to herself “a terrible coward.” The silence at home had been like the calm before a storm, and the pressure of what was approaching had catapulted her here. This was the way she saw it now, not without quite suppressing a smile; and it was also natural that something else Ulrich had said should occur to her, for he had said at some time or other: “A person never finds himself a total coward, because if something frightens him he runs just far enough away to consider himself a hero again!” And so here she sat!
At this moment Lindner entered, having made up his mind to say as much as his visitor would; but once they found themselves face-to-face, things turned out differently. Agathe immediately went on the verbal attack, which to her surprise turned out to be far more ordinary than what led up to it would have indicated.

“You will of course recall that I asked you to explain some things to me,” she began. “Now I’m here. I still remember quite well what you said against my getting a divorce. Perhaps I’ve understood it even better since!”
They were sitting at a large round table, separated from each other by the entire span of its diameter. In relation to her final moments alone Agathe first felt herself, at the very beginning of this encounter, deep under water, but then on solid ground; she laid out the word “divorce” like a bait, although her curiosity to learn Lindners opinion was genuine too.

And Lindner actually answered at almost the same instant: “I know quite well why you are asking me for this explanation. People will have been murmuring to you your whole life long that a belief in the supra-human, and obeying commandments that have their origin in this belief, belong to the Middle Ages! You have discovered that such fairy tales have been disposed of by science! But are you certain that’s really the way it is?”

Agathe noticed to her astonishment that at every third word or so, his lips puffed
out like two assailants beneath his scanty beard. She gave no answer.

"Have you thought about it?" Lindner continued severely. "Do you know the vast number of problems it involves? It's clear you don't! But you have a magnificent way of dismissing this with a wave of your hand, and you apparently don't even realize that you're simply acting under the influence of an external compulsion!"

He had plunged into danger. It was not clear what murmurers he had in mind. He felt himself carried away. His speech was a long tunnel he had bored right through a mountain in order to fall upon an idea, "lies of freethinking men," which was sparkling on the other side in a cocksure light. He was not thinking of either Ulrich or Hagauer but meant both of them, meant everyone. "And even if you had thought about it"—he exclaimed in an assertively rising voice—"and were to be convinced of these mistaken
doctrines that the body is nothing but a system of dead corpuscles, and the soul an interplay of glands, and society a ragbag of mechano-economic laws; and even if that were correct—which it is far from being—I would still deny that such a way of thinking knows anything about the truth of life! For what calls itself science doesn’t have the slightest qualification to explicate by externals what lives within a human being as spiritual inner certainty. Life’s truth is a knowledge with no beginning, and the facts of true life are not communicated by rational proof: whoever lives and suffers has them within himself as the secret power of higher claims and as the living explanation of his self!”

Lindner had stood up. His eyes sparkled like two preachers in the high pulpit formed by his long legs. He looked down on Agathe omnipotently.

“Why is he talking so much right away?” she thought. “And what does he have
against Ulrich? He hardly knows him, and yet he speaks against him openly.” Then her feminine experience in the arousal of feelings told her more quickly and certainly than reflection would have done that Lindner was speaking this way only because, in some ridiculous fashion, he was jealous. She looked up at him with an enchanting smile.

He stood before her tall, waveringly supple, and armed, and seemed to her like a bellicose giant grasshopper from some past geologic age. “Good heavens!” she thought. “Now I’m going to say something that will annoy him all over again, and he’ll chase after me again with his Where am I? What game am I playing?” It confused her that Lindner irritated her to the point of laughter and yet that she was not able to shrug off some of his individual expressions, like “knowledge with no beginning” or “living explanation”; such strange terms at present, but secretly familiar to her, as if she had
always used them herself without being able to remember ever having heard them before. She thought: “It’s gruesome, but he’s already planted some of his words in my heart like children!”

Lindner was aware of having made an impression on her, and this satisfaction conciliated him somewhat. He saw before him a young woman in whom agitation seemed to alternate precariously with feigned indifference, even boldness; since he took himself for a scrupulous expert on the female soul, he did not allow himself to be put off by this, knowing as he did that in beautiful women there was an inordinately great temptation to be arrogant and vain. He could hardly ever observe a beautiful face without an admixture of pity. People so marked were, he was convinced, almost always martyrs to their shining outward aspect, which seduced them to self-conceit and its dragging train of cold-heartedness and superficiality. Still, it
can also happen that a soul dwells behind a beautiful countenance, and how often has insecurity not taken refuge behind arrogance, or despair beneath frivolity! Often, indeed, this is true of particularly noble people, who are merely lacking the support of proper and unshakable convictions. And now Lindner was gradually and completely overcome once more with how the successful person has to put himself in the frame of mind of the slighted one; and as he did this he became aware that the form of Agathe’s face and body possessed that delightful repose unique to the great and noble; even her knee seemed to him, in the folds of its covering envelope, like the knee of Niobe. He was astonished that this specific image should force itself on him, since so far as he knew there was nothing in the least appropriate about it; but apparently the nobility of his moral pain had unilaterally come together in this image with the suspiciousness many children have, for
he felt no less attracted than alarmed. He now noticed her breast too, which was breathing in small, rapid waves. He felt hot and bothered, and if his knowledge of the world had not come to his aid again he would even have felt at a loss; but at this moment of greatest captiousness it whispered to him that this bosom must enclose something unspoken, and that according to all he knew, this secret might well be connected with the divorce from his colleague Hagauer; and this saved him from embarrassing foolishness by instantaneously offering the possibility of desiring the revelation of this secret instead of the bosom. He desired this with all his might, while the union of sin with the chivalric slaying of the dragon of sin hovered before his eyes in glowing colors, much as they glowed in the stained glass in his study.

Agathe interrupted this rumination with a question she addressed to him in a temperate, even restrained tone, after she
had regained her composure. “You claimed that I was acting on insinuations, on external compulsion; what did you mean by that?”

Disconcerted, Lindner raised the glance that had been resting on her heart to her eyes. This had never happened to him before: he could no longer remember the last thing he had said. He had seen in this young woman a victim of the free-minded spirit that was confusing the age, and in his victorious joy had forgotten it.

Agathe repeated her question slightly differently: “I confided to you that I want a divorce from Professor Hagauer, and you replied that I was acting under insinuating influences. It might be useful to me to find out what you understand by them. I repeat, none of the customary reasons is entirely apt; even my aversion has not been insurmountable, as the standards of the world go. I am merely convinced that they may not be
surmounted but are to be immeasurably enlarged!”

“By whom?”

“That’s just the problem you’re supposed to help me solve.” She again looked at him with a gentle smile that was a kind of horribly deep décolleté and that exposed her inner bosom as if it were covered by a mere wisp of black lace.

Lindner involuntarily protected his eyes from the sight with a motion of his hand feigning some adjustment to his glasses. The truth was that courage played the same timid role in his view of the world as it did in the feelings he harbored toward Agathe. He was one of those people who have recognized that it greatly facilitates the victory of humility if one first flattens arrogance with a blow of one’s fist, and his learned nature bade him fear no arrogance so bitterly as that of open-minded science, which reproaches faith with
being unscientific. Had someone told him that the saints, with their empty and beseeching raised hands, were outmoded and in today's world would have to be portrayed grasping sabers, pistols, or even newer instruments in their fists, he would no doubt have been appalled; but he did not want to see the arms of knowledge withheld from faith. This was almost entirely an error, but he was not alone in committing it; and that was why he had assailed Agathe with words that would have merited an honorable place in his writings—and presumably did—but were out of place directed to the woman who was confiding in him. Since he now saw sitting modestly and reflectively before him the emissary of quarters of the world hostile to him, delivered into his hands by a benevolent or demonic fate, he felt this himself and was embarrassed how to respond. “Ah!” he said, as generally and disparagingly as possible, and accidentally hitting not far from
the mark: “I meant the spirit that runs everything today and makes young people afraid they might look stupid, even unscientific, if they don’t go along with every modern superstition. How should I know what slogans are in their minds: ‘Live life to the full!’ ‘Say yes to life!’ ‘Cultivate your personality!’ ‘Freedom of thought and art!’ In any case, everything but the commandments of simple and eternal morality.”

The happy intensification “stupid, even unscientific” gladdened him with its subtlety and reinvigorated his combative spirit. “You will be surprised,” he continued, “that in conversing with you I am placing such emphasis on science, without knowing whether you have occupied yourself with it a little or a lot—”

“Not at all!” Agathe interrupted him. “I’m just an ignorant woman.” She emphasized it and seemed to be pleased with it, perhaps with a kind of non-sanctimoniousness.
“But it’s the world you move in!” Lindner corrected her emphatically. “And whether it’s freedom in values or freedom in science, they both express the same thing: spirit that has been detached from morality.”

Agathe again felt these words as sober shadows that were, however, cast by something still darker in their vicinity. She was not minded to conceal her disappointment, but revealed it with a laugh: “Last time, you advised me not to think about myself, and now you’re the one who is talking about me incessantly,” she mockingly offered for the man standing before her to think about.

He repeated: “You’re afraid of seeming old-fashioned to yourself!”

Something in Agathe’s eyes twitched angrily. “You leave me speechless: this certainly doesn’t apply to me!”
“And I say to you: ‘You have been bought dear; do not become the servants of man!’ The way he said this, which was in total contrast to his entire physical appearance, like a too-heavy blossom on a weak stem, made Agathe brighten. She asked urgently and almost coarsely: “So what should I do? I was hoping you would give me a definite answer!”

Lindner swallowed and turned gloomy with earnestness. “Do what is your duty!”

“I don’t know what my duty is!”

“Then you must seek duties out!”

“I don’t know what duties are!”

Lindner smiled grimly. “There we have it! That’s the liberation of the personality!” he exclaimed. “Vain reflection! You can see it in yourself: when a person is free he is unhappy! When a person is free he’s a phantom!” he added, raising his voice
somewhat more, out of embarrassment. But then he lowered it again, and concluded with conviction: “Duty is what mankind in proper self-awareness has erected against its own weakness. Duty is one and the same truth that all great personalities have acknowledged or pointed to. Duty is the work of the experience of centuries and the result of the visionary glance of the blessed. But what even the simplest person knows with precision in his inmost being, if only he lives an upright life, is duty too!”

“That was a hymn with quivering candles!” Agathe noted appreciatively.

It was disagreeable that Lindner, too, felt that he had sung falsely. He ought to have said something else but didn’t trust himself to recognize in what the deviation from the genuine voice of his heart consisted. He merely allowed himself the thought that this young creature must be deeply disappointed by her husband, since
she was raging so impudently and bitterly against herself, and that in spite of all the censure she provoked, she would have been worthy of a stronger man; but he had the impression that a far more dangerous idea was on the point of succeeding this one. Agathe, meanwhile, slowly and very decisively shook her head; and with the spontaneous assurance with which an excited person is seduced by another into doing something that unbalances an already precarious situation completely, she continued: “But we’re talking about my divorce! And why aren’t you saying anything more about God today? Why don’t you simply say to me: ‘God orders you to stay with Professor Hagauer!’ I can’t honestly imagine that He would command such a thing!”

Lindner shrugged his tall shoulders indignantly; indeed, as they rose he himself actually seemed to hover in the air. “I have never said a word to you about it; you’re the
only one who has tried to!” He defended himself gruffly. “And for the rest, don’t believe for a minute that God bothers Himself with the tiny egoistic antics of our emotions! That’s what His law is for, which we must follow! Or doesn’t that seem heroic enough for you, since people today are always looking for what’s personal”? Well, in that case I’ll set a higher heroism against your claims: heroic submission!”

Every word of this carried significantly more weight than a layperson really ought to permit himself, were it only in his thoughts; Agathe, in return, could only go on smiling in the face of such coarse derision if she did not want to be forced to stand up and break off the visit; and she smiled, of course, with such assured adroitness that Lindner felt himself goaded into ever-greater confusion. He became aware that his inspirations were ominously rising and increasingly reinforcing a glowing intoxication that was robbing him of
reflection and resounded with the will to break the obstinate mind and perhaps save the soul he saw facing him. “Our duty is painful!” he exclaimed. “Our duty may be repulsive and disgusting! Don’t think I have any intention of becoming your husband’s lawyer, or that my nature is to stand by his side. But you must obey the law, because it is the only thing that bestows lasting peace on us and protects us from ourselves!”

Agathe now laughed at him; she had guessed at the weapon, stemming from her divorce, that these effects put in her hand, and she turned the knife in the wound. “I understand so little about all that,” she said. “But may I honestly confess an impression I have? When you’re angry you get a little slippery!”

“Oh, come on!” Lindner retorted. He recoiled, his one desire not to concede such a thing at any price. He raised his voice defensively and entreated the sinning phantom
sitting before him: “The spirit must not submit itself to the flesh and all its charms and horrors! Not even in the form of disgust! And I say to you: Even though you might find it painful to control the reluctance of the flesh, as the school of marriage has apparently asked of you, you are not simply permitted to run away from it. For there lives in man a desire for liberation, and we can no more be the slaves of our fleshly disgust than the slaves of our lust! This is obviously what you wanted to hear, since otherwise you would not have come to me!” he concluded, no less grandiloquently than spitefully. He stood towering before Agathe; the strands of his beard moved around his lips. He had never spoken such words to a woman before, with the exception of his own deceased wife, and his feelings toward her had been different. But now these feelings were intermingled with desire, as if he were swinging a whip in his fist to chastise the whole earth; yet they
were simultaneously timid, as if he were being lofted like an escaped hat on the crest of the tornado of the sermon of repentance that had taken hold of him.

“There you go again, saying such remarkable things!” Agathe noted without passion, intending to shut off his insolence with a few dry words; but then she measured the enormous crash looming up before him and preferred to humble herself gently by holding back, so she continued, in a voice that had apparently suddenly been darkened by repentance: “I came only because I wanted you to lead me.”

Lindner went on swinging his whip of words with confused zeal; he had some sense that Agathe was deliberately leading him on, but he could not find a way out, and entrusted himself to the future. “To be chained to a man for a lifetime without feeling any physical attraction is certainly a heavy sentence,” he exclaimed. “But hasn’t one brought this
on oneself, especially if the partner is unworthy, by not having paid enough attention to the signs of the inner life? There are many women who allow themselves to be deluded by external circumstances, and who knows if one is not being punished in order to be shaken up?” Suddenly his voice cracked. Agathe had been accompanying his words with assenting nods of her head; but imagining Hagauer as a bewitching seducer was too much for her, and her merry eyes betrayed it. Lindner, driven crazy by this, blared in falsetto: “Tor he that spares the rod hates his child, but whosoever loves it chastises it!”

His victim’s resistance had now transformed this philosopher of life, dwelling in his lofty watchtower, into a poet of chastisement and the exciting conditions that went with it. He was intoxicated by a feeling he did not recognize, which emanated from an inner fusion of the moral reprimand with which he was goading his visitor and a
provocation of all his manliness, a fusion that one might symbolically characterize, as he himself now saw, as lustful.

But the “arrogant conquering female,” who was finally to have been driven from the empty vanity of her worldly beauty to despair, matter-of-factly picked up on his threats about the rod and quietly asked: “Who is going to punish me? Whom are you thinking of? Are you thinking of God?”

But it was unthinkable to say such a thing! Lindner suddenly lost his courage. His scalp prickled with sweat. It was absolutely impossible that the name of God should be uttered in such a context. His glance, extended like a two-tined fork, slowly withdrew from Agathe. Agathe felt it. “So he can’t do it either!” she thought. She felt a reckless desire to go on tugging at this man until she heard from his mouth what he did not want to yield to her. But for now it was enough: the conversation had reached its outer limit.
Agathe understood that it had only been a passionate rhetorical subterfuge, heated to the point where it became transparent, and all to avoid mentioning the decisive point. Besides, Lindner, too, now knew that everything he had said, indeed everything that had got him worked up, even the excess itself, was only the product of his fear of excesses; the most dissolute aspect of which he considered to be the approach with the prying tools of mind and feeling to what ought to remain veiled in lofty abstractions, toward which this excessive young woman was obviously pushing him. He now named this to himself as “an offense against die decency of faith.” For in these moments the blood drained back out of Lindner’s head and resumed its normal course; he awoke like a person who finds himself standing naked far from his front door, and remembered that he could not send Agathe away without consolation and instruction. Breathing deeply, he
stood back from her, stroked his beard, and said reproachfully: “You have a restless and over-imaginative nature!”

“And you have a peculiar idea of gallantry!” Agathe responded coolly, for she had no desire to go on any longer.

Lindner found it necessary to repair his standing by saying something more: “You should learn in the school of reality to take your subjectivity mercilessly in hand, for whoever is incapable of it will be overtaken by imagination and fantasy, and dragged to the ground...!” He paused, for this strange woman was still drawing the voice from his breast quite against his will. “Woe to him who abandons morality; he is abandoning reality!” he added softly.

Agathe shrugged her shoulders. “I hope next time you will come to us!” she proposed.

“To that I must respond: Never!” Lindner protested, suddenly and now totally
down to earth. ‘Tour brother and I have differences of opinion about life that make it preferable for us to avoid contact,’ he added as excuse.

“So I’m the one who will have to come studiously to the school of reality,” Agathe replied quietly.

“No!” Lindner insisted, but then in a remarkable fashion, almost menacingly, he blocked her path; for with those words she had got up to go. “That cannot be! You cannot put me in the ambiguous position toward my colleague Hagauer of receiving your visits without his knowledge!”

“Are you always as passionate as you are today?” Agathe asked mockingly, thereby forcing him to make way for her. She now felt, at the end, spiritless but strengthened. The fear Lindner had betrayed drew her toward actions alien to her true condition; but while the demands her brother made
demoralized her easily, this man gave her back the freedom to animate her inner self however she wanted, and it comforted her to confuse him.

“Did I perhaps compromise myself a little?” Lindner asked himself after she had left. He stiffened his shoulders and marched up and down the room a few times. Finally he decided to continue seeing her, containing his malaise, which was quite pronounced, in the soldierly words: “One must set oneself to remain gallant in the face of every embarrassment!”

When Agathe got up to leave, Peter had slipped hurriedly away from the keyhole, where he had been listening, not without astonishment, to what his father had been up to with the “big goose.”
BEGINNING OF A SERIES OF WONDROUS EXPERIENCES

Shortly after this visit there was a repetition of the “impossible” that was already hovering almost physically around Agathe and Ulrich, and it truly came to pass without anything at all actually happening.

Brother and sister were changing to go out for the evening. There was no one in the house to help Agathe aside from Ulrich; they had started late and had thus been in the greatest haste for a quarter of an hour, when a short pause intervened. Piece by piece, nearly all the ornaments of war a woman puts on for such occasions were strewn on the chair backs and surfaces of the room, and
Agathe was in the act of bending over her foot with all the concentration that pulling on a thin silk stocking demands. Ulrich was standing at her back. He saw her head, her neck, her shoulders, and this nearly naked back; her body was curved over her raised knee, slightly to one side, and the tension of this process rounded three folds on her neck, which shot slender and merry through her clear skin like three arrows: the charming physicality of this painting, born of the momentarily spreading stillness, seemed to have lost its frame and passed so abruptly and directly into Ulrich’s body that he moved from the spot and, neither with the involuntariness of a banner being unfurled by the wind nor exactly with deliberate reflection, crept closer on tiptoe, surprised the bent-over figure, and with gentle ferocity bit into one of these arrows, while his arm closed tightly around his sister. Then Ulrich’s teeth just as cautiously released his overpowered
victim; his right hand had grabbed her knee, and while with his left arm he pressed her body to his, he pulled her upright with him on upward-bounding tendons. Agathe cried out in fright.

Up to this point everything had taken place as playfully and jokingly as much that had gone on before, and even if it was tinged with the colors of love, it was only with the actually shy intention of concealing love’s unwonted dangerous nature beneath such cheerfully intimate dress. But when Agathe got over her fright, and felt herself not so much flying through the air as rather resting in it, suddenly liberated into weightlessness and directed instead by the gentle force of the gradually decelerating motion, it brought about one of those accidents beyond human control, in which she seemed to herself strangely soothed, indeed carried away from all earthly unrest; with a movement changing the balance of her body that she could
never have repeated, she also brushed away the last silken thread of compulsion, turned in falling to her brother, continued, so to speak, her rise as she fell, until she lay, sinking down, as a cloud of happiness in his arms. Ulrich bore her, gently pressing her body to his, through the darkening room to the window and placed her beside him in the mellow light of the evening, which flowed over her face like tears. Despite the energy everything demanded, and the force Ulrich had exercised on his sister, what they were doing seemed to them remarkably remote from energy and force; one might perhaps have been able, again, to compare it with the wondrous ardor of a painting, which for the hand that invades the frame to grasp it is nothing but a ridiculous painted surface. So, too, they had nothing in mind beyond what was taking place physically, which totally filled their consciousness; and yet, alongside its nature as a harmless, indeed, at the
beginning, even coarse joke, which called all their muscles into play, this physical action possessed a second nature, which, with the greatest tenderness, paralyzed their limbs and at the same time ensnared them with an inexpressible sensitivity. Questioningly they flung their arms around each other’s shoulders. The fraternal stature of their bodies communicated itself to them as if they were rising up from a single root. They looked into each others eyes with as much curiosity as if they were seeing such things for the first time. And although they would not have been able to articulate what had really happened, since their part in it had been too pressing, they still believed they knew that they had just unexpectedly found themselves for an instant in the midst of that shared condition at whose border they had long been hesitating, which they had already described to each other so often but had so far only gazed at from outside.
If they tested it soberly (and surreptitiously they both did), it signified hardly more than a bewitching accident and ought to have dissolved the next moment, or at least with the return of activity, into nothingness; and yet this did not happen. On the contrary, they left the window, turned on the lights, and resumed their preparations, only soon to relinquish them again, and without their having to say anything to each other, Ulrich went to the telephone and informed the house where they were expected that they were not coming. He was already dressed for the evening, but Agathe’s gown was still hanging unfastened around her shoulders and she was just striving to impart some well-bred order to her hair. The technical resonance of his voice in the instrument and the connection to the world that had been established had not sobered Ulrich in the slightest: he sat down opposite his sister, who paused in what she was doing, and
when their glances met, nothing was so certain as that the decision had been made and all prohibitions were now a matter of indifference to them. Their understanding announced itself to them with every breath; it was a defiantly endured agreement to finally redeem themselves from the ill humor of longing, and it was an agreement so sweetly suffered that the notions of making it a reality nearly tore themselves loose from them and united them already in imagination, as a storm whips a veil of foam on ahead of the waves: but a still greater desire bade them be calm, and they were incapable of touching each other again. They wanted to begin, but the gestures of the flesh had become impossible for them, and they felt an ineffable warning that had nothing to do with the commandments of morality. It seemed that from a more perfect, if still shadowy, union, of which they had already had a foretaste as in an ecstatic metaphor, a higher
commandment had marked them out, a higher intimation, curiosity, or expectation had breathed upon them.

Brother and sister now remained perplexed and thoughtful, and after they had calmed their feelings they hesitantly began to speak.

Ulrich said, without thinking, the way one talks into thin air: “You are the moon—”

Agathe understood.

Ulrich said: “You have flown to the moon and it has given you back to me again—”

Agathe said nothing: moon conversations so consume one’s whole heart.

Ulrich said: “It’s a figure of speech. We were ‘beside ourselves.’ ‘We exchanged bodies without even touching each other’ are metaphors too! But what does a metaphor signify? A little something true with a good
deal of exaggeration. And yet I was about to swear, impossible as it may be, that the exaggeration was quite small and the reality was becoming quite large!”

He said no more. He was thinking: ‘What reality am I talking about? Is there a second one?’

If one here leaves the conversation between brother and sister in order to follow the possibilities of a comparison that had at least some part in determining their talk, it might well be said that this reality was truly most closely related to the quixotically altered reality of moonlit nights. But if one does not comprehend this reality either, if one sees in it merely an opportunity for some ecstatic foolishness that by day were better suppressed, then if one wanted to picture accurately what was actually happening one would have to summon up the totally incredible idea that there’s a piece of earth where all feelings really do change like magic as
soon as the empty busyness of day plunges into the all-experiencing corporeality of night! Not only do external relationships melt away and re-form in the whispering enclosures of light and shadow, but the inner relationships, too, move closer together in a new way: the spoken word loses its self-will and acquires fraternal will. All affirmations express only a single surging experience. The night embraces all contradictions in its shimmering maternal arms, and in its bosom no word is false and no word true, but each is that incomparable birth of the spirit out of darkness that a person experiences in a new thought. In this way, every process on moonlit nights partakes of the nature of the unrepeateable. Of the nature of the intensified. Of the nature of selfless generosity and a stripping away of the self. Every imparting is a parting without envy. Every giving a receiving. Every conception multifariously interwoven in the excitement of the night. To be
this way is the only access to the knowledge of what is unfolding. For in these nights the self holds nothing back; there is no condensation of possession on the self’s surface, hardly a memory; the intensified self radiates into an unbounded selflessness. And these nights are filled with the insane feeling that something is about to happen that has never happened before, indeed that the impoverished reason of day cannot even conceive of. And it is not the mouth that pours out its adoration but the body, which, from head to foot, is stretched taut in exaltation above the darkness of the earth and beneath the light of the heavens, oscillating between two stars. And the whispering with one’s companion is full of a quite unknown sensuality, which is not the sensuality of an individual human being but of all that is earthly, of all that penetrates perception and sensation, the suddenly revealed tenderness of the
world that incessantly touches all our senses and is touched by them.

Ulrich had indeed never been aware in himself of a particular preference for mouth-ing adorations in the moonlight; but as one ordinarily gulps life down without feeling, one sometimes has, much later, its ghostly taste on one’s tongue: and in this way he suddenly felt everything he had missed in that effusiveness, all those nights he had spent heedless and lonely before he had known his sister, as silver poured over an endless thicket, as moon flecks in the grass, as laden apple trees, singing frost, and gilded black waters. These were only details, which did not coalesce and had never found an association, but which now arose like the com-mingled fragrance of many herbs from an in-toxicating potion. And when he said this to Agathe she felt it too.

Ulrich finally summed up everything he had said with the assertion: “What made us
turn to each other from the very beginning can really be called a life of moonlit nights!” And Agathe breathed a deep sigh of relief. It did not matter what it meant; evidently it meant: and why don’t you know a magic charm against its separating us at the last moment? She sighed so naturally and confidently that she was not even aware of it herself.

And this again led to a movement that inclined them toward each other and kept them apart. Every strong excitement that two people have shared to the end leaves behind in them the naked intimacy of exhaustion; if even arguing does this, then it is infinitely more true of tender feelings that ream out the very marrow to form a flute! So Ulrich, touched, would have almost embraced Agathe when he heard her wordless complaint, as enchanted as a lover on the morning after the first tempests. His hand was already touching her shoulder, which
was still bare, and at this touch she started, smiling; but in her eyes there reappeared immediately the unwished-for dissuasion. Strange images now arose in his mind: Agathe behind bars. Or fearfully motioning to him from a growing distance, torn from him by the sundering power of alien fists. Then again he was not only the one who was powerless and dismissed, but also the one who did this....Perhaps these were the eternal images of the doubts of love, merely consumed in the average life; then again, perhaps not. He would have liked to speak to her about this, but Agathe now looked away from him and toward the open window, and hesitantly stood up. The fever of love was in their bodies, but their bodies dared no repetition, and what was beyond the window, whose drapes stood almost open, had stolen away their imagination, without which the flesh is only brutal or despondent. When Agathe took the first steps in this direction,
Ulrich, guessing her assent, turned out the light in order to free their gaze into the night. The moon had come up behind the tops of the spruce trees, whose greenly glimmering black stood out phlegmatically against the blue-gold heights and the palely twinkling distance. Agathe resentfully inspected this meaningful sliver of the world.

“So nothing more than moonshine?” she asked.

Ulrich looked at her without answering. Her blond hair flamed in the semidarkness against the whitish night, her lips were parted by shadows, her beauty was painful and irresistible.

But evidently he was standing there in similar fashion before her gaze, with blue eye sockets in his white face, for she went on: “Do you know what you look like now? Like Tierrot Lunairel, it calls for prudence!” She wanted to wrong him a little in her
excitement, which almost made her weep. Ages ago, all useless young people had appeared to each other, painfully and peevishly, in the pale mask of the lunarly lonely Pierrot, powdered chalk-white except for the drop-of-blood-red lips and abandoned by a Columbine they had never possessed; this trivialized rather considerably the love for moonlit nights. But to his sisters initially growing grief, Ulrich willingly joined in. “Even ‘Laugh, clown, laugh’ has already sent a chill of total recognition down the spines of thousands of philistines when they hear it sung,” he affirmed bitterly. But then he added softly, whispering: “This whole area of feeling really is highly questionable! And yet I would give all the memories of my life for the way you look right now.” Agathe’s hand had found Ulrich’s. Ulrich continued softly and passionately: “To our time, the bliss of feeling means only the gluttony of feelings and has profaned being swept away by the
moon into a sentimental debauch. It does not even begin to understand that this bliss must be either an incomprehensible mental disturbance or the fragment of another life!”

These words—precisely because they were perhaps an exaggeration—had the faith, and with it the wings, of adventure. “Good night!” Agathe said unexpectedly, and took them with her. She had released herself and closed the drapes so hastily that the picture of the two of them standing in the moonlight disappeared as if at one blow; and before Ulrich could turn on the light she succeeded in finding her way out of the room.

And Ulrich gave her yet more time. “Tonight you’ll sleep as impatiently as before the start of a great outing!” he called after her.

“I hope so too!” was what resounded by way of an answer in the closing of the door.
When they saw each other again the next morning it was, from a distance, the way one stumbles on an out-of-the-ordinary picture in an ordinary house, or even the way one catches sight of an important outdoor sculpture in the full haphazardness of nature: an island of meaning unexpectedly materializes in the senses, an elevation and condensing of the spirit from the watery fens of existence! But when they came up to each other they were embarrassed, and all that was to be felt in their glances, shading them with tender warmth, was the exhaustion of the previous night.
Who knows, besides, whether love would be so admired if it did not cause fatigue! When they became aware of the unpleasant aftereffects of the previous day's excitement it made them happy again, as lovers are proud of having almost died from desire. Still, the joy they found in each other was not only such a feeling but also an arousal of the eye. Colors and shapes presented themselves as dissolved and unfathomable, and yet were sharply displayed, like a bouquet of flowers drifting on dark water: their boundaries were more emphatically marked than usual, but in a way that made it impossible to say whether this lay in the clarity of their appearance or in the underlying agitation. The impression was as much part of the concise sphere of perception and attention as it was of the imprecise sphere of emotion; and this is just what caused this impression to hover between the internal and the external, the way a held breath hovers between inhalation
and exhalation, and made it hard to discern, in peculiar opposition to its strength, whether it was part of the physical world or merely owed its origin to the heightening of inner empathy. Nor did either of them wish to make this distinction, for a kind of shame of reason held them back; and through the longish period that followed it also still forced them to keep their distance from each other, although their sensitivity was lasting and might well give rise to the belief that suddenly the course of the boundaries between them, as well as those between them and the world, had changed slightly.

The weather had turned summery again, and they spent a lot of time outdoors: flowers and shrubs were blooming in the garden. When Ulrich looked at a blossom—which was not exactly an ingrained habit of this once-impatient man—he now sometimes found no end to contemplation and, to say it all, no beginning either. If by
chance he could name it, it was a redemption from the sea of infinity. Then the little golden stars on a bare cane signified “forsythia,” and those early leaves and umbels “lilacs.” But if he did not know the name he would call the gardener over, for then this old man would name an unknown name and everything was all right again, and the primordial magic by which possession of the correct name bestows protection from the untamed wildness of things demonstrated its calming power as it had ten thousand years ago. Still, it could happen differently: Ulrich could find himself abandoned and without a helper as he confronted such a little twig or flower, without even Agathe around to share his ignorance: then it suddenly seemed to him quite impossible to understand the bright green of a young leaf, and the mysteriously outlined fullness of the form of a tiny flower cup became a circle of infinite diversion that nothing could interrupt. In
addition, it was hardly possible for a man like him, unless he were lying to himself, which on Agathe’s account could not be allowed to happen, to believe in an abashed rendezvous with nature, whose whisperings and upward glances, piety and mute music making, are more the privilege of a special simplicity which imagines that hardly has it laid its head in the grass than God is already tickling its neck, although it has nothing against nature being bought and sold on the fruit exchange on weekdays. Ulrich despised this cut-rate mysticism of the cheapest price and praise, whose constant preoccupation with God is at bottom exceedingly immoral; he preferred instead to continue abandoning himself to the dizziness of finding the words to characterize a color distinct enough to reach out and take hold of, or to describe one of the shapes that had taken to speaking for themselves with such mindless compelling-ness. For in such a condition the word does
not cut and the fruit remains on the branch, although one thinks it already in one’s mouth: that is probably the first mystery of day-bright mysticism. And Ulrich tried to explain this to his sister, even if his ulterior motive was that it should not, someday, disappear like a delusion.

But as he did so, the passionate condition was succeeded by another—of a calmer, indeed sometimes almost absentminded conversation—which came to permeate their exchange and served each of them as a screen from the other, although they both saw through it completely. They usually lay in the garden on two large deck chairs, which they were constantly dragging around to follow the sun; this early-summer sun was shining for the millionth time on the magic it works every year; and Ulrich said many things that just happened to pass through his mind and rounded themselves off cautiously like the moon, which was now quite pale and
a little dirty, or like a soap bubble: and so it happened, and quite soon, that he came round to speaking of the confounded and frequently cursed absurdity that all understanding presupposes a kind of superficiality, a penchant for the surface, which is, moreover, expressed in the root of the word “comprehend” to lay hold of, and has to do with primordial experiences having been understood not singly but one by the next and thereby unavoidably connected with one another more on the surface than in depth. He then continued: “So if I maintain that this grass in front of us is green, it sounds quite definite, but I haven’t actually said much. In truth no more than if I’d told you that some man passing by was a member of the Green family. And for heaven’s sake, there’s no end of greens! It would be a lot better if I contented myself with recognizing that this grass is grass-green, or even green like a lawn on which it has just rained a little....” He
squinched languidly across the fresh plot of grass illuminated by the sun and thought: “At least this is how you would probably describe it, since you’re good at making visual distinctions from judging dress materials. But I, on the other hand, could perhaps measure the color as well: I might guess it had a wavelength of five hundred forty millionths of a millimeter; and then this green would apparently be captured and nailed to a specific point! But then it gets away from me again, because this ground color also has something material about it that can’t be expressed in words of color at all, since it’s different from the same green in silk or wool. And now we’re back at the profound discovery that green grass is just grass green!”

Called as a witness, Agathe found it quite understandable that one could not understand anything, and responded: “I suggest you try looking at a mirror in the night: it’s dark, it’s black, you see almost nothing at
all; and yet this nothing is something quite distinctly different from the nothing of the rest of the darkness. You sense the glass, the doubling of depth, some kind of remnant of the ability to shimmer—and yet you perceive nothing at all!”

Ulrich laughed at his sister’s immediate readiness to cut knowledge’s reputation down to size; he was far from thinking that concepts have no value, and knew quite well what they accomplish, even if he did not act accordingly. What he wanted to bring out was the inability to get hold of individual experiences, those experiences that for obvious reasons one has to go through alone and lonely, even when one is with another person. He repeated: “The self never grasps its impressions and utterances singly, but always in context, in real or imagined, similar or dissimilar, harmony with something else; and so everything that has a name leans on everything else in regular rows, as a link in
large and incalculable unities, one relying on another and all penetrated by a common tension. But for that reason,” he suddenly went on, differently, “if for some reason these associations fail and none of them addresses the internal series of orders, one is immediately left again to face an indescribable and inhuman creation, indeed a disavowed and formless one.” With this they were back at their point of departure; but Agathe felt the dark creation above it, the abyss that was the “universe,” the God who was to help her!

Her brother said: “Understanding gives way to irrepressible astonishment, and the smallest experience—of this tiny blade of grass, or the gentle sounds when your lips over there utter a word—becomes something incomparable, lonely as the world, possessed of an unfathomable selfishness and radiating a profound narcosis...!”

He fell silent, irresolutely twisting a blade of grass in his hand, and at first
listened with pleasure as Agathe, apparently as unplagued by introspection as she was by an intellectual education, restored some concreteness to the conversation. For she now responded: “If it weren’t so damp, I’d love to lie on the grass! Let’s go away! It would be so nice to lie on a meadow and get back to nature as simply as a discarded shoe!”

“But all that means is being released from all feelings,” Ulrich objected. “And God alone knows what would become of us if feelings did not appear in swarms, these loves and hates and sufferings and goodesses that give the illusion of being unique to every individual. We would be bereft of all capacity to think and act, because our soul was created for whatever repeats itself over and over, and not for

what lies outside the order of things “

He was oppressed, thought
he had stumbled into emptiness, and with an uneasy frown looked questioningly at his sister’s face.

But Agathe’s face was even clearer than the air that enveloped it and played with her hair, as she gave a response from memory. “I know not where I am, nor do I seek myself, nor do I want to know of it, nor will I have tidings. I am as immersed in the flowing spring of His love as if I were under the surface of the sea and could not feel or see from any side any thing except water.’ “

“Where’s that from?” Ulrich asked curiously, and only then discovered that she was holding in her hands a book she had taken from his own library.

Agathe opened it for him and read aloud, without answering: “I have transcended all my faculties up to the dark power. There I heard without sound, saw without light. Then my heart became bottomless, my
soul loveless, my mind formless, and my nature without being.”

Ulrich now recognized the volume and smiled, and only then did

Agathe say: “It’s one of your books.” Then, closing the book, she concluded from memory: “ ‘Are you yourself, or are you not? I know nothing of this, I am unaware of it, and I am unaware of myself. I am in love, but I know not with whom; I am neither faithful nor unfaithful. Therefore what am I? I am even unaware of my love; my heart is at the same time full of love and empty of love!’ “

Even in ordinary circumstances her excellent memory did not easily rework its recollections into ideas but preserved them in sensory isolation, the way one memorizes poems; for which reason there was always in her words an indescribable blending of body and soul, no matter how unobtrusively she uttered them. Ulrich called to mind the scene
before his father’s funeral, when she had spoken the incredibly beautiful lines of Shakespeare to him. “How wild her nature is compared to mine!” he thought. “I haven’t let myself say much today.” He thought over the explanation of “day-bright mysticism” he had given her: All things considered, it was nothing more than his having conceded the possibility of transitory deviations from the accustomed and verified order of experience; and looked at this way, her experiences were merely following a basic principle somewhat richer in feelings than that of ordinary experience and resembled small middle-class children who have stumbled into a troupe of actors. So he had not dared say any more, although for days every bit of space between himself and his sister had been filled with uncompleted happenings! And he slowly began to concern himself with the problem of whether there might not be more things
that could be believed than he had admitted to himself.

After the lively climax of their dialogue he and Agathe had let themselves fall back into their chairs, and the stillness of the garden closed over their fading words. Insofar as it has been said that Ulrich had begun to be preoccupied by a question, the correction must be made that many answers precede their questions, the way a person hastening along precedes his open, fluttering coat. What preoccupied Ulrich was a surprising notion, one that did not require belief but whose very appearance created astonishment and the impression that such an inspiration must never be allowed to be forgotten, which, considering the claims it asserted, was rather disquieting. Ulrich was accustomed to thinking not so much godlessly as God-free, which in the manner of science means to leave every possible turning to God to the emotions, because such a turning is
not capable of furthering knowledge but can only seduce it into the impracticable. And even at this moment he did not in the least doubt that the way of science was the only correct way, since the most palpable successes of the human spirit had managed to come into being only since this spirit had got out of God’s way. But the notion that had come upon him said: “What if this selfsame ungodliness turned out to be nothing but the contemporary path to God? Every age has had its own pathway of thought to Him, corresponding to the energies of its most powerful minds; would it not also be our destiny, the fate of an age of clever and entrepreneurial experience, to deny all dreams, legends, and ingeniously reasoned notions only because we, at the pinnacle of exploring and discovering the world, again turn to Him and will begin to derive a relationship to Him from a kind of experience that is just beginning?”
This conclusion was quite undemonstrable, Ulrich knew that; indeed, to most people it would appear as perverse, but that did not bother him. He himself really ought not to have thought it either: the scientific procedure—which he had just finished explaining as legitimate—consists, aside from logic, in immersing the concepts it has gained from the surface, from “experience,” into the depths of phenomena and explaining the phenomena by the concepts, the depths by the surface; everything on earth is laid waste and leveled in order to gain mastery over it, and the objection came to mind that one ought not extend this to the metaphysical. But Ulrich now contested this objection: the desert is not an objection, it has always been the birthplace of heavenly visions; and besides, prospects that have not yet been attained cannot be predicted either! But it escaped him that he perhaps found himself in a second kind of opposition to
himself, or had stumbled on a direction leading away from his own: Paul calls faith the expectation of things hoped for and belief in things not seen, a statement thought out to the point of radiant clarity; and Ulrich’s opposition to the Pauline statement, which is one of the basic tenets of the educated person, was among the strongest he bore in his heart. Faith as a diminished form of knowing was abhorrent to his being, it is always “against one’s better knowledge”; on the other hand, it had been given to him to recognize in the “intimation ‘to the best of one’s knowledge” a special condition and an area in which exploring minds could roam. That his opposition had now weakened was later to cost him much effort, but for the moment he did not even notice it, for he was preoccupied and charmed by a swarm of incidental considerations.

He singled out examples. life was becoming more and more homogeneous and
impersonal. Something mechanical, stereotypical, statistical, and serial was insinuating itself into every entertainment, excitement, recreation, even into the passions. The life will was spreading out and becoming shallow, like a river hesitating before its delta. The will to art had already become more or less suspicious, even to itself. It seemed as though the age was beginning to devalue individual life without being able to make up the loss through new collective achievements. This was the face it wore. And this face, which was so hard to understand; which he had once loved and had attempted to remold in the muddy crater of a deeply rumbling volcano, because he felt himself young, like a thousand others; and from which he had turned away like these thousands because he could not gain control over this horribly contorted sight—this face was transfigured, becoming peaceful, deceptively beautiful, and radiant, by a single thought!
For what if it were God Himself who was devaluing the world? Would it not then again suddenly acquire meaning and desire? And would He not be forced to devalue it, if He were to come closer to it by the tiniest step? And would not perceiving even the anticipatory shadow of this already be the one real adventure? These considerations had the unreasonable consistency of a series of adventures and were so exotic in Ulrich’s head that he thought he was dreaming. Now and then he cast a cautiously reconnoitering glance at his sister, as if apprehensive that she would perceive what he was up to, and several times he caught sight of her blond head like light on light against the sky, and saw the air that was toying with her hair also playing with the clouds.

When that happened, she too, raising herself up slightly, looked around in astonishment. She tried to imagine how it would be to be set free from all life’s emotions.
Even space, she thought, this always uniform, empty cube, now seemed changed. If she kept her eyes closed for a while and then opened them again, so that the garden met her glance untouched, as if it had just that moment been created, she noticed as clearly and disembodiedly as in a vision that the course that bound her to her brother was marked out among all the others: the garden “stood” around this line, and without anything having changed about the trees, walks, and other elements of the actual environment—about this she could easily reassure herself—everything had been related to this connection to make an axis and was thereby invisibly changed in a visible way. It may sound paradoxical; but she could just as well have said that the world was sweeter here; perhaps, too, more sorrowful: what was remarkable was that one thought one was seeing it with one’s eyes. There was, moreover, something striking in the way all the
surrounding shapes stood there eerily abandoned but also, in an eerily ravishing way, full of life, so that they were like a gentle death, or a passionate swoon, as if something unnameable had just left them, and this lent them a distinctly human sensuality and openness. And as with this impression of space, something similar had happened with the feelings of time: that flowing ribbon, the rolling staircase with its uncanny incidental association with death, seemed at many moments to stand still and at many others to flow on without any associations at all. In the space of one single outward instant it might have disappeared into itself, without a trace of whether it had stopped for an hour or a minute.

Once, Ulrich surprised his sister during these experiments, and probably had an inking of them, for he said softly, smiling: “There is a prophecy that a millennium is to the gods no longer than a blink of the eye!”
Then they both leaned back and continued listening to the dream discourse of the silence.

Agathe was thinking: “Having brought all this about is all his doing; and yet he doubts every time he smiles!” But the sun was falling in a constant stream of warmth as tenderly as a sleeping potion on his parted lips. Agathe felt it falling on her own, and knew herself at one with him. She tried to put herself in his place and guess his thoughts, which they had really decided they would not do because it was something that came from outside and not from their own creative participation; but as a deviation it was that much more secret. “He doesn’t want this to become just another love story,” she thought, and added: “That’s not my inclination either.” And immediately thereafter she thought: “He will love no other woman after me, for this is no longer a love story; it is the very last love story there can be!” And she
added: “We will be something like the Last Mohicans of love!” At the moment she was also capable of this tone toward herself, for if she summed things up quite honestly, this enchanted garden in which she found herself together with Ulrich was also, of course, more desire than reality. She did not really believe that the Millennium could have begun, in spite of this name Ulrich had once bestowed on it, which had the sound of standing on solid ground. She even felt quite deserted by her powers of desire, and, wherever her dreams might have sprung from, she didn’t know where it was, bitterly sobered. She remembered that before Ulrich, she really had more easily been able to imagine a waking sleep, like the one in which her soul was now rocking, which was able to conduct her behind life, into a wakefulness after death, into the nearness of God, to powers that came to fetch her, or merely alongside life to a cessation of ideas and a transition
into forests and meadows of imaginings: it had never become clear what that was! So now she made an effort to call up these old representations. But all she could remember was a hammock, stretched between two enormous fingers and rocked with an infinite patience; then a calm feeling of being towered over, as if by high trees, between which she felt raised up and removed from sight; and finally a nothingness, which in some incomprehensible way had a tangible content: All these were probably transitory images of suggestion and imagination in which her longing had found solace. But had they really been only passing and half formed? To her astonishment, something quite remarkable slowly began to occur to Agathe. “Truly,” she thought, “it’s as one says: a light dawns! And it spreads the longer it lasts!” For what she had once imagined seemed to be in almost everything that was now standing around her, calm and
enduring, as often as she dispatched her glance to look! What she had imagined had soundlessly entered the world. God, to be sure—differently from the way a literally credulous person might have experienced it—stayed away from her adventure, but to make up for this she was, in this adventure, no longer alone: these were the only two changes that distinguished the fulfillment from the presentiment, and they were changes in favor of earthly naturalness.
In the time that followed they withdrew from their circle of acquaintances, astonishing them by turning down every invitation and not allowing themselves to be contacted in any way. They stayed at home a great deal, and when they went out they avoided places in which they might meet people of their social set, visiting places of entertainment and small theaters where they felt secure from such encounters; and whenever they left the house they generally simply followed the currents of the metropolis, which are an image of people’s needs and, with the precision of tide tables, pile them up in specific places or suck them away, depending on the hour.
It amused them to participate in a style of living that differed from their own and relieved them for a time of responsibility for their usual way of life. Never had the city in which they lived seemed to them at once so lovely and so strange. In their totality the houses presented a grand picture, even if singly or in particular they were not handsome at all; diluted by the heat, noise streamed through the air like a river reaching to the rooftops; in the strong light, attenuated by the depths of the streets, people looked more passionate and mysterious than they presumably deserved. Everything sounded, looked, and smelled irreplaceable and unforgettable, as if it were signaling how it appeared to itself in all its momentariness; and brother and sister not unwillingly accepted this invitation to turn toward the world.

In doing so, they came upon an extraordinary discord. The experiences that they had not shared openly with each other
separated them from other people; but the same problematic passion, which they continued to feel undiminished and which had come to grief not because of a taboo but because of some higher promise, had also transported them to a state that shared a similarity with the sultry intermissions of a physical union. The desire that could not find expression had again sunk back within the body, filling it with a tenderness as indefinable as one of the last days of autumn or first days of spring. It was, nonetheless, not at all as if they loved every person they saw, or everything that was going on: they merely felt the lovely shadow of “how it would be” falling on their hearts, and their hearts could neither fully believe in the mild delusion nor quite escape its pull. It seemed that through their conversations and their continence, through their expectation and its provisional limits, they had become sensitive to the barriers reality places before the emotions, and
now perceived together the peculiarly double-sided nature of life, which dampens every higher aspiration with a lower one. This two-sided nature combines a retreat with every advance, a weakness with every strength, and gives no one a right that it does not take away from others, straightens out no tangle without creating new disorder, and even appears to evoke the sublime only in order to mistake it, an hour later, for the stale and trite. An absolutely indissoluble and profoundly necessary connection apparently combines all happy and cheerful human endeavors with the materialization of their opposites and makes life for intellectual people, beyond all dissension, hard to bear.

The way the plus and minus sides of life adhere to each other has been judged in quite different ways. Pious misanthropists see in it an effluence of earthly decrepitude, bulldog types life’s juiciest filet; the man in the street feels as comfortable within this
contradiction as he does between his left and right hands, and people who are proper say that the world was not created in order to correspond to human expectations but it is the other way round: these ideas were created in order to correspond to the world, and why is it that they never bring it to pass in the sphere of the just and the beautiful? As mentioned, Ulrich was of the opinion that this state of affairs served the production and preservation of a middling condition of life, which more or less leaves it up to chance to mix human genius with human stupidity, as this condition itself also emerges from such a mixture; a long time ago he had expressed this by saying that the mind has no mind, and just recently, at Diotima’s soirée, he had again talked about it at length as the great confusion of the emotions. But whether it had been recently or long ago, and no matter how obvious it might have been to continue the same thought, as soon as Ulrich
began to do so he had the feeling that such words were coming from his mouth a few days too late. This time, he frequently found himself lacking in desire to occupy himself with things that did not directly concern him, for his soul was prepared to submit to the world with all its senses, however this might turn out. His judgment was as good as disconnected from this altogether. Even whether something pleased him or not hardly mattered, for everything simply seized hold of him in a way that surpassed his capacity for understanding. This was as true for every general state of mind as for every particular and individual one; indeed, at times it was entirely without thought, and corporeal; but when it had lasted awhile and reached full measure, it became unpleasant or seemed ridiculous to him, and he was then ready, in a manner just as unfounded as the one in which he had first submitted, to retract that submission.
And Agathe in her fashion was experiencing pretty much the same thing. At times, her conscience was oppressed, and expected or made for itself new oppressions from the world she had left behind but that nonetheless proclaimed itself in all its power all around her. In the manifold bustle that fills day and night there was probably not a single task in which she could participate with all her heart, and her failure to venture into anything should not be regarded with the certainty of blame or disdain, or even contempt. There was in this a remarkable peace! It might perhaps be said, to alter a proverb, that a bad conscience, as long as it is bad enough, may almost provide a better pillow on which to rest than a good one: the incessant ancillary activity in which the mind engages with a view to acquiring a good individual conscience as the final outcome of all the injustice in which it is embroiled is then abolished, leaving behind in mind and
emotions a hectic independence. A tender loneliness, a sky-high arrogance, sometimes poured their splendor over these holidays from the world. Alongside one’s own feelings the world could then appear clumsily bloated, like a captive balloon circled by swallows, or, *mutatis mutandis*, humbled to a background as small as a forest at the periphery of one’s field of vision. The offended civic obligations echoed like a distant and crudely intrusive noise; they were insignificant, if not unreal. A monstrous order, which is in the last analysis nothing but a monstrous absurdity: that was the world. And yet every detail Agathe encountered also had the tensed, high-wire-act nature of the once-and-never-again, the nature of discovery, which is magical and admits of no repetition; and whenever she wanted to speak of this, she did so in the awareness that no word can be uttered twice without changing its meaning.
So the attitude of brother and sister toward the world at this time was a not entirely irreproachable expression of confident benevolence, containing its own brand of parallel attraction and repulsion in a state of feeling that hovered like a rainbow, instead of these opposites combining in the stasis that corresponds to the self-confident state of every day. And something else was connected with this: in the days following that strange night, the tone of their conversations changed too; the echo of destiny faded, and the progression became freer and looser; indeed, it sometimes volatilized in a playful fluttering of words. Still, this did not indicate a temporizing born of despondency as much as it indicated an unregulated broadening of the living foundations of their own adventure. They sought support in observing the ordinary ways in which life was carried on, and were secretly convinced that the equilibrium of this usual form of living was also a
pretense. In this way it happened one day that their conversation took a direction in which, despite some fluctuation, it persisted. Ulrich asked: ‘What does the commandment ‘Love thy neighbor as thyself really mean?’

“Love the person farthest away like thyself is what it means!” Agathe responded with the tenderest forbearance, to which her brother had a right in questions of loving one’s fellowmen.

But Ulrich was not satisfied. “And what does it mean to say ‘Love what you do not know? To love someone you don’t know, although you might well be convinced that after you got acquainted you wouldn’t like each other? So, in the last analysis: to love him although you know him?” he insisted more explicitly.

“That’s clearly the situation most people are in, but they don’t let it bother them!”
Agathe replied. “They put doubt and confidence inside each other!”

“They foresee nothing more in the commandment of love than the reasonable prohibition against hurting each other so long as it serves no purpose,” Ulrich offered.

But Agathe said that that would be the insipid rule of thumb “What you don’t want someone to do to you, don’t do to anyone else,” and it was impossible that the entire purpose of this high-mindedly passionate, cheerfully generous task could be to love a stranger without even asking who he was!

“Perhaps the word love’ here is only an expression that has taken far too great a swing to overcome the obstacles?” Ulrich reflected. But Agathe insisted that it really did mean “love him!” and “without any particular reason,” and that it was not to be haggled over, so Ulrich yielded. “What it means is: Love him in spite of what you know!” he
objected. “And before you know him!” Agathe repeated and underlined it once again: “At least, without knowing him!”

But she stopped abruptly and looked at her brother, bewildered. “But what is it you really love in a person if you don’t know him at all?” she asked impatiently.

Thus the playful questions took on various forms as they sped back and forth. But Ulrich did not hasten to his sister’s aid. He was of the opinion that to love something means to prefer it over other things, and that surely assumed a certain knowing.

“Almost everybody loves himself best, and knows himself least!” Agathe threw in.

“True love is independent of merit and reward,” Ulrich confirmed, mimicking a moralizing tone and shrugging his shoulders.

“Something’s wrong here!”

“A lot’s wrong!” he ventured.
“And if you love everything? If you’re supposed to love the whole world, the way you are today? What is it then that you’re loving? You would say: ‘Nothing special’!” Agathe laughed.

“Haven’t you noticed, too, that today it’s downright disturbing if you happen to meet a person who is so beautiful that you have to say something personal about it?” he asked her.

“Then it’s not a feeling about the real world and the real person!” she said firmly.

“So then we have to tackle the question as to what part of this person it’s true of, or what metamorphosis and transformation of the real person and the real world,” Ulrich said, softly but emphatically.

After a short pause, Agathe answered, with a timid conscience: “Perhaps that is the real person?” But Ulrich hesitantly resisted this, shaking his head.
Shining through the content of this inquiring assertion there was, no doubt, a profound obviousness. The breezes and delights of these days were so tender and merry that the impression arose spontaneously that man and world must be showing themselves as they really were: this transparency harbored a small, odd, supra-sensory shudder, such as is glimpsed in the flowing transparency of a brook, a transparency that allows the glance to see to the bottom but, when it arrives there, wavering, makes the mysterious colored stones look like fish scales, and beneath them what the glance had thought it was experiencing is truly concealed, without possibility of access. Agathe, surrounded by sunshine, needed only to disengage her glance a little to have the feeling of having stumbled into a supernatural domain; for the shortest interval she could easily imagine that she had come in contact with a higher truth and reality, or at least had come upon
an aspect of existence where a little door behind the earth mysteriously indicated the way from the earthly garden into the beyond. But when she again limited the range of her glance to an ordinary span and let life’s glare stream in on her once more, she saw whatever might actually happen to be there: perhaps a little flag being waved to and fro by a child’s hand, merrily and without any kind of puzzled thought; a police wagon with prisoners, its black-green paint sparkling in the light; or a man with a colorful cap contentedly turning a pile of manure; or finally a company of soldiers, whose shouldered rifles were pointing their barrels at the sky. All this seemed to have had poured over it something related to love, and everyone also seemed more ready to open themselves to this feeling than usual: but to believe that the empire of love was now really happening would be just as difficult, Ulrich said, as
imagining that at this moment no dog could bite or no person do anything evil.

The same happened with all the other attempts at explanation, which had in common with this one that they opposed some land of person who was far off and true to people who were everyday, earth-bound, and bad and good, but at all events people as we know them. Brother and sister examined these ideal types one after the other, and could not believe in any of them. There was the feeling that on such festive days nature brought forth in her creatures all their hidden goodness and beauty. Then there were the more psychological explanations, that people in this transparent, nuptial air did not show themselves as different in some magical way, but still displayed themselves so as to be as lovable as they would like to be and saw themselves as being: sweating their egotism and inward-turned indulgence, as it were, out through their pores. And finally
there is also the variation that people were showing their goodwill; to be sure, this cannot prevent them from doing evil, but emerges miraculously and unscathed on days like these from the evil will that usually governs them, like Jonah from the belly of the whale. But the most succinct explanation one heard was that this is the immortal part of man, which shimmers through the mortal part. All these imputations had in common that they located the real person in a part of him that, among the insubstantial remainder, does not come into play; and if the promising contact with this real self was a process clearly directed upward, there was also a second, no less abundant group of explanations, which directed this process just as clearly downward: these were all those according to which man is supposed to have lost his natural innocence through intellectual arrogance and all lands of misfortune brought upon him by civilization. There are,
therefore, two genuine people, who appear to the mind with the greatest punctuality in the same, constantly recurring situations, yet both these types—the one a divine superman, the other an animal-like inframan—were on opposite sides of the person as he really is. Finally, Ulrich remarked dryly: “The only trait that remains as common, and also very characteristic, is that even when he is being good, a person does not seek the true person in himself but takes himself to be something else plus or minus*!”

But here brother and sister had arrived at a borderline case of that love for another that is so problematic and so gently entwines everything within it, and Agathe sighed in vexation, but not without charm. “Then all that remains of all this is just a ‘mood’!” she said, disappointed. “The sun is shining. You get into a frame of mind!”
Ulrich added to this: “The social instincts stretch themselves out in the sun like mercury in the thermometer tube, at the expense of the egotistic instincts, which otherwise hold them more or less in balance. Perhaps nothing else.”

“So an ‘unconscious craving’ like a schoolgirl’s or schoolboys!” Agathe continued. “They would like to kiss the whole world and have no idea why! So we can’t say anything more than that either?”

They had suddenly become tired of feeling; and it sometimes happened that in such a conversation, dealing only with their capacity for feeling, they neglected to use it. Also, because the surfeit of emotions that could nowhere find an outlet actually hurt, they sometimes got back at it with a little ingratitude. But when they had both spoken in this fashion, Agathe quickly looked sidelong at her brother. “That would,” she protested, “be saying too little!”
The moment she said this, they both felt once more that they were not just relying on some subjective fantasy but were facing an invisible reality. Truth was hovering in the mood inundating them, reality was under the appearance, transformation of the world gazed out of the world like a shadow! The reality about which they felt so expectant was, to be sure, remarkably lacking a nucleus and only half comprehensible, and it was a long-intimate half-truth, familiar and unfulfillable, that wooed credibility: not an everyday reality and truth for everyone, but a secret one for lovers. Obviously, it was not just caprice or delusion either, and its most mysterious insinuation whispered: “Just leave yourself to me without mistrust, and you’ll discover the whole truth!” Giving an account of this was so difficult because the language of love is a secret language and in its highest perfection is as silent as an embrace.
The thought “secret language” had the effect of making Agathe dimly recall that it was written somewhere: “Whosoever abides in love abides in God, and God in him. He who has not love does not know God.” She did not know where.

Ulrich on the other hand, because she had said before that it was “just a mood,” was considering an idea as sweetly temperate as the sound of a flute. One had only to assume that such a mood of being in love was not always just a transitory special state but was also, beyond its immediate occasion, capable of enduring and spreading; in other words, all you had to assume was that a person could be a lover alone and in accordance with his enduring being, in exactly the same way that he can be indifferent, and this would lead him to a totally changed way of life: indeed, presumably it would take him to an entirely unfamiliar world that would be present in his mind without his having to be
considered mentally ill. This thought, that everything could be made different by one small step, indeed just by a movement that the mind merely had to let happen, was extremely seductive. And suddenly Ulrich asked his sister with curiosity: “What do you think would happen if we were to stop one of these people and say to him: ‘Brother, stay with us!’ or ‘Stop, O hastening soul’?”

“He would look at us flabbergasted,” Agathe replied.

“And then unobtrusively double his pace, or call a policeman,” Ulrich finished.

“He would probably think he’d fallen in with good-natured madmen,” Agathe added.

“But if we were to yell at him: ‘You criminal, you piece of nothing!’ he probably wouldn’t consider us crazy,” Ulrich noted with amusement, “but would merely take us to be people who think differently,’ or
‘members of a different party,’ who had turned angry at him.”

Agathe frowned, smiling, and then they both again gazed into the human current that was pulling them along and flowing against them. Together they felt again the self-forgetfulness and power, the happiness and goodness, the deep and elevated constraint, that predominate inside a vital human community, even if it is only the contingent community of a busy street, so that one does not believe that there could also be anything bad or divisive; and their own sense of existence, that sharply bounded and difficult having-been-placed-here, that basic happiness and basic hostility, stood in marvelous contrast to this communal scene. They both thought the same; but they also thought differently, without its being obvious. They guessed each other’s meaning; but sometimes they guessed wrongly. And gradually an indolence, indeed a paralysis of thinking,
emanated from this double-pearled juxta-position on the oyster shell of the world, as Ulrich called it rather scornfully, and they then parried it by laughing at each other, or about something.

But when this happened again Agathe said: “It always makes me so sad when we’re forced to laugh at ourselves; and I don’t know why I have to.”

Ulrich replied: “Nothing is funnier than opening one’s eyes to reality when they’re still filled with the inner soul!”

But Agathe did not pick up on this; she repeated: “Everything remains so uncertain. It seems to draw itself together and then extend itself again, without any shape. It permits no activity, and the inactivity becomes unbearable. I can’t even say that I really love these people, or that I love these real people, as they are when we look at them. I’m afraid our own feelings are pretty unreal!”
“But these people respond to each other in exactly the same way!” Ulrich retorted. “They want to love each other, yet at the decisive moment they think antipathy is more natural and healthier! So it’s the same for everyone: We feel that real life has snapped off a possible life!”

“But then tell me,” Agathe retorted angrily, “why love always needs a church or a bed!”

“For heaven’s sake”—Ulrich soothed his companion with a laugh—”don’t speak so openly!” He touched her hand with his fingertips and went on, joking mysteriously: “All these people can also be called in public what you and I are in private: the unseparated but not united!”

It was not an assertion, merely a cajoling constellation of words, a joke, a candid little cloud of words; and they knew that feeling oneself chosen was the cheapest of all
magic formulas and quite adolescent. Nevertheless, Ulrich’s fraternal words slowly rose from the ground to a position above their heads. Agathe, too, now whispered jokingly: “Sometimes you feel your breath blow back from your veil still hot, like a pair of strange lips: that’s how it sometimes seems to me—call it illusion or reality—that I’m you!” was her response, and her gentle smile drew silence closed like a curtain after it as it died away.

In such back-and-forth fashion they came to reproach the millions of loving couples who in their serious desire for certainty ask themselves a hundred times a day whether they really and truly love each other, and how long it can last: who, however, don’t have to fear conjuring up similar oddities.
Another of these world-oriented discussions went like this: “Then how would things stand when a love occurs between two so-called persons of different gentler, which is as famous as it is gladly experienced?” Ulrich objected. “You probably are really partly in love with the person you think you’re loving.”

“But what you’re mostly doing is simply making a puppet of him!” Agathe interjected resentfully.

“In any event, what he says and thinks in the process also has its charm!”
“As long as you love him! Because you love him! But not the other way round! If you’ve once understood how the other person means it, it’s not only anger that’s disarmed, as one always says, but for the most part love as well!”

Again it was Agathe who gave this passionate answer. Ulrich smiled. She must have banged her head pretty hard against this wall more than once.

“But at first you can like the other person’s opinions, that’s often involved in the beginning: the well-known marvelous ‘agreeing about everything’; later, of course, you no longer understand it at all,” he said placatingly, and asked: “But deeds? Does love depend on deeds?”

“Only insofar as they embody a person’s sentiments. Or turn the imagination into a sort of monument!”
“But didn’t we just decide it wasn’t so much a matter of sentiments?” Ulrich recalled teasingly.

“It doesn’t depend on anything at all!” Agathe cried. “Not on what the other person is, not on what he thinks, not on what he wants, and not on what he does! There are times when you despise a person but love him all the same. And there are times when you love a person and have the secret feeling that this person with the beard (or breasts), whom you think you’ve known for a long time and...treasure, and who talks about himself incessantly, is really only visiting love. You could leave aside his sentiments and merits, you could change his destiny, you could give him a new beard or different legs—you could leave aside almost the whole person, and still love him! As far as you happen to love him at all,” she added, mitigating her statement.
Her voice had a deep ring, with a restless glitter buried in its depths like a flame. She sat down guiltily, having involuntarily jumped up from her chair in her zeal.

Ulrich summed up the result in balanced fashion: “Both contradictions are always present and form a team of four horses: you love a person because you know him and because you don’t know him; and you know him because you love him and don’t know him because you love him. And sometimes that grows strong enough to become quite palpable. Those are the well-known moments when Venus gazes through Apollo and Apollo through Venus at an empty scarecrow, and each is mightily surprised at having seen something there before. If, furthermore, love is stronger than astonishment, it comes to a struggle between them, and sometimes out of this struggle love emerges—even if it is despairing, exhausted, and mortally wounded—as the victor. But if
love is not that strong, it leads to a battle between the people involved, to insults intended to make up for having been played for a simpleton...to terrible incursions of reality...to utter degradation....” He had participated in this stormy weather of love often enough to be at ease describing it.

Agathe interrupted him. “But I find that these marital and extramarital affairs of honor are usually greatly overrated!” she objected.

“Love as a whole is overrated! The maniac who in his delusion pulls a knife and stabs some innocent person who just happens to be standing in for his hallucination—in love he’s the normal one!” Ulrich said, and laughed.

Agathe, too, smiled as she looked at him.

Ulrich became serious. “It’s odd enough to have to think that there really are no two
people who can agree spontaneously, without their opinions and convictions being more or less powerfully influenced,” he noted thoughtfully, and for a while this gave the conversation a somewhat different turn.

Brother and sister were sitting in Ulrich’s room, on either side of the long, darkly shining desk of heavy wood, whose center was now empty because apparently Ulrich was not working on anything. Each of them had lazily posed an arm on the desk and was looking at a small papier-mâché horse standing in the vacant middle ground between them.

“Even in rational thinking, where everything has logical and objective connections,” Ulrich went on, “it’s usually the case that you unreservedly recognize the superior conviction of someone else only if you have submitted to him in some way, whether as a model and guide, or as a friend or teacher. But without such a feeling, which has
nothing to do with the case, every time you make someone else’s opinion your own, it will only be with the silent reservation that you can do more with it than its originator; if indeed you weren’t already out to show this fellow what unsuspected importance his idea really contained! Especially in art, most of us certainly know it would be impossible for us to do ourselves what we read, see, and hear; but we still have the patronizing awareness that if we were able to do any of these things, we could of course do them better! And perhaps it has to be that way, and lies in the active nature of the mind, which doesn’t allow itself be filled up like an empty pot,” Ulrich concluded, “but actively appropriates everything, and literally has to make it part of itself.”

He would gladly have added something more that occurred to him, and it would not let him rest, so he was already giving vent to his scruple before Agathe had any chance to
respond. “But we should also ask ourselves,” he suggested, “what sort of life would arise if all this were not so unfavorable. Our feelings ultimately want to be handled quite roughly, it appears, but in the other borderline case—when we assimilate someone else’s sentiments without resistance, when we submit completely to someone else’s feelings, indeed, when we reach a pure agreement with a second understanding—is there not a happiness that is pathologically tender, in fact almost anti-intellectual? And how could this light be produced without the shadow?” This thought made him want to linger over the conversation; but although the idea was not entirely alien to Agathe either, she was occupied at the moment with smaller concerns. She looked at her brother for a while without speaking, struggling against what was coming over her, but then made up her mind to ask the offensive question, as casually as possible, whether that meant he had arrived at
the considered conviction that “even only two people” could never be of one mind, and lovers under no circumstances whatever?

Ulrich was almost at the point of expressing through a gesture that this was neither to be taken as real nor worth talking about, when he was struck by his sisters misplaced warmth; he had to suppress a smile at this suspicious inquisitiveness, but in doing so lost his own more serious inquisitiveness and fell back again into the interrupted merry flow of his initial joking way of talking. “You yourself began by belittling love!” he replied.

“Let’s leave it at that!” Agathe decreed magnanimously. “Let’s leave it at people not agreeing, when they’re in love. But in ordinary life, which is certainly nothing less than loving, you must admit that all lands of people have similar convictions and that that plays an enormous role!”
“They only think they have them!” Ulrich broke in.

“They agree with each other!”

“They agree with each other!”

“The agreement is imposed on them! People are like a fire that immediately shoots out in all directions unless there’s a stone on top!”

“But aren’t there, for instance, generally prevailing opinions?” Agathe asked, intending to keep up with her brother.

“But aren’t there, for instance, generally prevailing opinions?” Agathe asked, intending to keep up with her brother.

“Now you’re saying it yourself!” he countered. “‘Prevailing!’ Since it’s necessary that we agree, innumerable arrangements of course exist to take care of the externals and delude us inwardly into thinking it so. In making us people of one mind, these arrangements aren’t exactly subtle. Hypnotic suggestion, violence, intimidation, thoughtlessness, cowardice, and such things play a not inconsiderable role. The exercise of these arrangements is mostly alloyed with
something base and corrupting. But if their influence stops for just a single moment, allowing reason to take over their affairs, you will very shortly see mankind start gabbling and fall to quarreling, the way the insane start running around when their warders aren’t looking!”

Agathe recalled the walks in lovely weather where everything had been in unqualified harmony with everything else, and the people, even if they were apparently mistaken in believing that they loved each other, were at least very attentive to one another and filled with an almost solemn amiability and curiosity. It seemed appropriate to mention that love was, after all, the only tiling in the world that made people of one mind, and that in every one of its varieties it did so from both sides voluntarily.

“But love is precisely one of the agreement machines. It has the lucky effect of making people blind!” Ulrich objected. “Love
blinds: half the riddles about loving one’s neighbor we’ve been trying to solve are already contained in this proposition!”

“The most one might add is that love also enables one to see what isn’t there,” Agathe maintained, concluding reflectively: “So really these two propositions contain everything you need in the world, in order to be happy despite it!”

In direct connection with this point, however, it was the tiny papier-mâché horse, standing between them all alone in the middle of the desk, that bore the sole responsibility for their conversation. It was hardly a hand’s breadth high; its neck was daintily curved; the brown of its coat was as tender and full as the stomach of a fifteen-year-old girl who has almost, but not yet quite, eaten too much cake, and its mane and tail, its hooves and reins, were of one single, deepest black. It was a horse belonging to a court carriage, but as in legend two gods
often grow into one, it was also a candy box in the form of a horse. Ulrich had discovered this little horse in a suburban confectioner’s window and had immediately acquired it, for he knew it from his childhood and had loved it so intensely back then that he could hardly recall whether he had ever owned it. Fortunately, such mercantile poems are sometimes preserved over several generations and merely wander with time from the centers of commerce to display windows in more modest parts of the city. So Ulrich had reverently installed this find on his desk, having already explained the significance of the species to his sister. The candy horse was a close relative of those circus animals—lions, tigers, horses, and dogs—that had lived at the same time, the time of Ulrich’s childhood, on the posters of traveling circuses, and could no more be summoned from the raging expressions of their palpable but one-dimensional existence into fully developed life than this
little horse could jump through the glass pane of the shop window. Agathe had quickly understood this, for the confectioner’s horse constituted part of the large family of children’s fancies which are always chasing their desires with the zigzag flight of a butterfly, until at last they reach their goal only to find a lifeless object. And wandering back along childhood’s paths of love, brother and sister had even opened the horse and, with the mixed feelings attending the unsealing of a crypt, found inside a variety of round, flat little tents strewn with grains of sugar, which they thought they had not seen for decades, and which they enjoyed with the cautious courage of explorers.

In a distracted and pensive way, during the pause that had followed the last exchange with Ulrich, Agathe had been observing this small object with the magnetic soul that stood before them. In the far distances of this daydreaming, perhaps there
also emerged from the river of words about similarities and differences in thinking, that idea of the unseparated but not united, and now this joined in a peculiar way with their companionship as children. Agathe finally landed on time’s other shore of silence without knowing how long the interruption had lasted, and she picked up the conversation where it had left off by asking with direct vehemence, as if something had been forgotten: “But not every love has to blind!”

Ulrich, too, was immediately ready to be pressed into service again in pursuit of the exchange of words that had rushed away, as if he were not sure how long he had been standing there distracted. “Let’s go on!” he suggested, and led with a random example: “Maternal love!”

“Doting, it’s called,” Agathe replied.

“In any case, it loves blindly, loves in advance. Won’t let anything distract it,”
Ulrich stated, immediately continuing: “And its opposite, a child’s love?”

“Is that love at all?” Agathe asked.

“There’s a lot of selfishness and instinctive need for protection and such things in it,” Ulrich ventured, but added that it could also be, at least at certain stages, a real passion. Next, he asked about the love of friends.

They were again agreed: youth was the only time for passionate friendships.

“Love of honor?” Ulrich asked.

Agathe shrugged her shoulders.

“Love of virtue?”

She repeated the gesture, then thought it over and said: “Saints or martyrs might call it love.”

“But then it’s obviously a passion for overcoming the world, or something like
that, as well,” Ulrich interjected. “An oppositional passion, but in any case something containing a lot of complications.”

“But there can also be a lot of complications in love of honor,” Agathe added.

“Love of power?” Ulrich went on, assenting to her objection with only a nod of his head.

“That’s probably a contradiction in terms.”

“Perhaps,” Ulrich agreed. “You might think that force and love are mutually exclusive.”

“But they aren’t!” Agathe exclaimed, having changed her mind in the meantime. “Look: to be compelled! For women especially, being loved and being compelled is no contradiction at all!”

Ulrich responded in contradictory ways to this reminder of the possibility of such
experiences in his sister’s past; on the one hand he desired an informed explanation; on the other, the primordial ignorance of the gods. Frowning, he thought over what his response should be, and finally said, clearly but hesitating involuntarily: “In that case the association of the words is indeed ambivalent. All power is laid low before love, and if it humiliates love, then—”

“Let’s not dwell on it,” Agathe interrupted, and offered a new question: “Love of truth?”

Since he hesitated, “You should know all about that!” she added in jesting reproof; his long-drawn-out efforts to be accurate sometimes made her impatient.

But the conversation was already inhibited, and slowly it became diffuse. “There, too, it’s not easy to separate out the right concepts,” Ulrich decided. “You can love truth in many different ways: as honor, as
power, as virtue, or also like pure spring water and the air you breathe, or like—"

"Is that love?" Agathe interrupted him again. "That way you could love spinach too!"

"And why not? Even being partial to something is a form of love.

There are many transitions," Ulrich countered. "And love of truth’ especially is one of the most contradictory terms: If the concept of truth is stronger, love is correspondingly less, and in the last analysis you can hardly call the honorable or even the utilitarian need for truth love’; but if the concept of love is strong, what you might call the purest, highest love, then truth ceases to exist."

"Truth, unfortunately, arises in cold blood," Agathe remarked pointedly.
“To demand truth from love is just as mistaken as demanding justice from anger,” Ulrich agreed. “Emotion is injurious there.”

“Oh perhaps that’s only men’s talk!” Agathe protested.

“That’s the way it is: Love tolerates truth, but truth does not tolerate love,” Ulrich confirmed. “Love dissolves truth.”

“But if it dissolves the truth, then it has no truth?” Agathe asked this with the seriousness of the ignorant child who knows by heart the story it wants to hear repeated for the twentieth time.

“A new truth begins,” Ulrich said. “As soon as a person encounters love not as some kind of experience but as life itself, or at least as a land of life, he knows a swarm of truths. Whoever judges without love calls this opinions, personal views, subjectivity, whim; and for him that’s all it is. But the one who loves knows about himself that he is not
insensitive to truth, but oversensitive. He finds himself in a kind of ecstasy of thinking, where the words open up to their very centers. He understands in every way more than is necessary. He can hardly save himself from an inexhaustible flood. And he feels that every rational desire to understand can only banish it. I don’t want to claim that this really is a different truth—for there is only one and the same truth—but it is a hundred possibilities that are more important than truth; it is, to say it more clearly, something by means of which all truth loses the importance attributed to it. Perhaps one might say: truth is the unequivocal result of an attitude to life which we by no means feel unequivocally to be the true attitude!” Ulrich, happy because he had finally achieved a more exact description, drew the conclusion: “So apparently to be surrounded by a swarm of truths means nothing other than that the lover is open to everything that has been loved, and
also willed, thought, and put down in words; open to all contradictions, which are after all those of sentient beings; open even to every shared experience, if a word exists that can lift it tenderly to the point of articulation. The distinctive signs of truth and morality have been suppressed for him by the gentle power of life stirring all around him; they remain present, but fruitfulness and fullness have out- and overgrown them. For the lover, truth and deception are equally trivial, and yet this does not strike him as caprice: Now, this is probably no more than a changed personal attitude, but I would say that it still finally depends on countless possibilities underlying whatever reality has conquered them, possibilities that could also have become realities. The lover awakens them. Everything suddenly appears different to him from what you think. Instead of a citizen of this world, he becomes a creature of countless worlds—"
“But that is another reality!” Agathe exclaimed.

“No!” said Ulrich hesitantly. “At least I don’t know. It’s merely the age-old opposition between knowledge and love, which has always been supposed to exist.”

Agathe gave him a confused but encouraging smile.

“No!” Ulrich repeated. “That’s still not the right one.”

Her smile disappeared. “So we have to pick up our business once again, otherwise we won’t get to the end this way either,” Agathe suggested with comic distress, and with a sigh she began anew: “What is love of money?”

“You said things like that weren’t love at all,” Ulrich interjected.

“But you said there were transitions,” Agathe countered.
“Love of beauty?” Ulrich asked, ignoring this.

“Love is also supposed to make an ugly person beautiful,” Agathe replied, following a sudden inspiration. “Do you love something because it’s beautiful or is it beautiful because it’s loved?”

Ulrich found this question important but unpleasant. So he responded: “Perhaps beauty is nothing other than having been loved. If something was once loved, its ability to be beautiful is directed outward. And beauty presumably arises in no other way but this: that something pleases a person who also has the power to give other people a land of set of directions for repetition.” Then he added sharply: “Nevertheless, men who, like friend Lindner, waylay beauty are simply funny!”

“Love one’s enemy?” Agathe asked, smiling.
“Difficult!” said Ulrich. “Perhaps a leftover from magical-religious cannibalism.”

“Compared to that, loving life is simple,” Agathe stated. “No idea at all is connected with it; it’s simply a blind instinct.”

“Passion for hunting?”


Ulrich answered with a shrug of the shoulders and a smile. “Love becomes real in many ways and in the most varied connections. But what is the common denominator? What in all these loves is the essential fluid and what merely its crystallization? And what, especially, is that ‘love!’ that can also occur spontaneously and fill the whole world?” he asked, showing little hope of an
answer. “Even if someone were to compare the various forms more seriously,” he went on, “he would presumably find only as many emotions as there are external conditions and attitudes. Under all these circumstances one can love; but only because one can also despise or remain indifferent: in this way whatever is shared in common surfaces as something vaguely like love.”

“But doesn’t that just mean that full love doesn’t correspond to experience?” Agathe interrupted. “But who questions that? That’s the decisive point! If love exists, in order to become manifest it will be entirely different from everything it is alloyed with!”

Now Ulrich interrupted. “What would that prove? As feeling and action, this love would have no limits, and therefore there is no attitude or behavior that would correspond to it.”
Agathe listened eagerly. She was waiting for a final word. “And what do you do if there is no attitude or behavior?” she asked.

Ulrich understood her artless question. But he showed himself prepared for these reconnaissance expeditions to last even longer; he merely shrugged his shoulders resignedly and answered with a jest: “It doesn’t seem nearly so simple to love as nature would have us believe, just because she’s provided every bungler with the tools!”
A soldier must not let anything deter him. So General Stumm von Bordwehr was the only person to push his way through to Ulrich and Agathe; but then he was perhaps the only person for whom they did not make it absolutely impossible, since even refugees from the world can see to it that their mail is forwarded to them periodically. And as he burst in to interrupt their continuing their conversation, he crowed: “It wasn’t easy to penetrate all the perimeter defenses and fight my way into the fortress!”, gallantly kissed Agathe’s hand, and, addressing himself to
her in particular, said: “I’ll be a famous man, just because I’ve seen you! Everyone is asking what event could have swallowed up the Inseparables, and is asking after you; and in a certain sense I am the emissary of society, indeed of the Fatherland, sent to discover the cause of your disappearance! Please excuse me if I appear importunate!”

Agathe bade him a polite welcome, but neither she nor her brother was immediately able to conceal their distractedness from their visitor, who stood before them as the embodiment of the weakness and imperfection of their dreams; and as General Stumm again stepped back from Agathe, a remarkable silence ensued. Agathe was standing on one long side of the desk, Ulrich on the other, and the General, like a suddenly becalmed sailing vessel, was at a point approximately halfway between them. Ulrich meant to come forward to meet his visitor, but could not stir from the spot. Stumm now
noticed that he really had butted in, and considered how he might save the situation. The twisted beginnings of a friendly smile lay on all three faces. This stiff silence lasted barely a fraction of a second; it was just then that Stumm’s glance fell on the small papier-mâché horse standing isolated among them, like a monument, in the center of the empty desk.

Clicking his heels together, he pointed to it solemnly with the flat of his hand and exclaimed with relief: “But what’s this? Do I perceive in this house the great animal idol, the holy animal, the revered deity of the cavalry?”

At Stumm’s remark, Ulrich’s inhibition, too, dissolved, and moving quickly over to Stumm but at the same time turning toward his sister, he said animatedly: “Admittedly it’s just a coach horse, but you have wonderfully guessed the rest! We were really just talking about idols and how they originate.
Now tell me: What is it one loves, which part, what reshaping and transformation does one love, when one loves one’s neighbor without knowing him? In other words, to what extent is love dependent on the world and reality, and to what extent is it the other way round?”

Stumm von Bordwehr had directed his glance questioningly to Agathe.

“Ulrich is talking about this little thing,” she assured him, somewhat disconcerted, pointing to the candy horse. “He used to have a passion for it.”

“That was, I hope, quite a long time ago,” Stumm said in astonishment. “For if I’m not mistaken, it’s a candy jar?”

“It is not a candy jar! Friend Stumm!” Ulrich implored, seized by the disgraceful desire to chat with him about it. “If you fall in love with a saddle and harness that are too expensive for you, or a uniform or a pair of
riding boots you see in a shop window: what are you in love with?”

“You’re being outrageous! I don’t love things like that!” the General protested.

“Don’t deny it!” Ulrich replied. “There are people who can dream day and night of a suit fabric or a piece of luggage they have seen in a shop; everyone’s known something like that; and the same thing will have happened to you, at least with your first lieutenant’s uniform! And you’ll have to admit that you might have no use for this material or this suitcase, and that you don’t even have to be in the position of being able to really desire it: so nothing is easier than loving something before you know it and without knowing it. May I, moreover, remind you that you loved Diotima at first sight?”

This time, the General looked up cunningly. Agathe had in the meantime asked him to sit down and also procured a cigar for
him, since her brother had forgotten his duty. Stumm, fringed with blue clouds, said innocently: “Since then she’s become a text-book of love, and I didn’t much like text-books in school, either. But I still admire and respect this woman,” he added with a dignified composure that was new to him.

Ulrich, unfortunately, didn’t notice it immediately. “All those things are idols,” he went on, pursuing the questions he had directed at Stumm. “And now you see where they came from. The instincts embedded in our nature need only a minimum of external motivation and justification; they are enormous machines set in motion by a tiny switch. But they equip the object they are applied to with only as many ideas that can bear investigation as perhaps correspond to the flickering of light and shadow in the light of an emergency lamp—"
“Stop!” Stumm begged from his cloud of smoke. ‘What is object? Are you talking about the boots and that suitcase again?’

“I’m speaking of passion. Of longing for Diotima, just as much as longing for a forbidden cigarette. I want to make clear to you that every emotional relationship had the groundwork laid for it by preliminary perceptions and ideas that belong to reality; but that such a relationship also immediately conjures up perceptions and ideas that it fits out in its own way. In short, affect sets up the object the way it needs it to be, indeed it creates it so that the affect finally applies to an object that, having come about in such a way, is no longer recognizable. But affect isn’t destined for knowledge, either, but really for passion! This object that is born of passion and hovers in it,” Ulrich concluded, returning to his starting point, “is of course something different from the object on which it is outwardly fastened and which it can
reach out to grasp, and this is therefore also true of love. 'I love you' is mistaken; for 'you,' this person who has evoked the passion and whom you can seize in your arms, is the one you think you love; the person evoked by passion, this wildly religious invention, is the one you really love, but it is a different person."

"Listening to you"—Agathe interrupted her brother with a reproach that betrayed her inner sympathies—"you might think you don't really love the real person, but really love an unreal person!"

"That's precisely what I meant to say, and I've also heard you saying much the same."

"But in reality both are ultimately one person!"

"That's exactly the major complication, that the hovering image of the person you love has to be represented in every outward
connection by the person himself and is indeed one and the same. That’s what leads to all the confusions that give the simple business of love such an excitingly ghostly quality!”

“But perhaps it’s only love that makes the real person entirely real? Perhaps he’s not complete before then?”

“But the boot or the suitcase you dream about is in reality none other than the one you could actually buy!”

“Perhaps the suitcase only becomes completely real if you love it!”

“In a word, we come to the question of what is real. Love’s old question!” Ulrich exclaimed impatiently, yet somehow satisfied.

“Oh, let’s forget the suitcase!” To the astonishment of both, it was the General’s voice that interrupted their sparring. Stumm had comfortably squeezed one leg over the
other, which, once achieved, lent him great security. “Let’s stay with the person,” he went on, and praised Ulrich: “So far you’ve said some things terrifically well! People always believe that nothing is easier than loving each other, and then you have to remind them every day: ‘Dearest, it’s not as easy as it is for the apple woman!’ “ In explanation of this more military than civilian expression, he turned politely to Agathe. “The ‘apple woman,’ dear lady, is an army expression for when someone thinks something is easier than it is: in higher mathematics, for example, when you’re doing short division so short that, willy-nilly, you come up with a false result! Then the apple woman is held up to you, and it’s applied the same way in other places as well, where an ordinary person might just say: that’s not so simple!” Now he turned back to Ulrich and continued: “Your doctrine of the two persons interests me a good deal, because I’m also always
telling people that you can love people only in two parts: in theory, or, as you put it, as a hovering person, is the way you ought to love someone, as I see it; but in practice, you have to treat a person strictly and, in the last analysis, harshly too! That’s the way it is between man and woman, and that’s the way it is in life in general! The pacifists, for instance, with their love that has no soles on its shoes, haven’t the slightest notion of this; a lieutenant knows ten times as much about love as these dilettantes!

Through his earnestness, through his carefully weighed manner of speaking, and not least through the boldness with which, despite Agathe’s presence, he had condemned woman to obedience, Stumm von Bordwehr gave the impression of a man to whom something important had happened and who had striven, not without success, to master it. But Ulrich still had not grasped this, and proposed: ‘Well, you decide which
person is truly worth loving and which has the walk-on part!"

“That’s too deep for me!” Stumm stated calmly, and, inhaling from his cigar, added with the same composure: “It’s a pleasure to hear again how well you speak; but on the whole you speak in such a way that one really must ask oneself whether it’s your only occupation. I must confess that after you disappeared I expected to find you, God knows, busy with more important matters!”

“Stumm, this is important!” Ulrich exclaimed. “Because at least half the history of the world is a love story! Of course you have to take all the varieties of love together!”

The General nodded his resistance. “That may well be.” He barricaded himself behind the busyness of cutting and lighting a fresh cigar, and grumbled: “But then the other half is a story of anger. And one shouldn’t
underestimate anger! I have been a specialist in love for some time, and I know!”

Now at last Ulrich understood that his friend had changed and, curious, asked him to tell what had befallen him.

Stumm von Bordwehr looked at him for a while without answering, then looked at Agathe, and finally replied in a way that made it impossible to distinguish whether he was hesitating from irritation or enjoyment: “Oh, it will hardly seem worth mentioning in comparison with your occupations. Just one thing has happened: the Parallel Campaign has found a goal!”

This news about something to which so much sympathy, even if counterfeit, had been accorded would have broken through even a fully guarded state of seclusion, and when Stumm saw the effect he had achieved he was reconciled with fortune, and found again for quite a while his old, guileless joy in
spreading news. “If you’d rather, I could just as well say: the Parallel Campaign has come to an end!” he offered obligingly.

It had happened quite incidentally: “We all of us had got so used to nothing happening, while thinking that something ought to happen,” Stumm related. “And then all of a sudden, instead of a new proposal, someone brought the news that this coming autumn a Congress for World Peace is to meet, and here in Austria!”

“That’s odd!” Ulrich said.

“What’s odd? We didn’t know the least thing about it!”

“That’s just what I mean.”

“Well, there you’re not entirely off the track,” Stumm von Bordwehr agreed. “It’s even being asserted that the news was a plant from abroad. Leinsdorf and Tuzzi went so far as to suspect that it might be a Russian
plot against our patriotic campaign, if not ultimately even a German plot. For you must consider that we have four years before we have to be ready, so it’s entirely possible that someone wants to rush us into something we hadn’t planned. Beyond that, the different versions part company; but it’s no longer possible to find out what the truth of the matter is, although of course we immediately wrote off everywhere to learn more. Remarkably enough, it seems that people all over already knew about this pacifistic Congress—I assure you: in the whole world! And private individuals as well as newspaper and government offices! But it was assumed, or bandied about, that it emanated from us and was part of our great world campaign, and people were merely surprised because they couldn’t get any kind of rational response from us to their questions and queries. Maybe someone was playing a joke on us; Tuzzi was discreetly able to get hold of a few
invitations to this Peace Congress; the signatures were quite naive forgeries, but the letter paper and the style were good as gold! Of course we then called in the police, who quickly discovered that the whole manner of execution pointed to a domestic origin, and in the course of this it emerged that there really are people here who would like to convene a World Peace Congress here in the autumn— because some woman who has written a pacifist novel is going to celebrate her umpteeth birthdy or, in case she’s died, would have: But it quickly became clear that these people quite evidently had not the least connection with disseminating the material that was aimed at us, and so the origin of the affair has remained in the dark,” Stumm said resignedly, but with the satisfaction that every well-told tale provides. The effortful exposition of the difficulties had drawn shadows over his face, but now the sun of his smile burst through this perplexity, and with
a trace of scorn that was as unconstrained as it was candid, he added: “What’s most remarkable is that everyone agreed that there should be such a congress, or at least no one wanted to say no! And now I ask you: what are we to do, especially since we have already announced that we are undertaking something meant to serve as a model for the whole world and have constantly been spreading the slogan ‘Action!’ around? For two weeks we’ve simply had to work like savages, so that retroactively at least it looks the way it would have looked prospectively, so to speak, under other circumstances. And so we showed ourselves equal to the organizational superiority of the Prussians—assuming that it was the Prussians! We’re now calling it a preliminary celebration. The government is keeping an eye on the political part, and those of us in the campaign are working more on the ceremonial and cultural-human
aspects, because that is simply too burdensome for a ministry—”

“But what a strange story it is!” Ulrich asserted seriously, although he had to laugh at this development.

“A real accident of history,” the General said with satisfaction. “Such mystifications have often been important.”

“And Diotima?” Ulrich inquired cautiously.

“Well, she has speedily had to jettison Amor and Psyche and is now, together with a painter, designing the parade of regional costumes. It will be called: The clans of Austria and Hungary pay homage to internal and external peace,” Stumm reported, and now turned pleadingly toward Agathe as he noticed that she, too, was parting her lips to smile. “I entreat you, dear lady, please don’t say anything against it, and don’t permit any objection to it either!” he begged. “For the
parade of regional costumes, and apparently a military parade, are all that is definite so far about the festivities. The Tyrolean militia will march down the Ringstrasse, because they always look picturesque with their green suspenders, the rooster feathers in their hats, and their long beards; and then the beers and wines of the Monarchy are to pay tribute to the beers and wines of the rest of the world. But even here there is still no unanimity on whether, for instance, only Austro-Hungarian beers and wines shall pay tribute to those of the rest of the world, which would allow the charming Austrian character to stand out more hospitably by renouncing a tribute from the other side, or whether the foreign beers and wines should be allowed to march along as well so that they can pay homage to ours, and whether they have to pay customs duties on them or not. At any rate, one thing is certain: that there never has been and never can be a
parade in this country without people in Old Germanic costumes sitting on carts with casks and on beer wagons drawn by horses; and I just can’t imagine what it must have been like in the actual Middle Ages, when the Germanic costumes weren’t yet old and wouldn’t even have looked any older than a tuxedo does today!”

But after this question had been sufficiently appreciated, Ulrich asked a more delicate one. “I’d like to know what our non-German nationalities will say to the whole thing!”

“That’s simple: they’ll be in the parade!” Stumm assured him cheerfully. “Because if they won’t, we’ll commandeer a regiment of Bohemian dragoons into the parade and make Hussite warriors out of them, and we’ll drag in a regiment of Ulans as the Polish liberators of Vienna from the Turks.”
“And what does Leinsdorf say to these plans?” Ulrich asked hesitantly.

Stumm placed his crossed leg beside the other and turned serious. “He’s not exactly delighted,” he conceded, relating that Count Leinsdorf never used the word “parade” but, in the most stubborn way possible, insisted on calling it a “demonstration.” “He’s apparently still thinking of the demonstrations he experienced,” Ulrich said, and Stumm agreed. “He has often said to me,” he reported, “^Who- ever brings the masses into the street is taking a heavy responsibility upon himself, General!’ As if I could do anything for or against it! But you should also know that for some time we’ve been getting together fairly often, he and I....”

Stumm paused, as if he wanted to leave space for a question, but when neither Agathe nor Ulrich asked it, he went on
cautiously: “You see, His Excellency ran into another demonstration. Quite recently,

on a trip, he was nearly beaten up in B by the Czechs as well as

the Germans.”

“But why?” Agathe exclaimed, intrigued, and Ulrich, too, showed his curiosity.

“Because he is known as the bringer of peace!” Stumm proclaimed. “Loving peace and people is not so simple in reality—”

“Like with the apple woman!” Agathe broke in, laughing.

“I really wanted to say, like with a candy jar,” Stumm corrected her, adding to this discreet reproach for Ulrich the observation on Leinsdorf: “Still, a man like him, once he has made up his mind, will totally and completely exercise the office he has been given.”

“What office?” Ulrich asked.
“Every office!” the General stated. “On the festival reviewing stand he will sit beside the Emperor, only in the event, of course, that His Majesty sits on the reviewing stand; and, moreover, he is drafting the address of homage from our peoples, which he will hand to the All-Highest Ruler. But even if that should be all for the time being, I’m convinced it won’t stay that way, because if he doesn’t have any other worries, he creates some: such an active nature! By the way, he would like to speak with you,” Stumm injected tentatively.

Ulrich seemed not to have heard this, but had become alert. “Leinsdorf is not ‘given’ an office!” he said mistrustfully. “He’s been the knob on top of the flagstaff all his life!”

“Well,” the General said reservedly. “I really didn’t mean to say anything; of course he is and always was a high aristocrat. But look, for example, not long ago Tuzzi took
me aside and said to me confidentially: ‘General! If a man brushes past me in a dark alley, I step aside; but if in the same situation he asks me in a friendly way what time it is, then I not only reach for my watch but grope for my gun too!’ What do you say to that?”

“What should I say to that? I don’t see the connection.”

“That’s just the government’s caution,” Stumm explained. “In relation to a World Peace Congress it thinks of all the possibilities, while Leinsdorf has always been one to have his own ideas.”

Ulrich suddenly understood. “So in a word: Leinsdorf is to be removed from leadership because people are afraid of him?”

The General did not answer this directly. “He asks you through me to please resume your friendly relations with your cousin Tuzzi, in order to find out what’s going on. I’m saying it straight out; he, of course,
expressed it in a more reserved fashion,” Stumm reported. And after a brief hesitation, he added by way of excuse: “They’re not telling him everything! But then that’s the habit of ministries: we don’t tell each other everything among ourselves either!”

“What relationship did my brother really have with our cousin?” Agathe wanted to know.

Stumm, snared in the friendly delusion that he was pleasantly joking, unsuspectingly assured her: “He’s one of her secret loves!” adding immediately to encourage Ulrich: “I have no idea what happened between you, but she certainly regrets it! She says that you are such an indispensable bad patriot that all the enemies of the Fatherland, whom we are trying to make feel at home here, must really love you. Isn’t that nice of her? But of course she can’t take the first step after you withdrew so willfully!”
From then on the leave-taking became rather monosyllabic, and Stumm was mightily oppressed at such a dim sunset after he had stood at the zenith.

Thus it was that Ulrich and Agathe got to hear something that brightened their faces again and also brought a friendly blush to the General’s cheeks. “We’ve got rid of Feuermaul!” he reported, happy that he had remembered it in time and adding, full of scorn for that poet’s love of mankind: “In any event, it’s become meaningless.” Even the “ nauseating” resolution from the last session, that no one should be forced to die for other people’s ideas, whereas on the other hand everyone should die for his own—even this resolution, which would fundamentally ensure peace, had, as was now apparent, been dropped, along with everything belonging to the past, and at the General’s instigation was no longer even on the agenda. “We suppressed a journal that printed it; no one
believes such exaggerated rumors anymore!” Stumm added to this news, which seemed not quite clear in view of the preparations under way for a pacifistic congress. Agathe then intervened a little on behalf of the young people, and even Ulrich finally reminded his friend that the incident had not been Feuermaul’s fault. Stumm made no difficulties about this, and admitted that Feuermaul, whom he had met at the house of his patroness, was a charming person. “So full of sympathy with everything! And so spontaneously, absolutely, really good!” he exclaimed appreciatively.

“But then he would most certainly be an estimable addition to this Congress!” Ulrich again threw in.

But Stumm, who had meanwhile been making serious preparations to leave, shook his head animatedly. “No! I can’t explain so briefly what’s involved,” he said resolutely,
“but this Congress ought not to be blown out of proportion!”
AGATHE FINDS ULRICH’S DIARY

While Ulrich was personally escorting the parting guest to the door, Agathe, defying an inner self-reproach, carried out something she had decided on with lightning speed. Even before Stumm’s intrusion, and again a second time in his presence, her eye had been caught by a pile of loose papers lying in one of the drawers of the desk, on both occasions through a suppressed motion of her brother’s, which had given the impression that he would have liked to refer to these papers during the conversation but could not make up his mind—indeed, deliberately refrained from doing so. Her intimacy with him had allowed her to sense this more than
guess it on any substantive basis, and in the same way she also understood that this concealment must be connected with the two of them. So when he was barely out of the room she opened the drawer, doing so, whether it was justified or not, with that feeling which furthers quick decisions and does not admit moral scruples. But the notes that she took up in her hands, with many things crossed out, loosely connected and not always easily decipherable, immediately imposed a slower tempo on her passionate curiosity.

“Is love an emotion? This question may at first glance seem nonsensical, since it appears so certain that the entire nature of love is a process of feeling; the correct answer is the more surprising: for emotion is really the least part of love! Looked at merely as emotion, love is hardly as intense and overwhelming, and in any event not as strongly marked, as a toothache.”
The second, equally odd note ran: “A man may love his dog and his wife. A child may love a dog more dearly than a man his wife. One person loves his profession, another politics. Mostly, we seem to love general conditions; I mean—if we don’t happen to hate them—their inscrutable way of working in concert, which I might call their ‘horse-stall feeling’: we are contentedly at home in our life the way a horse is in its stall!

“But what does it mean to bring all these things that are so disparate together under the same word, love’? A primordial idea has settled in my mind, alongside doubt and derision: Everything in the world is love! Love is the gentle, divine nature of the world, covered by ashes but inextinguishable! I wouldn’t know how to express what I understand by ‘nature’; but if I abandon myself to the idea as a whole without worrying about it, I feel it with a remarkably natural certainty. At least at moments.”
Agathe blushed, for the following entries began with her name. “Agathe once showed me places in the Bible; I still vaguely remember how they ran and have decided to write them down: ‘Everything that happens in love happens in God, for God is love.’ And a second says: ‘Love is from God, and whosoever loves God is born of God.’ Both these places stand in obvious contradiction to each other: in one, love comes from God; in the other, it is God!

“Therefore the attempts to express the relationship of ‘love’ to the world seem fraught with difficulty even for the enlightened person; how should the uninstructed understanding not fail to grasp it? That I called love the nature of the world was nothing but an excuse; it leaves the choice entirely open to say that the pen and inkpot I am writing with consist of love in the moral realm of truth, or in the empirical realm of reality. But then how in reality? Would they
then consist of love or would they be its consequences, the embodying phenomenon or intimation? Are they already themselves love, or is love only what they would be in their totality? Are they love by nature, or are we talking about a supranatural reality? And what about this ‘in truth’? Is it a truth for the more heightened understanding, or for the blessedly ignorant? Is it the truth of thinking, or an incomplete symbolic connection that will reveal its meaning completely only in the universality of mental events assembled around God? What of this have I expressed? More or less everything and nothing!

“I could also just as well have said about love that it is divine reason, the Neoplatonic *logos*. Or just as well something else: Love is the lap of the world: the gentle lap of unself-conscious happening. Or, again differently: O sea of love, about which only the drowning man, not the ship-borne traveler, knows! All
these allusive exclaimations can transmit their meaning only because one is as untrustworthy as another.

“Most honest is the feeling: how tiny the earth is in space, and how man, mere nothing compared with the merest child, is thrown on the resources of love! But that is nothing more than the naked cry for love, without a trace of an answer!

“Yet I might perhaps speak in this way without exaggerating my words into emptiness: There is a condition in the world the sight of which is barred to us, but that things sometimes expose here or there when we find ourselves in a state that is excited in a particular way. And only in this state do we glimpse that things are ‘made of love.’ And only in it, too, do we grasp what it signifies. And only this state is then real, and we would only then be true.
“That would be a description I would not have to retract in any part. But then, I also have nothing to add to it!”

Agathe was astonished. In these secret entries Ulrich was holding himself back much less than usual. And although she understood that he allowed himself to do this, even for himself, only under the reservation of secrecy, she still imagined she could see him before her, stirred and irresolute, in the act of opening his arms toward something.

The notes went on: “That, too, is a notion reason itself might almost chance upon, although to be sure only reason that has to some extent managed to get out of its passive position: imagining the All-Loving as the Eternal Artist. He loves creation as long as he is creating it, but his love turns away from the finished portions. For the artist must also love what is most hateful in order to shape it, but what he has already shaped, even if it is good, cools him off; it becomes so bereft of
love that he hardly still understands himself in it, and the moments when his love returns to delight in what it has done are rare and unpredictable. And so one could also think: What lords over us loves what it creates; but this love approaches and withdraws from the finished part of creation in a long ebbing flow and a short returning swell. This idea fits the fact that souls and things of the world are like dead people who are sometimes reawakened for seconds.”

Then came a few other quick entries, which looked as if they were only tentative.

“A lion under the morning sky! A unicorn in the moonlight! You have the choice between love’s fire and rifle fire. Therefore there are at least two basic conditions: love and violence. And without doubt it is violence, not love, that keeps the world moving and from going to sleep!
“Here the assumption might also, of course, be woven in that the world has become sinful. Before, love and paradise. That means: the world as it is, sin! The possible world, love!

“Another dubious question: The philosophers imagine God as a philosopher, as pure spirit; wouldn’t it make sense, then, for officers to imagine Him as an officer? But I, a mathematician, imagine the divine being as love? How did I arrive at that?

“And how are we to participate without more ado in one of the Eternal Artist’s most intimate experiences?”

The writing broke off. But then Agathe’s face was again suffused with a blush when, without raising her eyes, she took up the next page and read on:

“Lately Agathe and I have frequently had a remarkable experience! When we undertook our expeditions into town. When the
weather is especially fine the world looks quite cheerful and harmonious, so that you really don’t pay attention to how different all its component parts are, according to their age and nature. Everything stands and moves with the greatest naturalness. And yet, remarkably, there is in such an apparently incontrovertible condition of the present something that leads into a desert; something like an unsuccessful proposal of love, or some similar exposure, the moment one does not unreservedly participate in it.

“Along our way we find ourselves walking through the narrow violet-blue streets of the city, which above, where they open to the light, burn like fire. Or we step out of this tactile blue into a square over which the sun freely pours its light; then the houses around the square stand there looking taken back and, as it were, placed against the wall, but no less expressively, and as if someone had scratched them with the fine lines of an
engraving tool, lines that make everything too distinct. And at such a moment we do not know whether all this self-fulfilled beauty excites us profoundly or has nothing at all to do with us. Both are the case. This beauty stands on a razor’s edge between desire and grief.

“But does not the sight of beauty always have this effect of brightening the grief of ordinary life and darkening its gaiety? It seems that beauty belongs to a world whose depths hold neither grief nor gaiety. Perhaps in that world even beauty itself does not exist, but merely some kind of almost indescribable, cheerful gravity, and its name arises only through the refraction of its nameless splendor in our ordinary atmosphere. We are both seeking this world, Agathe and I, without yet being able to make up our minds; we move along its borders and cautiously enjoy the profound emanation at those points where it is still mingled with the
powerful lights of every day and is almost invisible!"

It seemed as if Ulrich, through his sudden idea of speaking of an Eternal Artist, had been led to bring the question of beauty into his observations, especially since, for its part, beauty also expressed the oversensitivity that had arisen between brother and sister. But at the same time he had changed his manner of thinking. In this new sequence of entries he proceeded no longer from his dominant ideas as they faded down to the vanishing point of his experiences, but from the foreground, which was clearer but, in a few places that he noted, really too clear, and again almost permeable by the background.

Thus Ulrich went on. "I said to Agathe: 'Apparently beauty is nothing other than having been loved.' For to love something and beautify it is one and the same. And to propagate its love and make others see its
beauty is also one and the same. That's why everything can appear beautiful, and everything beautiful, ugly; in both cases it will depend on us no less than it compels us from outside, because love has no causality and knows no fixed sequence. I'm not certain how much I've said about that, but it also explains this other impression that we have so vividly on our walks: We look at people and want to share in the joy that is in their faces; but these faces also radiate a discomfiture and an almost uncanny repulsion. It emanates, too, from the houses, clothes, and everything that they have created for themselves. When I considered what the explanation for this might be, I was led to a further group of ideas, and through that back to my first notes, which were apparently so fantastic.

“A city such as ours, lovely and old, with its superb architectural stamp, which over the course of ages has arisen from changing
taste, is a single great witness to the capacity for loving and the incapacity for loving long. The proud sequence of this city’s structures represents not only a great history but also a constant change in the direction of thought. Looked at in this manner, the city is a mutability that has become a chain of stone and that surveys itself differently every quarter century in order to be right, in the end, for eternal ages. Its mute eloquence is that of dead lips, and the more enchantingly seductive it is, the more violently it must evoke, in its most profound moment of pleasing and of expropriation, blind resistance and horror.”

“It’s ridiculous, but tempting,” Agathe responded to that. “In that case the swallow-tail coats of these dawdlers, or the funny caps officers wear on their heads like pots, would have to be beautiful, for they are most decidedly loved by their owners and displayed for love, and enjoy the favor of women!”
“We made a game of it too. In a kind of merry bad temper we enjoyed it to the utmost and for a while asked ourselves at every step, in opposition to life: What, for example, does the red on that dress over there mean by being so red? Or what are these blues and yellows and whites really doing on the collars of those uniforms? And why in God’s name are the ladies’ parasols round and not square? We asked ourselves what the Greek pediment of the Parliament building was after, with its legs astraddle? Either ‘doing a split’ as only a dancer or a pair of compasses can, or disseminating classical beauty? If you put yourself back that way into a preliminary state in which you are not touched by feelings, and where you do not infuse things with the emotions that they complacently expect, you destroy the faith and loyalty of existence. It’s like watching someone eat silently, without sharing his appetite: You
suddenly perceive only swallowing movements, which look in no way enviable.

“I call that cutting oneself off from the ‘meaning’ of life. To clarify this, I might begin with how we unquestionably seek the firm and solid in life as urgently as a land animal that has fallen into the water. This makes us overestimate the significance of knowledge, justice, and reason, as well as the necessity of compulsion and violence. Perhaps I shouldn’t say overestimate; but in any case, by far the greatest number of manifestations of our life rest on the mind’s insecurity. Faith, supposition, assumption, intimation, wish, doubt, inclination, demand, prejudice, persuasion, exemplification, personal views, and other conditions of semi-certainty predominate among them. And because meaning, on this scale, lies roughly halfway between reasoning and capriciousness, I am applying its name to the whole. If what we express with words, no matter how
magnificent they are, is mostly just a meaning, an opinion, then what we express without words is always one.

"Therefore I say: Our reality, as far as it is dependent on us, is for the most part only an expression of opinion, although we ascribe every imaginable kind of importance to it. We may give our lives a specific manifestation in the stones of buildings: it is always done for the sake of a meaning we impute to it. We may kill or sacrifice ourselves: we are acting only on the basis of a supposition. I might even say that all our passions are mere suppositions; how often we err in them; we can fall into them merely out of a longing for decisiveness! And also, doing something out of 'free' will really assumes that it is merely being done at the instigation of an opinion. For some time Agathe and I have been sensitive to a certain hauntedness in the empirical world. Every detail in which our surroundings manifest themselves
‘speaks to us.’ It means something. It shows that it has come into being with a purpose that is by no means fleeting. It is, to be sure, only an opinion, but it appears as a conviction. It is merely a sudden idea, but acts as if it were an unshakable will. Ages and centuries stand upright with legs firmly planted, but behind them a voice whispers: Rubbish! Never has the Hour Struck, never has the Time Come!

“It seems to be willfulness, but it enables me to understand what I see if I note in addition: This opposition between the self-obsession that puffs out the chest of everything we have created in all its splendor, and the secret trait of being given up and abandoned, which likewise begins with the first minute, is wholly and completely in agreement with my calling everything merely an opinion. By this means we recognize that we are in a peculiar situation. For every attribution of meaning
shows the same double peculiarity: as long as it is new it makes us impatient with every opposing meaning (when red parasols are having their day, blue ones are ‘impossible’—but something similar is also true of our convictions); yet it is the second peculiarity of every meaning that it is nevertheless given up with time, entirely of its own accord and just as surely, when it is no longer new. I once said that reality does away with itself. It could now be put like this: If man is for the most part only proclaiming meanings, he is never entirely and enduringly proclaiming himself; but even if he can never completely express himself, he will try it in the most various ways, and in doing so acquires a history. So he has a history only out of weakness, it seems to me, although the historians understandably enough consider the ability to make history a particular badge of distinction!”
Here Ulrich seemed to have embarked on a digression, but he continued in this direction: “And this is apparently the reason why I have to take note of this today: History happens, events happen—even art happens—from a lack of happiness. But such a lack does not lie in circumstances—in other words, in their not allowing happiness to reach us—but in our emotions. Our feeling bears the cross of this double aspect: it suffers no other beside itself and itself does not endure. By this means everything connected with it acquires the aspect of being valid for eternity, but we all nonetheless strive to abandon the creations of our feelings and change the meanings that are expressed in them. For a feeling changes in the instant of its existence; it has no duration or identity; it must be consummated anew. Emotions are not only changeable and inconstant—as they are well taken to be—but the instant they weren’t, they would become so. They are not
genuine when they last. They must always arise anew if they are to endure, and even in doing this they become different emotions. An anger that lasted five days would no longer be anger but be a mental disorder; it transforms itself into either forgiveness or preparations for revenge, and something similar goes on with all the emotions.

“Our emotions always seek a foothold in what they form and shape, and always find it for a while. But Agathe and I feel an imprisoned ghostliness in our surroundings, the reverse magnetism of two connected poles, the recall in the call, the mobility of supposedly fixed walls; we see and hear it suddenly. To have stumbled Into a time’ seems to us like an adventure, and dubious company. We find ourselves in the enchanted forest. And although we cannot encompass ‘our own’ differently constituted feeling, indeed hardly know what it is, we suffer anxiety about it and would like to hold
it fast. But how do you hold a feeling fast? How could one linger at the highest stage of rapture, if indeed there were any way of getting there at all? Basically this is the only question that preoccupies us. We have intimations of an emotion removed from the entropy of the other emotions. It stands like a miraculous, motionless shadow in the flow before us. But would it not have to arrest the world in its course in order to exist? I arrive at the conclusion that it cannot be a feeling in the same sense as the other feelings.”

And suddenly Ulrich concluded: “So I come back to the question: Is love an emotion? I think not. Love is an ecstasy. And God Himself, in order to be able to lastingly love the world and, with the love of God-the-Artist, also embrace what has already happened, must be in a constant state of ecstasy. This is the only form in which he may be imagined—”

Here he had broken off this entry.
GREAT CHANGES

Ulrich had personally escorted the General out with the intention of discovering what he might have to say in confidence. As he accompanied him down the stairs, he sought at first to offer a harmless explanation for having distanced himself from Diotima and the others, so that the real reason would remain unstated. But Stumm was not satisfied, and asked: “Were you insulted?”

“Not in the least.”

“Then you had no right to!” Stumm replied firmly.

But the changes in the Parallel Campaign, about which in his withdrawal from
the world Ulrich had not had the least inkling, now had an invigorating effect on him, as if a window had suddenly been thrown open in a stuffy hall, and he continued: “I would still like to find out what’s really going on. Since you’ve decided to open my eyes halfway, please finish the job!”

Stumm stopped, supporting his sword on the stone of the step, and raised his glance to his friend’s face; a broad gesture, which lasted the longer in that Ulrich was standing one step higher: “Nothing I’d like better,” he said. “That’s the reason I came.”

Ulrich calmly began to interrogate him. “Who’s working against Leinsdorf? Tnzzi and Diotima? Or the Ministry of War with you and Arnheim—?”

“My dear friend, you’re stumbling through abysses!” Stumm interrupted him. “And blindly walking past the simple truth, the way all intellectuals seem to do! Above
all, I beg you to be convinced that I have passed on Leinsdorf’s wish to have you visit him and Diotima only as the most selfless favor—”

‘Tour officer’s word of honor?”

The General’s mood turned sunny. “If you’re going to remind me of the spartan honor of my profession, you conjure up the danger that I really will start lying to you; for there might be an order from above that would obligate me to do so. So I’d rather give you my private word of honor,” he said with dignity, and continued by way of explanation: “I was even intending to confide to you that recently I have seen myself at times compelled to reflect upon such difficulties; I find myself lying often these days, with the ease of a hog wallowing in garbage.” Suddenly he turned completely toward his more elevated friend and added the question: “How does it happen that lying is so agreeable, assuming you have an excuse? Just
speaking the truth seems absolutely unproductive and frivolous by comparison! If you could tell me that, it would be, straight out, one of the reasons I came to hunt you up.”

“Then tell me honestly what’s going on,” Ulrich asked, unyielding.

“In total honesty, and also quite simply: I don’t know!” Stumm protested.

“But you have a mission!” Ulrich probed.

The General answered: “In spite of your truly unfriendly disappearance, I have stepped over the corpse of my self-respect to confide this mission to you. But it is a partial mission. A teeny commission. I am now a little wheel. A tiny thread. A little Cupid who has been left with only a single arrow in his quiver!” Ulrich observed the portly figure with the gold buttons. Stumm had definitely become more self-reliant; he did not wait for Ulrich’s response but set himself in motion
toward the door, his sword clanking on every step. And as the entry hall, whose noble furnishings would otherwise have instilled in him a reverence for the master of the house, arched up over the two of them as they came down, he said over his shoulder to this master: “It’s clear you still have not quite grasped that the Parallel Campaign is now no longer a private or family undertaking but a political process of international stature!”

“So now it’s being run by the Foreign Minister?” Ulrich volleyed.

“Apparently.”

“And consequently Tuzzi?”

“Presumably; but I don’t know,” Stumm quickly added. “And of course he acts as if he knows nothing at all! You know what he’s like: these diplomats pretend to be ignorant even when they really are!”
They walked through the front door, and the carriage drove up. Suddenly Stumm turned, confidingly and comically pleading, to Ulrich: “But that’s why you should really start frequenting the house again, so that we have a quasi-confidant there!”

Ulrich smiled at this scheming, and laid his arm around the General’s shoulder; he felt reminded of Diotima. “What is she up to?” he asked. “Does she now recognize the man in Tuzzi?”

“What she’s up to?” the General responded, vexed. “She gives the impression of being irritated.” And he added good-naturedly: “To the discriminating glance, perhaps even a moving impression. The Ministry of Education gives her hardly any other assignments than deciding whether the patriotic association Wiener Schnitzel should be allowed to march in the parade, or a group called Roast Beef with Dumplings as well—”
Ulrich interrupted him suspiciously. “Now you’re talking about the Ministry of Education? Weren’t you just saying that the Foreign Ministry had appropriated the campaign?”

“But look, maybe the Schnitzels are really the affair of the Interior Ministry. Or the Ministry of Trade. Who can predict?” Stumm instructed him. “But in any case, the Congress for World Peace as a whole belongs to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to the extent that it’s not already owned by the two Ministerial Presidiums.”

Ulrich interrupted him again. “And the War Ministry is nowhere in your thoughts at all?”

“Don’t be so suspicious!” Stumm said calmly. “Of course the War Ministry takes the most active interest in a congress for world peace; I would say no less an interest than police headquarters would take in an
international congress of anarchists. But you know what these civilian ministries are like: they won’t grant even a toehold to the likes of us!”

“And—?” Ulrich asked, for Stumm’s innocence still made him suspicious.

“There’s no ‘and’!” Stumm assured him. “You’re rushing things! If a dangerous business involves several ministries, then one of them wants to either shove it off on, or take it away from, one of the others; in both cases the result of these efforts is the creation of an inter-ministerial commission. You only need to remind yourself how many committees and subcommittees the Parallel Campaign had to create at the beginning, when Diotima was still in full command of its energies; and I can assure you that our blessed council was a still life compared with what’s being worked up today!” The carriage was waiting, the coachman sitting bolt upright on his coach box, but Stumm gazed irresolutely
through the open vehicle into the bright-green garden that opened beyond. “Perhaps you can give me a little-known word with Inter’ in it?” he asked, and toted up with prompting nods of his head: “Interesting, interministerial, international, intercurrent, intermediate, interpellation, interdicted, internal, and a few more; because now you hear them at the General Staff mess more often than the word ‘sausage.’ But if I were to come up with an entirely new word, I could create a sensation!”

Ulrich steered the General’s thoughts back to Diotima. It made sense to him that the highest mandate came from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, from which it in all probability followed that the reins were in Tuzzi’s hands: but then, how could another ministry offend this powerful man’s wife? At this question Stumm disconsolately shrugged his shoulders. “You still haven’t got it through your head that the Parallel Campaign is an
affair of state!” he responded, adding spontaneously: “Tuzzi is slyer than we thought. He himself would never have been able to ascribe such a thing to it, but interministerial technology has allowed him to hand over his wife to another ministry!”

Ulrich began to laugh softly. From the message clothed in these rather odd words he could vividly imagine both people: magnificent Diotima—the power station, as Agathe called her—and the smaller, spare Section Chief, for whom he had an absolutely inexplicable sympathy, although he knew Tuzzi looked down on him. It was fear of the moon-nights of the soul that drew him to this man’s rational feelings, which were as dryly masculine as an empty cigarette case. And yet, when they had broken over the head of this diplomat, the sufferings of the soul had brought him to the point of seeing in everyone and everything only pacifist intrigues; for pacifism was for Tuzzi the most
intelligible representation of soulful tenderness! Ulrich recalled that Tuzzi had finally come to regard Arnheim’s increasingly open efforts concerning the Galician oil fields—indeed, his efforts concerning his own wife—as merely a divertissement whose purpose was to deflect attention from a secret enterprise of a pacifistic nature: so greatly had the events in his house confused Tuzzi! He must have suffered unbearably, and it was understandable: the spiritual passion that he found himself unexpectedly confronting not only offended his concept of honor, just as physical adultery would have done, but struck directly and contemptuously at his very ability to form concepts, which in older men is the true retirement home of manly dignity.

And Ulrich cheerfully continued his thought aloud: “Apparently the moment his wife’s patriotic campaign became the object of pub-he teasing, Tuzzi completely regained
control over his lost mental faculties, as befits a high official. It must have been then at the latest that he recognized all over again that more things are going on in the lap of world history than would find room in a woman’s lap, and your Congress for World Peace, which turned up like a foundling, will have woken him with a start!” With coarse satisfaction, Ulrich depicted to himself the murky, ghost-ridden state that must have come first, and then this awakening, which perhaps did not even have to be associated with a feeling of awakening; for the moment the souls of Arnheim and Diotima, wandering around in veils, started to touch down in reality, Tuzzi, freed from every haunting spirit, again found himself in that realm of necessity in which he had spent almost his entire life. “So now he’s getting rid of all those friends of his wife’s who are saving the world and uplifting the Fatherland? They always were a thorn in his side!” Ulrich
exclaimed with great satisfaction, and turned queryingly to his companion.

Stumm, portly and lost in thought, was still standing in the doorway. “So far as I know, he told his wife that she owed it to him and his position, especially under these changed conditions, to bring the Parallel Campaign to an honorable conclusion. She would get a decoration. But she had to entrust herself to the protection and insights of the ministry he had selected for that purpose,” he reported conscientiously.

“And so he’s made peace with you—I mean, with the Ministry of War and Arnheim?”

“It looks that way. Because of the Peace Congress, he seems to have argued with the government for support of the rapid modernization of our artillery, and with the Minister of War concerning the political consequences. It is said that he wants to push
the necessary laws through Parliament with the help of the German parties, and for that reason is now counseling a German line in domestic politics. Diotima told me that herself.”

“Wait a minute!” Ulrich interrupted. “German line? I’ve forgotten everything!”

“Quite simple! He always said that everything German was a misfortune for us; and now he’s saying the opposite.”

Ulrich objected that Section Chief Tuzzi never expressed himself so unambiguously.

“But he does to his wife,” Stumm replied. “And between her and me there’s a kind of bond ordained by fate.”

“Well, how do things stand between her and Arnheim?” asked Ulrich, who was at the moment more interested in Diotima than in the concerns of the government. “He no
longer needs her; and I suppose that’s making his soul suffer!”

Stumm shook his head. “That’s apparently not so simple either!” he declared with a sigh.

Up to now he had answered Ulrich’s questions conscientiously but without emotion, and perhaps for that very reason relatively sensibly. But since the mention of Diotima and Arnheim, he looked as if he wanted to come out with a quite different story, which seemed to him more important than Tuzzi’s finding himself. “You might have long thought that Arnheim had had enough of her,” he now began. “But they’re Great Souls! It may be that you can understand something about such souls, but they are them! You can’t say, was there something between them or was there nothing between them? Today they still talk the way they used to, except that you have the feeling: now there definitely isn’t anything
between them: They’re always talking in what you might call last words’!

Ulrich, remembering what Bonadea, the practitioner of love, had told him about its theoretician, Diotima, held up to Stumm’s own, more measured statement that Diotima was a manual of love. The General smiled thoughtfully at this. “Perhaps we aren’t judging it from a broad enough perspective,” he generalized discreetly. “Let me preface this by saying that before her I never heard a woman talk that way; and when she starts talking, it’s like having ice bags all over me. Besides, she’s doing this less often now; but when it occurs to her even today she speaks, for instance, of this World Peace Congress as a ‘pan-erotic human experience,’ and then I feel myself all of a sudden unmanned by her cleverness. But”—and he intensified the significance of his words by a brief pause—”there must be something in it—some need, some so-called characteristic
of the age—because even in the War Ministry they’re beginning to talk that way now. Since this Congress has turned up, you can hear officers of the General Staff talking about love of peace and love of mankind the way they talk about the Model 7 machine gun or the Model 82 medical supply wagon! It’s absolutely nauseating!”

“Is that why you called yourself a disappointed specialist in love just now?” Ulrich interjected.

“Yes, my friend. You have to excuse me: I couldn’t stand hearing you talk so one-sidedly! But officially I derive great profit from all these things.”

“And you no longer have any enthusiasm for the Parallel Campaign, for the celebration of great ideas, and such things?” Ulrich probed out of curiosity.

“Even such an experienced woman as your cousin has had enough of culture,” the
General replied. “I mean culture for its own sake. Besides, even the greatest idea can’t stop your ears from getting boxed!”

“But it can cause someone else’s getting his ears boxed next time.”

“That’s right,” Stumm conceded. “But only if you use the spirit/or something, not if you serve it selflessly!” Then he looked up at Ulrich, curious to enjoy along with him the effect of his next words, and lowering his voice expectantly, certain of success, he added: “But even if I would like to, I can’t anymore: I’ve been removed!”

“I’m impressed!” Ulrich exclaimed, instinctively acknowledging the insight of the military authorities. But then he followed another sudden idea and said quickly: “Tuzzi got you into this mess!”

“Not a bit of it!” Stumm protested, sure of himself.
Up to this point the conversation had taken place in the vicinity of the door, and besides the two men there was a third participant who was waiting for them to finish, staring straight ahead so motionlessly that for him the world stopped between the ears of two pairs of horses. Only his fists in their white cotton gloves, through which the reins ran, surreptitiously moved in irregular, soothing rhythms, because the horses, not quite so accessible to military discipline as people, were getting more and more bored with waiting, and were pulling impatiently at their harnesses. At last the General commanded this man to take the carriage to the gate and exercise the horses there until he got in; he then invited Ulrich to walk through the garden on foot, so that he could fill him in properly about what had gone on, without being overheard.

But Ulrich thought he saw vividly what it was all about, and at first didn’t let Stumm
get a word in. “It makes no difference whether Tuzzi took you out of the game or not,” he said, “for in this matter you are, if you will excuse me, only a minor figure. What’s important is that almost at the very moment when he began to get suspicious on account of the Congress and began to face a difficult and onerous test, he simplified his political as well as his personal situation the quickest way he could. He went to work like a sea captain who hears of a big storm coming and doesn’t let himself be influenced by the still-dreaming ocean. Tuzzi has now allied himself with what repelled him before—Arnheim, your military policies, the German line—and he would also have allied himself with the efforts of his wife if, in the circumstances, it had not been more useful to wreck them. I don’t know how I should put it. Is it that life becomes easy if one doesn’t bother with emotions but merely keeps to one’s goal; or is it a murderous
enjoyment to calculate with the emotions instead of suffering from them? It seems to me I know what the devil felt when he threw a fistful of salt into life’s ambrosia!”

The General was all fired up. “But that’s what I told you at the beginning!” he exclaimed. “I only happened to be talking about lies, but genuine malice is, in all its forms, an extraordinarily exciting thing! Even Leinsdorf, for instance, has rediscovered a predilection for realpolitik and says: Realpolitik is the opposite of what you would like to do!”

Ulrich went on: “What makes the difference is that before, Tuzzi was always confused by what Diotima and Arnheim were talking about together; but now it can only make him happy, because the loquacity of people who aren’t able to seal off their feelings always gives a third person all sorts of footholds. He no longer needs to listen to it with his inner ear, which he was never good
at, but only with the outer, and that’s roughly the difference between swallowing a disgusting snake or beating it to death!”

“What?” Stumm asked.

“Swallowing it or beating it to death!”

“No, that bit about the ears!”

“I meant to say: it was fortunate for him that he retreated from the inward side of feeling to the outward side. But perhaps that might still not make sense to you; it’s just an idea I have.”

“No, you put it very well!” Stumm protested. “But why are we using others as examples? Diotima and Arnheim are Great Souls, and for that reason alone it’ll never work right!” They were strolling along a path but had not got very far; the General stopped. “And what happened to me isn’t just an army story!” he informed his admired friend.
Ulrich realized he hadn’t given him a chance to speak, and apologized. “So you didn’t fall on account of Tuzzi?” he asked politely.

“A general may perhaps stumble over a civilian minister, but not over a civilian section chief,” Stumm reported proudly and matter-of-factly. “I believe I stumbled over an idea!” And he began to tell his story.
Agathe, meanwhile, had come upon a new group of pages, in which her brother’s notes continued in a quite different manner. It appeared that he had suddenly made up his mind to ascertain what an emotion was, and to do this conceptually and in a dry fashion. He also must have called up all manner of things from his memory, or read them specifically for this purpose, for the papers were covered with notes relating in part to the history and in part to the analysis of the concept of the emotions; altogether, it formed a
collection of fragments whose inner coherence was not immediately apparent.

Agathe first found a hint about what had moved him to do this in the phrase “a matter of emotion!” which was written in the margin at the beginning; for she now remembered the conversation, with its profound oscillations that bared the foundations of the soul, which she and her brother had had on this subject in their cousin’s house. And she could see that if one wanted to find out what a matter of emotions was, one had to ask oneself, whether one liked it or not, what emotion was.

This served her as a guide, for the entries began by saying that everything that happens among people has its origin either in feelings or in the privation of feelings; but without regard to that, an answer to the question of what an emotion was could not be gained with certainty from the entire immense literature that had grappled with the
issue, for even the most recent accomplishments, which Ulrich really did think were advances, called for an act of trust of no small degree. As far as Agathe could see, he had not taken psychoanalysis into account, and this surprised her at first, for like all people stimulated by literature, she had heard it spoken of more than other lands of psychology. Ulrich said he was leaving it out not because he didn’t recognize the considerable merits of this significant theory, which was full of new concepts and had been the first to teach how many things could be brought together that in all earlier periods had been anarchic private experience, but because its method was not really appropriate to his present purpose in a way that would be worthy of its quite demanding self-awareness. He laid out as his task, first, to compare the existing major answers to the question of what emotion is, and went on to note that on the whole, only three answers could be
ascertained, none of which stood out so clearly as to entirely negate the others.

Then followed sketches that were meant to work this out: “The oldest but today still quite prevalent way of representing feeling proceeds from the conviction that clear distinctions can be made among the state of feeling, its causes, and its effects. This method understands by the emotions a variety of inner experiences that are fundamentally distinct from other lands—and these are, according to this view, sensation, thinking, and willing. This view is popular and has long been traditional, and it is natural for it to regard emotion as a state. This is not necessary, but it comes about under the vague impression of the perception that at every moment of an emotion, and in the middle of its dynamic changes, we can not only distinguish that we are feeling but also experience, as something apparently static, that we are persisting in a state of feeling.
“The more modern way of representing emotion, on the other hand, proceeds from the observation that it is most intimately associated with action and expression; and it follows both that this view is inclined to consider emotion as a process and that it does not direct its attention to emotion alone but sees it as a whole, together with its origin and forms of expression. This approach originated in physiology and biology, and its efforts were first directed at a physiological explanation of spiritual processes or, more emphatically, at the physical totality in which spiritual manifestations are also involved. The results of this can be summarized as the second main answer to the problem of the nature of emotion.

“But directing the thirst for knowledge toward the whole instead of its constituent elements, and toward reality instead of a preconceived notion, also distinguishes the more recent psychological investigations of
emotion from the older kinds, except that its aims and leading ideas are naturally derived from its own discipline. This leads these recent investigations to yield a third answer to the problem of what emotion is, an answer that builds on the others as well as standing on its own. This third answer, however, is no longer in any way part of a retrospective view, because it marks the beginning of insight into the concept formation currently under way or regarded as possible.

“I wish to add, since I mentioned earlier the question of whether emotion is a state or a process, that this question actually plays just about no role at all in the developments I have outlined, unless it be that of a weakness common to all views, which is perhaps not entirely unfounded. If I imagine an emotion, as seems natural in the older manner, as something constant that has an effect both inwardly and outwardly, and also receives input from both directions, then I am
obviously faced with not just one emotion but an indeterminate number of alternating emotions. For these subcategories of emotion, language rarely has a plural at its disposal: it knows no envies, angers, or spites. For language these are internal variations of an emotion, or emotion in various stages of development; but without question a sequence of stages points just as much toward a process as does a sequence of emotions. If, on the other hand—which would accord with this and also seem to be closer to the contemporary view—one believes that one is looking at a process, then the doubt as to what emotion ‘really’ is, and where something stops belonging to itself and becomes part of its causes, consequences, or accompanying circumstances, is not to be solved so easily. In a later place I shall come back to this, for such a divided answer customarily indicates a fault in the way the question is put; and it will, I think, become
clear that the question of whether emotion is a state or a process is really an illusory one, behind which another question is lurking. For the sake of this possibility, about which I can’t make up my mind, I will let this question stand.”

“I will now continue following the original doctrine of emotion, which distinguishes four major actions or basic states of the soul. It goes back to classical antiquity and is presumably a dignified remnant of antiquity’s belief that the world consists of the four elements earth, air, fire, and water. In any event, one often hears mention even today of four particular classes of elements of consciousness that cannot be reduced to each other, and in the class of ‘emotion the two feelings pleasure* and lack of pleasure’ usually occupy a privileged position; for they are supposed to be either the only ones, or at least the only ones involving emotions that are not in any way alloyed with anything
else. In truth they are perhaps not emotions at all but only a coloration and shading of feelings in which have been preserved the original distinction between attraction and flight, and probably also the opposition between succeeding and failing, and other contrasts of the originally so symmetrical conduct of life as well. Life, when it succeeds, is pleasurable: Aristotle said it long before Nietzsche and our time. Kant, too, said that pleasure is the feeling of furthering life, pain that of hindering it. And Spinoza called pleasure the ‘transition in man from lesser to greater perfection.’ Pleasure has always had this somewhat exaggerated reputation of being an ultimate explanation (not least on the part of those who have suspected it of deception!).

“But it can really arouse laughter in the case of thinkers who are not quite major and yet are suspiciously passionate. Here let me cite from a contemporary manual a lovely
passage of which I would not like to lose a single word: What appears to be more different in kind than, for example, joy over an elegant solution to a mathematical problem and joy over a good lunch! And yet both are, as pure emotion, one and the same, namely pleasure!’ Also let me add a passage from a court decision that was actually handed down just a few days ago: The purpose of compensation is to bestow upon the injured party the possibility of acquiring the feelings of pleasure corresponding to his usual circumstances, which balance the absence of pleasure caused by the injury and its consequences. Applied to the present case, it already follows from the limited choice of feelings of pleasure that correspond to the age of two and a quarter years, and the ease of providing means for them, that the compensation sought is too high.’ The penetrating clarity expressed in both these examples permits the respectful observation that
pleasure and the absence of pleasure will long remain as the hee and the haw of the doctrine of feeling."

"If I look around further, I discover that this doctrine that carefully weighs pleasure and the absence of pleasure understands by ‘mixed feelings’ the connection of the elements of pleasure and lack of pleasure with the other elements of consciousness, meaning by these grief, composure, anger, and other things upon which lay people place such high value that they would gladly find out more about them beyond the mere name. ‘General states of feeling’ such as liveliness or depression, in which mixed feelings of the same kind predominate, are called unity of an emotional situation.’ ‘Affect’ is what this connection calls an emotional situation that occurs ‘suddenly and violently,’ and such a situation that is, moreover, ‘chronic’ it calls ‘passion.’ Were theories to have a moral, the moral of this doctrine would be more or less
contained in the words: If you take small steps at the beginning, you can take big leaps later on!"

“But in distinctions such as these, whether there is just one pleasure and lack of pleasure or perhaps several; whether beside pleasure and the absence of pleasure there are not also other basic oppositions, for instance whether relaxation and tension are not such (this bears the majestic title of singularistic and pluralistic theory); whether an emotion might change and whether, if it changes, it then becomes a different emotion; whether an emotion, should it consist of a sequence of feelings, stands in relation to these the way genus stands in relation to species, or the caused to its causes; whether the stages an emotion passes through, assuming it is itself a state, are conditions of a single state or different states, and therefore different emotions; whether an emotion can bring about a
change in itself through the actions and thoughts it produces, or whether in this talk about the ‘effect’ of an emotion something as figurative and barely real is meant as if one were to say that the rolling out of a sheet of steel ‘effects’ its thinning, or a spreading out of clouds the overcasting of the sky: in such distinctions traditional psychology has achieved much that ought not to be underesti-mated. Of course one might then ask whether love is a ‘substance’ or a ‘quality’ and what is involved with regard to love in terms of ‘haeccity and ‘quiddity’; but is one ever certain of not having to raise this question yet again?”

“All such questions contain a highly useful sense of ordering, although considering the unconstrained nature of emotions, this seems slightly ridiculous and is not able to help us much with regard to how emotions determine our actions. This logical-
grammatical sense of order, like a pharmacy equipped with its hundred little drawers and labels, is a remnant of the medieval, Aristotelian-scholastic observation of nature, whose magnificent logic came to grief not so much on account of the experiences people had with it as on account of those they had without it. It is particularly the fault of the developing natural sciences and their new kind of understanding, which placed the question of what is real ahead of the question of what is logical; yet no less, too, the misfortune that nature appears to have been waiting for just such a lack of philosophy in order to let itself be discovered, and responded with an alacrity that is by no means yet exhausted. Nevertheless, so long as this development has not brought forth the new cosmic philosophical egg, it is still useful even today to feed it occasionally from the old bowl, as one does with laying hens. And this is especially true for the psychology of the
emotions. For in its buttoned-up logical investiture it was, ultimately, completely unproductive, but the opposite is only too true for the psychologists of emotion who came after; for in regard to this relation between logical raiment and productivity, they have been, at least in the fine years of their youth, well-nigh sans-culottes!”

“What should I call to mind from these beginnings for more general advantage? Above all that this more recent psychology began with the beneficent sympathy that the medical faculty has always had for the philosophical faculty, and it cleared away the older psychology of emotion by totally ceasing to speak of emotions and beginning to talk instead about ‘instincts’, ‘instinctive acts,’ and ‘affects.’ (Not that talk of man as a being ruled by his instincts and affects was new; it became the new medicine because from then on man was exclusively to be so regarded.)
“The advantage consisted in the prospect of reducing the higher human attitude of inspiration to the general invigorated attitude constructed on the basis of the powerful natural constraints of hunger, sex, persecution, and other fundamental conditions of life to which the soul is adapted. The sequences of actions these determine are called ‘instinctive drives’ and these arise without thinking or purpose whenever a stimulus brings the relevant group of stimuli into play, and these are similarly activated in all animals of the same species; often, too, in both animal and man. The individual but almost invariable hereditary dispositions for this are called ‘drives’; and the term ‘affect’ is usually associated in this connection with a rather vague notion according to which the ‘affect’ is supposed to be the experience or the experienced aspect of the instinctive action and of drives stimulated to action.
“This also mostly assumes, either emphatically or discreetly, that all human actions are instinctive actions, or combinations from among such actions, and that all our emotions are affects or parts or combinations of affects. Today I leafed through several textbooks of medical psychology in order to refresh my memory, but not one of their thematic indexes had a mention of the word ‘emotion,’ and it is really no mean accomplishment for a psychology of the emotions not to contain any emotions!”

“This is the extent to which, even now, a more or less emphatic intention dominates in many circles to substitute scientific concepts meant to be as concrete as possible for the useless spiritual observation of the soul. And however one would originally have liked emotions to be nothing more than sensations in the bowels or wrists (which led to such assertions as that fear consists of an
accelerated heartbeat and shallow breathing, or that thinking is an inner speaking and thus really a stimulation of the larynx), what is honored and esteemed today is the purified concept that reduces all inner life to chains of reflexes and the like, and this serves a large and successful school by way of example as the only permissible task of explaining the soul.

“So if the scientific goal may be said to be a broad and wherever possible ironclad anchoring in the realm of nature, there is still blended with it a peculiar exuberance, which can be roughly expressed in the proposition: What stands low stands firm. In the overcoming of a theological philosophy of nature, this was once an exuberance of denial, a ‘bearish speculation in human values.’ Man preferred to see himself as a thread in the weave of the world’s carpet rather than as someone standing on this carpet; and it is easy to understand how a devilish, degrading
desire for soullessness also rubbed off on the emptiness of the soul when it straggled noisily into its materialistic adolescence. This was later held against it in religiously strait-laced fashion by all the pious enemies of scientific thinking, but its innermost essence was nothing more than a good-natured gloomy romanticism, an offended child’s love for God, and therefore also for his image, a love that in the abuse of this image still has unconscious aftereffects today.”

“But it is always dangerous when a source of ideas is forgotten without this being noticed, and thus many things that had merely derived their unabashed certainty from it were preserved in just as unabashed a state in medical psychology. This gave rise in places to a condition of neglect involving precisely the basic concepts, and not least the concepts of instinct, affect, and instinctive action. Even the question of what a drive is, and which or how many there are, is
answered not only quite disparately but without any kind of trepidation. I had an exposition before me that distinguished among the ‘drive groups’ of taking in food, sexuality, and protection against danger; another, which I compared with it, adduced a life drive, an assertion drive, and five more. For a long time psychoanalysis, which incidentally is also a psychology of drives, seemed to recognize only a single drive. And so it continues: Even the relationship between instinctive action and affect has been determined with equally great disparities: everybody does seem to be in agreement that affect is the ‘experience’ of instinctive action, but as to whether in this process the entire instinctive action is experienced as affect, including external behavior, or only the internal event, or parts of it, or parts of the external and internal process in a particular combination: sometimes one of these claims is advanced, sometimes the other, and sometimes
both simultaneously. Not even what I wrote before from memory without protest, that an instinctive action happens ‘without intention or reflection,’ is correct all the time.”

“Is it then surprising if what comes to light behind the physiological explanations of our behavior is ultimately, quite often, nothing but the familiar idea that we let our behavior be steered by chain reflexes, secretions, and the mysteries of the body simply because we were seeking pleasure and avoiding its opposite? And not only in psychology, also in biology and even in political economy—in short, wherever a basis is sought for an attitude or a behavior—pleasure and its lack are still playing this role; in other words, two feelings so paltry that it is hard to think of anything more simpleminded. The far more diversified idea of satisfying a drive would indeed be capable of offering a more colorful picture, but the old habit is so strong that one can sometimes even read that the
drives strive for satisfaction because this fulfillment is pleasure, which is about the same as considering the exhaust pipe the operative part of a motor!”

And so at the end Ulrich had also come to mention the problem of simplicity, although it was doubtless a digression.

“What is so attractive, so specially tempting to the mind, that it finds it necessary to reduce the world of emotions to pleasure and its lack, or to the simplest psychological processes? Why does it grant a higher explanatory value to something psychological, the simpler it is? Why a greater value to something physiological-chemical than to something psychological, and finally, why does it assign the highest value of all to reducing things to the movement of physical atoms? This seldom happens for logical reasons, rather it happens half consciously, but in some way or other this prejudice is usually operating. Upon what, in other words, rests
this faith that nature’s mystery has to be simple?

“There are, first, two distinctions to be made. The splitting up of the complex into the simple and the minuscule is a habit in everyday life justified by utilitarian experience: it teaches us to dance by imparting the steps, and it teaches that we understand a thing better after we have taken it apart and screwed it together again. Science, on the other hand, uses simplicity really only as an intermediate step; even what appears as an exception subordinates itself to this. For ultimately science does not reduce the complex to the simple but reduces the particularity of the individual case to the generally valid laws that are its goal, and which are not so much simple as they are general and summarizing. It is only through their application, that is to say at second hand, that they simplify the variety of events.
“And so everywhere in life two simplicities contrast with each other: what it is beforehand and what it becomes afterward are simple in different senses. What it is beforehand, whatever that may be, is mostly simple because it lacks content and form, and therefore is generally foolish, or it has not yet been grasped. But what becomes simple, whether it be an idea or a knack or even will, both entails and participates in the power of truth and capability that compel what is confusingly varied. These simplicities are usually confused with each other: it happens in the pious talk of the simplicity and innocence of nature; it happens in the belief that a simple morality is closer in all circumstances to the eternal than a complicated one; it happens, too, in the confusion between raw will and a strong will.”

When Agathe had read this far she thought she heard Ulrich’s returning steps on the garden gravel and hastily shoved all
the papers back into the drawer. But when she was sure that her hearing had deceived her, and ascertained that her brother was still lingering in the garden, she took the papers out again and read on a bit further.
When General Stumm von Bordwehr began expounding in the garden why he thought he had stumbled over an idea, it soon became evident that he was talking with the joy that a well-rehearsed subject provides. It began, he reported, with his receiving the expected rebuke on account of the hasty resolution that had forced the Minister of War to flee Diotima’s house. “I predicted the whole thing!” Stumm protested confidently, adding more modestly: “except for what came afterward.” For in spite of all countermeasures, a whiff of the distressing incident had got through to the newspapers, and had surfaced again during the riots of which Leinsdorf
became the sacrificial lamb. But on Count Leinsdorf’s way back from his Bohemian landholdings, in a city where he was trying to catch the train—Stumm now spelled out what he had already indicated in Agathe’s presence—his carriage had happened to get caught between the two fronts of a political encounter, and Stumm described what happened next in the following manner: “Of course their demonstrations were about something entirely different: some regulation or other concerning the use of local national languages in the state agencies, or an issue like that, something people have got so upset about so often that it’s hard to get excited about it anymore. So all that was going on was that the German-speaking inhabitants were standing on one side of the street shouting “Shame!” at those across the way, who wanted other languages and were shouting “Disgrace!” at the Germans, and nothing further might have happened. But Leinsdorf
is famous as a peacemaker; he wants the national minorities living under the Monarchy to be a national people, as he’s always saying. And you know, too, if I may say so here where no one can hear us, that two dogs often growl around each other in a general way, but the moment someone tries to calm them they jump at each other’s throats. So as soon as Leinsdorf was recognized, it gave a tremendous impetus to everyone’s emotions. They began asking in chorus, in two languages: What’s going on with the Commission to Establish the Desires of the Concerned Sections of the Populace, Your Excellency?’ And then they shouted: ‘You fake peace abroad, and in your own house you’re a murderer!’ Do you remember the story that’s told about him that once, a hundred years ago, when he was much younger, a coquette he was with died during the night? This was what they were alluding to, people are saying now. And all this happened on
account of that stupid resolution that you should let yourself be killed for your own ideas but not for other people’s, a stupid resolution that doesn’t even exist because I kept it out of the minutes! But obviously word got around, and because we had refused to allow it, now all of us are suspected of being murderers of the people! It’s totally irrational, but ultimately logical!"

Ulrich was struck by this distinction.

The General shrugged his shoulders. “It originated with the Minister of War himself. Because when he had me called in after the row at Tuzzi’s, he said to me: ‘My dear Stumm, you shouldn’t have let it get so far!’ I responded as well as I could about the spirit of the times, and that this spirit needs a form of expression and, on the other hand, a footing too: in a word, I tried to prove to him how important it is to look for an idea in the times and get excited about it, even if just now it happens to be two ideas that
contradict each other and give each other apoplexy, so that at any given moment it’s impossible to know what’s going to develop. But he said to me: ‘My dear Stumm, you’re a philosopher! But it’s a general’s job to know! If you lead a brigade into a skirmish, the enemy doesn’t confide in you what his intentions are and how strong he is!’ Whereupon he ordered me once and for all to keep my mouth shut.’” Stumm interrupted his tale to draw breath, and went on: “That’s why, as soon as the Leinsdorf business came up on top of that, I immediately asked to speak to the Minister; because I could see that the Parallel Campaign would be blamed again, and I wanted to forestall it. Tour Excellency!’ I began. *What the populace did was irrational, but that might have been expected, because it always is. That’s why in such cases I never regard it as reason, but as passion, fantasies, slogans, and the like. But aside from this, even that wouldn’t have helped,
because Count Leinsdorf is a stubborn old fellow who won’t listen to anything!’ This is more or less what I said, and the Minister of War listened the whole time, nodding but not saying anything. But then he either forgot what he had just been chewing me out about or must have been in a really bad temper, because he suddenly said: ‘You are indeed a philosopher, Stumm! I’m not in the least interested in either His Excellency or the people; but you say reason here and logic there as if they were one and the same, and I must point out to you that they are not one and the same! Reason is something a civilian can have but can get along without. But what you have to confront reason with—which I must demand from my generals—is logic. Ordinary people have no logic, but they have to be made to feel it over them!’ And that was the end of the discussion,” Stumm von Bordwehr concluded.
“I can’t say I understand that at all,” Ulrich remarked, “but it seems to me that on the whole, your Second-Highest Generalissimo was treating you not ungraciously.”

They were strolling up and down the garden paths, and Stumm now walked a few paces without replying, but then stopped so violently that the gravel crunched beneath his boots. “You don’t understand?” he exclaimed, and added: “At first I didn’t understand either. But little by little the whole range of just how right His Excellency the Minister of War was dawned on me! And why is he right? Because the Minister of War is always right! If there should be a scandal at Diotima’s, I can’t leave before he does, and I can’t divine the future of Mars either; it’s an unreasonable thing to ask of me. Nor can I fall into disgrace, as in Leinsdorf’s case, for something with which I have as little connection as I do with the birth of my blessed grandmother! But still, the Minister of War
is right when he imputes all that to me, because one’s superior is always right: that both is and isn’t a banality! Now do you understand?"

“No,” Ulrich said.

“But look,” Stumm implored. “You’re just trying to make things difficult for me because you don’t feel involved, or because you have a feeling for justice, or for some such reason, and you won’t admit that this is something a lot more serious! But really you remember quite well, because when you were in the army, people said to you all the time that an officer must be able to think logically! In our eyes, logic is what distinguishes the military from the civilian mind. But does logic mean reason? No. Reason is what the army rabbi or chaplain or the fellow from the military archives has. But logic is not reason. Logic means acting honorably in all circumstances, but consistently, ruthlessly, and without emotion; and don’t let
anything confuse you! Because the world isn’t ruled by reason but must be dominated by iron logic, even if the world has been full of idle chatter since it began! That’s what the Minister of War was giving me to understand. You will object that in me it didn’t fall upon the most barren ground, because it’s nothing more than the old tried-and-true mentality of the military mind. Since then I’ve got more of that back, and you can’t deny it: we must be prepared to strike before we all start talking about eternal peace; we must first repair our omissions and weaknesses so as not to be at a disadvantage when we join the universal brotherhood. And our spirit is not ready to strike! It’s never ready! The civilian mind is a highly significant back-and-forth, an up-and-down, and you once called it the millennial war of faith: but we can’t let that destroy us! Somebody has to be there who, as we say in the military, has initiative and takes over the leadership, and
that’s the vocation of one’s superior. I see that now myself, and I’m not entirely certain whether before, in my sympathy for every spiritual endeavor, I wasn’t sometimes carried away.”

Ulrich asked: “And what would have happened if you hadn’t realized that? Would you have been discharged?”

“No, that wouldn’t have happened,” Stumm corrected him. “Presuming, of course, that I still showed no deficiency in military feeling toward power relationships. But they would have given me an infantry brigade in Wladisschmirschowitz or Knobl-joluka, instead of letting me continue at the crossroads of military power and civilian enlightenment and still be of some use to the culture we all share!”

They had now gone back and forth several times on the path between the house and the gate, near which the carriage was
waiting, and this time, too, the General turned around before they reached the gate. “You mistrust me,” he complained. “You haven’t even asked me what actually happened when the Peace Congress suddenly materialized!”

“Well, what did happen? The Minister of War called you in again, and what did he say?”

“No! He didn’t say anything! I waited a week, but he said nothing more,” Stumm replied. And after a moment of silence he couldn’t restrain himself any longer and proclaimed: “But they took ‘Report D’ away from me!”

“What is ‘Report D’?” Ulrich asked, although he had some idea.

“‘Report Diotima,’ of course,” Stumm responded with pained pleasure. “In a ministry, a report is prepared for every important question, and that had to be done when
Diotima began to use the gatherings at her house for a patriotic notion and after we found out about Arnheim’s active involvement. This report was assigned to me, as you will doubtless have noticed, and so I was asked what name it should be given, because you can’t just stick such a thing in a row like something in medical supplies or when you do a commissary course, and the name Tuzzi couldn’t be mentioned for interministerial reasons. But I couldn’t think of anything appropriate either, so finally, in order not to say either too much or too little, I proposed calling it ‘Report D’: for me, ‘D’ was Diotima, but no one knew that, and for the others it sounded really terrific, like the name of a directory, or maybe even like a secret to which only the General Staff has access. It was one of my best ideas,” Stumm concluded, adding with a sigh: “At that time I was still allowed to have ideas.”
But he did not seem entirely cheered up, and when Ulrich—whose mood of falling back into the world was almost used up, or at least its oral supply of talkativeness was pretty well consumed—now fell into silence after an appreciative smile, Stumm began to complain anew. “You don’t trust me. After what I’ve said, you think I’m a militarist. But on my honor, I fight against it, and I don’t want to simply drop all those things I believed in for so long. It’s these magnificent ideas that really make people out of soldiers. I tell you, my friend, when I think about it I feel like a widower whose better half has died first!” He warmed up again. “The Republic of Minds is of course just as disorderly as any other republic; but what a blessing is the superb idea that no person is in sole possession of the truth and that there are a host of ideas that haven’t yet even been discovered, perhaps because of the very lack of order that prevails among them! This makes me an
innovator in the military. Of course, in the General Staff they called me and my ‘Report D’ the ‘mobile searchlight battery,’ on account of the variety of my suggestions, but they really liked the cornucopia I was emptying!”

“And all that’s over?”

“Not unconditionally; but I’ve lost a lot of my confidence in the mind,” Stumm grumbled, seeking consolation.

“You’re right about that,” Ulrich said dryly.

“Now you’re saying that too?”

“I’ve always said it. I always warned you, even before the Minister did. Mind is only moderately suited to governing.”

Stumm wanted to avoid a lecture, so he said: “That’s what I’ve always thought too.”
Ulrich went on: “The mind is geared into life like a wheel, which it drives and by which it is also driven.”

But Stumm let him go no further. “If you should suspect,” he interrupted, “that such external circumstances were decisive for me, you would be humiliating me! It’s also a matter of a spiritual purification! ‘Report D’ was, moreover, taken from me with great respect. The Minister called me in to tell me himself that it was necessary because the Chief of the General Staff wanted a personal report on the Congress for World Peace, and so they immediately took the whole business out of the Office for Military Development and attached it to the Information Offices of the Evidenzbüro—”

“The Espionage Department?” Ulrich interjected, suddenly animated again.

“Who else? Whoever doesn’t know what he wants himself at least has to know what
everyone else wants! And I ask you, what business does the General Staff have at a Congress for World Peace? To interfere with it would be barbarous, and to encourage it in a pacifist way would be unmilitary! So they observe it. Who was it who said ‘Readiness is all’? Well, whoever it was knew something about the military.” Stumm had forgotten his sorrow. He twisted his legs from side to side, trying to cut off a flower with the scabbard of his sword. “I’m just afraid it will be too hard for them and they’ll beg me on their knees to come back and take over my report,” he said. “After all, you and I know from having been at it for nearly a year how such a congress of ideas splits up into proofs and counterproofs! Do you really believe—disregarding for the moment the special difficulties of governing—that it’s only the mind that can produce order, so to speak?”

He had now given up his preoccupation with the flower and, frowning and holding
the scabbard in his hand, gazed urgently into his friend’s face.

Ulrich smiled at him and said nothing.

Stumm let the saber drop because he needed the fingertips of both white-gloved hands for the delicate determination of an idea. “You must understand what I mean when I make a distinction between mind and logic. Logic is order. And there must be order! That is the officer’s basic principle, and I bow down to it! But on what basis order is established doesn’t make the slightest bit of difference: that’s mind—or, as the Minister of War put it in a rather old-fashioned way, reason—and that’s not the officer’s business. But the officer mistrusts the ability of civilian life to become reasonable by itself, no matter what the ideas are by which it’s always trying to do so. Because whatever mind there has ever been at any time, in the end it’s always led to war!”
Thus Stumm explained his new insights and scruples, and Ulrich summarized them involuntarily in an allusion to a well-known saying when he asked: “So you really mean to say that war is an element of God’s ordained ordering of the world?”

“That’s talking on too high a plane!” Stumm agreed, with some reservation. “I ask myself straight out whether mind isn’t simply dispensable. For if I’m to handle a person with spurs and bridle, like an animal, then I also have to have a part of the animal in me, because a really good rider stands closer to his steed than he does, for example, to the philosophy of law! The Prussians call this the scoundrel everyone carries inside himself, and constrain it with a Spartan spirit. But speaking as an Austrian general, I’d rather put it that the better, finer, and more ordered a nation is, the less it needs the mind, and in a perfect state it wouldn’t be needed at all! I take this to be a really tough
paradox! And by the way, who said what you just said? Who’s it from?”

“Moltke. He said that man’s noblest virtues—courage, renunciation, conscientiousness, and readiness to sacrifice—really develop only in war, and that without war the world would bog down in apathetic materialism.”

“Well!” Stumm exclaimed. “That’s interesting too! He’s said something I sometimes think myself!”

“But Moltke says in another letter to the same person, and therefore almost in the same breath, that even a victorious war is a misfortune for the nation,” Ulrich offered for consideration.

“You see, mind pinched him!” Stumm replied, convinced. “I’ve never read a line of him; he always seemed much too militaristic for me. And you can really take my word for it that I’ve always been an antimilitarist. All
my life I’ve believed that today no one believes in war anymore, you only make yourself look ridiculous if you say you do. And I don’t want you to think I’ve changed because I’m different now!” He had motioned the carriage over and already set his foot on the running board, but hesitated and looked at Ulrich entreatingly. “I have remained true to myself,” he went on. “But if before I loved the civilian mind with the feelings of a young girl, I now love it, if I may put it this way, more like a mature woman: it’s not ideal, it won’t even let itself be made coherent, all of a piece. That’s why I’ve told you, and not just today but for a long time, that one has to treat people with kindness as well as with a firm hand, one has to both love them and treat them shabbily, in order for things to come out properly. And that’s ultimately no more than the military state of mind that rises above parties and is supposed to distinguish the soldier. I’m not claiming any
personal merit here, but I want to show you that this conviction was what was speaking out of me before.”

“Now you’re going to repeat that the civil war of ‘66 came about because all Germans declared themselves brothers,” Ulrich said, smiling.

“Yes, of course!” Stumm confirmed. “And now on top of that everybody is declaring themselves brothers! That makes me ask, what’s going to come of it? What really comes happens so unexpectedly. Here we brooded for almost a whole year, and then it turned out quite differently. And so it seems to be my fate that while I was busily investigating the mind, the mind led me back to the military. Still, if you consider everything I’ve said, you’ll find that I don’t identify myself with anything but find something true in everything; that’s the essence, more or less, of what we’ve been talking about.”
After looking at his watch, Stumm started to give the sign to leave, for his pleasure at having unburdened himself was so intense that he had forgotten everything else. But Ulrich amicably laid his hand on him and said: “You still haven’t told me what your newest ‘little job’ is.”

Stumm held back. “Today there’s no more time. I have to go.”

But Ulrich held him by one of the gold buttons gleaming on his stomach, and wouldn’t let go until Stumm gave in. Stumm fished for Ulrich’s head and pulled his ear to his mouth. “Well, in strictest confidence,” he whispered, “Leinsdorf.”

“I take it he’s to be done away with, you political assassin!” Ulrich whispered back, but so openly that Stumm, offended, pointed to the coachman. They decided to speak aloud but avoid naming names. “Let me think about it,” Ulrich proposed, “and see for
myself whether I still know something about the world you move in. *He* brought down the last Minister of Culture, and after the recent insult he received, one has to assume that he will bring down the current one as well. But that would be, momentarily, an unpleasant disturbance, and this has to be precluded. And, for whatever reason, *he* still clings firmly to the conviction that the Germans are the biggest threat to the nation, that Baron Wisnieczky, whom the Germans can’t stand, is the man best suited to beat the drum among them that the government ought not to have changed course, and so on....”

Stumm could have interrupted Ulrich but had been content to listen, only now intervening. “But it was under *him* in the campaign that the slogan ‘Action!’ came about; while everyone else was just saying It’s a new spirit,’ *he* was saying to everyone who didn’t like to hear it: ‘Something must be done!’ “
“And he can’t be brought down, he’s not in the government. And the Parallel Campaign has been, so to speak, shot out from under him,” Ulrich said.

“So now the danger is that he’ll start something else,” the General went on.

“But what can you do about it?” Ulrich asked, curious.

“Well! I’ve been assigned the mission of diverting him a little and, if you like, also watching over him a bit—”

“Ah! A ‘Report L,’ you coy deceiver!”

“That’s what you can call it between us, but of course it doesn’t have an official name. My mission is simply to sit on Leinsdorf’s neck”—this time Stumm wanted to enjoy the name too, but again he whispered it—”like a tick. Those were the Minister’s own gracious words.”
“But he must have also given you a goal to aim for?”

The General laughed. “Talk! I’m to talk with him! Go along with everything he’s thinking, and talk so much about it that he will, we hope, wear himself out and not do anything rash. ‘Suck him dry,’ the Minister told me, and called it an honorable mission and a demonstration of his confidence. And if you were to ask me whether that’s all, I can only respond: it’s a lot! Our old Excellency is a person of enormous culture, and tremendously interesting!” He had given the coachman the sign to start, and called back: “The rest next time. I’m counting on you!”

It was only as the coach was rolling away that the idea occurred to Ulrich that Stumm might also have had the intention of rendering him innocuous, since he had once been suspected of being able to lead Count Leinsdorf’s mind off on some quite extravagant fancy.
Agathe had gone on to read a large part of the pages that followed.

They did not, at first, contain anything of the promised exposition of the current development of the concept of emotion, for before Ulrich gave a summary of these views, from which he hoped to derive the greatest benefit, he had, in his own words, sought to “present the origin and growth of an emotion as naively, clumsily spelling it out with his finger, as it might appear to a layman not unpracticed in matters of the intellect.”
This entry went on: “We are accustomed to regard emotion as something that has causes and consequences, and I want to limit myself to saying that the cause is an external stimulus. But of course appropriate circumstances are part of this stimulus as well, which is to say appropriate external, but also internal, circumstances, an inner readiness, and it is this trinity that actually decides whether and how this stimulus will be responded to. For whether an emotion occurs all at once or protractedly, how it expands and runs its course, what ideas it entails, and indeed what emotion it is, ordinarily depend no less on the previous state of the person experiencing the emotion and his environment than they do on the stimulus. This is no doubt self-evident in the case of the condition of the person experiencing the emotion: in other words, his temperament, character, age, education, predispositions, principles, prior experience, and present
tensions, although these states have no definite boundaries and lose themselves in the person’s being and destiny. But the external environment too, indeed simply knowing about it or implicitly assuming it, can also suppress or favor an emotion. Social life offers innumerable examples of this, for in every situation there are appropriate and inappropriate emotions, and emotions also change with time and region, with what groups of emotions predominate in public and in private life, or at least which ones are favored and which suppressed; it is even the case that periods rich in emotion and poor in emotion have succeeded one another.

“Add to all this that external and internal circumstances, along with the stimulus—this can easily be measured—are not independent of each other. For the internal state has been adapted to the external state and its emotional stimuli, and is therefore dependent on them as well; and the external
state must have been assimilated in some fashion or other, in such a way that its manifestation depends on the inner state before a disturbance of this equilibrium evokes a new emotion, and this new emotion either paves the way for a new equalization or is one itself. But in the same way, the ‘stimulus’ too, does not ordinarily work directly but works only by virtue of being assimilated, and the inner state again only carries out this assimilation on the basis of perceptions with which the beginnings of the excitation must already have been associated.

“Aside from that, the stimulus capable of arousing an emotion is connected with the emotion insofar as what stimulates, for instance, a starving person is a matter of indifference to a person who has been insulted, and vice versa.”

“Similar complications result when the subsequent process is to be described seriatim. Thus even the question of when an
emotion is present cannot be answered, although according to the basic view by which it is to be effected and then produce an effect itself, it must be assumed that there is such a point in time. But the arousing stimulus does not actually strike an existing state, like the ball in the mechanical contraption that sets off a sequence of consequences like falling dominoes, but continues in time, calling forth a fresh supply of inner forces that both work according to its sense and vary its effect. And just as little does the emotion, once present, dissipate immediately in its effects, nor does it itself remain the same even for an instant, resting, as it were, in the middle between the processes it assimilates and transmits; it is connected with a constant changing in everything to which it has connection internally and externally, and also receives reactions from both directions.

“\text{It is a characteristic endeavor of the emotions to actively, often passionately, vary}
the stimuli to which they owe their origin, and to eliminate or abet them; and the major directions of life are those toward the outside and from the outside. That is why anger already contains the counterattack, desire the approach, and fear the transition to flight, to paralysis, or something between both in the scream. But an emotion also receives more than a little of its particularity and content through the retroactive effect of this active behavior; the well-known statement of an American psychologist that we do not weep because we are sad, but are sad because we weep' might be an exaggeration, yet it is certain that we don't just act the way we feel, but we also soon learn to feel the way we act, for whatever reasons.

“A familiar example of this back-and-forth pathway is a pair of dogs who begin to romp playfully but end up in a bloody fight; a similar phenomenon can be observed in children and simple people. And is not,
ultimately, the entire lovely theatricality of life such an example writ large, with its half-momentous, half-empty gestures of honor and being honored, of menacing, civility, strictness, and everything else: all gestures of wanting-to-represent-something and of the representation that sets judgment aside and influences the emotions directly. Even the military ‘drill* is part of this, based as it is on the effect that a behavior imposed for a long time finally produces the emotions from which it was supposed to have sprung.”

“More important than this reacting to an action, in this and other examples, is that an experience changes its meaning if its course happens to veer from the sphere of the particular forces that steered it at the beginning into the sphere of other mental connections. For what is going on internally is similar to what is happening externally. The emotion pushes inside; it ‘grabs hold of the whole person’ as colloquial language not
inappropriately has it; it suppresses what doesn’t suit it and supports whatever can offer it nourishment. In a psychiatric textbook, I came across strange names for this: ‘switching energy’ and ‘switching work’ But in this process the emotion also stimulates the inner sphere to turn toward it. The inner readiness not already expended in the first instant gradually pushes toward the emotion; and the emotion will be completely taken over from within as soon as it gets hold of the stronger energies in ideas, memories, or principles, or in other stored-up energy, and these will change it in such a way that it becomes hard to decide whether one should speak of a moving or of a being moved.

“But if, through such processes, an emotion has reached its high point, the same processes must weaken and dilute it again as well. For emotions and experiences will then crisscross the region of this climax, but no longer subordinate themselves to it
completely; indeed, they will finally displace it. This countercurrent of satiety and erosion really begins when the emotion first arises; the fact that the emotion spreads indicates not only an expansion of its power but, at the same time, a relaxation of the needs from which it arose or of which it makes use.

“This can also be observed in relation to the action; for emotion not only intensifies in the action, but also relaxes in it; and its satiety, if it is not disturbed by another emotion, can proceed to the point of excess, that is to say, to the point where a new emotion occurs.”

“One thing deserves special mention. So long as an emotion subjugates the internal aspect, it comes in contact with activities that contribute to experiencing and understanding the external world; and thus the emotion will be able to partly pattern the world as we understand it according to its own pattern and sense, in order to be
reinforced within itself through the reactive aspect. Examples of this are well known: A violent feeling blinds one toward something that uninvolved observers perceive and causes one to see things others don’t. For the melancholy person, everything is gloomy; he punishes with disregard anything that might cheer him up; the cheerful person sees the world in bright colors and is not capable of perceiving anything that might disturb this. The lover meets the most evil natures with trusting confidence, and the suspicious person not only finds his mistrust confirmed on every side, but these confirmations also seek him out to plague him. In this way every emotion, if it attains a certain strength and duration, creates its own world, a selective
and personal world, and this plays no small role in human relations! Here, too, is where our notorious inconsistency and our changeable opinions belong.”

Here Ulrich had drawn a line and briefly reverted to the question of whether an emotion was a state or a process. The question's peculiarity now clearly emerged as illusory. What followed took up, in summary and continuing fashion, where the previous description had left off:

“Proceeding from the customary idea that emotion is a state that emanates from a cause and produces consequences, I was led in my exposition to a description that doubtless does represent a process if the result is observed over a fairly long stretch. But if I then proceed from the total impression of a process and try to grasp this idea, I see just as clearly that the sequence between neighboring elements, the one-after-another that is an essential part of a process, is
everywhere missing. Indeed, every indication of a sequence in a particular direction is missing. On the contrary, it points to a mutual dependence and presupposition between the individual steps, and even to the image of effects that appear to precede their causes. Nor do any temporal relationships appear anywhere in the description, and all this points, for a variety of reasons, to emotion being a state.

“So strictly speaking I can merely say of an emotion that it seems to be a state as much as it is a process, or that it appears to be neither a state nor a process; one statement can be justified as easily as the other.

“But even that depends, as can easily be shown, at least as much on the manner of description as on what is described. For it is not a particular idiosyncrasy of mental activity, let alone that of emotion, but occurs also in other areas in describing nature; for instance, everywhere where there is talk of a
system and its elements, or of a whole and its parts, that in one person’s view can appear as a state while another person sees it as a process. Even the duration of a process is associated for us with the concept of a state. I could probably not say that the logic of this double idea-formation is clear, but apparently it has more to do with the distinction between states and processes belonging to the way thinking expresses itself in language than it does with the scientific picture presented by facts, a picture that states and processes might improve but might also, perhaps, allow to disappear behind something else.”

“The German language says: Anger is in me, and it says: I am in anger [Ich bin in Zorn]. It says: I am angry, I feel angry [Ich fühle mich zornig]. It says: I am in love [Ich bin verliebt], and I have fallen in love [Ich habe mich verliebt]. The names the language has given to the emotions probably point
back frequently, in its history, to language’s having been affected by the impression of actions and through dangerous or obvious attitudes toward actions; nevertheless, language talks of an emotion as, in one case, a state embracing various processes, in another as of a process consisting of a series of states. As the examples show, it also includes quite directly in its forms of expression, various though these may be, the idea-formations of the individual and of external and internal, and in all this the language behaves as capriciously and unpredictably as if it had always intended to substantiate the disorder of German emotions.

“This heterogeneity of the linguistic picture of our emotions, which arose from impressive but incomplete experiences, is still reflected today in the idea-formation of science, especially when these ideas are taken more in breadth than in depth. There are psychological theories in which the ‘I’
appears as the most certain element, present in every movement of the mind, but especially in the emotion of what is capable of being experienced, and there are other theories that completely ignore the ‘I’ and regard only the relationships between expressions as capable of being experienced, describing them as if they were phenomena in a force field, whose origin is left out of account. There are also ego psychologies and psychologies without the ego. But other distinctions, too, are occasionally formulated: thus emotion may appear in one place as a process that runs through the relation of an ‘I’ to the external world, in another as a special case and state of connectedness, and so forth: distinctions that, given a more conceptual orientation of the thirst for knowledge, easily press to the fore so long as the truth is not clear.

“Much is here still left to opinion, even if one takes the greatest care to distinguish
opinion from the facts. It seems clear to us that an emotion takes shape not just anywhere in the world but within a living being, and that it is ‘I’ who feels, or feels stimulation within itself. Something is clearly going on within me when I feel, and I am also changing my state. Also, though the emotion brings about a more intense relation to the external world than does a sense perception, it seems to me to be more Inward’ than a sense perception. That is one group of impressions. On the other hand, a stand taken by the entire person is associated with the emotion as well, and that is another group. I know about emotion, in distinction to sense perception, that it concerns ‘all of me’ more than sense perception does. Also, it is only by means of an individual person that an emotion brings something about externally, whether it is because the person acts or because he begins to see the world differently. Indeed, it cannot even be maintained that an
emotion is an internal change in a person without the addition that it causes changes in his relation to the external world.”

“So does the being and becoming of an emotion take place ‘in’ us, or to us, or by means of us? This leads me back to my own description. And if I may give credence to its disinterestedness, the relationships it discreetly illuminates once again reinforce the same thing: My emotion arises inside me and outside me; it changes from the inside and the outside; it changes the world directly from inside and indirectly, that is through my behavior, from outside; and it is therefore, even if this contradicts our prejudice, simultaneously inside and outside, or at least so entangled with both that the question as to what in an emotion is internal and what external, and what in it is ‘I’ and what the world, becomes almost meaningless.

“This must somehow furnish the basic facts, and can do so expeditiously, for,
expressed in rather measured words, it merely states that in every act of feeling a double direction is experienced that imparts to it the nature of a transitory phenomenon: inward, or back to the individual, and outward, or toward the object with which it is concerned. What, on the other hand, inward and outward are, and even more what it means to belong to the ‘I’ or the world, in other words what stands at the end of both directions and would therefore be necessary to permit us to understand their presence completely: this is of course not to be clearly grasped in the first experience of it, and its origin is no clearer than anything else one experiences without knowing how. It is only through continuing experience and investigation that a genuine concept for this can be developed.

“That is why a psychology that considers it important that it be a real science of experience will treat these concepts and
proceed no differently from the way such a science does with the concepts of state and process; and the closely related ideas of the individual person, the mind, and the ‘I’ but also complete ideas of inward and outward, will appear in it as something to be explained, and not as something by whose aid one immediately explains something else...

“The everyday wisdom of psychology agrees with this remarkably well, for we usually assume in advance, without thinking about it much, that a person who shows himself in a way that corresponds to a specific emotion really feels that way. So it not seldom happens, perhaps it even happens quite often, that an external behavior, together with the emotions it embraces, will be comprehended directly as being all of a piece, and with great certainty.

“We first experience directly, as a whole, whether the attitude of a being approaching us is friendly or hostile, and the
consideration whether this impression is correct comes, at best, afterward. What approaches us in the first impression is not something that might perhaps prove to be awful; what we feel is the awfulness itself, even if an instant later the impression should turn out to be mistaken. And if we succeed in reconstituting the first impression, this apparent reversal permits us to also discern a rational sequence of experiences, such as that something is beautiful and charming, or shameful or nauseating.

“This has even been preserved in a double usage of language we meet with every day, when we say that we consider something awful, delightful, or the like, emphasizing thereby that the emotions depend on the person, just as much as we say that something is awful, delightful, and the like, emphasizing that the origin of our emotions is rooted as a quality in objects and events. This doubleness or even amphibian
ambiguity of the emotions supports the idea that they are to be observed not only within us, but also in the external world.”

With these last observations Ulrich had already arrived at the third answer to the question of how the concept of emotion is to be determined; or, more reservedly, at the opinion on this question that prevails today.
FEELING AND BEHAVIOR. THE PRECARIOUSNESS OF EMOTION

“The school of theoretical psychology most successful at the moment treats emotions and the actions associated with emotions as an indissoluble entity. What we feel when we act is for this psychology one aspect, and how we act with feeling the other aspect, of one and the same process. Contemporary psychology investigates both as a unit. For theories in this category, emotion is—in their terms—an internal and external behavior, event, and action; and because this bringing together of emotion and behavior has proved itself quite well, the question of how the two sides are to be ultimately separated again
and distinguished from each other has become for the time being almost secondary. That is why instead of a single answer there is a whole bundle of answers, and this bundle is rather untidy."

"We are sometimes told that emotion is simply identical with the internal and external events, but we are usually merely told that these events are to be considered equivalent to the emotion. Sometimes emotion is called, rather vaguely, ‘the total process,’ sometimes merely internal action, behavior, course, or event. Sometimes it also seems that two concepts of emotion are being used side by side: one in which emotion would be in a broader sense the ‘whole’ the other in which it would be, in a narrower sense, a partial experience that in some rather hazy way stamps its name, indeed its nature, on the whole. And sometimes people seem to follow the conjecture that one and the same thing, which presents itself to observation as
a complex process, becomes an emotion when it is experienced; in other words, the emotion would then be the experience, the result, and, so to speak, what the process yields in consciousness.

"The origin of these contradictions is no doubt always the same. For every such description of an emotion exhibits components, preponderantly in the plural, that are obviously not emotions, because they are actually known and equally respected as sensation, comprehension, idea, will, or an external process, such as can be experienced at any time, and which also participate exactly as they are in the total experience. But in and above all this there is also just as clearly something that seems in and of itself to be emotion in the simplest and most unmistakable sense, and nothing else: neither acting, nor a process of thinking, nor anything else.

"That’s why all these explanations can be summarized in two categories. They
characterize the emotion either as an aspect,' a component,’ or a ‘force’ of the total process, or else as the ‘becoming aware’ of this process, its ‘inner result,’ or something similar; expressions in which one can see clearly enough the embarrassment for want of better ones!”

“The most peculiar idea in these theories is that at first they leave vague the relation of the emotion to everything it is not, but with which it is filled; but they make it appear quite probable that this connection is in any case, and however it might be thought of otherwise, so constituted that it admits of no discontinuous changes, and that everything changes, so to speak, in the same breath.

“It can be thought of in terms of the example of melody. In melody the notes have their independent existence and can be recognized individually, and their propinquity, their simultaneity, their sequence, and
whatever else can be heard are not abstract concepts but an overflowing sensory exposition. But although all these elements can be heard singly in spite of their connectedness, they can also be heard connectedly, for that is precisely what melody is; and if the melody is heard, it is not that there is something new in addition to the notes, intervals, and rhythms, but something *with* them. The melody is not a supplement but a second-order phenomenon, a special form of existence, under which the form of the individual existences can just barely be discerned; and this is also true of emotion in relation to ideas, movements, sensations, intentions, and mute forces that unite in it. And as sensitive as a melody is to any change in its ‘components’ so that it immediately takes on another form or is destroyed entirely, so can an emotion be sensitive to an action or an interfering idea.
“In whatever relationship the emotion may therefore stand to ‘internal and external behavior’ this demonstrates how any change in this behavior could correspond to a change in the emotion, and vice versa, as if they were the two sides of a page.”

“(There are many model and experimental examples that confirm the broad extent of this theoretical idea, and other examples outside science that this idea fitfully illuminates, whether apparently or actually. I would like to retain one of these. The fervor of many portraits—and there are portraits, not just pictures, even of things—consists not least in that in them the individual existence opens up toward itself inwardly and closes itself off from the rest of the world. For the independent forms of life, even if they represent themselves as relatively hermetic, always have common links with the dispersive circle of a constantly changing environment. So when I took Agathe on my
arm and we both took ourselves out of the frame of our lives and felt united in another frame, perhaps something similar was happening with our emotions. I didn’t know what hers were, nor she mine, but they were only there for each other, hanging open and clinging to each other while all other dependency disappeared; and that is why we said we were outside the world and in ourselves, and used the odd comparison with a picture for this animated holding back and stopping short, this true homecoming and this becoming a unity of alien parts.

“So the peculiar thought I am talking about teaches that the alterations and modulations of the emotion, and those of the internal and external behavior, can correspond to each other point for point without the emotion having to be equated with the behavior or with part of it, or without anything else having to be maintained about the emotion beyond its possessing qualities that also
have their civic rights elsewhere in nature. This result has the advantage of not interfering with the natural distinction between an emotion and an event, and yet bridges them in such a way that the distinction loses its significance. It demonstrates in the most general fashion how the spheres of two actions, which can remain totally unlike one another, may yet be delineated in each other.

“This obviously gives the question of how, then, an emotion is supposed to ‘consist’ of other mental, indeed even of physical processes, an entirely new and remarkable turn; but this only explains how every change in the behavior corresponds to a change in the emotion, and vice versa, and not what really leads to such changes as take place during the entire duration of the emotion. In that case, the emotion would appear to be merely the echo of its accompanying action, and this action would be the mirror image of the emotion, so it would be hard to
understand their reciprocally changing each other.

“Here, consequently, the second major idea that can be derived from the newly opened up science of the emotions begins. I would like to call it the idea of shaping and consolidating.”

“This idea is based on several notions and considerations. Since I would like to clarify it for myself, let me first go back to our saying that an emotion brings about a behavior, and the behavior reacts on the emotion; for this crude observation easily allows a better one to counter it, that between both there is, rather, a relationship of mutual reinforcement and resonance, a rampant swelling into each other, which also, to be sure, brings about mutual change in both components. The emotion is translated into the language of the action, and the action into the language of the emotion. As with every
translation, something new is added and some things are lost in the process.

"Among the simplest relationships, the familiar expression that one’s limbs are paralyzed with fear already speaks of this; for it could just as well be maintained that the fear is paralyzed by the limbs: a distinction such as the one between ‘rigid with terror and ‘trembling with fear’ rests entirely on this second case. And what is claimed by the simplest movement of expression is also true of the comprehensive emotional action: in other words, an emotion changes not just as a consequence of the action it evokes, but already within the action by which it is assimilated in a particular way, repeated, and changed, in the course of which both the emotion and the action mutually shape and consolidate themselves. Ideas, desires, and impulses of all sorts also enter into an emotion in this way, and the emotion enters them."
“But such a relationship of course presupposes a differentiation in the interaction in which the lead should alternate sequentially, so that now feeling, now acting, dominates, now a resolve, scruple, or idea becomes dominant and makes a contribution that carries all the components forward in a common direction. So this relationship is contained in the idea of a mutual shaping and consolidation, and it is this idea that really makes it complete.

“On the other side, the unity described previously must at the same time be able to assimilate changes and yet still have the ability to maintain its identity as a more or less defined emotional action; but it must also be able to exclude, for it assimilates influences from within and without or fends them off. Up to now, all I know of this unity is the law of its completed state. Therefore the origins of these influences must also be able to be adduced and ultimately explained, thanks to
which providence or arrangement it happens that they enter into what is going on in the sense of a common development.”

“Now, in all probability a particular ability to endure and be resuscitated, a solidity and degree of solidity, and thus finally also a particular ‘energy’ cannot be ascribed to the unity alone, to the structure as such, the mere shape of the event; nor is it very likely that there exist other internal participatory energies that focus specifically on this. On the other hand, it is probable that these energies play nothing more than a secondary role; for our emotions and ideas probably also control the same numerous, instantaneous internal relationships and the same enduring dispositions, inclinations, principles, intentions, and needs that produce our actions as well as our emotions and ideas. Our emotions and ideas are the storage batteries of these elements, and it is to be assumed that the energies to which they give rise
somehow bring about the shaping and consolidation of the emotions.”

“How that happens I will try to make clear by means of a widely held prejudice. The opinion is often voiced that there is some kind of ‘inner relation’ among an emotion, the object to which it is directed, and the action that connects them. The idea is that it would then be more comprehensible that these form a unified whole, that they succeed one another, and so on. The heart of the matter is that a particular drive or a particular emotion—for example, hunger and the instinct for food—are directed not at random objects and actions but primarily, of course, at those that promise satisfaction. A sonata is of no help to a starving person, but food is: that is to say, something belonging to a more or less specific category of objects and events; and this gives rise to the appearance of this category and this state of stimulation always being connected. There is some
truth in this, but no more mysterious a truth than that to eat soup we use a spoon and not a fork.

“We do so because it seems to us appropriate; and it is nothing but this commonplace appearing-to-be-appropriate that fulfills the task of mediating among an emotion, its object, the concomitant actions, ideas, decisions, and those deeper impulses that for the most part elude observation. If we act with an intention, or from a desire, or for a purpose—for instance, to help or hurt someone—it seems natural to us that our action is determined by the demand that it be appropriate; but beyond that it can turn out in many different ways. The same is true for every emotion. An emotion, too, longs for everything that seems suited to satisfying it, in which process this characteristic will be sometimes more tightly, sometimes more loosely, related; and precisely this looser
connection is the natural path to shaping and consolidation.

“For it occasionally happens even to the drives that they go astray, and wherever an emotion is at its peak, it then happens that an action is merely attempted, that an intention or an idea is thrown in that later turns out to be inappropriate and is dropped, and that the emotion enters the sphere of a source of energy, or this sphere enters that of the emotion, from which it frees itself again. So in the course of the event not everything is shaped and consolidated; a great deal is also abandoned. In other words, there is also a shaping without consolidation, and this constitutes an indispensable part of the consolidating arrangement. For since everything that seems appropriate to serve the directing energies can be absorbed by the unity of the emotional behavior, but only so much of this is retained as is really appropriate, there enter of themselves into the feeling, acting,
and thinking the common trait, succession, and duration which make it comprehensible that the feeling, acting, and thinking mutually and increasingly consolidate and shape themselves."

"The weak point of this explanation lies where the precisely described unity that arises at the end is supposed to be connected to the unknown and vaguely bounded sphere of the impulses that lies at the beginning. This sphere is hardly anything other than what is embraced by the essences ‘person’ and ‘I’ according to the proportion of their involvement, about which we know little. But if one considers that in the moment of an emotion even what is most inward can be recast, then it will not seem unthinkable that in such a moment the shaped unity of the action, too, can reach that point. If one considers, on the other hand, how much has to happen beforehand in order to prepare such a success as a person giving up principles
and habits, one will have to desist from every idea that concentrates on the momentary effect. And if one were, finally, to be satisfied by saying that other laws and connections are valid for the area of the source than for the outlet, where the emotion becomes perceptible as internal and external action, then one would again come up against the insufficiency that we have no idea at all according to what law the transition from the causative forces to the resulting product could come about. Perhaps the postulation of a loose, general unity that embraces the entire process can be combined with this, in that it would ultimately enable a specific and solid unity to emerge: but this question extends beyond psychology, and for the time being extends beyond our abilities too.”

“This knowledge, that in the process of an emotion from its source to its appearance a unity is indicated, but that it cannot be said when and how this unity assumes the closed
form that is supposed to characterize the emotion’s completely developed behavior (and in analyzing which I used the articulation of a melody as example)—this quite negative knowledge permits, remarkably, an idea to be brought in by means of which the deferred answer to the question of how the concept of the emotion appears in more recent research comes to a singular conclusion. This is the admission that the actual event corresponds neither in its entirety nor in its final form to the mental image that has been made of it. This is usefully demonstrated by a kind of double negative: One says to oneself: perhaps the pure unity that theoretically represents the law of the completed emotion never exists; indeed, it may not even be at all possible for it to exist, because it would be so completely cut off inside its own compass that it would not be able to assimilate any more influences of any other kind. But, one now says to oneself, there never is such a
completely circumscribed emotion! In other words: emotions never occur purely, but always only in an approximating actualization. And in still other words: the process of shaping and consolidating never ends.”

“But this is nothing other than what presently characterizes psychological thinking everywhere. Moreover, one sees in the basic mental concepts only ideational patterns according to which the internal action can be ordered, but one no longer expects that it is really constructed out of such elements, like a picture printed by the four-color process. In truth, according to this view, the pure nature of the emotion, of the idea, of sensation, and of the will are as little to be met with in the internal world as are the thread of a current or a difficult point in the outer world: There is merely an interwoven whole, which sometimes seems to will and sometimes to think because this or that quality predominates.
"The names of the individual emotions therefore characterize only types, which approximate real experiences without corresponding to them entirely; and with this, a guiding principle with the following content—even if this is rather crudely put—takes the place of the axiom of the older psychology by which the emotion, as one of the elemental experiences, was supposed to have an unalterable nature, or to be experienced in a way that distinguished it once and for all from other experiences: There are no experiences that are from the beginning distinct emotions, or even emotions at all; there are merely experiences that are destined to become emotion and to become a distinct emotion.

"This also gives the idea of arrangement and consolidation the significance that in this process emotion and behavior not only form, consolidate, and, as far as it is given them, determine; it is in this process that the
emotion originates in the first place: so that it is never this or that specific emotion that is present at the beginning—say, in a weak state—together with its mode of action, but only something that is appropriate and has been destined to become such an emotion and action, which, however, it never becomes in a pure state."

“But of course this ‘something* is not completely random, since it is understood to be something that from the start and by disposition is intended or appropriate to becoming an emotion, and, moreover, a specific emotion. For in the final analysis anger is not fatigue, and apparently not in the first analysis either; and just as little are satiety and hunger to be confused, even in their early stages. Therefore at the beginning something unfinished, a start, a nucleus, something like an emotion and things associated with that emotion, will already be present. I would like to call it a feeling that is
not yet an emotion; but it is better to present an example, and for that I will take the relatively simple one of physical pain inflicted externally.

“This pain can be a locally restricted sensation that penetrates or burns in one spot and is unpleasant but alien. But this sensation can also flare up and overwhelm the entire person with affliction. Often, too, at the beginning there is merely an empty spot at the place, from which it is only in the following moments that sensation or emotion wells up: it is not only children who at the beginning often do not know whether something hurts. Earlier, one assumed that in these cases an emotion is superimposed on the sensation, but today one prefers to suppose that a nucleus of experience, originally as little a sensation as it is an emotion, can develop equally well into the one as the other.
“Also already part of this original stability of experience is the beginning of an instinctive or reflex action, a shrinking back, collapsing, fending off, or a spontaneous counterattack; and because this more or less involves the entire person, it will also involve an internal ‘flight or fight’ condition, in other words a coloration of the emotion by the kind of fear or attack. This proceeds of course even more strongly from the drives triggered, for not only are these dispositions for a purposive action but, once aroused, they also produce nonspecific mental states, which we characterize as moods of fearfulness or irritability, or in other cases of being in love, of sensitivity, and so forth. Even not acting and not being able to do anything has such an emotional coloration; but the drives are for the most part connected with a more or less definite will formation, and this leads to an inquiry into the situation that is in itself a confrontation and therefore has an
aggressive coloration. But this inquiry can also have the effect of coolness and calm; or if the pain is quite severe, it does not take place, and one suddenly avoids its source. So even this example goes back and forth from the very beginning between sensation, emotion, automatic response, will, flight, defense, attack, pain, anger, curiosity, and being coolly collected, and thereby demonstrates that what is present is not so much the original state of a single emotion as rather varying beginnings of several, succeeding or complementing one another.

“This gives to the assertion that a feeling is present, but not yet an emotion, the sense that the disposition to an emotion is always present but that it does not need to be realized, and that a beginning is always present but it can turn out later to have served as the beginning of a different emotion.”
"The peculiar manner in which the emotion is from the beginning both present and not present can be expressed in the comparison that one must imagine its development as the image of a forest, and not as the image of a tree. A birch, for example, remains itself from its germination to its death; but on the other hand, a birch forest can begin as a mixed forest; it becomes a birch forest as soon as birch trees—as the result of causes that can be quite varied—predominate in it and the departures from the pure stamp of the birch type are no longer significant.

"It is the same with the emotion and (this is always open to misunderstanding) with the action connected to the emotion. They always have their particular characteristics, but these change with everything that adheres to them until, with growing certitude, they take on the marks of a familiar emotion and ‘deserve’ its name, which
always retains a trace of free judgment. But emotion and the action of emotion can also depart from this type and approximate another; this is not unusual, because an emotion can waver and, in any event, goes through various stages. What distinguishes this from the ordinary view is that in the ordinary view the emotion has validity as a specific experience, which we do not always recognize with certainty. On the other hand, the more recently established view ascribes the lack of certainty to the emotion and tries to understand it from its nature and to limit it concisely."

There followed in an appendix individual examples that really ought to have been marginal notations but had been suppressed at the places they had been intended for in order not to interrupt the exposition. And so these stragglers that had dropped out of their context no longer belonged to a specific place, although they did belong to the whole
and retained ideas that might possibly have some useful application for the whole:

“In the relation ‘to love something’ what carries such enormous distinctions as that between love of God and loving to go fishing is not the love but the ‘something.’ The emotion itself: the devotion, anxiousness, desire, hurt, gnawing—in other words, loving—does not admit a distinction.”

“But it is just as certain that loving one’s walking stick or honor is not apples and oranges’ only for the reason that these two things do not resemble each other, but also because the use we make of them, the circumstances in which they assume importance—in short, the entire group of experiences—are different. It is from the non-interchangeability of a group of experiences that we derive the certainty of knowing our emotion. That is why we only truly recognize it after it has had some effect in the world and has been shaped by the world; we do not
know what we feel before our action has made that decision.”

“And where we say that our emotion is divided, we should rather say that it is not yet complete, or that we have not yet settled down.”

“And where it appears as paradox or paradoxical combination, what we have is often something else. We say that the courageous person ignores pain; but in truth it is the bitter salt of pain that overflows in courageousness. And in the martyr it rises in flames to heaven. In the coward, on the contrary, the pain becomes unbearably concentrated through the anticipatory fear. The example of loathing is even clearer; those feelings inflicted with violence are associated with it, which, if received voluntarily, are the most intense desire.

“Of course there are differing sources here, and also varying combinations, but
what comes into being most particularly are various directions in which the predominant emotion develops."

"Because they are constantly fluid, emotions cannot be stopped; nor can they be looked at under the microscope. This means that the more closely we observe them, the less we know what it is we feel. Attention is already a change in the emotion. But if emotions were a 'mixture' this should really be most apparent at the moment when it is stopped, even if attention intervenes."

"Because the external action has no independent significance for the mind, emotions cannot be distinguished by it alone. Innumerable times we do not know what we feel, although we act vigorously and decisively. The enormous ambiguity of what a person does who is being observed mistrustfully or jealously rests on this lack of clarity."
“The emotions lack of clarity does not, however, demonstrate its weakness, for emotions vanish precisely when feeling is at its height. Even at high degrees of intensity, emotions are extremely labile; see for instance the courage of despair or happiness suddenly changing into pain. At this level they also bring about contradictory actions, like paralysis instead of flight, or ‘being suffocated’ by one’s own anger. But in quite violent excitation they lose, so to speak, their color, so that all that remains is a dead sensation of the accompanying physical manifestations, contraction of the skin, surging of the blood, blotting out of the senses. And what appears fully in these most intense stages is an absolute bedazzlement, so that it can be said that the shaping of the emotion, and with it the entire world of our emotions, is valid only in intermediate stages.”

“In these average stages we of course recognize and name an emotion no
differently from the way we do other phenomena that are in flux, to repeat this once again. To determine the distinction between hate and anger is as easy and as difficult as ascertaining the distinction between premeditated and unpremeditated murder, or between a basin and a bowl. Not that what is at work here is capriciousness in naming, but every aspect and deflection can be useful for comparison and concept formation. And so in this way the hundred and one kinds of love about which Agathe and I joked, not entirely without sorrow, are connected. The question of how it happens that such quite different things are characterized by the single word love’ has the same answer as the question of why we unhesitatingly talk of dinner forks, manure forks, tree-branch forks, rifle forks, road forks, and other forks. Underlying all these fork impressions is a common ‘forkness’: it is not in them as a common nucleus, but it might almost be said
that it is nothing more than a comparison possible for each of them. For they do not all even need to be similar to one another: it is already sufficient if one leads to another, if you go from one to the next, as long as the neighboring members are similar to one another. The more remote ones are then similar through the mediation of these proximate members. Indeed, even what constitutes the similarity, that which associates the neighboring members, can change in such a chain; and so one travels excitedly from one end of the path to the other, hardly knowing oneself how one has traversed it."

“But if we wished to regard, as we are inclined to do, the similarity existing among all kinds of love for its similarity to a kind of ‘ur-love,’ which so to speak would sit as an armless and legless torso in the middle of them all, it would most likely be the same error as believing in an ‘ur-fork.’ And yet we have living witness for there really being
such an emotion. It is merely difficult to determine the degree of this ‘really.’ It is different from that of the real world. An emotion that is not an emotion for something; an emotion without desire, without preferment, without movement, without knowledge, without limits; an emotion to which no distinct behavior and action belongs, at least no behavior that is quite real: as truly as this emotion is not served with arms and legs, so truly have we encountered it again and again, and it has seemed to us more alive than life itself! Love is already too particular a name for this, even if it most intimately related to a love for which tenderness or inclination are expressions that are too obvious. It realizes itself in many different ways and in many connections, but it can never let itself be detached from this actualization, which always contaminates it. Thus has it appeared to us and vanished, an intimation that always remained the same. Apparently the dry
reflections with which I have filled these pages have little to do with this, and yet I am almost certain that they have brought me to the right path to it!”
Professor August Lindner sang. He was waiting for Agathe.

Ah, the boy's eyes seem to me So crystal clear and lovely, And a something shines in them That captivates my heart.

Ah, those sweet eyes glance at me, Shining into mine! Were he to see his image there He would greet me tenderly.

And this is why I yield myself To serve his eyes alone, For a something shines in them That captivates my heart.

It had originally been a Spanish song. There was a small piano in the house, dating
from Frau Lindners time; it was occasionally devoted to the mission of rounding out the education and culture of son Peter, which had already led Peter to remove several strings. Lindner himself never used it, except possibly to strike a few solemn chords now and then; and although he had been pacing up and down in front of this sound machine for quite some time, it was only after cautiously making sure that the housekeeper as well as Peter was out of the house that he had let himself be carried away by this unwonted impulse. He was quite pleased with his voice, a high baritone obviously well suited to expressing emotion; and now Lindner had not closed the piano but was standing there thinking, leaning on it with his arm, his weightless leg crossed over his supporting leg. Agathe, who had already visited him several times, was over an hour late. The emptiness of the house, stemming in part from that fact and in part from the
arrangements he had made, welled up in his consciousness as a culpable plan.

He had found a soul of bedazzling richness, which he was making great efforts to save and which evoked the impression of confiding itself to his charge; and what man would not be charmed at finding something he had hardly expected to find, a tender female creature he could train according to his principles? But mixed in with this were deep notes of discontent. Lindner considered punctuality an obligation of conscience, placing it no lower than honesty and contractual obligations; people who made no punctual division of their time seemed to him pathologically scatterbrained, forcing their more serious fellow men, moreover, to lose parcels of *their* time along with them; and so he regarded them as worse than muggers. In such cases he took it as his duty to bring it to the attention of such beings, politely but unrelentingly, that his time did not belong to him
but to his activity; and because white lies injure one’s own mind, while people are not all equal, some being influential and some not, he had derived numerous character exercises from this; a host of their most powerful and malleable maxims now came to his mind and interfered with the gentle arousal brought on by the song.

But no matter: he had not sung any religious songs since his student days, and enjoyed it with a circumspection. ‘What southern naïveté, and what charm,’ he thought, ‘emanate from such worldly lines! How delightfully and tenderly they relate to the boy Jesus!’ He tried to imitate the poem’s artlessness in his mind, and arrived at the result: “If I didn’t know better, I’d be capable of believing that I feel a girl’s chaste stirrings for her boy!” So one might well say that a woman able to evoke such homage was reaching all that was noblest in man and must herself be a noble being. But here
Lindner smiled with dissatisfaction and decided to close the lid of the piano. Then he did one of his arm exercises that further the harmony of the personality, and stopped again. An unpleasant thought had crossed his mind. "She is unfeeling!" he sighed behind gritted teeth. "She would be laughing!"

He had in his face at this moment something that would have reminded his dear departed mother of the little boy under whose chin every morning she tied a big lovely bow before sending him off to school; this something might be called the complete absence of rough-hewn maleness. On this tall, slack, pipestem-legged apparition, the head sat as if speared on a lance over the roaring arena of his schoolmates, who jeered at the bow tie made by his mother’s hand; and in anxiety dreams Professor Lindner even now sometimes saw himself standing that way and suffering for the good, the true, and the beautiful. But for this very reason he
never conceded that roughness is an indispensible male characteristic, like gravel, which has to be mixed into mortar to give it strength; and especially since he had become the man he flattered himself to be, he saw in that early defect merely a confirmation of the fact that he had been born to improve the world, even if in modest measure. Today we are quite accustomed to the explanation that great orators arise from speech defects and heroes from weakness, in other words the explanation that our nature always first digs a ditch if it wants us to erect a mountain above it; and because the half-knowledgeable and half-savage people who chiefly determine the course of life are quick to proclaim nearly every stutterer a Demosthenes, it is that much easier, as a sign of intellectual good taste, to recognize that the only important thing about a Demosthenes was his original stuttering. But we have not yet succeeded in reducing the deeds of Hercules to his having
been a sickly child, or the greatest achievements in the sprint and broad jump to flat-footedness, or courage to timidity; and so it must be conceded that there is something more to an exceptional talent than its omission.

Thus Professor Lindner was by no means restricted to acknowledging that the raillery and blows he had feared as a child could be a cause of his intellectual development. Nevertheless, the current disposition of his principles and emotions did him the service of transforming every such impression that reached him from the bustle of the world into an intellectual triumph; even his habit of weaving martial and sportive expressions into his speech, as well as his tendency to set the stamp of a strict and inflexible will on everything he said and did, had begun to develop to the degree that, as he grew up and lived among more mature companions, he was correspondingly removed from direct
physical attacks. At the university, he had even joined one of the fraternities whose members wore their jackets, caps, boots, insignia, and sword just as picturesquely as the rowdies whom they despised, but made only peaceful use of them because their outlook forbade dueling. In this, Lindners pleasure in a bravery for which no blood need be spilled had achieved its definitive form; but at the same time it gave witness that one can combine a noble temperament with the overflowing pulse of life or, of course in other terms, that God enters man more easily when he imitates the devil who was there before him.

So whenever Lindner reproached his more compact son, Peter, as he was unfortunately often called upon to do, that yielding to the very idea of force made a person effeminate, or that the power of humility and the courage of renunciation are of greater value than physical strength and courage, he was not talking as a layman in questions of
courage but enjoying the excitement of a conjurer who has succeeded in yoking demons to the service of the good. For although there was really nothing that could disturb his equilibrium at the height of well-being he had attained, he was marked by a disinclination to jokes and laughter bordering almost on anxiety—as an injury that has healed leaves behind a limp—even when he merely suspected their bare possibility. “The tickling of jokes and humor,” he was accustomed to instruct his son on the subject, “originate in the sated comfort of life, in malice, and in idle fantasies, and they easily induce people to say things their better selves would condemn! On the other hand, the discipline that comes from stifling ‘witty’ ripostes and ideas is an admirable test of strength and an annealing test of will, and the more you use the silence you have struggled to master in order to look into your joke more closely, the better it turns out for the whole man. “We
usually see first,” this standing admonition concluded, “how many impulses to elevate oneself and demean others it conceals, how much coquetry and frivolity lie behind most jokes, how much refinement of sympathy they stifle in ourselves and others, indeed how much horrifying coarseness and mockery comes to light in the laughter we try to coax from an audience!”

As a result, Peter had to hide carefully from his father his youthful inclination to mockery and joking; but he was so inclined, and Professor Lindner often felt the breath of the evil spirit in his surroundings without being able to spot the poisonous phantom. It could go so far that the father would instill fear in the son with a subduing glance, while secretly fearing him himself, and when this happened he was reminded of something ineffable between his wife and himself while his plump spouse was still on earth. Being lord and master in his own house,
establishing its atmosphere and knowing that his family surrounded him like a peaceful garden in which he had planted his principles, belonged for Lindner to the indispensable preconditions of happiness. But Frau Lindner, whom he had married shortly after he finished his studies, during which time he had been a lodger at her mothers, had unfortunately soon thereafter ceased to share his principles and put on an air of being reluctant to contradict him that irritated him more than contradiction itself. He could not forget having sometimes caught a glance from the corner of her eye while her mouth was obediently silent, and every time this happened he subsequently found himself in a situation that was not exactly proof against adverse comment: for instance, in a nightshirt that was too short, preaching that her dignity as a woman should preclude her finding any pleasure in the rough, loose young men who with their drunkenness and
scrapes still dominated student life at that time and who accordingly were not as undesirable as lodgers as they ought to be.

Woman’s secret mockery is a chapter in itself, with the most intimate connections to her lack of understanding for those preoccupations of greatest importance to the male; and the moment Lindner remembered this, the mental processes that had until then been churning indistinctly within him uncorked the idea of Agathe. What would she be like to live with intimately? “There is no question of her being what one might comfortably call a good person. She doesn’t even try to hide it!” he told himself, and a remark of hers that occurred to him in this connection, her laughing assertion that today the good people were no less responsible for the corruption of life than the bad ones, made his hair stand on end. But on the whole he had already “extracted the abscessed teeth” of these “horrible views,” even if every time
they came up they upset him all over again, by once and for all declaring to himself: “She has no conception of reality!” For he thought of Agathe as a noble being, even though she was, for a “daughter of Eve,” full of venomous unrest. The proper attitude, however certain it may be for the believer, seemed to her the most intellectually unascertainable object, the solution of life’s most extreme and difficult task. She seemed to have a dreamily confused idea of what was good and right, an idea inimical to order, with no more coherence than an accidental grouping of poems. “Reality is alien to her!” he repeated. “If, for example, she knows something about love, how can she make such cynical statements about it as that it’s impossible, and the like?” Therefore she must be shown what real love is.

But here Agathe presented new difficulties. Let him admit it fearlessly and courageously: she was offensive! She all too
gladly tore down from its pedestal whatever you cautiously raised up; and if you found fault with her, her criticism knew no bounds and she made it clear that she was out to wound. There are such natures that rage against themselves and strike the hand bringing them succor; but a determined man will never allow his behavior to depend on the behavior of others, and at this moment what Lindner saw was the image of a peaceful man with a long beard, bending over a sick woman anxiously fending him off, and seeing in the depths of her heart a profound wound. The moment was far removed from logic, and so this did not mean that he was this man; but Lindner straightened up—this he actually did—and reached for his beard, which in the meantime had lost a good deal of its fullness, and a nervous blush raced across his face. He had remembered that Agathe had the objectionable habit of instilling in him the belief, more than any
other human being ever could have done, that she would like to share his most sublime and most secret feelings; indeed, that in her own constrained situation she was even waiting for a special effort of these feelings in order, once he had exposed the innermost treasures of his mind, to pour scorn on him. She was egging him on! Lindner admitted this to himself and could not have done otherwise, for there was a strange, restless feeling in his breast that one might have hard-heartedly compared, although he was far from thinking this, with hens milling about in a chicken coop. But then she could suddenly laugh in the most mysterious way, or say something profane and hard that cut him to the quick, as if she had been building him up only in order to cut him down! And had she not already done this today too, even before her arrival, Lindner asked himself, bringing him to such a pass with this piano? He looked at it; it stood there beside him like
a housemaid with whom the master of the house had transgressed!

He could not know what motivated Agathe to play this game with him, and she herself would not have been able to discuss it with anyone—not even, and especially, Ulrich. She was behaving capriciously; but to the extent that this means with changeable emotions, it was done intentionally and signified a shaking and loosening up of the emotions, the way a person weighed down by a delicious burden stretches his limbs. So the strange attraction that several times had secretly led her to Lindner had contained from the beginning an insubordination against Ulrich, or at least against complete dependence on him; the stranger distracted her thoughts a little and reminded her of the diversity of the world and of men. But this happened only so that she might feel her dependence on her brother that much more warmly, and was, moreover, the same as
Ulrich’s secretiveness with his diary, which he kept locked away from her; indeed, it was even the same as his general resolve to let reason stand beside emotion as well as above it, and also to judge. But while this took up his time, her impatience and stored-up tension was seeking an outlet, an adventure, about which it could not yet be said what path it would take; and to the degree that Ulrich inspired or depressed her, Lindner, to whom she felt superior, caused her to be forbearing or high-spirited. She won mastery over herself by misusing the influence she exercised over him, and she needed this.

But something else was also at work here. For there was between her and Ulrich at this time no talk either of her divorce and Hagauer’s letters or of the rash or actually superstitious altering of the will in a moment of disorientation, an act that demanded restitution, either civic or miraculous. Agathe was sometimes oppressed by what
she had done, and she knew, too, that in the disorder one leaves behind in a lower circle of life Ulrich did not see any favorable sign of the order one strives for in a higher sense. He had told her so openly enough, and even if she no longer remembered every detail of the conversation that had followed on the suspicions Hagauer had recently raised against her, she still found herself banished to a position of waiting between good and ill. Something, to be sure, was lifting all her qualities upward to a miraculous vindication, but she could not yet allow herself to believe in this; and so it was her offended, recalcitrant feeling of justice that also found expression in the quarrel with Lindner. She was very grateful to him for seeming to impute to her all the bad qualities that Hagauer, too, had discovered in her and for unintentionally calming her by the very way he looked while doing it.
Lindner, who thus, in Agathe’s judgment, had never come to terms with himself, had now begun to pace restlessly back and forth in his room, subjecting the visits she was paying him to a severe and detailed examination. She seemed to like being here; she asked about many details of his house and his life, about his educational principles and his books. He was surely not mistaken in assuming that one would express so much interest in someone’s life only if one were drawn to share it; of course, the way she had of expressing herself in the process would just have to be accepted as her idiosyncrasy! In this vein he recalled that she had once told him about a woman—unpardonably a former mistress of her brother’s—whose head always became “like a coconut, with the hair inside” when she fell in love with a man; and Agathe had added the observation that that was the way she felt about his house. It was all so much of a piece that it really made
one “afraid for oneself!” But the fear seemed to give her pleasure, and Lindner thought he recognized in this paradoxical trait the feminine psyche’s anxious readiness to yield, the more so as she indicated to him that she remembered similar impressions from the beginning of her marriage.

Now, it is only natural that a man like Lindner would more readily have thoughts of marriage than sinful ones. And so, both during and outside the periods he set aside for the problems of life, he had sometimes secretly allowed the idea to creep in that it would perhaps be good if the child Peter had a mother again; and now it also happened that instead of analyzing Agathe’s behavior further, he stopped at one of its manifestations that secretly appealed to him. For in a profound anticipation of his destiny, Agathe had, from the beginning of their acquaintance, spoken of nothing with more passion than her divorce. There was no way he could
sanction this sin, but he could also not prevent its advantages from emerging more clearly with every passing day; and in spite of his customary opinions about the nature of the tragic, he was inclined to find tragic the lot that compelled him to express bitter antipathy toward what he himself almost wished would happen. In addition, it happened that Agathe exploited this resistance mostly in order to indicate in her offensive way that she did not believe the truth of his conviction. He might trot out morality, place the Church in front of it, pronounce all the principles that had been so ready to hand all his life; she smiled when she answered, and this smile reminded him of Frau Lindner’s smile in the later years of their marriage, with the advantage that Agathe’s possessed the unsettling power of the new and mysterious. “It’s Mona Lisas smile!” Lindner exclaimed to himself. “Mockery in a pious face!” and he was so dismayed and flattered by what he
took to be a meaningful discovery that for the moment he was less able than usual to reject the arrogance ordinarily associated with this smile when she interrogated him on his belief in God. This unbeliever had no desire for missionary instruction; she wanted to stick her hand in the bubbling spring; and perhaps this was precisely the task reserved for him; once again to lift the stone covering the spring to permit her a little insight, with no one to protect him if it should turn out otherwise, no matter how unpleasant, even alarming, this idea was to himself! And suddenly Lindner, although he was alone in the room, stamped his foot and said aloud: “Don’t think for a minute that I don’t understand you! And don’t believe that the subjugation you detect in me comes from a creature subjugated from the beginning!”

As a matter of fact, the story of how Lindner had become what he was was far more commonplace than he thought. It
began with the possibility that he, too, might have become a different person; for he still remembered precisely the love he had had as a child for geometry, for the way its beautiful, cleverly worked out proofs finally closed around the truth with a soft snap, delighting him as if he had caught a giant in a mousetrap. There had been no indication that he was particularly religious; even today he was of the opinion that faith had to be "worked for," and not received as a gift in the cradle. What had made him a shining pupil in religion class was the same joy in knowing and in showing off his knowledge that he demonstrated in his other subjects. His inner being, of course, had already absorbed the ways in which religious tradition expressed itself, to which the only resistance was the civic sense he had developed early. This had once found unexpected expression in the single extraordinary hour his life had ever known. It had happened while he was
preparing himself for his final school examinations. For weeks he had been driving himself, sitting evenings in his room studying, when all at once an incomprehensible change came over him. His body seemed to become as light toward the world as delicate paper ash, and he was filled with an unutterable joy, as if in the dark vault of his breast a candle had been lit and was diffusing its gentle glow into all his limbs; and before he could come to terms with such a notion, this light surrounded his head with a condition of radiance. It frightened him a lot; but it was nevertheless true that his head was emitting light. Then a marvelous intellectual clarity overwhelmed all his senses, and in it the world was reflected in broad horizons such as no natural eye could encompass. He glanced up and saw nothing but his half-lit room, so it was not a vision; but the impetus remained, even if it was in contradiction to his surroundings. He comforted himself that
he was apparently experiencing this somehow only as a “mental person,” while his “physical person” was sitting somber and distinct on its chair and fully occupying its accustomed space; and so he remained for a while, having already got half accustomed to his dubious state, since one quickly grows used to the extraordinary as long as there is hope that it will be revealed as the product, even if a diabolical product, of order. But then something new happened, for he suddenly heard a voice, speaking quite clearly but moderately, as if it had already been speaking for some time, saying to him: “Lindner, where are you seeking me? *Sis tu tuus et ego ero tuus*” which can be roughly translated: Just become Lindner, and I will be with you. But it was not so much the content of this speech that dismayed the ambitious student, for it was possible that he had already heard or read it, or at least some of it, and then forgotten it, but rather its
sensuous resonance; for this came so independently and surprisingly from the outside, and was of such an immediately convincing fullness and solidity, and had such a different sound from the dry sound of grim industriousness to which the night was tuned, that every attempt to reduce the phenomenon to inner exhaustion or inner overstimulation was uprooted in advance. That this explanation was so obvious, and yet its path blocked, of course increased his confusion; and when it also happened that with this confusion the condition in Lindner’s head and heart rose ever more gloriously and soon began to flow through his entire body, it got to be too much. He seized his head, shook it between his fists, jumped up from his chair, shouted “No!” three times, and, almost screaming, managed to speak the first prayer he could think of, upon which the spell finally vanished and the future professor, mortally frightened, took refuge in bed.
Soon afterward he passed his examinations with distinction and enrolled at the university. He did not feel in himself the inner calling to the clerical class—nor, to answer Agathe’s foolish questions, had he felt it at any time in his life—and was at that time not even entirely and unimpeachably a believer, for he, too, was visited by those doubts that any developing intellect cannot escape. But the mortal terror at the religious powers hiding within him did not leave him for the rest of his life. The longer ago it had been, the less, of course, he believed that God had really spoken to him, and he therefore began to fear the imagination as an unbridled power that can easily lead to mental derangement. His pessimism, too, to which man appeared in general as a threatened being, took on depth, and so his decision to become a pedagogue was in part probably the beginning of an as it were posthumous educating of those schoolmates who had
tormented him, and in part, too, an educating of that evil spirit or irregular God who might possibly still be lurking in his thoracic cavity. But if it was not clear to him to what degree he was a believer, it quickly became clear that he was an opponent of unbelievers, and he trained himself to think with conviction that he was convinced, and that it was one’s responsibility to be convinced. At the university, it was also easier for him to learn to recognize the weaknesses of a mind that is abandoned to freedom, in that he had only a rudimentary notion of the extent to which the condition of freedom is an innate part of the creative powers.

It is difficult to summarize in a few words what was most characteristic of these weaknesses. It might be seen, for instance, in the ways that changes in living, but especially the results of thinking and experience itself, undermined those great edifices of thought aimed at a freestanding
philosophical explanation of the world, whose last constructions were erected between the middle of the eighteenth and the middle of the nineteenth centuries: without the fullness of new knowledge the sciences brought to light almost every day having led to a new, solid, even if tentative way of thinking, indeed without the will to do so stirring seriously or publicly enough, so that the wealth of knowledge has become almost as oppressive as it is exhilarating. But one can also proceed quite generally from the premise that an extraordinary flourishing of property and culture had risen by insidious degrees to a creeping state of crisis, which, not long after this day—when Lindner, recuperating from the more stressful parts of his personal reminiscences, was thinking about the errors of the world—was to be interrupted by the first devastating blow. For assuming that someone came into the world in 1871, the year Germany was born, he would
already have been able to perceive around the age of thirty that during his lifetime the length of railroads in Europe had tripled and in the whole world more than quadrupled; that postal service had tripled in extent and telegraph lines grown sevenfold; and much else had developed in the same way. The degree of efficiency of engines had risen from 50 to 90 percent; the kerosene lamp had been successively replaced by gaslight, gas mantle lamps, and electricity, producing ever newer forms of illumination; the horse team, which had maintained its position for millennia, was replaced by the motorcar; and airplanes not only had appeared on the scene but were already out of their baby shoes. The average length of life, too, had markedly increased, thanks to progress in medicine and hygiene, and relations among peoples had become, since the last warring skirmishes, noticeably more gentle and confiding. The person experiencing all this might well
believe that at last the long-awaited progress of mankind had arrived, and who would not like to think that proper for an age in which he himself is alive!

But it appears that this civic and spiritual prosperity rested on assumptions that were quite specific and by no means everlasting, and today we are told that in those days there had been enormous new areas for farming and other natural riches that had just been appropriated; that there were defenseless colored peoples who had not yet been exploited (the reproach of exploitation was excused by the idea that it was a means of bestowing civilization upon them); and that there were also millions of white people living who, defenseless, were forced to pay the costs of industrial and mercantile progress (but one salved one’s conscience with the firm and not even entirely unjustified faith that the dispossessed would be better off than before their dispossession). At any
rate, the cornucopia from which physical and spiritual prosperity poured forth was so large and unbounded that its effects were invisible, and all one could see was the impression of increase with every achievement; and today it is simply impossible to conceive how natural it was at that time to believe in the permanence of this progress and to consider prosperity and intellect something that, like grass, springs up wherever it is not deliberately rooted out.

Toward this confident bliss, this madness of growth, this fateful exultant broad-mindedness, the pale, scrawny student Lindner, tormented even physically by his height, had a natural aversion, which expressed itself in an instinctive sensing of any error and an alert receptivity for any sign of life that gave evidence of this aversion. Of course, economics was not his field of specialization, and it was only later that he learned to evaluate these facts properly; but this made him
all the more clairvoyant about the other aspect of this development, and the rot going on in a state of mind that initially had placed free trade, in the name of a free spirit, at the summit of human activities and then abandoned the free spirit to the free trade, and Lindner sniffed out the spiritual collapse that then indeed followed. This belief in doom, in the midst of a world comfortably ensconced in its own progress, was the most powerful of all his qualities; but this meant that he might also possibly have become a socialist, or one of those lonely and fatalistic people who meddle in politics with the greatest reluctance, even if they are full of bitterness toward everything, and who assure the propagation of the intellect by keeping to the right path within their own narrow circle and personally do what is meaningful, while leaving the therapeutics of culture to the quacks. So when Lindner now asked himself how he had become the person he was, he could give
the comforting answer that it had happened exactly the way one ordinarily enters a profession. Already in his last year at school he had belonged to a group whose agenda had been to criticize coolly and discreetly both the “classical paganism” that was half officially admired in the school and the “modern spirit” that was circulating in the world outside. Subsequently, repelled by the carefree student antics at the university, he had joined a fraternity in whose circles the influences of the political struggle were already beginning to displace the harmless conversations of youth, as a beard displaces a baby face. And when he got to be an upper-classman, the memorable occurrence applicable to every kind of thinking had dictatorially asserted itself: that the best support of faith is lack of faith, since lack of faith, observed and struggled against in others, always gives the believer occasion to feel himself zealous.
From the hour when Lindner had resolutely told himself that religion, too, was a contrivance, chiefly for people and not for saints, peace had come over him. Between the desires to be a child and a servant of God, his choice had been made. There was, to be sure, in the enormous palace in which he wished to serve, an innermost sanctum where the miracles reposed and were preserved, and everyone thought of them occasionally; but none of His servants tarried long in this sanctum: they all lived just in front of it; indeed, it was anxiously protected from the importunity of the uninitiated, which had involved experiences not of the happiest sort. This exerted a powerful appeal on Lindner. He made a distinction between arrogance and exaltation. The activity in the antechamber, with its dignified forms and myriad degrees of goings-on and subordinates, filled him with admiration and ambition; and the outside work he now undertook
himself, the exercise of influence on moral, political, and pedagogic organizations and the imbuing of science with religious principles, contained tasks on which he could spend not one but a thousand lives, but rewarded him with that enduring dynamism harnessed to inner unchangeability which is the happiness of blessed minds: at least that is what he thought in contented hours, but perhaps he was confusing it with the happiness of political minds. And so from then on he joined associations, wrote pamphlets, delivered lectures, visited collections, made connections, and before he had left the university the recruit in the movement of the faithful had become a young man with a prominent place on the officers’ list and influential patrons.

So there was truly no need for a personality with such a broad base and such a clarified summit to allow itself to be intimidated by the saucy criticism of a young woman,
and on returning to the present, Lindner drew out his watch and confirmed that Agathe had still not come, although it was almost time when Peter could return home. Nevertheless, he opened the piano again and, if he did not expose himself to the unfathomableness of the song, he did let his eyes roam again over its words, accompanying them with a soft whisper. In doing this he became aware for the first time that he was giving them a false emphasis that was far too emotional and not at all in accord with the music, which for all its charm was rather austere. He saw before him a Jesus child that was “somehow by Murillo,” which is to say that in some quite vague way, besides the black cherry eyes of that master’s older beggar boys, it had their picturesque beggar’s rags, so that all this child had in common with the Son of God and the Savior was the touchingly humanized quality, but in a quite obviously overdone and really tasteless way.
This made an unpleasant impression on him and again wove Agathe into his thoughts, for he recalled that she had once exclaimed that there was really nothing so peculiar as that the taste which had produced Gothic cathedrals and passionate devotion should have been succeeded by a taste that found pleasure in paper flowers, beading, little serrated covers, and simpering language, so that faith had become tasteless, and the faculty for giving a taste and smell to the ineffable was kept alive almost solely by nonbelievers or dubious people! Lindner told himself that Agathe was “an aesthetic nature,” meaning something that could not attain the seriousness of economics or morality but in certain cases could be quite stimulating, and this was one of them. Up to now Lindner had found the invention of paper flowers beautiful and sensible, but he suddenly decided to remove a bouquet of them that was standing
on the table, hiding it for the time being behind his back.

This happened almost spontaneously, and he was slightly dismayed by this action, but was under the impression that he probably knew how to provide an explanation for the “peculiarity” remarked on by Agathe, which she had let take its course, an explanation she would not have expected of him. A saying of the Apostles occurred to him: “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal!” And glancing at the floor with puckered forehead, he considered that for many years everything he had done stood in relationship to eternal love. He belonged to a wondrous community of love—and it was this that distinguished him from the ordinary intellectual—in which nothing happened for which an allegorical connection to the Eternal could not have been given, no matter how
contingent and yoked to things earthly: indeed, nothing in which this connection would not have taken root as its inmost meaning, even if this did not always result in one’s consciousness always being polished to a shine. But there is a powerful difference between the love one possesses as conviction and the love that possesses one: a distinction in freshness, he might say, even if, of course, the difference between purified knowledge and muddy turbulence was certainly just as justified. Lindner did not doubt that purified conviction deserved to be placed higher; but the older it is, the more it purifies itself, which is to say that it frees itself from the irregularities of the emotions that produced it; and gradually there remains not even the conviction of these passions but only the readiness to remember and be able to use them whenever they might be needed. This might explain why the works of the emotions
wither away unless they are freshened once again by the immediate experience of love.

Lindner was preoccupied with such almost heretical considerations when suddenly the bell shrilled.

He shrugged his shoulders, closed the piano again, and excused himself to himself with the words: “life needs not only worshipers but workers!”
Agathe had not finished reading the entries in her brothers diaries when for the second time she heard his steps on the gravel-strewn path beneath the windows, this time with unmistakable clarity. She made up her mind to penetrate his lair again, without his knowledge, at the first opportunity that presented itself. For however alien this way of viewing things was to her nature, she did want to get to know and understand it. Mixed in with this, too, was a little revenge, and she wanted to pay back secret with secret, and so did not want to be surprised. She hastily put the papers in order, replaced them, and erased every trace that might have betrayed her new
knowledge. Moreover, a glance at the time told her that she really ought to have left the house long since and was no doubt being awaited with some irritation elsewhere, something Ulrich might not know about. The double standard she was applying suddenly made her smile. She knew that her own lack of candor was not really prejudicial to loyalty, and that this lack was, moreover, much worse than Ulrich’s. This was a spontaneous satisfaction that enabled her to part from her discovery notably reconciled.

When her brother entered his study again he no longer found her there, but this did not surprise him. He had finally wandered back in, the people and circumstances he had been discussing with Stumm having so filled his mind that after the General left he had strolled about in the garden for some time. After long abstinence, a hastily drunk glass of wine can bring about a similar, merely alcoholic vivacity, behind
whose colorful scene changes one remains gloomy and untouched; and so it had not even crossed his mind that the people in whose destinies he was again apparently so interested lived no great distance from him and could easily have been contacted. The actual connection with them had remained as paralyzed as a cut muscle.

Still, several memories formed an exception to this and had aroused thoughts to which there were even now bridges of feeling, although only quite fragmentary ones. For instance, what he had characterized as “the return of Section Chief Tuzzi from the inwardness of emotion to its external manipulation” gave him the deeper pleasure of reminding himself that his diaries aimed at a distinction between these two aspects of emotion. But he also saw before him Diotima in her beauty, which was different from Agathe’s; and it flattered him that Diotima was still thinking of him, although with all
his heart he did not begrudge her her chastisement at the hands of her husband in those moments when this heart again, so to speak, transformed itself into flesh. Of all the conversations he had had with her, he remembered the one in which she had postulated the possibility of occult powers arising in love; this insight had been vouchsafed her by her love for the rich man who also wanted to have Soul, and this now led him to think of Arnheim as well. Ulrich still owed him an answer to the emotional offer that was to have brought him influence on the world of action, and this led him to wonder what could have become of the equally magniloquent and no less vague offer of marriage that had once enraptured Diotima. Presumably the same thing: Arnheim would keep his word if you reminded him of it, but would have no objection if you forgot. The scornful tension that had emerged on his face at the memory of Diotima’s moment of glory
relaxed again. It really would be quite decent of her not to keep a hold on Arnheim, he thought. A voice speaking reasonably in her overpopulated mind. At times, she had fits of sobriety and felt herself abandoned by the higher things, and then she would be quite nice. Ulrich had always harbored some small inclination for her in the midst of all his disinclination, and did not want to exclude the possibility that she herself might finally have realized what a ridiculous pair she and Arnheim made: she prepared to commit the sacrifice of adultery, Arnheim the sacrifice of marriage, so that again they would not come together, finally convincing themselves of something heavenly and unattainable in order to elevate themselves above the attainable. But when Bonadea’s story about Diotima’s school of love occurred to him, he finally said to himself that there was still something unpleasant about her, and there
was nothing to exclude her throwing her entire energy of love at *him* at some point.

This was, more or less, how Ulrich let his thoughts run on after his conversation with Stumm, and it had seemed to him that this was how upstanding people had to think whenever they concerned themselves with one another in the traditional way; but he himself had got quite out of the habit.

And when he entered the house all this had disappeared into nothingness. He hesitated a moment, again standing in front of his desk, took his diaries in his hands, and put them down again. He ruminated. In his papers a few observations about ecstatic conditions followed immediately after the exposition of the concept of the emotions, and he found this passage correct. An attitude entirely under the domination of a single emotion was indeed, as he had occasionally mentioned, already an ecstatic attitude. To fall under the sway of anger or fear is an ecstasy.
The world as it looks to the eyes of a person who sees only red or only menace does not indeed last long, and that is why one does not speak of a world but speaks only of suggestions and illusions; but when masses succumb to this ecstasy, hallucinations of terrifying power and extent arise.

A different kind of ecstasy, which he had also pointed out previously, was the ecstasy of the uttermost degree of feeling. When this is attained, action is no longer purposeful but on the contrary becomes uncertain, indeed often absurd: the world loses its colors in a kind of cold incandescence, and the self disappears except for its empty shell. This vanishing of hearing and seeing is doubtless, too, an impoverishing ecstasy—and incidentally, all enraptured states of soul are poorer in diversity than the everyday one—and becomes significant only through its link with orgiastic ecstasy or the transports of madness, with the state of
unbearable physical exertions, dogged expressions of will, or intense suffering, for all of which it can become the final component. For the sake of brevity, Ulrich had, in these examples, telescoped the overflowing and desiccating forms of losing oneself, and not unjustly so, for if from another point of view the distinction is indeed a quite significant one, yet in consideration of the ultimate manifestations, the two forms come close to merging. The orgiastically enraptured person leaps to his ruin as into a light, and tearing or being torn to pieces are for him blazing acts of love and deeds of freedom in the same way that, for all the differences, the person who is deeply exhausted and embittered allows himself to fall to his catastrophe, receiving salvation in this final act; in other words, he too receives something that is sweetened by freedom and love. Thus action and suffering blend on the highest plane on which they can still be experienced.
But this ecstasy of undivided sovereignty and of the crisis of an emotion are, of course, to a greater or lesser degree merely mental constructs, and true ecstasies—whether mystical, martial, or those of love groups or other transported communities—always presuppose a cluster of interrelated emotions and arise from a circle of ideas that reflects them. In less consolidated form, occasionally rigidifying and occasionally loosening up again, such unreal images of the world, formed in the sense of being particular groupings of ideas and feelings (as Weltanschauung, as personal tic), are so frequent in everyday life that most of them are not even regarded as ecstasies, although they are the preliminary stage of ecstasies in about the same way that a safety match in its box signifies the preliminary stage of a burning match. In his last entry, Ulrich had noted that a picture of the world whose nature is ecstatic also arises whenever the emotions
and their subservient ideas are simply given priority over sobriety and reflection: it is the rapturous, emotional picture of the world, ecstatic life, that is periodically encountered in literature and to some extent also in reality, in larger or smaller social communes; but what was missing in this enumeration was precisely what for Ulrich was most important, the adducing of the one and only condition of soul and world which he considered an ecstasy that would be a worthy coequal of reality. But his thoughts now digressed from the subject, for if he wanted to make up his mind about evaluating this most seductive of exceptions, it was absolutely necessary—and this was also brought home to him in that he had hesitatingly alternated between an ecstatic world and a mere picture of an ecstatic world—to first become acquainted with the link that exists between our emotions and what is real: that is to say, the world to which
we, as opposed to the illusions of ecstasy, impart this value.

But the standards by which we measure this world are those of the understanding, and the conditions under which this happens are likewise those of the understanding. But understanding—even if increasingly greater discrimination of its limits and rights places great obstacles in the path of the intellect—possesses a peculiarity in specific relation to the emotions that is easily perceived and characterized: in order to understand, we must put aside our emotions to the greatest extent possible. We block them out in order to be “objective,” or we place ourselves in a state in which the abiding emotions neutralize each other, or we abandon ourselves to a group of cool feelings that, handled carefully, are themselves conducive to understanding. We draw upon what we apprehend in this clearheaded condition for comparison when in other cases we speak of
“delusions” through the emotions; and then we have a zero condition, a neutralized state: in short, a specific situation of the emotions, the silent presupposition of experience and thought processes with whose aid we consider merely as subjective whatever other emotional states used to delude us. A millennium’s experience has confirmed that we are most qualified to consistently satisfy reality if we place ourselves in this condition again and again, and that whoever wants not merely to understand but also to act also has need of this condition. Not even a boxer can do without objectivity, which in his case means “staying cool,” and inside the ropes he can as little afford to be angry as he can to lose his courage if he does not want to come out the loser. So our emotional attitude too, if it is to be adapted to reality, does not depend solely on the emotions governing us at the moment or on their submerged instinctual levels, but depends simultaneously
on the enduring and recurrent emotional state that guarantees an understanding of reality and is usually as little visible as the air within which we breathe.

This personal discovery of a connection that is usually not often taken into account had enticed Ulrich to thinking further about the relation of the emotions to reality. Here a distinction must be made between the sense perceptions and the emotions. The former also “deceive,” and clearly neither the sensuous image of the world that sense perceptions represent to us is the reality itself, nor is the mental image we infer from it independent of the human way of thinking, though it is independent of the subjective way of thinking. But although there is no tangible similarity between reality and even the most exact representation of it that we have—indeed, there is, rather, an unbridgeable abyss of dissimilarity—and though we never get to see the original, yet we are able
in some complex way to decide whether and under what conditions this image is correct. It is different with the emotions: for these present even the image falsely, to maintain the metaphor, and yet in so doing fulfill just as adequately the task of keeping us in harmony with reality, except that they do it in a different way. Perhaps this challenge of remaining in harmony with reality had a particular attraction for Ulrich, but aside from that, it is also the characteristic sign of everything that asserts itself in life; and there can thus be derived from it an excellent shorthand formula and demonstration of whether the image that perception and reason give us of something is correct and true, even though this formula is not all-inclusive. We require that the consequences of the mental picture of reality we have constructed agree with the ideational image of the consequences that actually ensue in reality, and only then do we consider the
understanding’s image to be correct. In contrast to this, it can be said of the emotions that they have taken over the task of keeping us constantly in errors that constantly cancel one another out.

And yet this is only the consequence of a division of labor in which the emotion that is served by the tools of the senses, and the thought processes that are heavily influenced by this emotion, develop and, briefly stated, have developed into sources of understanding, while the realm of the emotions themselves has been relegated to the role of more or less blind instigator; for in primeval times, our emotions as well as our sense sensations sprang from the same root, an attitude that involved the entire creature when it came into contact with a stimulus. The division of labor that arose later can even now be expressed by the statement that the emotions do without understanding what we would do with understanding if we were ever to do
anything without some instigation other than understanding! If one could only project an image of this feeling attitude, it would have to be this: we assume about the emotions that they color the correct picture of the world and distort and falsely represent it. Science as well as everyday attitudes number the emotions among the “subjectivities”; they assume that these attitudes merely alter “the world we see,” for they presume that an emotion dissipates after a short time and that the changes it has caused in a perception of the world will disappear, so that “reality” will, over a shorter or longer time, “reassert” itself.

It seemed to Ulrich quite remarkable that this sometimes paralyzed condition of the emotions, which forms the basis of both scientific investigation and everyday behavior, has a subsidiary counterpoint in that the canceling of emotions is also encountered as a characteristic of earthly life. For the
influence our emotions exercise on the mind’s impartial representations, those things that maintain their validity as being true and indispensable, cancels itself out more or less completely over a long enough period of time, as well as over the breadth of matter that gets piled up; and the influence of the emotions on the mind’s non-impartial representations, on those unsteady ideas and ideologies, thoughts, views, and mental attitudes born out of changeable emotions, which dominate historical life both sequentially and in juxtaposition, also cancels itself out, even if it does so in opposition to certainty, even if it cancels itself out to worse than nothing, to contingency, to impotent disorder and vacillation— in short, to what Ulrich exasperatedly called the “business of the emotions.”

Now that he read it again, he would have liked to work out this point more precisely but couldn’t, because the written train
of thought that ended here, trailing off in a few further catchwords, required that he bring more important things to a conclusion. For if we project the intellectual image of the world, the one that corresponds to reality (even if it is always just an image, it is the right image), on the assumption of a specific state of the emotions, the question arises of what would happen if we were to be just as effectively controlled not by it but by other emotional states. That this question is not entirely nonsensical can be seen in that every strong affect distorts our image of the world in its own way, and a deeply melancholy person, or one who is constitutionally cheerful, could object to the "fancies" of a neutral and evenhanded person, saying that it is not so much because of their blood that they are gloomy or cheerful as on account of their experiences in a world that is full of heavy gloom or heavenly frivolity. And so, however an image of the world may be imagined
based on the predominance of an emotion or a group of emotions, including for instance the orgiastic, it can also be based on bringing emotions in general to the fore, as in the ecstatic and emotional frame of mind of an individual or a community; it is a normal everyday experience that the world is depicted differently on the basis of specific groups of ideas and that life is lived in different ways up to the point of obvious insanity.

Ulrich was not in the least minded to consider that understanding was an error, or the world an illusion, and yet it seemed to him admissible to speak not only of an altered picture of the world but also of another world, if instead of the tangible emotion that serves adaptation to the world some other emotion predominates. This other world would be “unreal” in the sense that it would be deprived of almost all objectivity: it would contain no ideas, computations, decisions, and actions that were adapted to
nature, and dissension among people would perhaps fail to appear for quite some time but, once present, would be almost impossible to heal. Ultimately, however, that would differ from our world only in degree, and about that possibility only the question can decide whether a humanity living under such conditions would still be capable of carrying on with its life, and whether it could achieve a certain stability in the coming and going of attacks from the outer world and in its own behavior. And there are many things that can be imagined as subtracted from reality or replaced by other things, without people being unable to live in a world so constituted. Many things are capable of reality and the world that do not occur in a particular reality or world.

Ulrich was not exactly satisfied with this after he had written it down, for he did not want it to appear as if all these possible realities were equally justified. He stood up
and paced back and forth in his study. Something was still missing, some land of distinction between “reality” and “full reality,” or the distinction between “reality for someone” and “real reality,” or in other terms, an exposition of the distinctions of rank was missing between the claim to the validity of reality and world, and a motivation for our claiming a priority dependent on conditions impossible to fulfill for what seems to us to be real and true under all conditions, a priority that is true only under certain conditions. For on the one hand an animal, too, adapts splendidly to the world, and because it certainly does not do so in complete darkness of soul, there must be even in the animal something that corresponds to human ideas of world and reality without it having to be, on that account, even remotely similar; and on the other hand we don’t possess true reality but can merely refine our ideas about it in an infinite, ongoing process,
while in the hurly-burly of life we even use juxtaposed ideas of quite varying degrees of profundity, such as Ulrich himself had encountered in the course of this very hour in the example of a table and a lovely woman. But after having thought it over in approximately this fashion, Ulrich was rid of his restlessness and decided that it was enough; for what might still be said about this subject was not reserved for him, and not for this hour, either. He merely convinced himself once more that there was presumably nothing in his formulation that would be expected to impede a more precise exposition, and for honors sake he wrote a few words to indicate what was missing.

And when he had done this he completely interrupted his activity, looked out the window into the garden lying there in the late-afternoon light, and even went down for a while in order to expose his head to the fresh air. He was almost afraid that he could
now assert either too much or too little; for what was still waiting to be written down by him seemed to him more important than anything else.
“Where would be the best place to begin?” Ulrich asked himself as he wandered around the garden, the sun burning his face and hands in one place, and the shadow of cooling leaves falling on them in another. “Should I begin right away with every emotion existing in the world in binary fashion and bearing within itself the origin of two worlds as different from each other as day and night? Or would I do better to mention the significance that sobered feeling has for our image of the world, and then come conversely to the influence that the image of the world born from our actions and knowledge
exercises on the picture of our emotions that we create for ourselves? Or should I say that there have already been states of ecstasy, which I have sketchily described as worlds in which emotions do not mutually cancel each other out?” But even while he was asking himself these questions, he had already made up his mind to begin with everything at the same time; for the thought that made him so anxious that he had interrupted his writing had as many associations as an old friendship, and there was no longer any way of saying how or when it had arisen. While he was trying to put things in order, Ulrich had moved closer and closer to this thought—and it was only on his own account that he had taken it up—but now that he had come to the end, either clarity or emptiness would have to emerge behind the dispersing mists. The moment when he found the first decisive words was not a pleasant one: “In every feeling there are two fundamentally
opposed possibilities for development, which usually fuse into one; but they can also come into play individually, and that chiefly happens in a state of ecstasy!”

He proposed to call them, for the time being, the outer and the inner development, and to consider them from the most harmless side. He had a crowd of examples at his disposal: liking, love, anger, mistrust, generosity, disgust, envy, despair, fear, desire..., and he mentally ordered them into a series. Then he set up a second series:

affability, tenderness, irritation, suspicion, high-spiritedness, anxiety, and longing, lacking only those links for which he could not find any name, and then he compared the two series. One contained specific emotions, chiefly as they are aroused in us by a specific encounter; the second contained nonspecific emotions, which are strongest when aroused by some unknown cause. And yet in both cases it was the same emotions,
in one case in a general, in the other in a specific state. “So I would say,” Ulrich thought, “that in every emotion there is a distinction to be made between a development toward specificity and a development toward non-specificity. But before doing that, it would first be better to list all the distinctions this involves.”

He could have toted up most of them in his sleep, but they will seem familiar to anyone who substitutes the word “moods” for the “nonspecific emotions” from which Ulrich had formed his second series, although Ulrich deliberately avoided this term. For if one makes a distinction between emotion and mood, it is readily apparent that the “specific emotion” is always directed toward something, originates in a life situation, has a goal, and expresses itself in more or less straightforward behavior, while a mood demonstrates approximately the opposite of all these things: it is encompassing, aimless,
widely dispersed, and idle, and no matter how clear it may be, it contains something indeterminate and stands ready to engulf any object without anything happening and without itself changing in the process. So a specific attitude toward something corresponds to the specific emotion, and a general attitude toward everything corresponds to the nonspecific emotion: the one draws us into action, while the other merely allows us to participate from behind a colorful window.

For a moment Ulrich dwelt on this distinction between how specific and nonspecific emotions relate to the world. He said to himself: “I will add this: Whenever an emotion develops toward specificity, it focuses itself, so to speak, it constricts its purposiveness, and it finally ends up both internally and externally in something of a blind alley; it leads to an action or a resolve, and even if it should not cease to exist in one or the
other, it continues on, as changed as water leaving a mill. If, on the other hand, it develops toward non-specificity, it apparently has no energy at all. But while the specifically developed emotion is reminiscent of a creature with grasping arms, the nonspecific emotion changes the world in the same way the sky changes its colors, without desire or self, and in this form objects and actions change like the clouds. The attitude of the nonspecific emotion to the world has in it something magical and—God help me!—in comparison to the specific attitude, something feminine!" This is what Ulrich said to himself, and then something occurred to him that took him far afield: for of course it is chiefly the development toward a specific emotion that brings with it the fragility and instability of the life of the soul. That the moment of feeling can never be sustained, that emotions wilt more quickly than flowers, or transform themselves into paper flowers if one tries to
preserve them, that happiness and will, art and conviction, pass away: all this depends on the specificity of the emotion, which always imposes on it a purposiveness and forces it into the pace of life that dissolves or changes it. On the other hand, the emotion that persists in its non-specificity and boundlessness is relatively impervious to change. A comparison occurred to him: “The one dies like an individual, the other lasts like a kind or species.” In this arrangement of the emotions there is perhaps repeated in reality, even if very indirectly, a general arrangement of life; he was not able to gauge this but did not stop over it, for he thought he saw the main argument more clearly than he ever had had before.

He was now ready to return to his study, but he waited, because he wanted to mull over the entire plan in his head before putting it down on paper. “I spoke of two possibilities of development and two states
of one and the same emotion,” he reflected, “but then there must also be present at the origin of the emotion, of course, something to initiate the process. And the drives that feed our soul with a life that is still close to animal blood actually demonstrate this bipartite disposition. A drive incites to action, and this appears to be its major task; but it also tunes the soul. If the drive has not yet found a target, its nebulous expanding and stretching become quite apparent; indeed, there will be many people who see precisely this as the sign of an awakening drive—for example, the sex drive—but of course there is a longing of hunger and other drives. So the specific and the nonspecific are present in the drive. 1*11 add,” Ulrich thought, “that the bodily organs that are involved when the external world arouses an affect in us can on other occasions produce this affect themselves if they receive a stimulus from within;
and that’s all it takes to arrive at a state of ecstasy!”

Then he reflected that according to the results of research, and especially after his discussion of these results in his diaries, it was also to be assumed that the impulse for one emotion can always serve for another emotion, too, and that no emotion, in the process of its shaping and strengthening, ever comes to an entirely specifiable end. But if that was true, then not only would no emotion ever attain its total specificity, but in all probability it would not attain perfect nonspecificity either, and there was neither an entirely specific nor an entirely nonspecific emotion. And in truth it almost always happens that both possibilities combine in a common reality, in which merely the characteristics of one or the other predominate. There is no “mood” that does not also include specific emotions that form and dissolve again; and there is no specific emotion
that, at least where it can be said to “radiate,” “seize,” “operate out of itself,” “extend itself,” or operate on the world “directly,” without an external emotion, does not allow the characteristics of the nonspecific emotion to peer through. There are certainly, however, emotions that closely approximate the one or the other.

Of course the terms “specific” and “nonspecific” involve the disadvantage that even a specific emotion is always insufficiently specified and is in this sense nonspecific; but that should probably be easy to distinguish from significant non-specificity. “So all that remains is to settle why the particularity of the nonspecific emotion, and the whole development leading up to it, is taken to be less real than its counterpart,” Ulrich thought. “Nature contains both. So the different ways they are treated are probably connected with the external development of emotion being more important for us than
the inner development, or with the direction of specificity meaning more to us than that of non-specificity. If this were not so, our life would truly have to be a different one than it is! It is an inescapable peculiarity of European culture that every minute the ‘inner world’ is proclaimed the best and most profound thing life has to offer, without regard for the fact that this inner world is treated as merely an annex of the outer world. And how this is done is frankly the secret balance sheet of this culture, even though it is an open secret: the external world and the “personality” are set off against each other. The assumption is that the outer world stimulates in a person inner processes that must enable that person to respond in an appropriate fashion; and by mentally setting up this pathway leading from a change in the world through the change in a person to a further change in the world, one derives the peculiar ambiguity
that permits us to honor the internal world as the true sphere of human grandeur and yet to presuppose that everything taking place within it has the ultimate task of flowing outward in the form of an orderly external action."

The thought went through Ulrich’s mind that it would be rewarding to consider our civilization’s attitude toward religion and culture in this sense, but it seemed to him more important to keep to the direction his thoughts had been following. Instead of “inner world,” one could simply say “emotions,” for they in particular are in the ambiguous position of actually being this inwardness and yet are mostly treated as a shadow of the world outside; and this of course was involved with everything that Ulrich thought he could distinguish as the inner and non-specific development of emotions. This is already shown in that the expressions we use to describe inner governing processes are
almost all derived from external processes; for we obviously transpose the active kind of external happening onto the differently constituted inner events even in representing the latter as an activity, whether we call it an emanation, a switching on or off, a taking hold, or something similar. For these images, derived from the outer world, have become accepted and current for the inner world only because we lack better ones to apprehend it. Even those scientific theories that describe the emotions as an interpenetration or juxtaposition on an equal footing of external and internal actions make a concession to this custom, precisely because they ordinarily speak of acting and overlook pure inwardness’s remoteness from acting. And for these reasons alone, it is simply inevitable that the inner development of emotions usually appears to us as a mere annex to their external development, appears indeed to be its repetition and muddying,
distinguishing itself from the outer development through less sharply defined forms and hazier connections, and thus evoking the somewhat neglected impression of being an incidental action.

But of course what is at stake is not simply a form of expression or a mental priority; what we “really’ feel is itself dependent on reality in hundreds of ways and is therefore also dependent on the specific and external development of emotions to which the development of inner and nonspecific emotions subordinates itself, by which the latter are, as it were, blotted up. “It shouldn’t depend on the details,” Ulrich resolved, “yet it could probably be shown in every detail not only that the concept we create for ourselves has the task of service-ably integrating its ‘subjective’ element into our ideas about reality, but also that in feeling itself, both dispositions merge in a holistic process that unites their outer and inner development in
very unequal fashion. Simply stated: we are acting beings; for our actions we need the security of thinking; therefore we also need emotions capable of being neutralized—and our feeling has taken on its characteristic form in that we integrate it into our image of reality, and not the other way around, as ecstasies do. Just for that reason, however, we must have within us the possibility of turning our feeling around and experiencing our world differently!"

He was now impatient to write, feeling confident that these ideas had to be subjected to a more intense scrutiny. Once in his study, he turned on the light, as the walls already lay in shadow. Nothing was to be heard of Agathe. He hesitated an instant before beginning.

He was inhibited when he recollected that in his impatience to take shortcuts in laying out and sketching his idea he had used the concepts “inner” and “outer,” as well as
“individual” and “world,” as if the distinction between both agencies of the emotions coincided with these representations. This was of course not so. The peculiar distinction Ulrich had made between the disposition for and the possibility of elaboration into specific and nonspecific emotions, if allowed to prevail, cuts across the other distinctions. The emotions develop in one and the other fashion just as much outwardly and in the world as they do inwardly and in the individual. He pondered over a proper word for this, for he didn’t much like the terms “specific” and “nonspecific,” although they were indicative.

“The original difference in experience is most exposed and yet most expressive in that there is an externalizing of emotions as well as an inwardness both internal and external,” he reflected, and was content for a moment, until he found these words, too, as unsatisfactory as all the others, when he went on to try out a dozen. But this did not change
his conviction; it only looked to him like a complication in the discussion he was embarking on, the result of language not having been created for this aspect of existence. “If I go over everything once more and find it correct, it won’t matter to me if all I end up talking about is our ordinary emotions and our ‘other ones,’” he concluded.

Smiling, he took down from a shelf a book that had a bookmark in it and wrote at the head of his own words these words of another: “Even if Heaven, like the world, is subjected to a series of changing events, still the Angels have neither concept nor conception of space and time. Although for them, too, everything that happens happens sequentially, in complete harmony with the world, they do not know what time means, because what prevails in Heaven are neither years nor days, but changing states. Where there are years and days, seasons prevail, where there are changes of state, conditions.
Since the Angels have no conception of time the way people do, they have no way of specifying time; they do not even know of its division into years, months, weeks, hours, into tomorrow, yesterday, and today. If they should hear a person speak of these things—and God has always linked Angels with people—what they understand by them is states and the determination of states. Man’s thinking begins with time, the Angels’ with a state; so what for human beings is a natural idea is for the Angels a spiritual one. All movement in the spiritual world is brought about through inner changes in state. When this troubled me, I was raised into the sphere of Heaven to the consciousness of Angels, and led by God through the realms of the firmament and conducted to the constellations of the universe, and all this in my mind, while my body remained in the same place. This is how all the Angels moved from place to place: that is why there are for
them no intervals, and consequently no distances either, but only states and changes in state. Every approach is a similarity of inner states, every distancing a dissimilarity; spaces in Heaven are nothing but external states, which correspond to the internal ones. In the spiritual world, everyone will appear visible to the other as soon as he has a yearning desire for the other’s presence, for then he is placing himself in the other’s state; conversely, in the presence of disinclination he will distance himself from him. In the same way, someone who changes his abode in halls or gardens gets where he is going more quickly if he longs for the place, and more slowly if his longing is less; with astonishment I saw this happen often. And since the Angels are not able to conceive of time, they also have a different idea of eternity than earthly people do; they understand by it an infinite state, not an infinite time.”
A few days earlier, Ulrich had accidentally come across this in a selection of the writings of Swedenborg he owned but had never really read; and he had condensed it a little and copied down so much of it because he found it very pleasant to hear this old metaphysician and learned engineer—who made no small impression on Goethe, and even on Kant—talking as confidently about heaven and the angels as if it were Stockholm and its inhabitants. It fit in so well with his own endeavor that the remaining differences, which were by no means insignificant, were brought into relief with uncanny clarity. It gave him great pleasure to seize on these differences and conjure forth in a new fashion from the more cautiously posited concepts of a later century the assertions—dryly unhallucinatory in their premature self-certainty, but with a whimsical effect nevertheless—of a seer.
And so he wrote down what he had thought.
The following four chapters, in corrected fair copy, are alternate versions of the preceding “galley” chapters. (Alternates 47 and 48 have been omitted because the first differs in only minor details from galley chapter 57, and the second closely parallels galley chapter 48.) Musil was working on these during the last two years of his life, up to his sudden death on April 15, 1942.
Man, the speaking animal, is the only one that requires conversation even for his reproduction. And not only because he is always talking does he speak while that is going on too, but apparently his bliss in love is bound root and branch to his loquacity, and in so profoundly mysterious a fashion that it almost calls to mind those ancients according to whose philosophy god, man, and things arose from the “logos,” by which they variously understood the Holy Ghost, reason, and speaking. Now not even psychoanalysis and sociology have had anything of consequence to say about this, although both these modern sciences might well compete
with Catholicism in intervening in everything human. So one must construct one’s own explanation, that in love, conversations play an almost greater role than anything else. Love is the most garrulous of all emotions, and it consists largely of loquaciousness. If the person is young, these conversations that encompass everything are part of the phenomenon of growing up; if he is mature, they form his peacock’s fan, which, even though it consists only of quills, unfolds the more vibrantly the later it happens. The reason might lie in the awakening of contemplative thinking through the emotions of love, and in its enduring connection with them; but this would only be putting off the problem for the moment, for even if the word “contemplation” is used almost as often as the word “love,” it is not any clearer.

Whether, moreover, what bound Agathe and Ulrich together can be accused of being love or not is not to be decided on
these grounds, although they spoke with each other insatiably. What they spoke about, too, turned around love, always and somehow; that is true. But what is true of every emotion is true of love, that its ardor expands more strongly in words the farther off action is; and what persuaded brother and sister, after the initial violent and obscure emotional experiences that had gone before, to give themselves over to conversations, and what seemed to them at times like a magic spell, was above all not knowing how they could act. But the timidity before their own emotions that was involved in this, and their curious penetration inward to this emotion from its periphery, sometimes caused these conversations to come out sounding more superficial than the depth that underlay them.
DIFFICULTIES WHERE THEY ARE NOT LOOKED FOR

How do things stand with the example, as celebrated as it is happily experienced, of love between two so-called people of different sexes? It is a special case of the commandment to love thy neighbor without knowing what land of person he is; and a test of the relationship that exists between love and reality.

People make of each other the dolls with which they have already played in dreaming of love.

And what the other thinks and really is has no influence on this at all?
As long as one loves the other, and because one loves the other, everything is enchanting; but this is not true the other way around. Never has a woman loved a man because of his thoughts or opinions, or a man a woman on account of hers. These play only an important secondary role. Moreover, the same is true of thoughts as of anger: if one understands impartially what the other means, not only is anger disarmed, but most of the time, against its expectation, love as well.

But, especially at the beginning, isn’t what plays the major role being charmed by the concord of opinions?

When the man hears the woman’s voice, he hears himself being repeated by a marvelous submerged orchestra, and women are the most unconscious of ventriloquists; without its coming from their mouths, they hear themselves giving the cleverest answers. Each time it is like a small annunciation: a
person emerges from the clouds at the side of another, and everything the one utters seems to the other a heavenly crown, custom fitted to his head! Later, of course, you feel like a drunk who has slept off his stupor.

And then the deeds! Are not the deeds of love—its loyalty, its sacrifices and attentions—its most beautiful demonstration? But deeds, like all mute things, are ambiguous. If one thinks back on one's life as a dynamic chain of actions and events, it amounts to a play in which one has not noticed a single word of the dialogue and whose scenes have the same monotonous climaxes!

So one does not love according to merit and reward, and in anti-phony with the immortal spirits mortally in love?

That one is not loved as one deserves is the sorrow of all old maids of both sexes!

It was Agathe who gave this response. The uncannily beautiful where-does-it-come-
from of love rose up from past loves in conjunction with the mild frenzy of injustice and even reconciled her to the lack of dignity and seriousness of which she sometimes complained because of her game with Professor Lindner, and which she was always ashamed of whenever she again found herself in Ulrich’s vicinity. But Ulrich had begun the conversation, and in the course of it had become interested in pumping her for her memories; for her way of judging these delights was similar to his.

She looked at him and laughed. “Haven’t you ever loved a person above everything, and despised yourself for it?”

“I could say no; but I won’t indignantly reject it out of hand,” Ulrich said. “It could have happened.”

“Have you never loved a person,” Agathe went on excitedly, “despite the strangest conviction that this person,
whether he has a beard or breasts, about whom you thought you knew everything and whom you esteem, and who talks incessantly about you and himself, is really only visiting love? You could leave out his thinking and his merits, give him a different destiny, furnish him with a different beard and different legs: you could almost leave him out, and you would still love him!...That is, insofar as you love him at all!” she added to soften it.

Her voice had a deep resonance, with a restless glitter in its depths, as from a fire. She sat down guiltily, because in her unintentional eagerness she had sprung up from her chair.

Ulrich, too, felt somewhat guilty on account of this conversation, and smiled. He had not in the least intended to speak of love as one of those contemporary bifurcated emotions that the latest trend calls “ambivalent,” which amounts to saying that the soul, as is the case with swindlers, always
winks with its left eye while pledging an oath with its right hand. He had only found it amusing that love, to arise and endure, does not depend on anything significant. That is, you love someone in spite of everything, and equally well on account of nothing; and that means either that the whole business is a fantasy or that this fantasy is the whole business, as the world is a whole in which no sparrow falls without the All-Feeling One being aware of it.

“So it doesn’t depend on anything at all!” Agathe exclaimed by way of conclusion. “Not on what a person is, not on what he thinks, not on what he wants, and not on what he does.”

It was clear to them that they were speaking of the security of the soul, or, since it might be well to avoid such a grand word, of the insecurity, which they—using the term now with modest imprecision and in an overall sense—felt in their souls. And that
they were talking of love, in the course of which they reminded each other of its changeability and its art of metamorphosis, happened only because it is one of the most violent and distinctive emotions, and yet it is such a suspicious emotion before the stern throne of sovereign understanding that it causes even this understanding to waver. But here they had already found a beginning when they had scarcely begun strolling in the sunshine of loving one’s neighbor; and mindful of the assertion that even in this gracious stupefaction you had no idea whether you really loved people, and whether you were loving real people, or whether, and by means of what qualities, you were being duped by a fantasy and a transformation, Ulrich showed himself assiduous in finding a verbal knot that would give him a handhold on the questionable relationship that exists between emotion and understanding, at least at the
present moment and in the spirit of the idle conversation that had just died away.

“This always contains both contradictions; they form a four-horse team,” he said. “You love a person because you know him; and because you don’t know him. And you understand him because you love him; and don’t know him because you love him. And sometimes this reaches such a pitch that it suddenly becomes quite palpable. These are the notorious moments when Venus through Apollo, and Apollo through Venus, gaze at a hollow scarecrow and are mightily amazed that previously they had seen something else there. If love is stronger than this astonishment, a struggle arises between them, and sometimes love—albeit exhausted, despairing, and mortally wounded—emerges the victor. But if love is not so strong, it becomes a struggle between people who think themselves deceived; it comes to insults, crude intrusions of reality, incredible humiliations
intended to make up for your having been the simpleton....” He had experienced this stormy weather of love often enough to be able to describe it now quite comfortably.

But Agathe put an end to this. “If you don’t mind, I’d like to point out that these marital and extramarital affairs of honor are for the most part much overrated!” she objected, and again tried to find a comfortable position.

“All love is overrated! The madman who in his derangement stabs with a knife and runs it through an innocent person who just happens to be standing where his hallucination is—in love he’s normal!” Ulrich declared, and laughed.
A comfortable position and lackadaisical sunshine, which caresses without being importunate, facilitated these conversations. They were mostly conducted between two deck chairs that had been not so much moved into the protection and shade of the house as into the shaded light coming from the garden, its freedom modulated by the morning walls. One should not, of course, assume that the chairs were standing there because brother and sister—stimulated by the sterility of their relationship, which in the ordinary sense was simply present but in a higher sense was perhaps threatening—might have had the intention of
exchanging their opinions concerning the deceptive nature of love in Schopenhauerian-Hindu fashion, and of defending themselves against the insane seductive workings of its drive to procreation by intellectually dismembering them; what dictated the choice of the half-shadowed, the protective, and the curiously withdrawn had a simpler explanation. The subject matter of the conversation was itself so constituted that in the infinite experience through which the notion of love first emerges distinctly, the most various associative pathways came to light, leading from one question to the next. Thus the two questions of how one loves the neighbor one does not know, and how one loves oneself, whom one knows even less, directed their curiosity to the question encompassing both: namely, how one loves at all; or, put differently, what love “really” is. At first glance this might seem rather precocious, and also an all-too-judicious question for a couple in
love; but it gains in mental confusion as soon as one extends it to include millions of loving couples and their variety.

These millions differ not only individually (which is their pride) but also according to their ways of acting, their object, and their relationship. There are times when one cannot speak of loving couples at all but can still speak of love, and other times, when one can talk of loving couples but not of love, in which case things proceed in rather more ordinary fashion. All in all, the word embraces as many contradictions as Sunday in a small country town, where the farm boys go to mass at ten in the morning, visit the brothel in a side street at eleven, and enter the tavern on the main square at noon to eat and drink. Is there any sense in trying to investigate such a word all the way around? But in using it one is acting unconsciously, as if despite all the differences there were some inherent common quality! Whether you love a
walking stick or honor is six of one and half a dozen of the other, and it would not occur to anybody to name these things in the same breath if one weren’t accustomed to so doing every day. Other kinds of games about things that are different and yet one and the same can be addressed with: loving the bottle, loving tobacco, and loving even worse poisons. Spinach and outdoor exercise. Sports or the mind. Truth. Wife, child, dog. Those only added to the list who spoke about: God. Beauty, Fatherland, and money. Nature, friend, profession, and life. Freedom. Success, power, justice, or simply virtue. One loves all these things; in short, there are almost as many things associated with love as there are ways of striving and speaking. But what are the distinctions, and what do these loves have in common?

It might be useful to think of the word “fork.” There are eating forks, manure forks, tree-branch forks, gun forks, road forks, and
other forks, and what they all have in common is the shaping characteristic of "forkness." This is the decisive experience, what is forked, the gestalt of the fork, in the most disparate things that are called by that name. If you proceed from these things, it turns out that they all belong to the same category; if you proceed from the initial impression of forkness, it turns out that it is filled out and complemented by the impressions of the various specific forks. The common element is therefore a form or gestalt, and the differentiation lies first in the variety of forms it can assume, but then also in the objects having such a form, their purpose, and such things. But while every fork can be directly compared with every other, and is present to the senses, even if only in the form of a chalk line, or mentally, this is not the case with the various shapes of love; and the entire usefulness of the example is limited to the question of whether here, too,
corresponding to the forkness of forks, there is in all cases a decisive experience, a love-ness, a lovebeing, and a lovekind. But love is not an object of sensory understanding that is to be grasped with a glance, or even with an emotion, but a moral event, in the way that premeditated murder, justice, or scorn is; and this means among other things that a multiply branching and variously supported chain of comparisons is possible among various examples of it, the more distant of which can be quite dissimilar to each other, indeed distinct from each other to the point of being opposite, and yet be connected through an association that echoes from one link to the next. Acting from love can thus go as far as hate; and yet the cause is not the much-invoked “ambivalence,” the dichotomy of emotions, but precisely the full totality of life.

Nevertheless, such a word might also have preceded the developing continuation of the conversation. For forks and other such
innocent aids aside, sophisticated conversation knows nowadays how to handle the essence and nature of love without faltering, and yet to express itself as grippingly as if this kernel were concealed in all the various appearances of love the way forkness is contained in the manure fork or the salad fork. This leads one to say—and Ulrich and Agathe, too, could have been seduced into this by the general custom—that the important thing in every land of love is libido, or to say that it is eros. These two words do not have the same history, yet they are comparable, especially in the contemporary view. For when psychoanalysis (because an age that nowhere goes in for intellectual or spiritual depth is riveted to hear that it has a depth psychology) began to become an everyday philosophy and interrupted the middle classes’ lack of adventure, everything in sight was called libido, so that in the end one could as little say what this key and
skeleton-key idea was not as what it was. And much the same is true of eros, except that those who, with the greatest conviction, reduce all physical and spiritual worldly bonds to eros have regarded their eros the same way from the very beginning. It would be futile to translate libido as drive or desire, specifically sexual or pre-sexual drive or desire, or to translate eros, on the other hand, as spiritual, indeed supra-sensory, tenderness; you would then have to add a specialized historical treatise. One’s boredom with this makes ignorance a pleasure. But this is what determined in advance that the conversation conducted between two deck chairs did not take the direction indicated but found attraction and refreshment instead in the primitive and insufficient process of simply piling up as many examples as possible of what was called love and putting them side by side as in a game: indeed, to
behave as ingenuously as possible and not despise even the least judicious examples.

Comfortably chatting, they shared whatever examples occurred to them, and how they occurred to them, whether according to the emotion, according to the object it was directed at, or according to the action in which it expressed itself. But it was also an advantage first to take the procedure in hand and consider whether it merited the name of love in real or metaphorical terms, and to what extent. In this fashion many kinds of material from different areas were brought together.

But spontaneously, the first thing they talked about was emotion; for the entire nature of love appears to be a process of feeling. All the more surprising is the response that emotion is the least part of love. For the completely inexperienced, it would be like sugar and toothache; not quite as sweet, and not quite as painful, and as restless as cattle
plagued by horseflies. This comparison might not seem a masterpiece to anyone who is himself tormented by love; and yet the usual description is really not that much different: being torn by doubts and anxieties, pain and longing, and vague desires! Since olden times it seems that this description has not been able to specify the condition any more precisely. But this lack of emotional specificity is not characteristic only of love. Whether one is happy or sad is also not something one experiences as irrevocably and straightforwardly as one distinguishes smooth from rough, nor can other emotions be recognized any better purely by feeling or even touching them. For that reason an observation was appropriate at this point that they might have fleshted out as it deserved, on the unequal disposition and shaping of emotions. This was the term that Ulrich set out as its premise; he might also have said disposition, shaping, and consolidation.
For he introduced it with the natural experience that every emotion involves a convincing certainty of itself that is obviously part of its nucleus; and he added that it must also be assumed, on equally general grounds, that the disparity of emotions began no less with this nucleus. You can hear this in his examples. Love for a friend has a different origin and different traits from love for a girl; love for a completely faded woman different ones from love for a saintly, reserved woman; and emotions such as (to remain with love) love, veneration, prurience, bondage, or the lands of love and the lands of antipathy that diverge even further from one another are already different in their very roots. If one allows both assumptions, then all emotions, from beginning to end, would have to be as solid and transparent as crystals. And yet no emotion is unmistakably what it appears to be, and neither self-observation nor the actions to which it gives rise
provide any assurance about it. This distinction between the self-assurance and the uncertainty of emotions is surely not trifling. But if one observes the origin of the emotion in the context of its physiological as well as its social causes, this difference becomes quite natural. These causes awaken in general terms, as one might say, merely the land of emotion, without determining it in detail; for corresponding to every drive and every external situation that sets it in motion is a whole bundle of emotions that might satisfy them. And whatever of this is initially present can be called the nucleus of the emotion that is still between being and nonbeing. If one wanted to describe this nucleus, however it might be constituted, one could not come up with anything more apt than that it is something that in the course of its development, and independently of a great deal that may or may not be relevant, will develop into the emotion it was intended to
become. Thus every emotion has, besides its initial disposition, a destiny as well; and therefore, since what it later develops into is highly dependent on accruing conditions, there is no emotion that would unerringly be itself from the very beginning; indeed, there is perhaps not even one that would indisputably and purely be an emotion. Put another way, it follows from this working together of disposition and shaping that in the field of the emotions what predominates are not their pure occurrence and its unequivocal fulfillment, but their progressive approximation and approximate fulfillment. Something similar is also true of everything that requires emotion in order to be understood.

This was the end of the observation adduced by Ulrich, which contained approximately these explanations in this sequence. Hardly less brief and exaggerated than the assertion that emotion was the smallest part of love, it could also be said that because it
was an emotion, it was not to be recognized by emotion. This, moreover, shed some light on the question of why he had called love a moral experience. The three chief terms—disposition, shaping, and consolidation—were, however, the main cruxes connecting the ordered understanding of the phenomenon of emotions: at least according to a particular fundamental view, to which Ulrich not unwillingly turned whenever he had need of such an explanation. But at this stage, because working this out properly had made greater and more profound claims than he was willing to take upon himself, claims that led into the didactic sphere, he broke off what had been begun.

The continuation reached out in two directions. According to the program of the conversation, it ought now to have been the turns of the object and the action of love to be discussed, in order to determine what it was in them that gave rise to their highly
dissimilar manifestations and to discover what, ultimately, love “really” is. This was why they had talked about the involvement of actions at the very beginning of the emotion in determining that emotion, which should be all the more repeatable in regard to what happened to it later. But Agathe asked an additional question: it might have been possible—and she had reasons, if not for distrust, at least to be afraid of it—that the explanation her brother had selected was really valid only for a weak emotion, or for an experience that wanted to have nothing to do with strong ones.

Ulrich replied: “Not in the least! It is precisely when it is at its strongest that an emotion is most secure. In the greatest panic, one is paralyzed or screams instead of fleeing or defending oneself. In the greatest happiness there is often a peculiar pain. Great eagerness, too, ‘can only harm’ as one says. And in general it can be maintained
that at the highest pitch of feeling the emotions fade and disappear as in a dazzling light. It may be that the entire world of emotions that we know is designed for only a middling kind of life and ceases at the highest stages, just as it does not begin at the lowest.” An indirect part of this, too, is what you experience when you observe your feelings, especially when you examine them closely: they become indistinct and are hard to distinguish. But what they lose in clarity of strength they need to gain, at least to some degree, through clarity of attentiveness, and they don’t do even that....This was Ulrich’s reply, and this obliteration of the emotion juxtaposed in self-observation and in its ultimate arousal was not accidental. For in both conditions action is excluded or disturbed; and because the connection between feeling and acting is so close that many consider them a unit, it is not without significance that the two examples are complementary.
But what he avoided saying was precisely what they both knew about it from their own experience, that in actuality a condition of mental effacement and physical helplessness can be combined with the highest stage of the emotion of love. This made him turn the conversation with some violence away from the significance that acting has for feeling, apparently with the intention of again bringing up the division of love according to objects. At first glance, this rather whimsical possibility also seemed better suited to bringing order to ambiguity. For if, to begin with an example, it is blasphemy to label love of God with the same word as love of fishing, this doubtless lies in the differences between the objects this love is aimed at; and the significance of the object can likewise be measured by other examples. What makes the enormous difference in this relationship of loving something is therefore not so much the love as rather the
something. Thus there are objects that make love rich and happy; others that make it poor and sickly, as if it were due entirely to them. There are objects that must requite the love if it is to develop all its power and character, and there are others in which any similar demand would be meaningless from the outset. This decisively separates the connection to living beings from the connection to inanimate things; but, even inanimate, the object is the proper adversary of love, and its qualities influence those of love.

The more disproportionate in value this adversary is, the more distorted, not to say passionately twisted, love itself becomes. “Compare,” Ulrich admonished, “the healthy love of young people for each other with the ridiculously exaggerated love of the lonely person for a dog, cat, or dickeybird. Observe the passion between man and wife fade away, or become a nuisance like a rejected beggar, if it is not requited, or not fully
requited. Don’t forget, either, that in unequal associations, such as those between parents and children, or masters and servants, between a man and the object of his ambition or his vice, the relationship of requited love is the most uncertain, and without exception the fatal element. Wherever the governing natural exchange between the condition of love and its adversary is imperfect, love degenerates like unhealthy tissue!...This idea seemed to have something special that attracted him. Ulrich would have expounded on it at length and with numerous examples, but while he was still thinking these over, something unanticipated, which quickened his intended line of thought with expectation like a pleasant fragrance coming across fields, appeared to direct his reflections almost inadvertently toward what in painting is called still life or, according to the contrary but just as fitting procedure of a foreign language, nature morte. “It is somehow
ridiculous for a person to prize a well-painted lobster,” Ulrich continued without transition, “highly polished grapes, and a hare strung up by the legs, always with a pheasant nearby; for human appetite is ridiculous, and painted appetite is even more ridiculous than natural appetite.” They both had the feeling that this association reached back in more profound ways than were evident, and belonged to the continuation of what they had omitted to say about themselves.

For in real still lifes—objects, animals, plants, landscapes, and human bodies conjured up within the sphere of art—something other than what they depict comes out: namely, the mysterious, demoniacal quality of painted life. There are famous pictures of this kind, so both knew what they were talking about; it would, however, be better to speak not of specific pictures but of a land of picture, which, moreover, does not attract
imitators but arises without rules from a flourish of creative activity. Agathe wanted to know how this could be recognized. Ulrich gave a sign refusing to indicate any definitive trait, but said slowly, smiling and without hesitation: “The exciting, vague, infinite echo!”

And Agathe understood him. Somehow one has the feeling of being on a beach. Small insects hum. The air bears a hundred meadow scents. Thoughts and feelings stroll busily hand in hand. But before one’s eyes lies the unanswering desert of the sea, and what is important on the shore loses itself in the monotonous motion of the endless view. She was thinking how all true still lifes can arouse this happy, insatiable sadness. The longer you look at them, the clearer it becomes that the things they depict seem to stand on the colorful shore of life, their eyes filled with monstrous things, their tongues paralyzed.
Ulrich responded with another paraphrase. “All still lifes really paint the world of the sixth day of creation, when God and the world were still by themselves, with no people!” And to his sister’s questioning smile he said: “So what they arouse in people would probably be jealousy, secret inquisitiveness, and grief!”

That was almost an aperçu, and not a bad one; he noted it with displeasure, for he was not fond of these ideas machined like bullets and hastily gilded. But he did nothing to correct it, nor did he ask his sister to do so. For the strange resemblance to their own life was an obstacle that kept both of them from adequately expressing themselves about the uncanny art of the still life or nature morte.

This resemblance played a great role in their lives. Without it being necessary to repeat in detail something reaching back to the shared memories of childhood that had been
reawakened at their reunion and since then had given a strange cast to all their experiences and most of their conversations, it cannot be passed over in silence that the anesthetized trace of the still life was always to be felt in it. Spontaneously, therefore, and without accepting anything specific that might have guided them, they were led to turn their curiosity toward everything that might be akin to the nature of the still life; and something like the following exchange of words resulted, charging the conversation once more like a flywheel and giving it new energy:

Having to beg for something before an imperturbable countenance that grants no response drives a person into a frenzy of despair, attack, or worthlessness. On the other hand, it is equally unnerving, but unspeakably beautiful, to kneel before an immovable countenance from which life was
extinguished a few hours before, leaving behind an aura like a sunset.

This second example is even a commonplace of the emotions, if ever anything could be said to be! The world speaks of the consecration and dignity of death; the poetic theme of the beloved on his bier has existed for hundreds, if not thousands of years; there is a whole body of related, especially lyric, poetry of death. This obviously has something adolescent about it. Who imagines that death bestows upon him the noblest of beloveds for his very own? The person who lacks the courage or the possibility of having a living one!

A short line leads from this poetic immaturity to the horrors of conjuring up spirits and the dead; a second line leads to the abomination of actual necrophilia; perhaps a third to the pathological opposites of exhibitionism and coercion by violence.
These comparisons may be strange, and in part they are extremely unappetizing. But if one does not allow oneself to be deterred but considers them from, as it were, a medical-psychological viewpoint, there is one element they all have in common: an impossibility, an inability, an absence of natural courage or the courage for a natural life.

They also supply the truth—should one already be embarked on daring comparisons—that silence, fainting, and every kind of incompleteness in the adversary is connected with the effect of mental exhaustion.

What is especially repeated in this way, as was mentioned before, is that an adversary who is not on the same level distorts love; it is only necessary to add that it is not infrequently a distorted attitude of the emotion that bids it make a choice at all. And inversely, it would be the responding, living, acting partner who determines the emotions
and keeps them in order, without which they degenerate into shadowboxing.

But isn’t the strange charm of the still life shadowboxing too? Indeed, almost an ethereal necrophilia?

And yet there is also a similar shadowboxing in the glances of happy lovers as an expression of their highest feelings. They look into each other’s eyes, can’t tear themselves away, and pine in an infinite emotion that stretches like rubber!

This was more or less how the exchange of words had begun, but at this point its thread was pretty much left hanging, and for quite a while before it was picked up again. For they had both really looked at each other, and this had caused them to lapse into silence.

But if an observation is called for to explain this—and if it is necessary to justify such conversations once again and express
their sense—perhaps this much could be said, which at this moment Ulrich understandably left as an unspoken idea: that loving was by no means as simple as nature would have us believe by bestowing on every bungler among her creatures the necessary tools.
The sun, meanwhile, had risen higher; they had abandoned the chairs like stranded boats in the shallow shade near the house and were lying on a lawn in the garden, beneath the full depth of the summer day. They had been like this for quite some time, and although the circumstances had changed, this change hardly entered their consciousness. Not even the cessation of the conversation had accomplished this; it was left hanging, without a trace of a rift.

A noiseless, streaming snowfall of lusterless blossoms, emanating from a group of trees whose flowering was done, hovered through the sunshine, and the breath that
bore it was so gentle that not a leaf stirred. It cast no shadow on the green of the lawn, but this green seemed to darken from within like an eye. Extravagantly leaved by the young summer, the tender trees and bushes standing at the sides or forming the backdrop gave the impression of being amazed spectators who, surprised and spellbound in their gay attire, were participating in this funeral procession and celebration of nature. Spring and fall, speech and nature’s silence, and the magic of life and death too, mingled in this picture; hearts seemed to stop, removed from their breasts to join the silent procession through the air. “My heart was taken from out my breast,” a mystic had said: Agathe remembered it.

She knew, too, that she herself had read this saying to Ulrich from one of his books.

That had happened here in the garden, not far from the place where they were now. The recollection took shape. Other maxims
too that she had recalled to his mind occurred to her: “Are you it, or are you not it? I know not where I am; nor do I wish to know!” “I have transcended all my abilities but for the dark power! I am in love, and know not in whom! My heart is full of love and empty of love at the same time!” Thus echoed in her again the laments of the mystics, into whose hearts God had penetrated as deeply as a thorn that no fingertips can grasp. She had read many such holy laments aloud to Ulrich at that time. Perhaps their rendering now was not exact: memory behaves rather dictatorially with what it wishes to hear; but she understood what was meant, and made a resolve. As it now appeared at this moment of flowery procession, the garden had also once looked mysteriously abandoned and animated at the very hour when the mystical confessions Ulrich had in his library had fallen into her hands. Time stood still, a thousand years weighed as
lightly as the opening and closing of an eye; she had attained the Millennium: perhaps God was even allowing his presence to be felt. And while she felt these things one after the other—although time was not supposed to exist anymore—and while her brother, so that she should not suffer anxiety during this dream, was beside her, although space did not seem to exist any longer either: despite these contradictions, the world seemed filled with transfiguration in all its parts. What she had experienced since could not strike her as other than conversationally temperate by comparison with what had gone before; but what an expansion and reinforcement it gave to these later things as well, although it had lost the near-body-heat warmth of the immediacy of the first inspiration! Under these circumstances Agathe decided to approach with deliberation the delight that had formerly, in an almost dreamlike way, befallen her in this garden. She did not know why she associated
it with the name of the Millennium. It was a word bright with feeling and almost as palpable as an object, yet it remained opaque to the understanding. That was why she could regard the idea as if the Millennium could come to pass at any moment. It is also called the Empire of Love: Agathe knew that too; but only then did it occur to her that both names had been handed down since biblical times and signified the kingdom of God on earth, whose imminent arrival they indicated in a completely real sense. Moreover, Ulrich too, without on that account believing in the Scriptures, sometimes employed these words as casually as his sister, and so she was not at all surprised that she seemed to know exactly how one should behave in the Millennium. “You must keep quite still,” her inspiration told her. “You cannot leave room for any land of desire; not even the desire to question. You must also shed the judiciousness with which you perform tasks. You must
deprive the mind of all tools and not allow it to be used as a tool. Knowledge is to be discarded by the mind, and willing: you must cast off reality and the longing to turn to it. You must keep to yourself until head, heart, and limbs are nothing but silence. But if, in this way, you attain the highest selflessness, then finally outer and inner will touch each other as if a wedge that had split the world had popped out!”

Perhaps this had not been premeditated in any clear way. But it seemed to her that if firmly willed, it must be attainable; and she pulled herself together as if she were trying to feign death. But it quickly proved as impossible to completely silence the impulses of thought, senses, and will as it had been in childhood not to commit any sins between confession and communion, and after a few efforts she completely abandoned the attempt. In the process, she discovered that she was only superficially holding fast to her
purpose, and that her attention had long since slipped away; at the moment, it was occupied with a quite remote problem, a little monster of disaffection. She asked herself in the most foolish way, reveling in the very foolishness of it: “Was I really ever violent, mean, hateful, and unhappy?” A man without a name came to mind, his name missing because she bore it herself and had carried it away with her. Whenever she thought of him, she felt her name like a scar; but she no longer harbored any hatred for Hagauer, and now repeated her question with the somewhat melancholy obstinacy with which one gazes after a wave that has ebbed away. Where had the desire come from to do him mortal harm? She had almost lost it in her distraction, and appeared to think it was still to be found somewhere nearby. Moreover, Lindner might really be seen as a substitution for this desire for hostility; she asked herself this, too, and thought
of him fleetingly. Perhaps she found all the things that had happened to her astonishing, young people always being more disposed to be surprised at how much they have already had to feel than older people, who have become accustomed to the changeability of life’s passions and circumstances, like changes in the weather. But what could have so affected Agathe as this: that in the very moment of sudden change in her life, as its passions and conditions took flight, the stone-clear sky reached again into the marvelous river of emotions—in which ignorant youth sees its reflection as both natural and sublime—and lifted from it enigmatically that state out of which she had just awakened.

So her thoughts were still under the spell of the procession of flowers and death; they were, however, no longer moving with it to its rhythms of mute solemnity; Agathe was “thinking flittingly,” as it might be called in
contrast to the frame of mind in which life lasts “a thousand years” without a wing beating. This difference between two frames of mind was quite clear to her, and she recognized with some amazement how often just this difference, or something closely related to it, had already been touched on in her conversations with Ulrich. Involuntarily she turned toward him and, without losing sight of the spectacle unfolding around them, took a deep breath and asked: “Doesn’t it seem to you, too, that in a moment like this, everything else seems feeble by comparison?”

These few words dispersed the cloudy weight of silence and memory. For Ulrich, too, had been looking at the foam of blossoms sweeping by on their aimless journey; and because his thoughts and memories were tuned to the same string as those of his sister, he needed no further introduction to be told what would answer even her
unspoken thoughts. He slowly stretched and replied: “I’ve been wanting to tell you something for a long time—even in the state when we were speaking of the meaning of still lifes, and every day, really—even if it doesn’t hit the center of the target: there are, to draw the contrast sharply, two ways of living passionately, and two sorts of passionate people. In one case, you let out a howl of rage or misery or enthusiasm each time like a child, and get rid of your feelings in a trivial swirl of vertigo. In that case, and it is the usual one, emotion is ultimately the everyday intermediary of everyday life; and the more violent and easily aroused it is, the more this kind of life is reminiscent of the restlessness in a cage of wild animals at feeding time, when the meat is carried past the bars, and the satiated fatigue that follows. Don’t you think? The other way of being passionate and acting is this: You hold to yourself and give no impetus whatever to the action
toward which every emotion is straining. In this case, life becomes like a somewhat ghostly dream in which the emotions rise to the treetops, to the peaks of towers, to the apex of the sky! It’s more than likely that that’s what we were thinking of when we were pretending to discuss paintings and nothing but paintings.”

Agathe propped herself up, curious. “Didn’t you once say,” she asked, “that there are two fundamentally different possibilities for living and that they resemble different registers of emotion? One would be worldly emotion, which never finds peace or fulfillment; the other...I don’t know whether you gave it a name, but it would probably have to be the emotion of a ‘mystical’ feeling that resonates constantly but never achieves ‘full reality.”’ Although she spoke hesitantly, she had raced ahead too quickly, and finished with some embarrassment.
But Ulrich recognized quite well what he seemed to have said; he swallowed as if he had something too hot in his mouth, and attempted a smile. He said: “If that’s what I meant, I’ll have to express myself less pretentiously now! So I’ll simply use a familiar example and call the two lands of passionate existence the appetitive and, as its counterpart, the non-appetitive, even if it sounds awkward. For in every person there is a hunger, and it behaves like a greedy animal; yet it is not a hunger but something ripening sweetly, like grapes in the autumn sun, free from greed and satiety. Indeed, in every one of his emotions, the one is like the other.”

“In other words, a vegetable—perhaps even a vegetarian—disposition alongside the animal one?” There was a trace of amusement and teasing in this question of Agathe’s.

“Almost!” Ulrich replied. “Perhaps the animalistic and the vegetative, understood as
the basic opposition of desires, would even strike a philosopher as the most profound discovery! But would that make me want to be one? All I would venture is simply what I have said, and especially what I said last, that both lands of passionate being have a model, perhaps even their origin, in every emotion. These two aspects can be distinguished in every emotion,” he continued. But oddly, he then went on to speak only of what he understood by the appetitive. It urges to action, to motion, to enjoyment; through its effect, emotion is transformed into a work, or into an idea and conviction, or into a disappointment. All these are ways in which it discharges, but they can also be forms of recharging, for in this manner the emotion changes, uses itself up, dissipates in its success and comes to an end; or it encapsulates itself in this success and transforms its vital energy into stored energy that gives up the vital energy later, and occasionally often with
multiple interest. “And doesn’t this explain that the energetic activity of our everyday feelings and its feebleness, which you were so pleasantly sighing about, don’t make any great difference to us, even if it is a profound difference?”

“You may be all too right!” Agathe agreed. “My God, this entire work of the emotions, its worldly wealth, this wanting and rejoicing, activity and unfaithfulness, all only because of the existence of this drive! Including everything you experience and forget, think and passionately desire, and yet forget again. It’s as beautiful as a tree full of apples of every color, but it’s also formlessly monotonous, like everything that ripens and falls the same way each year!”

Ulrich nodded at his sisters answer, which exuded a breath of impetuousness and renunciation. “The world has the appetitive part of the emotions to thank for all its works and all beauty and progress, but also all the
unrest, and ultimately all its senseless running around!” he corroborated. “Do you know, by the way, that ‘appetitive’ means simply the share that our innate drives have in every emotion? Therefore,” he added, “what we have said is that it is the drives that the world has to thank for beauty and progress.”

“And its chaotic restlessness,” Agathe echoed.

“Usually that’s exactly what one says; so it seems to me useful not to ignore the other! For that man should thank for his progress precisely what really belongs on the level of the animal is, at the very least, unexpected.” He smiled as he said this. He, too, had propped himself up on his elbow, and he turned completely toward his sister, as if he wished to enlighten her, but he went on speaking hesitantly, like a person who first wants to be instructed by the words he is searching for. “You were right to speak of an
animalistic disposition,” he said. “Doubtless there are at its core the same few instincts as the animal has. This is quite clear in the major emotions: in hunger, anger, joy, willfulness, or love, the soul’s veil barely covers the most naked desire!”

It seemed that he wanted to continue in the same vein. But although the conversation—which had issued from a dream of nature, the sight of the parade of blossoms that still seemed to be drifting through the middle of their minds with a peculiar uneventfulness—did not permit any misconstruing of the fateful question of the relation of brother and sister to each other, it was rather that from beginning to end the conversation was under the influence of this idea and dominated by the surreptitious notion of a “happening without anything happening,” and took place in a mood of gentle affliction; although this was the way it was, finally the conversation had led to the opposite of such
a pervasive idea and its emotional mood: to the point where Ulrich could not avoid emphasizing the constructive activity of strong drives alongside their disturbing activity. Such a clear indication of the drives, including the instinctive, and of the active person in general—for it signified that too—might well be part of an “Occidental, Western, Faustian life feeling,” as it was called in the language of books, in contrast to everything that, according to the same self-fertilizing language, was supposed to be “Oriental” or “Asiatic.” He recalled these patronizing vogue words. But it was not his or his sisters intention, nor would it have been in keeping with their habits, to give a misleading significance to an experience that moved them deeply by employing such adventitious, poorly grounded notions; rather, everything they discussed with each other was meant as true and real, even if it may have arisen from walking on clouds.
That was why Ulrich had found it amusing to substitute an explanation of a scientific kind for the caressing fog of the emotions; and in truth he did so just because—even if it appeared to abet the “Faustian”—the mind faithful to nature promised to exclude everything that was excessively fanciful. At least he had sketched out the basis for such an explanation. It was, of course, rather stranger that he had done so only for what he had labeled the appetitive aspect of emotions, but quite ignored how he could apply an analogous idea to the non-appetitive aspect, although at the beginning he had certainly considered them to be of equal importance. This did not come about without a reason. Whether the psychological and biological analysis of this aspect of emotion seemed harder to him, or whether he considered it in toto only a bothersome aid—both might have been the case—what chiefly influenced him was something else, of
which he had, moreover, shown a glimpse since the moment when Agathe’s sigh had betrayed the painful yet joyous opposition between the past restless passions of life and the apparently imperishable ones that were at home in the timeless stillness under the stream of blossoms. For—to repeat what he had already repeated in various ways—not only are two dispositions discernible in every single emotion, through which, and in its own fashion, the emotion can be fleshed out to the point of passion, but there are also two sorts of people, or different periods of destiny within each person, which differ in that one or the other disposition predominates.

He saw a great distinction here. People of the one sort, as already mentioned, reach out briskly for everything and set about everything; they rush over obstacles like a torrent, or foam into a new course; their passions are strong and constantly changing, and the result is a strongly segmented career
that leaves nothing behind but its own stormy passage. This was the sort of person Ulrich had had in mind with the concept of the appetitive when he had wanted to make it one major notion of the passionate life; for the other sort of person is, in contrast to this, nothing less than the corresponding opposite of the first kind: the second is timid, pensive, vague; has a hard time making up its mind; is full of dreams and longings, and internalized in its passion. Sometimes—in ideas they were not now discussing—Ulrich also called this sort of person “contemplative,” a word that is ordinarily used in another sense and that perhaps has merely the tepid meaning of “thoughtful”; but for him it had more than this ordinary meaning, was indeed equivalent to the previously mentioned Oriental/non-Faustian. Perhaps a major distinction in life was marked in this contemplative aspect, and especially in conjunction with the appetitive as its opposite: this attracted Ulrich
more vitally than a didactic rule. But it was also a satisfaction to him, this elementary possibility of explanation, that all such highly composite and demanding notions of life could be reduced to a dual classification found in every emotion.

Of course it was also clear to him that both sorts of people under discussion could signify nothing other than a man “without qualities,” in contrast to one who has every quality that a man can show. The one sort could also be called a nihilist, who dreams of God’s dreams, in opposition to the activist, who in his impatient mode of conduct is, however, also a kind of God-dreamer and nothing less than a realist, who bestirs himself, clear about the world and active in it. “Why, then, aren’t we realists?” Ulrich asked himself. Neither of them was, neither he nor she: their ideas and their conduct had long left no doubt of that; but they were nihilists
and activists, sometimes one and sometimes the other, whichever happened to come up.
Further Sketches

1939 - 1941
If you speak of the double-sided and disorderly way the human being is constituted, the assumption is that you think you can come up with a better one.

A person who is a believer can do that, but Ulrich was not a believer. On the contrary: he suspected faith of inclining to the over-hasty, and whether the content of this spiritual attitude was an earthly inspiration or a supra-earthly notion, even as a mechanism for the forward movement of the soul it reminded him of the impotent attempts of
the domestic chicken to fly. Only Agathe caused him to make an exception; he claimed to envy in her that she was able to believe precipitately and with ardor, and he sometimes felt the femininity of her lack of rational discretion as physically as he did one of those other sexual differentiations, knowledge of which arouses a dazzling bliss. He forgave her this unpredictability even when it really seemed to him unforgivable, as in her association with the ridiculous person of Professor Lindner, about whom there was much that his sister did not tell him. He felt the reticence of her bodily warmth beside him and was reminded of a passionate assertion which had it that no person is beautiful or ugly, good or bad, significant or soul-destroying in himself, but his value always depends on whether one believes in him or is skeptical of him. That was an extravagant observation, full of magnanimity but also undermined by vagueness, which allowed all
sorts of inferences; and the hidden question of whether this observation was not ultimately traceable to that billy goat of credulity, this fellow Lindner, of whom he knew little more than his shadow, caused a wave to eddy up jealously in the rapid underground river of his thoughts. But as Ulrich thought about this, he could not recall whether it had been Agathe who had made this observation or he himself; the one seemed as possible as the other. As a result of this heady confusion, the wave of jealousy ebbed over all spiritual and physical distinctions in a delicate foam, and he would have liked to voice what his real reservations were about every predisposition to faith. To believe something and to believe in something are spiritual conditions that derive their power from another condition, which they make use of or squander; but this other condition not only was, as seemed most obvious, the solid condition of knowledge but could, on the contrary, be an
even more ephemeral state than that of faith itself: and that everything that moved his sister and him pointed precisely in this direction urged Ulrich to speak out, but his ideas were still far from the prospect of pledging himself to it, and therefore he said nothing, but rather changed the subject before he reached that point.

Even a man of genius bears within himself a standard that could empower him to the judgment that in some totally inexplicable fashion things in the world go backward as well as forward; but who is such a man? Originally Ulrich had not had the slightest desire to think about it, but the problem would not let him go, he had no idea why.

“One must separate genius in general from genius as an individual superlative,” he began, but still had not found the right expression. “I sometimes used to think that the only two important species of humans were the geniuses and the blockheads, which don’t
intermingle very well. But people of the species ‘genius’ or people of genius, don’t actually need to be geniuses. The genius one gapes at is actually born in the marketplace of the vanities; his splendor is radiated in the mirrors of the stupidity that surround him; it is always connected with something that bestows on it one merit the more, like money or medals: no matter how great his deserts, his appearance is really that of stuffed genius.”

Agathe interrupted him, curious about the other: “Fine, but genius itself?”

“If you pull out of the stuffed scarecrow what is just straw, it would probably have to be what’s left,” Ulrich said, but then be-thought himself and added distrustfully: “I’ll never really know what genius is, or who should decide!”

“A senate of wise men!” Agathe said, smiling. She knew her brother’s often quite
idiosyncratic way of thinking; he had plagued her with it in many conversations. Her words were meant to remind him rather hypocritically of the famous demand of philosophy, which had not been followed in two thousand years, that the governance of the world ought to be entrusted to an academy of the wisest men.

Ulrich nodded. “That goes back to Plato. And if it could have been brought about, presumably a Platonist would have followed him as leader of the reigning spirit until one day—God knows why—the Plotinists would have been seen as the true philosophers. That’s the way it is, too, with what passes for genius. And what would the Plotinists have made of the Platonists, and before that the Platonists of them, if not what every truth does with error: mercilessly root it out? God proceeded cautiously when he directed that an elephant bring forth only another elephant, and a cat a cat: but a
philosopher produces a blind adherent and a counter-philosopher!"

“So God himself had to decide what genius was!” Agathe exclaimed impatiently, not without feeling a soft, proud shudder at this idea and awareness of its precipitate/childish/vehemence.

“I fear it bores him!” Ulrich said. “At least the Christian God. He’s out for hearts, without caring whether they have a lot of understanding or a little. Moreover, I believe that there’s a lot to be said for the church’s contempt for the genius of laymen.”

Agathe waited a bit; then she simply replied: “You used to have a different opinion.”

“I could answer you that the heathen belief that all ideas that move people rested beforehand in the divine spirit must have been quite beautiful; but it’s hard to think of divine emanations, since among the things
that mean a lot to us there are ideas called guncotton or tires,” Ulrich countered at once. But then he seemed to waver and to have grown tired of this jocular tone, and suddenly he revealed to his sister what she wanted to know. He said: “I have always believed, and almost as if it’s my nature to, that the spirit, because one feels its power in oneself, also imposes the obligation to make it carry weight in the world. I have believed that to live meaningfully is the only reward, and have wanted never to do anything that was indifferent. And the consequence of this for culture in general may seem an arrogant distortion but is unavoidably this: Only genius is bearable, and average people have to be squeezed to either produce it or allow it to prevail! Mixed in with a thousand other things, something of this is also part of the general persuasion: It’s really humiliating for me to have to respond that I never could say what genius was, and don’t know now either,
although just now I indicated casually that I would ascribe this quality less to a particular individual than to a human modality.”

He didn’t seem to mean it so seriously, and Agathe carefully kept the conversation going when he fell silent. “Don’t you yourself find it pretty easy to speak of an acrobat with genius?” she asked. “It seems that today the difficult, the unusual, and whatever is especially successful ordinarily figure in the notion.”

“It began with singers; and if a singer who sings higher than the rest is called a genius, why not someone who jumps higher? By this reasoning you end up with the genius of a pointing dog; and people consider men who won’t let themselves be intimidated by anything to be more worthy than a man who can tear his vocal cords out of his throat. Evidently, what’s vague here is a twofold use of language: aside from the genius of success, which can be made to cover everything,
so that even the stupidest joke can be, ‘in its fashion,’ a work of genius, there is also the sublimity, dignity, or significance of what succeeds: in other words, some kind of ranking of genius.” A cheerful expression had replaced the seriousness in Ulrich’s eyes, so that Agathee asked what came next, which he seemed to be suppressing.

“It occurs to me that I once discussed the question of genius with our friend Stumm,” Ulrich related, “and he insisted on the usefulness of distinguishing between a military and a civilian notion of genius. But to grasp this distinction, I’ll probably have to tell you something about the world of the Imperial and Royal military. The companies of engineers,” [The German Genie means both “genius” and “engineer”] he went on, “are there to build fortifications and for similar work, and are made up of soldiers and subalterns and officers who don’t have any particular future unless they pass a ‘Higher
Engineer[/Genius] Course,’ after which they land on the ‘Engineering [/Genius] Staff.’ ‘So in the military, the Engineer [/Genius] Staffer stands above the engineer [/genius],’ says Stumm von Bordwehr. ‘And at the very top, of course, there is the General Staff, because that is absolutely the cleverest thing God has done.’ So although Stumm always enjoys playing the anti-militarist, he tried to convince me that the proper usage of ‘genius’ can really be found only in the military and is graded in steps, while all civilian chatter about genius is regrettably lacking in such order. And the way he twists everything so that you really see to the bottom of truth, it wouldn’t be at all a bad idea for us to follow his primer!”

But what Ulrich added to this concerning the dissimilar notions of genius was aimed less at the highest degree of genius than at its basic form, the significant, whose doubtfulness seemed to him more painful
and confusing. It seemed to him easier to arrive at a judgment about what was exceptionally significant than about the significant in general. The first is merely a step beyond something whose value is already unquestioned, that is, something which is always grounded in a more or less traditional order of spiritual values; the latter, on the other hand, calls for taking the first step into an indefinite and infinite space, which offers almost no prospect of allowing a cogent distinction to be made between what is significant and what is not. So it is natural for language instead to have stuck with the genius of degree and success rather than with the genius value of what succeeds; yet it is also understandable that the custom that has developed of calling any aptitude that is hard to imitate “genius” is connected with a bad conscience, and of course none other than that of a dropped task or a forgotten duty. This scandalized the two of them in a joking and
incidental way, but they went on speaking seriously. “This is clearest,” Ulrich said to his sister, “when, although it mostly happens only by accident, one becomes conscious of an external sign to which scant attention is paid: namely, our habit of pronouncing the noun *Genie* and its adjective, *genial*, differently, and not in a way to indicate that the adjective derives from the noun.”

As happens to everyone who is made aware of a practice to which scant attention is paid, Agathe was somewhat surprised.

“After my conversation with Stumm that time, I looked it up in Grimm’s dictionary,” Ulrich offered by way of excuse. “The military word *Genie*—in other words, the engineering soldier—came to us, of course, like many military expressions, from the French. In French, the art of the engineer is called *le genie*, and connected with it is *geniecorps*, *arme du genie*, and *Ecole du genie*, as well as the English *engine*, the French *engin*, and
the Italian *ingenio macchina*, the artful tool; the whole clan goes back to the late Latin *ingenium*, whose hard *g* became in its travels a soft *g* and whose fundamental connotation is dexterity and inventiveness: a summation, like the now rather old and creaky expression, ‘arts and crafts,’ with which official communications and inscriptions still sometimes bless us. From there a decayed path also leads to the soccer player of genius, indeed even to the hunting dog of genius or the steeplechase horse of genius, but it would be consistent to pronounce adjective and noun the same way. For there is a second *Genie* and *genial*, whose meaning is likewise to be found in every language and does not derive from *genium* but from *genius*, the more-than-human, or at least, in reverence for mind and spirit, the culmination of what is human. I hardly need point out that for centuries these two meanings have been dreadfully confused and mixed up everywhere, in
language as in life, and not only in German; but, characteristically, in German most of all, so that not being able to keep genius and ingenious apart can be called a particularly German problem. Moreover, it has in German a history that in one place affects me greatly—"

Agathe had followed this extended explanation, as is usual in such cases, with some mistrust and a readiness for boredom, while waiting for a turn that would free her from this uncertainty. “Would you consider me a linguistic grouch if I were to propose that from now on we both start using the expression ‘inspiriting’?” Ulrich asked.

A smile and a movement of her head spontaneously indicated his sister’s resistance to this archaic term, which has fallen out of use and now bears the scent of old trunks and costumes.
“It is an archaic word,” Ulrich admitted, “but this would be a good occasion to use it! And as I said, I did read up on it. If it doesn’t bother you to do this in the street, let me have a look at what else I can tell you about it.” With a smile, he pulled a piece of paper from his pocket and deciphered various notes he had made in pencil. “Goethe,” he announced. “‘Here I saw regret and penitence pushed to caricature, and because all passion replaces genius, really inspiriting.’ In another place: Tour inspiriting composure often advanced to meet me with magnificent enthusiasm.’ Wieland: The fruit of inspiriting hours.’ Hölderlin: The Greeks are still a beautiful, inspiriting, and happy people.’ And you’ll find a similar ‘inspiriting’ in Schleiermacher, in his earlier years. But already with Immermann you find ‘inspired economy and ‘inspired debauchery.’ So there you already have the disconcerting transformation of the notion into the kettle-
patching and slovenly, which is how ‘inspired’ is understood today.” He turned the piece of paper this way and that, stuck it back in his pocket, and then took it out once more for assistance. “But its prehistory and preconditions are found earlier,” he added. “Kant was already criticizing ‘the fashionable tone of a geniuslike freedom in thinking’ and speaks with annoyance of ‘genius-men’ and ‘genius-apes.’ What annoyed him so much is a respectable piece of German intellectual history. For before him as well as after him people in Germany talked, partly ecstatically, partly disapprovingly, of ‘genius urge,’ ‘genius fever,’ ‘storm of genius,’ ‘leaps of genius,’ ‘calls of genius,’ and ‘screams of genius,’ and even philosophy’s fingernails were not always clean, least of all when it believed it could suck the independent truth from its fingers.”

“And how does Kant decide what a genius is?” Agathe asked. All she associated
with his famous name was that she remembered having heard that he surpassed everything.

“What he emphasized in the nature of genius was the creative element and originality, the ‘spirit of originality,’ which has remained extraordinarily influential up to the present day,” Ulrich replied. “Goethe later was relying on Kant when he defined the geniative with the words: ‘to have many objects present and easily relate the most remote ones to each other: this free of egotism and self-complacency.’ But that’s a view that was very much designed for the achievements of reason, and it leads to the rather gymnastic conception of genius we have succumbed to.”

Agathe asked with laughing disbelief: “So now do you know what genius and geniative are?”
Ulrich took the joshing with a shrug of his shoulders. “Anyway, we’ve found that among Germans, if we don’t see the strictly Kantian ‘spirit of originality,’ we feel that eccentric and conspicuous behavior indicates genius,” he said.
The conversation with Stumm that Ulrich mentioned had occurred at a chance meeting and had been brief. The General seemed worried; he did not indicate why, but he began to grumble over the nonsense that in civilian life there were so many geniuses. “What is a genius, really?” he asked. “No one has ever called a general a genius!”

“Except Napoleon,” Ulrich interjected.

“Maybe him,” Stumm admitted. “But that appears to happen more because his whole evolution was paradoxical!”

Ulrich didn’t know what to say to this.
“At your cousin’s, I had lots of opportunity to meet people who are designated as geniuses,” Stumm declared pensively, and went on: “I believe I can tell you what a genius is: a person who not only enjoys great success but also, in some sense, has to get hold of his subject backward!” And Stumm immediately expounded on this, using the great examples of psychoanalysis and the theory of relativity:

“In the old days it was also often true that you didn’t know something,” he began in his characteristic fashion. “But you didn’t think anything of it, and if it didn’t happen during an examination it didn’t harm anyone. But suddenly this was turned into the so-called unconscious, and now everyone’s unconscious is the size of all the things he doesn’t know, and it’s much more important to know why you don’t know something than what it is you don’t know! Humanly speaking, this has, as one says, turned things
topsy-turvy, and it’s apparently a lot simpler too.”

Since Ulrich still did not react, Stumm went on:

“But the man who invented that also established the following law: You will remember that in the regiment one used to admonish the younger men when there had been too much barnyard talk by telling them: ‘Don’t say it, just do it!’ And what’s the opposite of that? In some sense, the challenge: If, because you’re a civilized human being, you can’t do what you want, at least talk it over with a learned man; for he will convince you that everything that exists rests on something that ought not to exist! Of course I can’t judge this from a scientific point of view, but in any case you can see from this that the new rules are absolutely the reverse of those that prevailed before, and the man who introduced them is praised today as a top-notch genius!”
Since Ulrich was apparently still not convinced, and Stumm himself did not feel he had got where he wanted, he repeated his argument using “relativity theory,” as he conceived of it: “like me, you learned at school that everything that moves happens in ‘space and time,’” was where his thinking started. “But what is it like in practice? Permit me to say something quite ordinary: You are supposed to be with the front of your squadron at a particular place on the map at such and such a time. Or when you get the order, you’re supposed to bring your cavalry from a formation to form a new front, which bears no relation at all to the straight lines on the exercise field. It happens in space and time, but it never happens without incident and never works out the way you want. I, at least, received a hundred reprimands so long as I was with the troops, I tell you that candidly. Even at school I always, so to speak, resisted when I had to calculate a mechanical
motion in space and time on the blackboard. So I found it a real inspiration of genius the instant I heard that someone had finally discovered that space and time are quite relative concepts, which change at every moment whenever they are put to serious use, although since the creation of the world they have been regarded as the solidiest thing there is. That’s why this man, and in my view quite rightly, is at least as famous as the other. But it can also be said of him that he’s tethered the horse by its tail, which, at least today, is what more or less amounts to the fixed main idea of what a genius is! And that’s what I would like to make you see, if you place any value on my experience,” Stumm concluded.

Ulrich, in his partiality for him, had conceded that the most important scientific teachings of the present had their eccentric aspects, or at least showed no fear of them. It might not mean much; but if one is so
inclined, a sign can be seen in this as well. Fearless showiness, a predisposition for the paradoxical, self-starting ambition, surprise, and revision of everything on the basis of contradictory details that previously had hardly been noticed, all this had doubtless been part of the fashion in thinking for some time, for with their great achievements these things had just begun to crown precisely those fields where one would not have expected it and where one had been accustomed to the steady administration and constant increase of an enormous intellectual estate.

“But why?” Stumm asked. “How did it happen?”

Ulrich shrugged his shoulders. He thought of his own abandoned science, the broaching of its basic questions, their being skewered when their logic was checked out. It had not been much different with other sciences; they felt their edifices shaken through discoveries they had a hard time
accommodating. That was the dispensation and the violence of truth. Nevertheless, it still seemed possible to speak of a boredom with every day, never-ending progress, which up to now, and for the longest time, had been the ideal of real, silent faith amid the racket of all convictions. There was no denying a creeping doubt in all fields about the lightness of the bare, exact process of taking one step before another. That, too, might be a cause. Finally, Ulrich answered: “Perhaps it’s simply the same as when you get tired: you need a prospect that refreshes you, or a shove in the back of your knees.”

“Why not sit down instead?” Stumm asked.

“I don’t know. In any event, after the longish calm flowering of the mind, you prefer to flirt with revolution. Some such thing seems to be in the offing. By way of comparison, you might perhaps think of the prevailing disjointedness in the arts. I don’t
understand much about politics, but perhaps sometime in the future someone will say that this intellectual restlessness already held signs of a revolution.”

“The hell you say!” Stumm exclaimed, arts and revolutionary unrest reminding him of his impressions at Diotima’s.

“Perhaps only as a transition to a new stability to come!” Ulrich said soothingly.

That made no difference to Stumm. “Since that tactless business in front of the War Minister I’ve avoided Diotima’s parties,” he related. “Don’t get me wrong, I have no objection whatever to all those geniuses we’ve been talking about, who are already preserved in amber—or if I do, it’s only that the way they’re revered seems to me exaggerated. But I really have it in for the rest of that rabble!” And after a brief but obviously bitter moment he brought himself to ask the
question: “Tell me honestly, is genius really so valuable?”

Ulrich had to smile, and disregarding what he had said before, he now mentioned the enormous—he even called it the magically simpleminded—sense of release that one recognized in the solution to any land of problem that the most talented and even the greatest specialists had vainly striven to find. Genius is the single unconditional human value, it is human value, he said. Without the involvement of genius there would not even be the animal group of the higher primates. In his eagerness, he even passionately praised that genius which he was later to call merely the genius of degree and dexterity, to the extent that it was not fundamentally genius by nature.

Stumm nodded with satisfaction. “I know: the invention of fire and the wheel, gunpowder and printing, and so on! In short, from log canoe to logarithms!” But after he
had demonstrated his sympathy he went on: “Now let me tell you something, and it’s from the conversations at Di-otima’s: Trom Sophocles to Feuermaul!’ Some young dolt once shouted that in complete seriousness!”

“What bothers you about Sophocles?”

“Ah! I don’t know anything about him. But Feuermaul! And here you are claiming that genius is an unconditional value.”

“The touch of genius is the only moment in which that ugly and obdurate pupil of God, man, is beautiful and candid!” Ulrich intensified his statement. “But I did not say that it’s easy to decide what’s genius and what merely fantasy. I’m just saying that wherever a new value really enters the human game, genius is behind it!”

“How can you know whether something is ‘really a new value’?”

Ulrich hesitated, smiling.
“And then, in any case, whether the value really is worth anything!” Stumm added with curiosity and concern.

“You often feel it at first sight,” Ulrich said.

“I’ve been told that people have been mistaken at first sight!”

The conversation faltered. Stumm was perhaps preparing a fundamentally different question.

Ulrich said: “You hear the first bars of Bach or Mozart; you read a page of Goethe or Corneille: and you know that you’ve touched genius!”

“Maybe with Mozart and Goethe, because with them I already know that; but not with an unknown!” the General protested.

“Do you believe it wouldn’t have electrified you even when you were young? The
enthusiasm of youth is in itself related to genius!"

"What do you mean, ‘in itself’? But if you’re really forcing me to answer: maybe an opera diva might have aroused my enthusiasm. And Alexander the Great, Caesar, and Napoleon excited me once too. But ‘in itself,’ writers or composers of any kind have always left me cold!"

Ulrich beat a retreat, although he felt that he had merely got hold of a good argument from the wrong end. "I meant to say that a young person, as he develops intellectually, sniffs out genius the way a migrating bird senses direction. But apparently that would be confusing things.

For the young person has only the most limited access to what is significant. He has no particular sense of it, but only a sense for what excites him. He’s not even looking for genius, but he’s searching for himself and for
whatever is an appropriate foothold for the shape of his biases. What speaks to him," he declared, "is what’s like him, in all the vagueness that goes along with it. It’s more or less what he himself believes he can be, and has the same importance in his formation as the mirror, in which he gazes at himself happily, but by no means only out of vanity. That’s why it’s only to be expected of works of genius that they should have this effect on him; usually it’s contemporary things, and among those rather the ones that stimulate moods than those clearly formed by the intellect, just as he prefers mirrors that make his face thin or his shoulders broad to faithful ones."

“That may well be,” Stumm agreed pensively. “But do you believe that people get cleverer later on?”

“There’s no doubt that the mature person is more capable and has more experience in recognizing what is significant; but his mature personal aims and powers also force
him to exclude many things. It’s not that he refuses from lack of understanding but that he leaves things aside.”

“That’s it!” Stumm exclaimed, relieved. “He’s not as limited as a young person, but I would say he’s more circumscribed! And that has to be too. Whenever people like us associate with immature young people of the kind favored by your cousin, God knows we must be ready for anything and have the good sense not to understand half of what they’re saying!”

“You might well criticize them.”

“But your cousin says they’re geniuses! How do you prove the opposite?”

Ulrich would not have been disinclined to follow up this question as well. “A genius is a person who finds a solution where many have looked for it in vain by doing something nobody before him thought of doing,” he
defined, in order finally to get on, because he was curious himself.

But Stumm declined. “I can stick to the facts themselves,” he commented. “At Frau von Tuzzi’s I’ve met enough critics and professors in person, and every time that one of the geniuses who improve life or art made assertions that were entirely too far out of line, I discreetly sought these experts’ advice.”

Ulrich allowed himself to be distracted. “And what was the result?”

“Oh, they were always very respectful to me and said: ‘You shouldn’t bother your head about that, General!’ Of course that may be a kind of arrogance they have; for though they nervously praise all new artists, they nonetheless seem to imagine that these artists, in their own assertions, dangerously contradict each other, indeed that they feel something like blind rage toward each other,
and that *summa summarum* they perhaps don’t know what they’re doing!”

“And did you also find out what those sun-stricken minds that Diotima cools with laurel think about the critics and professors, to the extent these people don’t praise them?” Ulrich asked. “As if the artists were the ones feeding these beasts of intellect with their flesh, and these beasts were the ones who would leave a mere struggle over bones as the final remains of all man’s humanity!”

“You’ve observed them well!” Stumm agreed as a delighted connoisseur.

“But in the face of so much contradiction, how do you recognize whether you’ve really got hold of a ‘genius’ or not?” Ulrich asked logically.

Stumm’s answer was honest, if not compelling: “I don’t give a damn,” he said.
Ulrich looked at him in silence. If he wanted merely to engage in a rear-guard skirmish and avoid problems that were more difficult than the circumstances warranted, then it was a mistake for him not to use this moment “to disengage himself from the enemy,” as good tactics would have dictated. But he himself did not know what mood he was in. So he finally said: “Nothing gives fake geniuses so much luck with the masses as the incomprehension that genuine geniuses ordinarily have for each other, and, following their example, the pseudo-genuine ones; lamp polishers can’t clean Prometheus!” At this conclusion Stumm looked up at him, uncomprehending but thoughtful. “Don’t misunderstand me,” he added cautiously. “Remember my eagerness when I was searching for a great idea for Diotima. I know what intellectual aristocracy is. Nor am I Count Leinsdorf, for whom that’s always a kind of minor nobility. Just now, for example, you
brilliantly defined what a genius is. How did it go? It finds a solution by doing something that hadn’t occurred to anyone before! That really says the same thing I’ve been saying: the important thing is that a genius gets hold of his subject from the wrong end. But that’s not intellectual aristocracy! And why isn’t it intellectual aristocracy? Because the usual polestar of our age is that whatever the circumstances, what happens must be meaningful, but whether you call it genius or intellectual aristocracy, progress or, as you now often hear people say, a record, just doesn’t matter much to our time!”

“But then why did you mention intellectual aristocracy?” Ulrich prompted impatiently.

“I can’t really say precisely, for that very reason!” Stumm defended himself. “Anyway,” he continued, thinking busily, “perhaps you could say in a way that an intellectual aristocracy in particular is not
permitted to leave character in peace. Aren’t I right?”

“Yes, you’re right!” Ulrich encouraged him, made aware for the first time this precise moment, quite incidentally, as it happened, to heed a distinction like the one between genius and dexterity.

“Yes,” Stumm repeated thoughtfully. And then he asked: “But what is character? Is it what helps a man develop the ideas that will distinguish him? Or is it what keeps him from having such ideas? For a man who has character doesn’t do much flitting around!”

Ulrich decided to shrug his shoulders and smile.

“Presumably it’s connected with what one is accustomed to calling great ideas,” Stumm went on skeptically. “And then intellectual aristocracy would be nothing except the possession of great ideas. But how does one recognize that an idea is great? There are
so many geniuses, at least a couple in every profession; indeed, it's a distinctive mark of our time that we have too many geniuses. How is one to understand them all and not overlook any!” His painful familiarity with the question of what a really great idea was had brought him back to its role in genius.

Ulrich shrugged again.

“There are of course some people, and I’ve met them,” Stumm said, “who never miss the smallest genius that can be dug up anywhere!”

Ulrich replied: “Those are the snobs and intellectual pretenders.”

The General: “But Diotima is one of these people too.”

Ulrich: “Makes no difference. A person into whom everything he finds can be stuffed must be built with no shape of his own, like a sack.”
“It’s true,” the General replied rather reproachfully, “that you’ve often said that Diotima was a snob. And you’ve sometimes said it about Arnheim as well. But that made me imagine a snob to be someone who is quite stimulating! I’ve honestly tried hard to be one myself and not let anything slip past me. It’s hard for me to suddenly hear you say that you can’t even depend on a snob to understand genius. Because you said before that youth couldn’t answer for it, nor age either. And then we discussed how geniuses don’t, and critics not at all. Well then, genius will finally have to reveal itself to everyone of its own accord!”

“That will happen in time,” Ulrich soothed him, laughing. “Most people believe that time naturally turns up what is significant.”

“Yes, one hears that too. But tell me if you can,” Stumm asked impatiently. “I can understand that one is cleverer at fifty than
one was at twenty. But at eight o’clock in the evening I’m no cleverer than I was at eight in the morning; and that one should be cleverer after nineteen hundred and fourteen years than after eight hundred and fourteen, that I can’t see either!” This led them to go on a bit discussing the difficult subject of genius, the only thing, in Ulrich’s opinion, that justified mankind, but at the same time the most exciting and confusing, because you never know whether you’re looking at genius or at one of its half-baked imitations. What are its distinguishing characteristics? How is it passed on? Could it develop further if it were not constantly being thwarted? Is it, as Stumm had asked, such a desirable thing anyway? These were problems that for Stumm belonged to the beauty of the civilian mind and its scandalous disorder, while Ulrich, on the other hand, compared them with a weather forecast that not only didn’t know whether it would be fair tomorrow but didn’t
know whether it had been fair yesterday either. For the judgment of what constitutes genius changes with the spirit of the times, assuming that anyone is interested in it at all, which by no means need be the mark of greatness of soul or of mind.

Such puzzles would no doubt have been well worth solving, and so it came about in this part of the conversation that Stumm finally, after shaking his head a few times, proffered his observation about the Engineering[Genius] Staff that Ulrich later repeated to his sister. This explanation, that genius needed a Genius Staff, reminded him somewhat painfully, moreover, of what Ulrich himself had half ironically called the General Secretariat of Precision and Soul, and Stumm did not neglect to remind him that he had last mentioned it in his own and Count Leinsdorf's presence during the unfortunate gathering at Diotima's. “At that time you were demanding something quite
similar,” he held up to him, “and if I’m not mistaken, it was a department for geniuses and the intellectual aristocracy.” Ulrich nodded silently. “For the intellectual aristocracy,” Stumm continued, “would ultimately be what ordinary geniuses don’t have. No matter how you define them, our geniuses are geniuses and nothing more, nothing but specialists! Am I right? I can really understand why many people say: today there’s no such thing as genius!”

Ulrich nodded again. A pause ensued.

“But there’s one thing I’d like to know,” Stumm asked with that hint of egotism that attaches to a recurrent perplexing thought: “Is it a reproach or a distinction that people never say about a general: he’s a genius?”

“Both.”

“Both? Why both?”

“I honestly don’t know.”
Stumm was taken aback but, after thinking it over, said: “You put that brilliantly! The people love an officer as long as they aren’t stirred up; and he gets to know the people: the people couldn’t care less about geniuses! But by the time he gets to be a general he has to be a specialist, and if he himself is a specialist genius he then falls into the category that there’s no such thing as genius. So he never gets, as I would say if I spelled it out, to the point where the use of this wishy-washy term would be appropriate. Do you know, by the way, that I recently heard something really clever? I was at your cousin’s, in the most intimate circle, although Arnheim is away, and we were discussing intellectual questions. Then someone pokes me in the ribs and explains Arnheim to me in a whisper: ‘He’s what you call a genius,’ he said. ‘More than all the others. A universal specialist!’ Why don’t you say anything?” Ulrich found nothing to say. “The
possibilities inherent in this point of view surprised me. Besides, you yourself happen to be such a kind of universal specialist. That’s why you shouldn’t neglect Arnheim so; because ultimately the Parallel Campaign might get its saving idea from him, and that could be dangerous! I would really much prefer that it came from you.”

And although Stumm had (finally) spoken far more than Ulrich, he took his leave with the words: “As always, it’s a pleasure talking with you, because you understand all these things de facto much better than everyone else!”
Ulrich had related this conversation to his sister.

But even before that he had been speaking of difficulties connected with the notion of genius. What enticed him to do this? He had no intention of claiming to be a genius himself, or of politely inquiring about the conditions that would enable a person to become one. On the contrary, he was convinced that the powerful, exhausted ambition in his time for the vocation of genius was the expression not of intellectual or spiritual greatness but merely of an incongruity. But as all contemporary questions about life become impossibly entangled in an impenetrable
thicket, so do the questions surrounding the idea of genius, which in part enticed one’s thoughts to penetrate it and in part left them hung up on the difficulties.

After he finished his report, Ulrich had immediately come back to this. Of course, whatever has genius must be significant; for genius is the significant accomplishment that originates under particularly distinctive conditions. But “significant” is not only the lesser but also the more general category. So the first thing was to inquire into this notion again. The words “significant” and “significance” themselves, like all terms that are much used, have different meanings. On the one hand, they are connected with the concepts of thinking and knowing. To say that something signifies or has this significance means that it points to, gives to understand, indicates, or can represent in specific cases, or simply generally, that it is the same as something else, or falls under the same
heading and can be known and comprehended as the other. That is, of course, a relationship accessible to reason and involving the nature of reason; and in this manner anything and everything can signify something, as it can also be signified. On the other hand, the term “signifying something” is used as well in the sense of something having significance or being of significance. In this sense, too, nothing is excluded. Not only a thought can be significant, but also an act, a work, a personality, a position, a virtue, and even an individual quality of mind. The distinction between this and the other kind of signifying is that a particular rank and value is ascribed to what is significant. That something is significant means in this sense that it is more significant than other things, or simply that it is unusually significant. What decides this? The ascription gives one to understand that it belongs to a hierarchy, an order of mental powers that is aspired to,
even should the attainable measure of order be in many things as undependable as it is strict in others. Does this hierarchy exist?

It is the human spirit itself: named not as a natural concept but as the objective spirit.

Agathe asked what this included; it is a notion that people more scientifically trained than she threw around so much that she ducked.

Ulrich nearly emulated her. He found the word used far too much. At that period it was used so often in scientific and pseudoscientific arguments that it simply revolved around itself. “For heavens sake! You’re becoming profound!” he retorted. The expression had inadvertently slipped from his own lips.

Ordinarily, one understands by “objective spirit” the works of the spirit, the relatively constant share it deposits in the world
through the most various signs, in opposition to the subjective spirit as individual quality and individual experience; or one understood by it, and this could not be entirely separated from the first kind, the viable spirit, verifiable, constant in value, in opposition to the inspirations of mood and error. This touched two oppositions whose significance for Ulrich's life had certainly not been simply didactic but—and this he was well aware of and had expressed often enough—had become extremely alluring and worrisome. So what he meant had elements of both.

Perhaps he could also have said to his sister that by "objective spirit" one understands everything that man has thought, dreamed, and desired; but, to do so means not looking at it as components of a spiritual, historical, or other temporal-actual development, and certainly not as something spiritual-suprasensory either, but exclusively as itself, according to its own characteristic
content and inner coherence. He could also have said, which appeared to contradict this but in the end came to the same thing, that it should be looked at with the reservation of all the contexts and orderings of which it is at all capable. For what something signifies or is in and of itself he equated with the result that coalesces out of the significances that could accrue to it under all possible conditions.

But one merely needs to put this differently, simply saying that in and of itself, something would be precisely what it never is in and of itself, but rather is in relation to its circumstances; and likewise that its significance is everything that it could signify; so one merely has to turn the expression on its head for the scruple connected with it to immediately become obvious. For of course the usual procedure, on the contrary, is to assume, even if only from a usage of language, that what something is in and of itself, or
what it signifies, forms the origin and nucleus of everything that can be expressed about it in mutable relationships. So it was a particular conception of the nature of the notion and of signifying by which Ulrich had let himself be guided; and particularly because it is not unfamiliar, it might also be stated something like this: Whatever may be understood under the nature of the concept of a logical theory is in application, as a concept of something, nothing but the counter-value and the stored-up readiness for all possible true statements about that something. This principle, which inverts the procedure of logic, is “empirical,” that is, it reminds one, if one were to apply an already coined name to it, of that familiar line of philosophical thought, without, however, being meant in precisely the same sense. Ought Ulrich now to have explained to his companion what empiricism was in its earlier form and what it had become in its more modest, and
perhaps improved, modern version? As often happens when an idea gains in correctness, the more finely honed process of thinking renounces false answers but also some more profound questions as well.

What was baptized as empiricism in philosophical language was a doctrine that arbitrarily declared the really astonishing presence and unchangeable sway of laws in nature and in the rules of the intellect to be a deceptive view that originated in habituation to the frequent repetition of the same experiences. The approximate classical formula for this was:

Whatever repeats itself often enough seems to have to be so; and in this exaggerated form, which the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries bestowed upon it, this formula was a repercussion of the long antecedent theological speculation: that is, of the faith placed in God, of being able to explain His works with the aid of whatever one takes
into one’s head. Notions and ideas demonstrate, when they are dominant, the same inch-nation to let themselves be worshiped and to broadcast capricious judgments as people do; and that probably led, when empiricism was established in modern times, to the admixture of a rather superficial opposition to totally convinced rationalism, which then, when it came to power itself, bore some of the responsibility for a shallow materialistic nature and societal mentality that at times has become almost popular. Ulrich smiled when he thought of an example, but did not say why. For it was not reluctantly that one reproached empiricism, which was all too simpleminded and confined to its rules, that according to it the sun rises in the east and sets in the west for no other reason than that up till now it always has. And were he to betray this to his sister and ask her what she thought of it, she would probably answer arbitrarily, without bothering about
the arguments and counterarguments, that the sun might one day do it differently. This was why he smiled as he thought of this example; for the relationship between youth and empiricism seemed to him profoundly natural, and youth’s inclination to want to experience everything itself, and to expect the most surprising discoveries, moved him to see this as the philosophy appropriate to youth. But from the assertion that awaiting the rising of the sun in the east every day merely has the security of a habit, it is only a step to asserting that all human knowledge is felt only subjectively and at a particular time, or is indeed the presumption of a class or race, all of which has gradually become evident in European intellectual history. Apparently one should also add that approximately since the days of our great-grandfather’s, a new kind of individuality has made its appearance: this is the type of the empirical man or empiricist, of the person of
experience who has become such a familiar open question, the person who knows how to make from a hundred of his own experiences a thousand new ones, which, however, always remain within the same circle of experience, and who has by this means created the gigantic, profitable-in-appearance monotony of the technical age. Empiricism as a philosophy might be taken as the philosophical children’s disease of this type of person.
Sketches for a Continuation of the “Galley Chapters” 1938 and Later
In his room he had lit one lamp after the other, as if the stimulating excess of illumination would make the words come more easily, and for a long time he wrote zealously. But after he had accomplished the most important part, he was overcome by the awareness that Agathe had not yet returned, and this became more and more disturbing. Ulrich did not know that she was with Lindner, nor did he know about these visits at all; but since that secret and his diaries were the only things they concealed from each other, he could surmise and also almost understand what she was doing. He did not take it more seriously than it deserved, and was more
astonished at it than jealous; then too, he ascribed responsibility for it to his own lack of resolution, insofar as she pursued ways of her own that he could not approve of. It nevertheless inhibited him more and more, and diminished the readiness for belief that was weaving his thoughts together, that in this hour of collectedness he did not even know where she was or why she was late. He decided to interrupt his work and go out, to escape the enervating influence of waiting, but with the intention of soon returning to his labors. As he left the house it occurred to him that going to the theater not only would be the greatest diversion, but would also stimulate him; and so he went, although he was not dressed for it. He chose an inconspicuous seat and at first felt the great pleasure of coming into a performance that was already energetically under way. It justified his coming, for this dynamic mirroring of emotions familiar a hundred times over, by
which the theater is accustomed to live under the pretext that this gives it meaning, reminded Ulrich of the value of the task he had left at home and renewed his desire to come to the end of the road that, proceeding from the origin of the emotions, ultimately had to lead to their significance. When he again directed his attention to the goings-on onstage, it occurred to him that most of the actors busily occupied up there, beautifully if meaninglessly imitating passions, bore titles such as Privy Councillor or Professor, for Ulrich was in the Hoftheater, and this raised everything to the level of state comedy. So although he left the theater before the end of the play, he nevertheless returned home with his spirits refreshed.

He again turned on all the lights in his room, and it gave him pleasure to listen to himself writing in the porous stillness of the night. This time, when he had entered the house, all sorts of fleeting signs barely
assimilated by his consciousness told him that Agathe had returned; but when he subsequently thought of it and everything was without a sound, he was afraid to look around him. Thus the night became late. He had been once more in the garden, which lay in complete darkness, as inhospitable, indeed as mortally hostile, as deep black ocean; nevertheless, he had groped his way to a bench and persevered there for quite a while. It was difficult, even under these circumstances, to believe that what he was writing was important. But when he was again sitting in the light, he set to work to write to the end, as far as his plan extended this time. He didn’t have far to go, but had hardly begun when a soft noise interrupted him. For Agathe, who had been in his room while he was at the theater and had repeated this secret visit while he was in the garden, slipping out upon his return, hesitated a short
while outside the door and now softly turned the knob.

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Agathe’s entrance: she is wearing the historical lounging attire, etc. Lets her hand glide over his head, sits with crossed legs on the sofa.

Or: wrapper. Perhaps better. Describe it? Not transparent; on the contrary, heavy material. She was enveloped in a wrapper of old velvet material that reached to her ankles and looked like a completely darkened picture that had once been painted on a gold ground. Like a magician’s cape. Her ankles bare, the span of her foot as bare as her hand. Her slippers were of violet silk the color of spindle-tree fruit hanging on its bush in autumn. A collar of some soft weave, whose color hovered between ivory, milk, and dull gilt silver.
She had never worn this wrapper before; Ulrich did not recall it.

*Ibidem.* When he is near her, Ulrich feels the flowing back into emotion of what is outside and what inside, and the vigorous action of the emotion. Also the sexual propensity, which belongs to a different sphere.

The woman who becomes a guiding image in a different aspect and the woman who is the fulfillment of desire as examples of conceptions of different levels that in life exist side by side.

She settles down on the sofa. Her torso comfortably supported and her legs drawn up beneath her so that only her foot peeks out beneath the hem that forms a wheel. Later she briskly changes position, but at the beginning her posture was thoughtful and her face serious.
“I’ve read it!” she informed her brother, like a chess player who, after a short pause for reflection, makes his first move.

“It seems to me you shouldn’t have,” he responded in the same manner.

Agathe burst out laughing. “It was disloyal of you to conceal it from me,” she asserted boldly.

If the description of the dress stays, don’t have the laughing right after it—

Ulrich listened to her voice and contemplated her beauty. “These reflections make me understand more about myself than many years were able to previously,” he said quite calmly.

“And they have nothing to do with me?”

“Yes, it concerns you as well!”

“But why then are you doing it secretly? Why haven’t you ever told me about it?
“Why are you secretly visiting that man of tears Lindner?”

“Also to understand myself better. And anyway, he weeps tears of anger.”

“Were you there today?”

“Yes.” Agathe looked steadily at her brother and noticed the resentment in his eyes.

He strove to control himself and responded as tersely as possible: “I don’t like your doing that.”

“I don’t Uke doing it myself,” Agathe said, continuing after a brief pause: “But I like what you write. The beginning and the end, and what’s in between too. I didn’t understand everything, but I read it all. I think you could explain a lot of things to me, and because I’m afraid of straining myself, I’ll believe a lot without any explanation at all.”
(Post datum. This is really an example of an inner form of cheerfulness as distinct from outer.)

She laughed again, and it pealed softly. She seemed to be laughing over nothing and only from joy; and although Ulrich could be quite sensitive to people’s laughter when it was aroused by something, for then it sometimes seemed to him just as humdrum an occurrence as sneezing, it immediately enticed him into an impossible task, that of adequately describing this pleasant, unmotivated sound. If, into the bargain, one threw in a little poetic commonplace, the impression could then be compared with that of a small, low-tuned silver bell: a dark bass tone submerged in a soft overflowing sparkle. But while Ulrich was listening to these cheerful sounds spreading out in the quiet room, his eyes also thought they were seeing all its lamps burning that much more quietly / as brightly. Precisely the simplest sensory
impressions that populate the world occasionally have surprises in store when it comes to describing them, as if they came from another world.

Influenced by this weakness, Ulrich suddenly felt a confession on his tongue about which he himself had not thought for goodness knew how long. “I once made a devilish bet with our big cousin Tzi, which I will never write down and which I don’t think I ever told you about,” he began to confess. “He suspected that I would write books, and, as it seems to me, he considered books that did not praise his politics to be deleterious and those that did superfluous, aside from the historical literature and memoirs a diplomat customarily employs. But I swore to him that I would kill myself before I succumbed to the temptation of writing a book; and I really meant it. For what I was able to write would do nothing more than prove that one is able to live differently in some specific
fashion; but that I should write a book about it would at the very least be the counterproof that I’m not able to live in that fashion. I didn’t expect it would turn out differently.”

His sister had listened to him without stirring, without even a muscle in her face twitching. “We can kill each other if it turns into a book,” she said. “But it seems to me we have less reason to than before.”

Ulrich involuntarily looked her in the eye.

“Rather more reason for the opposite,” she went on.

“You can’t yet say that (too),” Ulrich objected calmly.

Agathe found that the supporting pillow at her side needed rearranging, which turned her face away from him. “Don’t be angry with me,” she replied from this posture, “but even though I admire what you write, I still don’t
quite understand *why* you write. Indeed, sometimes I’ve found it enormously comical. You carefully dissect according to natural and moral laws the possibility of extending your hand. Why don’t you simply reach out?”

“It’s ruinous simply to reach out. Did I ever tell you the story of the major’s wife?”

Agathe nodded mutely.

“It can’t end the way that did!”

The small furrow appeared between Agathe’s brows. “The major’s wife was a commonplace person,” she declared coolly.

“That’s right. But whether one discovers a world or goes on a Don Quixote adventure doesn’t depend, unfortunately, on the worth of the person in whose honor one embarks on the trip.”

“Who knows!” Agathe replied. A moment later she impatiently abandoned her comfortable position and sat down in the
ordinary way right in front of her brother, as if she were going to test something. She looked at him (almost grimly) but said nothing. “Well?” Ulrich asked encouragingly, expecting an attack (that was awaiting him).

“Doesn’t everything you’ve written down”—she pointed to the table and the papers lying on it—“answer everything we’ve been asking ourselves so often and have been so uncertain about?”

“I almost think so.”

“I have the feeling that everything we’ve been discussing back and forth for so long is resolved in these papers. But why didn’t you hit on it sooner? I’m even immodest enough to maintain that you’ve left us both in the dark for quite a while.”

“We’re still in the dark. You shouldn’t overestimate these ideas. And it’s been hard
for me to open up to you. Sometimes in a dream you have delightful thoughts, but if you carry on with them after you wake up, they’re ridiculous.”

“Really? But if I’ve understood you correctly, you’re certain that for every emotion there are two worlds and that it depends on us which one we wish to live in!”

“Two images of the world! But only one reality! Within it, of course, you can perhaps live in one way or the other. And that is when you apparently have the one or the other reality before you.”

“Apparently, but totally? Apparently, and with no gaps? But if everything were living in this other way, wouldn’t that be the Millennium?”

Ulrich cautiously confirmed the possibility of this conclusion.
“So the intimation of this other world would also be what brought about belief in a paradise? Don’t laugh at me, but it’s made me conclude that in this way one would of necessity arrive in paradise just by living according to the other part of one’s feelings, as you call it.”

“Put correctly, paradise would then have to arrive on earth,” Ulrich rectified.

“I’m not laughing at all. I just have to add: as far as one can!” / Or: mysticism as anomalous psychology of normal life: You believe that mysticism is a secret through which we enter another world; but it is only, or even, the secret of living differently in our world.”

“Oh? Yes, that’s what you wrote. But didn’t you even much earlier sometimes call it the concave, submerged world?” Agathe ascertained. “You spoke of an encompassing and an encompassed possibility of feeling as
if they were old tales. Of gods and goddesses. Of two branches of development in life. Of moon-nights and day. Of two inseparable twins!”

It is the answer to all our conversations, all our peculiarities.

Agathe was pressing, but Ulrich yielded of his own accord: “You can add anything you like: everything that has truly moved me has its explanation here. The victories that come from acting in the world, and the emotions that go with them, have always been alien to me, even if at times I felt an obligation to them. An apparently inactive state I called love, without loving a woman, was opposed in me to the processes of knowledge that gave me the passion a rider has for his horse / which I called the world of love because I couldn’t love in the everyday world! / We always imagined a different life before us.”
Agathe interrupted him animatedly. But it was hard for her to find the right words. At the beginning, although soon swept away by what she was saying, there was a little awkwardness in her voice, as when a boy tries to speak in a man’s bass voice, or when a girl paints a mustache on her face, as she began: “You know that I’m no shrinking touch-me-not. And I’ve often reproached myself for my so-called passions, which have always left me completely unmoved. I clearly felt that I was being moved by them only because I hadn’t found what could truly move us.” Possibly better this way: When she applied the expression “touch-me-not” to herself. She said Ulrich knew that she wasn’t one and that she attached no importance to it. But also (that is: he knew) that she found her so-called passions most shameful after the fact. “You scrape yourself like a cow against a tree, just as happily, and suddenly stop in the same bewilderment,” she said.
Ulrich: A person is passionate in two senses. A land of appetitive sense, which reaches out for everything and undertakes everything, and another, which is timid, has a hard time making up its mind to do things, and is full of inexpressible longing. One probably has both within oneself.

Agathe: The man with qualities and the man without qualities!Marvelous, marvelous. If someone understands you properly he has saved his life! What author wouldn’t be flattered by such praise! Ulrich responded: It’s not immaterial that we are talking about a passionate person in two quite different senses. We’ve become accustomed to applying the term chiefly to people we really ought to call lustful, to gluttons in every kind of passion, while we rather tend to regard people who are profoundly passionate within themselves as weak in affect, people who ascetically serve some sort of nobler passion of life. That leads to stupid mix-ups.
Agathe: I’m reproached for acting badly—

Who reproaches you? (a little suspiciously)

Agathe violently twitched her shoulders. “Professor Hagauer. Think of his letters. Indeed, I’ve often reproached myself for having done what I did with the will—”

“We’ll make amends for it,” Ulrich intervened.

“What a situation to be in, feeling that you’re not a good person and yet not wanting it any other way! You yourself once reproached me about this, and I was insulted—”

Ulrich interrupted her with an apologetic, defensive gesture. Probably (too) from the author, that it’s important that they have now recognized that they’ve got to the center of their difficulties.
Agathe: “Oh, you’ve often talked about morality. You’ve set before me at least ten different definitions; every time, listening to you was a totally new experience. But now I’m reproached for being immoral, I’m made to believe it myself, but for all that I’m an absolute marvel of morality!”

Ulrich: And why a marvel?

Agathe: You showed me the way! The only condition I love and seek needs no morality, it is morality! Every twitch of the little toe that happens in it is moral. Am I right? (laughs)

Ulrich: Yes, you’re right.

Agathe: But first I want to ask you something else...Everything we’ve been talking about half-jokingly and half seriously for the last few days: is it all settled?

Ulrich: Of course.
Agathe: To love your neighbor as yourself is an ecstatic demand?

Ulrich: It is the natural morality of mystic ecstasy, which teaches something that never quite fits the ordinary activity of our lives.
Early-Morning Walk

Part I

Around Clarisse’s mouth laughter was struggling with the difficulties facing her; her mouth kept opening and then pressing itself tightly shut. She had got up too early: Walter was still sleeping; she had hastily thrown on a light dress and gone outside. The singing of birds reached her from the woods through the empty morning stillness. The hemisphere of the sky had not yet filled with warmth. Even the light was still shallowly dispersed. “It only reaches my ankles,” Clarisse thought. “The cock of the morning has just been wound up! Everything is before its time!” Clarisse was deeply moved that she
was wandering through the world before it was time. It almost made her cry.

Without saying anything about it to Walter or Ulrich, Clarisse had been to the asylum a second time. Since then she had been especially sensitive. She applied everything she had seen or heard during her two visits to herself. Three events especially preoccupied her. The first was that she had been addressed and greeted as the Emperors son and a man. When this assertion had been repeated, she had quite distinctly felt her resistance to it yield, as if something ordinary that usually stood in the way of this royal quality was vanishing. And she was filled with an inexpressible desire. The second thing that excited her was that Mein- gast, too, was transforming himself, and was obviously using her and Walter’s proximity in the process. Since she had surprised him in the vegetable garden—it might have been a few weeks ago—and terrified him with her
truly prophetic shout that she could transform herself too and also be a man, he had been avoiding her company. Since then she had not seen him often, even at meals; he locked himself in with his work or spent the whole day out of the house, and whenever he was hungry he secretly took something to eat from the pantry (without asking). It had been just a short time ago that she had succeeded in talking to him again alone. She had told him: “Walter has forbidden me to talk about how you’re undergoing a transformation in our house!” and had blinked her eyes. But even here Meingast kept himself concealed and acted surprised, indeed annoyed. He did not want to let her in on the secret he was busily working on. This seemed to be the explanation. But Clarisse had said to him: “Perhaps I’ll steal a march on you!” And she connected that with the first event. There was little reflection in this, and on that account its relation to reality was unclear; but
what was clearly palpable was the lustful emergence of a different being from within the foundation of her own.

Clarisse was now convinced that the insane people had found her out (that she had offered to Meingast that she could also be a man). And since then she had one secret more: when an invitation to repeat the interrupted visit did not arrive, either from the secretly resisting General von Stumm or from Ulrich, she had after long hesitation herself called Dr. Friedenthal and announced that she would visit him at the hospital. And the doctor had promptly found time for Clarisse. When she asked him immediately upon her arrival whether mad people did not know a great deal that healthy people could not even guess at, he smiled and shook his head, but gazed deeply into her eyes and answered in a tone of complacency: “The doctors of the insane know a lot that healthy people don’t even suspect!” And when he had
to go on his rounds he had offered to take Clarisse along, and to begin where they had stopped the last time. As if it were already a matter of course, Clarisse again slipped into the white doctors coat that Friedenthal held for her.

But—and this was the third event that still excited Clarisse after the fact, and even more than the others—she again did not get to see Moosbrugger. For something remarkable happened. They had left the last pavilion and were breathing in the spicy air of the grounds as they walked, during which Friedenthal ventured: "Now it's time for Moosbrugger!" when again a guard came running up with a message. Friedenthal shrugged his shoulders and said: "Strange! It's not going to work out this time either! At this moment the Director and a Commission are with Moosbrugger. I can't take you with me." And after he had assured her on his own initiative that he would invite her to
continue her visit at the first opportunity, he left with rapid strides, while the guard conducted Clarisse back to the street.

Clarisse found it striking and extraordinary that her visits had twice come to nothing, and suspected that there was something behind it. She had the impression that she was intentionally not being allowed to see Moosbrugger and that a new excuse was being thought up each time, perhaps even with the purpose of making Moosbrugger disappear before she could get through to him.

But when Clarisse thought this over again, she nearly cried. She had let herself be outsmarted and felt quite ashamed; for she had heard nothing from Friedenthal. But while she was getting so upset, she was also calming down again. A thought occurred to her that often preoccupied her now, that in the course of the history of mankind many great men had been spirited away and
tortured by their contemporaries, and that in the madhouse many had even disappeared. “They could neither defend themselves nor explain, because all they felt for their time was scorn!” she thought. And she recalled Nietzsche, whom she idolized, with his great, sad mustache and grown totally mute behind it.

But this gave her an uncanny feeling. What had just now insulted or provoked her, her defeat at the hands of the cunning doctor, was suddenly revealed to her as a sign that the destiny of such a great man might also have been preordained for her. Her eyes sought the direction in which the asylum lay, and she knew that she always felt this direction as something special, even when she wasn’t thinking of it.

It was extremely oppressive to feel oneself so at one with madmen, but she told herself
that “to put oneself on the level of the uncanny is to decide for genius!”

Meanwhile the sun had come up, and this made the landscape even emptier; it was green and cool, with bloody wisps; the world was still low, and reached up only to Clarisse’s ankles on the little rise she was standing on. Here and there a bird’s voice shrieked like a lost soul. Her narrow mouth expanded and smiled at the course of the morning. She stood girded round by her smile like the Blessed Virgin on the earth embraced by sin / crescent moon. She mulled over what she should do. She was under the sway of a peculiar mood of sacrifice: far too many things had recently been going through her head. She had repeatedly believed that it was now beginning with her: to do a great deed, something great with all her soul! But she did not know what.

She only felt that something was imminent. She stood in fear of it, but felt a
longing for the fearful. It hovered in the emptiness of the morning like a cross above her shoulders. But really it was more an active hurt. A great deed. A transformation. There was that idea again, so laden with associations! But, as it were, empty, like a rising first ball of light. And yet it was something active and aggressive. What it might be and her attempts to imagine it caromed through her head in all directions. The swallows, too, had meanwhile begun to dart back and forth through the air.

Suddenly Clarisse became cheerful again, although the uncanniness did not entirely disappear. It occurred to her that she had got quite far away from her house. She turned around, and began to dance on the way. She stretched her arms straight out and lifted her knee. That was how she traversed the entire last part of her route.
But before she got home, at a bend in the path, she came upon General von Stumm.

(1) “Good morning, dear lady! How are things?” he called already from a distance of fifteen yards.

“Quite well!” Clarisse replied with a stern face, in a toneless soft voice.

(2) Stumm was in uniform, and his little round legs were ensconced in boots and dun-colored riding breeches with a general’s red stripes. At the Ministry he militantly pretended that he sometimes went on long rides in the morning before work, but in reality he went strolling with Clarisse over the banks and meadows that surrounded her house. At this hour Walter was still sleeping, or had to busy himself with his clothes and breakfast in joyless haste so he wouldn’t be late to the office; and if Walter peeked out of the window, filled with jealousy he saw the sun
sparkling on the buttons and colors of a uniform, alongside which a red or blue summer dress was usually to be seen billowing in the wind, as happens in old paintings to the garments of angels in the exuberance of their descending.

(3) “Shall we go to the ski jump?” Stumm asked cheerfully. The “ski jump” was a small quarry in the hills, and had nothing whatever to do with its name. But Stumm found this name, one that Clarisse had chosen, “exquisite and dynamic.” “As if it were winter!” he exclaimed. “It makes me laugh every time. And you would doubtless, my dear lady, call a snowbank a ‘summer hill’?”

Clarisse liked being called “my dear lady” and immediately agreed to turn around with him, because once she had become accustomed to the general’s company she found it quite agreeable. First, because he was, after all, a general; not “nothing,” like
Ulrich and Meingast and Walter. She now loved everything that was important in the world. Then, because it had occurred to her that it was really a quite peculiar circumstance to be always carrying a sword around, an odd relation to the world that corresponded to the great and fearful feelings that at times / often preoccupied her. Further, she esteemed the voluble von Stumm because she unconsciously recognized that he did not, like the others, desire her in a way that, when she was not in the mood herself, demeaned her. “There’s something strangely pure about him!” she had explained to her jealous husband. But as a final reason, she also needed a person with whom she could talk, for she was oppressed by myriad swarms of inner promptings that she had to keep to herself. And when the General was listening to her, she felt that everything she said and did was good. “You have, my dear lady,” the General would often assure her,
“something that sets you apart from all women I have had the honor of getting to know. You positively teach me energy, martial courage, and the conquering of Austrian negligence!” He smiled as if it were a joke, but she clearly noticed that he meant some of it seriously.

(4) But the major topic of their conversations was, as is also the rule in love, recollections of their common great experience, the visit to the insane asylum, and so this time Clarisse began to confide to the General that she had since been back a second time.

‘With whom?’ the General inquired, relieved to have escaped a horrible mission.

“Alone,” Clarisse said.

“Good God!” Stumm exclaimed, and stopped, although they had only taken a few steps. “Really alone? You don’t let anything give you the creeps! And did you see anything special?” he asked, curious.
“The murderers' house,” Clarisse responded with a smile.

This was the designation that Dr. Friedenthal, a good stage director, had used as they had walked across the soundless moss under the trees of the old garden toward a group of small buildings from which horrible cries came echoing toward them with remarkable regularity. Friedenthal, too, had smiled, and had told Clarisse, as Clarisse now told the General, that every inmate of this group of houses had killed at least one person, sometimes a number of people.

“And now they're screaming when it's too late!” Stumm said in a tone of reproachful acquiescence in the way of the world.

But Clarisse did not appreciate his response. She recalled that she, too, had asked what the cries meant. And Friedenthal had told her that they were manic fits; but he said this quite softly and cautiously, as if they
were not to intrude. And just at that moment the gigantic guards had suddenly materialized around them and opened the reinforced doors; and Clarisse, repeating this and falling back into the mood, like being at an exciting play, softly whispered the term “manic fits” while looking meaningfully into the General’s eyes.

She turned away and walked on a few paces ahead, so that Stumm almost had to run to catch up with her. When he was at her side again, she asked him what he thought about modern painting, but before he could gather his impressions, she surprised him with the information that there was an astonishing correspondence between this painting and an architecture born from the spirit of the madhouse: “The buildings are dice, and the patients live in hollowed-out concrete dice,” she explained. “There is a corridor through the middle, and cube-shaped cells left and right, and in each cell
there is nothing but one person and the space around him. Even the bench he’s sitting on is part of the wall. Of course all edges have been carefully rounded off so he can’t hurt himself,” she added with precision, for she had observed everything with the greatest attention.

She found no words for what she really wanted to say. Since she had been surrounded by art all her life and had listened to the concerns expressed about art, this island had remained relatively resistant to the changes that had been slowly growing in other areas of her thinking; and especially since her own artistic activity did not spring directly from passion but was merely an appendix of her ambition and a consequence of the circumstances in which she lived, her judgment in this area, despite the illness that had recently made new inroads on her personality, was no more perverse than is common, from time to time, in the development of art. She could,
therefore, deal quite comfortably with an idea like “purpose-oriented architecture” or “a manner of building deriving from the mission of an insane asylum,” and it was only the peopling of these up-to-date dwellings with the insane that surprised her as a new concept and tickled her like a scent kindled in the nose.

But Stumm von Bordwehr interrupted her with the modest observation that he had always imagined that cells for maniacs had to be padded.

Clarisse became uncertain, for perhaps the cells had been made of light-colored rubber, and so she cut off his objection. “Maybe in the old days,” she said firmly. “In the days of upholstered furniture and tasseled drapes, maybe the cells were upholstered too. But today, when people think objectively and spatially, it’s quite impossible. Cultural progress doesn’t stop, even in insane asylums!”
But Stumm would rather have heard something about the manics themselves than be diverted by the problem of what connections there might be between them and painting and architecture, so he replied: “Most interesting! But now I’m really anxious to hear what happened in these modern spaces!”

“You’ll be surprised,” Clarisse said. “As quiet as a cemetery.”

“Interesting! I recall that in the courtyard of murderers that we saw, it was that still for a few moments too.”

“But this time only a single man had on a striped linen smock,” Clarisse went on. “A weak, little old man with blinking eyes.” And suddenly she gave a loud laugh. “He dreamed that his wife had deceived him, and when he woke up in the morning he beat her to death with the bootjack!”
Stumm laughed too. “Right when he woke up? That’s capital!” he agreed. “He was evidently in a hurry! And the others? Why do you say that he was the only one who had on a smock?”

“Because the others were in black. They were quieter than the dead,” Clarisse replied, overcome with seriousness.

“Murderers really don’t seem to be merry people,” Stumm hazarded.

“Oh, you’re thinking of the nutcracker!” Clarisse said.

For a moment the General did not know whom she meant.

“The one with nutcracker teeth who said to me that Vienna is a beautiful city!”

“And what did this lot say to you?” the General asked with a smile.

“But I told you, they were as silent as ghosts!”
“But, my dear lady,” Stumm excused himself, “you can’t call that manic!”

“They were waiting for their attacks!”

“What do you mean, waiting? It’s strange to wait for an attack of mania the way you wait for an inspiring corps commander. And you say that they were dressed in black: ready to be reviewed, in a way? I’m afraid, dear lady, that you must have been mistaken in what you were seeing just then. I most humbly beg your pardon, but I am accustomed to imagining such things with the greatest precision!”

Clarisse, who found it not at all disagreeable that Stumm insisted on precision, for something was weighing her down that was not clear to her either, replied: “Dr. Friedenthal explained it to me that way, and I can only repeat, General, that that’s the way it was. There were three men waiting there; all three had on black suits, and their hair
and beards were black. One was a doctor, the second a lawyer, and the third a wealthy businessman. They looked like political martyrs about to be shot."

"Why did they look that way?" asked the incredulous Stumm.

"Because they were wearing neither collar nor tie."

"Perhaps they had just arrived?"

"No! Friedenthal said they had been in the asylum a long time," Clarisse asserted warmly. "And yet that’s the way they looked, as if they could stand up at any moment and go to the office or visit a patient. That’s what was so strange."

"Well, it’s all the same to me," Stumm responded, to turn the conversation, and yet with a nobility that was new to him, while at the same time he struck his boots aggressively with his riding crop. "I’ve seen fools in
uniform, and consider more people crazy than one might think I would. But I imagined ‘manic’ as something more vivid, even if I concede that you can’t ask of a person that he be manic all the time. But that all three were so quiet...I’m sorry I wasn’t there myself, for I think this Dr. Friedenthal is capable of pulling the wool over a person’s eyes!”

“When he was speaking they listened quite mutely,” Clarisse reported. “You wouldn’t have noticed that they were ill at all if you hadn’t happened to meet them there. And imagine, as we were leaving, the one who was a doctor stood up and motioned me, with a truly chivalrous gesture, to go first, saying to Friedenthal: ‘Doctor, you often bring visitors. You are always showing guests around. Today for a change I’ll come with you too/ “

“And then of course those bullies, those toadies of guards, immediately—” the
General began heatedly, even though he might have been more touched by the tragedienne than the tragedy.

“No, they didn’t grab him,” Clarisse interrupted. “It was really with the greatest respect that they kept him from following me. And I assure you, it was all so moving in this polite and silent fashion. As if the world were hung with heavy, precious fabrics, and the words one would like to say have no resonance. It’s hard to understand these people. You’d have to live in an asylum yourself for a long time to be able to enter their world!”

“What an exquisite idea! But God preserve us from it!” Stumm responded quickly. “You know, dear lady, that I am indebted to you for a pretty good insight into the value of shaking up the bourgeois spirit by means of illness and murder: but still, there are certain limits!”
With these words they had arrived at the hill that was their goal, and the General paused for breath before undertaking the pathless climb. Clarisse surveyed him with an expression of grateful solicitude and a tender mockery that she rarely showed. “But one of them did have a fit!” she informed him roguishly, the way one hauls out a present that had been concealed.

“Well, so there!” Stumm exclaimed. He could not think of anything else to say. But his mouth remained open as he mindlessly groped around for a word; suddenly he beat against his boots again with his crop. “But of course, the shouts!” he added. “Right at the beginning you spoke of the shouting you heard, and I overlooked that when you were talking about the deathly stillness. You tell a story so magnificently that one forgets everything!”

“As we stood in front of the door from which shouts and a strange moaning
alternated,” Clarisse began, “Friedenthal asked me once more whether I really wanted to go in. I was so excited I could hardly answer, but the guards paid no attention and began opening the doors. You may imagine, General, that at that moment I was terribly afraid, for I’m really only a woman. I had the feeling: when the door opens, the maniac is going to jump me!”

“One always hears that such mentally ill people have incredible strength,” the General said by way of encouragement.

“Yes; but when the door was open and we all stood at the entrance, he paid absolutely no attention to us!”

“Paid no attention?” Stumm asked.

“None at all! He was almost as tall as Ulrich, and perhaps my age. He was standing in the middle of the cell, with his head bent forward and his legs apart. Like this!” Clarisse imitated it.
General: Was he dressed in black too?
Clarisse: No, stark naked.

General: Looks at Clarisse from head to toe.

“Thick strands of saliva were spread all over his young man’s brownish-blond beard; the muscles literally jumped out of his scrawniness; he was naked, and his hair, I mean specific hairs—”

“You present everything so vividly one understands it all!” Stumm intervened soothingly.

“—were dully bright, shamelessly bright; he fixed us with them as if they were an eye that looks at you without noticing anything about you!”

Clarisse had reached the top, the General sat at her feet. From the “ski jump” one looked down on vineyards and meadows sloping away, on large and small houses that
for a short distance rose in a jumble up the slope from below, and in one place the glance escaped into the charming depth of the hilly plateau that on the far horizon bordered high mountains. But if, like Stumm, you were sitting on a low tree stump, all you saw was an accidental hump of forest arching its back toward the sky, white clouds in the familiar, fatly drifting balls, and Clarisse. She stood with her legs apart in front of the General and mimicked a manic fit. She held one arm bent out at a right angle and stiffly locked to her body; with her head bent forward, she was executing with her torso in an unvarying sequence a jerky motion that formed a shallow forward circle, while she bent one finger after another as if she were counting. And she allowed each of these motions to be accompanied by a pantingly uttered cry, whose force, however, she considerately restrained. “You can’t imitate the essential part,” she
explained. “That’s the incredible strain with every motion, which gives an impression as if each time the person is tearing his body from a vise....”

“But that’s mora!” the General exclaimed. “You know, that game of chance? Whoever guesses the right number of fingers wins. Except that you can’t bend one finger after another but have to show as many as you think of on the spur of the moment. All our peasants on the Italian border play it.”

“It really is mora,” said Clarisse, who had seen it on her travels. “And he also did it the way you described!”

“Well then, mora,” Stumm repeated with satisfaction. “But I*d like to know where these insane people get their ideas,** he added, and here commenced the strenuous part of the conversation.

Clarisse sat down on the tree stump beside the General, a little apart from him so
that she could, if need be, “cast an eye” on him, and each time this happened he had a ridiculous horrible feeling, as if he were being pinched by a stag beetle. She was prepared to explain for his benefit the emotional life of the insane as she herself understood it after much reflection. One of its most important elements—because she connected everything with herself—was the idea that the so-called mentally ill were some kind of geniuses who were spirited away and deprived of their rights, and for some reason that Clarisse had not yet discovered, this was something they were not able to defend themselves against. It was only natural that the General could not concur in this opinion, but this did not surprise either of them. “I am willing to concede that such an idiot might occasionally guess something that the likes of us don’t know,”* he protested. “That’s the way you imagine them being: they have a certain aura; but that they should think more
than we healthy people— no, please, I beg to differ!**

Clarisse insisted seriously that people who were mentally healthy thought less than those who were mentally unhealthy. “Have you ever strayed off a point, General, from A to B?** she asked Stumm, and he was forced to agree that he had. “Have you ever, then, done it the other way round, from B to A?” she asked further, and Stumm had even less desire to deny it, after considering for a while what it meant, for it is part of a man’s pride to think through for himself to the single thing called truth. But Clarisse reasoned: “You see, and that’s nothing but cowardice, this neat and orderly reflecting about things. On account of their cowardice men will never amount to anything!”

“I’ve never heard that before,” Stumm asserted dismissively. But he thought it over. Wouldn’t that mean...?”
Clarisse moved closer to him with her eyes. “Surely some woman has whispered in your ear: ‘You god-man’?”

Stumm could not recall this happening, but he didn’t want to admit it, so he merely made a gesture that could just as well mean “unfortunately not” as “I’m sick and tired of hearing it!” In words, he replied: “Many women are very high-strung! But what does that have to do with our conversation? Something of that sort is simply an exaggerated compliment!”

“Do you remember the painter whose sketches the doctor showed us?” Clarisse asked.

“Yes, of course. What he had painted was really magnificent.”

“He was dissatisfied with Friedenthal because the doctor doesn’t understand anything about art. ‘Show it to this gentleman!’ he said, pointing to me,” Clarisse went on,
again suddenly casting her eye on the General. “Do you believe it was merely a compliment that he addressed me as a man?”

“It’s just one of those ideas,” Stumm said. “Honestly, I’ve never thought about it. I would assume it’s what’s called an association, or an analogy, or something like that. He just had some reason or other to take you for a man!”

But does it give you pleasure to be taken for a man? Pleasure? No. But...

Although Stumm was convinced that with these last words he had explained something to Clarisse, he was still surprised by the warmth with which she exclaimed: “Terrific! Then I only need tell you that it has the same cause as in love when there’s
whispering about god-man! For the world is full of double beings!”

One should not of course believe that it was agreeable to Stumm when Clarisse talked this way, shooting a cleft glance from eyes narrowed to slits; he was thinking, rather, whether it would not be more proper not to conduct such conversations in uniform, but to appear for the next walk in mufti. But on the other hand the good Stumm, who admired Clarisse with great caution, if not concealed terror, had the ambitious desire to understand this young woman who was so passionate, and also to be understood by her, for which reason he quickly discovered a good side to her assertion. He put it this way, that most things involving the world and people were indeed ambivalent, which accorded well with his newly acquired pessimism. He assuaged himself further by assuming that what was meant by god-man and man-woman was no
different from what could be said about anybody: that he was a bit of a noble person and a bit of a rascal. Still, he preferred to steer the conversation back to the more natural view, and began to spin out his knowledge of analogies, comparisons, symbolic forms of expression, and the like.

“Please excuse me and permit me, dear lady, to adopt your excitement for a moment and accept the idea that you really are a man,” he began, advised by the guardian angel of intuition, and went on in the same fashion: “because then you would be able to imagine what it means for a lady to wear a heavy veil and show only a small part of her face; or, which is almost the same thing, for a ball gown to swirl up from the floor in a dance and expose an ankle: that’s how it was just a few years ago, about the time I was a major; and such hints strike one much more strongly, I might almost say more passionately, than if one were to see the lady up to
her knee with no obstacle in the way—yes, obstacle is precisely the right word! Because that’s how I would also describe what analogies or comparisons or symbols consist of. They present an obstacle to thinking, and in doing so arouse it more strongly than is usually the case. I believe that’s what you mean when you say that there’s something cowardly about ordinary reflection.”

But Clarisse meant nothing of the sort. “People have an obligation to get beyond mere hints!” she asserted.

“Quite remarkable!” Stumm exclaimed, honestly moved. “Old Count Leinsdorf says the same thing you do! Just recently I had a most profound discussion with that distinguished gentleman about metaphors and symbols, and in connection with the patriotic campaign he expressed precisely the opinion you did: that all of us have the obligation to reach out beyond the condition of metaphor to reality!”
“I once wrote him a letter in which I asked him to do something about freeing Moosbrugger,” Clarisse said.

You see, even then we already had two acquaintances in common without knowing it!

“And what was his response? For of course he couldn’t do it. I mean, even if he could, he couldn’t, because he’s much too conservative and legalistic a gentleman.”

“But you could?” Clarisse asked.

“No; whatever’s in the madhouse can stay there. No matter how ambiguous it is. Caution, you know, is the mother of wisdom.”

“But what’s this?” Clarisse asked, smiling, for she had discovered on the scabbard of the General’s sword the woven double
eagle, the emblem of the Imperial and Royal Monarchy. “What’s this double eagle?”

“What do you mean? What should the double eagle be? It’s the double eagle!”

“But what is a double eagle? An eagle with two heads? Only one-headed eagles fly around in the real world! So I’m pointing out to you that you’re carrying on your saber the symbol of a double being! I repeat, General, enchanting things are all based, it would appear, on primitive nonsense!”

General: Pst! I shouldn’t be listening to such things! (smiling)
Walter and Clarisse’s Woodsy Armistice

As they approached her house, she was accompanied by the theatrical illusion of being a person returning from a distant land. She had given up her dance but for some reason or other was humming in her head the melody “There my father Parsifal wore the crown, I his knight, Lohengrin my name.” When she walked through the door and felt the violent transition from the morning, whose brightness had already become hard and warm, into the sleeping twilight of the vestibule, she thought she was caught in a trap. Under her light weight the steps she climbed emitted a barely audible sound; it echoed like the breath of a sigh, but nothing
in the entire house responded. Clarisse cautiously turned the doorknob of the bedroom: Walter was still sleeping! She was greeted by light the color of milky coffee penetrating the curtains, and the nursery odor of the ending night. Walters lips were sulky like a boys, and warm; at the same time his face was simple, indeed impoverished. Much less was to be seen in it than was normally one’s impression. Only a lustful need for power, otherwise not evident, was now visible. Standing motionless by his bed, Clarisse looked at her husband; he felt his sleep disturbed by her entrance and rolled over on his other side. She lingeringly enjoyed the superiority of the waking over the sleeping person; she felt the desire to kiss him or stroke him, or indeed to scare him, but could not make up her mind. She also did not want to expose herself to the danger associated with the bedroom, and finding Walter still sleeping had obviously found her unprepared. She tore off a piece
from some wrapping paper from a purchase, which had been left lying on the table, and wrote on it in large letters: “I have paid a visit to the sleeper and await him in the woods.”

When Walter awoke shortly afterward and discovered the empty bed next to his, he dully remembered that something had gone on in the room while he was sleeping, looked at the clock, discovered the note, and quickly wiped away the cobwebs of sleep, for he had intended on this particular day to get up especially early and do some work. Since this was now no longer possible, he thought it proper, after thinking it over a bit, to put off the work; and although he saw himself forced to scrape his own breakfast together, he was soon standing in the best of spirits under the rays of the morning sun. He assumed that Clarisse was lurking in a hiding place and would materialize from ambush as soon as he entered the woods. He took the usual route, a wide dirt wheelbarrow path,
which took about half an hour. It was a half holiday, which is to say one of those days between holidays that do not officially count as holidays; on which account, remarkably enough, precisely those official agencies and the noble professions connected with them took the whole day off, while less responsible private people and businesses worked half the day. Things like this are said to have been sanctioned by history, and the consequence was that on this day Walter was permitted to walk like a private individual in an almost private nature, in which apart from him only a few unsupervised hens were running around. He stretched to see whether he might discover a bright-colored dress either at the edge of the woods or perhaps even coming toward him, but there was nothing to be seen, and although the walk had been lovely at the start, his pleasure in the exercise sank with the increasing heat. His rapid walking soaked his collar and the
pores of his face until that unpleasant feeling of damp warmth set in which degrades the human body to a piece of laundry. Walter resolved to get into better shape for the outdoors again; allowed himself the excuse that perhaps he was merely dressed too warmly; was also doubtless anxious lest he might be coming down with something: and his thoughts, which had initially been quite animated, became in this fashion gradually incoherent and finally flopped, as it were, in time with his steps, while the path seemed never to end.

At some point he thought: “As a so-called normal person, one’s thoughts are truly hardly less incoherent than a madman’s!” And then it occurred to him: “Moreover, one does say that it’s insanely hot!” And he smiled weakly that this turn of phrase was apparently not without foundation, since for example the changes a feverish temperature brings about in one’s head are
really somewhere between the symptoms of ordinary heat and those of mental disturbance. And so, without taking it entirely seriously, it might perhaps also be said of Clarisse that she had always been what one calls a crazy person without her having to be a sick one. Walter would very much have liked to know the answer to this question. Her brother and doctor claimed that there was not the slightest danger. But Walter believed he had known for a long time that Clarisse was already on the other side of a certain boundary. He sometimes had the feeling that she was merely still hovering around him as do departed souls, of whom it is said that they cannot immediately separate themselves from what they had loved. This idea was not unsuited to inflating his pride, for there were not many other people who would have been up to such a ghastly yet beautiful—as he now called it—struggle between love and horror. There were, to be
sure, times when he felt irresolute. A sudden push or collapse could carry his wife away into the domain of the completely repellent and ugly, and that would still have been the least of it, for what if, in that case, she did not repel him! No, Walter assumed that she would have to repel him, for the debased mind was ugly! And Clarisse would then have to be put in an institution, for which there was not enough money. That was all quite depressing. Still, there had been times, when her soul was already, so to speak, fluttering in front of the windowpanes, when he had felt himself so bold that he had no desire to think whether he should pull her in to him or rush out to her.

Such thoughts made him forget the sunny, strenuous path, but finally also caused him to leave off thinking altogether, so that while he remained in animated motion he really had no content, or was filled with terribly ordinary contents, which he
solemnly pondered; he walked along Uke a rhythm without notes, and when he bumped into Clarisse he almost stumbled over her. She, too, had at first followed the broad path, and had found at the edge of the woods a small indentation where the spilled sunlight licked the shadows at every breath of wind, like a goddess licking an animal. Here the ground rose gently, and since she was lying on her back, she saw the world within a strange gimlet. Through some kind of kinship of shapes, the uncanny mood that on this day mixed particularly easily with her cheerfulness had again taken hold of her spirits, and gazing long and steadily into the horizontally perverse landscape she began to feel sadness, as if she had to assume the burden of a sorrow or a sin or a destiny. There was an enormous sense of abandonment, of anticipation, and an expectancy of sacrifice abroad in the world, of the land she had found the first time she had gone out, when
the day just “reached her ankles.” Her eyes involuntarily sought the place where, behind more distant slopes and not visible to her, the extensive buildings of the asylum for the insane must lie; and when she thought she had located them it calmed her, as it calms the lover to know the direction in which his thoughts can find his beloved. Her thoughts “flew,” but not in that direction. “They’re now crouching, having fallen quite silent, Uke huge black birds beside me in the sun,” she thought, and the splendid yet melancholy feeling associated with this lasted until Clarisse caught sight of Walter in the distance. Then she had suddenly had enough of her sorrow, hid behind the trees, held her hand in front of her mouth like a funnel, and shouted, as loudly as she could: “Cuckoo!” She then straightened up and ran deeper into the woods, but immediately changed her mind again and threw herself down in the warm forest weeds beside the path Walter
would have to use. His countenance then did come along, thinking itself unobserved, expressing nothing but an unconscious, gently animated attentiveness to the obstacles on the path, and this made his face very strange, indeed quite resolutely masculine, to look at. When he was unsuspectingly close, Clarisse stretched out her arm and reached for his foot, and tins was the moment when Walter nearly fell and first caught sight of his wife, lying almost under his eyes and directing her smiling glance up at him. Despite some of his concerns, she did not look in the least ugly.

Clarisse laughed. Walter sat down beside her on a tree stump and dried his neck with his handkerchief. “Clarisse...!” he began, and continued only after a pause: “I really meant to work today....”

“Meant?” Clarisse mocked. But for once it did not sting. The word whizzed from her tongue and mingled with the cheerful whirring of the flies that zoomed past their ears
through the sun like small metal arrows. Walter replied: “I’ll admit that lately I haven’t thought working was the right thing to do if you could just as well sniff the new flowers. Work is one-sided; it goes against one’s duty to wholeness!”

Since he paused briefly, Clarisse threw a small pine cone that had come to hand up in the air a few times and caught it again.

“Of course I’m also aware of the objections that could be raised against that,” Walter asserted.

Clarisse let the pine cone fall to the ground and asked animatedly: “So you’re going to begin working again? Today we need an art that has brush strokes and musical intervals this big!” She stretched her arms out three feet.

“I don’t have to begin that way right off,” Walter objected. “Anyway, I still find the whole problematic of the individual artist
off-putting. Today we need a problematic of the totality—” But hardly had he uttered the word “problematic” than it seemed to him quite overexcited in the stillness of the woods. He therefore added something new: “But basically it’s in no way a demand inimical to life that a person should paint something he loves; in the case of the landscape painter, nature!”

“But a painter also paints his beloved,” Clarisse threw in. “One part of the painter loves, the other paints!”

Walter saw his beautiful new idea shrivel up. He was not in the mood to breathe new life into it, but he was still convinced that the idea was important and merely needed careful working out. And the singing of finches, the woodpecker’s drumming, the humming of small insects: it didn’t move him to work but rather dragged him down into an infinite abyss of indolence.
“We’re very much alike, you and I,” he said with gratification. “There’s hardly another couple like us! Others paint, make music, or write, and I refuse to: basically that’s as radical as your eagerness!”

Clarisse turned on her side, raised herself on her elbow, and opened her mouth for a furious response. “I’ll set you free yet, all the way!” she said quickly.

Walter looked down at her tenderly. “What do you mean, really, when you say that we have to be saved from our sinful form?” he asked eagerly.

This time Clarisse did not answer. She had the impression that if she were to speak now it would run away too quickly, and although she intended to say something, the woods confused her; for the woods were on her side: that was something that couldn’t be expressed properly, although it was clear to see.
Walter probed in the delicious wound. “Did you really talk about that again with Meingast?” he asked in a way that demanded a response, yet hesitantly, indeed fearful that she might have done so although he had forbidden it.

Clarisse lied, for she shook her head; but at the same time she she smiled.

“Can you still remember the time we took Meingast’s ‘sins’ on ourselves?” he pursued further. He took her hand. But Clarisse only let him have a finger. It is a remarkable condition when a man has to remind himself with as much reluctance as willingness that nearly everything his beloved bestows on him has previously belonged to another; it may be the sign of a love that is all too strong, or perhaps the sign of a feeble soul, and sometimes Walter actually sought out this condition. He loved the fifteen-to-sixteen-year-old Clarisse, who had never been taken with him completely and
unreservedly; loved her almost more than the present Clarisse, and the memory of her caresses, which were perhaps the reflection of Meingast’s indecency, stirred him in a peculiar way more profoundly than, by comparison, the cool, unhampered quality of marriage. He found it almost agreeable knowing that Clarisse had a favoring side glance to spare for Ulrich and now entirely once again for the magnificently altered Meingast, and the way in which these men had an unfavorable impact on her imagination magnified his longing for his wife the way the shadows of debauchery and desire under an eye make it appear larger. Of course men in whom jealousy will suffer nothing beside themselves, he-men, will not experience this, but his jealousy was full of love, and when that is the case, then the torture is so precise, so distinct, so alive, that it is almost the vicarious experiencing of desire. Whenever Walter imagined his wife in
the act of giving herself to another man he felt more strongly than when he held her in his own arms, and, somewhat disconcerted, he thought by way of excuse: “When I’m painting and I need to see the most subtle curvature of the lines of a face, I don’t look at it directly but in a mirror!” It really stung him that he was yielding to such thoughts in the woods, in the healthy world of nature, and the hand that held Clarisse’s finger began to tremble. He had to say something, but it could not be what he was thinking. He joked in a strained way: “So now you want to take my sins upon yourself, but how are you going to do that?” He smiled; but Clarisse noticed a slight trembling spreading over his lips. This did not suit her just now; although it is always a marvelous spur to laughter, this image of the way a man who is dragging a much too large bale of useless thoughts along with him tries to stride through the small door to which he is drawn. She sat
completely upright, looked at Walter with a mockingly serious glance, shook her head several times, and began reflectively:

“Don’t you believe that periods of depression alternate with periods of mania in the world? Urgent, disturbed, fruitful periods of upswing that bring in the new, alternating with sinful periods, despondent, depressed, bad centuries or decades?” Periods in which the world approaches its bright ideal shape and periods where it sinks into its sinful form. Walter looked at her with alarm. “That’s how it is; I just can’t tell you which years,” she continued, adding: “The upswing doesn’t have to be beautiful; in fact, it has to shuck off a good deal, which may of course be beautiful. It can look like a disease: I’m convinced that from time to time humanity has to become mentally ill in order to attain the synthesis of a new and higher health!”

Walter refused to understand.
Clarisse talked on: “People who are sensitive, like you and me, feel that! We’re now living in a period of decline, and that’s why you can’t work either. In addition there are sensual ages, and ages that turn away from sensuality. You must prepare yourself for suffering....”

Remarkably, it moved Walter that Clarisse had said “you and me.” She had not said that for a long time.

“And of course there are periods of transition,” Clarisse went on. “And figures like Saint John, precursors; we may be two precursors.”

Now Walter responded: “But you had your way and went to the insane asylum; now we really ought to be of one mind again!”

“You mean that I ought not to go again?” Clarisse interjected, and smiled.
“Don’t go again!” Walter pleaded. But he did so without conviction: he felt it himself; his plea was merely meant to cover him.

Clarisse replied: “All precursors’ complain about the spirit’s lack of resolution because they don’t yet have complete faith, but no one dares put an end to the irresolution! Even Meingast doesn’t dare,” she added.

Walter asked: “What is it you’d have to dare?”

“You see, a whole people can’t be insane,” Clarisse said in an even softer voice. “There is only individual insanity. When everyone is insane, then they are the healthy ones. Isn’t that right? Therefore a whole people of the insane is the healthiest of people; you just have to treat them as a people, and not as sick people. And I tell you, the mad think more than the healthy do, and they lead a resolute life of a kind we never have the courage for! To be sure, they are
forced to live this life in a sinner’s form, or they can’t yet do otherwise!”

Walter swallowed and asked: “But what is this sinner’s form? You talk about it so much, and a lot about transformation too, about taking sins upon oneself, about double beings and so much else, that I half understand and half don’t understand!”
That goes around in circles
Of course it goes around in circles

Clarisse smiled, and it was her embarrassed and rather excited smile. “That can’t be put in a few words,” she replied. “The insane are just double beings.”

“Well, you said that before. But what does it mean?” Walter probed; he wanted to know how she was feeling, without consideration for her.

Clarisse reflected. “In many depictions, Apollo is man and woman. On the other hand, the Apollo with the arrow was not the Apollo with the lyre, and the Diana of Ephesus wasn’t the Diana of Athens. The Greek gods were double beings, and we’ve forgotten that, but we’re double beings too.”

Walter said after a while: “You’re exaggerating. Of course the god is one thing when he’s killing men and another when he’s making music.”
“That’s not natural at all!” Clarisse countered. “You would be the same! You would only be excited in a different way. You’re a little different here in the woods and there in your room, but you’re not a different person. I could say that you never transform yourself completely into what you do; but I don’t want to say too much. We’ve lost the concepts for these processes. The ancients still had them, the Greeks, the people of Nietzsche!”

“Yes,” Walter said, “perhaps; perhaps one could be quite different from the way we are.” And then he fell silent. Snapped a twig. They were both now lying on the ground, with their heads turned toward each other. Finally Walter asked:

“What sort of double being am I?”

Clarisse laughed.

He took his twig and tickled her face.
“You are billy goat and eagle,” she said, and laughed again.

“I am not a billy goat!” Walter protested sulkily.

“You’re a billy goat with eagle’s wings!” Clarisse fleshed out her assertion.

“Did you just invent that?” Walter asked.

It had come to her on the spur of the moment, but she could add something to it that she had long known: “Every person has an animal in which he can recognize his fate. Nietzsche had the eagle.”

“Perhaps you mean what’s called a totem. Do you know that for the Greeks specific animals were still associated with the gods: the wolf, the steer, the goose, the swan, the dog...”

“You see!” Clarisse said. “I didn’t know that at all, but it’s true.” And she suddenly
added: “Do you know that sick people do disgusting things? Just like the man under my window that time.” And she related the story of the old man on the ward who had winked at her and then behaved so indecently.

“A lovely story, that, and moreover in front of the General!” Walter objected heatedly. “You really mustn’t go there again!”

“Oh, come on, the General is just afraid of me!” Clarisse defended herself.

“Why should he be afraid?”

“I don’t know. But you are too, and Father was afraid, and Meingast is afraid of me too,” Clarisse said. “I seem to possess an accursed power, so that men who have something wrong with them are compelled to offer themselves to me. In a word, I tell you, sick people are double beings of god and billy goat!”
“I’m afraid for you!” Walter whispered more than spoke, softly and tenderly.

“But the sick ones aren’t only double beings of god and goat, but also of child and man, and sadness and gaiety,” Clarisse went on without paying attention.

Walter shook his head. “You seem to associate all men with ‘goat’!”

“My God, that’s true, I do.” Clarisse defended it calmly. “I carry the figure of the goat within myself too!”

“The figure!” Walter was a little scornful, but involuntarily; for the constant succession of ideas was making him tired.

“The image, the model, the daemon—call it what you like!”

Walter needed a rest, he wished to stop for a while, and replied: “I will admit that in many respects people are double beings. Recent psychology—”
Clarisse interrupted him vehemently. "Not psychology! You all think much too much!"

"But didn’t you claim that the insane think more than we healthy people do?" Walter asked mechanically.

"Then I said it wrong. They think differently. More energetically!" she replied, and went on: "It doesn’t make the slightest difference what one thinks; as soon as one acts, what one thought beforehand doesn’t matter anymore. That’s why I find it right not to go on talking but to go to the insane in their house."

"Just a minute!" Walter begged. "What is your double being?"

"I am first of all man and woman."

"But you just said goat too."

"That too. Too! It’s not the sort of thing you can measure with ruler and compass."
“No, that you can’t!” Walter moaned aloud, covering his eyes with his hands and clenching his hands into fists. As he lay there mute in this posture, Clarisse crept up to him, threw her arms around his shoulders, and kissed him from time to time.

Walter lay motionless.

Clarisse was whispering and murmuring something into his ear. She was telling him that the man under the window had been sent by the goat, and that the goat signified sensuality, which had everywhere separated itself from the rest of mankind. All people creep to each other in bed every night and leave the world where it is: this lower solution to the great powers of desire in people must finally be stopped, and then the goat would become the god! This was what Walter heard her say. And wasn’t she right? Yet how did it happen that it pleased him? How did it happen that for a long time nothing else had pleased him? Not the paintings
that he had earlier admired; not the masters of music whom he had loved; not the great poems, and not the mighty ideas? And that he now found pleasure in listening to Clarisse telling him something that anyone else would say was fantasy? These were the questions that went through Walter’s mind. As long as his life had lain before him, he had felt it to be full of great desire and imagination; since then, Eros had truly separated himself from it. Was there anything he still did body and soul? Was not everything he touched insignificant? Truly, love was gone from his fingertips, the tip of his tongue, his entrails, eyes, and ears, and what remained was merely ashes in the form of life, or, as he now expressed it rather magniloquently, “dung in a polished glass,” the “goat”! And beside him, at his ear, was Clarisse: a little bird that had suddenly begun to prophesy this in the woods! He could not find the suggestive, the commanding
tone to point out to her where her ideas went too far and where they did not. She was full of images jumbled together; he, too, had been this full of images once, he persuaded himself. And of these great images, one has no idea which ones can be made into reality and which ones cannot. So every person bears within himself a leading ideal figure, Clarisse was now maintaining, but most people settle for living in the form of sin, and Walter found that it might well be said of him that he bore an ideal figure within himself, although he, perhaps even self-penitently, at least voluntarily, lived in ashes. The world also has an ideal figure. He found this image magnificent. Of course it did not explain anything, but what good is explanation? It expressed the will of humanity, striving upward again and again after every defeat. And it suddenly struck Walter that Clarisse had not kissed him voluntarily for at
least a year, and that she was now doing it for the first time.
On the same morning, Agathe, impelled by moody contradictions left over from the previous night, said to her brother: “And why should it be possible to live a life in love? There are times when you live no less in anger, in hostility, or even in pride or hardness, and they don’t claim to be a second world!”

“I’d prefer to say that one lives for love,” Ulrich replied indolently. “Our other emotions must inspire us to action in order that they last; that’s what anchors them in reality.”

“But it’s usually that way in love too,” Agathe objected. She felt as if she were
swinging on a high branch that was threatening to break off under her any moment. “But then why does every beginner swear to himself that it will last’ forever, even if he’s beginning for the tenth time?” was her next question.

“Perhaps because it’s so inconstant.”

“One also swears eternal enmity.”

“Perhaps because it’s such a violent emotion.”

“But there are emotions whose nature it is to last longer than others: loyalty, friendship, obedience, for example.”

“I think because they are the expression of stable, indeed even moral, relationships.”

“Your answers aren’t very consistent!”

The interruptions and continuations of the conversation seemed to nestle in the shallow, lazy breaths of the summer day. Brother and sister lay, a little bleary-eyed
and overtired, on garden chairs in the sunshine. After a while Agathe began again:

“Faith in God imposes no action, contains no prescribed relationships to other people, can be totally immoral, and yet it’s a lasting emotion.”

“Faith and love are related to each other,” Ulrich remarked. “Also, unlike all the other emotions, both have available their own manner of thinking: contemplation. That means a great deal; for it is not love and faith themselves that create the image of their world; contemplation does it for them.”

“What is contemplation?”

“I can’t explain it. Or maybe, in a nutshell, a thinking by intimation. Or, in other words: the way we think when we’re happy. The other emotions you named don’t have this resource. You could also call it meditating. If you say that faith and love can...
mountains,’ it means that they can entirely take the place of the mind.”

“So the thought of the believer and the lover is intimation? The real inner manner of their thinking?”

“Right!” Ulrich confirmed, surprised.

“No reason to praise me! You said it yourself yesterday!” his sister informed him. “And just so that I’m sure: contemplation, then, is also the thinking that allows itself to be led not by our actual emotions but by our other ones?”

“If you want to put it that way, yes.”

“So that’s the way one could think in a world of special people? Yesterday you used the term ‘ecstatic society’ for it. Do you remember?”

“Yes.”

“Good!”
“Why are you laughing now?” Ulrich asked.

“Because Mephistopheles says: Truth is proclaimed through the mouths of two witnesses!’ So two suffice!”

“He’s evidently wrong,” Ulrich contradicted calmly. “In his day, délire à deux, the joint insanity of two people, had not yet been recognized....”

A noiseless stream of weightless drifting blossoms, emanating from a group of trees whose flowering was done, drifted through the sunshine, and the breath that bore it was so gentle that not a leaf stirred. It cast no shadow on the green of the lawn, but this green seemed to darken from within like an eye. Extravagantly and tenderly leaved by the young summer, the trees and bushes standing in the wings or forming the backdrop gave the impression of being amazed spectators who, surprised and spellbound in their
gay attire, were participating in this funeral procession and celebration of nature. Spring and fall, speech and nature’s silence, life and death, mingled in this picture. Hearts seemed to stop, to have been removed from their breasts, in order to join this silent procession through the air. “My heart was taken from out my breast,” a mystic had said. Agathe cautiously abandoned herself to the enthusiasm that once before in this garden had almost led her to believe in the arrival of the Millennium and under the image of which she imagined an ecstatic society. But she did not forget what she had learned since: in this kingdom, you must keep quite still. You cannot leave room for any land of desire: not even the desire to ask questions. You must also shed the understanding with which you ordinarily perform tasks. You must strip the self of all inner tools. It seemed to her that walls and columns retreated to the side within her, and that the
world was entering her eyes the way tears do. But she suddenly discovered that she was only superficially holding fast to this condition, and that her thoughts had long since slipped away from it.

When she encountered them again, her thoughts were considering a quite remote problem, a little monster of disaffection. She was asking herself in the most foolish fashion, and intent on this foolishness: “Was I ever really impetuous and unhappy?” A man without a name came to mind, whose name she bore, indeed had borne away from him, and she repeated her question with the mute, unmoving obstinacy with which one gazes after a wave that has ebbed away. Presumably, young people (whose life span is still short) are more disposed to be amazed at what they have already felt than older people, who have become accustomed to the changeability of life’s passions and circumstances; except that the escape of feeling is
also the stream in whose motion the stone heavens of mystic emotion are reflected, and for one of these reasons it was probably a supra-naturally magnified astonishment that contained the question of where the hatred and violence she had felt against Hagauer had come from. Where was the desire to hurt him? She was close to thinking she had lost it, like an object that must still be somewhere nearby.

So Agathe's thoughts were doubtless still completely under the spell of the procession of flowers and death, but they were not moving with it, and in its mute and solemn way, but making little jumps here and there. It was not "meditating" she was indulging in, but a "thinking," even if a thinking without rigor, a branching off and inner continuation of what had earlier been left unsaid in the fleeting exchange about the constancy of the emotions; without exactly wanting to be, she was still gripped by it, and she recalled an
image that Ulrich had suggested on another occasion, and with greater sympathy, about this constancy and inconstancy of the emotions. She was thinking now that nothing was more remote from her than expressing her emotions in “works,” and apparently she was thinking for a moment of August Lindner and meant “good works,” “works of love,” “signs of love’s practical orientation,” such as he desired of her in vain; but by and large, she meant simply “works” and was thinking of Ulrich, who earlier had always spoken of spiritual work that one had to fashion out of everything, even if it was only a deeper breath. And that one derived a rule or created an idea for everything and felt responsible for the world also remained a matter of indifference to her most profound inclination: her ambition was not tempted to sit in the masters saddle of a hobbyhorse. And finally character was not the refuge of her emotions either, and when she
confronted this question she received the answer: “I never used to love what I felt so strongly that I would have wanted to be, so to speak, its cupboard for my entire life!” And it occurred to her that for her emotions, insofar as they had been aroused by men, she had always chosen men whom she did not like with either all her soul or all her body. “How prophetic!” she thought cheerfully. “Even then I weakened the desires, the pull toward reality in my emotions, and kept open the path to the magic kingdom!”

For wasn’t that now Ulrich’s theory about passion? Either howl like a child with rage and frustration or enthusiasm—and get rid of it! Or abstain entirely from the pull toward the real, the active, and desire of any land that every emotion contains. What lies in between is the real “kingdom of the emotions”—its works and transformations, its being filled up with reality—as lovely as a storeroom full of apples of every hue, and
absurdly monotonous too, like everything that fades and falls the same way with every new year! This was what she was thinking, and she tried to find her way back again to the emotion hovering silently through the world of nature. She kept her mind from turning toward anything in a specific way. She strained to shed all knowledge and desire, all utilitarian use of head and heart and limbs. “You must be unegotistic in this most extreme sense; you have to strive to gain this mysterious unmediated’ relationship to outer and inner,” she said to herself, and collected herself almost as if she wanted to feign death. But this seemed as impossible a task as it had been in childhood not to commit a sin between confession and communion, and finally she abandoned the effort entirely. “What?” she asked herself sulkily. “Is a world in which one desires nothing perhaps not desirable?” At this moment she was honestly suspicious of the world of ecstasy, and she
urgently wanted to present this fundamental question that underlies all ascesis to her brother. He, however, seemed not to want to be disturbed by anything as he lay there enjoying his comfortable position and closed the narrow slit between his eyelids completely every time she looked over at him.

So she abandoned her deck chair and stood irresolutely for a while, smiling, looking now at Ulrich, now at the garden. She stretched her legs and adjusted her skirt with small blows of her hand. Each one of these actions had a land of rustic beauty, simple, healthy, instinctive; and it was this way either by chance or because her most recent thoughts had led her to be cheerful in a robust way. Her hair fell in a scallop at each side of her face, and the background, formed of trees and bushes that, from where she was standing, opened into depth, was a frame that positioned her image before earth and sky. This view, which Ulrich was enjoying,
for he was secretly observing his sister, not only was attractive but soon became so much so that it suffered nothing else beside it that it would not have drawn in. Ulrich thought this time of the expression “enhanced accountability” for this enchanting image that was forming, not for the first time, between brother and sister; he extrapolated the term from a word that ages ago, in another charmed circle, had meant much to him: and truly, as there is a diminished sense of accountability, whose bewitched nature had formerly astounded him, and which is ultimately always stamped with the defect of senselessness, what seemed to be reigning here was an increased and intensified fullness of the senses, a high superabundance, indeed a distress, of such a kind that everything about Agathe and which was taking place cast a reflection on her that could not be grasped by sensory designations, and placed her in an aspect for which not only no
word existed but also no expression or outlet of any kind. Every fold of her dress was so laden with powers, indeed it almost might be said with value, that it was impossible to imagine a greater happiness, but also no more uncertain adventure, than cautiously to touch this fold with the tips of one’s fingers!

She had now half turned away from her brother and was standing motionless, so that he could observe her freely. He knew that experiences of this kind had bound the two of them together for as long as they had known each other. He remembered the morning after his arrival at their father’s house, when he had caught sight of her in woman’s clothes for the first time; it had been at that time, too, that he had had the strange experience of seeing her standing in a grotto of rays of light, and this in addition: that she was a more beautiful repetition and alteration of his self. There were, moreover, many things connected with this that merely had a
different external shape. For the painted circus animals that he had loved more ardently than real ones, the sight of his little sister dressed for a ball, her beauty kindling in him the longing to be her, then even the confectioners horse that had lately been the object of a bantering conversation, all arose from the same enchantment; and now, when he again returned to the present, which was by no means droll, the most contradictory scruples about coming too close to one another, the staring at and bending over, the heavy figurative quality of many moments, the gliding into an equivocal we-and-the-world feeling, and many other things, demonstrated to him the same forces and weaknesses. Involuntarily he reflected on these things. Common to all these experiences was that they received an emotion of the greatest force from an impossibility, from a failure and stagnation. That they were missing the bridge of action leading to and
from the world; and finally, that they ended on a vanishingly narrow borderline between the greatest happiness and pathological behavior. Looked at in an unholy way, they were all somewhat reminiscent of a porcelain still life, and of a blind window, and of a dead-end street, and of the unending smile of wax dolls under glass and light: things that appear to have got stuck on the road between death and resurrection, unable to take a step either forward or backward. In bringing such examples to mind, Ulrich thought that they were also to be understood without mystery and myth. Such images entice our emotions, which are accustomed to act, and our sympathies, which are usually dispersed over many things, in a direction in which no progress is possible; and this might easily give rise to an experience of dammed-up significance that permits no access of any kind, so that it grows and grows in absolutely unbearable fashion. “Externally, nothing new
happens anymore, but the one thing is repeated again and again,” Ulrich thought. “And internally, it’s as if we had henceforth only said, thought, and felt: one thing, one thing, one thing! But it’s not entirely like that either!” he interjected to himself. “It’s rather like a very slow and monotonous rhythm. And something new arises: bliss! A tormenting bliss one would like to give the slip to but can’t! Is it bliss at all?” Ulrich asked himself. “It’s an oppressive increase in the emotion that leaves all qualities behind. I could just as easily call it a congestion!”

Agathe did not seem to notice that she was being observed. “And why does my happiness—for it is happiness—search out just such occasions and hiding places?” Ulrich went on to ask again, with one small change. He could not keep from admitting to himself that separated out from the stream, such an emotion could also wash around the love for a dead person, whose countenance belongs
with a more profound defenselessness than any living one to the glances which it cannot drive off. And his happening to think that in literature moody, necrophilic art thoughts were not exactly a rarity did not make it any better, but merely led him to reflect that the charming insanity of relating things, which combines all the soul’s longing into the representation of a beautiful dead woman, has some kind of connection with the malevolent insanity in which a fetish—a hairband, a shoe—draws all the currents of body and soul to itself. And every “fixed idea” too, even one that is only “overpowering” in the ordinary sense, is accompanied by such an intensified usurpation. There was in this a kinship more or less crippled and not entirely pleasant, and Ulrich would not have been a man had not the twisted, slippery, lurking, lost nature of these relationships filled him with suspicion. To be sure, his spirits were lifted by the idea that there was nothing in the
world that did not have some black-sheep kin, for the world of health is composed of the same basic elements as the world of disease: it is only the proportions that differ; but when he cautiously directed his glance at Agathe and allowed it to drink from the sight of her, there still dominated in his feelings, in spite of their miserable sublimity, an uncanny absence of will, a marked displacement or being carried away into the vicinity of sleep, of death, of the image, of the imobile, the imprisoned, the powerless. Ideas drained away, every energetic drive dissipated, the unutterable paralyzed every limb, the world slipped away remote and unheeding, and the unstable armistice on the borderline between the enhanced and the diminished was barely to be borne any longer. But precisely with the entrance of this enormous draining away of power something different began, for their bodies seemed to be losing something of their boundaries, of
which they no longer had any need. “It’s like the frenzy of the bee swarm that’s trying to surround the queen!” Ulrich thought silently.

And finally the unavoidable discovery dawned on him, although he had so far avoided it, that all these strange, individual temptations of the emotions and emotional experiences, which intermingled and hovered within him like the shadows cast by the foliage of a restless tree when the sun is high, could be encompassed and understood at a single glance if he regarded his love for his sister as their origin. For evidently this emotion and this alone was the hero of his breaking down, of his blocked path, and of all the ambiguous adventures and detours associated with this. Even the psychology of the emotions, which he was pursuing on his own in his diaries, now seemed to him merely an attempt to conceal the love between him and his sister in a quixotic edifice of ideas. Did he, then, desire her? He
was really astonished that he was confessing this to himself for the first time, and he now clearly saw the possibilities between which he had to make up his mind. Either he really had to believe that he was making ready for an adventure such as had never existed before, an adventure that he needed only to urge on and set out on with no second thoughts...Or he had to yield to his emotion, even should this feeling be unnatural, in the natural way, or forbid himself to; and was all he was accomplishing through his irresolution to become inventive in subterfuges? When he asked himself this second, rather contemptible question, he did not fail to ask the third it entailed: What was there to prevent him from doing what he wanted? A biological superstition, a moral one? In short, the judgment of others? Thinking of this, Ulrich felt such a violent boiling up of feeling against these others that he was even more surprised, especially as this sudden stab bore
no relation to the gentle emotions with which he believed himself filled.

But in reality what came to the fore was only something that had recently receded into the background. For his attachment to Agathe and his detachment from the world were always two sides of one and the same situation and inclination. Even in those years when he had almost never thought that he had a real sister, the concept of “sister” had had a magic effect on him. No doubt this happens often, and it is usually nothing very different from the soaring youthful form of that need for love which in the later condition of submission seeks out a bird, a cat, or a dog, at times too, probably, humanity or one’s neighbor, because between the dust and heat of the struggle to live and life’s games this need cannot truly unfold. Sometimes this need for love is already even in youth full of submission, of timidity toward life, and loneliness, and in that case the
misty image of the “sister” takes on the shadowboxing grace of the doppelganger, which transforms the anxiety of being abandoned by the world into the tenderness of lonely togetherness. And sometimes this ecstatic image is nothing but the crassest egotism and selfishness, that is to say an excessive wanting to be loved, which has entered into a jerry-built agreement with sweet selflessness. In all such cases—and Ulrich thought again of the case in which it transforms itself into a fellow human being and then dispenses with its ambiguity, but also with its beauty!—”sister” is a creation originating from the “other” part of emotion, from the uproar of this emotion and the desire to live differently; that’s the way Ulrich would understand it now. But it probably is this only in the weak form of longing. But familiar with longing as he was, his mind was no less acquainted with struggle, and if he correctly understood his past, his precipitate turning
toward Agathe had initially been a declaration of war against the world; love is, moreover, always the revolt of a couple from the wisdom of the crowd. It could be said that in his case, the revolt had come first; but it could be said just as well that the core of all his criticism of the world was nothing so much as a knowing about love. “So I am—if a hermaphroditic monasticism is conceivable, why shouldn’t this be!—in the dubious situation of having been, at bottom, a soldier with monastic inclinations, and ultimately a monk with soldierly inclinations who can’t leave off swearing!” he thought cheerfully, but still with astonishment; for he was made aware for perhaps the first time of the profound contradiction between his passion and the entire disposition of his nature. Even as he now looked at Agathe, he thought he perceived his conflict on the sea-bright surface of inwardness spreading out around her, as an evil, metallic reflection. He was so lost in
these thoughts that he did not notice that she had for some time been curiously observing his eyes.

Now she stepped up to her brother and mischievously passed her hand downward before his eyes, as if she wished to cut off his peculiar glance. And as if that were not sufficient, she grasped his arm and prepared to pull him up from his chair. Ulrich stood and looked around him the way a person does emerging from sleep. “To think that at this very moment, hundreds of people are fighting for their lives! That ships are sinking, animals are attacking people, thousands of animals are being slaughtered by people!” he said, half like someone looking back with a shudder from a blissful shore, half like a man who is sorry not to be part of it.

“You’re certainly sorry not to be part of it?” Agathe then did indeed ask.
His smile denied it, but his words conceded the point: “It’s pleasant to think about how pleasant it is when I grasp with my whole hand a thing that I’ve merely been stroking for some time with the tip of a finger.”

His sister put her arm through his. “Come, let’s walk around a little!” she proposed. In the hardness of his arm she felt the manly joy at everything savage. She pressed her fingernails against the unyielding muscles, seeking to hurt him. When he complained, she offered the explanation: “In the infinite waters of bliss I’m clutching at the straw of evil! Why should you be the only one?” She repeated her attack. Ulrich placated her with a smile: “What your nails are doing to me is not a straw but a girder!” They were walking meanwhile. Had Agathe demonstrated the ability to guess his thoughts? Were the two of them twin clocks? When emotions are tuned to the same string,
is it entirely natural to read emotions from each other’s faces? It is at any rate an impressive game, so long as one does not miss the mark and crash. The loveliest assurance of the miracle’s enduring now lay in their motion, lay in the garden, which seemed to be sleeping in the sunshine, where the gravel crunched, the breeze freshened from time to time, and their bodies were bright and alert. For surmising oneself bound in feeling to everything the eye could see was as easy as the transparent air, and only when they stopped was it afterward as melancholy as a deep breath to take first steps again through this imagistic landscape. The words they exchanged meanwhile really signified nothing, but merely cradled them as they walked, like the childishly amused conversation a fountain has with itself, babbling gossip about eternity.

But without their needing to say anything, they slowly turned into a path that led
them near the boundary of their small garden kingdom, and it was evident that this was not happening for the first time. Where they came in sight of the street, rolling animatedly past beyond the high iron fence that was supported by a stone base, they abandoned the path, taking advantage of the cover of trees and bushes, and paused on a small rise, whose dry earth formed the place where several old trees stood. Here the picture of the resting pair was lost in the play of light and shadow, and there was almost no likelihood of their being discovered from the street, although they were so near it that the unsuspecting pedestrians made that exaggerated outward impression which is peculiar to everything one merely observes without in any way participating in it. The faces seemed like things, indeed even poorer than things, like flat disks, and if words were suddenly carried into the garden they had no sense, only an amplified sound such as hollow,
decayed rooms have. But the two observers did not have long to wait before one person or another came still closer to their hiding place: whether it was someone stopping and looking in astonishment at all the green suddenly revealed along his course, or whether it was someone moved to stop by the favorable opportunity of resting something in his hand on the stone base of the fence for a moment, or to tie his shoelace on it, or whether in the short shadows of the fence pillars falling on the path it was two people stopped in conversation, with the others streaming past behind them. And the more accidentally this seemed to happen in single cases, the more clearly the invariable, unconscious, enduring effect of the fence detached itself from the variety and contingency of these manifold actions, invading the individual life like a trap.
They both loved this game of cause and effect, which stood in scornful contrast to the game of souls.

They had discovered this place on the days when they, too, had strolled through the streets and talked about the difficulties of loving one's neighbor, and the contradictions of everyone loving everybody; and the fence, which separated them from the world but connected them with it visually, had seemed to them then the manifest image of the human world, not least of themselves: in short, the image of everything which Ulrich had once summarized in the terse expression “the un-separated and not united.” Most of this now seemed quite superfluous and a childish waste of time; as indeed its only mission had been to give them time and to gain from the observing game with the world the conviction that they had something in mind that concerned everyone and did not just spring from a personal need. Now they
were much more secure, they knew more about their adventure. All individual questions were froth, beneath which lay the dark mirror of another possible way of life. Their great sympathy with each other and with others, and in general the fulfillment of the promises sunk into the world, promises that constantly emanate the peculiar mirage that life-as-it-is strikes us as fragmented in every way by life-as-it-might-be—this fulfillment was never to be won from details but only from the Totally Different! The fence, however, had still preserved something of its coarse, prompting distinctness, and was at least able to beckon to a leave-taking.

Agathe laid her hand, which had the light, dry warmth of the finest wool, on Ulrich’s head, turned it in the direction of the street, let her hand fall to his shoulder, and tickled her brothers ear with her fingernail and no less with the words: “Now let’s test our love for our neighbors once more,
Teacher! How would it be if today we tried to love one of them like ourselves!"

"I don’t love myself!" Ulrich resisted in the same tone. “I even think that all the earlier energy I was so proud of was a running away from myself."

“So what you’ve sometimes said, that I’m your self-love in the form of a girl, is altogether not terribly flattering.”

“Oh, on the contrary! You’re another self-love, the other!”

“Now, that you’ll have to explain to me!” Agathe commanded without looking up.

“A good person has good defects and a bad one has bad virtues: so the one has a good self-love and the other a bad one!”

“Obscure!”
“But from a famous author from whom Christendom has learned a great deal, but unfortunately just not that.”

“Not much clearer!”

“Half a millennium before Christ, he taught that whoever does not love himself in the right way is not able to love others either. For the right love for oneself is also being naturally good to others. So self-love is not selfishness but being good.”

“Did he really say that?”

“Oh, I don’t know, perhaps I’m putting the words in his mouth. He also taught that goodwill is not wanting the good but wanting something with goodness. He was a logician and natural philosopher, soldier and mystic, and, significantly, is supposed to have been the greatest teacher, and so it did not even escape him that morality can never be completely detached from mysticism/’
“You’re an insufferable exercise instructor who shows up in the morning; the cock crows, and one’s supposed to hop to it! I’d rather sleep!”

“No, you ought to help me.”

They lay on their stomachs on the ground, next to each other. If they raised their heads, they saw the street; if they didn’t, they saw between pointed young blades of grass the drying fallen leaves from the high tree.

Agathe asked: “So that’s why it’s love your neighbor ‘as yourself’? It could also be the other way around: Love yourself as your neighbor.”

“Yes. And it’s easier to love him not only less than oneself but also more. What’s almost impossible is to love him and yourself in the same way. Compared with that, loving someone so much that you sacrifice yourself for him is positively a relief,” Ulrich replied.
For the moment, the conversation had taken on the playful tone that deftly stirred up profound questions, a tone to which they had become accustomed during their walks through the city; but really—and although since then nothing that could be counted as time had passed—they were deliberately imitating themselves, the way one casually immerses oneself again in a game one has outgrown. And Agathe remarked: “So then love your neighbor as yourself also means: don’t love your neighbor selflessly!”

“Actually, yes,” Ulrich conceded. And without agreeing with her incidental arguments against selfless goodness, which in male human form were courting her soul, he added: “That’s even quite important. For the people who talk of selfless goodness are teaching something that’s better than selfishness and less than goodness.”
And Agathe asked: “But when you fall in love the usual way, doesn’t that inevitably involve desire and selflessness?”

“Yes.”

“And it really can’t be said of self-love either that one desires oneself, or that one loves oneself selflessly?”

“No,” Ulrich said.

“Then what’s called self-love may not be any kind of love at all?” Agathe hazarded.

“That’s as you take it,” her brother replied. “It’s more a confiding in oneself, an instinctive caring for oneself—”

“Self-toleration!” Agathe said, quite deliberately making a dissatisfied and slightly disgusted face, although she did not exactly know why.

“Why are we talking about it at all?” Ulrich interjected.
“But we’re talking about others!” Agathe answered, and laughter at her brother and herself lit up her face. She had again directed her glance at the fence, drawing her brother’s after her; and because their eyes were not focused on a specific distance, the host of vehicles and pedestrians swam past it. “Where shall we begin?” she asked, as if the rest were understood as a matter of course.

“You can’t just do it on command!” Ulrich objected.

“No. But we can try to just feel everything in some such way; and we can entrust ourselves to it more and more!”

“That has to happen of itself.”

“Let’s help it along!” Agathe proposed. “For instance, let’s stop talking and do nothing but look at them!”
“That’s all right with me,” Ulrich agreed.

For a short time they were silent; then something else occurred to Agathe: “To love something in the ordinary sense means to prefer it to something else: so we must try to love one person and at the same time prevent ourselves from preferring him to others,” she whispered.

“Keep quiet! You have to be quiet!” Ulrich fended her off.

Now they gazed out for a while again. But soon Agathe propped herself up on her elbow and looked despairingly at her brother. “It’s not working! As soon as I tried it, the people outside became like a river full of pale fish. We’re dreadful idlers!” she complained.

Ulrich turned toward her, laughing. “You’re forgetting that striving for bliss isn’t work!”
“I’ve never done anything in my whole life; now I’d like something to happen! Let’s do something good to someone!” Agathe pleaded.

“Even doing good is a notion that doesn’t occur at all in real goodness. It’s only when the waves break that the ocean disintegrates into droplets!” Ulrich countered. “And what would it mean anyway to do something good in a situation in which you can’t do anything but good?” The anticipation, the headiness of a feeling of victory, the confidence of powers that were for the moment at rest, allowed him to be playful with his seriousness.

“So you don’t want to do anything?” Agathe asked coolly.

“Of course I do! But the kingdom of love is in every respect the great anti-reality. That’s why the first thing you have to do is cut the arms and legs off your emotions; and
then we’ll see what can happen in spite of that!”

“You make it sound like a machine/’
Agathe chided.

“You have to undertake it as a good experimenter,” Ulrich contradicted her, unmoved. “You have to try to circumscribe the decisive part.”

Agathe now offered serious resistance. “We’re not concluding some scientific investigation but, if you’ll permit the expression, opening our hearts,” she said with somewhat sarcastic sharpness. “And also the point we’d have to start from has not been exactly new for some time, since the Gospels! Exclude hatred, resistance, strife from yourself; just don’t believe that they exist! Don’t blame, don’t get angry, don’t hold people responsible, don’t defend yourself against anything! Don’t struggle anymore; don’t think or bargain; forget and unlearn denial! In this way
fill every crack, every fissure, between you and them; love, fear, beg, and walk with them; and take everything that happens in time and space, whatever comes and goes, whatever is beautiful or disturbing, not as reality but as a word and metaphor of the Lord. That’s how we should go to meet them!"

As usually happened, during this long and passionate and unusually resolute speech her face had taken on a deeper hue. “Splendid! Every word a letter in a great scripture!” Ulrich exclaimed appreciatively. “And we, too, will have to gain courage. But such courage? Is that what you really want?”

Agathe subdued her zeal and denied it mutely and honestly. “Not entirely!” she added by way of explanation, so as not to deny it too much.

“It is the teaching of Him who advised us to offer our left cheek if we have been
struck on the right one. And that’s probably the mildest transgression that ever was,” Ulrich went on reflectively. “But don’t misunderstand one thing, that this message too, if carried out, is a psychological exercise! A particular behavior and a particular group of ideas and emotions are bound up in it together and mutually support each other. I mean everything in us that is suffering, enduring, tender, susceptible, protective, and yielding: in short, love. And it’s so far from that to everything else, especially to whatever is hard, aggressive, and actively life-shaping, that these other emotions and ideas and the bitter necessities disappear from view entirely. That doesn’t mean that they fade from reality; merely that you don’t get angry at them, don’t deny them, and that you forget knowing about them; so it’s like a roof that the wind can get under and that can never stand for long—"
"But one has faith in goodness! It's faith! You're forgetting that!" Agathe interrupted.

"No, I'm not forgetting that, but that came along only later, through Paul. I made a note of his explanation. It runs: Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.' And that's a gross, I'd almost say covetous, misunderstanding. The tenet of the kingdom that will come at the end of days would like to have something it can get hold of in place of the bliss that the Son of Man has already experienced on earth."

"It has been promised. Why are you running it down? Is it then worth nothing to be able to believe not merely with all one's soul but utterly, with parasol and clothes?"

"But the breath of the annunciation was not promise and faith but intimation! A condition in which one loves metaphors! A
bolder condition than faith! And I’m not the first to notice this. The only thing that’s been regarded as truly real for the bringer of salvation has been the experiencing of these foreshadowing metaphors of happy unresistingness and love; the miserable rest, which we call reality, natural, sturdy, dangerous life, has simply mirrored itself in his soul in a completely dematerialized way, like a picture puzzle. And—by Jehovah and Jupiter!—that assumes, first of all, civilization, because no one is so poor that robbers can’t be found to murder him; and it assumes a desert in which there are indeed evil spirits, but no lions. Secondly, these high and happy tidings appear to have originated pretty much in ignorance of all contemporary civilizations. It is remote from the multiplicities of culture and the spirit, remote from doubts, but also from choice, remote from sickness but also from almost all discoveries that fight it: in short, it is remote from all the weaknesses,
but also from all the advantages of human knowledge and capability, which even in its own time were by no means meager. And incidentally, that’s why it also has rather simple notions of good and evil, beautiful and ugly. Now, the moment you make room for such objections and conditions, you’ll also have to content yourself with my less simple procedure!”

Agathe argued against it anyway. “You’re forgetting one thing,” she repeated, “that this teaching claims to come from God; and in that case everything more complex that deviates from it is simply false or indifferent!”

“Quiet!” Ulrich said, placing a finger on his mouth. “You can’t talk about God in such a stubbornly physical way, as if He were sitting behind that bush over there the way He did in the year 100!”
“All right, I can’t,” Agathe conceded. “But let me tell you something, too! You yourself, when you’re devising bliss on earth, are prepared to renounce science, tendencies in art, luxury, and everything people rush around for every day. Then why do you begrudge it so much to others?”

“You’re certainly right,” Ulrich conceded. A dry twig had found its way into his hand, and he pensively poked the ground with it. They had slid down a little, so that once again only their heads peeked over the top of the rise, and that only when they lifted them. They lay beside each other on their stomachs like two marksmen who have forgotten what they were lying in wait for; and Agathe, touched by her brother’s yielding, threw her arm around his neck and made a concession of her own. “Look, what is it doing?” she exclaimed, pointing with a finger to an ant beside his twig, which had attacked another ant.
“It’s murdering,” Ulrich ascertained coldly.

“Don’t let it!” Agathe pleaded, and in her excitement raised a leg to the sky so that it rose upside down over her knee.

Ulrich proposed: “Try to take it metaphorically. You don’t even have to rush to give it a particular significance: just take its own! Then it becomes like a dry breath of air, or the sulfurous smell of decaying foliage in autumn: some kind of volatizing drops of melancholy that make the soul’s readiness for dissolution tremble. I can imagine that one could even get over one’s own death amicably, but only because one dies just once and therefore regards it as especially important; because the understanding of saints and heroes is pretty lacking in glory in the face of nature’s constant small confusions and their dissonances!”

Possibly: Ulrich: Through faith!
Agathe: Intimation and metaphor won’t do it either.

Ulrich: Exactly!

While he was speaking, Agathe had taken the twig from his fingers and attempted to rescue the ant that had been attacked, with the result that she nearly crushed both, but finally she succeeded in separating them. With diminished vitality, the ants crept toward new adventures.

“Did that make any sense?” Ulrich asked.

“I understand you to mean by that that what we were trying to do by the fence is against nature and reason,” Agathe answered.

“Why shouldn’t I say it?” Ulrich said. “Anyway, I wanted to say to surprise you: the glory of God does not twitch an eyelid when calamity strikes. Perhaps too: life swallows
corpses and filth without a shadow on its smile. And surely this: man is charming as long as no moral demands are made on him.” Ulrich stretched out irresponsibly in the sun. For they merely needed to change position slightly, they did not even have to stand up, in order for the world on which they had been eavesdropping to disappear and be replaced by a large lawn, bordered by rustling bushes, that stretched in a gentle incline down to their lovely old house and lay there in the full light of summer. They had given up the ants and offered themselves to the points of the sun’s rays, half unawares; from time to time a cool breeze poured over them. “The sun shines on the just and the unjust!” Ulrich offered as benediction, in peaceable mockery.

“‘Love your enemies, for He maketh the sun to rise on the evil and on the good’ is the way it goes.” Agathe contradicted him as
softly as if she were merely confiding it to the air.

“Really? The way I say it, it would be wonderfully natural!”

“But you’ve got it wrong.”

“Are you sure? Where is it from anyway?”

“The Bible, of course. I’ll look it up in the house. I want to show you for once that I can be right too!”

He wanted to hold her back, but she was already on her feet beside him and hastened away. Ulrich closed his eyes. Then he opened and closed them again. Without Agathe, the solitude was bereft of everything; as if he were not in it himself. Then the steps returned. Great resounding footsteps in the silence, as in soft snow. Then the indescribable sense of nearness set in, and finally the nearness filled with a cheery laugh, prefacing
the words: “It goes: ‘Love your enemies,...for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust’!”

“And where’s it from?”

“Nowhere else but the Sermon on the Mount that you seem to know so well, my friend.”

“I feel I’ve been exposed as a bad theologian,” Ulrich conceded with a smile, and asked: “Read it aloud!”

Agathe had a heavy Bible in her hands, not an especially old or precious thing, but in any case not a recent edition, and read:

“ ‘Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that
ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.’ “

“Do you know anything else?” Ulrich asked, eager to know.

“Yes,” Agathe went on. “It is written: To have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment:...but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.’ And then this too, which you know so well: ‘But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain/ “
‘Well, I don’t like that!’ Ulrich said.

Agathe thumbed through the pages. “Maybe you’ll like this: ‘And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.’ “

Ulrich took the book from her and leafed through it himself. “There are even several variations,” he exclaimed. Then he laid the book in the grass, pulled her beside him, and for some time said nothing. At last he replied: “Speaking seriously, I’m like Everyman, or at least like that man; it’s natural for me to apply this saying in reverse. If his hand offend thee, cut it off, and if you smite someone on the cheek, give him a hook to the heart too, just to make sure.”
Even in those years when Ulrich had sought his path in life alone and not without bravado, the word “sister” had often been for him heavy with an undefined longing, although at that time he almost never thought that he possessed a real living sister. In this there was a contradiction pointing to disparate origins, which were indicated in many ways that brother and sister ordinarily discounted. Not that they necessarily saw it as false, but it counted as little in relationship to the truth they knew they were
approaching as an intruding corner signifies in the sweep of a grandly curving wall.

Without question, such things happen often. In many lives the unreal, invented sister is nothing other than the soaring youthful form of a need for love that later, in the condition of chillier dreams, contents itself with a bird or another animal, or turns toward humanity or one’s neighbor. In the life of many others, this sister is adolescent timidity and loneliness, an invented doppelganger full of shadowboxing charm, which softens the anxieties of loneliness in the tenderness of a lonely togetherness. And of many natures it need merely be said that this image that they cherish so ecstatically is nothing but the crassest egotism and selfishness: an excessive liking to be loved that has entered into a jerry-built agreement with sweet selflessness. But that many men and women bear the image of such a counterpart in their hearts there can be no doubt. It simply
represents love and is always the sign of an unsatisfying and tense relation to the world. And it is not only those who are deficient or who are by nature without harmony who have such desires; balanced people have them too.

And so Ulrich began to speak to his sister about an experience he had related to her once already, and repeated the story of the most unforgettable woman who, with the exception of Agathe herself, had ever crossed his path. She was a child-woman, a girl of about twelve, remarkably mature in her behavior, who had ridden in the same trolley car for a short distance with him and a companion, and had charmed him like a mysteriously bygone love poem whose traces are full of never-experienced bliss. Later, the flaming up of his infatuation had sometimes aroused doubts in him, for it was peculiar and admitted dubious inferences about himself. For that reason he did not relate the incident
with feeling but spoke of the doubts, even though it was not without feeling that he generalized them. “At that age, a girl quite often has more beautiful legs than she does later,” he said. “Their later sturdiness apparently comes from what they need to carry directly above them; in adolescence these legs are long and free and can run, and if their skirts expose the thigh in some activity, the curve already has something gently increasing—oh, the crescent moon occurs to me, toward the end of its tender first virginal moon phase—that’s how glorious they look! Later I sometimes investigated the reasons quite seriously. At that age hair has the softest sheen. The face shows its lovely naturalness. The eyes are like some smooth, never-crumpled silk. The mind, destined in future to become petty and covetous, is still a pure flame without much brightness among obscure desires. And what at this age is certainly not yet beautiful—for instance, the
childish tummy or the blind expression of the breast—acquires through the clothing, to the extent that it cleverly simulates adulthood, and through the dreamy imprecision of love, everything that a charming stage mask can achieve. So it’s quite in order to admire such a creature, and how else should one do so than through a slight attack of love!”

“And it’s not at all against nature for a child to be the object of such feelings?” Agathe asked.

“What would be against nature would be a straight-out lustful desire,” Ulrich replied. “But a person like that also drags the innocent or, in any event, unready and helpless creature into actions for which it is not destined. He must ignore the immaturity of the developing mind and body, and play the game of his passion with a mute and veiled opponent; no, he not only ignores whatever would get in his way, but brutally sweeps it
aside! That’s something quite different, with different consequences!"

“But perhaps a touch of the perniciousness of this ‘sweeping aside’ is already contained in the ‘ignoring’?” Agathe objected. She might have been jealous of her brother’s tissue of thoughts; at any rate, she resisted. “I don’t see any great distinction in whether one pays no attention to what might restrain one, or doesn’t feel it!”

Ulrich countered: “You’re right and you’re not right. I really just told the story because it’s a preliminary stage of the love between brother and sister.”

“Love between brother and sister?” Agathe asked, and pretended to be astonished, as if she were hearing the term for the first time; but she was digging her nails into Ulrich’s arm again, and perhaps she did so too strongly, and her fingers trembled. Ulrich, feeling as if five small warm wounds
had opened side by side in his arm, suddenly said: “The person whose strongest stimulation is associated with experiences each of which is, in some way or other, impossible, isn’t interested in possible experiences. It may be that imagination is a way of fleeing from life, a refuge and a den of iniquity, as many maintain; I think that the story of the little girl, as well as all the other examples we’ve talked about, point not to an abnormality or a weakness but to a revulsion against the world and a strong recalcitrance, an excessive and overpassionate desire for love!” He forgot that Agathe could know nothing of the other examples and equivocal comparisons with which his thoughts had previously associated this kind of love; for he now felt himself in the clear again and had overcome, for the time being, the anesthetizing taste, the transformation into the willless and lifeless, that was part of his
experience, so that the automatic reference slipped inadvertently through a gap in his thoughts.

These thoughts were still oriented toward the more general aspect, with which his personal case could be compared as well as contrasted; and if in favor of the inner coherence of these ideas one leaves aside how they succeeded and shaped one another, what remained was a more or less impersonal content that looked something like this: For the articulation of life, hate might be just as important as love. There seem to be as many reasons to love the world as to detest it. Both instincts he in human nature ready for use, their powers in unequal proportions, which vary in individuals. But there is no way of knowing how pleasure and bitterness balance each other in order to allow us to keep going on with our lives. The opinion we like to hear, that this calls for a preponderance of pleasure, is evidently false. For we also go on
with our lives with bitterness, with an excess of unhappiness, hatred, or contempt for life, and proceed as surely as we would with a superabundance of happiness. But it occurred to Ulrich that both are extremes, the life-loving person as well as the person shadowed by animosity, and this is what led him to think of the complicated balance that is the usual one. Belonging to this balance of love and hate, for example, and thereby to the processes and structures with whose help they reach an accommodation, are justice and all other ways of observing moderation; but there belong to it no less the formation of fellowships of two or of vast numbers, combinations that are like feathered nests elaborately girdled with thorns; there belongs to it the certainty of God; and Ulrich knew that in this series the intellectual-sensual structure of the “sister” ultimately also had its place as a most daring expedient. From what weakness of soul this dream drew its nourishment
stood hindmost, and foremost stood, as its origin, a really superhuman disparity. And apparently it was for this reason that Ulrich had spoken of revulsion toward the world, for whoever knows the depth of good and evil passion experiences the falling away of every kind of agreement that mediates between them, and he had not spoken the way he did in order to gloss over the passion for his own flesh and blood. Without accounting for why he was doing so, he now told Agathe a second little story as well, which at the beginning seemed to have no connection at all with the first. “I once came across it, and it is supposed to have actually happened in the time of the Thirty Years’ War, when individuals and peoples were thrown about in confusion,” he began. “Most of the peasants from one isolated group of farms had been snatched away to serve in the war; none of them returned, and the women managed the farms by themselves, which
was tiring and vexatious for them. Then it happened that one of the men who had disappeared returned to the region, and after many adventures came to his wife. I’ll say right off that it wasn’t the right man but a tramp and deceiver, who had shared camp and march for a few months with the missing and perhaps dead man, and had so successfully absorbed the other man’s stories, when homesickness loosened his tongue, that he was able to pretend to be him. He knew the nicknames of wife and cow, and the names and habits of the neighbors, who moreover lived some distance away. He had a beard exactly like the other man’s. He had a way of looking, with his two eyes of nondescript color, that one might easily think he wouldn’t have done it much differently before; and although his voice sounded strange at first, it could certainly be explained by saying that one was now listening more closely than one had before. In short, the man knew how to
imitate his predecessor trait for trait, the way a coarse and unlike portrait at first repeals but becomes more of a likeness the longer one remains alone with it, and finally takes over one’s recollection entirely. I can imagine that, from time to time, something like dread must have warned the woman that he was not her husband; but she wanted to have her man again, and perhaps just a man, and so the stranger became more and more established in his role—”

“And how did it end?” Agathe asked.

“I forget. Apparently the man must have been unmasked by some sort of accident. But man in general is never unmasked, his whole life long!”

“You mean: One always only loves the stand-in for the right person? Or do you mean that when a person loves for the second time he doesn’t confuse the two, but the image of the new one is in many places
only an over-painting of the image of the first one?” Agathe asked, with a charming yawn.

“I intended to say a lot more, and it is much more boring,” Ulrich responded. “Try to imagine someone, color-blind, for whom shades of brightness and shadow represent almost the entire world of colors: he can’t see a single color and yet can apparently act so that no one notices, for what he can see represents for him what he can’t. But what happens in this case in a particular area is what really happens to us all with reality. In our experiences and investigations, reality never appears otherwise than through a glass that partially transmits one’s glance and partially reflects back the image of the viewer. If I observe the delicately flushed white of your hand, or feel the refractory inwardness of your flesh in my fingers, I have something real before me, but not in the way in which it
is real; and just as little when I reduce it to its ultimate atoms and formulas!”

“Then why make such an effort to reduce it to something loathsome!”

“Do you recall what I said about the intellectual portrayal of nature, of its being an image without similarity? There are many quite different ways in which anything can be apprehended as the exact image of something else, but everything that occurs in this image, or results from it, must in just this one specific view always be a depiction of what investigating the original image demonstrates. If this also turns out to be the case where it could not have originally been foreseen, then the image is as justified as it can possibly be. That’s a very general and quite unsensory notion of image-ability. It presupposes a specific relationship of two areas, and gives to understand that it can be comprehended as a portrayal whenever it covers both areas without exception. In this
sense, a mathematical formula can be the image of a natural process, just as much as a portrayal established by external sensory similarity. A theory can in its consequences accord with reality, and the effects of reality with theory. The cylinder in a music box is the portrayal of a way of singing, and an action portrays a fluctuating feeling. In mathematics, where for the sake of unsullied progression of thought one would most like to trust only what can be counted off on one’s fingers, one usually speaks only of the precision of coordinates, which has to be possible point for point. But fundamentally, everything can also be regarded as a portrayal that is called correspondence, represent-ability for some purpose, equal value and exchangeability, or equality in respect to something, or undifferent-ability, or mutual appropriateness according to some kind of standard. A portrayal, therefore, is something like a relationship of complete
correspondence in view of any particular such relationship—"

Agathe interrupted this exposition, which Ulrich was pronouncing listlessly and out of a sense of duty, with the admonition: "You could really get one of our modern painters fired up with all that—"

'Well, why not!' he replied. "Consider what sense there is in talking about fidelity to nature and similarity where the spatial is replaced by a surface, or the motley colors of life by metal or stone. That’s why artists aren’t entirely wrong to reject these notions of sensory imitation and similarity as photographic and, with the exception of a few traditional laws that go along with their medium and tools, why they recognize only inspiration, or some kind of theory that has been revealed to them; but the customers who are portrayed, who after the execution of these laws see themselves as victims of a miscarriage of justice, mostly aren’t...."
Ulrich paused. Although he had intended to speak about the logically strict notion of portrayal only in order to be able to derive from it its free but by no means random consequences, which dominate the various imagistic relationships that occur in life, he was now silent. Observing himself in this attempt left him dissatisfied. He had lately forgotten many things that had formerly been at the tips of his fingers, or to put it better, he had pushed them aside; even the pointed expressions and concepts of his earlier profession, which he had used so often, were no longer viable for him, and in searching for them he not only felt an unpleasant dryness but was also afraid of talking like a bungler.

“You said that a color-blind person isn’t missing anything when he looks at the world,” Agathe encouraged him.

“Yes. Of course I oughtn’t to have put it quite that way,” Ulrich responded. “It’s still an obscure question altogether. Even if you
limit yourself to the intellectual image that the understanding derives from something, in confronting the problem of whether it’s true you come up against the greatest difficulties, although the air you ordinarily breathe is always dry and crystalline. However, the images we make for ourselves in life so we can act and feel rightly, or even act and feel energetically, aren’t determined just by the understanding; indeed, these images are often quite irrational and, according to rational standards, not at all accurate representations, and yet they must fulfill their purpose in order for us to remain in harmony with reality and with ourselves. They must also be precise and complete according to some kind of key or manual of images, and according to the notion that determines the manner in which they are portrayed, even if this notion leaves room for various methods—"
Agathe interrupted him excitedly. She had suddenly grasped the connection. “So the false peasant was a portrayal of the real one?” she asked.

Ulrich nodded. “Originally, an image always represented its object completely. It bestowed power over it. Whoever cut out the eyes or the heart of an image killed the person portrayed. Whoever secretly got hold of the image of an inaccessible beauty was able to conquer her. The name, too, is part of these images; and so one was able to conjure God with His name, which is equivalent to making Him subservient. As you know, even today one makes off with secret remembrances, or gives oneself a ring with an engraved name, and wears pictures and locks of hair over one’s heart as a talisman. In the course of time, something split off; but it has all sunk to the level of superstition, although one part has achieved the tedious dignity of photography, geometry, and such things. But
just think of the hypnotized person, who with every sign of satisfaction bites into a potato that for him represents an apple, or think of your childhood dolls, which you loved more passionately the simpler they were and the less they looked like people; so you see that it doesn’t depend on externalities, and you’re back at the bolt-upright fetish column that represents a god—"

“Couldn’t you almost say that the more dissimilar an image is, the greater the passion for it as soon as we’ve attached ourselves to it?” Agathe asked.

“Yes, absolutely!” Ulrich agreed. “Our reason, our perception, have separated themselves from our emotions in this matter. One could say that the most stirring representations always have something unlike.” Smiling, he observed her from the side and added: “When I’m not in your presence I don’t see you before me in a way one would like to paint; it’s rather as if you had glanced
into some water and I was trying vainly to trace your image in the water with my finger. I maintain that it’s only indifferent things that one sees properly and truly alike.”

“Strange!” his sister replied. “I see you before me precisely! Perhaps because my memory is entirely too precise and dependent!”

“Similarity of portrayal is an approximation of what the understanding finds real and equal; it is a concession to the understanding,” Ulrich said agreeably, and went on in a conciliatory way: “But besides that, there are also the images that address themselves to our emotions, and an image in art is, for example, a mixture of both demands. But if, beyond that, you wish to take it to the point where something portrays something else only for the emotions, you’ll have to think of such examples as a flag flying, which at certain moments is an image of our honor—”
“But there you can only be talking about a symbol, you’re no longer talking about images!” Agathe interjected.

“Mental image, simile, metaphor, they shade into one another,” Ulrich said. “Even such examples as the image of a disease and the doctor’s plan for curing it belong here. They must have imagination’s inventive lack of precision, but the precision of execut-ability as well. This flexible boundary between imagining the plan, and the image that endures in the face of reality, is important everywhere in life, but hard to find.”

“How different we are!” Agathe repeated thoughtfully.

Ulrich parried the reproach with a smile. “Very much so! I’m speaking of the lack of precision in taking something/or something, as of a divinity bestowing fruitfulness and life, and I’m trying to impart as much order to it as it will bear; and you don’t
notice that I’ve been talking for a long time about the truthful possibility of twins who are doppelgangers, who have two souls, but are one?” He went on spiritedly: “Imagine twins who resemble each other ‘interchangeably’; place them before you, each in the same attitude, separated only by a wall indicated by a line to confirm that they are two independent beings. And in an uncanny augmentation, they can repeat themselves in whatever they do, so that you spontaneously assume the same about their inner processes. What’s uncanny about this performance? That there’s absolutely nothing by which we can distinguish them, and that yet they are two! That in everything we might undertake with them, one is as good as the other, although in the process something like a destiny is being fulfilled! In short, they are the same for us but not for themselves!”
“Why are you playing such gruesome and spooky games with these twins?” Agathe asked.

“Because it’s a case that happens often. It’s the case of mistaking things, of indifference, of perceiving and acting wholesale, of represent-ability: in other words, a major chapter from the usages of life. I’ve only prettied it up in order to dramatize something for you. Now let me turn it around: Under what circumstances would the twins be two for us and one for themselves? Is that spooky too?”

Agathe pressed his arm and sighed. Then she admitted: “If it’s possible for two people to be the same for the world, it could also be that a person appears to us doubled—But you’re making me speak nonsense!” she added.

“Imagine two goldfish in a bowl,” Ulrich asked.
“No!” Agathe said firmly, but laughing at the same time. “I’m not going along with any more of this!”

“Please, imagine them! A large bowl in the shape of a ball, as you sometimes see in someone’s living room. You can, incidentally, imagine the bowl to be as large as the boundaries of our property. And two reddish-gold fish, moving their fins slowly up and down like veils. Let’s leave aside whether they are really two or one. For each other, at least, they will be two, for the time being; their jealousy over feeding and sex will see to that. They avoid each other, too, whenever they come too near each other. But I can well imagine that for me they can become one: I need only concentrate on this motion that slowly draws in upon itself and unfolds, and then this single shimmering creature becomes merely a dependent part of this common up-and-down motion. Now I ask when this might also happen to them—”
“They’re goldfish!” Agathe admonished. “Not a group of dancers suffering from supernatural delusions!”

“They are you and I,” her brother responded pensively, “and that’s why I would like to try to bring the comparison to a proper conclusion. It seems to me a soluble problem to imagine how the world glides past in its separate-but-united motion. It’s no different from the world undulating past from a railway car going around curves, except that it happens twice over, so that at every one of the double being’s moments, the world occupies two positions, which somehow must coincide in the soul. That means that the idea of getting from one to the other through some motion will never be associated with these double beings; the impression of a distance existing between them will not arise; and more such things. I think I can imagine that one would also manage to be tolerably comfortable in such a world and could
doubtless puzzle out in various ways the necessary constitution of the mental tools and procedures needed to make sense of things.” Ulrich stopped for a moment and reflected. He had become aware of many objections, and the possibility of overcoming them also suggested itself. He smiled guiltily. Then he said: “But if we assume that the constitution of that other world is the same as ours, the task is much easier! Both hovering creatures will then feel themselves as one without being bothered by die difference in their perception and without there being any need of a higher geometry or physiology to attain it, as long as you are simply willing to believe that spiritually they are bound to each other more firmly than they are to the world. If anything at all important that they share is infinitely stronger than the difference of their experiences; if it bridges these differences and doesn’t even let them reach awareness; if the disturbances reaching them from
the world aren’t worth being aware of, then it will happen. And a shared suggestion can have this effect; or a sweet indolence and imprecision of the habits of receptiveness, which mix everything up; or a one-sided tension and exaltation that allows only what is desired to get through: one thing, it seems to me, as good as the next—"

Now Agathe laughed at him: “Then why did I have to march through all that precision about the conditions of portrayal?” she asked.

Ulrich shrugged his shoulders. “It’s all interconnected,” he answered, falling silent.

He himself knew that with all his efforts he had nowhere made a breach, and their variety confused his recollection. He foresaw that they would repeat themselves. But he was tired. And as the world becomes snugly heavy in the evaporating light and draws all its limbs up to itself, so did Agathe’s
nearness again force its way physically among his thoughts while his mind was giving up. They had both become accustomed to conducting such difficult conversations, and for rather a long time these had already been such a mixture of the pulsating power of the imagination, and the vain utmost effort of the understanding to secure it, that it was nothing new for either of them at one time to hope for a resolution, at another to allow their own words to rock them to sleep much as one listens to the childishly happy conversation of a fountain, babbling to itself happily about eternity. In this condition Ulrich now belatedly thought of something, and again had recourse to his carefully prepared parable. “It’s amazingly simple, but at the same time strange, and I don’t know how to present it to you convincingly,” he said. “You see that cloud over there in a somewhat different position than I do, and also presumably in a different way; and we’ve discussed
how whatever you see and do and what occurs to you will never be the same as what happens to me and what I do. And we’ve investigated the question of whether, in spite of that, it still might not be possible to be one being to the ultimate degree, and live as two with one soul. We’ve measured out all sorts of answers with a compass, but I forgot the simplest: that both people could be minded and able to take everything they experience only as a simile! Just consider that for the understanding every simile is equivocal, but for the emotions it’s unequivocal. For someone to whom the world is just a simile could also probably, according to his standards, experience as one thing what according to the world’s standards is two.” At this moment the idea also hovered before Ulrich that, in an attitude toward life for which being in one place is merely a metaphor for being in another, even that which cannot be experienced—being one person in two bodies
wandering about separately—would lose the sting of its impossibility; and he made ready to talk about this further.

But Agathe pointed at the cloud and interrupted him glibly: "Hamlet: ‘Do you see yonder cloud that’s almost in shape of a camel?’ Polonius: ‘By th’ mass, and ‘tis like a camel indeed.’ Hamlet: ‘Methinks it is like a weasel’ Polonius: ‘It is back’d like a weasel.’ Hamlet: ‘Or like a whale?’ Polonius: ‘Very like a whale!’ “ She said this so that it was a caricature of assiduous accord.

Ulrich understood the objection, but it did not prevent him from continuing: "One says of a simile, too, that it is an image. And it could be said just as well of every image that it’s a simile. But none is an equation. And just for that reason, the fact that it’s part of a world ordered not by equality but by similitude explains the enormous power of representation, the forceful effect that characterizes even quite obscure and unlike
copies, which we’ve already spoken about!” This idea itself burgeoned through its twilight, but he did not complete it. The immediate recollection of what they had said about portrayals combined in it with the image of the twins and with the picture-perfect numbness Agathe had experienced, which had repeated itself before her brother’s eyes; and this brew was animated by the distant memory of how often such conversations, when they were at their finest and came from heart and soul, themselves proclaimed an inclination to express themselves only in similes. But today that did not happen, and Agathe again hit the sensitive spot like a marksman as she upset her brother with a remark. “Why, for heaven’s sake, are all your words and desires directed at a woman who, oddly enough, is supposed to be your exact second edition?” she exclaimed, innocently offending. She was, nevertheless, a little afraid of the reply, and protected herself with
the generalization: “Is it comprehensible that in the whole world the ideal of all lovers is to become one being, without considering that these ungrateful people owe almost all the charm of love to the fact that they are two beings, and of seductively different sexes?” She added sanctimoniously, but with even craftier purpose: “They even sometimes say to one another, as if they wanted to accommodate you, ‘You’re my doll’!”

But Ulrich accepted the ridicule. He considered it justified, and it was difficult to counter it with a new accommodation. At the moment it was not necessary either. For although brother and sister were speaking quite differently, they were still in agreement. From some undetermined boundary on, they felt as one being: the way that from two people playing piano four-handedly, or reading with two voices a scripture important for their salvation, a single being arises, whose animated, brighter outline is
indistinctly set off from a shadowy background. As in a dream, what hovered before them was a melting into one form—just as incomprehensibly, convincingly, and passionately beautifully as it happens that two people exist alongside each other and are secretly the same; and this unity was partly supported and partly upset by the dubious manipulation that had lately emerged. It can be said of these reflections that it should not be impossible that the effects the emotions can achieve in sleep can be repeated when one is wide awake; perhaps with omissions, certainly in an altered fashion and through different processes, but it could also be expected that it would then happen with greater resistance to dissolving influences. To be sure, they saw themselves sufficiently removed from this, and even the choice of means they preferred distinguished them from each other, to the extent that Ulrich inclined more to accounting for things, and
Agathe to spontaneously credulous resolution.

That is why it often happened that the end of a discussion appeared to be further from its goal than its beginning, as was also the case this time in the garden, where the meeting had begun almost as an attempt to stop breathing and had then gone over to suppositions about ways of building variously imagined houses of cards. But it was basically natural that they should feel inhibited about acting according to their all too daring ideas. For how were they to turn into reality something that they themselves planned as pure unreality, and how should it be easy for them to act in one spirit, when it was really an enchanted spirit of inaction? This was why in the midst of this conversation far removed from the world they suddenly had the urgent desire to come into contact with people again.
PART 2

Drafts of Character and Incident
He encountered Moosbrugger towering broadly among the cunning deceivers. It was heroic, the futile struggle of a giant among these people. He seemed through some quality or other to actually deserve the admiration that he found a sham but enjoyed in a naively ridiculous way. In the grossest distortions of insanity, there is still a self struggling to find something to hang on to. He was like a heroic ballad in the midst of an age that creates quite different kinds of songs but out of habitual admiration still preserves the old things. Defenseless, admired power, like a club among the arrows of the mind. One
could laugh at this person and yet feel that what was comic in him was shattering. The clouding of this mind was connected with that of the age.

—Do you have a friend? Ulrich asked in a moment when they were unobserved. —I mean, Moosbrugger, don’t you have anyone who could get you out of here? There’s no other way. Moosbrugger said he did, but he wouldn’t be easy to find. What is he? A locksmith. But he’s a locksmith who works on cabinets, Moosbrugger grinned rather sheepishly, (he’s not easy to find), he works in many places. He’d do it, but Ulrich would have to go to his wife and get his address from her. And he didn’t want to impose that on him, this wife was an awful person. Moosbrugger was visibly cutting capers and preening in a courtly way before Ulrich. Ulrich said she would probably give him the information, whether she was awful or not. Yes, she no doubt would; he would have to
mention Moosbrugger’s name. Before his last wandering, when he was working in Vienna, he had lived with her himself, the heart of the matter now emerged; he, Moosbrugger; but she was a woman with low tastes, a criminal, a quite common sort Moosbrugger shows all the symptoms of his hatred for women only because he is afraid that Ulrich might have a poor opinion of him when he sees this woman.

So she would tell Ulrich where he could meet her partner.

Ulrich went to see her. Borne by the automatism that accompanies all deeds of daring. He was really not in the least surprised when he entered an apartment that looked like forty others in a building on the outskirts of the city, and encountered in the kitchen a young woman doing chores, who must have been just like the forty other housewives. Nor did the suspicion with which he was greeted in any way differ from
the suspicion one often finds in these circles. As soon as he entered he had to say something, and through the general European courtesies he uttered was immediately placed in a quite impersonal relationship. There wasn’t a breath of crime in this environment. She was a coarse young woman, and her breasts moved under her blouse like a rabbit under a cloth.

When he brought up the name of Moosbrugger Fraulein Hornlicher smiled deprecatingly, as if to say: the useless crazy things he gets himself into; but she was willing to help him. Of course it depended on Karl, but she didn’t think he’d leave Moosbrugger in the lurch. This all took place in courteous exchanges, as when a businessman who’s got himself into a corner begs his solid neighbors for support.

She gave Ulrich the name of a small tavern where he would presumably find Karl. He’d probably have to go several times, since
Karl’s movements were never entirely predictable. He should tell the tavern keeper who had sent him and whom he wanted to speak to and calmly sit down and wait.

Ulrich was lucky, and found Karl Biziste on his first try. Again an automatic play of limbs and thoughts carried him there; but this time Ulrich was paying attention, and followed with curiosity what seemed to be happening to him rather than to be something he was doing. His emotions were the same as they were the time when he had been arrested. From that moment, when Clarisse’s interest had cautiously begun to tickle him like the end of a thread, until now, where events were already being woven into a heavy rope, things had taken their own course, one thing leading to another with a necessity that merely carried him along. It seemed incredibly strange to him that the course of most people’s lives is this course of things that so alienated him, while on the
contrary for other people it is quite natural to let themselves be borne along by whatever turns up, and thus finally be raised to a solid existence. Ulrich also felt that soon he would no longer be able to turn around, but this made him as curious as when one suddenly notices the inexorable movement of one’s own breathing.

And he made yet another observation. When he imagined how much mischief could arise from what he was proposing to do, and that it soon would no longer be in his power to avoid initiating the process. With an evil deed that he felt on his conscience as if it had already been committed, he saw the world he was walking through in a different way. Almost as if he had a vision in his heart. Of God, or a great invention, or a great happiness. Even the starry sky is a social phenomenon, a structure of the shared fantasy of our species, man, and changes when one steps out of its circle.
Moosbrugger—Ulrich told himself—will wreak more havoc if I help him to freedom. There’s no denying that sooner or later he will again fall victim to his disposition, and I will bear the responsibility for it. —But when he tried grave self-reproach in order to stop himself, there was something really untruthful in it. About as if one were to take the stance of being able to see clearly through a fog. The sufferings of those victims were really not certain. Had he seen the suffering creatures before him, he would probably have been overcome by a fierce empathy, for he was a person of oscillations, and that also meant of sympathetic oscillations. But as long as this suggestive power of experiencing with the senses was missing, and everything remained only a play of mental forces, these victims remained adherents of a mankind that he would really have liked to abolish, or at least greatly change, and no amount of sympathy diminished the emotional force of
this dislike. There are people whom this horrifies; they are under the impress of a very strong moral or social power of suggestion; they speak up and start shouting as soon as they notice even the most remote injustice, and are furious at the badness and coldness of feeling that they frequently find in the world. They demonstrate violent emotions, but in most cases these are the emotions imposed on them by their ideas and principles: that is, an enduring suggestiveness, which like all powers of suggestion has something automatic and mechanical about it, whose path never dips into the realm of living emotions. The person who lives disinterestedly is, in contrast to them, ill-disposed and indifferent toward everything that does not touch his own circle of interests; he not only has the indifference of a mass murderer, in its passive form, when he reads in his morning paper about the accidents and misfortunes of the previous day, but he can also quite easily
wish all kinds of misfortune on people he doesn’t care about, if they annoy him. Certain phenomena lead one to assume that a forward-marching civilization based on shared works also strengthens the repressed and immured antagonists of these emotions. This was what was going through Ulrich’s mind as he walked along. Moosbruggers victims were abstract, threatened, like all the thousands who are exposed to the dangers of factories, railroads, and automobiles.

When he happened to look around on his way to Herr Biziste, he thought he could see that all the life we have created has been made possible only through our neglecting our duty to care for our more distant neighbor. Otherwise we would never think of putting on the street machines that kill him; indeed, we would never let him go out on the street himself, as is actually the case with cautious parents and their children. Instead of this, however, we live with a statistically
predictable annual percentage of murders, which we commit rather than deviate from our manner of living and the line of development we hope to maintain. Ulrich suddenly thought, too, that part of this was a general division of labor in which it is always the task of a particular group of people to heal injuries caused by the indispensable activities of others; but we never restrain a force by demanding that it moderate itself; and finally there are still quite specific institutions, like parliaments, kings, and the like, that serve exclusively as equalizers. Ulrich concluded from this that for him to assist Moosbruggers escape had no significance, for there were enough other people whose job it was to prevent any injuries that might result, and if they fulfilled their obligations they were bound to succeed, which made his personal deed no worse than an irregularity. This individual, moral prohibition—that he was nevertheless obliged as an individual not to
let things go that far—was in this context nothing more than a doubled coefficient of security, which the knowledgeable person could afford to neglect.

The vision of a different order of things hovering far in advance of these specific ideas, an order that was more honest, one might say technically without clichés, accompanied Ulrich even as the adventure enticed him, tired as he was of the indecisive life of a person of today. / Possibly: It was not his good fortune to be effective in the world and to be defined by that. like Thomas Mann or the good upstanding citizen of this age. Nor was he involved in the struggle for something. / Thus this path was not unlike the dive into the water, well known to Ulrich, from a height of thirty feet. On the way down one sees one’s own image rushing toward one faster and faster in a watery reflection and can adjust small errors in one’s position;
but for the rest, one can no longer change anything in what is taking place.

When he had found the tavern, Ulrich did everything as Fraulein Hornlicher had indicated. He mentioned her name, told the proprietor what he wanted, was asked to sit down and told that he might have to wait quite a while. He inspected the guests, many of whom spoke to the proprietor as they entered and left; felt himself observed, but could not make out a great deal himself. It was an hour at which the patrons were intermingled with workers and petit bourgeois. Finally, he thought he could make out the criminals among the guests by the peculiarly ridiculous elegance of their clothes.

Ulrich had not made out Herr Biziste, who, when he came in, spoke with the proprietor like the others after glancing quickly around the room and, after he had sat down,
was looked at in the same way by everyone else around the room, and who was dressed with an equally counterfeit elegance / with a somewhat different elegance. Nor did the owner give Ulrich any sign. Biziste was drinking with several men, then stood up to go, stopped as if idly by Ulrich’s table, and asked him dismissively what it was he was after. Ulrich had the tact not to stand, but to look up carelessly and offer Biziste a chair. This was of course presumptuous, but since he could be certain that Biziste was still interested in Moosbrugger, he could permit himself to meet the great man on the same level. He told him that Moosbrugger would be executed within a few weeks if no one helped him. For some reason or other, Ulrich seemed to himself like a spoiled boy who is playing with street urchins and is showing off with fairy tales he has invented. Biziste seemed to disapprove of Ulrich as of an incorrigible blockhead. Still dismissive, he
asked Ulrich how he thought this could be done. Ulrich quickly emptied his glass and by a rather vague gesture left it to the proprietor whether he was to bring another glass for himself and his tablemate as well. Then he related that arranging an escape from the observation clinic would not be all that difficult. Herr Biziste was interested in this new milieu that Ulrich described to him. Ulrich became inventive; it amused him to think it out in front of a hardened criminal, and on the spot he made up a specific plan in which only the hour remained unfixed but that otherwise, thanks to Ulrich’s exact knowledge of the place, didn’t seem at all bad. Three men would be needed, one as a lookout outside the garden wall they had to climb over, so that on their way out they would not fall into the hands of a police patrol or give themselves away to passersby; the other two would be enough to bring Moosbrugger
civilian clothes and hold off any guard who might come by until Moosbrugger had changed.

The arrogant irony with which Biziste listened to this plan, as Ulrich spoke faster and faster from nervousness, was striking.

Then Biziste stood up and said: If you come to such and such a place on Wednesday, perhaps we can talk about it some more.

Will you bring along a third person?

Biziste shrugged his shoulders, and Ulrich was dismissed.

It gave Ulrich a peculiar, bitter pleasure that in the meantime everything else went on inexorably.

On the day Biziste had set, he had gone to the rendezvous but did not meet the third man. Biziste, treating the whole business casually, merely said to him that for a certain sum this third man had declared himself
willing. He mentioned a day and time, and revealed that Ulrich would have to go over the wall too, since he was the only one who knew the layout.

All Biziste probably wanted to do was frighten him, and for money a new partner could have been found, but the bizarre situation attracted Ulrich; since one could also break one’s neck skiing, why should he not climb over a wall in the night with criminals? Incidentally, he heartily wished the police on this puffed-up Biziste.

He put on his oldest suit, omitted a collar, and topped it off with a sports cap; in this way his silhouette in the shadows of the night was not conspicuously different from that of the other people one might encounter on the remote street along which the wall of the asylum garden ran. Moosbrugger had been alerted; over time, three linen sheets had disappeared in die hospital, to serve as a rope on which he was to let himself down.
Ulrich could probably have smuggled in a climbers rope, but he wanted to avoid anything that might betray the assistance supplied, since it was not out of the question that suspicion would fall on him. On this night the window of Moosbrugger’s room was dimly lit; Ulrich had got him the stump of a candle so that they would be able to orient themselves in the darkness of the moonless night.

Biziste had climbed onto the back of the second “gentleman,” swung himself up on top of the wall, and could be heard jumping down into the leaves on the other side. As Ulrich was about to follow, voices were heard; the “gentleman” stood up so inconsiderately that Ulrich, who had already got a foot up to mount on his back, nearly fell, and the other man strolled, hands in pockets, into the night.

Ulrich’s heart was pounding and he felt a need to run, which he controlled with
effort; but in order not to attract attention by behaving oddly, he imagined that he ought not to be walking alone, caught up with the “gentleman,” and took his arm like that of a drinking companion, which the “gentleman” seemed to find ridiculously overdone.

The voices died away, and the “gentleman” again offered his back; Ulrich grasped the mortar and brick dust, felt the stab of a pulled muscle in his leg, so forcefully had he swung it up in his excitement, hung there, let himself fall into the darkness, and ended in an applauding sound of dead leaves such as he had not heard since his boyhood. He stood up in total darkness, unable to discern the slightest trace of Biziste. He groped right and left, in the hope that another noise would answer his own, but it remained as quiet as it was dark. He had to make up his mind to go in the direction of the building alone, hoping that he would meet up with Biziste on the way.
Again Ulrich’s heart pounded; the bushes scratched, as if in his fear he was making only inappropriate movements. Distances, odors, physical contacts, sounds—everything was new, never experienced. He had to stop, collect his will, and tell himself that he had no other recourse than to see this stupid adventure through. He stumbled onto a path and deduced which direction would lead to the building most quickly, but was suddenly overcome by the problem of whether he should walk on the crunching gravel or go on working his way through the bushes.

That damned Biziste ought to have waited for him, but at the same time he longed for him as if he were a stronger brother. If he would not have been ashamed of himself because of the fellow on the other side of the wall, Ulrich would have turned around. But he did not even know what signal he was supposed to give to find out
whether all was clear on the other side. He realized that he was a fool, and gained some respect for these rogues. But he was not a man to let himself be defeated so easily; it would have been ridiculous for an intellectual not to be able to cope with this too. Ulrich marched forward straight through the shrubbery; the excitement he was in and the self-control his progress required (entirely without reflection; it was simply moral pains) made him ruthlessly crack, break, and rustle the bushes. To have slunk forward like an Indian seemed to him just then incredibly silly and childish, and this was the moment in which the normal person in him began to reawaken.

When he came to the edge, Biziste, as Ulrich really might have expected from the first, was squatting there observing the building, and he turned a witheringly punitive glance toward his noisy arrival. Moosbrugger’s window was dimly lit; Biziste
whistled through his teeth. The huge shoulders of the murderer filled the rectangle of the window, the rope fashioned from the sheets rolled down; but Moosbrugger was not skilled in crime and had underestimated the strength of the rescue line required for his enormous weight; hardly had he suspended himself from it when it broke, and the force of his landing exploded the stillness with a muffled detonation. At this moment two guards materialized in the half-light that illuminated the wall.

Two days earlier, two mentally ill prisoners had escaped from another observation clinic, but Ulrich had neither heard nor read about it. And so he had not known that since yesterday security had been generally tightened and old, long-forgotten measures were again being enforced for a while. Among these was the two-man patrol, which, perhaps drawn by the noises Ulrich had made and now alarmed by the muffled fall,
stopped, looked around, recognized in the sand a heavy body that with great effort was trying to get up, rushed over, saw a rope hanging from die window, and with all their lung power signaled for help through shrill little whistles. Moosbrugger had dislocated his shoulder and broken an ankle, otherwise it would have been an unhappy encounter for the guards who jumped on him; as it was, he knocked one bleeding into the sand, but when he tried to straighten up to shake off the second, pain deprived him of his footing. The guard hung on his neck and whisded piercingly; the second man, full of pain and rage, pounced on him, and at this moment Biziste sprang out of the bushes. With a powerful blow of his fist, he smashed one guard’s whistle between his teeth so that he tumbled off Moosbrugger, but now the other whisded like mad and rushed at Biziste. Such guards are strong men, and Biziste was not exceptionally powerful. If at this instant
Ulrich had come forward to help, with his considerable trained strength, they would no doubt have succeeded in rendering both attackers mute and motionless for a while, but Ulrich did not feel the slightest desire to do so. In the tangle before him his sympathies lay quite honestly with the men unexpectedly set upon, who were fighting for their duty, and if he had only followed his emotions, he would have grabbed this Biziste by the collar and given him a solid hook to the chin. But perhaps that was also merely the somewhat comical maternal voice of bourgeois order in him, and as the situation tensed his muscles and nerves, so his mind ebbed, filling him with disgust at contradictions whose resolution was not worth the effort. Another semi-event, Ulrich said to himself. A very painful sensation of the awful ludicrousness of his situation came over him.

Biziste reached for his knife. But before he raised it to thrust, his glance, practiced in
weighing risk and advantage, revealed to him the hopelessness of the outcome: Moosbrugger could not stand up without assistance, the noise of the alarmed people on night duty was already coming out of the darkness from the wing of the building, flight was the only recourse. The guard, who would not let him go, screamed, hit by a stab in the arm. Biziste disappeared, leaving Ulrich behind, as Ulrich ascertained with cheerful satisfaction in spite of the quite awkward situation. He had meantime been thinking how he himself might get out of this stupid business. The way over the wall was blocked, for he hadn’t the slightest desire to meet Herr Biziste and his friend ever again in his life, nor did he feel like climbing over the wall alone and perhaps being detained by the curious drawn to the scene by the shouts of the guards, who would certainly be chasing after Biziste. He settled on the only thing that occurred to him, a very stupid thing: to
run a little farther, quickly find a bench, and pretend to be asleep in case he was found. He raised the collar of his coat so his bare neck could not be seen, took off his cap, and "awoke" with as much surprise as possible when, surrounded by a maze of lights, he was knocked from the bench by an incredible fist and his arms grabbed by six men. He did not know whether he gave a good performance as the righteous person drunk with sleep; it was his good fortune that one of the guards immediately recognized him, upon which he was released with reluctant respect. He was taken for a doctor who was doing studies at the clinic. He now tried to make credible that after a visit he had been walking in the grounds and had fallen asleep here. To this end, he involuntarily looked at his watch, remembered that he had left it at home but could no longer take back the gesture and therefore found it missing; reached into his jacket and pants pockets and immediately
found his money missing too, for he had of course also not brought it along; and as stupid as this comedy was, as he told himself, there was an even stupider guard who believed it, or really just one whose servile officiousness and desire to please Ulrich suggested what Ulrich wanted him to believe, so that he immediately called out: The rascals have also robbed the Herr Doktor. Ulrich did not say either yes or no, but only went on like someone who missed his belongings without knowing anything about what had happened and now found out the entire drama backward and in snatches. As an object of respect and the remaining center of interest, he left the clinic in this feigned role as quickly as he could; he was not to enter it again as long as it sheltered Moosbrugger.

For after this attempted flight Moosbrugger was placed under heavy guard, and Ulrich, on the orders of the head of the clinic, was no longer allowed to visit him. Nor did
Ulrich have the slightest desire to. Still, the unpleasant uncertainty, whether the doctor...

The very unpleasant doubt remained whether, upon investigating the circumstances, they had not come to suspect him, which of course they would not express but were just as little ready to abandon.

In mania, this would be a depressive cycle of short duration.
Her brothers conduct, the restlessness that the visit to Lindner had intensified in her, stimulated Agathe to a degree that remained hidden even from herself. She did not know how it had happened, or when; suddenly her soul was transported out of her body and looked around curiously in the alien world. This world pleased her soul uncommonly. Anything that might have disturbed it was lost in the completeness of its pleasure.

Agathe dreamed.

Her body lay on the bed without stirring, though it was breathing. She looked at it and felt a joy like polished marble at the sight. Then she observed the objects that stood farther back in her room; she
recognized them all, but they were not exactly the things that otherwise were hers. For the objects lay outside her in the same way as her body, which she saw resting among them. That gave her a sweet pain!

Why did it hurt? Apparently because there was something deathlike about it; she could not act and could not stir, and her tongue was as if cut off, so that she was also unable to say anything about it. But she felt a great energy. Whatever her senses lit upon she grasped immediately, for everything was visible and shone the way sun, moon, and stars are reflected in water. Agathe said to herself: “You have wounded my body with a rose”—and turned to the bed in order to take refuge in her body.

Then she discovered that it was her brothers body. He, too, was lying in the reflecting glorious light as in a crypt; she saw him not distinctly but more penetratingly than usual, and touched him in the secrecy of
the night. She raised him up; he was a heavy burden in her arms, but she nevertheless had the strength to carry and hold him, and this embrace had a supranatural charm. Her brother’s body nestled so lovably and indulgently against her that she rested in him; as he in her; nothing stirred in her, not even now the beautiful desire. And because in this suspension they were one and without distinctions, and also without distinctions within themselves, so that her understanding was as if lost and her memory thought of nothing and her will had no activity, she stood in this calm as if facing a sunrise, and melted into it with her earthly details. But while this was happening, joyously, Agathe perceived surrounding her a wild crowd of people who, as it appeared, found themselves around her in great fear. They were running excitedly back and forth, and gesturing warningly and resentfully with increasing din. In the manner of a dream, this was happening quite close to
her but without involving her, but only until the noise and fright suddenly intruded violently into her mind. Then Agathe was afraid, and quickly stepped back into her sleeping body; she had no idea at all how everything might have been changed, and for a time left off dreaming.

But after a while she began again. Again she left her body, but this time met her brother immediately. And again her body was lying naked on the bed; they both looked at it, and indeed the hair over the genitals of this unconscious body that had been left behind burned like a small golden fire on a marble tomb. Because there was no “I” or “you” between them, this being three did not surprise her. Ulrich was looking at her softly and earnestly in a way she did not recognize as his. They also looked at their surroundings together, and it was their house in which they found themselves, but although Agathe knew all the objects quite well, she
could not have said in which room this was happening, and that again had a peculiar charm, for there was neither right nor left, earlier nor later, but when they looked at something together they were united like water and wine, a union that was more golden or silver, depending on whichever was poured in in greater quantity. Agathe knew immediately: “This is what we have so often talked of, total love,” and paid close attention so as not to miss anything. But she still missed how it was happening. She looked at her brother, but he was looking in front of him with a stiff and embarrassed smile. At this moment she heard a voice somewhere, a voice so exceedingly beautiful that it had nothing to compare with earthly things, and it said: “Cast everything you have into the fire, down to your shoes; and when you no longer have anything don’t even think of a shroud, but cast yourself naked into the fire!” And while she was listening to this voice and
remembering that she knew this sentence, a splendor rose into her eyes and radiated from them, a splendor that took away precise earthly definition even from Ulrich, though she had no impression that anything was missing from him, and her every limb received from it in the manner of its special pleasure great grace and bliss. Involuntarily she took some steps toward her brother. He was coming toward her from the other side in the same way.

Now there was only a narrow chasm between their bodies, and Agathe felt that something must be done. At this place in her dream she began, too, with the greatest effort, to think again. “If he loves something and receives and enjoys it,” she said to herself, “then he is no longer he, but his love is my love!” She doubtless sensed that this sentence, the way she had uttered it, was somehow distorted and emasculated, but still she understood it through and through, and it
took on a significance that clarified everything. “In the dream,” she explained it to herself, “one must not think about things, then everything will happen!” For everything she was thinking she believed to see transpiring, or rather, what happened and partook of the desire of matter also partook of the desire of the spirit, which penetrated it as thought in the profoundest possible way. This seemed to her to give her a great superiority over Ulrich; for while he was now standing there helplessly, without stirring, not only did the same splendor as before rise into her eyes and fill them, but its moist fire suddenly broke out from her breasts and veiled everything that faced her in an indescribable sensation. Her brother was now seized by this fire and began to burn in it, without the fire growing more or less. “Now you see!” Agathe thought. “We’ve always done it wrong! One always builds a bridge of hard material and always crosses over to the
other at a single place: but one must cross the abyss at every place!” She had seized her brother by the hands and tried to draw him to her; but as she pulled, the burning naked male body, without really being changed, dissolved into a bush or a wall of glorious flowers and, in this form, came loosely closer. All intentions and thoughts vanished in Agathe; she lay fainting with desire in her bed, and as the wall strode through her she also believed that she had to wander through large brooks of soft-skinned flowers, and she walked without being able to make the spell vanish. “I am in love!” she thought, as someone finds a moment when he is able to draw breath, for she could hardly still bear this incredible excitement that did not want to end. Since the last transformation she also no longer saw her brother, but he had not disappeared.

And looking for him, she woke up; but she felt that she wanted to go back once
more, for her happiness had attained such an intensification that it went on increasing. She was quite confused as she got out of bed: the beginnings of wakefulness were in her mind, and all the rest of her body held the not-yet-ended dream that apparently wanted to have no end.

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Since the dream, there had been in Agathe an intention to lead her brother astray on some mad experiment. It was not clear even to herself. Sometimes the air was like a net in which something invisible had got caught. It spread the web apart but was not able to break through it. All impressions had somewhat too great a weight. When they greeted each other in the morning, the first impression was of a quite sharply sensual delimitation. They emerged from the ocean of sleep onto the islands of “you” and “I.” The body’s color and shape drifted like a bouquet of flowers on the depths of space. Their glances,
their movements, seemed to reach farther than usual; the inhibition that otherwise catches and stops them in the secret mechanism of the world must have grown weaker. But words were often suppressed by the fear that they would be too weak to utter this.

In order to understand such a passion, one must remember the habits of consciousness. Not long ago, for example, a woman wearing glasses not only was considered ridiculous, but really looked it; today is a time in which they make her look enterprising and young: those are habitual attitudes of consciousness; they change but are always present in some connection, forming a scaffolding through which perception enters into consciousness. The image is always present before its component parts are, and is what first gives significance to the meaningless daubings of sense impressions. Polonius’s cloud, which appears sometimes as a ship, sometimes as a camel, is not the weakness of
a servile courtier but completely characterizes the way God has created us. The play between self and external world is not like the die and the stamping but is reciprocal and capable of extremely fine motions, to the extent that it is freed from the cruder mechanisms of utility. One rarely imagines how far this extends. In truth it reaches from beautiful, ugly, good, and evil, where it still seems natural to everyone that one man’s morning cloud should be another man’s camel, through bitter and sweet, fragrant and stinking, as far as the apparently most precise and least subjective impressions of colors and forms. Herein lies perhaps the deepest sense of the support that one person seeks in another; but Ulrich and Agathe were like two people who, hand in hand, had stepped out of this circle. What they felt for each other was by no means simply to be called love. Something lay in their relationship to each other that could not be included
among the ordinary notions of living together; they had undertaken to live like brother and sister, if one takes this expression in the sense not of an official marriage-bureau document but of a poem; they were neither brother and sister nor man and wife, their desires like white mist in which a fire burns. But that sufficed at times to remove their hold on the world from what they were for each other. The result was that what they were became senselessly strong. Such moments contained a tenderness without goals or limits. And also without names or aid. To do something for someone’s sake contains in the doing a thousand connections to the world; to give someone pleasure contains in the giving all considerations that bind us to other people. A passion, on the other hand, is an emotion that, free from all contaminants, can never do enough for itself. It is simultaneously the emotion of a powerlessness in the
person and that of a movement proceeding from it, which seizes the entire world.

And it is not to be denied that in the company of her brother Agathe tasted the bitter sweetness of a passion. Today one often confuses passion and vice. Cigarette smoking, cocaine, and the vigorously esteemed recurrent need for coitus are, God knows, no passions. Agathe knew that; she knew the substitutes for passion, and recognized passion at the first moment in that not only the self burns, but the world as well; it is as if all things were behind the air just above the tip of a flame. She would have liked to thank the Creator on her knees that she was experiencing it again, although it is just as much a feeling of devastation as of happiness. Agathe felt, too, that this life is like a ship gliding along in infinite seclusion. The sounds on the shore become ever weaker, and objects lose their voice: they no longer say, now you should do this or that with me;
movement dies away; the nimble words die away. At times in the mornings there already lay, between the house they were living in and the street, a nothingness that neither Ulrich nor Agathe could penetrate; life’s charms lost their power to evoke the ridiculous little decisions that are so vital: putting on a hat, inserting a key, those small touches of the rudder by means of which one moves forward. But the space in the rooms was as if polished, and everything was full of a soft music, which ceased only when one strained to hear it more clearly. And that was why the loving anxiety was there; the silence behind the sound of a word, behind a handshake, a movement, could often suddenly detach itself for a moment from a series of others, divest itself of the chains of temporal and spatial connections and send the sound out onto an infinite deep, above which it rested motionless. life then stood still. The eye, in sweet torment, could not withdraw itself
from the image. It sank into existence as into a wall of flowers. It sank ever deeper and ever more slowly. It reached no bottom; it could not turn around! What might the clocks be doing now? Agathe thought; the idiotic little second hand she remembered, with its precise forward movement around its little circle: with what longing for salvation she now thought of it! And should a glance be absorbed in the other, how painful it was to withdraw it; as if their souls had linked together! It was very nearly comical, this silence. A heavy mountain of soulfulness. Ulrich often struggled to find a word, a jest; it would not matter in the least what one talked about, it only needed to be something indifferent and real that is domesticated in life and has a right to a home. That puts souls back into connection with reality. One can just as well start talking about the lawyer as come up with any clever observation. All it had to be was a betrayal of
the moment; the word falls into the silence then, and in the next moment other corpses of words gleam around it, risen up in great crowds like dead fish when one throws poison into the water! Agathe hung on Ulrich’s lips while he was searching for such a word, and when his lips could no longer find it and no longer part, she sank back exhausted into the silence that burned her too, like a pallet consisting of nothing but little tips of flame.

Whenever Ulrich resisted: —But we do have a mission, an activity in the world! Agathe answered: —Not I, and you are certainly only imagining yours. We have some idea of what we have to do: be together! What difference does it make what progress is made in the world? Ulrich disagreed, and attempted to convince her ironically of the impossibility of what it was that kept him bound in chains. —There’s only one explanation for our inactivity that is to some degree satisfactory: to rest in God and be subsumed
in God. You can use another word instead of God: the Primal One, Being, the Unconditional... there are a few dozen words, all powerless. They all oppose assurance to the terror at the sweet cessation of being human: you have arrived at the edge of something that is more than being human. Philosophical prejudices then take care of the rest. Agathe replied: —I understand nothing of philosophy. But let’s just stop eating! Let’s see what comes of that?

Ulrich noticed that in the bright childishness of this proposal there was a fine black line.

—What would come of that? He answered in detail: —First hunger, then exhaustion, then hunger again, raging fantasies about eating, and finally either eating or dying!

—You can’t know without having tried it!
—But, Agathe! It’s been tried and tested a thousand times!

—By professors! Or by bankrupt speculators. Do you know, dying must be not at all like one says. I nearly died once: it was different.

Ulrich shrugged his shoulders. He had no idea how close together in Agathe the two feelings were, to impulsively ignore all her lost years or, if that failed, to want to stop. She had never, like Ulrich, felt the need of making the world better than it is; she was happy lying around somewhere, while Ulrich was always on the go. This had been a difference between them since childhood, and it remained a difference until death. Ulrich did not so much fear death as regard it as a disgrace that is set as a final price on all striving. Agathe had always been afraid of death when she imagined it, as every young and healthy person does, in the unbearable and incomprehensible form: Now you are, but at
some point you will no longer be! But at the same time she had, in her early youth, already become acquainted with the gradual process of separation that is capable of inserting itself into the tiniest span of time, that hurtlingly rapid—in spite of all its slowness—being turned away from life and becoming tired of and indifferent to it, and striving trustingly into the approaching nothingness that sets in when the body is grievously harmed by an illness without the senses being affected. She had confidence in death. Perhaps it’s not so bad, she thought. It’s always, in any case, natural and pleasant to stop, in everything one does. But decay, and the rest of those horrible things: for heaven’s sake, isn’t one used to everything happening to one while one has nothing to do with it? You know, Ulrich—she terminated the conversation—you’re like this: if you’re given leaves and branches, you always sew them together into a tree; but I would
like to see what would happen if we would once, for instance, sew the leaves firmly onto ourselves.

And yet Ulrich, too, felt they had nothing else to do but be together. Whenever Agathe called through the rooms: —Leave the light on!—a quick call, before Ulrich on his way out darkened the room to which Agathe wished to return once more, Ulrich thought: A request, hasty, what more? Oh, what more? No less than Buddha running to catch a tram. An impossible gait! A collapse of absurdity. But still, how lovely Agathe’s voice was! What trust lay in the brief request, what happiness that one person can call out something like that to another without being misunderstood. Of course, such a moment was like a piece of earthly thread running among mysterious flowers, but it was at the same time moving, like a woolen thread that one places around one’s beloved’s neck when one has nothing else to give her. And when
they then stepped out into the street and, walking side by side, could not see much of each other but only felt the tender force of unintended contact, they belonged together like an object that stands in an immense space.

It lies in the nature of such experiences that they urge their own telling. Within the tiniest amount of happening they contain an extreme of inner processes that needs to break a path for itself to the outside. And as in music or a poem, at a sickbed or in a church, the circle of what can be uttered in such circumstances is peculiarly circumscribed. Not, as one might believe, through solemnity or some other subjective mood, but through something that has far more the appearance of an objective thing. This can be compared with the remarkable process through which one assimilates intellectual influences in one’s youth; there, too, one takes in not every truth that comes along but
really only a truth that comes to meet it from one’s own mind, a truth that therefore, in a certain sense, has only to be awakened, so that one already knows it in the moment one comes across it. There are at that age the truths that are destined for us and those that aren’t; bits of knowledge are true today and false tomorrow, ideas light up or go out—not because we change our minds but because with our thoughts we are still connected to our life as a whole and, fed by the same invisible springs, rise and sink with them. They are true when we feel ourselves rising at the moment of thinking them, and they are false when we feel ourselves falling. There is something inexpressible in ourselves and the world that is increased or diminished in the process. In later years this changes; the disposition of the emotions becomes less flexible, and the understanding becomes that extraordinarily flexible, firm, doughty tool which we know it to be when we refuse to
allow ourselves to be swayed by emotion. At this point the world has already divided itself: on the one side into the world of things and dependable sensations of them, of judgments and, as it can also be put, recognized emotions or will; on the other side into the world of subjectivity, that is of caprice, of faith, taste, intimation, prejudices, and all those uncertainties, taking an attitude in regard to which, whatever it may be, there remains a kind of private right of the individual, without any claims to public status. When that happens, individual industry may sniff out and take in everything or nothing; it rarely happens in the steeled soul that in the fire of the impression the walls, too, stretch and move.

But does this attitude really permit one to feel as secure in the world as it might lead one to think? Does not the whole solid world, with all our sensations, buildings, landscapes, deeds, drift on countless tiny clouds?
Beneath every perception lies music, poem, feeling. But this feeling is tied down, made invariable, excluded, because we want to perceive things truly, that is, without emotion, in order to let them guide us, instead of our guiding them, which, as one knows, amounts to meaning that we finally, quite suddenly, have really learned to fly instead of merely dreaming about flying, as the millennia before us did. To this emotion imprisoned in objects there corresponds, on the individual side, that spirit of objectivity which has pushed all passion back into a condition where it is no longer perceptible, so that in every person there slumbers a sense of his value, his usefulness, and his significance that cannot be touched, a basic feeling of equilibrium between himself and the world. Yet this equilibrium need only be disturbed at any point, and everywhere the imprisoned little clouds escape. A little fatigue, a little poison, a little excess of
excitement, and a person sees and hears things he doesn’t want to believe; emotion rises, the world slides out of its middling condition into an abyss or rises up energetically, solitary, like a vision and no longer comprehensible!

Often everything that he and Agathe undertook, or what they saw and experienced, seemed to Ulrich only a simile. This tree and that smile are reality, because they have the quite specific quality of not merely being illusion; but are there not many realities? Was it not just yesterday that we were wearing wigs with long locks, possessed very imperfect machines, but wrote splendid books? And only the day before yesterday that we carried bows and arrows and put on gold hoods at festivals, over cheeks that were painted with the blue of the night sky, and orange-yellow eye sockets? Some kind of vague sympathy for these things still quivers within us today. So much was like today and
so much was different, as if it was trying to be one of many hieroglyphic languages. Does not this mean that one should also not set too much store in present things? What is bad today will perhaps in part be good tomorrow, and the beautiful ugly; disregarded thoughts will have become great ideas, and dignified ideas decay to indifference. Every order is somehow absurd and like a wax figure, if one takes it too seriously; every thing is a frozen individual instance of its possibilities. But those are not doubts, rather a dynamic, elastic, undefined quality that feels itself capable of anything.

But it is a peculiarity of these experiences that they are almost always experienced only in a state of nonpossession. Thus the world changes when the impassioned person yearns for God, who does not reveal Himself, or the lover for his distant beloved, who has been snatched from him. Agathe as well as Ulrich had known these things, and
to experience them reciprocally when they were together sometimes gave them real difficulty. Involuntarily they pushed the present away, by telling each other for the first time the stories of their past in which this had happened. But these stories again reinforced the miraculousness of their coming together, and ended in the half-light, in a hesitant touching of hands, silences, and the trembling of a current that flowed through their arms.

And sometimes there were violent rebellions.

Let’s make an assumption—[Ulrich] said to himself, for example, in order to exclude it again later—and let’s suppose that Agathe would feel loathing at the love of men. In that case, in order to please her as a man, I would have to behave like a woman. I would have to be tender toward her without
desiring her. I would have to be good in the same way to all things in order not to frighten her love. I could not lift a chair unfeelingly, in order to move it to some other place in insentient space; for I may not touch it out of some random idea; whatever I do must be something, and it is involved with this spiritual existence, the way an actor lends his body to an idea. Is that ridiculous? No, it’s nothing other than festive. For that’s the sense of sacred ceremonies, where every gesture has its significance. That is the sense of all things when they emerge again before our eyes for the first time with the morning sun. No, the object is not a means for us. It is a detail, the little nail, a smile, a curly hair of our third sister. [Ulrich elsewhere defines the three sisters as himself, Agathe, and the Other Condition] “I” and “you” are only objects too. But we are objects that are engaged in exchanging signals with each other; that is what gives us the miraculous: something is
flowing back and forth between us, I cannot look at your eyes as if at some dead object, we are burning at both ends. But if I want to do something for your sake, the thing is not a dead object either. I love it, that means that something is happening between me and it; I don’t want to exaggerate, I have no intention of maintaining that the object is alive like me (and has feeling and talks with me), but it does live with me, we always stand in some relationship to each other.

I have said we are sisters. You have nothing against my loving the world, but I must love it like a sister, not like a man or the way a man loves a woman. A little sentimentally; you and it and I give one another presents. I take nothing away from the tenderness that I present you with if I also make a present to the world; on the contrary, every prodigality increases our wealth. We know that each of us has our separate relations to one another that one could not totally reveal
even if one wanted to, but these secrets do not arouse any jealousy. Jealousy assumes that one wishes to turn love into a possession. However, I can lie in the grass, pressed to the lap of earth, and you will feel the sweetness of this moment along with me. But I may not regard the earth as an artist or a researcher: then I would be making it my own, and we would form a couple that would exclude you as a third.

What, then, in everyday life really distinguishes the most primitive affect of love from mere sexual desire? Mixed in with the desire to rape is a dread, a tenderness, one might almost say something feminine mixed in with the masculine. And that's the way it is with all emotions; they are peculiarly pitted of their seeds and magnified.

Morality? Morality is an insult in a condition in which every movement finds its justification in contributing to the honor of that condition.
But the more vividly Ulrich imagined this assumed sisterly feeling, the more ...

To previous page: One could variously call the cardinal sin in this paradise: having, wanting, possessing, knowing. Round about it gather the smaller sins: envying, being offended.

They all come from one’s wanting to put oneself and the other in an exclusive relationship. From the self wanting to have its way like a crystal separating from a liquid. Then there is a nodal point, and nothing but nodal points collect around it.

But if we are sisters, then you will want not the man, nor any thing or thought but yours. You do not say: I say. For everything will be said by everything. You do not say: I
love. For love is the beloved of all of us, and when it embraces you it smiles at me....

When Agathe next entered Lindner’s house, he seemed to have fled in a hurry a short time before. The inviolable order in hall and rooms had been thrown into disorder, which admittedly did not take much, for quite a few of the objects that were not in their usual places in these rooms were quite upsetting to look at anyway. Hardly had Agathe sat down to wait for Lindner when Peter came rushing through the room; he had no idea that she had come in. He seemed bent on smashing to pieces everything in his path, and his face was bloated, as if everywhere beneath the pink skin tears were hiding, preparing themselves for an eruption.

—Peter? Agathe asked in dismay.
—What’s the matter?

He wanted to go right by, but suddenly stopped and stuck out his tongue at her with
such a comical expression of disgust that she had to laugh.

Agathe had a soft spot for Peter. She understood that it could be no fun for a young man to have Professor Lindner for a father, and when she imagined that Peter perhaps suspected her of being his father’s future wife, his antagonistic attitude toward her met with her secret applause. Somehow she felt him to be a hostile ally. Perhaps only because she remembered her own youth as a pious convent-school girl. He had as yet no roots anywhere; was seeking himself, and seeking to grow up; growing up with the same pains and anomalies inside as outside. She understood that so well. What could wisdom, faith, miracles, and principles mean to a young person who is still locked up in himself and not yet opened up by life to assimilate such things! She had a strange sympathy for him; for his being undisciplined and recalcitrant, for his being young, and
apparently, too, simply for the badness of his way of thinking. She would gladly have been his playmate, at least here; these surroundings gave her this childish thought, but she sadly noticed that he usually treated her like an old woman.

—Peter! Peter! What’s the matter? he aped her. —He’ll tell you anyhow. You soul-sister of his!

Agathe laughed even more and caught him by the hand.

—Do you like that? Peter went after her unabashedly. —Do you like me to howl? How old are you anyway? Not so much older than I am, I should think: but he treats you the way he treats the sublime Plato! He had dis-engaged himself and examined her, looking for an advantage.

—What has he really done to you? Agathe asked.
—What’s he done? He’s punished me! I’m not at all ashamed in front of you, as you see. Soon he’s going to pull down my pants, and you’ll be allowed to hold me!

—Peter! For shame! Agathe warned innocently. —Did he really beat you?

—Did he? Peter? Maybe you’d like that?

—Shame on you, Peter!

—Not at all! Why don’t you call me Herr Peter? Anyway, what do you think: there! He stretched out his tensed leg and grasped his upper thigh, strengthened from playing soccer. —Have a look for yourself; I could murder him with one hand. He doesn’t have as much strength in both legs as I have in one arm. It’s not me, it’s you who ought to be ashamed, instead of prattling wisdom with him! Do you want to know what he’s done to me?
—No, Peter, you can’t talk to me that way.

—Why not?

—Because your father’s heart is in the right place. And because— But here Agathe could not find the right way to proceed; she was no good at preaching, although the youth was indeed in the wrong, and she suddenly had to laugh again. —So what did he do to you?

—He took away my allowance!

—Wait! Agathe asked. Without stopping to think, she fished out a banknote and handed it to Peter. She herself did not know why she did this; perhaps she thought the first thing to do was to get rid of Peter’s anger before she could have an effect on him, perhaps it only gave her pleasure to thwart Lindners pedagogy. And with the same suddenness she had addressed Peter with the familiar Du. Peter looked at her in
astonishment. Behind his lovely misted eyes something quite new awoke. —The second thing he imposed on me—he continued, grinning cynically, without thanking her—is also broken: the school of silence! Do you know it? Man learns through silence to remove his speech from all inner and outer irritations and make it the handmaid of his innermost personal considerations!

—You surely said some improper things, said Agathe, falling back on the normal pronoun of address.

—This is how it was! “The first response of man to all interventions and attacks from without happens by means of the vocal cords,” he quoted his father. —That’s why he’s ruined today and my day off from school tomorrow with room arrest, observes total silence toward me, and has forbidden me to speak a single word with anybody in the house. The third thing—he mocked—is control of the instinct for food—
—But, Peter, you must now really tell me—Agathe interrupted him, amused—what did you do to set him off?

The conversation in which he was mocking his father through his future mother had put the youth in the best of spirits. —That’s not so simple, Agathe, he replied shamelessly. —There is, you ought to know, something that the old man fears the way the devil fears holy water: jokes. The tickling of jokes and humor, he says, comes from idle fantasy and malice. I always have to swallow them. That’s exemplary for one’s character. Because, if we look at the joke more closely—

—Enough! Agathe commanded. —What was your forbidden joke about?

—About you! said Peter, his eyes boring into hers in challenge. But at this moment he shrank back, because the doorbell rang, and both recognized from the sound of the ring that it was Professor Lindner. Before Agathe
could make any reproaches, Peter pressed his fingernails with painful violence into her hand and stole out of the room.

There were also violent rebellions.

Agathe owned a piano. She was sitting at it in the twilight, playing. The uncertainty of her frame of mind played along with the notes. Ulrich came in. His voice sounded cold and mute as he greeted her. She interrupted her playing. When the words had died away, her fingers went a few steps further through the boundless land of music.

—Stay where you are! ordered Ulrich, who had stepped back, drawing a pistol from his pocket. —Nothing’s going to happen to you. He spoke altogether differently, a stranger. Then he fired at the piano, shooting into the center of its long black flank. The first bullet cut through the dry, tender wood and howled across the strings. A second churned up leaping sounds. As shot followed
shot, the keys began to hop. The jubilandy sharp reports of the pistol drove with increasing frenzy into a splintering, screaming, tearing, drumming, and singing uproar. When the magazine was empty, Ulrich let it drop to the carpet—he only noticed it when he futilely tried to get off two more shots. He gave the impression of a madman, pale, his hair hanging down over his forehead; a fit had seized him and carried him far away from himself. Doors slammed in the house, people were listening; slowly, in such impressions, reason again took possession of him.

Agathe had neither lifted her hand nor uttered the slightest sound to prevent the destruction of the expensive piano or flee the danger. She felt no fear, and although the beginning of her brothers outbreak could have seemed insane, this thought did not frighten her. She accepted it as a pleasant end. The strange cries of the wounded instrument
aroused in her the idea that she would have to leave the earth in a swarm of fantastically fluttering birds.

Ulrich pulled himself together and asked if she was angry with him; Agathe denied it with radiant eyes. His face again assumed its usual expression. —I don’t know—he said—why I did it. I couldn’t resist the impulse.

Agathe reflectively tried out a few isolated strings that had survived.

—I feel like a fool..., Ulrich pleaded, and cautiously ran his hand through his sister’s hair, as if his fingers could find refuge from themselves there. Agathe withdrew them again by the wrist and pushed them away. —What came over you? she asked.

—I have no idea, Ulrich said, making an unconscious motion with his arms as if he wanted to brush off the embrace of something tenacious and lack it away.
Agathe said: If you wished to repeat that, it would turn into a quite ordinary target practice. Suddenly she stood up and laughed. —Now you’ll have to have the piano completely rebuilt. What won’t that all lead to: orders, explanations, bills...! For that reason alone something like this can’t happen again.

—I had to do it, Ulrich explained shyly. —I would just as gladly have shot at a mirror if you’d happened to be looking in it.

—And now you’re upset that one can’t do such a thing twice. But it was beautiful just as it was. She pushed her arm in his and drew close to him. —The rest of the time you’re never willing to do anything unless you know where it will lead!

On the same evening, Ulrich had to put in an appearance at a garden party. He could not very well beg off, although he would have done so had not his despair / depression
impelled him to go. But he arrived late; it was near midnight. The greater part of the guests had already laid aside their masks. Among the trees of the old grounds torches flamed, rammed into the ground like burning spears or fastened with brackets to the trunks of trees. Gigantic tables had been set up, covered with white cloths. A flickering fire reddened the bark of the trees, the silently swaying canopy of leaves overhead, and the faces of countless people crowded together, which from a Utile distance seemed to consist only of such red and black spots. It seemed to have been the watchword among the ladies to appear in men’s costumes. Ulrich recognized a Frau Maya Sommer as a soldier from the army of Maria Theresa, the painter von Hartbach as a Tyrolean with bare knees, and Frau Clara Kahn, the wife of the famous physician, in a Beardsley costume. He also discovered that even among the younger women of the upper nobility, so
far as he knew them by sight, many had chosen a mannish or boyish disguise; there were jockeys and elevator boys, half-mannish Dianas, female Hamlets, and corpulent Turks. The fashion of slacks for women, advocated just recently, seemed, although no one had followed it, to have had some effect upon the imagination nonetheless; for that time, in which women belonged to the world at most from ground level to halfway up their calves, but between there and the neck only to their husbands and lovers, to be seen like that at a party where one might expect to see members of the Imperial House was something unheard of, a revolution, even if only a revolution of caprice, and the precursor of the vulgar customs that the older and stouter ladies were already privileged to predict, while the others noticed nothing but exuberance. Ulrich thought he could excuse himself from greeting the old prince, around whom as master of the house a group of
people was in constant attendance, while he barely knew him; he looked for [his valet] Tzi to ask him to do something, but when he could not find him anywhere assumed that the industrious man had already gone home, and sauntered away from the center of activity to the edge of a grove of trees, from which, over an enormous grass lawn, one could catch a glimpse of the castle. This magnificent old castle had had fastened to it long rows of electric lights like footlights, which shone from under cornices or ran up pillars and liquefied, as it were, the forms of the architecture from out of the shadows, as if the stern old master who had devised them was among the guests and a little tipsy beneath a blanched paper hat. Below, one could see the servants running in and out through the dark door openings, while above, the ugly reddish-gray night sky of the city arched forward like an umbrella into the other, pure dark night sky, which one glimpsed, with its
stars, whenever one lifted one’s eyes. Ulrich did so, and was as if drunk from a combination of disgust and joy. As he let his glance fall, he perceived a nearby figure that had previously escaped his notice.

It was a tall woman in the costume of a Napoleonic colonel, and she was wearing a mask; by which Ulrich recognized immediately that it was Diotima. She acted as if she did not notice him, looking at the shining castle, sunk in thought. —Good evening, cousin! he addressed her. —Don’t try to deny it; I recognize you unmistakably because you’re the only person still wearing a mask.

—What do you mean? the mask asked.

—Very simple: You feel ashamed. Tell me why so many women showed up in trousers?

Diotima vehemently shrugged her shoulders. —The word went around beforehand. My God, I can understand it: the old
ideas are already so worn out. But I really must confess to you that I’m annoyed; it was a tactless idea; you think you’ve stumbled into a theatrical fancy-dress ball.

—The whole thing is impossible, Ulrich said. —Such parties don’t work anymore because their time is past.

—Hmph! Diotima answered perfunctorily. She found the sight of the castle romantic.

—Would the Colonel command where one might find a better opinion? Ulrich asked, with a challenging look at Diotima’s body.

—Oh, my dear friend, don’t call me Colonel!

There was something new in her voice. Ulrich stepped close to her. She had taken off her mask. He noticed two tears that fell slowly from her eyes. This tall, weeping
officer was totally ridiculous, but also very beautiful. He seized her hands and gently asked what the matter was. Diotima could not answer; a sob she was trying to suppress stirred the bright sheen of the white riding breeches that reached far up beneath her flung-back coat. They stood thus in the half-darkness of the light sinking into the lawns. —We can’t talk here, Ulrich whispered. —Come with me somewhere else. If you permit, I’ll take you to my house. Diotima tried to draw her hand away from his, but when this didn’t work she let it be. Ulrich felt by this gesture what he could hardly believe, that his hour with this woman had come. He grasped Diotima respectably around the waist and led her, supporting her tenderly, deeper into the shadows and then around to the exit. / A kiss right here?

Before they again emerged into the light, Diotima had of course dried her tears and mastered her excitement, at least
outwardly. —You’ve never noticed, Ulrich—she said in a low voice—that I’ve loved you for a long time; like a brother. I don’t have anyone I can talk to. Since there were people nearby, Ulrich only murmured: —Come, we’ll talk. But in the taxi he did not say a word, and Diotima, anxiously holding her coat closed, moved away from him into the corner. She had made up her mind to confess her woes to him, and when Diotima resolved to do something it was done; although in her whole life she had never been with another man at night than Section Chief Tuzzi, she followed Ulrich because before she had run into him she had made up her mind to have a long talk with him if he was there, and felt/had a great, melancholy longing for such a talk. The excitement of carrying out this firm resolve had an unfortunate physical effect on her; it was literally true that her resolve lay in her stomach like some indigestible food, and when (in addition) the
excitement suppressed all the juices that could dissolve it, Diotima felt cold sweat on her forehead and neck as if from nausea. She was diverted from herself only by the impression that arriving at Ulrich’s made on her; the small grounds, where the electric bulbs on the tree trunks formed an alley, seemed to her charming as they strolled through; the entry hall with the antlers and the small baroque staircase reminded her of hunting horns, packs of hounds, and horsemen, and—since nighttime reinforces such impressions and conceals their weaknesses—out of admiration for her cousin she could not understand why he had never showed off this house but had, as it always seemed, only made fun of it.

Ulrich laughed, and got something warm to drink. —Looked at more closely, it’s a stupid frivolity—he said—but let’s not talk about me. Tell me what’s been happening to you. Diotima could not utter a word; this had
never happened to her before; she sat in her uniform and felt illuminated by the many lights that Ulrich had turned on. It confused her.

—So Arnheim has acted badly? Ulrich tried to help.

Diotima nodded. Then she began. Arnheim was free to do as he pleased. Nothing had ever happened between her and him that would, in the ordinary sense, have imposed any obligations on him or given him any privileges.

—But if I’ve observed rightly, the situation between you had already gone so far that you were to get a divorce and marry him? Ulrich interjected.

—Oh, marry? the Colonel said. —We might perhaps have got married, if he had behaved himself better; that can come like a ring that one finally slips on loosely, but it ought not to be a band that binds!
—But what did Arnheim do? Do you mean his escapade with Leona?

—Do you know this person?

—Barely.

—Is she beautiful?

—One might call her that.

—Does she have charm? Intelligence? What sort of intelligence does she have?

—But, my dear cousin, she has no intelligence of any land whatsoever!

Diotima crossed one leg over the other and allowed herself to be handed a cigarette; she had gathered a little courage. —Was it out of protest that you appeared at the party in this outfit? Ulrich asked. —Am I right? Nothing else would have moved you to do such a thing. A kind of Overman in you enticed you, after men failed you: I can’t find the right words.
—But, my dear friend, Diotima began, and suddenly behind the smoke of the cigarette tears were again running down her face. —I was the oldest of three daughters. All my youth I had to play the mother; we had no mother; I always had to answer all the questions, know everything, watch over everything. I married Section Chief Tuzzi because he was a good deal older than I and already beginning to lose his hair. I wanted a person I could finally subject myself to, from whose hand my brow would receive grace or displeasure. I am not unfeminine. I am not so proud as you know me. I confess to you that during the early years I felt bliss in Tuzzi’s arms, like a little girl that death abducts to God the father. But for...years I’ve had to despise him. He’s a vulgar utilitarian. He doesn’t see or understand anything about anything else. Do you know what that means!
Diotima had jumped up; her coat remained lying in the chair; her hair hung over her cheeks like a schoolgirl’s; her left hand rested now in manly fashion on the pommel of her saber, now in womanly fashion went through her hair; her right arm made large oratorical flourishes; she advanced one leg or closed her legs tightly together, and the round belly in the white riding breeches had—and this lent a remarkably comic effect—not the slightest irregularity such as a man betrays. Ulrich now first noticed that Diotima was slightly drunk. In her doleful mood she had, at the party, tossed off several glasses of hard spirits one after another, and now, after Ulrich, too, had offered her alcohol, the tipsiness had been freshly touched up. But her intoxication was only great enough to erase the inhibitions and fantasies of which she normally consisted, and really only exposed something like her natural nature: not all of it, to be sure, for as soon as
Diotima came to speak of Arnheim, she began to talk about her soul.

She had given her entire soul to this man. Did Ulrich believe that in such questions an Austrian has a finer sensibility, more culture? —No.

—But perhaps he does!—Arnheim was certainly an important person. But he had failed ignominiously. Ignominiously!—I gave him everything, he exploited me, and now I’m miserable!

It was clear that the suprahuman and suggestive love play with Arnheim, rising physically to no more than a kiss but mentally to a boundless, floating duet of souls (a love play that had lasted many weeks, during which Diotimas quarrel with her husband had kept it pure), had so stirred up Diotimas natural fire that, to put it crudely, someone ought to be kicking it out from under the kettle to prevent some kind of accident of
exploding nerves. This was what Diotima, consciously or not, wanted from Ulrich. She had sat down on a sofa; her sword lay across her knees, the sulfurous mist of gentle rapture over her eyes, as she said: —Listen, Ulrich: you’re the only person before whom I’m not ashamed. Because you’re so bad. Because you’re so much worse than I am.

Ulrich was in despair. The circumstances reminded him of the scene with Gerda that had taken place here weeks ago, like this one the result of a preceding over-stimulation. But Diotima was no girl over-stimulated by forbidden embraces. Her lips were large and open, her body damp and breathing like turned-up garden soil, and under the veil of desire her eyes were like two gates that opened into a dark corridor. But Ulrich was not thinking of Gerda at all; he saw Agathe before him, and wanted to scream with jealousy at the sight of this feminine inability to resist any longer, although
he felt his own resistance fading from second to second. His expectation was already a mirror in which he saw the breaking of these eyes, their growing dull, as only death and love can achieve, the parting in a faint of lips between which the last breath steals away, and he could hardly still expect to feel this person sitting there before him collapsing completely and looking at him as he turned away in decay, like a Capuchin monk descending into the catacombs. Apparently his thoughts were already heading in a direction in which he hoped to find salvation, for with all his strength he was fighting his own collapse. He had clenched his fists and was drilling his eyes, from Diotima’s viewpoint, into her face in a horrible way. At this moment she felt nothing but fear and approval of him. Then a distorted thought occurred to Ulrich, or he read it from the distortion of the face into which he was looking. Softly and emphatically he replied: —You have no
idea how bad I am. I can’t love you; I’d have to be able to beat you to love you!

Diotima gazed stupidly into his eyes. Ulrich hoped to wound her pride, her vanity, her reason; but perhaps it was only his natural feelings of animosity against her that had mounted up in him and to which he was giving expression. He went on: —For months I haven’t been able to think of anything but beating you until you howl like a little child! And he suddenly seized her by the shoulders, near the neck. The imbecility of sacrifice in her face grew. Beginnings of wanting to say something still twitched in this face, to save the situation through some kind of detached comment. Beginnings of standing up twitched in her thighs, but reversed themselves before reaching their goal. Ulrich had seized her saber and half drawn it from its scabbard. —For God’s sake! he felt. —If nothing intervenes I’ll hit her over the head with it until she gives no more signs of her
damned life! He did not notice that in the meantime a decisive change had been taking place in the Napoleonic colonel. Diotima sighed heavily as if the entire woman that she had been since her twelfth year was escaping from her bosom, and then she leaned over to the side so as to let Ulrich’s desire pour itself over her in whatever way he liked.

If her face had not been there, Ulrich would at this moment have laughed out loud. But this face was indescribable the way insanity is, and just as infectious. He threw away the saber and gave her, twice, a rough smack. Diotima had expected it to be different, but the physical concussion nevertheless had its effect. Something started going the way clocks sometimes start when they are roughly treated, and in the ordinary course that events took from that point on something unusual was also mingled, a scream and rattle of the emotions.
Childish words and gestures from long ago mingled with it, and the few hours until morning were filled with a kind of dark, childish, and blissful dream state that freed Diotima from her character and brought her back to the time when one does not yet think about anything and everything is good. When day shone through the panes she was lying on her knees, her uniform was scattered over the floor, her hair had fallen over her face, and her cheeks were full of saliva. She could not recall how she had come to be in this position, and her awakening reason was horrified at her fading ecstasy. There was no sign of Ulrich.

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[Valerie]

A young person tells himself: I’m in love. For the first time. He tells himself, he doesn’t just do it; for there is in him still a little of
the childish pride of wanting to possess the world of grownups, the whole world.

He might have previously desired and possessed beautiful women. He might also have been in love before; in various ways: impatiently, boldly, cynically, passionately; and yet the moment may still come when he tells himself for the first time: I’m in love. Ulrich had at the time immediately loosened the bonds that tied him to the woman with whom this happened, so that it was almost like a breaking up. He left from one day to the next; said, We wont write much. Then wrote letters that were like the revelation of a religion, but hesitated to mail them. The more powerfully the new experience grew in him, the less he let any of it show.

He suddenly began to recall this vividly. At that time he had been quite young, an army officer, on leave in the countryside. Perhaps that was what had brought about his shift in mood. He was spiritedly courting a
woman, older than he, the wife of a cavalry captain, his superior; she had for a long time been favorably inclined toward him, but seemed to be avoiding an adventure with this beardless little man who confused her with his unusual philosophical and passionate speeches, which came from beyond her circle. On a stroll, he suddenly seized her hand; fate had it that the woman left her hand for a moment in his as if powerless, and the next instant a fire blazed from arms to knees and the lightning bolt of love felled both of them, so that they almost fell by the side of the path, to sit on its moss and passionately embrace.

The night that followed was sleepless. Ulrich had said good-bye in the evening and said: tomorrow we run away. Desire aroused and not yet satisfied threw the woman back and forth in her bed, dry as thirst, but at the same time she feared the stream that was to moisten her lips in the morning, because of
its overflowing suddenness. The entire night she reproached herself because of the others' youth, and also on account of her husband, for she was a good wife, and in the morning wept tears of relief when she had handed to her Ulrich's letter, in which he took such an abrupt departure amid piled-up protestations.

Valerie had been the name of this good-natured woman, Ulrich remembered, and at that time, in spite of his inexperience, he must have already been clearly aware that she was only the impetus, but not the content, of his sudden experience. For during that sleepless night, shot through with passionate ideas, he had been borne farther and farther away from her, and before morning came, without his rightly knowing why, his resolve was fixed to do something the like of which he had never done before. He took nothing but a rucksack along, traveled a quite short stretch on the train, and then
wandered, his first step already in unknown territory, through a completely isolated valley to a tiny shrine hidden high in the mountains, which at this season no one visited and where hardly anyone lived.

What he did there was, if one were to make a story of it to someone, absolutely nothing. It was fall, and in the mountains the early-autumn sun has a power of its own; mornings it lifted him up and bore him to some tree high up on the slopes, from beneath which one looked into the far distance, for in spite of his heavy hiking boots he was really not conscious of walking. In the same self-forgetful way he changed his location several times during the day and read a little in a few books he had with him. Nor was he really thinking, although he felt his mind more deeply agitated than usual, for his thoughts did not shake themselves up as they usually do, so that a new idea is always landing on top of the pyramid of the earlier ones
while the ones at the bottom are becoming more and more compacted until finally they fuse with flesh, blood, skull case, and the tendons supporting the muscles, but his insights came like a jet into a full vessel, in endless overflowing and renewal, or they passed in an everlasting progression like clouds through the sky in which nothing changes, not the blue depths and not the soundless swimming of those mother-of-pearl fish. It could happen that an animal came out of the woods, observed Ulrich, and slowly bounded away without anything changing; that a cow grazed nearby, or a person went past, without any more happening than a beat of the pulse, twin to all the others of the stream of life that softly pounds without end against the walls of the understanding.

Ulrich had stumbled into the heart of the world. From there it was as far to his beloved as to the blade of grass beside his feet or to the distant tree on the sky-bare heights
across the valley. Strange thought: space, the nibbling in little bites, distance distanced, replaces the warm husk and leaves behind a cadaver; but here in the heart they were no longer themselves, everything was connected with him the way the foot is no farther from the heart than the breast is. Ulrich also no longer felt that the landscape in which he was lying was outside him; nor was it within; that had dissolved or permeated everything. The sudden idea that something might happen to him while he was lying there—a wild animal, a robber, some brute—was almost impossible of accomplishment, as far away as being frightened by one’s own thoughts. / Later: Nature itself is hostile. The observer need only go into the water. / And the beloved, the person for whose sake he was experiencing all this, was no closer than some unknown traveler would have been. Sometimes his thoughts strained like eyes to imagine what they might do now, but then he
gave it up again, for when he tried to approach her this way it was as if through alien territory that he imagined her in her surroundings, while he was linked to her in subterranean fashion in a quite different way.

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“You’re working...?” She did not conceal her disappointment, for with remarkable certainty she felt it as disloyalty whenever Ulrich leafed through books in his hand and his forehead became stiff as bone.

“I have to. I can’t bear the uncertainty of what we’re going through. And we’re not the first people it’s happening to either.”

“Twin siblings?”

“That’s perhaps something especially elect. But I don’t believe in such mysteries as being chosen—” He quickly corrected himself. “Hundreds of people have had the experience of believing that they were seeing
another world open up before them. Just as we do."

“And what came of it?”

“Books.”

“But it can’t have been just books?”


“You’re in a bad mood.”

“I could read to you or talk with you for hours about things from these books. What I began yesterday was an attempt to do that. You can go back as far as you like from this moment in which we’re now talking, millennia or as far as human memory can reach, and you will always find described the existence of another world that at times rises up like a deep sea floor when the restless floods of our ordinary life have receded from it.

“Since we’ve been together I’ve been comparing as much of this as I could get hold
of. All the descriptions state, in odd agreement, that in that condition there is in the world neither measure nor precision, which have made our world of the intellect great, neither purpose nor cause, neither good nor bad, no hmit, no greed, and no desire to kill, but only an incomparable excitement and an altered thinking and willing. For as objects and our emotions lose all the limitations that we otherwise impose on them, they flow together in a mysterious swelling and ebbing, a happiness that fills everything, an agitation that is in the true sense boundless, one and multiple in shape as in a dream. One might perhaps add that the ordinary world, with its apparently so real people and things that lord it over everything like fortresses on cliffs, if one looks back at it, together with all its evil and impoverished relationships, appears only as the consequence of a moral error from which we have already withdrawn our organs of sense.
That describes exactly as much as we ourselves experienced when we looked into each other’s eyes for the first time.

“The condition in which one perceives this has been given many names: the condition of love, goodness, turning away from the world, contemplation, seeing, moving away, returning home, willlessness, intuition, union with God, all names that express a vague harmony and characterize an experience that has been described with as much passion as vagueness. Insane peasant women have come to know it, and dogmatic professors of theology; Catholics, Jews, and atheists, people of our time and people of tens of thousands of years ago; and as amazingly similar as the ways are in which they have described it, these descriptions have remained remarkably undeveloped; the greatest intellect has not told us any more about it than the smallest, and it appears that you and I will not learn any more from
the experience of millennia than we know by ourselves.

“What does this mean?”

Agathe looked at him questioningly. “Lindner,” she said, “when I once asked him about the significance of such experiences—and by the way, he dismisses them—maintains that they go back to the difference between faith and knowledge, and that for the rest, they’re neurotic exaggerations—”

“Very good,” Ulrich interrupted her. “If you had reminded me of that yesterday, it might perhaps have spared my despair at my lack of results. But we’ll come back to Lindner later! Of course that’s fibbing; if I believe something, I at least want to have the hope that under favorable circumstances I could also experience it, but not keep stopping after the same first steps all the time.
“No, Agathe, it means something quite different. What would you say if I maintain that it signifies nothing other than the lost paradise. It is a message. A message in a bottle that has been drifting for thousands of years. Paradise is perhaps no fairy tale; it really exists.”

Up till then he had spoken with such rational decisiveness that these words had a quite remarkable sound. If he had said: I’ve done some reconnoitering, come along, we have to go out by the window and then through a dark corridor, and so on, then we’ll get there...it would not have seemed strange to Agathe to set off immediately.

He really ought to explain it twice: once with yearning, then the way one explains it as prelogical, etc.
But Ulrich merely went on reporting the results of his inquiries.

“From what I’ve found,” he said with the same calm as before, “two things emerge. First, that paradise has been placed where it is unattainable. Even in the first legendary beginnings of the human race it is supposed to have been lost, and what people claim to have experienced of it later is described as ecstasy, trance, madness: in short, as pathological delirium; but it is quite striking that something is simultaneously being denied as illness and considered a paradise: this leads me to suppose that it must also be attainable for healthy and rational people, but on a path that is presumed to be forbidden and dangerous.

“But that then leads me to understand the second point, that this condition of paradise in life, which is supposed to be taboo as a whole, breaks into pieces and is
inextricably mingled in with common life, that is, what people consider the highest values.

“In other words: the ideals of humanity. Think about it: they are all unattainable. But not only, as people pretend, because of human frailty but because, were one to fulfill them absolutely, they would become absurd. They are, therefore, the remains of a condition which as a whole is not capable of life, of which our life is not capable.

“One might be tempted to see in this shadowy doppelganger of another world only a daydream, had it not left behind its still warm traces in countless details of our lives. Religion, art, love, morality...these are attempts to follow this other spirit, they project into our lives with enormous power, but they have lost their origin and meaning, and this has made them totally confused and corrupt.”
They are bays but not the ocean.

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“And that brings us to Lindner.

“He would go mad if he were to follow the emotions that he has declared to be the decisive ones in his life. That’s why he rations them and dilutes them with convictions.

“You want to be good—like a lake without a shore—and its individual drops, which he carefully stores up in himself, are what draw you to him.

“You therefore only have some inkling, and he is convinced (believes) that you feel something is good, feel it like the smell of a field; while he makes a firm distinction between good and evil, but by separating them he mixes them together hopelessly.
That makes you feel abandoned, even by yourself, because you have an intimation of a togetherness as never before. Your experience is hard to communicate, private, almost unsocial. He ties his soul to experiences that can be repeated and understood, for the unequivocal is repeatable and therefore comprehensible, but the mutuality of the ideals he disseminates is like the shadowy realm that is neither life nor death. He knows the virtue of limitation, you the sin of limitation. You are deprived of power, he is active. His God is nothing but an initial association or the like.

“In a word: You would like to live in God, even if only as His worst creature, while he lives for Him. But in doing so he is following the same tried-and-true course as everyone else.”

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Agatthe had found a hairpin. In the period following Bonadea’s visit, which Ulrich had not told her about. She was sitting on the sofa and talking with her brother, her hands, full of idle security, supported in the pillows on both sides, when she suddenly felt the small steel object between her fingers. It quite confused her hands before she drew it out. She looked at the pin, which was that of a strange woman, and the blood rose to her cheeks.

It might have been a small occasion for laughter that Agatthe, like any jealous woman, hit upon the truth with such uncanny accuracy. But although it would have been easy to explain the discovery in some other fashion, Ulrich made no attempt to do so. Blood had risen to his cheeks too.

Finally, Agatthe regained her composure, but her smile was disconcerted.
Ulrich mumbled a confession about Bonadea’s assault.

She listened to him restlessly. —I’m not jealous, she said. —I have no right to be. But —

She sought to find this “but”; the demonstration was meant to cover the wildness that rose up in her against another woman taking Ulrich away from her.

Women are peculiarly naive when they talk about a man’s “needs.” They have let themselves be persuaded that these needs are inexorable violent forces, a kind of sullied but still grandiose suffering on the part of men, and they seem to know neither that they themselves become just as crazy through long abstinence, nor that after a period of transition it is not much more difficult for men to accustom themselves to it than it is for them; the distinction is, in truth, more a moral than a physiological one,
a distinction of the habit of granting or denying oneself one’s desires. But for many women, who believe they have grounds for not letting their desires gain control over them, this idea, that the man is not allowed to control himself without doing harm to himself, serves as a welcome opportunity to enclose the suffering man-child in their arms, and Agathe too—put in the role of a rather frigid woman through the taboo against otherwise following toward her brother the unambiguous voice of her heart—unconsciously applied this stratagem in her mind.

—I believe I do understand you—she said—but—but you have hurt me.

When Ulrich tried to ask her pardon and attempted to stroke her hair or her shoulders, she said: —I’m stupid—trembled a little, and moved away.

—If you were reading a poem aloud to me—she tried to explain—and I wasn’t able
to keep from looking at the latest newspaper the while, you would be disappointed too. That’s just the way it hurt. On your account.

Ulrich was silent. The vexation of again experiencing through explanations what had happened sealed his lips.

—Of course I have no right to set rules for you, Agathe repeated. —What is it then that I do give you! But why are you throwing yourself away on such a person! I could imagine your loving a woman I admire. I don’t know how to express it, but isn’t every caress a person gives someone somehow taken away from everyone else?

She felt that she would want it that way if she were to abandon this dream and have a husband again.

—Inwardly, more than two people can embrace, and everything external is only— She stopped short, but suddenly the comparison occurred to her: —I could imagine that
the person who embraces the body is only the butterfly uniting two flowers—

The comparison seemed to her somewhat too poetic. While she voiced it, she felt vividly the warm and ordinary feeling women have: I must give him something and compensate him.

Ulrich shook his head. “I have,” he said seriously, “committed a grave error. But it was not the way you think. What you say is beautiful. This bliss that arises from the skin through mechanical stimulation, this sudden being seized and changed by God: to ascribe this to a person who is just the instrument, to give him a privileged place through adoration or hate, is basically as primitive as being angry at the bullet that hits you. But I have too little faith to imagine that one could find such people.” Holds her hand—it is a mood borne far away.
When his hand sought pardon on her, Agathe enclosed her brother in her arms and kissed him. And involuntarily, shaken, in a sisterly-comforting way and then no longer able to control it, she opened her lips for the first time on his with that complete, undiminished womanliness that opens up the ripe fruit of love to its core.

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In the Parallel Campaign everyone declared themselves for Arnheim. Clarisse preferred Meingast.

Ulrich came home embittered. Faced with that powerlessness that cannot find a single point from which to express its opposition to the perfecting of an inadequate world.

He felt: They’re doing everything I want, it’s just that they’re doing it badly.
They don’t even understand me enough to contradict me; they believe that I’m saying what they’re saying, only worse.

Whenever you talk with them you start vomiting from nervousness.

They have goodness, love, soul; chopped into little pieces and mixed in with large chunks of the opposite; this keeps them healthy and makes them idealists, while I end up on the margin of the absurd and the criminal.

Oh, how unbearable they are, these chatterers at Diotima’s! But it would be just as nonsensical not to confess that there are many people who feel it as much as I do and who accomplish better things: Why do I feel so excluded?

He went through Agathe’s room and straight to his study. His face mirrored the strain and silence of a hard struggle.
Believers squabble with God when they get to feel isolated among their fellowmen; that’s when unbelievers get to know Him for the first time. If it were possible to run out into the empty, chilly universe, that would have been the right expression for Ulrich’s despair, anger, and unquiet temperament. His flames had inverted themselves and were burning inwardly. It nearly made him suffocate.

Suddenly he stopped. He took paper and pencil, which were lying under the heap of scribbled papers on his desk, and wrote down an idea. Read it through, walked up and down, read it once more, and added something to it.

There is no necessity behind it! This was the first idea, which, still obscure, contained everything. This world is only one of countless possible experiments?
Then: In mathematics there are problems that admit of no general solutions but only case-by-case ones. But under certain given conditions these partial solutions are summarized to give relative total solutions. Thus God gives partial solutions; these are the creative people; they contradict one another; we are condemned again and again to derive from this relative total solutions that dont correspond to anything!

Finally: Like molten ore I am poured into the mold that the world has shaped during my lifetime. For that reason I am never entirely what I think and do. For that reason this self always remains strange to me. One attempted form in an attempted form of the totality.

Acting without reflecting: for a man never gets further than when he doesn’t know where he’s going.
When he read over this last idea, he tore up the piece of paper and went in to Agathe; for then there is only one thing: not to listen to the bad masters, who have erected one of His possible lives as if for eternity, according to God’s plan, but to confide oneself to Him humbly and defiantly.
Below lay a narrow stretch of coast with some sand. Boats drawn up on it, seen from above, like blue and green spots of sealing wax. If one looked more closely, oil jugs, nets, men with vertically-striped pants and brown legs; the smell of fish and garlic; patched-up, shaky little houses. The activity on the warm sand was as small and far away as the bustling of beetles. It was framed on both sides by boulders as by stone pegs on which the bay hung, and farther along, as far as the eye could see, the steep coast with its crinkled details simply plunged into the southern sea. If one cautiously clambered down, one could, over the ruins of fallen rocks, venture out a little into the ocean, which filled tubs and troughs among the
stones with a warm bath and strange animal comrades.

Ulrich and Agathe felt as if a tremendous din had been raised from them and had flown off. They stood out there in the ocean, swaying white flames, almost sucked up and extinguished by the hot air. It was somewhere in Istria, or the eastern edge of Italy, or on the Tyrrhenian Sea. They hardly knew themselves. They had got on the train and traveled; it seemed to them as if they had been crisscrossing at random / in a way...that would prevent them from ever finding their way back.

2.

On their mad journey, Ancona was firmly fixed in their memory. They had arrived dead tired and in need of sleep. They got in early in the forenoon and asked for a room. Ate zabaglione in bed and drank strong coffee, whose heaviness was as if lifted to the
skies by the foam of whipped cream. Rested, dreamed. When they had gone to sleep it seemed to them that the white curtains in front of the windows were constantly lifting and sinking in an enchanting current of refreshing air; it was their breathing. When they awoke, they saw through the opening slats ore-blue sea, and the red and yellow sails of the barks entering and leaving the harbor were as shrill as floating whistles.

They understood nothing in this new world; it was all like the words of a poem.

They had left without passports and had a mild fear of some sort of discovery and punishment. When they registered at the hotel they had been taken for a young married couple and offered this lovely room with a wide bed meant for two, a *letto matrimoniale*, which in Germany has fallen into disuse. They had not dared reject it. After the sufferings of the body, the longing for primitive happiness.
Lying in this bed, they noticed an oval window the size of a cabin porthole, high up to the right of the door and near a corner of the room, in a totally incomprehensible place; it had opaque-colored glass, disquietingly like a secret observation post, but surrounded by a casual wreath of painted roses.

In comparison with the enormous tension that had gone before, it was nothing. And afterward there was a conspiratorial happiness in every detail, and at the moment when their resistance wavered and melted Ulrich said: It also makes most sense not to resist; we have to get this behind us so that this tension doesn’t debase what we have before us.

And they traveled.

They had stayed three days.

It has to be this way too: charmed by each other again and again. Traversing the scale of the sexual with variations.
For three days they never talked about soul. Only then did they bring it up again.

3.

When they went out on the street for the first time: buzzing of people. like a flock of sparrows happily dusting themselves in the sand. Curious glances without timidity, which felt themselves at home. At the backs of the brother and sister as they cautiously glided through this crowd lay the room, lay the wakefulness drifting deep over sleep like a cat’s paw over water, the blissful exhaustion in which one can ward off nothing, and also not oneself, but hears the world as a pale noise outside the infinitely deep corridors of the ear.

The exhaustion of excessive enjoyment in the body, the consumed marrow. It is shaming and joyful.

4.
They went on. Apparently suitcase nomads. In truth driven by the restlessness of finding a place worth living and dying in.

Much was beautiful and held them enticingly fast. But nowhere did the inner voice say: this is the place.

Finally here. Actually some insignificant chance had brought them here, and they did not notice anything special. Then this voice made itself heard, softly but distinctly.

Perhaps, without knowing it, they had become tired of their random traveling.
Here, where they stayed, a piece of garden-like nature rose up to the small white hotel, empty at this season, which was concealed on the slope; rose from the narrow beach between the rocky arms of the coast, like a posy of flowers and shrubs pressed against the breast, with narrow paths winding around it in a very gentle, slow climb up to the hotel. A little higher there was nothing but dazzling stone glittering in the sun, between one’s feet yellow broom and red thistles that ran from the feet toward the sky, the enormous hard straightness of the plateau’s edge, and, if one had climbed up with eyes closed and now opened them: suddenly, like a thunderously opened fan, the motionless sea.

It is probably the size of the arc in the line of the contour, this far-reaching security enclosed by an arm, a security that is more than human? Or only the enormous desert of
the dark-blue color, hostile to life? Or that the bowl of the sky never lies so directly over life? Or air and water, of which one never thinks? Otherwise colorless, good-natured messengers, but here where they were at home suddenly rearing up unapproachably like a pair of royal parents.

The legends of almost all peoples report that mankind came from the water and that the soul is a breath of air. Strange: science has determined that the human body consists almost entirely of water. One becomes small. When they got off the train in which they had crisscrossed the dense network of European energies and, still trembling from the motion, had hastened up here, brother and sister stood before the calm of the sea and the sky no differently than they would have stood a hundred thousand years ago. Tears came to Agathe’s eyes, and Ulrich lowered his head.
What is this whole exposition for? Can it be retracted? Something’s not right here.

Arm on arm, their hands intertwined, they climbed down again in the blue of evening to their new home. In the small dining room the whiteness of the tablecloths sparkled and the glasses stood as soft splendor. Ulrich ordered fish, wine, and fruit, speaking at length and in detail about it with the maître d’Hôtel; it did not interfere. The black figures glided around them or stood against the walls. Silverware and teeth functioned. The pair even carried on a conversation so as not to attract notice. Ulrich almost came to speak of the impression they had had up above. As if the people of a hundred thousand years ago had really had a direct revelation: it was like that; if one considers how tremendous the experience of these first myths is, and how little since...; it did not interfere; everything that happened
was embedded as in the murmuring of a fountain.

Ulrich looked at his sister for a long time; she was now not even beautiful; there was not that either. On an island they had not seen in the daylight a chain of houses shone: that was lovely but far away; the eyes looked at it only fleetingly and then directly in front of themselves again.

They asked for two rooms.
6.

The sea in summer and the high mountains in autumn are the two real tests of the soul. In their silence Ues a music greater than anything else on earth; there is a blissful torture in the inability to follow their rhythms, to make the rhythm of word and gesture so broad that it would join with theirs; mankind cannot keep in step with the breath of the gods.

The next morning, Ulrich and Agathe found a tiny pocket of sand up among the rocks beneath the edge of the plateau; when they stumbled onto it they had the feeling as if a creature that lived there had expected them and was looking at them: here no one knows anything about us anymore. They had been following a small, natural path; the coast curved away, they actually convinced themselves that the shining white hotel had disappeared. It was a long, narrow sunlit step of rock, with sand and bits and pieces of
stone. They undressed. They felt the need to bend their knees and stretch their arms, naked, unprotected, small as children before the greatness of the sea and the solitude. They did not say this to each other, and were ashamed before each other, but hidden behind the motions of their clothing and of searching for a place to lie down, each tried it for himself.

They were both ashamed because it is so nudist-camp natural and health-conscious, but expected it necessarily had to lead to something else...

The silence nailed them to the cross.

They felt that soon they would not be able to stand it anymore, would have to shout, insane as birds.

This was why they were suddenly standing beside each other, with their arms around each other. Skin stuck to skin; timidly this small feeling penetrated the great
desert like a tiny succulent flower growing all alone among the stones, and calmed them. They wove the circle of the horizon like a wreath around their hips, and looked at the sky. Stood as on a high balcony, interwoven with each other and with the unutterable like two lovers who, the next instant, will plunge into the emptiness. Plunged. And the emptiness supported them. The instant lasted; did not sink and did not rise. Agathe and Ulrich felt a happiness about which they did not know if it might be grief, and only the conviction inspiring them, that they had been chosen to experience the extraordinary, kept them from weeping.

7.

But they soon discovered...if they did not want to, they did not have to leave the hotel at all. A wide glass door led from their room to a small balcony overlooking the sea. Unobserved, they could stand in the doorway, their eyes directed at this never-
answering expanse, their arms flung protectively around each other. Blue coolness, on which the living warmth of the day lay like fine gold dust even after midnight, penetrated from the ocean. While their souls were standing erect within them, their bodies found each other like animals seeking warmth. And then the miracle happened to these bodies. Ulrich was suddenly part of Agathe, or she of him.

Agathe looked up, frightened. She looked for Ulrich out there, but found him in the center of her heart. She did see his form leaning out in the night, wrapped in starlight, but it was not his form, only its shining, ephemeral husk; and she saw the stars and the shadows without understanding that they were far away. Her body was light and fleet, it seemed to her that she was floating in the air. A great, miraculous impetus had seized her heart, with such rapidity that she almost thought she felt the gentle jolt. At this
moment brother and sister looked at each other confounded.

However much they had been preparing themselves for this every day for weeks, they feared that in this second they had lost their reason. But everything in them was clear. Not a vision. Rather an excessive clarity. And yet they still seemed to have lost and put aside not only their reason but all their capacities; no thoughts stirred in them, they could form no purpose, all words had receded far away, the will lifeless; everything that stirs in the individual was rolled up inertly, like leaves in a burning calm. But this deathlike impotence did not weigh them down; it was as if the lid of a sarcophagus had been roiled off them. Whatever was to be heard during the night sobbed without sound or measure, whatever they looked at was without form or mood and yet contained within itself the joyous delight of all forms and moods. It was really strangely simple: as
their powers became circumscribed all boundaries had disappeared, and since they no longer felt any kind of distinctions, neither in themselves nor about objects, they had become one.

They gazed around cautiously. It was almost painful. They were quite confused, far away from themselves, set down in a distance in which they lost themselves. They saw without light and heard without sound. Their soul was as excessively stretched as a hand that loses all its power, their tongue was as if cut off. But this pain was as sweet as a strange, living clarity.

[?] It was like a pain grating on their sensibilities, and yet could be called more a sweetness than a pain, for there was no vexation in it but a peculiar, quite supranatural comfort.

And they further perceived that the circumscribing powers in them were not lost at all, but in reality inverted, and with them all
boundaries had been inverted. They noticed that they had not become mute at all but were speaking, but they were not choosing words but were being chosen by words; no thought stirred in them, but the whole world was full of marvelous thoughts; they thought that they, and things as well, were no longer mutually displacing and repelling hermetic bodies, but opened and allied forms. Their glances, which in their whole lives had followed only the small patterns that objects and people form against the enormous background, had suddenly reversed, and the enormous background played with the patterns of life like an ocean with tiny matches.

Agathe lay half fainting against Ulrich’s chest. She felt at this moment embraced by her brother in such a distant, silent, and pure fashion that there was nothing at all like it. Their bodies did not move and were not altered, and yet a sensual happiness flowed through them, the like of which they had
never experienced. It was not an idea and not imagined! Wherever they touched each other, whether on their hips, their hands, or a strand of hair, they interpenetrated one another.

They were both convinced at this moment that they were no longer subject to the distinctions of humankind. They had overcome the stage of desire, which expends its energy on an action and a brief intensification, and their fulfillment impinged on them not only in specific places but in all the places of their bodies, as fire does not become less when other fires kindle from it. They were submerged in this fire that fills up everything; swimming in it as in a sea of desire, and flying in it as in a heaven of rapture.

Agathe wept with happiness. Whenever they moved, the recollection that they were still two dropped like a grain of incense into the sweet fire of life and dissolved in it; these
were perhaps the happiest moments, where they were not entirely one.

Originally also supposed to come here:...I’m in love and don’t know with whom...I’m neither faithful, nor unfaithful, what am I then.

For they felt, hovering more strongly over this hour than over others a breath of grief and transitoriness, something shadowy and unreal, a being robbed, a cruelty, a fearful tension of uncertain forces against the fear of being transformed once more. Finally, when they felt the condition fade, they separated wordlessly and in utter exhaustion.

The next morning, Ulrich and Agathe had separated without having made plans, and did not see each other the entire day; they could not do otherwise; the emotions of the night were still ebbing away and taking them with them; both felt the need to come to terms with themselves alone, without
noticing that this entailed a contradiction of the experience that had overpowered them. Involuntarily they went off far across the countryside in opposite directions, stopped in places at different times, sought a resting place in view of the sea, and thought of each other.

It may be called strange that their love immediately involved the need for separation, but this love was so great that they mistrusted it and desired this test.

Can they still separate? How can it be done?

Now one can dream. Lie under a bush and the bees buzz; or stare into the weaving heat, the thin air. The senses doze off, and in the body memories shine forth again like the stars after sunset. The body is again touched and kissed, and the magic line of demarcation that otherwise still distinguishes the strongest memories from reality is transcended by these soft / dreaming memories. They
push time and space aside like a curtain and unite the lovers not only in thought but physically, not with their heavy bodies but with inwardly altered ones consisting entirely of tender mobility. But only when one thinks that during this union, which is more perfect and blissful than bodily union, one has no idea what the other person has just been doing, or what he will be doing the next moment, does the mystery attain its greatest depth. Ulrich assumed that Agathe had remained behind in the hotel. He saw her standing on the white square in front of the white building, speaking with the manager. It was false. Or perhaps she was standing with the young German professor who had arrived and introduced himself, or was talking with Luisina, the chambermaid with the lovely eyes, and laughing at her pert, funny answers. That Agathe was now able to laugh! It destroyed the Condition; a smile was just heavy enough to be borne by it...!! When
Ulrich turned around, Agathe was suddenly really standing there. Really? She had come across the stones in a great arc; her dress was fluttering in the wind, she cast a dark shadow on the hot ground and was laughing at Ulrich. Blissfully real reality; it hurt as much as when eyes that have been staring into die distance must quickly adapt to nearness.

Agathe sat down beside him. A lizard sat nearby; it silently darted out its tongue, a small, scurrying flame of life, beside their conversation. Ulrich had noticed it some time before. Agathe hadn’t. But when Agathe, who was afraid of small animals, caught sight of it, she was frightened and, laughing in embarrassment, scared the little creature away with a stone. And to gather courage she ran after it, clapping her hands and chasing the little beast.

Ulrich, who had been staring at the small creature as at a flickering magic
mirror, said to himself: That we were now so different is as sad as that we were born at the same time but will die at different times. With his eyes and ears he followed this strange body, Agathe. But then he suddenly fell deeply once again into and was at the bottom of the experience out of which Agathe had startled him.

He was not able to pin it down clearly, but in this flickering brightness above the stones in which everything was transformed, happiness into grief, and also grief into happiness, the painful moment abruptly took on die secret lust of the hermaphrodite who, separated into two independent beings, finds itself again, whose secret no one who touches it suspects. Yet how glorious it is—Agathe’s brother thought—that she is different from me, that she can do things I can’t even guess at, which yet also belong to me through our secret empathy. Dreams occurred to him, which he otherwise never recalled but which
must have often preoccupied him. Sometimes in a dream he had met the sister of a beloved, although she did not have a sister, and this strange familiar person radiated all the happiness of possession and all the happiness of desire. Or he heard a soft voice speaking. Or saw only the fluttering of a skirt, which most definitely belonged to a stranger, but this stranger was most definitely his beloved. As if a disembodied, completely free attachment was only playing with these people. All at once Ulrich was startled, and thought he saw in the great brightness that the secret of love was precisely this, that lovers are not one.

That belongs to the principles of profane love! Thus really already a game against itself.

“How wonderful it is, Agathe,” Ulrich said, “that you can do things I can’t guess at.”
“Yes,” she answered, “the whole world is full of such things. As I was walking across this plateau I felt that I could now walk in every direction.”

“But why did you come to me?”

Agathe was silent.

“It is so beautiful to be different from the way one was born,” Ulrich continued. “But I was afraid of just that.” He told her the dreams that he had remembered, and she knew them too.

“But why are you afraid?” Agathe asked.

“Because it occurred to me that if it is the sense of these dreams—and it might well be that they signify the final memory of it—that our desires aim not at making one person out of two but, on the contrary, at escaping from our prison, our oneness, to become two in a union, but preferably twelve, a thousand, incredibly many, rather, to slip
out of ourselves as in a dream, to drink life brewed to the boiling point, to be carried out of ourselves or whatever, for I can’t express it very well; then the world contains as much lust as strangeness, as much tenderness as activity, and is not an opium haze but rather an intoxication of the blood, an orgasm of battle, and the only mistake we could make would be to forget the (lustful contact of) lust of strangeness and imagine doing all sorts of things by dividing up the hurricane of love into scanty creeks flowing back and forth between two people—"

He had jumped up.

“But how would one have to be?” Agathe asked pensively and simply. It pained him that she could immediately appropriate his half-loved and half-cursed idea. “One would have to be able to give,” she went on, “without taking away. To be such that love does not become less when it’s divided. Then that would be possible too.
Not to treat love as a treasure”—she laughed—”the way it’s already laid down in language!”

Ulrich was picking up head-sized stones and flinging them from the cliff into the sea, which squirted up a tiny spray; he had not exercised his muscles for a long time.

“But...?” Agathe said. “Isn’t what you’re saying simply what one reads fairly often, drinking the world in great drafts of desire? To want to be a thousandfold, because once isn’t enough?” She was parodying it a little because she suddenly realized that she did not like it.

“No!” Ulrich shouted back. “It’s never what others say!” He flung the large stone he was holding in his hand so angrily to the ground that the loose limestone exploded. “We forgot ourselves,” he said gently, grasping Agathe under the arm and pulling her away. “It would still have to be a sister and a
brother, even if they’re divided into a thousand pieces. —Anyway, it’s just an idea.”

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Meanwhile days came when only the surface stirred. On the sparkling damp stones in the sea. A silent being: a fish, flowerlike in the water. Agathe romped after it from stone to stone until it dived under, darting into the darkness like an arrow, and disappeared. Well? Ulrich thought. Agathe was standing out on the rocks, he on the shore; a melody of eventfulness broke off, and a new one must carry on: How will she turn around, how smile back to the shore? Beautifully. like all perfection. With total charm in her motion is how Agathe did it; the insights of the orchestra of her beauty, though it seemed to be making music without a conductor, were always delightful.

And yet all perfected beauty—an animal, a painting, a woman—is nothing more
than the final piece in a circle; an arc is completed, one sees it but would like to know the circle. If it is one of life’s familiar circles, for instance that of a great man, then a noble horse or a beautiful woman is like the clasp in a belt, which closes it and for a moment seems to contain the entire phenomenon; in the same way one can be smitten with a lovely farm horse, because in him as in a focusing mirror the entire heavy-footed beauty of the field and its people is repeated. But if there is nothing behind it? Nothing more than is behind the rays of the sun dancing on the stones? If this infinitude of water and sky is pitilessly open? Then one might almost believe that beauty is something that secretly negates, something incomplete and incompletable, a happiness without purpose, without sense. But what if it lacks everything? Then beauty is a torture, something to laugh and cry over, a tickling to
make one roll around in the sand, with Apollo’s arrow in one’s side.

Hatred of beauty. Sense of urgent sexual desire: to destroy beauty.

The brightness of such days was like smoke, which the clarity of the nights wiped away.

Agathe had somewhat less imagination than Ulrich. Because she had not thought as much as he had her emotions were not as volatile as his, but burned like a flame rising straight out of the particular ground on which she happened to be standing. The daring nature of their flight, the conscience made somewhat anxious by the fear of discovery, and finally this hiding place in a flower basket between the porous limestone wall, sea, and sky, at times gave her a high-spirited and childlike cheerfulness. She then treated even
their strange experience as an adventure: a forbidden space within herself over whose enclosure one spies, or into which one forces one’s way, with beating heart, burning neck, and heavy soles weighed down with clods of damp earth from the path one has hurriedly followed in secret.

In this way very indirect suggestion of repeated coitus.

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She sometimes had a playful way of allowing herself to be touched, with opened-even-when-closed eyes; of reappearing; a tenderness that was not to be stilled. He secretly observed her, saw this play of love with the body, which has the captivation of a smile and the oppressive quality of a force of nature, for the first time, or was moved by it
for the first time. Or there were hours when she did not look at him, was cold, almost angry with him; because she was too agitated; like someone in a boat not daring to move, so it was in her body—afterward, every time. Because the connection does not function. Or after-reactions; at first a blocking and then, for no apparent reason, an after-flood. It was thrilling and charming to let oneself be cradled by these inspirations; they shortened the hours but they forced an optic of nearness and minute observation.

Ulrich resisted this. It was a leftover piece of earth drifting in the liquid fire and clouding it; a temptation to explanations such as that Agathe had never learned the proper connection between love and sex. As with most people, the entire power of the sexual had first come together with a spark of inclination at the time she had married Hagauer, who was not yet abhorrent to her. Instead of stumbling into a storm with someone /
almost only in the company of / accompanied by someone almost as impersonal as the elements, and only then noticing as a still nameless surprise that this person’s legs are not clothed like one’s own and that one’s soul is beckoning one to change one’s hiding place...

But such thoughts, too, were like singing in a false key. Ulrich did not allow himself this kind of understanding. Understanding a person one loves cannot involve spying on that person but must come pouring from an overflow of auspicious inspirations. One may only recognize those things that enrich. One makes a gift of qualities in the unshakable security of a predetermined harmony, a separation that has never been—

Especially when ethical magnanimity is stimulated by it. Not the seeing or not seeing
of weaknesses, but the large motion in which they float without significance.

An ancient column—thrown down at the time of Venice, Greece, or Rome—lay among the stones and the broom; every groove of its shaft and capital deepened by the ray-sharp graving tool of the midday shadows. Lying next to it belonged to the great hours of love.

Four eyes watching. Nothing but noon, column, four eyes. If the glance of two eyes sees one picture, one world: why not the glance of four?

When two pairs of eyes look long into each other, one person crosses over to the other on the bridge of glances, and all that remains is a feeling that no longer has a body.

When in a secret hour two pairs of eyes look at an object and come together in it—every object hovering deep down in a
feeling, and objects standing only as firmly as they do if this deep ground is hard—then the rigid world begins to move, softly and incessantly. It rises and falls restlessly with the blood. The fraternal twins looked at each other. In the bright light it could not be made out whether they were still breathing or had been lying there for a thousand years like the stones. Whether the stone column was lying there or had risen up in the light without a sound and was floating.

There is a significant difference in the way one looks at people and the way one looks at things. Every time after this when they looked at someone in the hotel: the play of facial expressions of someone with whom one is talking becomes unspeakably alienating if one observes it as an objective process, and not as an ongoing exchange of signals between two souls; we are accustomed to see things lying mutely where they are, and we consider it a disturbing hallucination if they
take on a more dynamic relation to us. But it is only we ourselves who are looking at them in such a way that the small changes in their physiognomies are not answered by any alterations in our emotions, and to change this nothing more is needed, basically, than that we not look at the world intellectually but that objects arouse in us our moral emotions instead of our sense-based surveying equipment. At such moments the excitement in which a glimpse brings us something and enriches us becomes so strong that nothing appears real except for a hovering condition, which, beyond the eyes, condenses into objects, and on this side of the eyes condenses into ideas and feelings, without these two sides being separable from each other. Whatever the soul bestows comes forward; whatever loses this power dissipates before one’s eyes.

In this flickering silence among the stones there was a panic horror. The world
seemed to be only the outer aspect of a specific inner attitude, and interchangeable with it. But world and self were not solid; a scaffolding sunk into soft depths; mutually helping each other out of a formlessness. Agathe said softly to Ulrich: “Are you yourself or are you not? I know nothing of it. I am incognizant of it and I am incognizant of myself/’

It was the terror: The world depended on her, and she did not know who she was.

Ulrich was silent.

Agathe continued: “I am in love, but I do not know with whom. I am neither faithful nor unfaithful. What am I then? My heart is at once full of love and emptied of love...,” she whispered. The horror of a noontime silence seemed to have clutched her heart.

Over and over the great test was the sea. Time and again, when they had climbed
down the narrow slope with its many paths, its quantity of laurel, its broom, its figs, and its many bees, and stepped out onto the powerful surface spread out above the ocean, it was like the first great chord sounding after the tuning up of an orchestra. How would one have to be to endure this constantly? Ulrich proposed that they try setting up a tent here. But he did not mean it seriously; it would have frightened him. There were no longer any opponents around, up here they were alone; the rebuffs one receives as long as one must contradict the demands of others and the habits of one’s own conscience were used up; in this final battle it was a matter of their resolve. The sea was like a merciless beloved and rival; every minute was an annihilating exploration of conscience. They were afraid of collapsing unconscious before this expanse that swallowed up every resistance.
This monstrously extended sight was not to be borne without its becoming somewhat boring. This being responsible for every slightest motion was—they had to confess—rather empty, if one compared it with the cheerfulness of those hours when they made no such claims on themselves and their bodies played with the soul like a beautiful young animal rolling a ball back and forth.

One day Ulrich said: It’s broad and pastoral; there’s something of a pastor about it! They laughed. Then they were startled by the scorn that they had inflicted upon themselves.

The hotel had a little bell tower; in the middle of its roof. Around one o’clock this bell rang for lunch. Since they were still almost the only guests, they did not need to respond right away, but the cook was indicating that he was ready. The bright sounds sliced into the stillness like a sharp knife
contacting skin, which had shuddered beforehand but at this moment becomes calm. “How lovely it is, really,” Ulrich said, as they climbed down on one of these days, “to be driven by necessity. The way one drives geese from behind with a stick, or entices hens from in front with feed. And where everything doesn’t happen mysteriously—” The blue-white trembling air really shuddered like goose pimples if one stared into it for a long time. At that time memories were beginning to torture Ulrich vividly; he suddenly saw before him every statue and every architectural detail of one of those cities overloaded with such things that he had visited years ago; Nürnberg was before him, and Amiens, although they had never captivated him; some large red book or other that he must have seen years earlier in an exhibit would not go away from before his eyes; a slender tanned boy, perhaps only the counter his imagination had conjured up to Agathe,
but in such a way as if he had once really met him but did not know where, preoccupied his mind; ideas that he had had at some time and long forgotten; soundless, shadowy things, things properly forgotten, eddied up in this south of stillness and seized possession of the desolate expanse.

The impatience that from the beginning had been mingled with all this beauty began to rage in Ulrich.

He could be sitting before a stone, lost to the world, sunk in contemplation, and be tortured by this raging impatience. He had come to the end, had assimilated everything into himself and ran the danger of beginning, all alone, to speak aloud in order to recite everything to himself once again. “Yes, you’re sitting here,” his thoughts said, “and you could tell yourself once again what you’re looking at.” The stones are of a quite peculiar stone-green, and their image is mirrored in the water. Quite right. Exactly as
one says. And the stones are shaped like boxes....But it’s all no use, and I’d like to leave. It is so beautiful!

And he remembered: at home, sometimes only years later, and sometimes purely by accident, if one no longer has any idea how everything was, suddenly a light falls from behind, from such past things, and the heart does everything as if in a dream. He longed for the past.

“It’s quite simple,” he said to Agathe, “and everyone knows it, we’re the only ones who don’t: the imagination is stimulated only by what one does not yet possess or no longer has; the body wants to have, but the soul does not want to have. Now I understand the tremendous efforts people make to this end. How stupid it is for this ordinary fellow, this art traveler, to compare this flower to a jewel, or that stone over there to a flower: as if the truly intelligent thing to do wouldn’t be to transform them for a brief
moment into something else. And how stupid all our ideals would be, since every ideal, if one takes it seriously, contradicts some other ideal; thou shalt not kill, therefore perish? Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s goods, so live in poverty? As if their sense did not lie precisely in the impossibility of carrying them out, which ignites the soul! And how good it is for religion that one can neither see nor comprehend God! But which world? A cold, dark strip between the two fires of the Not-yet and the No-longer!”

“A world to be afraid of oneself in,” Agathe said. “You’re right.” She said this quite seriously, and there was real bitterness in her eyes.

—And if it is so! Ulrich laughed. —It occurs to me for the first time in my life that we would have to be terribly afraid of being tricked if Heaven were not to dangle before us an end of the world that does not exist.
Evidently everything absolute, hundred-percent, true, is completely monstrous.

Between two people as well; you mean between us?

I now understand so well what visionaries are: food without salt is unbearable, but salt without food is a poison; visionaries are people who want to live from salt alone. Is that right?

Agathe shrugged her shoulders.

— Look at our chambermaid, a cheerful stupid creature smelling of cheap soap. A short time ago I was watching her as she made up the room; she seemed to me as pretty as a freshly washed sky.

It comforted Ulrich to confess this, and a small worm of disgust crawled across Agathe’s mouth. Ulrich repeated it; he did not want to drown out this small disharmony
with the great peal of the dark bell. “It is a disharmony, isn’t it? And any trick will do for the soul to keep itself fruitful. Sometimes it dies from love several times in succession. But”— and now he said something he believed to be a consolation, indeed a new love—”if everything is so sad and a deception, and one can no longer believe in anything: isn’t that just when we really need one another? The folk song about the little sister”—he smiled—”quiet, pensive music that nothing can drown out; an accompanying music; a love of loveless-ness that softly reaches out its hands...?”

Time is the greatest cynic.

Here sexuality and camaraderie!

A cool, quiet, gray aneroticism?
Agathe was silent. Something had been extinguished. She was inordinately tired. Her heart had suddenly been snatched away from her, and she was tortured by an unbearable fear of a vacuum within, of her unworthiness and her regressive transformation. This is the way ecstacies feel when God withdraws from them and nothing responds any longer to their zealous appeals.

The art traveler, as they called him, was a professor returning from Italian cities, who had the butterfly-net skin and botanizing drum-beating mind of the aspiring art historian. He had stopped over here for a few days to rest before his return and to order his notes. As they were the only guests, he had already introduced himself to the pair on the first day. They chatted briefly after meals, or when they met in the vicinity of the hotel, and there was no denying that although Ulrich made fun of him, at certain moments this man brought them welcome relaxation.
He was strongly convinced of his significance as man and scholar, and from their first encounter, after finding that the couple were not on their honeymoon, he had courted Agathe with great determination. He said to her: You resemble the beautiful — in the painting by — , and all the women who have this expression, which repeats itself in their hair and in the folds of their gowns, have the quality of ——: As she was telling this to Ulrich Agathe had already forgotten the names, but for a stranger to know what one was was as pleasant as the firm pressure of a masseur, while one knew oneself to be so diffuse that one could barely distinguish oneself from the noontime silence.

This art traveler said: Women’s function is to make us dream; they are a stratagem of nature for the fertilization of the masculine mind. He gleamed with self-satisfaction at his paradox, which inverted the sense of fertilization. Ulrich replied: But
there are still distinctions in kind among these dreams!

This man asserted that in embracing a “really great female” one must be able to think of Michelangelo’s *Creation*. “You pull the blanket of the Sistine ceiling over yourself and underneath it you’re naked except for the blue stockings,” Ulrich ridiculed. No. He admits that carrying this out calls for tact, but in principle such people could be “twice as big” as others. “In the last analysis, the goal of all ethical life is to unite our actions with the highest that we bear within us!” It was not so easy to contradict this theoretically, although practically speaking it was ridiculous.

—I have discovered—the art historian said—that there are, and in the course of history always have been, two sorts of people. I call them the static and the dynamic. Or, if you prefer, the Imperial and the Faustian. People who are static can feel happiness as
something present. They are somehow characterized by balance, equilibrium. What they have done and what they will do blends into what they are doing at the moment, is harmonized, and has a shape like a painting or a melody; has, so to speak, a second dimension, shines in every moment as surface. The Pope, for example, or the Dalai Lama; it is simply unimaginable that they would do something that was not stretched on the frame of their significance. On the other hand, the dynamic people: always tearing themselves loose, merely glancing backward and forward, rolling out of themselves, insensitive people with missions, insatiable, pushy, luckless—whom the static ones conquer over and over in order to keep world history going: in a word, he hinted that he was capable of carrying both strains within himself.

—Tell me—Ulrich asked, as if he were quite serious—are not the dynamic people
also those who in love seem not to feel anything because they have either already loved in their imagination or will only love what has slipped away from them again? Couldn’t one say that too?

—Quite right! the professor said.

—They are immoral and dreamers, these people, who can never find the right point between future and past—

It’s enough to make them throw up.

—Well, I don’t think I’d claim that—

—Yes, but you do. They would be capable of committing crazy good or bad deeds because the present means nothing to them.

He really ought to say: they could commit crazy deeds out of impatience.
The art historian did not quite know how to answer this, and found that Ulrich did not understand him.

The restlessness grew. The summer heat increased. The sun burned like a fire to the edge of the earth. The elements filled existence completely, so that there was hardly anyplace left for anything human.

It happened that toward evening, when the burning air already cast light, cooling folds, they went strolling on the steep banks. Yellow bushes of broom sprang up from the embers of the stones and stood there directly before the soul; the mountains gray as donkeys’ backs with the washed-out green that the grass growing on the white limestone cast over them; the laurel’s hot dark green. The parched glance resting on the laurel sank into cooler and cooler depths. Countless bees hummed; it fused into a deep metallic
tone that shot off little arrows whenever, in a sudden turn, they flew by one’s ear. Heroic, tremendous, the approaching line of mountains, in three waves one behind the other, smoothly canted, breaking off steeply.

—Heroic? Ulrich asked. —Or is it only what we have always hated because it was supposed to be heroic? Endlessly portrayed, this painted and engraved, this Greek, this Roman, this Nazarene, classicistic landscape—this virtuous, professorial, idealistic landscape? And ultimately it impresses us only because we’ve now encountered it in reality? The way one despises an influential man and is nevertheless flattered because one knows him?

But the few things here to which the space belonged respected each other; they kept their distance from each other and did not saturate nature with impressions, as they do in Germany. No mocking helped; as only high in the mountains, where everything
earthly keeps diminishing, this landscape was no longer a place of human habitation but a piece of the sky, to whose folds a few species of insects still clung.

And on the other side (of this humility) lay the sea. The great beloved, adorned with the peacock’s tail. The beloved with the oval mirror. The opened eye of the beloved. The beloved become God. The pitiless challenge. The eyes still hurt and had to look away, pierced by the shattering spears of light speeding back from the sea. But soon the sun will be lower. It will only be a circumscribed sea of liquid silver, with violets floating on it. And then one must look out over the sea! Then one has to look at it. Agathe and Ulrich feared this moment. What can one do to prevail against this monstrous, observing, stimulating, jealous rival? How should they love each other? Sink to their knees? As they had done at first? Spread out their arms? Scream? Can they embrace each other? It is
all so ridiculous, as if one were trying to shout angrily at someone while nearby all the bells of a cathedral are pealing! The fearful emptiness again closed in on them from all sides.

So it ends the way it begins!

But at such a moment one can shoot the other, or stab him, since his death cry will be muffled.

Ulrich shook his head. —One must be somewhat limited to find nature beautiful. To be someone like that fellow down there, who would rather talk himself than listen to someone better. One is forcibly reminded by nature of school exercises and bad poems, and one has to be capable of transforming it at the moment of observation into an anointing. Otherwise one collapses. One must
always be stupider than nature in order to stand up to it, and must gossip in order not to lose the language.

Fortunately, their skin could not stand the heat. Sweat broke out. It created a diversion and an excuse; they felt themselves relieved of their mission.

But as they were walking back Agathe noticed that she was looking forward to the certainty of meeting the traveling stranger down below in front of the hotel. Ulrich was certainly right, but there was a great consolation in the babbling, insistently pushy company of this person.

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Afternoons, in the room, there were fearful moments. Between the extended red-striped awning and the stone railing of the balcony lay a blue, burning band the width of one’s hand. The smooth warmth, the severely attenuated brightness, had dislodged
everything from the room that was not fixed. Ulrich and Agathe had not brought along anything to read; that had been their plan; they had left behind ideas, normal circumstances, everything having any connection—no matter how sagacious—with the ordinary human way of living: now their souls lay there like two hard-baked bricks from which every drop of water has escaped. This contemplative natural existence had made them unexpectedly dependent on the most primitive elements.

Finally, a day of rain came. The wind lashed. Time became long in a cool way. They straightened up like plants. They kissed each other. The words they exchanged refreshed them. They were happy again. To always be waiting every moment for the next moment is only a habit; dam it up, and time comes forth like a lake. The hours still flow, but they are broader than they are long. Evening falls, but no time has passed.
But then a second rainy day followed; a third. What had seemed a new intensity glided downward as a conclusion. The smallest help, the belief that this weather was a personal dispensation, an extraordinary fate, and the room is full of the strange light from the water, or hollowed out like a die of dark silver. But if no help comes: what can one talk about? One can still smile at the other from far apart—embrace— weaken the other to the point of that fatigue which resembles death, which separates the exhausted like an endless plain; one can call across: I love you, or: You are beautiful, or: I would rather die with you than live without you, or:

What a miracle that you and I, two such separate beings, have been blown together. And one can weep from nervousness when, quite softly, one begins to fall prey to boredom...

Fearful violence of repetition, fearful godhead! Attraction of emptiness, always
sucking in like the funnel of a whirlpool whose walls yield. Kiss me, and I will bite gently and harder and harder and wilder and wilder, ever more drunken, more greedy for blood, listening into your lips for the plea for mercy, climbing down the ravine of pain until at the end we are hanging in the vertical wall and are afraid of ourselves. Then the deep pantings of breath come to our aid, threatening to abandon the body; the gleam in the eye breaks, the glance rolls from side to side, the grimace of dying begins. Astonishment and a thousandfold ecstasy in each other eddy in this rapture. Within a few minutes concentrated flight through bliss and death, ending, renewed, bodies swinging like howling bells. But at the end one knows: it was only a profound Fall into a world in which it drifts downward on a hundred steps of repetition. Agathe moaned: You will leave me! —No! Darling! Conspirator! Ulrich was searching for expressions of enthusiasm, etc.
—No—Agathe softly fended him off—I can’t feel anything anymore...! Since it had now been spoken, Ulrich became cold and gave up the effort.

—If we had believed in God—Agathe went on—we would have understood what the mountains and flowers were saying.


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It ends in excrement and vomiting like the first time!

—No. I was thinking of the art historian. His thread never breaks. Agathe gave a pained and wan smile. She was lying on the bed; Ulrich had torn open the door to the balcony, the wind flung water in. “What difference does it make,” he said harshly. “Think of
whomever you want. We have to look around for a third person. Who’ll observe us, envy us, or reproach us.” He remained standing before her and said slowly: “There is no such thing as love between two people alone!” Agathe propped herself on an elbow and lay there, wide-eyed, as if she were expecting death. —We have yielded to an impulse against order, Ulrich repeated. —A love can grow out of defiance, but it can’t consist of defiance. On the contrary, it can only exist when it is integrated into a society. It’s not the content of life. But a negation of, an exception to, all life’s contents.

But an exception needs whatever it is the exception to. One can’t live from a negation alone. —Close the door, Agathe asked. Then she stood up and arranged her dress. —So shall we leave?

Ulrich shrugged his shoulders. —Well, it’s all over.
—Don’t you remember any more our proviso when we came here?

Ashamed, Ulrich answered: We wanted to find the entrance to paradise!

—And kill ourselves—Agathe said—if we didn’t!

Ulrich looked at her calmly. —Do you want to?

Agathe might perhaps have said yes. She did not know why it seemed more honest to slowly shake her head and say no.

—We’ve lost that resolve too, Ulrich stated.

She stood up in despair. Spoke with her hands on her temples, listening to her own words: I was waiting...I was almost decadent and ridiculous...Because in spite of the life I’ve led I was still waiting. I could not name it or describe it. It was like a melody without notes, a picture with out form. I knew that
one day it will come up to me from outside and will be what treats me tenderly and what will hold no harm for me anymore, either in life or in death

Ulrich, who had turned violently toward her, cut in, parodying her with a spitefulness that was a torture to himself: —It’s a longing, something that’s missing: the form is there, only the matter is missing. Then some bank official or professor comes along, and this little beastie slowly fills up the emptiness that was stretched out like an evening sky.

—My love, all movement in life comes from the evil and brutal; goodness dozes off. Is a drop of some fragrance; but every hour is the same hole and yawning child of death, which has to be filled up with heavy ballast. You said before: If we could believe in God!. But a game of patience will do as well, a game of chess, a book. Today man has discovered that he can console himself with these things just as well. It just has to be
something where board is joined to board in order to span the empty depths.

—but don’t we love each other any longer, then? Agathe exclaimed.

Now they are again talking as they had earlier. It is very lovely.

—You can’t overlook—Ulrich answered—how much this feeling depends on its surroundings. How it derives its content from imagining a life together, that is, a line between and through other people. From good conscience, because everyone else is so pleased at the way these two love each other, or from bad conscience as well

—What is it then that we experienced? We mustn’t pretend to something untrue: I wasn’t a fool for wanting to seek paradise. I could determine it the way one can deduce
an invisible planet from certain effects. And what happened? It dissolved into a spiritual and optical illusion and into a physiological mechanism that is repeatable. As with all people!

—It’s true, Agathe said. —For the longest time we’ve been living from what you call evil; from restlessness, small distractions, the hunger and satiety of the body.

—And yet—Ulrich answered, as in an extremely painful vision— when it’s forgotten, you’ll be waiting again. Days will come where behind many doors someone will beat on a drum. Muffled and insistently: beat, beat. Days, as if you were waiting in a brothel for the creaking of the stairs; it will be some corporal or bank official. Whom fate has sent you. To keep your life in motion. And yet you remain my sister.

—But what is to become of us? Agathe saw nothing before her.
—You must marry or find a lover—I said that before.

—But are we no longer one person? she asked sadly.

—One person also has both within himself.

—But if I love you? Agathe shouted.

—We must live. Without each other—for each other. Do you want the art historian? Ulrich said this with the coldness of great effort. Agathe dismissed it with a small shrug of her shoulder. —Thank you, Ulrich said. He tried to grasp her slack hand and stroke it. —I’m not so—so firmly convinced either....

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Once again, almost the great union. But it seems to Agathe that Ulrich does not have sufficient courage.
They were silent for a while. Agathe opened and closed drawers and began to pack. The storm shook at the doors. Then Agathe turned around and asked her brother calmly and in a different voice:

—But can you imagine that tomorrow or the next day we’ll get home and find the rooms the way we left them, and begin to make visits?...

Ulrich did not notice with what enormous resistance Agathe struggled against this idea. He could not imagine all that either. But he felt some new kind of tension, even if it was a melancholy task. At this moment he was not paying enough attention to Agathe.

Continuation: The day after this dismal conversation Clarisse arrived.
On Kakania

A digression on Kakania. The crucible of the World War is also the birthplace of the poet Feuermaul

It may be assumed that the expression “Crucible of the World War” has, since this object existed, been used often enough, yet always with a certain imprecision as to the question of where it is located. Older people who still have personal memories of those times will probably think of Sarajevo, yet they
themselves will feel that this small Bosnian city can only have been the oven vent through which the wind blew in. Educated people will direct their thoughts to political nodal points and world capitals. Those even more highly educated will, moreover, have the names of Essen, Creuzot, Pilsen, and the other centers of the armaments industry confidendy in mind. And the most highly educated will add to these something from the geography of oil, potash, and other raw materials, for that’s the way one often reads about it. But what follows from all this is merely that the crucible of the World War was no ordinary crucible, for it was located in several places simultaneously.

Perhaps one might say to this that the expression is to be understood only metaphorically. But this is to be assented to so completely that it immediately gives rise to even greater difficulties. For, granting that “crucible” is intended to mean
metaphorically approximately the same thing that “origin” or “cause” means non-metaphorically, while on the one hand one knows that the origin of all things and events is God, on the other it leaves one empty-handed. For “origins” and “causes” are like a person who goes searching for his parents: in the first instance he has two, that is indisputable; but with grandparents it’s the square of two, with great-grandparents two to the third, and so on in a powerfully unfolding series, which is totally unassailable but which yields the remarkable result that at the beginning of time there must have been an almost infinite number of people whose purpose was merely to produce a single one of today’s individuals. However flattering this may be, and however it may correspond to the significance that the individual feels within himself, today one calculates too precisely for anyone to believe it. Therefore, with heavy heart, one must give
up a personal series of ancestors and assume that “starting from someplace” one must have a common descent as a group. And this has a variety of consequences. Such as that people consider themselves in part “brothers,” in part “from alien tribes,” without a person knowing how to determine where the boundary is, for what is called “nation” and “race” is results and not causes. Another consequence, no less influential even if not as obvious, is that Mr. What’s-his-name no longer knows where he has his cause. He consequently feels himself like a snipped thread that the busy needle of life incessantly pulls back and forth because making a button for it was somehow overlooked. A third consequence, just now dawning, is for instance that it has not yet been calculated whether and to what extent there might be two or multiple other Mr. What’s-his-names; in the realm of what is hereditarily possible it is entirely conceivable, only
one does not know how great the probability is that it could actually happen with oneself; but a dim oppressiveness of the idea that given man’s nature today this cannot be entirely excluded lies, as it were, in the air.

And surely it would not even be the worst thing. Count Leinsdorf, speaking with Ulrich for a moment, held forth on the aristocratic institution of chamberlains. “A chamberlain needs to have sixteen noble forebears, and people are upset at that being the height of snobbery; but what, I ask you, do people do themselves? Imitate us with their theories of race, that’s what they do,” he explained, “and immediately exaggerate it in a fashion that has nothing at all to do with nobility. As far as I’m concerned we can all be descended from the same Adam, a Leinsdorf would still be a Leinsdorf, for it’s a damn sight more a matter of education and training than a matter of blood!” His Grace was irritated by the intrusion of populist
elements into the Parallel Campaign, which for a variety of reasons had to be countenanced up to a certain point. At that time nationalism was nearly ready to put forth its first bloody blossoms, but no one knew it, for despite its imminent fulfillment it did not seem terrible but only seemed ridiculous: its intellectual aspect consisting for the most part of books pasted together with the well-read busyness of a scholar and the total incoherence of untrained thinking by compilers who lived in some rural backwater as elementary-school teachers or petty customs officials.

/ Preliminary sketch: continuation after first paragraph above / Therefore the obvious reservation will probably be put forward that the expression “crucible of the World War” is to be understood merely metaphorically, and this is to be subscribed to so wholeheartedly that it will immediately lead to new difficulties; if on the other hand one
maintains that “crucible” signifies the same as causation complex, and such a thing is complicated and extensive in all human endeavors, then it must be contradicted straightaway. For if one pursues causes back in a straight line they lead right back to God as the *Prima Causa* of everything that happens; this is one of the few problems about which centuries of theology have left no doubt. But on the other hand it’s like a person going from his father to his father’s father, from his father’s father to his father and father’s father of the father’s father, and so on in this series: he will never arrive at a complete notion of his descent. In other words: the causal chain is a warp on a loom; the moment a woof is put in, the causes disappear into a woven texture. In science, research into causes was abandoned long ago, or at least greatly reduced, to be replaced by a functional mode that called for observing relationships. The search for causes belongs
to household usage, where the cook’s being in love is the cause of the soup’s being over-salted. Applied to the World War, this search for a cause and a causer has had the extremely positive negative result that the cause was everywhere and in everyone. This demonstrates that one can truly say “crucible” just as well as “cause of” or “guilt for” the war; but then one would have to supplement this entire mode of observation with another. For this purpose, let us proceed experimentally from the problem of why the poet Feuermaul should suddenly pop up in the Parallel Campaign, and even why—leaving behind a decisive but merely trivial contribution to its history—he will immediately and permanently drop out of it again. The answer is that this was apparently necessary, that there was absolutely no way of avoiding it—for everything that happens has, as we know, a sufficient cause—but that the reasons for this necessity are themselves,
however, completely meaningless or, more properly, were important only for Feuermaul himself, his girlfriend, Professor Drangsal, and her envier, Diotima, and only for a brief period. It would be sheer extravagance were one to relate this. If Feuermaul had not striven to play a role in the Parallel Campaign, someone else would have done so in his place, or if this other person had not shown up, something else would have; in the interweavings of events there is a narrow insert where this or that influences its success with the differences they make; but in the long run, the things represent each other completely, indeed they somehow also represent the characters, with very few exceptions. Arnheim, too, could have been replaced in the same way; perhaps not for Diotima, but probably as the cause of the changes she underwent and, further, the effects that these led to. This view, which today might almost be called a natural one, seems fatalistic but is
so only so long as one accepts it as a destiny. But the laws of nature were also a destiny before they were investigated; after that happened, it was even possible to subordinate them to a technology.

/Belongs here: Feuermaul, like all the characters in the story except for Ulrich (and perhaps Leo Fischel), denies the value of technical projects, among others /

As long as this has not happened, one can also say that B., the birthplace of the poet Feuermaul, was also the original crucible of the World War. And that is why it is by no means capricious; what it amounts to, really, is that certain phenomena, which were to be found everywhere in the world and belonged to the crucible that, stretching over the entire planet, was everywhere and nowhere, condensed in B. in a fashion that prematurely brought out its meaning.
Instead of B. one could say the whole of Kakania, but B. was one of the special points within it. These phenomena were that in B. the people could not stand each other at all, and on the other hand that the poet Feuermann, born in their midst, chose as the basic principle of his work the assertion that Man Is Good and one need only turn directly to the goodness that dwells within him. Both signify the same thing.

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It would have been a lie had one tried to maintain that even the smallest part of what has been described was present in Feuermann at the time in any real way, or that it was present at any time in such detail. But life is always more detailed than its results: creating, as it were, a vegetarian diet, mountains of leaves, around a tiny pile of...The results are a few dispositions of individual conduct.
While Agathe and Ulrich were living behind closed crystal panels—by no means abstractly and without looking at the world, but looking at it in an unusual, unambiguous light, this world bathed every morning in the hundredfold light of a new day. Every morning cities and villages awaken, and wherever they do it happens, God knows, in more or less the same way; on the other hand, people are conceived and slain in an instant, and small birds fly from one branch to another with the same right to existence that a giant ocean liner expresses as it swims straight between Europe and America. Somehow everything in the world happens uniformly and with statutory monotony, but varied in countless ways, which, depending on the
mood in which one observes them, is as much blissful abundance as ridiculous superfluity. And perhaps even the expression “law of nature”—this exalted regency of mechanical laws, which we worship shivering—is still a much too personal expression; laws have something of the personal relationship an accused has with his judge or a subject with his king; there is in them something of the *con-trat social* and the beginnings of liberalism too. Nietzsche already noted the more modern view of nature when he wrote: “Nature has a calculable course not because it is ruled by laws but because they are lacking, and every power draws its ultimate consequences at every moment.” That is a statement which fits in with the ideas of contemporary physics but was really coined from biological events, and an intimation of such emotions lies over contemporary life. Once, “You can do what you like” meant following your drives; but one was not supposed to do
what one liked, and moral laws conceived in sublimity interfered with it. Today everyone feels in some way that these moral laws are a heap of contradictions, and that to follow them would amount to being able to pander to every one of his drives, and he feels a wild, extraordinary freedom. This freedom permits him a path that only leads forward: that, like the orbits of atoms, this chaos must somehow finally yield a specific value, and that with more precise knowledge of how things cohere one would again be able to give life a meaning.

That is more or less the sense of the transition from individualism to the collective view of the world / mission of the world (there is in this no supposition that the value of the individual should cease, only that it be more precisely evaluated).

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One day, the General was sitting before the two of them and said in astonishment to Ulrich: “What, you don’t read the newspapers?”

Brother and sister blushed as deeply as if the good Stumm had discovered them in flagrante, for even though in their condition everything might have been possible, that they might have been able to read the newspapers was not.

“But one must read the newspapers!” said / admonished the General in embarrassment, for he had stumbled upon an incomprehensible fact, and it was discretion that caused him to add reproachfully: There have been big demonstrations against the Parallel Campaign in B.!

Truly, while Ulrich and Agathe had been living behind closed crystal panels—by no means abstractly and without looking at the world, but looking at it in an unusual, unambiguous light—this same world bathed
every morning in the hundredfold light of a new day. Every morning cities and villages awaken, and wherever they do it happens, God knows, in more or less the same way; but with the same right to existence that a giant ocean liner expresses when it is under way between two continents, small birds fly from one branch to another, and thus everything happens simultaneously, in a fashion as uniform and simplified as it is uselessly varied in innumerable ways, and in a helpless and blessed abundance reminiscent of the glorious but limited picture books of childhood. Ulrich and Agathe also both felt their book of the world open before them, for the city of B. was none other than the one where they had found each other again after their father had lived and died there.

“And it had to happen precisely in B.!” the General repeated meaningfully.
“You were once stationed in the garrison there,” Ulrich affirmed.

“And that’s where the poet Feuermaul was born,” Stumm added.

“Right!” Ulrich exclaimed. “Behind the theater! That’s apparently what gave him his ambition to be a poet. Do you remember that theater? In the ‘80s or ‘90s there must have been an architect who plunked down such theatrical jewel boxes in most of the bigger cities, with every available nook and cranny plastered with decoration and ornamental statues. And it was right that Feuermaul came into the world in this spinning-and-weaving city: as the son of a prosperous agent in textiles. I remember that these middlemen, for reasons I don’t understand, earned more than the factory owners themselves; and the Feuermauls were already one of the wealthiest families in B. before the father began an even grander life in Hungary with saltpeter or God knows what murderous
products. So you’ve come to ask me about Feuermaul?” Ulrich asked.

“Not really,” his friend responded. “I’ve found out that his father is a great supplier of powder to the Royal Navy. That’s a restraint on human goodness that was laid on his son from the beginning. The Resolution will remain an isolated episode, I can guarantee you that!”

But Ulrich was not listening. He had long been deprived of the enjoyment of hearing someone talk in a casual, everyday fashion, and Agathe seemed to feel the same way. “Besides, this old B. is a rotten city,” he began to gossip. “On a hill in the middle there’s an ugly old fortress whose barbettes served as a prison from the middle of the eighteenth to the nineteenth century and were quite notorious, and the whole city is proud of them!”
“Marymount,” the General affirmed politely.

“What a very merry mount!” Agathe exclaimed, becoming irritated at her need for die ordinary when Stumm found the word-play witty and assured her that he had been garrisoned at B. for two years without having made this connection.

“The true B., of course, is the ring of the factory quarter, the textile and yarn city!” Ulrich went on, and turned to Agathe. “And what big, narrow, dirty boxes of houses with countless window holes, tiny alleys consisting only of yard walls and iron gates, a spreading tangle of bleak, rutted streets!” After the death of his father he had wandered through this area several times. He again saw the high chimneys hung with dirty banners of smoke, and the streets /roadways covered with a film of oil. Then his memory wandered without transition to the farmland, which in fact began right
behind the factory walls, with heavy, charged, fruitful loam that in spring the plow turned over black-brown; wandered to the low, long villages lying along their single street, and houses that were painted in not only screaming colors but colors that screamed in an ugly, incomprehensible voice. It was humble and yet alien-mysterious farmland, from which the factories sucked their male and female workers because it lay squeezed between extensive sugar-beet plantations belonging to the great landed estates, which had not left it even the scantest room to thrive. Every morning the factory sirens summoned hordes of peasants from these villages into the city, and in the evening scattered them again over the countryside; but as the years went by, more and more of these Czech country people, fingers and hands turned dark from the oily cotton dust of the factories, stayed behind in the
city and caused the Slavic petite bourgeoisie that was already there to grow mightily.

This led to strained relations, for the city was German. It even lay in a German-language enclave, if at its outermost tip, and was proud of its involvement since the thirteenth century in the annals of German history. In the city's German schools one could learn that in the vicinity the Turk Kapistran had preached against the Hussites, at a time when good Austrians could still be born in Naples; that the hereditary bond between the houses of Habsburg and Hungary, which in 1364 laid the groundwork for the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, was forged nowhere else but here; that in the Thirty Years' War the Swedes had besieged this brave town for an entire summer without being able to take it, the Prussians in the Seven Years' War even less so. Of course this made the city just as much part of the proud Hussite memories of the Czechs and the
independent historical memories of the Hungarians, and possibly, too, even part of the memories of the Neapolitans, Swedes, and Prussians; and in the non-German schools there was no lack of indications that the city was not German and that the Germans were a pack of thieves who steal even other people’s pasts. It was astonishing that nothing was done to stop it, but this was part of Kakania’s wise tolerance. There were many such cities, and they all resembled one another. At the highest point they were lorded over by a prison, at the next highest by an episcopal residence, and scattered around in them were some ten cloisters and barracks. If one ranked what were indeed called “the necessities of state,” one would not, for the rest, encompass its homogeneity and unity, for Kakania was inspired by a hereditary mistrust, acquired from great historical experiences, of every Either/Or, and always had some glimmering that there were
in the world many more contradictions than the one which ultimately led to its demise, and that a contradiction must be decisively resolved. The principle of its government was This-as-well-as-that, or even better, with wisest moderation, Neither/Nor. One was therefore also of the opinion in Kakania that it was not prudent for simple people who have no need of it to learn too much, and they did not regard it as important that economically these people should be immodestly prosperous. One preferred to give to those who already had a great deal, because this no longer carried any risks, and one assumed that if among those other people there was some skill or capacity, it would find a way of making itself known, for resistance is well suited to developing real men.

And so it turned out too: men did develop from among the opponents, and the Germans, because property and culture in B. were German, were helped by the state to
receive more and more capital and culture. If one walked through the streets of B., one could recognize this in the fact that the beautiful architectural witnesses of the past that had been preserved, of which there were several, stood as a point of pride for the prosperous citizens among many witnesses to the modern period, which did not content themselves with being merely Gothic, Renaissance, or Baroque but availed themselves of the possibility of being all these things at once. Among the large cities of Kakania, B. was one of the wealthiest, and also displayed this in its architecture, so that even the surroundings, where they were wooded and romantic, got some of the little red turrets, the crenallated slate-blue roofs, and the rings of embrasured-like walls that the prosperous villas had. “And what surroundings!” Ulrich thought and said, hostile to but settled in his home region. This B. lay in a fork between two rivers, but it was a quite broad and
imprecise fork, and the rivers were not quite proper rivers either but in many places broad, slow brooks, and in still others standing water that was nevertheless secretly flowing. Nor was the landscape simple, but it consisted, leaving aside the farmland considered above, of three further parts. On one side a broad, yearningly opening plain, which on many evenings was delicately tinged in tender shades of orange and silver; on the second side shaggy, good old German wooded hills with waving tree-tops (although it happened not to be the German side), leading from nearby green to distant blue; on the third side a heroic landscape of Nazarene bareness and almost splendid monotony, with gray-green knolls on which sheep grazed, and plowed brown fields over which hovered something of the murmured singing of peasants’ grace at table as it pours out of humble windows.
So while one might boast that this cozy Kakanian region in the middle of which B. lay was hilly as well as flat, no less wooded than sunny, and as heroic as it was humble, there was nevertheless everywhere a little something missing, so that on the whole it was neither this way nor that way. Nor could it ever be decided whether the inhabitants of this town found it beautiful or ugly. If one were to say to one of them that B. was ugly, he would be sure to answer: “But look how pretty Red Mountain is, and Yellow Mountain too...and the black fields...!” and as he toted up these names, which were so sensual, one had to concede that it was indeed a quite respectable landscape. But if one called it beautiful, an educated B.’er would laugh and say that he was just back from Switzerland or Singapore, and that B. was a lousy hole that couldn’t even stand comparison with Bucharest. But this, too, was merely Kakanian, this twilight of the emotions in which
they took up their existence, this restless sense of having been all too prematurely laid to rest, in which they felt themselves sheltered and buried. If one puts it this way: for these people everything was simultaneously lack of pleasure and pleasure, one will notice how anticipatorily contemporary it was, for in many respects this most gentle of all states was secretly raging ahead of its time. The people who inhabited B. lived from the production of textiles and yarn, from the sale of textiles and yarn, from the production of and trade in all those things people use who produce or sell textile and yarn, including the production and management of legal disputes, diseases, acquired skills, diversions, and such other things as belong to the needs of a big city. And all the well-off people among them had the quality that there was no beautiful or famous place in the whole world where someone who was from this city would not meet someone else who was also
from this city, and when they were home again the consequence of this was that they all bore within themselves as much of the wide world as they did the amazing conviction that everything great ultimately led only to B.

Such a condition, which derives from the production of textiles and yarn, from industriousness, thrift, a civic theater, the concerts of touring celebrities, and from balls and invitations, is not to be conquered with these same means. That might have succeeded in the struggle for political power against a refractory working class, or the struggle against an upper class, or an imperialistic struggle for the world market of the kind other states conducted—in short, being rewarded not according to merit but by a remnant of the animalistic pouncing on prey, a process in which the warmth of life keeps itself alert. But in Kakania, while it was true that a great deal of money was unlawfully
earned, there could be no pouncing, and in that country, even if crimes had been permitted, it would have been with strict attention to their being committed only by officially certified criminals. This gave all cities like B. the appearance of a great hall with a low ceiling. A ring of powder arsenals in which the army kept its guns surrounded every fairly large town; big enough, if struck by lightning, to reduce an entire quarter of the city to rubble: but at every powder arsenal provision had been made by means of a sentry and a yellow-and-black sentry pole that no disaster should befall the citizenry. And the police were furnished with sabers as tall as the officers and reaching to the ground, no one knew why anymore, unless it was from moderation, for it was only with their right hand that the police were the instruments of justice; with their left they had to hang on to their swords. Nor did anyone know why on promising building sites in growing cities the
state, peering far into the future, constructed military hospitals, warehouses for uniforms, and garrison bakeries, whose giant unwalled rectangles later interfered with development. That is in no way to be taken for militarism, of which old Kakania was thoughtlessly accused; it was only common sense and prudence: for order cannot be otherwise than in order / more properly: it is, so to speak, already by its very nature in order / while, with every other kind of conduct the state engages in, this remains eternally uncertain. This order had become second nature in Kakania in the Franzisco-Josephenian era, indeed it had almost become landscape, and it is quite certain that if the quiet times of peace had lasted longer, the priests, too, would have got swords just as long, as the university professors had got them after the finance authorities and the postal officials, and if a world upheaval with entirely different views had not intervened, the
sword would perhaps have developed in Kakania into a spiritual weapon.

When the conversation had proceeded to this point, partly in an exchange of views, partly in the reminiscences that were their silent accompaniment, General Stumm put in: “That, by the way, is something Leinsdorf said already, that the priests really must receive their swords at the next concordat, as a sign that they, too, are performing a function in the state. He then hedged this with the less paradoxical remark that even small daggers might suffice, with mother-of-pearl and a gold handle, of the kind officials used to wear.”

“Are you serious?”

“He was,” the General replied. “He pointed out to me that in Bohemia during the Thirty Years’ War priests rode around in mass-robés of gilt that were leather below—in other words, proper mass-dragoons.
He is simply exasperated at the general hostility directed against the state, and recalled that in one of his casde chapels he still has such a garment preserved. Look, you know how he’s always talking about the constitution of ‘61 having given capital and culture the lead here, and that this has led to a big disappointment—”

“How did you actually happen to meet Leinsdorf?” Ulrich interrupted him with a smile.

“Oh, that came about when he was on his way back from one of his estates in Bohemia,” Stumm said, without going into greater detail. “Moreover, he has asked you to come see him three times, and you haven’t gone. In B. on the way back, his car blundered into the riots and was stopped. On one side of the street stood the Czechs, shouting: ‘Down with the Germans!’ on the other side the Germans shouted: ‘Down with the Czechs!’ But when they recognized him
they stopped that and asked in chorus in both German and Czech: *What’s going on with the Commission to Ascertain the Desires of the Concerned Sections of the Population, Count?’ and some screamed ‘Phooey!’ at him and others ‘Shame!’ This stupid Resolution, that one should let oneself be killed for one’s own ideas but not other people’s, appears to have spread by word of mouth, and because we suppressed it we’re now suspected of wanting to be the murderer of nationalities! That’s why Leinsdorf said to me: ‘You’re his friend; why doesn’t he come when I call him?’ And all I could do was offer: If you wish to entrust me with something, I will inform him!’ “Stumm paused.

“And what...?” Ulrich asked.

“Well, you know it’s never really easy to understand what he means. First he talked to me about the French Revolution. As is well known, the French Revolution lopped off the
heads of many of the nobility, and astonishingly he finds that quite proper, although stones had almost been thrown at him in B. For he says that the ancien regime had its mistakes, and the French Revolution its true ideas. But what ultimately resulted from all the effort? That’s what he was asking himself. And then he said the following: Today, for example, the mail is better and quicker; but earlier, while the mail was slow, people wrote better letters. Or: Today clothing is more practical and less ridiculous; but earlier, when it was like a masquerade, far better materials were used. And he concedes that for longer trips he himself uses an automobile because it’s faster and more comfortable than a horse-drawn coach, but he maintains that this box with springs on four wheels has deprived traveling of its true nobility. All that’s funny, I think, but it’s true. Didn’t you yourself once say that as mankind progresses one leg always slides backward
whenever the other slides forward? Involuntarily, each of us today has something against progress. And Leinsdorf said to me: ‘General, earlier our young people spoke of horses and dogs, but today the sons of factory owners talk of horsepower and chassis. So since the constitution of ‘61, liberalism has shoved the nobility aside, but everything is full of new corruption, and if against expectations the social revolution should ever happen, it will lop the heads off the sons of factory owners, but things won’t get any better either!’ Isn’t that something? You get the impression that something is boiling over in him. With someone else, one might perhaps think that he doesn’t know what he wants!”

But in the meantime we’ve only got as far as the national revolution?
“Do you know what he wants?” Ulrich asked.

“After the business in B., Drangsal tried to have him informed that now one would really have to let oneself be unconditionally swept up in the Ideal of Man, and Feuermaul is supposed to have expressed himself to the effect that it’s better as an Austrian not to master the resistance of the nationalities than it is as a German to transform one’s country into a field for army maneuvers. To this Leinsdorf’s only response was that that wasn’t *realpolitik*. He wants a proclamation of power; which is to say, of course it should also be a proclamation of love; that, after all, had been the original idea of the Parallel Campaign. *We must, General’—these were his words—proclaim our unity; that is less contradictory than it seems, but also not as easy!’

Hearing this, Ulrich forgot himself and gave a rather more serious response. “Tell
me,” he asked, “doesn’t all the talk about the Parallel Campaign ever seem rather childish to you?”

Stumm looked at him with astonishment. “Well, yes,” he replied hesitantly. “When I’m talking this way with you, or with Leinsdorf, it does sometimes seem to me that I’m talking like an adolescent, or that you’re philosophizing about the immortality of cockchafers; but doesn’t that come with the subject? Where it’s a question of sublime missions, one never has the feeling of being able / allowed to talk the way one really is.

Agathe laughed.

Stumm laughed along with her. “I’m laughing too, dear lady!” he affirmed in a worldly-wise way, but then seriousness returned to his face and he went on: “But strictly speaking, what the Count means is by no means so wrong. For instance, what do you understand by liberalism?” With these
words he again turned to Ulrich, but without waiting for a reply he went on again: “What I mean is that people ought to be left to themselves. And it will also have struck you that that’s now going out of fashion. It’s given rise to a lot of nonsense. But is that all it is? It seems to me people want something more. They aren’t content with themselves. I’m not either; I used to be an amiable person. You didn’t really do anything, but you were satisfied with yourself. Work wasn’t bad, and after work you played cards or went hunting, and there was in all of that a certain kind of culture. A certain wholeness. Doesn’t it seem so to you too? And why isn’t it like that anymore today? As far as I can judge from myself, I believe that people feel too clever. If you want to eat a schnitzel, it occurs to you that there are people without one. If someone is after a pretty girl, it suddenly goes through his mind that he really ought to be thinking about settling some conflict or
other. That’s this insufferable intellectualism that you can’t ever shake off today, and that’s why there’s no going forward anywhere. And without knowing it themselves, people again want something. That means they no longer want a complicated intellect, they don’t want a thousand possibilities for living; they want to be satisfied with what they’re doing anyway, and for this all they need is to get back some belief or conviction or—well, how to describe what they need to do that? I’d like to hear your opinion about all this!"

But that was only self-satisfaction on the part of the animated and excited Stumm, for before Ulrich could even pull a face, he sprang his surprise: "Of course one can just as well call it belief as conviction, but I’ve thought a lot about it and prefer to call it single-mindedness!"

Stumm paused, with the idea of garnering applause before he unveiled further insights into the workshop of his mind, and
then there mingled with the weighty expression on his face another, which was as superior as it was tired of enjoyment. “We used to talk a lot about the problems of order,” he reminded his friend, “and so we don’t have to stop over them today. So order is to a certain extent a paradoxical notion. Every decent person has a yearning for internal and external order, but on the other hand, you can’t bear too much of it; indeed, a perfect order would be, so to speak, the ruination of all progress and pleasure. That is (already) inherent, as it were, in the concept of order. And so you have to ask yourself: what is order after all? And how does it happen that we imagine we’re not able to exist without it? And what kind of order is it that we’re looking for? A logical, a practical, an individual, a general order, an order of the emotions, of die mind, or of actions? De facto, there’s a heap of orders all mixed up: taxes and customs duties are one, religion another,
military regulations a third; there’s no end of searching them out and enumerating them. I’ve been preoccupied with this, as you know, and I don’t believe that there are many generals in the world who take their profession as seriously as I’ve had to do this past year. I’ve helped after my fashion in the search for an encompassing idea, but you yourself ended up proclaiming that to order the spirit one would need an entire global secretariat, and even you’ll have to admit that we can’t wait for such an ordering. But on the other hand, one can’t use that to let everyone do whatever he wants!”

Stumm leaned back and drew breath. The most difficult part had now been said, and he felt the need to excuse himself to Agathe for the gloomy dryness of his behavior, which he did with the words: “You must excuse me, but your brother and I had an old and difficult account to settle; but from now on it will also be more suitable for ladies, for
I’m again back to where I was, that people don’t have any use for complicated intellect, but would like to believe and be convinced. For if you analyze this, you’ll find that the least important thing about the order to which man aspires is whether reason will approve of it or not; there are also totally ungrounded kinds of orders: for instance, the one that’s always asserted in the military about one’s superior always being right, meaning, of course, so long as his superior isn’t around. How I puzzled over this as a desecration of the world of ideas when I was a young officer! And what do I see today? Today it’s called the principle of the leader—”

“Where did you get that?” Ulrich asked, interrupting the lecture, for he had the distinct suspicion that these ideas were not just taken from a conversation with Leinsdorf.

“Everyone wants strong leadership! And partly from Nietzsche, of course, and his interpreters,” Stumm replied nimbly and
learnedly. “What’s already being called for is a double philosophy and morality: for leader and for led! But as long as we’re talking about the military, I must say that the military excels not only in and for itself, as an element of order, but also in always making itself available when all other order fails!”

“The decisive things are happening above and beyond reason, and the greatness of he is rooted in the irrational!” Ulrich brought up, imitating his cousin Diotima from memory.

The General grasped this immediately but did not take offense. “Yes, that’s the way she used to talk, your cousin, before she started investigating the proclamations of love in, as it were, too great detail.” With this explanation he turned to Agathe.

Agathe was silent, but smiled.

Stumm again turned to Ulrich. “I don’t know whether Leinsdorf has perhaps said it
to you too; at any rate, it’s marvelously right: he maintains that the most important thing about a belief is that one always believe the same thing. That’s something like what I’m calling single-minded-ness. ‘But can civilians do that?’ I asked him. ‘No,’ I said. ‘Civilians wear different suits every year, and every few years there are parliamentary elections so they can choose differently every time; the spirit of single-mindedness is much rather to be found in the military!’

“So you convinced Leinsdorf that a strengthened militarism is the true fulfillment of his aims?”

“God forbid, I didn’t say a word! We merely agreed that in the future we would do without Feuermaul because his views are too unusable. And for the rest, Leinsdorf has given me a whole series of assignments for you—”

“That’s superfluous!”
“You should quickly get him access to socialist circles—”

“My gardener’s son is a zealous member of the party—that I can do!”

“That’s just fine! He’s only doing it out of conscientiousness, because he once got the idea in his head. The second thing is that you should go see him as soon as possible—”

“But I’m leaving in a few days!”

“Then as soon as you get back—”

“It doesn’t look as if I’m ever coming back!”

Stumm von Bordwehr looked at Agathe; Agathe smiled, which encouraged him. “Crazy?” he asked.

Agathe shrugged her shoulders indecisively.

“Well, let me summarize once more—” Stumm said.
"Our friend has had enough philosophy!" Ulrich interrupted him.

"You certainly can’t say that about me!" Stumm angrily defended himself. "It’s just that we can’t wait for philosophy. And I don’t want to lie to you: of course whenever I visit Leinsdorf I have orders to influence him in a certain way if it’s possible, that you can imagine. And when he says that the most important thing about a belief is that one always believe the same thing, he’s thinking above all of religion; but I’m already thinking of single-mindedness, for that’s more comprehensive. I don’t hesitate to assert that a truly powerful philosophy of life can’t wait around for reason; on the contrary, a true philosophy of life must be absolutely directed against reason, otherwise it would not get into the position of being able to force its submission. And the civilian world seeks such a single-mindedness in constant change, but the military has, so to speak, an
enduring single-mindedness! Madame,” Stumm interrupted his ardor, “you should not believe that I’m a militarist; quite the contrary, the military has always been even a little on the raw side for my taste: but the way the logic of these ideas grabs hold of you is like playing with a large dog: first he bites for fun, and then he gets carried away and goes wild. And I would like to grant your brother, as it were, one last opportunity—”

“And how do you connect that with the proclamation of power and love?” Ulrich asked.

“God, in the meantime I’ve forgotten,” Stumm replied. “But of course these eruptions of nationalism that we’re now experiencing in our fatherland are somehow eruptions of the energy of an unhappy love. And also in this area, in the synthesis of power and love, the military is, in a certain sense, exemplary. A person has to have some kind of love for his fatherland, and if he doesn’t
have it for his fatherland, then he has it for something else. So you just need to grab hold of that something else. As an example that just occurs to me, take the term conscript-volunteer. Who would ever think that a conscript is a volunteer? That’s the last thing he is. And yet he was and is, according to the sense of the law. In some such sense people have to be made volunteers again!”
On the Young Socialist Schmeisser

Conversations with Schmeisser

Schmeisser (the name means “flinger” or “hurler”) is the left-wing counterpart to the proto-Fascistic Hans Sepp. Peter Lindner seems to represent apolitical, amoral youth.]

It was not the first time that Count Leinsdorf had expressed the opinion that a practitioner of realpolitik had to make use even of socialism in its search for allies against progress as well as nationalism, for he had repeatedly begged Ulrich to cultivate this connection, since out of political considerations he did
not just now wish to be caught doing it himself. He advised starting by approaching not the leaders but the young up-and-comers, those who were not completely corrupted and whose vitality permitted the hope that through them one might acquire a patriotically rejuvenating influence over the party. Then Ulrich remembered cheerfully that there lived in his house a young man who never greeted him but looked away disdainfully whenever they met, which happened rarely enough. This was Schmeisser, a doctoral student in technical sciences; his father was a gardener, who had already been living on the property when Ulrich took it over and who had since, in exchange for free lodging and occasional gifts, kept the small old grounds in order partly with his own hands and partly by indicating and supervising any work that became necessary. Ulrich appreciated the fact that this young man, who lived with his father and earned the money for his
studies by tutoring and doing a little writing, regarded him as one of the idle rich, who was to be treated with contempt; the experiment of inaction to which he was subject sometimes made him regard himself in this fashion, and he found pleasure in challenging his faultfinder when, one day, he stopped to talk with Schmeisser. It turned out that the student, who, moreover, seen from closer up, might already be twenty-six years old, had also been waiting for this moment, and immediately discharged the tension of the encounter in violent attacks, which ended between an attempt at conversion and the proffering of personal contempt. Ulrich told him about the Parallel Campaign, and thought he was doing the right thing by making his assignment out to be as ridiculous as it was while at the same time indicating the advantages a determined person might be able to draw from it. He was expecting Schmeisser to fall in with this scheme, which
then with God’s help might develop in rather strange directions; this young man, however, was no bourgeois romantic and adventurer, but listened with a crafty look around the mouth until Ulrich ran out of things to say. His chest was narrow between broad-boned shoulders, and he wore thick glasses. These really thick glasses were the beautiful part of his face, which had a sallow, fatty, blotchy skin; these thick glasses, made necessary by hard nights over his books and assignments and made stronger by poverty, which had not permitted him to consult a doctor at the first sign that he needed them, had become for Schmeisser’s simple emotions an image of self-liberation: when he spied them in the mirror, shining over his pimpled countenance with its saddle nose and sharp proletarian cheeks, it seemed to him like Poverty crowned by Intellect, and this had happened, especially often since, against his will, he had come to admire Agathe from afar. Since then
he had also hated Ulrich, to whom he had previously paid scant attention, for his athletic build, and Ulrich now read his damnation in these glasses and had the impression of chattering away like a child playing in front of the barrels of two cannons. When he had finished, Schmeisser answered him with lips that could barely separate themselves for satisfaction at what they were saying: “The party has no need of such adventures; we’ll arrive at the goal in our own way!”

That was really giving it to the bourgeois!

After this rebuff it was hard for Ulrich to find more to say, but he went straight at his attacker and finally said with a laugh: “If I were the person you take me for, you ought to pour poison in my water pipes, or saw down the trees under which I stroll: why don’t you want to do something of that sort in a case where it might really be called for?”
“You have no idea what politics is all about,” Schmeisser retorted, “for you are a social-romantic member of the middle class, at most an individual anarchist! Serious revolutionaries aren’t interested in bloody revolutions!”

After that, Ulrich often had brief conversations with this revolutionary who didn’t want to start revolutions. “I already knew when I was a cavalry lieutenant,” he told him, “that in the short or long run mankind is going to be organized according to socialist principles in some form; it is, as it were, the final chance that God has left to it. For the fact that millions of people are oppressed in the most brutal way, in order for thousands of others to fail to do anything worthwhile with the power that derives from this oppression, is not only unjust and criminal but also stupid, inappropriate, and suicidal!”

Schmeisser responded sarcastically: “But you’ve always settled for knowing that!
Haven’t you? There’s the bourgeois intellectual for you! You’ve spoken to me a few times about a bank director who’s a friend of yours: I assure you, this bank director is my enemy, I’ll fight him, I’ll show him that his convictions are only pretexts for his profits; but at least he has convictions! He says yes where I say no! But you? In you everything has already dissolved, in you the bourgeois lie has already begun to decompose!”

Ulrich objected peaceably: “It may be that my way of thinking is bourgeois in origin; to some extent it’s even probable. But: *Inter faeces et urinam nascimur*—why not our opinions as well? What does that prove against their correctness?”

Every time Ulrich spoke this way, reasoning politely, Schmeisser could not contain himself and exploded anew. “Everything you’re saying springs from the moral corruption of bourgeois society!” he would then proclaim, or something similar, for there was
nothing he hated more than that form of goodness opposed to reason which is found in amiability; indeed, all form, even that of beauty, was for him an object of suspicion. For this reason he never accepted even one of Ulrich’s invitations, but at most let himself be treated to tea and cigarettes, as if in Russian novels. Ulrich loved to provoke him, although these conversations were completely meaningless. Since the year of liberation in ‘48 and the founding of the German Empire, events that only a minority now personally remembered, politics probably seemed to the majority of educated people more an atavism than an important subject. There was next to no sign that behind these external processes that plodded along out of habit, intellectual processes were already preparing for that deformation, for that propensity for decline, and for the suicidal willingness arising from self-loathing, which undermine a state of affairs and apparently always form the passive
precondition to periods of violent political change. Thus his whole life long Ulrich, too, had been accustomed to expect that politics would bring about not what needed to happen but at best what ought to have happened long since. The image it presented to him was mostly that of criminal neglect. The social question too, which formed the whole of Schmeisser’s universe, appeared to him not as a question but merely as an omitted answer, though he could list a hundred other such “questions” on which the mental files had been closed and which, as one might say, were waiting in vain for manipulative treatment in the Office of Dispatch. And when he did that, and Schmeisser was in a gentle mood, the latter said: “Just let us first come to power!”

But then Ulrich said: “You’re too kind to me, for what I’m asserting isn’t true at all. Almost all intellectual people have this prejudice that the practical questions they
understand nothing about would be easy to solve, but when they try, of course it turns out that they just haven’t thought of everything. On the other hand—here I agree with you—if the politician were to think of everything, he would never get around to acting. Perhaps that’s why politics contains as much of the wealth of reality as of the poverty of spirit (lack of ideas)—”

This gave Schmeisser the opportunity for a jubilant interruption, with the words: “People like you never get around to acting because they don’t want the truth! The bourgeois so-called mind is in all its works only a procrastination and an excuse!”

“But why don’t people like me want?” Ulrich asked. “Why couldn’t they want? Wealth, for example, is certainly not what they really desire. I hardly know a prosperous man who doesn’t have a small weakness for it, myself included, but I also don’t know a single one who loves money for its own
sake, except for misers, and greed is a disturbance of personal conduct which is also found in love, in power, and in honor: the pathological nature of greed really proves that giving is more blessed than receiving. By the way, do you believe that giving is more blessed than receiving?” he asked.

“You can raise that question in some aesthete’s salon!” was Schmeisser’s response.

“But I fear,” Ulrich maintained, “that all your efforts will remain pointless as long as you don’t know whether giving or receiving is more blessed or how they complement each other!”

Schmeisser crowed: “You no doubt intend to talk mankind into being good? Besides, in the socially organized state, the proper relationship of giving and receiving will be a foregone conclusion!”

“Then I will maintain”—Ulrich completed his sentence with a smile—”that you
will just come to grief on something else, for instance that we are capable of cursing someone as a dog even when we love our dog more than our fellowmen!"

A mirror calmed Schmeisser by showing him the image of a young man wearing thick glasses under a stubborn forehead. He gave no answer.

Ulrich had picked out this young man for the General and proposed that they go with the General to visit Meingast, for Schmeisser knew about this prophet, and even if he was a false one, still it was nothing new for Schmeisser to visit the gatherings of opponents; but Ulrich had correctly guessed about his friend Stumm that at various times he was secretly gathering impressions from Clarisse, and through her had also made the acquaintance of the Master, who had made no small impression. But when Ulrich told Agathe
about his plan, she didn’t want to hear about it.

Ulrich began to jest. —I bet that this Schmeisser is really in love with you—he maintained—and it’s no secret that Lindner is. Both are/or-men. Meingast, too, is a/or-man. You’ll end up winning him over too.

Agathe naturally wanted to know what/or-men were.

—Lindner is a good person, isn’t he? Ulrich asked.

Agathe confirmed it, although for a long time she had not been as enthusiastic on this count as she had been at the beginning.

—But he lives more/or religion than in a religious state?

Agathe didn’t contest this at all.

—That’s just what a/or-man is, Ulrich explained. —The extensive activity he bestows upon his faith is perhaps the most
important example, but it’s just one example of the technique that’s always used to make ideals tenable and available for everyday use. So he explained to her in detail his spontaneously invented notion of living/or and in something.

Human life appears to be just long enough so that in it, if one lives/or something, one can accomplish the trajectory from neophyte to Nestor, patriarch, or pioneer; and in doing so it matters less for human satisfaction what one lives for than that one can live/or something: a Nestor of the German brandy trade and the pioneer of a new worldview enjoy, besides similar honors, the same advantage, which consists in the fact that life, despite its fearful wealth, contains not a single problem that would not be simplified by being brought into contact with a worldview, but would be simplified just as much by being brought into contact with the production of brandy. Such an
advantage is precisely what one calls, using a fairly recent term, rationalization, except that what is rationalized is not skilled actions but ideas, and who today would not already be able to survey what that implies? Even in the slightest case this life for something is comparable to owning a notebook in which everything is entered and things that have been disposed of are neatly crossed out. Whoever does not do this lives in a disorderly fashion, never finishes things, and is bothered by their comings and goings; whoever, on the other hand, has a notebook resembles the thrifty paterfamilias who saves every nail, every piece of rubber, every scrap of material, because he knows that someday such a stock will come in handy in his household economy. But this solid, civic/or something, as it was handed down from one’s father’s generation as the height of worthy endeavor, often too as a hobbyhorse or a secret detail one always keeps one’s eye
on, represented at that time something which was already somewhat old-fashioned; for a propensity for the broad scale, a yen for developing the living-for-some-thing in mighty associations, had already replaced it.

By this means what Ulrich had begun in jest took on, as he uttered it, more serious significance. The distinction he had hit upon tempted him with its inexhaustible prospects, and became for him at this moment one of those views that make the world fall asunder like a split apple under the knife, exposing what lies within. Agathe objected that one also often says that a person is completely subsumed by something, or lives and breathes it, although it was certain that according to Ulrich’s nomenclature such ardent livers and breathers were doing it for whatever their affair might be; and Ulrich conceded that it would be more precise to proceed by distinguishing between the notions of “finding oneself in the state of one’s
ideal” and “finding oneself in the state of working for one’s ideal,” but in which the second “in” was either unreal and in truth a “for,” or the claimed relationship to working/or it would have to be an unusual and ecstatic one. Language, moreover, has its good reasons not to be so precise about this, since living/or something is the condition of worldly existence, in, on the contrary, always that which one imagines and pretends to live, and the relation of these two states to each other is extremely refractory. People, after all, do secretly know, without, of course, being able to admit it, of the miraculous fact that everything “it’s worth living for” would be unreal if not actually absurd the moment one tried to immerse oneself in it completely. Love would never again arise from its lair; in politics, the slightest proof of sincerity would necessarily lead to the mortal destruction of one’s opponent; the artist would spurn all contact with less perfect
beings, and morality would have to consist not of perforated prescriptions but of taking one back to that childlike condition of love of the good and abhorrence of the bad which takes everything literally. For whoever really abhors crime would not find it too little to hire trained professional devils to torture prisoners as in old paintings of hellfire, and whoever loves virtue with his whole life ought to eat nothing but goodness until his stomach rises into his throat. What’s remarkable is that at times things really do go that far, but that such periods of Inquisition or its opposite, gushing over the goodness of man, are in bad odor / bad memories / remain memories.

That is why it is simply to preserve life that mankind has succeeded in inventing, in place of “what it’s worth living for,” living/or it or, in other words, putting its idealism in place of its ideal condition. It is a living before something; now, instead of living, one
“strives” and is henceforth a being that with all its energies presses on just as much toward fulfillment as it is exonerated from arriving at it. “Living for something” is the permanent principle of the “in.” All desires, and not just love, are sad after they are fulfilled; but in the moment in which the activity for the desire fully takes the place of the desire, it is canceled out in an ingenious way, for now the inexhaustible system of means and obstacles takes the place of the goal. In this system even a monomaniac does not live monotonously but constantly has new things to do, and even whoever could not live at all in the content of his life—a case that is more frequent today than one thinks: for example, a professor at an agricultural college who has set the management of stall wastes and dung on new paths—lives for this content without complaint, and enjoys listening to music or other such experiences, if he is a capable person, always, as it were, in honor of managing
stables. This doing something else “in honor of something” is, moreover, somewhat further removed from the “something” than from the “for” and consequently is the method most frequently applied, because it is as if it were the cheapest, of doing in the name of an ideal all those things that cannot be reconciled with it.

For the advantage of all “for” and “in honor of” consists in the fact that through serving the ideal, everything which the ideal itself excludes is again brought to life. The classic example of this was furnished by the traveling knights of chivalric love, who fell like mad dogs upon every equal they encountered in honor of a condition in their heart that was as soft and fragrant as dripping church wax. But the present, too, is not lacking in small peculiarities of this kind. Thus, for example, it organizes luxurious festivals for the alleviation of poverty. Or the large number of strict people who insist on
the carrying out of public principles from which they know themselves exempt. Then, too, the hypocritical admission that die end justifies the means belongs here, for in reality it is the always active and colorful means for whose sake one usually puts up with ends that are moral and insipid. And no matter how playful such examples may appear, this objection falls silent before the disturbing observation that civilized life doubtless has a tendency toward the most violent outbursts, and that these are never more violent than when they take place in honor of great and sacred, indeed even of tender, emotions! Are they then felt to be excused? Or is the relationship not rather the opposite?

Thus, by many interrelated paths, one arrives at the conclusion that people are not good, beautiful, and truthful, but rather would like to be, and one has a sense of how the serious problem of why this is so is veiled by the illuminating pretense that the ideal is,
by its very nature, unattainable. This was more or less what Ulrich said, without sparing attacks on Lindner and what he stood for. Right thinking that was the effortless result of this. It was certain, he maintained, that Lindner was ten times more convinced of two-times-two or the rules of morality than he was of his God, but by working for his conviction about God, he largely evaded this difficulty. For this purpose he put himself into the condition of belief, an attitude in which what he wanted to be convinced of was so ingeniously combined with what he could be convinced of that he himself was no longer able to separate them—

Here Agathe noted that all acting is questionable. She reminded herself of the paradoxical assertion that the only people who remain real and good in their hearts are those who do not do many good deeds. This now seemed to her extended, and thus confirmed, by the agreeable possibility that the
condition of activity was fundamentally the adulteration of another condition, from which it arose and which it pretended to serve.

Ulrich affirmed this once more. “We have on the one side,” he repeated by way of summary, “people who live for and, without taking the word too literally, in something, who are constantly on the move, who strive, weave, till, sow, and harvest, in a word the idealists, for all these idealists of today are really living/or their ideals. And on the other side are those who would like to live in some fashion in their gods, but for these there is not even a name—”

“What is this ‘in?’” Agathe asked emphatically.

Ulrich shrugged his shoulders and then gave a few indications. “One could relate ‘for’ and ‘in’ to what has been called experiencing in a convex and experiencing in a
concave way. Perhaps the psychoanalytic legend that the human soul strives to get back to the tender protection of the intrauterine condition before birth is a misunderstanding of the In/ perhaps not. Perhaps ‘in’ is the presumed descent of all life from God. But perhaps the explanation is also simply to be found in psychology; for every affect bears within it the claim of totality to rule alone and, as it were, form the ‘in* in which everything else is immersed; but no affect can maintain itself as primary for long without by that very fact changing, and thus it absolutely yearns for opposing affects in order to renew itself through them, which is pretty much an image of our indispensable ‘for*— Enough! One thing is certain: that all sociable life arises from the ‘for* and unites mankind in the aim of apparently living/or something; mankind mercilessly defends these aims; what we see today by way of political developments are all attempts to put
other ‘fors in place of the lost community of religion. The living ‘for something’ of the individual person has lagged behind with the paterfamilias and the age of Goethe. The middle-class religion of the future will perhaps be satisfied with bringing the masses together in a belief that might have no content at all but in which the feeling of *being for* it together will be that much more powerful—”

There was no doubt that Ulrich was evading a decision (about the question), for what did Agathe care about political development!
During this entire time Agathe was continuing her visits to Lindner.

This made extravagant claims on his Account for Unforeseen Loss of Time, and all too often this overdraft meant a reduction in all his other activities. Moreover, empathy for this young woman also demanded a great deal of time when she was not there:

Thus Lindner had found a soul, but deep tones of discontent were intermingled with it and kept him in a state of constant irritation.

Agathe had simply ignored his forbidding her to visit.
“Does my visiting embarrass you?” she asked the first time she showed up again.

“And what does your brother say to this?” Lindner replied earnestly every time.

“I haven’t told him anything about it,” Agathe confided in him, “because it might be that he wouldn’t like it. You’ve made me anxious.”

Of course one cannot withhold a helping hand from a person seeking help.

But every time they made an appointment Agathe was late. It was no use telling her that unpunctuality was the same as breaking a contract or as lack of conscience. “It indicates that the rest of the time, too, your will is in a slumbering state, and that you’re dreamily giving yourself up to things that turn up by chance, instead of breaking away at the right time with collected and focused energy!” Lindner conjectured severely.
“If only it were dreamily!” Agathe replied.

But Lindner declared sharply: “Such a lack of self-control makes one suspect every other kind of undependability!”

“Apparently. I suspect that too,” was Agathe’s response.

“Don’t you have any will?”

“No.”

“You’re a fantasist and have no discipline!”

“Yes.” And after a short pause she added, smiling: “My brother says that I’m a person of fragments; that’s lovely, isn’t it? Even if it’s not clear what it means. One might think of an unfinished volume of unfinished poems.”

Lindner was resentfully silent.
“My husband, on the other hand, is now impolitely asserting that I’m pathological, a neuropath or something like that,” Agathe went on.

And thereupon Lindner exclaimed sarcastically: “You don’t say! How pleased people are today when moral tasks can apparently be reduced to medical ones! But I can’t make things that comfortable for you!”

The only pedagogical success that Lindner was able to achieve he owed to the principle that five minutes before the end of each visit, which was always set and agreed upon beforehand, without regard to its delayed start and however much the conversation might absorb him, he began to fall silent and gave Agathe to understand that he now needed to devote his time to other obligations. Agathe not only greeted this rudeness with smiles; she was grateful for it. For such minutes of the conversation, framed on at least one side as if by a metal edge and
ticking sharply, also imparted to the remainder of the day something of their incisiveness. After the extravagant conversations with Ulrich, this had the effect of leanness or tightly belted straps.

But when she once said this to Lindner, thinking to be nice to him, it immediately made him miss a quarter of an hour, and the next day he was quite indignant with himself.

In these circumstances he was a strict teacher for Agathe.

But Agathe was an odd pupil. This man, who wanted to do something to help her, although most recently he was having difficulties himself, still gave her confidence and even consolation whenever she was on the point of despairing of making any progress with Ulrich. She then sought Lindner out, and not only because, for whatever external reasons, he was Ulrich’s adversary, but also
and even more because he revealed as clearly as he did involuntarily the jealousy that came over him at the mere mention of Ulrich’s name. It was obviously not personal rivalry, for Agathe was aware that the two men hardly knew each other, but rather a rivalry between intellectual species, the way species of animals have their particular enemies, whom they already recognize when they meet them for the first time and whose slightest approach makes them agitated. And remarkably, she could understand Lindner; for something that might be called jealousy was also among her feelings toward Ulrich, a not being able to keep up, or an offended fatigue, perhaps too, simply put, a feminine jealousy of his masculine pleasure in ideas, and this made her happy to listen, shivering with pleasure, whenever Lindner contested some opinion or other that could be Ulrich’s, and this he especially loved to do. She could go along with this the more safely in that she
felt closer to Lindners level than to her brothers, for however militant Lindner appeared, indeed even though he might intimidate her, there always remained working within her a secret mistrust, which was really / sometimes of the kind that women feel against the endeavors of other women.

Agathe still felt her heart beating whenever she sat alone for a moment in Lindners surroundings, as if she were exposed to the rising of vapors that enchanted her mind. The temptation, the unease she felt at making herself feel at ease, the illusive possibility that it might happen, always evoked in her the story of an abducted girl who, educated among strangers, changed places as it were within herself and became a different woman: this was one of the stories that, reaching back to her childhood and without being especially important to her, had sometimes played a role in the temptations of her life and their excuses. But Ulrich
had given her a particular interpretation of these stories, from which otherwise it would be easy to deduce merely a deficient spiritual constitution, and she believed more passionately in his interpretation than he did himself. For in the length and breadth of time, God has created more than this one life that we happen to be leading; it is in no way the true one, it is one of His many hopefully systematic experiments, into which He has placed no compulsion of necessity for those of us who are not blinded by the light of the passing moment, and Ulrich, talking this way about God and the imperfection of the world and the aimless, meaningless facticity of its course, stripping away its false order to reveal the true vision of God that represented the most promising approach to Him, also taught her the meaning of the tentative claim of this way of understanding how one could, in a shadowy figuration alongside oneself, also be another.
So as she attentively observed Lindners walls, which were equipped (hung) with pictures of divine subjects, Agathe felt that Ulrich was hovering in the vicinity. It occurred to her that she found Raphael, Murillo, and Bernini in individual engravings on the walls, but not Titian, and nothing at all from the Gothic period; on the other hand, there predominated in many of the pictures present-day imitations of that style a la Jesuit Baroque that had sucked up vast quantities of sugar like a puffy omelet. If one followed only these pictures around the walls, the piling up of billowing robes and vacant, uplifted oval faces and sweetish naked bodies was disquieting. Agathe said: There is so much soul in them that the total effect is of a monstrous despiritualization. And look: the heavenward gaze has become such a convention that all the irrepressible human vitality has taken refuge in the less prominent details and hidden itself there. Don’t you find
these garment hems, shoes, leg positions, arms, robe folds, and clouds loaded down by all the sexuality that isn’t openly recognized? This isn’t too far removed from fetishism!

Well, Agathe ought to know about this phenomenon of being loaded down. This yearningly leaning out from a balcony into the void. Or it’s really the other way around: an infinite pressing inward. With horror, one could see it right here on the borderline between pathological crotchet and exaltation.

Lindner had no inkling of this. But the reproach dismayed him, and he first tried speaking of this beauty in a belittling way. The artist must make use of the material and the fleshly, and clings to it; this leads to a lower order of art. Agathe overestimated it. Art might well propagate the great experiences of mankind but could not turn them into experience.
Agathe then angrily accused him of having too many such pictures. The freedoms that, according to what he said, had to be conceded to the lower humanity in the artist still seemed by that measure to have some meaning even for him. —What? Agathe asked.

Cornered, Lindner gave his views on art. True art is spiritualization of matter. It can represent nakedness only when the superiority of soul over matter speaks from the representation.

Agathe objected that he was mistaken, for it was the superiority not of soul that was speaking, but of convention.

Suddenly he burst out: Or did she think that could justify to a serious person painters’ and sculptors’ cult of nakedness? —Is the naked human really such a beautiful thing? Something so scandalous! Aren’t the transports of aesthetes simply ridiculous, even if
one doesn’t even try to apply serious moral concepts (to them)?

Agathe: —The naked body is beautiful!...This was a he, for heaven’s sake, whose only purpose was to enrage her partner. Agathe had never paid any attention to the beauty of male bodies; women today regard a man’s body for the most part only as an armature to support the head. Men are accustomed to pay somewhat more attention to beauty. But let one gather all the naked bodies with which our museums and exhibitions are filled and put them in a single place, and then seek out from among this confusion of white maggots those that are truly beautiful. The first thing one would notice is that the naked body is usually merely naked: naked like a face that for decades has worn a beard and is suddenly shaven. But beautiful? That the world stops in its tracks whenever a truly beautiful person appears reveals beauty to be a mystery; because beauty-love and love are
a mystery, it is true for the whole. Likewise that the concept of beauty has been lost (assembly-line art). So she sits there, and Ulrich speaks through her mouth.

But Lindner immediately jumps at the challenge. —Well! he exclaimed. —Oh, of course, the modern cult of the body! It excites the imagination in just one direction and inflames it with claims that life can’t fulfill! Even the exaggerated concern with physical culture that the Americans have wished on us is a great danger!

—You’re seeing ghosts, Agathe said indifferently.

Lindner to this: —Many pure women, who welcome and participate in such things without a deeper knowledge of life, don’t consider that in doing so they are conjuring up spirits that might perhaps destroy their own lives and the lives of those closest to them!
Agathe retorted sharply: —Should one bathe only once every two weeks? Bite off one’s nails? Wear flannel and smell of chilblain ointment?...It was an attack on these surroundings, but at the same time she felt imprisoned and ridiculously punished for having to argue over such platitudes.

Their conversations often took the form of Agathe’s mocking and irritating him so that he would lose his temper and “bark.” This was how she was acting now, and Lindner took on the adversary.

—A truly manly soul will regard not only the plastic arts but also the whole institution of the theater with the greatest reservation, and calmly suffer the scorn and mockery of those who are too effeminate to rigorously forbid themselves every tickling of the senses! he asserted, immediately adding novels with the remark that most novels, too, unmistakably breathe the sensual enslavement and overstimulation of their authors
and stimulate the readers lower aspects precisely through the poetic illusion with which they gloss over and cover up everything!

He seemed to assume that Agathe despised him for being inartistic, and was anxious to show his superiority. “It is after all dogma,” he exclaimed, “that one must have heard and seen everything in order to be able to talk about it! But how much better it would be if one would be proud of one’s lack of culture and let others prattle! One shouldn’t convince oneself that it’s part of culture to look at filth under electric light.”

Agathe looked at him, smiling, without answering. His observations were so dismally obtuse that her eyes misted over. This moist, mocking glance left him uncertain.

—All these observations are not, of course, directed at great and true art! Lindner qualified / assured her / he retreated.
Since Agathe continued her silence, he yielded another step.

“`It’s not prudery,” he defended himself. “Prudery would itself be only a sign of corrupted imagination. But naked beauty evokes the tragic in the inner person and, at the same time, spiritual powers, which the tragic strives to absolve and unbind: do you understand what I’m feeling?” He stopped before her. He was again captivated by her. He looked at her. “That’s why one must either conceal nakedness or so associate it with man’s higher longings that it isn’t enslaving and arousing but calming and liberating.” This was what had always been attempted at the high points of art, in the figures of the frieze on the Parthenon, in Raphael’s transcendent figures—Michelangelo associates transfigured bodies with the supra-sensual world, Titian binds covetousness through a facial
expression that does not stem from the world of natural drives.

Agathe stood up. “Just a minute!” she said. “You have a thread in your beard,” and she reached up rapidly and seemed to remove something; Lindner could not make out whether it was real or pretended, since he spontaneously and with signs of chaste horror fell back, while she immediately sat down again. He was extremely upset at his clumsy lack of self-control, and attempted to mask it through a blustering tone. He rode around like a Sunday rider on the word “tragic,” which suited him so badly. He had said that naked beauty evokes the tragic in the inner man, and now supplemented this by saying that this tragic sense repeats itself in art, whose powers in spite of everything did not suffice for complete spiritualization. This was not very illuminating, but it quite clearly amounted to saying that the soul of man is not a protection against the senses
but their powerful echo! Indeed, sensuality acquired its power only in that its false pretenses conquered and usurped man’s soul!

“Is that a confession?” Agathe asked dryly, unabashed.

“How so, a confession?” Lindner exclaimed. And he added: “What an arrogant way of looking at things you have! What megalomania! And besides: What do you think of me?” But he fled, quit the field, he actually physically retreated before Agathe.

One discovers nothing so quickly as another’s inner insecurity, and pounces on it like a cat on a grubbing beetle: it was really the capricious technique of the girls’ boarding school, with its passions between the admired “big ones” and adoring smaller ones, the eternal basic form of spiritual dependency, which Agathe was using against Lindner by appearing to respond understandingly and ardently to his words as often as she fell
upon him coldly and frightened him just when he thought he was secure in a shared feeling.

From the corner of the room his voice now boomed like an organ, with an artificially fearless bass; he acted as if *he* were the aggressor by proposing: “Let’s talk about this, for once, freely and frankly. Realize how inadequate and unsatisfying the entire process of procreation is as a mere natural process. Even motherhood! Is its physiological mechanism really so indescribably marvelous and perfect? How much horrible suffering it involves, how much senseless and unbearable contingency! So let’s just leave the deification of nature to those who don’t know what life is, and open our eyes to reality: the process of procreation is ennobled and raised above apathetic servitude only by being endowed with loyalty and responsibility, and subordinated to spiritual ideals!”
Agathe seemed to be reflecting silently. Then she asked relentlessly: “Why are you talking to me about the process of procreation?”

Lindner had to take a deep breath: “Because I am your friend! Schopenhauer has shown us that what we would like to think of as our most intimate experience is the most impersonal of arousals. But the higher emotions are exempted from this deception of the drive to procreate: loyalty, for instance, pure, selfless love, admiration and serving/”

“Why?” Agathe asked. “Certain feelings that suit you are supposed to have some supernatural origin, and others to be mere nature?”

Lindner hesitated; he struggled. “I can’t marry again,” he said softly and hoarsely. “I owe that to my son Peter.”

“But who’s asking that of you? Now I don’t understand you,” Agathe replied.
Lindner shrank back. “I meant to say that even if I could do it, I wouldn’t,” he said defensively. “Moreover, in my opinion friendship between man and wife demands an even more elevated frame of mind than love!” He made another try: “You know my principles, so you must also understand that in accord with them I would like nothing better than to offer to serve you as a brother, even to awaken, so to speak, in the woman the counterweight to the woman: I’d like to reinforce the Mary in the Eve!” He was close to breaking out in a sweat, so strenuous was it to pursue the strict line of his reasoning.

“So you’re offering me a kind of eternal friendship,” Agathe said quietly. “That’s lovely of you. And you surely know that your present was accepted in advance.”

She seized his hand, as is appropriate at such a moment, and was a little taken aback at this epidermal piece of strange person that lay in the lap of her hand. Lindner was not
able to withdraw his fingers either: it seemed to him that he should, and yet also that he didn’t have to. Even Ulrich’s lack of resolution sometimes exercised this natural impulse to flirt with her, but Agathe also despised if she saw that she was doing it successfully herself, for the power of flirtation is united with the notion of bribery, cunning, and compulsion, and no longer with love; and while she was reminded of Ulrich, she looked at this unsteady creature, who was now bobbing up and down inwardly like a cork, in a mood, shot through with evil thoughts, that was close to tears.

“I would like you to open your refractory and taciturn heart to me,” Lindner said timorously, warmly, and comically. “Don’t think of me as a man. You’ve missed having a mother!”

“Fine,” Agathe responded. “But can you stand it? Would you be prepared to entrust me with your friendship”—she withdrew her
hand— "even if I were to tell you that I had stolen and that I had incest on my conscience?" therefore (or) something on account of which one is ruthlessly expelled from the community of others?

Lindner forced himself to smile. "What you’re saying is strong, of course; it’s even extremely unfeminine to venture such a jest," he scolded. "Honestly! Do you know what you remind me of at such moments? Of a child who’s made up its mind to annoy a grownup! But this isn’t the moment for that," he added, offended because he was just now reminding himself of it.

But suddenly Agathe had something in her voice that cut through the conversation to the bottom when she asked: "You believe in God; reveal to me: In what way does He answer when you ask Him for advice and a decision about a heavy sin?"
Lindner rejected this question with the appalled severity that a decorous palace employee shows / puts on when asked about the married life of the Royal Couple.

Agathe: God in association with crime, specifically the Augustinian God, the abyss. Maybe really as Augustinian as possible: I see no possibility of being good on my own. I don’t understand when I am doing good or evil. Only His grace can tear me away, or something similar. Seems to assume that she had recently been worrying about this. For the moment remains open.

Lindner did feel something of the passion of her words, therefore his answer gentle and father-confessorial: I don’t know your life, you’ve only given me a few hints. But I consider it possible that you could act in a way similar to the way a bad person would act. You haven’t learned in the small things to take life seriously, and therefore you perhaps won’t hit it right when it comes
to big decisions. You’re probably capable of doing evil and disregarding all standards for no other reason than that it’s a matter of indifference to you what the other person feels, but that only because, while you feel the impulse to the good, you don’t know how much wisdom and obedience it involves. He seized her hand and asked: “Tell me the truth.”

“The truth is more or less what I’ve already told you,” Agathe repeated soberly and emphatically.

“No!”

“Yes.” There was something in this simple “yes” that made Lindner suddenly push away her hand.

Agathe said: “You wanted to make me better, didn’t you? If I’m like a gold piece twisted out of shape that you’d like to bend back, I’m still a gold piece, aren’t I? But you’re losing your courage. The challenge (from God?) presented to you in my person
collides with your conventional division of actions into light and darkness. And I say to you: to identify God with a human morality is blasphemy!"

The voice in which she exclaimed this had, at least for Lindner, the sound of trumpets, something oddly arousing; he also felt Agathe’s wild youthful beauty, and suffered enough as it was, whenever he reproached her, from an unutterable anxiety and insinuation. For his principles, where were his principles? They were round about him, but far off. And in the empty space whose innermost vacuum was now his breast, something stirred that was despicable but as alive as a basket full of puppies. Certainly, the only reason he wanted to strike to the heart of this obdurate young woman was in order to do her a service, but the heart he was aiming at looked like a piece of flower flesh. Since Lindner had become a widower he had lived ascetically and avoided prostitutes and
frivolous women on principle, but, to say it straight out, the more ardent he was about saving Agathe, the more grounded his fear became that in the process he would one day experience himself in a state of impermissible arousal. For this reason he often rapidly counted to fifty inwardly, in moments of anger as well as love. But his success was a remarkable one: the more this enabled him to drive his arousal from the point of threatened breach, the more it gathered in his whole body, until his body seemed to shine inside. He chose words of blame, but inwardly they were, ultimately, as soft as dying candles. He himself simply no longer believed what he was saying, for while externally he separated good from evil, inwardly everything was as mixed up together as it had been in Paradise before the Fall. And with a horrifying clarity for which there are no words, he was reminded of that grimly edifying experience which, in his
adolescence, had warned him once and for all against the power of the emotions. Lindner felt punished by a bitter self-contempt when he had to think that what at that time had clothed itself with devilish cunning in the appearance of God was now emerging in his mature years as common lust of the flesh, precisely in the way that the Enlighteners shallow view had said it would.

—Get away from me with this lie! he begged.

—The will? Agathe said. —It’s not a lie. I’ve falsified a will.

Lindner seized her by the arm in sudden anger as if she were a pupil and shouted: “Out!”

“No,” Agathe replied. “In our struggle against each other we have a secret pact to drive out each others devils!”
—You are arrogant and vain! Lindner exclaimed. —But behind it lies suffering and disappointment and humiliation! And again he nearly had it right.

But he only nearly had it right, and Agathe suddenly became tired of it (him) and left him standing.
Museum Pre-Chapter
At the lawyers

Were their souls two doves in a world of hawks and owls? Ulrich would never have been able to contemplate letting such a view prevail, and he was therefore fond of remarking, and even found a land of security in doing so, that external events took no account of the ravishments and anxieties of the soul but followed their own logic. Since Hagauer’s letters had compelled him to consult a lawyer, Hagauer too had turned to a counselor, and since both attorneys were now exchanging letters, a “case” had begun, independent of personal origins and furnished, as it were, with suprapersonal powers of attorney. This case compelled Ul-
rich’s lawyer to ask for a personal consultation with Agathe and to be surprised when she did not appear and, later, when she still did not appear, to raise serious questions that finally put Ulrich in the extreme position of having to overcome his sisters resistance by painting the unpleasant consequences. When they appeared at their advisers, this already put the course of events on a certain path. They found before them a secure and adroit man not much older than they, who was accustomed to smiling and preserving a polite composure even in the halls of the court and who, in consulting with his clients, proceeded from the principle that the first thing to do was gain his own picture of all things and people and take care to let himself be influenced as little as possible by the client, who was always undependable and wasted time.

And indeed Agathe did declare afterward that the whole time, she had felt like a
“law patient,” and this was true to the extent that all her answers to the introductory and basic questions of her lawyer were of a nature to reinforce the latter’s doubts. His task was difficult. A departure from “bed and board,” the easily arranged “separation,” did not suffice for his client’s wishes, and a divorce “of the conjugal bond,” the true annulment of the Catholic marriage concluded with Hagauer, was, according to the laws of the land, impossible; it could be managed only by a roundabout route through various other countries and their legal interconnections, as well as through complicated acquisitions and renunciations of citizenship, which did open a path that ought to lead safely to the goal but was by no means without difficulty or easily surveyed in advance. So Agathe’s lawyer had undertaken to substitute a more valid reason for her all too ordinary grounds for divorce, which she indicated simply as aversion.
“Insurmountable aversion wouldn’t be enough; don’t you have something else against your husband?” he probed.

Agathe said, curtly, no. There was much she could have reproached Hagauer with, but she became red and pale, for it all belonged in this place as little as she did herself. She was angry with Ulrich.

The lawyer looked at her attentively. “Impolite treatment, frivolous management of property, flagrant neglect of conjugal obligations...how about those?” He tried to get her to have an idea. “The surest grounds for divorce, of course, is always marital infidelity!”

Agathe looked at her interlocutor and answered in a clear, composed, low voice: “I have none of those grounds!”

Perhaps she ought to have smiled. Then the man who sat opposite her, in impeccably correct clothes that in no way contradicted
his capacity for high spirits, would have been convinced that he had before him a lovely and undefinably captivating woman. But the seriousness of her expression left him no room at all, and his lawyer’s brain became dull. He recalled from the files, which contained not only the correspondence of the opposing attorney but also the letters from Hagauer to Ulrich, Hagauer’s carefully documented complaints that the desire for a divorce was unjustified and capriciously frivolous, and the thought went through his mind that he would much rather be representing this apparently reasonable and dependable man. Then it occurred to him that somewhere the term “psychopathic woman” occurred, but he rejected it not so much on account of Agathe as because it might have prevented him from taking on this rewarding commission. “Nervous, of course: The kind of nervousness that’s capable of anything, not at all uncommon!” he thought, and
cautiously began to direct his questioning at the point that had impressed him as most in need of explanation when he had gone over the situation. In the correspondence in the files there were—both in Hagauer’s letters to Ulrich and, more significantly, in the correspondence of the opposing lawyer—more or less clear allusions that gave the sense that the two men might know of irregularities which had taken place in the management of the estate, or might even be of a mind to suspect the relations that had since ensued between brother and sister: these results, noted from the point-by-point checklist of Ulrich’s brother-in-law’s reflections, were intended to be understood as indicating that the pair might well consider whether it would not be better to change their resolve before they went too far in an affair that held all sorts of danger for them. Agathe’s new adviser now brought up these unambiguous allusions by turning to Ulrich, as the person
more familiar to him, with the politeness of a man who cannot spare another the repetition of a superfluous unpleasantness; but every so often he turned to Agathe and gave her to understand that although it was only a question of pure formality, still she, too, as his client, had to give him some assurance about these objections, which in certain circumstances, when brought unscrupulously out into the open, could weigh so heavily, an assurance on which he could base his further actions.

But Agathe had neither read Hagauer’s letters nor informed Ulrich of what she had been doing during the time she had been alone following the “so-called falsifying of the will”—involuntarily, at this moment, he was speaking thus cautiously to himself! This led to a short, embarrassed pause that had a quite peculiar effect. Ulrich sought to bring it to an end by a gesture whose calm superciliousness sought to characterize the lawyer’s
request as superfluous and already accommodated, but his sister disturbed this plan somewhat by asking the lawyer out of curiosity what her husband really thought he knew. The lawyer looked from one to the other. “My sister will, of course, give you the assurance you desire in any form,” Ulrich declared quickly and with the greatest indifference. “I have informed her of the precise content of the letters, but for quite personal reasons she herself has read them only in part.” Agathe now smiled in time, having caught her error, and confirmed that this was so. “I was too out of sorts,” she asserted calmly.

The attorney reflected for a moment. It went through his mind that this incident could quite well be an unwished-for confirmation of the adversary’s assertion that Agathe was under her brother’s baleful influence. Of course he did not believe this to be the case, but felt, even so, a slight aversion toward Ulrich. This moved him to answer Agathe with
the greatest politeness: “I must sincerely beg your pardon, madame, but my profession compels me to insist on the request that you examine the matter for yourself.” And with these words, gently insisting, he handed the file over to her.

Agathe hesitated.

Ulrich said: “You must formally examine it yourself.”

The lawyer smiled politely and added: “I beg your pardon, not only formally.”

Agathe let her glance dip twice into the pages, pulled a wry face, and slapped the file shut again.

The lawyer was satisfied. “These allusions are meaningless,” he assured her. “That’s what I assumed from the start. My colleague simply should not have given in to his client’s unpleasant irritability. But it would of course be embarrassing if during
the civil procedure a criminal indictment should suddenly be entered. If that happens, one would immediately have to respond with a counter-complaint on grounds of slander, or something similar.” Seemingly without his wishing it, what he was saying again passed from the unreal to the possible, and it seemed to Ulrich that in these assurances a question was still lurking.

“Of course it would be extremely embarrassing,” he confirmed dryly, and thought he would consult, aside from this celebrated divorce lawyer, a proper criminal lawyer, one with whom one could speak more openly in order to address all the possibilities contained in such an unfortunate story. But he did not know how to find such a man. “A battle of this dirty kind is always embarrassing for people who are clean,” he added. “But is there something else one can do besides wait?”
The lawyer acted as if he needed to think this over for a moment, smiled, and said that he was sorry, but he must very strongly advise that they go back to his original proposal and show that their adversary had transgressed marital fidelity. The length of time the separation had already lasted gave grounds for assuming the factual basis of such a complaint; there was no lack of investigators who took care of these things dependably and discreetly, and with this, as it were, classical ground for divorce, one would inevitably and most rapidly arrive at their goal, which would be of the greatest advantage in a struggle where one must not leave the adversary any time to develop his intrigues.

Ulrich also seemed to see the necessity of this.

But Agathe, who had completely lost the confidence she had once had in her dealings with lawyers and other persons of the
law, said no. Whether she had imagined that one orders a divorce from a lawyer the way one orders a cake from the baker, which is selected and delivered to one’s house, or whether it happened that she held it against Ulrich for having put her in a situation where her sense of responsibility for the embarrassments being visited upon the innocent Hagauer was awakened, or whether she simply could not bear the collapse of her world in the continuance of such conferences; enough, she refused vehemently.

She also considered this proposal to be a convenience on the part of the lawyer, and might perhaps have let herself be talked out of it; but Ulrich did not do so, merely excusing her smilingly with the jest that even through a detective she had no desire to find out any more about her husband, and the divorce lawyer suddenly gave a sigh of chivalric defeat, for he wanted to bring the conference to an end. He now assured them that they
would try to attain their goal this way, and pushed over to Agathe the power of attorney for her to sign.

Addendum. Possibly: Ulrich asks whether there were any proposals from Hagauer for an amicable settlement, and declares the continuation of the conference in this sense otherwise undesirable.

Even as they were descending the steps, Ulrich took Agathe’s arm in his, and in that moment they involuntarily stopped.

“We were in reality for an hour!” he said.

Agathe looked at him. Pain closed off the background of her light eyes like a stone wall.

“Are you very depressed?” he asked sympathetically.
“It involves such humiliation that we must withdraw from it,” she replied slowly.

“That’s very much the question,” Ulrich said.

“A real humiliation, like falling with one’s mouth in the dust! Something we have forgotten how to imagine lately!” Agathe added in a soft, urgent voice.

“I mean, the question is whether we will be allowed to withdraw from this humiliation,” Ulrich responded. “Perhaps there are even greater ones threatening us. I must confess to you that my sense of our situation today is that it’s bad. For, granted we give in: perhaps we could claim it had been an error, hastily repair it, cover things up. But it would be up to him to accept it or not, and he isn’t going to give you up; indeed, now that he’s become suspicious, he won’t put down his weapons until you’ve submitted to him unconditionally. That’s simply his sense of
order!” Ulrich said, since Agathe did not seem to want to wait for him to finish. “On the other hand, we could of course follow our lawyer’s proposal or some similar plan and try to wear him down. But what does that get us? Increased danger, for the enemy will feel himself absolved from all restraint by our attack, and in the best case our success would be that besides the divorce we would have maliciously harmed a person to whom we are profoundly indifferent.”

“And the guilt of existence?” Agathe objected passionately, although she violently forced herself to make a jest of it. “What you yourself have often said, that the only woman who remains pure is the one who has her lover’s head chopped off?”

“Did I say that? One would have to blow up the planet,” Ulrich said calmly, “if one wanted to get rid of all the witnesses to one’s mistakes!” And he added seriously: “You’re still misjudging the degree of ordinariness,
the tangible difficulty, of the situation we’re in: one way or the other, we’re threatened with disaster and have only the choice of remaining so or—"

“Killing ourselves!” Agathe said curtly and decisively.

“Oh come on! How that echoes in the stones of such a staircase! I hope no one heard it!” he rebuked her angrily, and looked cautiously around. “You’re so stupid! It’s not even sure that death is better than prison. But we could remove ourselves from the choice by running away.”

Agathe looked at him, and in this split second her eyes involuntarily resembled those of a child who has been romping wildly and been picked up.

“To an island in the South Seas,” Ulrich said, and smiled. “But perhaps an island in the Adriatic would do as well. Where once a week a boat will bring us what we need.”
When they stood below at the gateway, they were benumbed and struck by the shock of the summery street. A whitish fire in which bright shadows lived seemed to be waiting for them. People, animals, curbs, even they themselves lost something of their bodily constraints in the hot rays of light. Agathe had said: “You’ve never wanted to! For that I mean too little to you?” Ulrich responded: “Oh, let’s not talk about it this way! It’s harder than the resolve to deny the world. For once we’ve run away, everything here in the real world, which was imposed on us as ours, will turn really bad, and there’s hardly any turning back, although we have no idea whether where we want to go there’s solid ground on which people can stand differently from the way they do in dreams. If I still keep thinking about it, it’s because I have doubts not about you or myself but about what’s possible!”
But on the other hand it’s also quite practical! The lawyer has his instructions, the client is away: either both attorneys will come to an agreement in order to wind it up, or they’ll procrastinate.

When they finally do come back, everything is in quite good shape: the automatism of life that protects itself against catastrophes. They were merely on a trip, the lawyers were still procrastinating, etc.
Ulrich asked: “What is it you want from me: my clothes, my books, my house, my views about the future? What should I give you? I’d like to give you everything I have.”

Agathe replied: “Cut off your arm for me, or at least a finger!”

They were in the reception room on the ground floor, whose high, narrow windows, arched at the top, let in the soft new morning light, which mingled with the shade of trees as it fell into its own reflection on the floor. If one looked down at oneself it was like seeing beneath one’s feet the discolored sky with its
brightness and clouds through a brownish glass. Brother and sister had so retired from the world that there was hardly danger any longer of their being disturbed by a visit.

“You’re too modest!” Ulrich went on. “Go ahead, ask for my life! I believe I could discard it for you. But a finger? I must confess: a finger is of no importance to me at all!”

He laughed, his sister along with him; but her face retained the expression of someone who sees another joking about something that is serious to him.

Now Ulrich turned the tables: “When one loves one bestows, one ‘keeps nothing for oneself,’ one doesn’t want to possess anything by oneself: why do you want to possess Lindner for yourself?” he asked.

“But I don’t possess him at all!” Agathe retorted.
“You possess your secret emotions for him and your secret thoughts about him. Your error about him!”

“And why don’t you cut off an arm?” Agathe challenged.

“We will cut it off,” was Ulrich’s response. “But for the moment I’m still asking myself what land of life would result if I really gave up my sense of self, and others did likewise? Everyone would have a self in common with everyone else; not only the feeding bowl and the bed would be shared, but truly the self, so that every one would love his neighbor as himself and no one would be his own neighbor.”

Agathe said: “That must somehow be possible.”

“Can you imagine sharing a lover with another woman?” Ulrich asked.
“I could,” Agathe asserted. “I can even imagine it being quite beautiful! I just can’t imagine the other woman.”

Ulrich laughed.

Agathe made a parrying gesture. “I have a particular personal dislike of women,” she said.

“Of course, of course! And I don’t like men!”

Agathe felt his mockery was somewhat insulting because she felt that it was not unjustified, and she did not go on to say what she had intended.

In the resulting pause Ulrich, to encourage her, began to relate something he had recently dreamed up in the distracted condition of shaving. “You know that there were times when aristocratic women,” he said, “if a slave pleased them, could have him castrated so that they might have their pleasure
of him without endangering the aristocracy of their progeny.”

Agathe did not know it, but she gave no sign. On the other hand, she now recalled having once read that among some uncivilized tribes every woman married all her husband’s brothers along with him and had to serve them all, and every time she imagined such servile humiliation, an involuntary and yet not quite unwelcome shudder made her shrink. But she did not reveal any of this to her brother either.

“...whether something like that happened often, or only exceptionally, I don’t know, nor does it matter,” Ulrich had meanwhile been saying. “For, as I must confess, I was thinking only of the slave. More precisely, I was thinking of the moment when he left his sickbed for the first time and encountered the world again. At first, of course, the will to resist and defend himself, which had been paralyzed at the start of what
happened, rouses and thaws out again. But then the awareness must set in that it’s too late. Anger wants to rebel, but there follow one after the other the memory of the pain suffered, the cowardly awakening of a fear from which only consciousness was removed, and finally that humility signifying a now irrevocable humiliation, and these emotions now hold down the anger, the way the slave himself was held down while the operation was being performed.” Ulrich interrupted this odd recital and searched for words; his eyelids were lowered in meditation. “Physically, he could doubtless still pull himself together,” he continued, “but a strange feeling of shame will keep him from doing so, for he must recognize its futility in a way that embraces everything; he is no longer a man, he has been debased to a girl-like existence, to the existence of a towel, a handkerchief, a cup, of some kind of being that, not without affection, is allowed to serve. I would
like to know the moment when he is then called for the first time before the lady who tortured him and reads in her eyes what she proposes to do with him...."

Agathe laughed mockingly. “You’ve been thinking some really strange thoughts, Ulo! And when I think that before he was castrated your slave was perhaps a butcher or a stylish domestic...”

Ulrich laughed innocently along with her. “Then I myself would probably find my depiction of the awakening of his soul disturbingly comical,” he admitted. He himself was happy that this disreputable emotional report was brought to an end. For without his noticing, various things must have come into his mind that didn’t belong there: as if something of the mythological goddesses who consume their devotees, or the Siamese twins, up to masochism or the castration complex, had been drawn with fingernails across the dubious keyboard of
contemporary psychology! When he had stopped laughing he immediately made an embittered face.

Agathe laid her hand on his arm. The tiny shadows of a concealed excitement twitched in her gray eyes. “But why did you tell me that?” she asked.

“I don’t know,” Ulrich said.

“I believe you were thinking of me,” she asserted.

“Nonsense!” Ulrich retorted, but after a while he asked: “Do you know that another letter from Hagauer came today?” and so apparently began talking about something else.

The letters from Hagauer that were then arriving became more threatening from one to the next. “I don’t understand why, under these circumstances, he doesn’t get on the train and come here to confront us,” Ulrich went on.
“He won’t find the time,” Agathe said.

And that was indeed how it was. At the beginning Hagauer had resolved several times to do just that, but every time something intervened, and then he had become rather accustomed to being alone. It seemed to him not a bad thing to live for a while without his wife: man ought not to be too happy or too comfortable—that is a heroic conception of life. So Hagauer confronted his misfortune energetically, and was able to note the compensation that not only time can heal wounds, but lack of time as well. Of course this did not prevent him from continuing to insist that Agathe return; indeed, he could dedicate himself to this question of order with the unruffled mind of a man who has shipped the children of his emotions off to bed. Once again he thoroughly reviewed all the documents, which he preserved in careful order, and evening after evening read through all the personal papers of his
deceased father-in-law without finding in a single one any indication of the surprise that had been visited upon him. That a man whom he had always revered as a model could have changed his mind at the last minute, or out of negligence not adapted his will to changed circumstances over the years, seemed the more improbable to Hagauer the more often he untied the ribbons and removed the labeled covers with which he kept his correspondence and other papers in order. He avoided thinking about how, then, the result had come about that finally had come about, and reconciled himself by saying that some error, some carelessness, some guilty or innocent negligence, some lawyers stratagem, must lie behind it. In this opinion, which permitted him to spare his feelings without wasting his time over it, he contented himself with demanding precise statements and documents, and, when these did not come, calling upon a lawyer for advice;
for as an order-loving person, he assumed that in their spiteful endeavor Agathe and Ulrich must obviously have done the same, and he did not want to lag behind them. The lawyer now took over the writing of letters and repeated the demand for an explanation, combining with it the demand that Agathe return: in part because that was the preference of Hagauer, who imputed his wife’s conduct to her brother’s influence, and in part because it seemed a requisite in this obscure and perhaps shady affair that one should first stick to the established factual basis of “malicious abandonment”; the rest was to be left to the future, and to cautious evaluation of whatever points of attack might develop. From then on Ulrich started reading the antagonistic letters again and did not burn them. But no matter how often since then he had argued with his sister that arming themselves likewise for the legal struggle could not be put off, she would hear nothing
of it; indeed, she did not even want to listen to his reports, and finally he had had to undertake the first steps without her, until at last his own lawyer insisted on hearing Agathe himself and receiving his power of attorney from her. This was what Ulrich now informed her of all at once, adding that what he had first, out of consideration, called merely a "communication from Hagauer" was actually a singularly unpleasant legal letter. "It’s apparently unavoidable, and without our realizing it it’s become high time that we confide to our lawyer, as cautiously and with as much reserve as we can, something about the dangerous business with the will," he finished.

Agathe looked at him for a long time and irresolutely, with a look hooded from within, before she softly answered him with the words: "I did not want that!"

Ulrich made a gesture of excuse and smiled. It was possible to live in the fire of
goodness without the necessity of arson, and the criminal trick they had carried out on their father's will had long since become superfluous: but it had happened, and nothing could be done about it without their being exposed. Ulrich understood the connection between resistance and despondency in his sisters answer. Agathe had meanwhile stood up and was moving back and forth among the objects in the room without speaking; she sat down on a chair some distance off and went on looking at her brother in silence. Ulrich knew that she wanted to draw him back into the silence, which was like a bed of rest consisting of tiny points of flame, and a sweet martyrdom demanded his heart back.

As in music or in a poem, by a sickbed or in a church, the circle of what could be uttered was oddly circumscribed, and in their dealings with each other a clear distinction had formed between those
conversations that were permissible and those they could not have. But this did not happen through solemnity or any other kind of elevated expectation, but appeared to have its origin outside the personal. They both hesitated. What should the next word be, what should they do? The uncertainty resembled a net in which all unspoken words had been caught: the web was stretched taut, but they were not able to break through it, and in this want of words glances and movements seemed to reach further than usual, and outlines, colors, and surfaces to have an unstoppable weight: A secret inhibition, which usually resides in the arrangement of the world and sets limits to the depth of the senses, had become weaker, or from time to time disappeared entirely. And inevitably the moment came when the house they were in resembled a ship gliding outward on an infinite waste reflecting only this ship: the sounds of the shore grow fainter and fainter,
and finally all motion ceases; objects become completely mute and lose the inaudible voices with which they speak to man; before they are even thought, words fall like sick birds from the air and die; life no longer has even the energy to produce the small, nimble resolutions that are as important as they are insignificant: getting up, picking up a hat, opening a door, or saying something. Between the house and the street lay a nothingness that neither Agathe nor Ulrich could cross, but in the room space was polished to an utmost luster, which was intensified and fragile like all highly perfected things, even if the eye did not directly perceive it. This was the anxiety of the lovers, who at the height of their emotion no longer knew which direction led upward and which downward. If they looked at each other, their eyes, in sweet torment, could not draw back from the sight they saw, and sank as in a wall of flowers without striking bottom. “What might the
clocks be doing now?” suddenly occurred to Agathe; and reminded her of the small, idiotic second hand of Ulrich’s watch, with its precise forward motions along its narrow circle; the watch was in the pocket under the bottommost rib, as if that were where reason’s last place of salvation lay, and Agathe yearned to draw it out. Her glance loosened itself from her brother’s: a painful retreat! They both felt that it bordered on the comic, this shared silence under the pressure of a heavy mountain of bliss or powerlessness.

And suddenly Ulrich said, without having previously thought of saying exactly this: “Polonius’s cloud, which sometimes appears as a ship, sometimes as a camel, is not the weakness of a servile courtier but characterizes completely the way God has created us!”

Agathe could not know what he meant; but does one always know what a poem means? When it pleases us it opens its lips and causes a smile, and Agathe smiled. She
was lovely with her bowed lips, but this gave
Ulrich time, and he gradually recalled what it
was he had been thinking before he had
broken the silence. He had imagined as an
example that Agathe was wearing glasses. At
that time, a woman with glasses was still re-
garded as comical and looked quite risible, or
pitiable; but a time was already coming when
a woman wearing glasses, as is still true
today, looked enterprising, indeed positively
young. There are firmly inherited habits of
consciousness behind this, which change but
which in some connection or another are al-
ways present and form the pattern through
which all perceptions pass before they arrive
at consciousness, so that in a certain sense
the whole that one thinks one is experiencing
is always the cause of what it is that one ex-
periences. And one rarely imagines to one-
self how far this extends, that it extends from
ugly and beautiful, good and evil, where it
still seems natural that one man’s morning
cloud should be another man’s camel, through bitter and sweet or fragrant and noisome, which still have something material about them, to the things themselves with their precise and impersonally attributed qualities, the perception of which is apparently quite independent of intellectual prejudices but in truth is so only in the main. In reality, the relation of the outer to the inner world is not that of a die which impresses its image on a receptive material, but that of a matrix which is deformed in the process, so that its diagram, without its coherence being destroyed, can produce remarkably diverse images. So that Ulrich too, if he was able to think that he was seeing Agathe before him wearing glasses, could think just as well that she loved Lindner or Hagauer, that she was his “sister” or “the being half united with him in twinlike fashion,” and it was not a different Agathe each time that was sitting before him but a different sitting there, a different
world surrounding her, like a transparent ball dipping into an indescribable light. And it seemed to them both that here lay the deepest sense of the support which they sought in each other and which one person always seeks in another.

They were like two people who, hand in hand, have stepped out of the circle that had firmly enclosed them, without being at home in another one. There was in this something that could not be accounted for in ordinary notions of living together.
THE SUN SHINES ON JUST AND UNJUST

The sun shines with one and the same merciful glance on just and unjust; for some reason Ulrich would have found it more comprehensible if it did so with two: one after the other, first on the just and then on the unjust, or vice versa. “Sequentially, man too is living and dead, child and adult, he punishes and pardons; indeed this ability of only being able to do contradictory things in sequence could really be used to define the essence of the individual, for supra-individual entities, like humanity or a people or the population of a village, are able to commit their contradictions not only one after the other, but also
simultaneously and all mixed up with each other. So the higher a being stands on the scale of capabilities, the lower he stands on the scale of morality? In any case: you can rely on a tiger, but not on mankind!” This was what Ulrich said. If his friendship with Stumm had been flourishing, how fruitful such conversations might have been! With Agathe they always ended in a plea to excuse their superfluity and led to new and vain resistance. “There’s no sense in talking that way,” he conceded, and began from the beginning. “For there are many problems,” he instructed, “that make no sense, and they ought always to be suspected of being important ones. There are questions of the kind: Why do I have two ears but only one tongue? Or: Why is man symmetrical only frontally and not hexagonally? Sometimes these questions come straight from the nursery or the madhouse, but sometimes, too, they later achieve scientific respectability.”
It’s different, and yet basically the same, with the problem: Why do people die? We already find in textbooks of logic this model of a reasoned conclusion: “All men are mortal. Caius is a man. Therefore Caius is mortal.” But one can also give a scientific answer, and all such answers would leave such a problem in exceptionally rational condition: and yet the irrational way we stare at this problem, Ulrich maintained, an irrational, indeed entirely shameless way of refusing to understand nature, is itself almost morality, philosophy, and literature!

Agathe, by nature easygoing, tolerant, and averse to cloud castles of thought, responded: “Nature has no morality!”

Ulrich said: “Nature has two moralities!”

Agathe said: “I don’t care how many it has. It’s not a problem. You’re only trying to needle and upset me!”
“But it’s all the same!” Ulrich answered. “Because since we surely call that good which pleases us and to which we give preference—that’s not morality, but it is the beginning and end of morality!—wouldn’t evil then have to die out in due course, the way snakes or diseases are more or less stamped out and the jungle dies? Why does it survive and thrive so mightily?”

“That’s no concern of mine!” Agathe declared, thereby defending her intention of not taking the conversation seriously when it was conducted in this fashion.

But Ulrich replied: “We simply can’t do without evil. And what does concern you is even more absurd and profound! For mustn’t something exist that is worse than the rest, if only for the reason that we wouldn’t know what to do with ourselves if one of our feelings were just as beautiful as any other one, or even if each of our actions were better than its predecessors?”
Agathe looked up, for this was serious. This was the way it often happened now; they were uncertain about where their adventuresome plans were leading them, and avoided talking about it because they did not know how to begin; but suddenly they were to some extent in the midst of it. At that time Ulrich was receiving letters from Professor Schwung, his deceased father’s old enemy, entreating him on the head of the revered departed to engage himself in bringing about greater accountability in the world; and he was receiving letters from Professor Hagauer, his embittered brother-in-law, in which his sister and he were sternly suspected of being guilty of profoundly dubious conduct. At first he had answered these letters evasively, then not at all; finally, Agathe even asked him to burn them without opening them. She explained this by saying that it was impossible to read such letters, and in the condition in which they found
themselves, that was the truth. But to burn
them unread, and not even to listen to what
other people were complaining about: how
did it happen that this did not move her con-
science, although at that time it was so sens-
itive in every other respect?

That was the time when they were be-
ingning to comprehend what an equivocal
role other people played in their feelings.
They knew that they were not in accord with
the general public; in the thousand kinds of
busyness that filled up night and day there
was not a single activity in which they could
have participated wholeheartedly, and
whatever they might venture upon them-
selves would most certainly have been met
with contempt and disdain. There was a re-
markable peace in this. Apparently one can
(probably) say that a bad conscience, if it is
big enough, provides almost a better pillow
than a good one: the mind’s incidental activ-
ity, incessantly expanding with a view to
ultimately deriving a good individual conscience from all the wrong that surrounds it and in which it is implicated, is then shut down, leaving a boundless independence in the emotions. At times this caused a tender loneliness, a limitless arrogance, to pour its splendor on the pairs excursions through the world. Alongside their ideas the world could just as easily appear clumsily bloated, like a captive balloon circled by swallows, as it could be humbled to a background as tiny as a forest at the rim of the sky by the intensification of the solipsistic condition of their egos. Their social obligations sounded like a shouting that was reaching them, sometimes rude, sometimes from far away; they were trivial, if not unreal. An enormous arrangement, which is finally nothing but a monstrous absurdity: that was the world. On the other hand, everything they encountered on the plane of ideas had the tensed, tightrope-walking nature of the once-and-never-again,
and whenever they talked about it they did so in the awareness that no single word could be used twice without changing its meaning. Likewise, everything that happened to them was connected with the impression of being a discovery that permitted of no repetition, or it happened on precisely the right occasion, as if it had been conjured up by magic.

This gentle mania, which was nothing but an extremely elevated form of the involvement of two people with each other, also unleashed a deepened sympathy, a sinking into togetherness; the change also became apparent in their relation to the world, but in such a manner that along with the arrogance there began to predominate at times a peculiar immersion in the nature and doings of other people, and in the claim this involved to recognition and love. A temperate explanation, such as that this was merely the expression of an overflowing mood,
sometimes amicable, sometimes arrogant, did not suffice. For the happy person is no doubt friendly, and with cheerful complaisance wants to let everyone know it, and Ulrich or Agathe, too, felt lifted up at times by such gaiety, like a person being carried on someone’s shoulders and waving at everyone: yet this actively outward-striving amicability seemed to them harmless beside the kind that overcame them passively and almost hauntingly at the sight of others as soon as they made room to be ready for what they had called “walking two miles with them.” Ulrich might also have wondered that he had often seen himself approaching other people as if they were a generality, with theories and emotions that applied to them all; but now it was happening even in a constrained way on a small individual scale, with that silent insatiability of his which had once made Agathe herself suspect that it was more a longing for empathy on the part of a nature
that never involves itself with others than it was the expression of confident benevolence. To be sure, Agathe was now reacting as he did: although she had, for the most part, spent her life without either love or hate, but merely with indifference, she felt the same inclination toward others, quite divorced from any possibility of action, indeed from any idea that might have given comprehensible shape to her almost oppressive empathy.

Ulrich analyzed it: “If you like, you can just as well call it a bifurcated egotism as the start of loving everyone.”

Agathe joked: “As love, it’s still rather timid at the start/’

Ulrich went on: “In truth, it has as little to do with egotism as with its opposite. Those are later concepts, indispensable for decocted souls. In the Eudemian ethics, however, it still runs: Self-love is not selfishness but a higher condition of the self, with
the consequence that one loves others, too, in a higher way. Also, more than two thousand years ago the notion was formulated, apparently just for us, and then lost again, a linking of goal and cause into a ‘goal-cause’ that motivates what is loved as it does the lover.’ An unreal idea, and yet as if created in order to distinguish the sympathetic awareness of the emotions from the dead truth of reason!”

He touched her hand with his fingertips. Agathe looked around her shyly; they were in one of the busiest streets; there probably weren’t many other people roaming around whose concerns reached back to the fourth century B.C. “Don’t you think that we’re behaving extremely strangely?” Agathe asked. She saw women in the latest fashions, and officers with red, green, yellow, and blue necks and legs; many necks and legs stopped suddenly behind her and turned to look at her or some other woman, expecting an
“advance.” A ray of light from the heavenly vaults of truth had fallen on all this activity, and it looked somewhat precarious.

“I think so,” Ulrich said dryly. “Even if I might have been mistaken.”

For he could no longer recall exactly the passage that had once made an impression on him.

Agathe laughed at him. “You’re always so truth-loving,” she mocked, but secretly she admired him.

But Ulrich knew that what they were commanded to seek had as little to do with truth in the ordinary sense as it did with egotism or altruism, so he replied: “Love of truth is really one of the most contradictory formulations there is. For you can revere truth in God knows how many ways, but the one thing you can’t do is love it. If you do, it begins to waver. Love dissolves truth like wine the pearl.”
“Do pearls really dissolve in wine?” Agathe asked.

“I have no idea,” Ulrich conceded with a sigh. ‘Tin pretty far gone. I’m already using expressions I can’t account for! I meant to say: To the person who loves, truth and deception are equally trivial!”

This observation, that truth is dissolved by love—the opposite of the more faint-hearted assertion that love cannot bear the truth!—contains nothing new. The moment a person encounters love not as an experience but as life itself, or at least as a kind of life, he understands that there are several truths about everything. The person who judges without love calls this “opinions” and “subjectivity”; the person who loves denies that with the sage’s saying: “We can’t know the meaning of even the simplest words if we don’t love!” He is not being insensitive to truth, but oversensitive. He finds himself in a kind of enthusiasm of thinking, in which
words open up to their very core. The person judging without love calls something an illusion that is merely die consequence of the excited involvement of the emotions. He himself is free of passion, and truth is free of passion; an emotion is injurious to its truth, and to expect to find truth where something is “a matter of the emotions” seems to him just as wrongheaded as demanding justice from wrath. And yet it is precisely the general content of existence and truth that distinguishes love as an experiencing of the world from love as an experience of the individual. In the special world of love, contradictions do not raise each other to nothing and cancel each other out, but raise each other to the heights. They don’t adapt to each other, either, but are in advance a part of a higher unity, which, the moment they come into contact, rises from them as a transparent cloud. Therefore, in love as in life itself, every word is an event and none is a complete
notion, and no assertion is needed, nor any mere whim.

It is hard to account for this, because the language of love is a secret language, and in its ultimate perfection as silent as an embrace. Ulrich was capable of walking beside Agathe and seeing the reliable line of her profile in sparkling clarity before the swarm of his thoughts; then he perhaps recalled that in every delimitation there resides a tyrannical happiness. This is apparently the basic happiness of all works of art, of all beauty, of whatever is formed by earth at all. But it is perhaps, too, the basic hostility, the armor between all beings. And Agathe looked away from Ulrich into the stream of people and sought to imagine what cannot be imagined, what happiness it would be to do away with all limits. In thought they contradicted each other, but they would also have been able to change sides, since on earlier occasions they had, at times alone, at times
together, experienced one side as well as the other. But they did not speak about this at all. They smiled. That was enough. They each guessed what the other meant. And if they guessed wrongly, it was just as good as if it were right. If, on the contrary, they said something that cohered more firmly, they almost felt it as a disturbance. They had already spoken so much about it. A certain indolence, indeed paralysis, of thought was part of their silent insatiability as they now observed people and sought to enclose them within the magic circle that surrounded themselves, just as fluid and fleeting mobility belonged to this thinking. They were like the two halves of the shell of a mussel opening itself to the sea.

And at times they suddenly laughed at each other.

“It’s not as simple as one would like to think, loving one’s fellow man like oneself!” Ulrich sighed mockingly once again.
Agathe took a deep breath and told him with satisfaction that it was his fault. “You’re the one who’s always destroying it!” she complained.

“They’re the ones! Look at them!” Ulrich countered. “Look how they’re watching us! They’d say Thanks a lot!’ to our love!”

And in truth this made them laugh with a kind of abashed shame, for unfortunately nothing is more amusing than raising one’s eyes when they are still tender with sentiment. So Agathe laughed beforehand. But then she replied: “And yet what we’re looking for can’t be far away. Sometimes one feels one’s own breath against a veil as warm as a pair of strange lips. This seems to me that close too.”

Ulrich added: “And there is a circumstance that could lead one to believe that we’re not simply chasing chimeras. For even an enemy can be divined only if you’re able
to feel what he feels. So there is a love your neighbor’; it even has a postscript: so you get a cleaner shot at him! And quite generally, you never understand people entirely through knowing and observing them; it also calls for understanding of a kind you have with yourself; you must already have that understanding when you approach them.”

“But I usually don’t understand them at all,” Agathe said, surveying the people.

“You believe in them,” Ulrich replied. “At least you want to. You lend’ them credence. That’s what makes them seem worthy of loving.”

“No,” Agathe said. “I don’t believe in them in the least.”

“No,” Ulrich said. “‘Belief isn’t an accurate expression for it.”

“But then what should it really be called,” Agathe asked, “when you think you
understand people without knowing anything about them, and when you have an irresistible inclination for them, although you can be almost certain that you wouldn’t like to know them?"

“One usually lives in the cautious balance between inclination and aversion one keeps ready for one’s fellowmen,” her brother responded slowly. “If, for whatever reason, the aversion seems to be dormant, then only a desire to yield must remain, a desire that cannot be compared to anything one knows. But it’s no longer an attitude that corresponds to reality.”

“But you’ve said so often that it’s the possibility of another life!” Agathe reproached him.

“An awareness of the world as it could be is what it is,” Ulrich said, “shot through with an awareness of the world as it is!”

“No, that’s too little!” Agathe exclaimed.
“But I can’t say that I really love these people,” Ulrich defended himself. “Or that I love the real people. These people are real when they’re in uniform and civilian clothes; that’s the norm, so it’s our attitude that’s unreal!”

“But among themselves they think of it the same way!” Agathe responded, on the attack. “Because they don’t love each other in a real way, or really don’t love each other, in exactly the same way you’re claiming about our relation to them: their reality consists in part of fantasies, but why should that degrade ours?”

“You’re thinking with such strenuous sharpness today!” Ulrich fended her off, laughing.

“I’m so sad,” Agathe replied. “Everything is so uncertain. It all seems to shrink to nothing and expand again endlessly. It won’t let you do anything, but the
inactivity is also unbearable because it really presses in all directions against closed walls.”

And in this or similar fashion the preoccupation of brother and sister with their surroundings always broke off. Their involvement remained unarticulated: there was nowhere an accord in opinion or activity in which it could have expressed itself; the feeling grew all the more, the less it found a way of acting that corresponded to it, and the desire to contradict appeared as well: the sun shone on the just and unjust, but Ulrich found that one might better say, on the unseparated and not united, as the real origin of mankind’s being evil as well as good.

Agathe concurred in this opinion: “I’m always so sad whenever we have to laugh at ourselves,” she asserted, and laughed, because along with everything else an old saying had occurred to her, which sounded quite strange, as idle as it was prophetic. For it proclaimed: “Then the eyes of the soul were
opened, and I saw love coming toward me. And I saw the beginning, but its end I did not see, only its progression.”
Another time Agathe asked: “By what right can you speak so glibly of an Image of the world/ or even of a world’ of love? Of love as ‘life itself? You’re being frivolous!” She felt as if she were swinging back and forth on a high branch that was threatening to break under the exertion at any moment; but she went on to ask: “If one can speak of a cosmic image of love, could one not also finally speak of an image of anger, envy, pride, or hardness?”

“All other emotions last for a shorter period,” Ulrich replied. “None of them even claims to last forever.”
“But don’t you find it somewhat odd of love that it should make that claim?” Agathe asked.

Ulrich countered: “I believe one might well say that it also ought to be possible for other emotions to shape their own images of the world: as it were, one-sided or monochrome ones; but among them love has always enjoyed an obscure advantage and has been accorded a special claim to the power of shaping the world.”

During this exchange they sought out a place in their garden where they could look through the fence at the street, with its rich variety of human content, without exposing themselves, as far as possible, to the glances of strangers. This usually led them to a low, sunny rise whose dry soil gave footing to several larches, and where if they lay down they were camouflaged by the play of light and shadow; in this half hiding place they were on the one hand so near the street that the
people passing by gave them the peculiar impression of being alive in that merely animalistic way that attaches to all of us when we believe ourselves unobserved and alone with our demeanor, and on the other hand any eyes that were raised could see brother and sister and draw them into the events that they were observing with interest and a reserve for which the fence, a solid barrier but transparent to the glance, served as a positively ideal image.

“Now let’s try whether we really love them or not,” Agathe proposed, and smiled mockingly or impatiently.

Her brother shrugged his shoulders.

“Stop, O you hastening past, and bestow for a moment your precious soul upon two people who intend to love you!” Ulrich said, pushing it to absurdity.
“You can’t bestow yourself for a moment; you have to do it without end!” Agathe corrected him threateningly.

“A park. A mighty fence. Us behind it,” Ulrich affirmed. “And what might he be thinking when we called him, after he had involuntarily slowed his steps and before he timidly doubles them? That he’s walking by the garden fence of a private madhouse!”

Agathe nodded.

“And we,” Ulrich went on, “wouldn’t even dare! Don’t you absolutely know we won’t do it? Our inmost harmony with the world warns us that we’re not allowed to do such a thing!”

Agathe said: “If we were to address the brother hastening past, instead of as ‘our good friend’ or ‘dear soul,’ as ‘dog’ or ‘criminal,’ he probably wouldn’t consider us mad but would merely take us for people who ‘think differently’ and are mad at him!”
Ulrich laughed and was pleased with his sister. “But you see how it is,” he declared. “General rudeness is unbearable today. But because it is, goodness too must be false! It’s not that rudeness and goodness depend on each other as on a scale, where too much on one side equals too little on the other; they depend on each other like two parts of a body that are healthy and sick together. So nothing is more erroneous,” he went on, “than to imagine, as people generally do, that an excess of bad convictions is to blame for a lack of good ones; on the contrary, evil evidently increases through the growth of a false goodness!”

“We’ve heard that often,” Agathe replied with pleasantly dry irony. “But it’s apparently not simple to be good in the good way!”

“No, loving is not simple!” Ulrich echoed, laughing.
They lay there looking into the blue heights of die sun; then again through the fence at the street, which, to their eyes dazzled by the sunny sky, was spinning in a hazily excited gray. Silence descended. The feelings of self-confidence that the conversation had raised were slowly transformed into an undercutting, indeed an abduction, of the self. Ulrich related softly: “I’ve invented a magnificent sham pair of concepts: ‘egocentric and allocentric.’ The world of love is experienced either egocentrically or allocentrically; but the ordinary world knows only egotism and altruism, a coupled pair that, by comparison, are quarrelsome rational. Being egocentric means feeling as if one were carrying the center of the world in the center of one’s self. Being allocentric means not having a center at all anymore. Participating totally in the world and not laying anything by for oneself. At its highest stage, simply ceasing to be. I could also say:
turning the world inward and the self outward. They are the ecstasies of selfishness and selflessness. And although ecstasy appears to be an outgrowth of healthy life, one can evidently say as well that the moral notions of healthy life are a stunted vestige of what were originally ecstatic ones.”

Agathe thought: “Moonlit night ... two miles ...” And much else drifted through her mind as well. What Ulrich was telling her was one more version of all that; she did not have the impression that she would be losing anything if she did not pay really close attention, although she listened gladly. Then she thought of Lindners asserting that one had to live for something and could not think of oneself, and she asked herself whether that, too, would be “allocentric.” Losing oneself in a task, as he demanded? She was skeptical. Pious people have enthusiastically pressed their lips to lepers’ sores: a loathsome idea! an “exaggeration that is an affront to life,” as
Lindner liked to call it. But what he did consider pleasing to God, erecting a hospital, left her cold. Thus it happened that she now plucked her brother by the sleeve and interrupted him with the words: “Our man has shown up again!” For partly out of fun, partly from habit, they had fastened on a particularly unpleasant man to use for their mental experiment. This was a beggar who conducted his business for a while every day in front of their garden fence. He treated the stone base as a bench that was awaiting him; every day he first spread out beside himself a greasy paper with some leftover food on it, with which he casually regaled himself before putting on his business expression and packing away the rest. He was a stocky man with thick, iron-gray hair, had the pasty, spiteful face of an alcoholic, and had defended his location a number of times with great rudeness when other beggars unsuspectingly came near: Ulrich and Agathe hated this
parasite who offended against their property—and further refined what was proper to them, their loneliness—hated him with a primitive instinct of possessiveness that made them laugh, because it seemed to them totally illicit; and for just that reason they used this ugly, spiteful guest for their boldest and most dubious conjurations of loving one’s neighbor.

Hardly had they caught sight of him than Ulrich said, laughing: “I repeat: If you just, as people say, imagine yourself in this situation or feel any kind of vague sense of social responsibility for him—indeed, even if you only see him as a picturesque, tattered painting—there’s already a small percentage of the genuine ‘putting oneself in another’s place.’ Now you have to try it one hundred percent!”

With a smile, Agathe shook her head.
"Imagine you were in accord with this man about everything the way you are with yourself," Ulrich proposed.

Agathe protested. "I've never been in accord with myself!"

"But you will be then," Ulrich said. He took her hand.

Agathe let it happen and looked at the beggar. She became strangely serious and after a while declared: "He's stranger to me than death."

Ulrich enclosed her hand in his more completely and asked again: "Please try!"

After a while Agathe said: "I feel as if I'm hanging on this figure; I myself, and not just my curiosity!" From the tension of concentration, and its focus on a single object, her face had taken on the involuntary expression of a sleepwalker.
Ulrich helped out: “It’s like in a dream? Raw-sweet, alien-self, encountering oneself in the shape of another?”

Agathe dismissed this with a smile. “No, it’s certainly not as enchantingly sensual as it is in such dreams,” she said.

Ulrich’s eyes rested on her face. “Try, as it were, to dream him!” he counseled persuasively. “Cautious hoarders, in our waking state we consist mostly of giving out and taking back; we participate, and in doing so preserve ourselves. But in dreams we have a trembling intimation of how glorious a world is that consists entirely of prodigality!”

“That may be so,” Agathe answered hesitantly and distractedly. Her eyes remained fixed on the man. “Thank God,” she said slowly after a while, “he’s become an ordinary monster again!” The man had got up, gathered his things together, and left. “He was getting uncomfortable!” Ulrich claimed,
laughing. When he fell silent, the constant noise of the street rose and mingled with the sunshine in a peculiar feeling of stillness. After a while Ulrich asked pensively: “Isn’t it strange that almost every single person knows himself least of all and loves himself most? It’s evidently a protective mechanism. And ‘Love thy neighbor as thyself’ means in this fashion too: love him without knowing him, before you know him, although you know him. I can understand one’s taking this merely for an extreme expression, but I doubt that it will satisfy the challenge; for, pursued seriously, it asks: love him without your reason. And so an apparently everyday demand, if taken literally, turns into an ecstatic one!”

Agathe responded: “Truly, the ‘monster was almost beautiful!”

Ulrich said: “I think one not only loves something because it’s beautiful, but it’s also beautiful because one loves it. Beauty is
nothing but a way of saying that something has been loved; the beauty of all art and of the world has its origin in the power of making a love comprehensible.”

Agathe thought of the men with whom she had spent her life. The feeling of first being overshadowed by a strange being, and then opening one’s eyes in this shadow, is strange. She pictured it to herself. Was it not alien, almost hostile things that fused together in the kiss of two lives? The bodies remained unitedly separated. Thinking of them, you feel the repulsive and ugly with undiminished force. As horror, even. You are also certain that spiritually you have nothing to do with each other. The disparity and separation of the persons involved is painfully clear. If there had been some illusion of a secret accord, a sameness or likeness, this was the moment it vanished like a mist. No, you weren’t under the least illusion, Agathe thought to herself. And yet the sense of an
independent self is partially extinguished, the self is broken; and amid signs signifying an act of violence no less than a sweet sacrifice, it submits to its new state. All of that causes a “skin rash”? Doubtless the other ways of loving are not able to do as much. Perhaps Agathe had so often felt the inclination to love men she didn’t like because this is when this remarkable transformation happens most irrationally. And the remarkable power of attraction that Lindner had lately exercised on her signified nothing else, that she did not doubt. But she hardly knew that this was what she was thinking about; Ulrich, too, had once confessed that he often loved what he didn’t like, and she thought she was thinking of him. She recalled that all her life she had believed only in surroundings that rushed past, with the hopeless hope that they could remain the same; she had never been able to change herself by her own volition, and yet now, as a gift, a hovering
borne by the forces of summer had taken the place of vexation and disgust. She said to Ulrich gratefully: “You have made me what I am because you love me!”

Their hands, which had been intertwined, had disengaged themselves and were now just touching with their fingertips; these hands awakened to consciousness again, and Ulrich grasped his sister’s with his own. “You have changed me completely,” he responded. “Perhaps I have had some influence on you, but it was only you who were, so to speak, flowing through me!”

Agathe nestled her hand in the hand that embraced it. “You really don’t know me at all!” she said.

“Knowing people is of no consequence to me,” Ulrich replied. “The only thing one ought to know about a person is whether he makes our thoughts fruitful. There shouldn’t be any other way of knowing people!”
Agathe asked: “But then how am I real?”

“You’re not real at all!” Ulrich said with a laugh. “I see you the way I need you, and you make me see what I need. Who can say so casually where the first and fundamental impulse lies? We are a ribbon floating in the air.”

Agathe laughed, and asked: “So if I disappoint you it will be your fault?”

“No doubt!” Ulrich said. “For there are heights where it makes no sense to discriminate between I have been mistaken in you’ and ‘I have been mistaken in myself/ For instance, the heights of faith, of love, of magnanimity. Whoever acts from magnanimity, or, as it can also be called, from greatness, doesn’t ask about illusion, or about certainty either. There are some things he may even not want to know; he dares the leap over falsehood.”
“Couldn’t you also be magnanimous toward Professor Lindner?” Agathe asked rather surprisingly, for ordinarily she never spoke of Lindner unless her brother brought up his name. Ulrich knew that she was holding something back. It was not exactly that she was concealing that she had some sort of relationship with Lindner, but she did not say what it was. He more or less guessed it and, with some displeasure, acquiesced in the necessity of allowing Agathe to go her own way. The instant that, for God knows what reasons, such a question sprang from her lips, Agathe had immediately realized once more how ill the term “Professor Lindner” accorded with the term “magnanimity.” She felt that in some way or other, magnanimity could not be professed, much as she felt that Lindner was good in some unpleasant way. Ulrich was silent. She sought to look into his face, and when he turned it away as far as he could, she plucked his sleeve. She
used his sleeve as a bell rope until Ulrich’s laughing countenance again appeared in the doorway of grief and he delivered a small admonishing speech on how the person who in his magnanimity too soon abandons the firm ground of reality can easily become ridiculous. But that not only related to Agathe’s readiness for magnanimity in relation to the dubious Lindner, but also directed a scruple at that true and not-to-be-deceived sensibility in which truth and error signify far less than the enduring emanation of the emotions and their power to seize everything for themselves.
Since that scene, Ulrich thought he was being borne forward; but really all that could be said was that something new and incomprehensible had been added, which he perceived, however, as an increase in reality. He was acting perhaps a little like a person who has seen his opinions in print and is ever after convinced of their incontrovertibility; however he might smile at this, he was incapable of changing it. And just as he had been about to draw his conclusions from the millennial book, or perhaps he merely wanted once more to express his astonishment, Agathe had retaliated and cut off the discussion by exclaiming: “We’ve already
spent enough time talking about this!” How Ulrich felt that Agathe was always in the right, even when she wasn’t! For although nothing could be less the case than that there had been enough discussion between them—not to mention anything true or decisive—indeed, precisely such a saving event or magic formula for which one might have initially hoped had not materialized; yet he knew, too, that the problems that had dominated his life for the better part of a year were now bunched together dense and compact around him, and not in a rational but in a dynamic fashion. Just as if there would soon be enough talk about them, even if the answer did not happen to come out in words.

He could not even altogether remember what he had thought and said about these problems over the course of time; indeed, he was far from being able to do so. He had doubtless set out to converse about them with all mankind; but it lay, too, in the
nature of the reproach itself that nothing one could say about it was joined in a forward-looking way to anything else but that everything was as widely scattered as it was connected. The same movement of the mind, clearly distinguished from the ordinary, arose again and again, and the treasure of the things it reached out to include grew; but no matter what Ulrich might remind himself of, it was always as far from one inspiration to a second as it would have been to a third, and nowhere did a dominant assertion emerge. In this way he recalled, too, that a similar “equally far,” of the kind that was now almost burdensomely and depressingly affecting his thoughts, had once existed in the most inspiring way between himself and the whole world around him: an apparent or actual suspension of the spirit of separation, indeed almost of the spirit of space. That had been in the very first years of his manhood, on the island where he had taken refuge
from the majors wife but with her image in his heart. He had probably described it in almost the same words too. Everything had been changed in an incomprehensibly visual way through a condition of fullness of love, as if all he had known previously had been a condition of impoverishment. Even pain was happiness. His happiness, too, almost pain. Everything was leaning toward him, suspended. It seemed that all things knew about him, and he about them; that all beings knew about each other, and yet that there was no such thing as knowing at all, but that love, with its attributes of swelling fullness and ripening promise, ruled this island as the one and perfect law. He had later used this often enough as a model, with slight changes, and in recent weeks, too, he might have been able to refresh this description to some extent; it was by no means difficult to go on in it, and the more one did so without thinking, the more fruitful it turned out to be. But it was
precisely this indefiniteness that now meant the most to him. For if his thoughts were connected in such a way that nothing of substance could be added to them which they would not have absorbed, the way an arriving person disappears into a crowd, still that only proved their similarity to the emotions by which they had been summoned into Ulrich's life die first time; and this correspondence of an alteration of the sphere of the senses, experienced now a second time through Agathe, which seemed to affect the world with an altered way of thinking—of which it might also be said that it catches the wind in infinite dreams without stirring from the spot and had already exhausted itself once in the process!—this remarkable correspondence, to which Ulrich was only today fully attentive, inspired in him courage and apprehension. He still recalled that on that earlier occasion he had used the expression of having come to the heart of the world.
Was there such a thing? Was it really anything more than a circumlocution? Only by excluding his brain was he inclined to mysticism’s claim that one must give up one’s self; but did he not have to admit to himself just for that reason that he did not know much more about this than he had before?

He walked farther along these expanses, which nowhere seemed to offer access to their depths. Another time he had called this “the right life”; probably not long ago, if he was not mistaken; and certainly if he had been asked earlier what he was up to, even when he was busy with his most precise work he would ordinarily not have found any answer except to say that it was a preliminary study for the right life. Not to think about it was simply impossible. Of course one could not say what it should look like—indeed, not even if there was such a thing—and perhaps it was just one of those ideas that are more a badge of truth than a truth; but a
life without meaning, a life that obeyed only the so-called necessities, and their contingency disguised as necessity, in other words a life lived eternally moment to moment—and here again an expression occurred to him that he had once made up: the futility of the centuries!—such a life was for him a simply unbearable idea! But no less unbearable than a life “for something,” that sterility of highways shaded by milestones amid unsurveyed expanses. He might call all that a life preceding the discovery of morality. For that, too, was one of his views, that morality is not made by people and does not change with them but is revealed; that it unfolds in seasons and zones and can actually be discovered. This idea, which was as out of fashion as it was current, expressed perhaps nothing but the demand that morality, too, have a morality, or the expectation that it have one hidden away, and that morality was not simply tittle-tattle revolving on itself on a
planet circling to the point of implosion. Of course he had never believed that what such a demand contained could be discovered all at once; it merely seemed to him desirable to think of it at times, which is to say at a time that seemed propitious and relatively accommodating, after some thousands of centuries of aimless circling of the question, whether there was not some experience that might be derived from it. But then, what did he really know about it even now? On the whole, nothing more than that this group of problems, too, had in the course of his life been subjected to the same law or fate as the other groups, which closed ranks in all directions without forming a center.

Of course he knew more about it! For instance, that to philosophize as he was doing was considered horribly facile, and at this moment he fervently wished to be able to refute this error. He knew, too, how one goes about such a thing: he had some
acquaintance with the history of thought; he could have found in it similar efforts and how they had been contested, with bitterness or mockingly or calmly; he could have ordered his material, arranged it, he could have secured a firm footing and reached beyond himself. For a while he painfully recalled his earlier industriousness, and especially that frame of mind that came to him so naturally that it had once even earned him the derisive appellation of “activist.” Was he then no longer the person constantly haunted by the idea that one must work toward the “ordering of the whole”? Had he not, with a certain stubbornness, compared the world to a “laboratory,” an “experimental community”; had he never spoken of “mankind’s negligent condition of consciousness,” which needed to be transformed into will; demanded that one had to “make” history; had he not, finally, even if it had been only ironically, actually called for a “General
Secretariat of Precision and Soul”? That was not forgotten, for one cannot suddenly change oneself; it was merely suspended for the moment! There was also no mistaking where the reason lay. Ulrich had never kept accounts on his ideas; but even if he had been able to remember them all at the same time, he knew that it would have been impossible for him to simply take them up, compare them, test them for possible explanations, and so, ultimately, bring forth from the vapors the little tissue-thin metal leaf of truth. It was a peculiarity of this way of thinking that it did not contain any progress toward truth; and although Ulrich basically assumed that such progress might sometime, through a slow and infinite process, be brought about in the totality, this did not console him, for he no longer had the patience to let himself be outlived by whatever it was to which he was contributing something, like an ant. For the longest time
his ideas had not stood on the best footing with truth, and this now seemed to him again the question most urgently in need of illumination.

But this brought him back once again to the opposition between truth and love, which for him was nothing new. It occurred to him how often in recent weeks Agathe had laughed at his, for her taste much too pedantic, love of truth; and sometimes it must also have caused her grief! And suddenly he found himself thinking that there is really no more contradictory term than "love of truth." "For one can raise truth up high in God knows how many ways, but love it you can't, because truth dissolves in love," he thought. And this assertion, by no means the same as the fainthearted one that love cannot bear the truth, was for him as familiar and unachievable as everything else. The moment a person encounters love not as an experience but as life itself, or at least as a
kind of life, he knows several truths. The person who judges without love calls this opinions, personal views, subjectivity, caprice; but the person who loves knows that he is not insensitive to truth, but oversensitive. He finds himself in a land of enthusiasm of thinking, where the words open themselves up to their very core. Of course that can be an illusion, die natural consequence of an all too excitedly involved emotion, and Ulrich took that into account. Truth arises when the blood is cold; emotion is to be deducted from it; and to expect to find truth where something is “a matter of feeling” is, according to all experience, just as perverse as demanding justice from wrath. Nevertheless, there was incontestably some general content, a participation in being and truth, that distinguished love “as life itself” from love as individual experience. And Ulrich now reflected on how clearly the difficulties that ordering his life presented to him were always
connected with this notion of a super-powerful love that, so to speak, overstepped its bounds. From the lieutenant who sank into the heart of the world to the Ulrich of this past year, with his more or less assertive conviction that there are two fundamentally distinct and badly integrated conditions of life, conditions of the self, indeed perhaps even conditions of the world, the fragments of recollection, so far as he was able to call them to mind, were all in some form connected with the desire for love, tenderness, and gardenlike, struggle-free fields of the soul. In these expanses lay, too, the idea of the “right life”; as empty as it might be in the bright light of reason, it was richly filled by the emotions with half-born shadows.

It was not at all pleasant for him to encounter so unequivocally this preference for love in his thinking; he had really expected that there were more and different things his thinking would have absorbed, and that
shocks such as those of the past year would have carried their vibrations in different directions; indeed, it seemed to him really strange that the conqueror, then the engineer of morality, that he had expected himself to be in his energetic years should have finally matured into a mooning seeker of love.

**Clarisse / Walter / Ulrich**

**Mid 1920s**

**Clarisse**

Ulrich did not think about Walter and Clarisse. Then one morning he was urgently called to the telephone: Walter. Why didn’t he come out to see them; they knew he was
back. A lot had changed, they were waiting for his visit.

Ulrich declined with the curt excuse that after his long absence he had a lot of work to do.

To his surprise, Walter appeared soon afterward; he had taken off from work. The manner in which he inquired after Agathe and the experiences of the trip gave the impression of uncertainty or embarrassment; he seemed to know more than he wanted to let on. Finally, the words came out. He had only now realized that it is insanity to doubt the faithfulness of a woman one loves. One has to be able to let oneself be deceived but know how to be deceived in a fruitful way; for example: he had been wrong to be jealous of Ulrich—

—Ah, so he’s talking about Clarisse, Ulrich said to himself, suddenly breathing easier.
—Wrong—Walter went on—even if of course he had never thought of it in any terms other than as mental unfaithfulness; but it hurt so much to have to admit the simple bodily empathy.

—Of course, of course. Ulrich nodded.

—Meingast has left, Walter added.

Ulrich looked up; it really didn’t interest him, but he had the feeling that this was something new. “Why?”

Simply, it had been time. But for several days afterward Clarisse had been out of sorts in a way that gave grounds for anxiety. A real depression. But that was just it; that was what first made him grasp the whole business. Imagine—Walter said—that you love a woman, and you meet a man you admire, and you see that your wife loves and admires him too; and both of you feel that this man is far superior to you, unreachable—
—That I can’t imagine. Ulrich raised his shoulders with a laugh. Walter looked at him with annoyance; both friends felt that they were simulating an old game they had often played with each other.

—Don’t pretend, Walter said. —You’re not so swellheaded to the point of insensitivity that you believe no one is better than you!

—All right. The formulation is false. Who is objectively superior? Engineer A or Aesthetician B, a master wrestler or a sprinter? Let’s drop that. So you’re saying that a person becomes emotionally dependent on someone and the beloved does too: then what happens? You would have to play along with her role as well as your own. The man plays the man’s role and the woman’s role; the woman has womanly feelings for the superior man and a more manly inclination for her earlier and still-loved lover. So this gives rise to something hermaphroditic, doesn’t it? Assuming that no jealousy is involved. A
spiritual intertwining of three people, which appears mysterious, and at times almost mystic? God on six legs.

Ulrich had improvised this reflection and was himself astonished at the conclusion it had involuntarily reached. Walter looked at him in surprise. He did not agree—again there was too much intellect in it—but Ulrich had come surprisingly close to the truth, and Walter admired the lightness of Clarisse’s instinct when she had asked that Ulrich be let in on what was going on. He now began to talk a little. —Yes, Clarisse had been swept away by Meingast, and quite rightly, since only a new community of wills and hearts that embraced more than just one couple would be capable of again forging a humanity out of chaos. These ideas had had a powerful effect on her. After Meingast had left she had confessed to Walter: the whole time he had been there—he had really changed in a strange way—she had
continually been bothered by the idea that he had taken her and Walter’s sins upon himself and overcome them; it only sounds crazy, Walter said defensively, but it isn’t at all, for he and Clarisse ... behind their conflicts one finds everywhere a pathological disorder of the age. She would now like to speak to Ulrich on Moosbrugger’s account.

Ulrich was astonished. What brings the two of you to Moosbrugger?

Well. Moosbrugger is of course only a chance encounter. But when one has once come into contact with something like that one can’t at the same time just ignore it.

Look, you talked with Clarisse about it yourself a couple of times. Before. How can you forget something like that?

Ulrich shrugged his shoulders, but the next morning went to see Clarisse.
He felt that one of the two things was not to his taste. He had not thought of Moosbrugger for weeks; yet earlier Moosbrugger had for a time been a point of orientation in his thinking! And after he had thought this over for a while he noticed that once again Clarisse had suddenly managed to fasten onto him with this delicate claw, although he had already become indifferent to her, indeed even found her repulsive. He was curious about what it was Clarisse wanted. When he saw her, he knew that he would do something for Moosbrugger in order to get out of the anxious, reproachful, and unsettled state he was in on account of Agathe. When Ulrich came in she was standing at the window, her hands crossed in front of her hips, legs spread apart as if playing ball. It was a habitual stance of hers, from which her smile emerged with paradoxical charm.

—Our destinies are interwoven—she said—yours and mine. Did Walter tell you?
she began. Ulrich replied that he had not quite understood what Walter was after. I must see Moosbrugger! Clarisse said. After greeting him she held his hand in hers, moving his index finger downward, as if unintentionally. —I can influence such destinies, she added vaguely.

In the intervening time some quite specific constellation of ideas must have formed in her; one felt it by the way the walls pulsated. With no other person Ulrich knew did everything internal become so physical as with Clarisse, and this, too, doubtless explained her extraordinary ability to impart her excitement to others.

Her brother had already been won over to the idea, Clarisse related. He was a physician. Ulrich could not stand him. Because as a child of the Wagner craze he had been baptized “Wotan” [Siegfried], he believed everyone would think he was Jewish, and emphasized in equal measure his distaste for Jews
and music. He had another peculiarity. Since he had grown up among their other friends, he had found himself when young compelled to read Baudelaire, Dostoyevsky, Huysmans, and Peter Altenberg, to whom at that time the spiritual expressiveness of youth was attuned, and when in later years this style eroded and his own nature came to the fore, there arose a quite peculiar mishmash of fleurs du mal and provincial hymns to the Alps. He had come to visit his sister today too, and Clarisse said that he was working somewhere in the garden or in the (adjoining) vineyards. Since even his proximity was enough to put Ulrich out of sorts, he responded with some disappointment. But Clarisse seemed to have been expecting this. “We need him,” she said, and tried to give this sentence an emphasis from the back of her eyes, as if to mean: it’s really too bad he’s bothering us, even if we’re lucky that Walter isn’t here
(but it has to be!) —Be reasonable, Ulrich said: —Why do you want to see Moosbrugger?

Clarisse went and shut the door, which was open. Then she asked a question: Do you understand railway accidents? (One never happens because a locomotive engineer deliberately rams his engine into another train.) Well, they all happen because in the confusing network of tracks, switches, signals, and commands, fatigue makes a person lose the power of conscience. He would only have needed to check one more time whether he was doing the right thing ... isn’t that right?

Ulrich shrugged his shoulders.

—So the accident comes about because one allows something to happen, Clarisse went on. She cautiously closed her fangs around Ulrich’s hand, smiled in embarrassment, and drilled her glance into his the way
one drives a thumbtack into wood. —That’s right, Ulrich, I see it in Walter! (You already know what.) (Every time I’ve yielded we were destroyed. We just didn’t know that in doing it we were drinking a drop of the greatest poison in the world.)

—Oh? Ulrich said. —So it’s like that again between you?

Clarisse flashed at him from her eyes, pulled out the thumbtack again, and nodded.

—It is and it isn’t; I’m already a lot further. What’s the extreme opposite of letting things happen; that one yields to... impressing? You understand, he wants to impress; nothing else! She did not wait for a response. —To make a mark! she said. Her tiny figure had been striding up and down the room with supple energy, her hands at her back; now she stopped and sought with her eyes to hold fast to Ulrich’s, for the words she was now searching for made her mind somewhat
unsteady. —To inscribe himself, I’m saying. Lately I’ve discovered something else that’s really uncanny, it sounds so simple: Half our life is expression. (The) impressions are nothing. A heap of earthworms! When do you understand a piece of music? When you yourself create it inwardly! When do you understand a person? When for a moment you make yourself just like him! In art, in politics, but also in love, we’re trying painfully to express ourselves. We re-deem ourselves to the outside. You see—with her hand she described an acute angle lying horizontally, which involuntarily reminded Ulrich of a phallus—like this. That is the expression; the active form of our existence, the pointed form, the— She became quite excited by the effort to make herself understandable to Ulrich. Ulrich must have been rather taken aback, for Clarisse went on to declare: —That’s already in the words re-deem and redemption, both, the “deeming” and the
active “re-” Now you understand, of course one has to practice it, but ultimately everything will be like an arrow.

—Dear Clarisse—Ulrich pleaded—please speak so that I can understand you.

/Continuation: The Dionysiac. The murderer/

At this moment Siegfried came in. Ulrich had not interrupted Clarisse. She had nonetheless retreated and was standing excitedly, as if he were crowding her, against the wall. Ulrich was accustomed to how hard it was for her to find the right words and how she often tried to seize them with her whole body, so that the meaning for which the words were lacking lay in the movement. But this time he was a little astonished. Clarisse, however, was not yet satisfied, there was still
something she had to say. —You know, if I’m unfaithful to him—or let’s assume anyway that he is to me—then it’s like digging into one’s own raw flesh. Then you can’t do anything that doesn’t cut deep. Then you can’t talk about that table over there without there being a feeling of bleeding. A smile forced its way through her excitement because Siegfried was listening, but Siegfried was watching her calmly, as if it were a gymnastics exercise. He had taken off his jacket while working, and his hands and shoes were full of dirt. He had been accustomed since Clarisse’s marriage to be the confidant of surprising secrets, and used a glance at his watch to urge haste in a businesslike way. Ulrich felt that this last gesture was directed very much at him.

Clarisse quickly changed her dress. The door remained open, and it hardly seemed accidental that he could see her, standing among her skirts like a boy. Siegfried was
saying: —The assistant at the clinic was a fellow student. —You don’t say, Ulrich said. —What do you really want of him? Siegfried shrugged his shoulders. —Either this Moosbrugger is mentally ill or he’s a criminal. That’s correct. But if Clarisse imagines that she can help him ... ? I’m a doctor, and I also have to let the hospital chaplain imagine the same thing. Redeem! she says. Well, why shouldn’t she at least see him there? Siegfried went through his calm routine, brushed off his pants and shoes, and washed his hands. Looking at him, it was hard to believe his broad, modishly trimmed mustache. Then they drove to the clinic. Ulrich was in a state in which he would, without resisting, have let far crazier things happen to him.

The physician to whom Wotan conducted them was an artist in his profession.

This is something that exists in every profession that depends on working with
one’s head and consists of unsatisfied emotions.

In earlier decades there were photographers who placed the leg of the person to be immortalized on a cardboard boulder; today they strip him naked and have him emote at the sunset; at that time they were wearing curled beards and flowing neckties, today they are clean-shaven and underline their art’s organ of procreation—in precisely the same way a naked African emphasizes her pudenda with a loincloth of mussel shells—by means of glasses. But there were also such artists in the sciences, on the General Staff, and in industry. In such professions they are considered interesting not-just-experts and often, too, as liberators from the narrowness of the craft. In, for instance, the biology of the general doctrine of life, it has been discovered that mechanical, dead, causal explanations and functional laws are inadequate, and that life has to be
explained by life or, as they call it, the life force; and in the War they sacrificed entire divisions, or had the population of whole regions shot, because they were generous / thought they owed something to a certain heroic generosity.

With doctors, this romanticism often takes only the harmless form of the family adviser who prescribes marriage, automobile trips, and theater tickets, or advises a neurasthenic who is deeply depressed by his failing business not to pay any attention to the business for a period of two months. It was only psychiatry that occupied a special position, for in science the slighter the success in precision, the greater, generally speaking, is the artistic component, and up until a few years ago psychiatry was by far the most artistic of all modern sciences, with a literature as ingenious as that of theology and a success rate that could not be discerned in the earthly realm here below / was to be as
little discerned here below as theology’s. Its representatives were therefore often / frequently /, and today to some extent still are, great artists, and Dr. Fried, Wotan’s university friend, was one of these. If one asked him about the prospects for a cure he would dismiss it with an ironic or a fatigued gesture, while on the other hand there was always lying on his desk a cleanly prepared and beautifully dyed section of brain on a slide, beside the microscope through which he would look into the incomprehensible astral world of cell tissue, and on his face there was the expression of a man practicing a black art, a notorious but admired craft that brings him into daily contact with the incomprehensible and with depraved desires. His black hair was plastered down demoniacally, as if it would otherwise stand on end; his movements were soft and unnatural, and his eyes those of a cardsharp, hypnotist, master detective, gravedigger, or hangman.
Of the three visitors, he devoted himself from the beginning exclusively to Clarisse. He showed Ulrich the least possible politeness. Since this left Ulrich free to observe him in peace and with annoyance, he soon discovered the man’s major points. Clarisse, on the other hand, who from the beginning regarded her desire as fulfilled, was charging ahead too impetuously, and as clinical assistant and instructor, Dr. Fried saw himself compelled to raise obstacles. Clarisse was a woman and not a doctor, and science demands strictly circumscribed limits. Wotan wanted to assume the responsibility of having his sister let in with false documents. But since this was stated openly, the assistant could only smile wearily. —Since we aren’t doctors—Ulrich asked—couldn’t we be a pair of writers, who for research purposes ... ? The doctor dismissed this with a gesture: —If you were Zola and Selma Lagerlof I would be charmed by your visit, which of course I am
anyway, but here only scientific interests are recognized. Unless—he made a smiling gesture of yielding—the ambassadors of your countries had made application for you to the administration of the clinic.

—Then I know what we can do, Ulrich said: —We’ll invent some charitable motivation. If the lady is not permitted to see the patients, she can at least visit the prisoner. It’s no trouble for me to get her the legitimation of a charitable organization and permission of the district court.

—That would be fine. Come here to my official residence; the best time would be after the Chief Physician’s rounds. As long as you’re in my company nobody would, of course, think of asking to see your credentials. But naturally I have to have a cover for my conscience.

Clarisse, excited by the difficulties that had to be overcome, beamed, and Dr. Fried
spoke of his conscience at the last in a highly patronizing way, rather in the tone of a prince giving an order to the lowest of his subjects.

About a week passed.

Clarisse was as excited as a nervous child in the week before Christmas. It gave the impression that she was imparting a symbolic importance to her encounter with Moosbrugger, Hke the meeting of two rulers.

—I believe I have the strength to help him when I see him, she asserted.

Why don’t you take him a sausage instead—Ulrich answered—and cigarettes.

Wotan laughed and proffered a medical joke; but afterward he again gave the impression of being grateful for the greater energy that radiated into his darkness from
Clarisse’s ideas, like a thunderstorm below the horizon.

Clarisse was tinglingly strengthened when she felt her influence over him.

—If you had first met him a hundred years ago, you would have fallen weeping on his breast, Ulrich remarked.

Wotan of course added that at that time the emotions were not as disturbed as they are today.

—Quite the contrary, Ulrich maintained. —All the weeping and embracing was a sign that people never really possessed these emotions; that’s why they were forced. Isn’t it true—he turned to Wotan—that this is the same mechanism as in hysteria?

Wotan made a joke about his wife, who he said was hysterical, and all the medical theories he had no idea what to do with. He already had three children.
—When she’s playing the piano fortissimo—Walter defended Clarisse—when she’s excited and has tears in her eyes: isn’t she absolutely right in refusing to get on the streetcar, travel to the clinic, and behave there as if it had been ‘just music’ and not real tears?

He had, incidentally, excluded himself and did not go along to the clinic.

—She’s completely wrong, Ulrich responded.—For Moosbrugger’s sentiments toward a sausage are unaffected and healthy, while on the other hand, Clarisse’s impertunate behavior will only make him regret not being able to plunge a knife into her belly.

—You really think so? Clarisse liked that. She thought it over and said: —It was only the substitute women he was angry at; that’s what it was.
—He’s an idiot, Ulrich said clearly and calmly. Struggling around Clarisse’s mouth were a laugh, a difficulty, and the desire to let Ulrich know that she was reaching an understanding with him. —You’re a pessimist! she finally said; and nothing else, except: Nietzsche! Would Ulrich understand this? Would Walter intuit what had just taken place? Her thoughts had squeezed into a very small package, into a sentence and into a word, inserted into the smallest space as miraculously as the burglar’s tool that nothing can resist; she was strangely excited. Every evening now she took a volume of Nietzsche to bed with her. “Is there a pessimism of strength?” That was the sentence that had occurred to her; it continues: “... an intellectual predilection for what is hard, gruesome, evil, and problematical in existence?” She did not remember it exactly anymore, but an unarticulated essence of these qualities hovered before her, associated with Ulrich,
who from—indeed, now this expression popped up—"depths of anti-moral inclination," while she constantly had to struggle against the moral inclination to feel sympathy for Walter, made everything look ridiculous and therefore strangely allied with her. She was half fainting as these connections crackled like lightning, half philosophy and half adultery, and all squeezed into a single word as into a hiding place. And like a new avalanche, a sentence rolled down and engulfed her, "the desire for the horrible as the worthy enemy," and fragments from a long quotation swirled around her: "Is insanity perhaps not necessarily the symptom of degeneration? Are there perhaps neuroses of health? What does the synthesis of god and he-goat in the satyr indicate? Out of what experience of the self did the Greeks have to think of the enthusiast and primitive person as satyr?..." All that lay in a laugh, a word, and a twisting of the mouth. Walter noticed
nothing. Ulrich looked at her with calm merriment—what hardness lay in this unconcern!—and said they should hurry up.

As they were walking to the terminus of the streetcar, she asked Ulrich: “If he’s only an idiot/ why are you going?” “Oh, for heaven’s sake,” he replied, “I always do what I don’t believe in.” He was surprised because Clarisse did not look at him but stared radiantly straight ahead and gave his hand a strong squeeze.

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[Clarisse drags Ulrich to a concert of avant-garde music in the studio of some painter friends of hers. This scene is sketched out more fully later.] From the study of law Walter was driven to music; from music to the theater; from the theater to an art gallery; from the art gallery back to art; from art... ? Now he is stuck, no longer
has the energy to make another change, is contentedly unhappy, curses us all, and goes punctually to his office. And while he is in his office something may perhaps happen between Clarisse and Ulrich, but if he were to find out about it, it would put him in an enormous uproar, as if the whole ocean of world history were surging. He’s as blind as the moon about what goes on behind his back. To Ulrich, on the other hand, all this was far more a matter of indifference. Or: He almost envied him. Clarisse, sitting there hunched over and holding her fingers clenched while the other sounds sifted and shook, he found almost as unpleasant as a caricature of the sensibility of genius, of the revolutionary, the activist; that no emotion, no idea, is worth being the ultimate one, that one should not linger over anything because the sky leads endlessly upward. He is sleepy, but she will not let him rest. But there is something surrounding her! She always has
to be doing something. Simply from tension, to get rid of something, to get past the last minute. And Walter? He is the born talented mediocrity; unhappy, but lucky, and everyone likes him; everyone invites him to stick around; with titanic effort he is constantly pulling his feet out of soil where they could take root so beautifully. Ulrich smiled maliciously. —He’s really not a weak character at all. It’s unbelievably difficult to achieve nothing if you don’t have any talent!

And finally he will be happy.

Clarisse would be making a bad exchange.

During the intermission Clarisse sat down beside Ulrich. —I can’t take any more, she said. —When I hear music I’d like to either laugh or cry or run away.

—With Meingast? Ulrich asked.
—That was only an experiment. She seized his hand and held it fast. —No, with someone who could make music. Without conscience. A world. I hear that world sometimes.

Ulrich said angrily: “You’re primitive, you musicians. What kind of subtle, unheard-of motivation does it take to produce a raging outburst after sinking into oneself in silence! You do it with five notes!

—It’s something you don’t understand, Uli. Clarisse laughed.

—And it doesn’t bother you? Ulrich challenged her scornfully.

—You don’t understand it—Clarisse said tenderly—that’s just why you’re so hard. You don’t have a soft conscience. You were never sick.

—I’d cheat on you, Ulrich said.
—Being cheated is meaningless to us. We have to give everything we’ve got. We can only cheat ourselves. Her fingers snaked around his hand. —Music either is or it isn’t.

—You’ll run out on me with somebody from the circus, Ulrich said pensively. He stared gloomily into the confusing tangle of people. —You’ll be disappointed. For me it’s all a tissue of contradictions among which there is no resolution. But perhaps you’re right. A few blasts on the trumpet. Fantasized ones. Run to them.

Evening was coming on. Wandering dark-blue clouds were in the sky beyond the studio windows. The tips of a tree reached up from below—houses stood with the backs of their roofs turned upward. —How should they stand otherwise? Ulrich thought, and yet there are moments when the small sorrow that one feels falls into the world as if onto a muffled giant drum. He thought of Agathe and was unspeakably sad. This small
creature at his side was rushing forward at an unnatural speed. As if under the pressure of some kind of program. That wasn’t the natural way for love to develop. And anyway, there could be no talk of love. He was quite clear about that. And yet he yielded without resistance. He was consoled by a vague thought; something like this: a person is insulted and makes a great invention; that’s how die real deeds of the human will come about. Never in a straight line. I love Agathe and am letting myself be seduced by Clarisse. Clarisse believes that the small stir she makes is her will, but mine lies motionless beneath it like the water beneath the waves.

The music, which kindled people’s eyes like lights in the darkening room and blew their bodies through each other like smoke, had started up again.
The cleaning woman had already left; Walter was in the middle of his day in the office; Ulrich now chose such hours for his visits, without thinking about the significance of his choice. Yet until a particular Sunday, nothing happened. Walter had received an invitation that called him into town until evening, and half an hour before, after lunch, Ulrich had shown up without suspecting anything and in a bad mood, for the prospect of an afternoon in the presence of his friend had enticed him so little that he really only started out from habit. But when Walter immediately began to say good-bye, Ulrich felt it as a signal. Clarisse had the same thought. They both knew it.

She would play for him, Clarisse said. Clarisse began. From the window Ulrich waved to Walter, who waved back. Keeping his eyes in the room, he leaned farther and farther out, after the vanishing figure. Clarisse suddenly broke off and came to the
window too: Walter was no longer to be seen. Clarisse returned to playing. Ulrich now turned his back to her, as if it did not concern him; leaning into the window frame. Clarisse again stopped playing, ran into the hall; Ulrich heard her putting the chain on the door. When she came back he slowly turned around; said nothing; swayed for a moment. She played on. He went up to her and laid his hand on her shoulder. Without turning her head, she pushed his hand away with her shoulder. —Scoundrel! she said; played on. —Strange? he thought. —Does she want to feel force? The idea that urged itself upon him, that he ought to seize her by both shoulders and pull her down off the piano stool, seemed to him as comical as rocking a loose tooth. This constrained him. He went into the middle of the room. Alerted his hearing and sought an opening. But before anything occurred to him his mouth said: “Clarisse!” That had cut loose, detached itself
gurgling from his throat, had grown out of his throat like a strange creature. Clarisse obediently stood up and came over to him. Her eyes were wide open. At this moment he understood for the first time that Clarisse was trying artificially, perhaps without knowing it, to evoke the excitement of a tremendous sacrificial act. Since she was standing beside him, the decision had to be made in an instant, but Ulrich was overcome by all the force of these inhibitions; his legs would no longer support him, he could not utter a word, and threw himself on the sofa.

This excitement infecting him really ought to be made more appealing.

At the same instant, Clarisse threw herself on his lap. Her lizard arms slung themselves around his head and neck. She seemed to be tearing at her arms, but without being able to
loosen them from the embrace. Heated air came from her mouth and burned words into his face that he could not understand. There were tears in her eyes. Then everything of which he was normally constituted collapsed. He, too, uttered something that had no meaning, but before the eyes of them both; veins shivered and stood out like bars on a cage, their souls went at each other like bulls, and this riot was accompanied by the feeling of a tremendous moral decision. Now neither of them restrained words, faces, hands any longer. Their faces pressed themselves on each other, wet with tears and sweat, as pure flesh; all the words of love that were to be rehearsed tumbled over each other, as if the contents of a marriage had been shaken out upside down; the lascivious, hardened words that come only with long intimacy came first, unmediated, inciting, and yet bringing horror with them. Ulrich had half sat up; everything was so slippery (from
their faces to their words) that their gliding into each other no longer made a sound.

Clarisse tore her hat from the hook and stormed out. He with her. Wordless. Where to? This question was ridiculously lonely in his brain, swept clean by the storm.

Clarisse rushed over paths, across meadows, through hedges, through woods. She was not one of those women who are broken softly, but became hard and angry after the fall. They finally found themselves in a quiet remote corner of the zoo that adjoined the woods. A small rococo summer-house stood there. Empty. Here she presented herself to him once again. This time with many words and confessions. Driven by the impatience of desire and the fear that people might come by. It was horrible. This time Ulrich became quite cold and hard with remorse. Ulrich left her there. He did not care how she would get home, but rushed off.
When Ulrich got back to the house later, he found Walter there. Clarisse was still angry, and making a gentle show of marital concord. But with a single pouting look she made Ulrich feel that the two of them still belonged together. Only afterward did it occur to him how strange the expression of her eyes had been twice that afternoon: delirious and mad.

In the excitement, Ulrich had agreed to participate in freeing Moosbrugger. Now he fell in with this idea because it had already gone so far. He did not believe in it, and made the preparations convinced that it would not be possible to carry them out.

Attending physician: Stay in a sanatorium advised; a little rest-and-diet cure. It's
not good for the nerves to lie there without any fat—after he had observed Clarisse’s body, which had become totally boyish.

To Walters joyful surprise, Clarisse offered no resistance. (She felt: None of them amount to much: Walter, Ulrich, Meingast.) I have to take it upon myself alone. Her head felt like the peak of a mountain around which clouds gather; she felt a longing for the horizontal, to stretch out, lie down, in a more bracing air than that of the city. Greenness, vine-twistingness, light-dapplingness hovered before her; countryside, like a strong hand compelling sleep.

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She has come through the first phase; now it is a good idea for her to rest and strengthen herself. Moreover, she had the feeling: “I have to do everything by myself.”

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Wotan had offered to take her; Walter couldn’t get away from work; suffered as under a knife when he saw the two of them leave. Suffered as if his heart had been put through a meat grinder / stone crusher.

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When Clarisse entered the sanatorium, she inspected it like a general. A feeling of mission and divinity was already mingling again with her depression; she confidently tested the arrangements and the doctors on the question of whether they would be able to shelter and protect the revolution in world ideas that would now be emanating from this place.

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So it was also the need to collect herself that had led her there.
The diagnosis put forward for her was general exhaustion and neurasthenia; Clarisse lived quiedy and was solicitously cared for. The persistent blows that had shaken her body like a railway journey ceased; she suddenly came to realize that she had been ill, while the ground beneath her feet was becoming firmer and more elastic again; she felt tenderness for her healing body, which was also now “solicitously caring for” her mind, as she ascertained, delighted at this unity of events.

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Previously lack of appetite, diarrhea, etc.

But the most recent events suddenly appeared problematical to her.

She got hold of writing materials and proceeded to write down her experiences.

She wrote for a whole day, almost from morning to evening. Without the need for
fresh air or food; it struck her that her bodily activities receded almost entirely, and only a certain timidity about the strict house rules of the sanatorium moved her to go to the dining hall. Some time earlier she had read somewhere an article on Francis of Assisi; he showed up again in the notebook she was working on, in whole paragraphs that were repeated with trivial individual changes without this bothering her. The originality of intellectual achievements is judged falsely even today. The traditional idea of the hero still battles for priority with every new idea and new invention, although we have long known from the history of these controversies that every new idea arises in several minds at the same time, but that for some reason the heroic sense finds it more fitting to imagine genius as a bubbling spring instead of a broad current made up of many tributaries and combinations, although the greatest ideas of genius are nothing more
than modifications of other ideas of genius, with minor additions. That is why on the one hand “we no longer have any geniuses”—because we think we see the point of origin all too clearly and will not abandon ourselves to believing in the genius of an accomplishment composed of nothing but ideas, emotions, and other elements that, taken singly, we must have unavoidably already encountered here and there. On the other hand, we exaggerate our imaginings about the nature of genius’s originality—especially where the testing by facts and by success is lacking; in short, wherever it is a question of nothing less than our soul—in such a senseless and perverted way that we have a great many geniuses whose heads have no more content than the page of a newspaper, but a flashy and original makeup by way of compensation. This makeup—allied with the false belief in the inescapable originality of genius, at odds with the obscure feeling of there being
nothing behind it, which climaxes in a total incapacity to take the countless elements of an age and create structures of intellectual life that are nothing more than experiments, yet have the full seriousness of impartiality—belongs to that tepid mood full of doubts about the possibility of genius and the adoration of many ersatz geniuses that prevails today.

In spite of her many weaknesses, Clarisse, for whom genius was a matter of the will, belonged neither to the shrilly got-up people nor to the disheartened ones. She wrote down with great energy what she had read, and in doing so had the right feeling of originality in assimilating this material and feeling it mysteriously becoming part of her inmost being, as in the vividly leaping flames of an immolation. "By accident," she wrote, "while I was already thinking of my departure, memories clashed in my head. That the Sienese (Perugia?) in the year... carried a
portrait... into the church, that Dante ... names the fountain that is still standing today in the Piazza... And that Dante said about the piety of Francis of Assisi, who was canonized shortly afterward: It rose among us like a shining star.”

Where she no longer remembered the names she put in periods. There was time for that later. But the words “rose like a shining star” she felt in her body. That she—incidentally—had hit upon the article she had read had come about because she longed for better times; not as an escape, but because—as she felt—something active had to happen.

This Francis of Assisi—she wrote—was the son of prosperous Sienese citizens, a draper, and before that a smart young man about town. People of today like Ulrich, who have access to science, are reminded by his later behavior (after his religious awakening) of certain manic states, and it cannot be denied that they are right in doing so. But
what in 1913 is mental illness can in 13 ... (periodic insanity, hysteria, of course not illnesses with an anatomical course, only those that coexist with health!!) merely have been seen as a one-sided debit of health. The etiology of certain diseases is not only a personal but also a social phenomenon—she underlined this sentence. In parentheses she threw in a few additional words: (Hysteria. Freud. Delirium: its forms are different according to the society. Mass psychology offers images that do not differ greatly from the clinical). Then came a sentence that she also underlined: It is by no means excluded that what today becomes mere inner destruction will one day again have constructive value.

If the healthy person is a social phenomenon, then so is the sick person.

It went through her mind that Dante and Francis of Assisi were actually one and
the same person; it was a tremendous discovery. She did not, however, write it down but undertook to look into this problem later, and the next moment her splendor, too, was extinguished. The decisive thing is—she wrote—that at that time a person, whom today we would in good conscience put in a sanatorium, could live, teach, and lead his contemporaries! That the best of his contemporaries saw him as an honor and an illumination! That at that time Siena was a center of culture. But she wrote in the margin: All people are one person? Then she went on more calmly: It fascinates me to imagine how things looked then. That age did not have much intelligence. It did not test things; it believed like a good child, without bothering itself about what was improbable. Religion went along with local patriotism; it was not the individual Sienese who would enter into heaven, but one day the whole city of Siena that would be
transplanted there as a unit. For one loved heaven by loving the city. (The cheerfulness, the sense of ornament, the broad vistas of small Italian cities!) Religious eccentrics were few; people were proud of their city; what they shared was a common experience. Heaven belonged to this city, how should it be otherwise? The priests were considered not particularly religious people but merely a kind of official; for in all religions God was always something far away and uncertain, but the faith that the Son of God had come to visit, that one still had the writings of those who had seen Him with their own eyes, imparted an enormous vitality, nearness, and security to the experience, which the priests were there to confirm. The officer corps of God.

If in the midst of this one is brushed by God, as Saint Francis was, it is only a new reassurance, which does not disturb the civic cheerfulness of the experience. Because
everyone believed, a few could do so in a particular way, and thus intellectual wealth was added to simple, legitimate security. For in sum more energies flow from opposition than from agreement....

Here deep furrows formed on Clarisse’s forehead. Nietzsche occurred to her, the enemy of religion: here there were still some difficult things for her to reconcile. —I do not presume to know the enormous history of these emotions—she told herself—but one thing is certain: today the religious experience is no longer the action of all, of a community, but only of individuals. And apparently that is why this experience is sick.

Feeling of solitude in the sea of the spirit, which is in motion in all directions.
She stopped writing and walked slowly up and down the room, excitedly rubbing her hands against each other or rubbing her forehead with a finger. It was not from despondency that she fled into past and remote times; it was absolutely clear to her that she, striding up and down in this room, was connected with the Siena of the past. Thoughts of recent days were intermingled with this: she was in some fashion or other not only destined but already actually involved in taking over the mission that recurred over the centuries, like God in every new Host. But she was not thinking of God; remarkably enough, this was the only idea she did not think of, as if it had no role in it at all; perhaps it would have disturbed her, for everything else was as vivid as if she had to get on a train tomorrow to travel there. By the windows great masses of green leaves
waved in at her; tree balls; they steeped the whole room in a watery green. This color, “with which at that time my soul was filled,” as she said later, played a great role in her as the chief color of these ideas.

This connection to the past, which Ulrich lacks.

Feeling! Pealing of bells. Processions march with banners to the Virgin and gorgeous robes. She was walking in the middle. When they stopped, however, the crowd did not stop. But that was not upsetting.

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[Clarisse flees to Italy, where she joins Ulrich on the “Island of Health”:]

—In Pompeii—Ulrich said—the cast of a woman has been found sealed in a fraction of a second into the cooling lava like a statue by the gases into which her body dissolved
when the terrible stream of fire enveloped her. This nearly naked woman, whose shift had slid up to her back, had been overtaken as she was running and fallen facedown with her arms outstretched, while her small hair-knot, untidily put up, still sat firmly on the back of her head; she was neither ugly nor beautiful, neither voluptuous from living well nor gnawed by poverty, neither twisted by horror nor unwittingly overpowered without fear; but just because of all that, this woman, who many centuries ago jumped out of bed and was thrown on her stomach, has remained as incredibly alive as if at any second she could stand up again and run on. Clarisse understood exactly what he meant. Whenever she scratched her thoughts and emotions in the sand, with some mark or other that was as charged with them as a boat that can hardly stay afloat for the multiplicity of its cargo, and the wind then blew on it for a day, animal tracks ran over it, or
rain made pockmarks in it and eroded the sharpness of the outlines the way the cares of life erode a face, but most especially when one had forgotten it completely and only through some chance stumbled on it again and suddenly confronted oneself, confronted an instant compressed and full of emotions and thoughts that had become sunken, faded, small, and barely recognizable, overgrown from left to right but not vanished, with grasses and animals living around it without shyness, when it had become world, earth: then ... ? Hard to say what then; the island became populated with many Clarisses; they slept on the sand, flew on the light through the air, called from the throats of birds; it was a lust to touch oneself everywhere, to run into oneself everywhere, an unutterable sensitivity: a giddiness escaped from the eyes of this woman and was able to infect Ulrich, the way one person’s lustful glance can ignite the greatest lust in another.
God knows what it is—Ulrich thought—that causes lovers to scratch the mystery of their initials into the bark of trees, so that they grow along with it; that has invented the seal and the coat of arms, the magic of portraits gazing out of their frames: to end ultimately in the trace of the photographic plate, which has lost all mystery because it is already nearly reality again.

But it was not only that. It was also the multiplicity of meaning. Something was a stone and signified Ulrich; but Clarisse knew that it was more than Ulrich and a stone, that it was everything in Ulrich that was hard as stone and everything heavy that was oppressing her, and all insight into the world that one acquired, once one had understood that the stones were like Ulrich. Exactly as if one says: This is Max, but he is a genius. Or the fork of a branch and a hole in die sand say: this is Clarisse, but at the same time she is a witch and is riding her heart. Many
emotions that are otherwise separate crowd around such a sign, one never quite knew which ones, but gradually Ulrich also recognized such an uncertainty in the world in his own feelings. It threw into relief some of Clarisse’s peculiarly invented trains of thought, which he almost learned to understand.

/ The uncertainty: / For a while Clarisse saw things that one otherwise does not see. Ulrich could explain that splendidly. Perhaps it was insanity. But a forester out walking sees a different world from the one a botanist or a murderer sees. One sees many invisible things. A woman sees the material of a dress, a painter a lake of liquid colors in its stead. I see through the window whether a hat is hard or soft. If I glance into the street I can likewise see whether it is warm or cold outside, whether people are happy, sad, healthy, or ailing; in the same way, the taste of a fruit is sometimes already in the fingertips that
touch them. Ulrich remembered: if one looks at something upside down—for instance, behind the lens of a small camera—one notices things one had overlooked. A waving back and forth of trees or shrubs or heads that to the normal eye appear motionless. Or one becomes conscious of the peculiar hopping quality of the way people walk. One is astonished at die persistent restlessness of things. In the same way, there are unperceived double images in the field of vision, for one eye sees something differently from the other; afterimages crystallize from still pictures like the most delicate-colored fogs; the brain suppresses, supplements, forms the supposed reality; the ear does not hear the thousand sounds of one’s own body: skin, joints, muscles, the innermost self, broadcast a contrapuntal composition of innumerable sensations that, mute, blind, and deaf, perform the subterranean dance of the so-called waking state. Ulrich remembered how once, not
even very high up in the mountains, he had been overtaken by a snowstorm early in the year; he was on his way to meet some friends who were supposed to be coming down a path, and was surprised at not yet having met up with them, when the weather suddenly changed; the clarity darkened, a howling storm came up, and thick clouds of snow flung sharp icy needles at the solitary wanderer, as if for him it were a matter of life and death. Although after a few minutes Ulrich reached the shelter of an abandoned hut, the wind and the torrents of snow had gone right through him, and the icy cold as well as the exertions of his struggle against the storm and the force of the snow had exhausted him within a very brief period. When the storm passed as quickly as it had come, he of course set out on his way again; he was not the sort of person to let himself be intimidated by such an event, at least his conscious self was totally free of excitement
and any kind of overestimation of the danger he had come through; indeed, he felt himself in the highest of spirits. But he still must have been shaken, for he suddenly heard his party coming toward him and cheerfully called to them. But no one answered. He again called out loudly—for it is easy to get off the path in the snow and miss each other—and ran, as well as he could, in the direction indicated, for the snow was deep and he had not been prepared for it, having undertaken the climb without either skis or snowshoes. After some twenty-five paces, at every one of which he sank in up to his hips, exhaustion forced him to stop, but just then he again heard voices in animated conversation, and so near that he absolutely should have seen the speakers, whom there was nothing to conceal. And yet no one was there except the soft, bright-gray snow. Ulrich collected his senses, and the conversation became more distinct. I’m hallucinating, he said to
himself. Yet he called out again; without success. He began to fear for himself and checked himself in every way he could think of; spoke loudly and coherently, calculated small sums in his mind, and carried out movements of arms and fingers whose execution demanded total control. All these things worked, without the phenomenon vanishing. He heard whole conversations full of surprising import and a harmonious multiplicity of voices. Then he laughed, found the experience interesting, and began to observe it. But that did not make the phenomenon disappear either; it faded only when he turned around and had already climbed down several hundred yards, while his friends had not taken this way back at all and there was no human soul in the vicinity. So unreliable and extensive is the boundary between insanity and health. It really did not surprise him when in the middle of the night
Clarisse, trembling, woke him up and claimed she was hearing a voice. When he asked her, she said it was not a human voice and not an animal voice, but a “voice of something,” and then he, too, suddenly heard a noise that could in no way be ascribed to a material being; and the next instant, while Clarisse was trembling more and more violently and opened her eyes wide like a night bird, something invisible seemed to glide around the room, bumping into the mirror in its glass frame and exerting a disembodied pressure, and in Ulrich, too, fears—not one fear, a bundle of fears, a world of fears—poured out in panic, so that he had to bring all his reason to bear in order to resist and to calm Clarisse down.

Dramatize! Make all this present!

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But he was reluctant to apply his reason. One could feel strangely happy in this uncertainty that the world assumed in Clarisse’s vicinity. The sketchings in the sand and the models made of stones, feathers, and branches now took on meaning for him too, as if here, on this Island of Health, something was trying to come to fulfillment that his life had already touched on several times. The foundation of human life seemed to him a monstrous fear of some kind, indeed really a fear of the indeterminate. He lay on the white sand between the blue of the air and the blue of the water on the small, hot sandy platform of the island between the cold depths of sea and sky. He lay as in snow. If he were to have been blown away then, this is the way it could have happened. Clarisse was romping and playing like a child behind the thistly dunes. He was not afraid. He saw life from above. This island had flown away with him. He understood his
past. Hundreds of human orders have come and gone: from the gods to brooch pins, and from psychology to the record player, every one of them an obscure unit, every one an obscure conviction that it was the ultimate, ascendant one, and every one of them mysteriously sinking after a few hundred or a few thousand years and passing into rubble and building site: what else is this but a climbing up out of nothingness, each attempt on a different wall? like one of those dunes blown by the wind, which for a while forms its own weight and then is blown away again by the wind? What is everything we do other than a nervous fear of being nothing: beginning with our pleasures, which are no pleasures but only a din, a chattering instigated to kill time, because a dark certainty admonishes us that it will in the end annihilate us, all the way to those inventions that outdo each other, the senseless mountains of money that kill the spirit, whether one is suffocated or
borne up by them, to the continually changing fashions of the mind, of clothes that change incessantly, to murder, assassination, war, in which a profound mistrust of whatever is stable and created explodes: what is all that but the restlessness of a man shoveling himself down to his knees out of a grave he will never escape, a being that will never entirely climb out of nothingness, who fearfully flings himself into shapes but is, in some secret place that he is hardly aware of himself, vulnerable and nothing?

To here: Role of human experiences that spread not through rational transmission but through contagion. A social (humanity’s) experience in two people.

And no way at all of framing this in cycles!
Ulrich remembered the man he had observed with Clarisse and Meingast in the green circle of the lantern. Here on the Island of Health even this distorted human creation, this exhibitionist, this despairing creature, this sexual desire stealing forth in a crouch out of the darkness when a woman passed by, was not basically different from other people. What else but a solitary exhibitionism were Walters sentimental music, or Meingast’s political thoughts about the common will of the many? What is even the success of a statesman standing in the midst of human bustle other than an anesthetizing exercise that has the appearance of a gratification? In love, in art, in greed, in politics, in work, and in play, we seek to articulate our painful secret: A person only half belongs to himself, the other half is expression. / This quotation from Emerson is I think word for word! / In the travail of their souls, all people yearn for expression. The dog sprays
a stone with himself and sniffs his excrement: to leave a trace in the world, to erect in the world a monument to oneself, a deed that will still be celebrated after hundreds of years, is the meaning of all heroism. I have done something: that is a trace, a dissimilar but immortal portrait. “I have done something” binds parts of the material world to myself. Even just expressing something already means having one sense more with which to appropriate the world. Even wheedling someone into something the way Walter does has this sense. Ulrich laughed, because it occurred to him that Walter would walk around in despair with the thought: Oh, I could say a thing or two about that...! It is the profound basic feeling of the bourgeois, a feeling that is steadily being silenced and pacified. But on the Island of Health

Ulrich ended by taking back all the ambition of his life. What are even theories, other than wheedling? Discussions. And at the
conclusion of such hours Ulrich was no longer thinking of anything but Agathe, the distant, inseparable sister, of whom he did not even know what she was doing. And he sadly recalled her favorite expression: “What can I do for my soul, which lives in me like an unsolved riddle? Which leaves visible man free to make any kind of choice because it cannot govern him in any way?”

Here a settlement of accounts about Ulrich’s mood in regard to heroism.

The dog, which after long association with man involuntarily caricatures him so splendidly in many ways.

The feeling of never being allowed to leave here again.
Clarisse meanwhile was playing out her game of signs; sometimes he saw her scurrying over the dunes like a fluttering cloth. “We are playing our story here,” she claimed, “on the stage of this island.” Basically it was only the exaggerated form of this having to imprint oneself on uncertainty. Formerly, when Clarisse had still been going to the opera with Walter, she had often said: “What is all art! If we could act out our stories!” She was now doing this as well. All lovers ought to do it. All lovers have the feeling that what we are experiencing is something miraculous, we are chosen people; but they ought to play it before a large orchestra and a dark hall—real lovers on the stage, and not people who are paid: not only a new theater would arise but also an entirely new kind of love, which would spread, lighting up human gestures like a fine network of branches, instead of, like today, creeping into the child’s darkness. That was what Clarisse said. Please, no
child! Instead of accomplishing something, people have children! Sometimes she called the small keepsakes she put in the sand for Ulrich her secret children, or so she called every impression she received, for the impression melted into her like fruit. Between her and things there existed a continual exchanging of signs and understandings, a conspiracy, a heightened thinking / heightened correspondence / a burning, spirited life process. Sometimes this became so intense that Clarisse thought she was being torn out of her slender body and flying like a veil over the island, without rest, until her eyes were transfixed by a small stone or a shell and a credulous astonishment rooted her to the spot, because she had already been here once and always, and had lain quietly as a trace in the sand, while a second Clarisse had flown over the island like a witch.
At times, her person seemed to her only an obstacle, unnaturally inserted in the dynamic exchange between the world that affected her and the world she affected. In its most intense moments, this self seemed to tear apart and disintegrate. / Cf. piano scene. Beethoven—Nietzsche quotation. Even then Clarisse was serious about tearing apart. / Even if she was unfaithful to Walter with this body and this “soul fastened to her skin,” it did not mean anything: there were many hours in which the frigid, rejecting Clarisse transformed herself into a vampire, insatiable, as if an obstacle had fallen away and for the first time she could yield to this heretofore forbidden pleasure. She sometimes seemed to plan things to suck Ulrich dry: “There’s still one more devil in you I have to exorcise!” she said. He owned a red sport jacket, and she sometimes made him put it on in the middle of the night and did not let up until he turned pale under his tanned
skin. Her passion for him, and in general all the emotions she expressed, were not deep—Ulrich felt that distinctly—but somehow at times passed by depth on their precipitous fall into the abyss.

Nor did she entirely trust Ulrich. He did not completely understand the greatness of what she was experiencing. During these days she had of course recognized and seen through everything that had previously been inaccessible to her. Formerly, she had experienced infinite heaviness, the enterprising spirit’s fall from almost-attained heights of greatness to the deepest anxiety and anguish. It seems that a person can be driven out from the ordinary real world we all know by processes that take place not in her but above or below the earth, and in the same way the person can intensify them into the incommensurable. On the island she explained it to Ulrich like this: One day everything around Clarisse had been
enhanced: colors, smells, straight and crooked lines, noises, her emotions or thoughts, and the ones she aroused in others; what was taking place might have been causal, necessary, mechanical, and psychological, but aside from that it was moved by a secret driving force; it might have happened precisely that way the day before, but today, in some indescribable and fortunate way, it was different. —Oh—Clarisse immediately said to herself—I am freed from the law of necessity, where every thing depends on some other thing. For things depended on her emotions. Or rather, what was at work was a continual activity of the self and of things penetrating and yielding to each other, as if they were on opposite sides of the same elastic membrane. Clarisse discovered that what she was acting from was a veil of emotions, with things on the other side. A little later she received the most terrible confirmation: she perceived everything going on
around her just as correctly as before, but it had become totally dissociated and alienated. Her own emotions seemed foreign to her, as if someone else were feeling them, or as if they were drifting around in the world. It was as if she and things were badly fitted to each other. She no longer found any support in the world, did not find the necessary minimum of satisfaction and self-moderation, was no longer able to maintain through inner action the equilibrium with the events of the world, and felt with unspeakable anguish how she was being inexorably squeezed out of the world and could no longer escape suicide (or perhaps madness). Again she was exempted from ordinary necessity and subjected to a secret law; but then she discovered, at the last moment when she could possibly be saved, the law that no one before her had noticed:

We—that is, people lacking Clarisse’s insight—imagine that the world is
unambiguous, whatever the relationship between the things out there and inner processes may be; and what we call an emotion is a personal matter that is added to our own pleasure or uneasiness but does not otherwise change anything in the world. Not just the way we see red when we get angry—that too, moreover; it is only erroneously that one considers it something that is an occasional exception, without suspecting what deep and general law one has touched upon!—but rather like this: things swim in emotions the way water lilies consist not only of leaves and flowers and white and green but also of “gently lying there.” Ordinarily, they are so quiet about this that one does not notice the totality; the emotions have to be calm for the world to be orderly and for merely rational associations to be dominant in it.

But assuming for instance that a person suffers some really serious and annihilating humiliation that would have to lead to his
destruction, it does happen that instead of this shame a surpassing pleasure in the humiliation sets in, a holy or smiling feeling about the world, and this is then not merely an emotion like any other or a deliberation, not even the reflection that we might perchance console ourselves that humility is virtuous, but a sinking or rising of the whole person on another level, a “sinking on the rise,” and all things change in harmony with this; one might say they remain the same but now find themselves in some other space, or that everything is tinged with another sense. At such moments one recognizes that aside from everyone’s world, that solid world that can be investigated and managed by reason, there is a second world, dynamic, singular, visionary, irrational, which is only apparently congruent with the first and which we do not, as people think, merely carry in our hearts or our minds, but which exists externally with precisely the same reality as the
prevailing world. It is an uncanny mystery, and like everything mysterious it becomes, whenever one tries to articulate it, easily confused with what is most banal. Clarisse herself had experienced— when she was unfaithful to Walter, and although she had to be, on which account she did not recognize any remorse—how the world became black; however, it was not a real color but a quite indescribable one, and later this “sense color” of the world, as Clarisse called it, became a hard, burnt brown.

Clarisse was very happy on the day when she grasped that her new understanding was the continuation of her efforts on the subject of genius. For what distinguishes the genius from the healthy, ordinary person, other than the secret involvement of the emotions in everything that happens, which in the healthy person is stable and unnoticed but in the genius, on the other hand, is subject to incessant irritations? Moreover,
Ulrich too said that there are many possible worlds. Rational, reasonable people adapt themselves to the world, but strong people adapt the world to themselves. As long as the “sense color” of the world, as Clarisse called it, remained stable, equilibrium in the world also had something stable. Its unnoticed stability might even be considered healthy and ordinarily indispensable, the way the body, too, is not permitted to feel all the organs that maintain its equilibrium. Also unhealthy is a labile equilibrium, which tips over at the first chance and falls into the inferior position. Those are the mentally ill, Clarisse told herself, of whom she was afraid. But on top, conquerors in the realm of humanity, are those whose equilibrium is just as vulnerable but full of strength and, constantly disturbed, is constantly inventing new forms of equilibrium.

It is an uncanny balance, and Clarisse had never felt herself as much a creature
perched on the razors edge between annihilation and health as she did now. But whoever has followed the development of Clarisse’s thoughts up to this point will already know that she had now come upon the traces of the “secret of redemption.” This had entered her life as the mission to liberate the genius that was inhibited by all sorts of relations in herself, Walter, and their surroundings, and it is easy to see that this inhibition comes about because one is forced to yield to the repression the world practices against every person of genius, and is submerged in obscurity; but here, on the other side, it throws the world into relief in a new color. This was for her the significance of the soul color dark red, a marvelous, indescribable, and transparent shade in which air, sand, and vegetation were immersed, so that she moved everywhere as in a red chamber of light.
She once called this the “darkroom,” herself surprised by its similarity to a room in which in the midst of acrid vapors one bends tense and excited over the delicate, barely recognizable images that appear on the negative. It was her task to prefigure the redemption, and Ulrich seemed to her to be her apostle, who would after a while leave her and go out into the world, and whose first task would be to liberate Walter and Meingast. From this point on, her progress was much more rapid.

The blows of confused and anarchic ideas that Ulrich received every day, and the movement of these thoughts in an imprudent but clearly palpable direction, had in fact gradually swept him up, and the only thing that still differentiated his life from that of the insane was a consciousness of his situation, which he could interrupt by an effort. But for a long time he did not do so. For while he had always felt only like a guest
among rational people and those effectively engaged in life, at least with one part of his being, and as alien or meaningless as a poem would be were he suddenly to start reciting one at the general meeting of a corporation, he felt here in this nothingness of certainty an enhanced security, and lived with precisely this part of his being among the structures of absurdity in the air, but as securely as on solid ground. Happiness is in truth not something rational, which depends once and for all on a specific action or the possession of specific things, but much more a mood of the nerves through which everything becomes happiness or doesn’t; to this extent Clarisse was right. And the beauty, goodness, and quality of genius in a woman, the fire she kindles and sustains, is not to be settled by any legal determination of truth but is a mutual delirium. One could maintain, Ulrich told himself, that our entire being—which we basically cannot find a basis for but
complacently accept on the whole as God, while, acting from this assumption, it is easy for us to deduce the details—is nothing but the delirium of many; but if order is reason, then every simple fact, if we observe it outside of any order, is already the germ of a madness. For what do facts have to do with our mind? The mind governs itself by them, but they stand there, responsible to no one, like mountain peaks or clouds or the nose on a person’s face; there were times when it would have been a pleasure to crush the nose on the face of the lovely Diotima with two fingers; Clarisse’s nose sniffed, alert, like the nose of a pointer, and was able to impart all the excitement of the invisible.

But soon he was no longer able to follow Clarisse’s idea of order. You scratch a sign in a stone at the spot where you happen to be: that this is art, just as the greatest is, was a feeling one could sympathize with.
And Clarisse did not want to possess Ulrich, but—each time in a new leap—live with him. —I don’t perceive truly—she said—but I perceive fruitfully. Her ideas scintillated, things scintillated. One does not gather up one’s insights in order to form a self out of them, like a cold snowman, when like her one is growing into ever-new catastrophes; her ideas grew “in the open”; one weakens oneself by scattering everything, but spurs oneself on to new, strange growth. Clarisse began to express her life in poems; on the Island of Health Ulrich found this quite natural. In our poems there is too much rigid reason; the words are burned-out notions, the syntax holds out sticks and ropes as if for the blind, the meaning never gets off the ground everyone has trampled; the awakened soul cannot walk in such iron garments. Clarisse discovered that one would have to choose words that are not ideas; but since there don’t seem to be any, she chose instead the word pair. If
she said “I,” this word was never able to shoot up as vertically as she felt it; but “I-red” is not yet imprisoned by anything, and flew upward. Just as beneficial is freeing words from their grammatical bonds, which are quite impoverished. For example, Clarisse gave Ulrich three words and asked him to read them in any order he chose. If they were “God,” “red,” and “goes,” he read “God goes red,” or “God, red, goes”—that is, his brain immediately either understood them as a sentence or separated them by commas in order to underline that it was not making them into a sentence. Clarisse called this the chemistry of words, that they always cohere in groups, and showed how to counter this. Her favorite bit of information was that she worked with exclamation points or underlining. God!! red!!! goes! Such accumulations slow one down, and the word dams up behind them to its full meaning. She also underlined words from one to ten
times, and at times a page she had written this way looked like a cryptic musical score. Another means, but one she used less frequently, was repetition; through it the weight of the repeated word became greater than the power of the syntactic bond, and the word began to sink without end. God goes green green green green. It was an incredibly difficult problem to ascertain correctly the number of repetitions so that they would express exactly what was meant.

One day, Ulrich showed up with a volume of Goethe’s poems, which he happened to have brought along, and proposed taking several words out of each of a number of poems and putting them together, to see what came out. Poems like this came out:

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It cannot be overlooked that an obscure, incoherent charm emanates from these constellations, something with the glowing fire of a volcano, as if one were looking into the bowels of the earth. And a few years after Clarisse, a similar play with words actually did become an ominous fashion among the healthy.

Clarisse anticipated remarkable conclusions. Flakes of fire were stolen by poets from the volcano of madness: at some point in primeval times and later, every time a genius revisited earth; these glowing connections of words, not yet constricted to specific meanings, were planted in the soil of ordinary language to form its fertility, “which as we know comes from its volcanic origins.” But—so Clarisse concluded—it follows from this that the mind must decay to primal elements again and again in order for life to remain fruitful. This placed in Clarisse’s hands the responsibility for a monstrous
irresponsibility; she knew that she was really uneducated, but now she was filled with a heroic lack of respect for everything that had been created before her.

Ulrich was able to follow Clarisse’s games this far, and youth’s lack of respect made it easier for him to dream into the shattered mind these new structures that could be formed: a process that has repeated itself among us several times, around 1900, when people loved the suggestive and sketchy, as after 1910, where in painting people succumbed to the charm of the simplest constructive elements and bid the secrets of the visible world echo by reciting a kind of optical alphabet.

But Clarisse’s decline progressed more rapidly than Ulrich could follow. One day, she came with a new discovery. —Life withdraws powers from nature once and for all, forever—she began, making a connection with poems that tear words out of nature in
order slowly to make it barren—while life transforms these powers withdrawn from nature into a new condition, “consciousness,” from which there is no return. It seemed obvious, and Clarisse was surprised that no one before her had noticed it. This was because people’s morality prevented them from noticing certain things. —All physical, chemical, and other such stimuli that strike me—she declared—I transform into consciousness; but never has the reverse been achieved, otherwise I could raise this stone with my will. So consciousness is constantly interfering with the system of nature’s powers. Consciousness is the cause of all insignificant, superficial movement, and “redemption” demands that it be destroyed.

Leo Tolstoy: Consciousness is the greatest moral misfortune that a man can attain.

Fyodor Dostoyevsky: “All consciousness is a disease.”
From Gorky’s diary.

Clarisse immediately made a further discovery. The vanished forests of the carboniferous era, bubbling, rampant, gigantic, fantastic, are being freed again today under the influence of the sun as psychic forces, and it is through the exploitation of the energy that perished in that earlier time that die enormous spiritual energy of the present age arises.

She says: Before, it was only a game, now it has to get serious; here she becomes uncanny to him.

It was evening. To cool off she and Ulrich went for a walk in the dark. Hundreds of frogs were drumming in a small pond, and the crickets were rasping shrilly, so that the night was as animated as an African village
starting a ritual dance. Clarisse asked Ulrich to go into the pond with her and kill himself so that their consciousness would gradually become swamp, coal, and pure energy.

Kill him!

This was a little too much. Ulrich was in danger, if her ideas ran on in this fashion, of having Clarisse slit his throat one of these nights.

Another chapter: she really tries it!

He telegraphed Walter to come immediately, since his attempts to calm Clarisse had failed and he could no longer assume the responsibility.

A kind of settling of accounts takes place between Walter and Ulrich.
Walter reproaches him: You fell in with this “redemption”; do you want to be a redeemer? (Instead of subjecting Clarisse to being cured by means of society.) Ulrich to this: If I myself really had the redeeming ideas, no one would believe them. If Christ were to return, he wouldn’t get through today.

Rather paunchy belly, profound solidarity with Clarisse.

**Ulrich:** Aren’t you jealous?

**Walter:** If I were, it would be a serious mistake (crime). I can’t have that to complain about too; there are deeper values between people (husband and wife) than faithfulness.

**Ulrich**—who was thinking of Agathe—is depressed, seems ordinary to himself. But sensitive personal reactions while
conforming to public norms belong to the uncreative person. Tells himself with a venomous clarity.

Walter sees him lying on the ground. Wrecked person. Takes revenge.

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A weak person who sees a strong person on the ground loves him. Not because he now has him in his power. Nor because the envied person is now just as weak as he is. But loving himself in the other. He feels through him an enhancement of his self-love and tortures him from a kind of masochism.

This weak egotist, who has pushed his life hither and yon in trivial arrangements, is in this instance, where everything is the way he wants it to be and has often dreamed it, filled with soft beauty.
It was decided to bring Clarisse back to a new sanatorium; she accepted this without resistance and almost in silence. She was terribly disappointed in Ulrich and realized that she would have to go back into a clinic—"in order to try to get the circulation working once more"; it was so sluggish that even she had not been able to do it the first time.

She settled into her new abode with the confidence of a person returning to a hotel where he is a familiar guest. Walter stayed with her for four days. He felt the blessing of Ulrich’s not being along and of being able to control Clarisse alone, but did not admit this to himself. The manner he had adopted toward Ulrich had, he thought, great loftiness, and he also believed he had succeeded in that; but now that it was over, something quite unpleasant made its presence known: that he had been afraid of Ulrich the whole time. His body desired manly satisfaction. He ignored Clarisse’s condition and
convinced himself that she was not sick but would recover most quickly if, aside from the physical care, she were treated psychologically as an ordinary woman as much as possible. But still he knew that he was only telling himself this. To his astonishment, he found less resistance in Clarisse than he was accustomed to. He suffered. He felt disgusted with himself. In the first night he had got a small cut that hurt: in his pain, and shuddering at his brutality, he thought he was scourging both her and himself. Then his leave was over. It did not occur to him to desert his office. He had to pack his soul with watch in hand.

Clarisse underwent a diet cure that had been prescribed for her, since her nervous overexcitement was regarded as the consequence of her physical deterioration. She was emaciated and as unkempt as a dog that has been wandering around free for weeks. The unaccustomed nourishment, whose
effect she began to feel, impressed her. She even put up with Walter, gently, as she did with the cure that forced strange bodies on her and compelled her to gulp down coarse things. Dejectedly she put up with everything in order to acquire in her own mind the attestation of health. “I’m only living on my own credit,” she told herself, “no one believes in me. Perhaps it’s only a prejudice that I’m alive?” It calmed her, while Walter was there, to fill herself up with matter and take on earthly ballast, as she called it.

But the day Walter left, the Greek was there. He was staying at the sanatorium, perhaps he had been there longer than Clarisse, but now he crossed her path. As Clarisse passed by he was saying to a lady: “A person who has traveled as much as I have finds it absolutely impossible to love a woman.” It might even be that he had said: “A person who comes from as far away as I do...”; Clarisse immediately understood it as a sign
meant for her that this man had been led onto her path. The same evening she wrote him a letter. Its contents ran: I am the only woman you will love. She went into detail. You are a good height for a man—she wrote—but you have a figure like a woman’s and feminine hands. You have a “vulture’s beak,” an aquiline nose from which the useless excess of energy has been drained; it is more beautiful than an aquiline nose. You have large, dark, deep eye sockets, painful caves of vice. You know the world, the overworld, and the underworld. I noticed right away that you wanted to hypnotize me, although your glance was really tired and timid. You guessed that I am your destiny.

I am not here because I am ill. But because, instinctively, I always choose the right means. My blood courses slowly. No one has ever been able to find a fever in me. At worst, some undetectable local contamination; no organically caused stomach illness, however
much I suffer the greatest weakness as the result of complete exhaustion of my gastric system. Whatever our doctor may tell you, moreover, I am on the whole healthy, even though I myself might be ill in part. Proof: precisely that energy for absolute isolation and detachment that brought me here. I guessed with unerrning accuracy what is needed at the moment, while a typically sick creature cannot become healthy at all, much less make itself healthy. Pay attention to me. This has also made me guess with unerrning accuracy what it is you need.

You are the great hermaphrodite everyone is waiting for. Upon you the gods have bestowed male and female in equal measure. You will redeem the radiant world from the dark, unutterable schism of love. Oh, how I understood when you exclaimed that no woman was able to claim you! But I am the great feminine hermaphrodite. Whom no man can satisfy. In solitude I bear being split
into two. Which you possess only in your mind, and therefore still only as a longing that we must overcome. With a black shield before it. A divine encounter has brought us here. We cannot evade our destiny and make the world wait a hundred years ...!

The next day the Greek brought her letter back. Out of discretion he brought it himself. He told her he did not want to give her any occasion to write such things to him. His rejection was noble but firm. His hypnotist’s face, cinematically demonic, masculine, would, placed in any random crowd of people, immediately have become the center of attention. But his hands were weak like a woman’s; the skin of his head twitched involuntarily at times beneath his thick, carefully parted blue-black hair, and his eyes trembled slightly while Clarisse observed them. Under the influence of the diet cure and new moods, Clarisse had indeed changed physically in the last few days; she had become
heavier and coarser, and her piano hands, rough from work, which she was clenching and unclenching in her excitement, aroused in the Levantine a peculiar fear; he was constantly drawn to look at them, felt the impulse to flee, but could not stand up.

Clarisse repeated to him that he could not evade his destiny, and reached out to grab him. He saw the horrible hand coming at him and could not stir. Only when her mouth slid past his eyes to his own did he find the strength to jump up and flee. Clarisse held on to his pants and tried to embrace him. He uttered a soft cry of disgust and fear and reached the door.

Clarisse was overjoyed. She was left with the feeling that this was a man of incredible, rare, and absolutely demonic purity; but the indecencies that she herself had committed also seemed to her tinged with this feeling. Her breathing became broad and free; the satisfaction at following the
command of her inner voice past the ultimate constraints stretched her breasts like metal springs. For twenty-four hours she actually forgot everything that had brought her here, mission and suffering; her heart no longer shot arrows at the sky; all those she had fired off previously came back one after the other and drilled through it. Proudly she suffered horrible pains of desire. For the space of twenty-four hours. This frigid young woman, who as long as she had been healthy had never learned the frenzy of sex, received this delirium like an agony that raged through her body with such force that it could not hold still for an instant, but was driven back and forth by the terrible hunger of her nerves, while her delighted mind determined by this violence that the boundless power of all sexual desire, from which she had to redeem the world, had entered into her. The sweetness of this torture, the restless impotence, a need to throw herself in
front of this man and weep with gratitude, the happiness she could not forbid herself, were for her a demonstration of how monstrous the demon was with whom she had to take up the struggle. This mentally ill woman who had not yet loved now loved with everything that had been spared in her, like a healthy woman but with desperate intensity, as if, with the utmost possible strength of which this emotion was capable, she wanted to tear it away from the shadows that surrounded and irresistibly reinterpreted it.

Like all women, she waited for the return of the man who had spurned her. Twenty-four hours passed, and then—approximately at the same hour as previously—the Greek actually did knock at Clarisse’s door. A power he could not understand led this weak-willed man with the feminine sensibility to return to the situation in which the brutal attack on him had been inconclusively broken off. He came impeccably
attired and coiffed, pleading carefully rehearsed excuses, and inwardly reinforced by the reflection that one had to fully enjoy this interesting woman; but when he looked at Clarisse his pupils trembled like the breasts of a girl being fondled for the first time. Clarisse did not beat around the bush. She repeated to him that he was not allowed to duck out, God too had suffered on the Mount of Olives, and went for him. His knees trembled and his hands went up against hers as helplessly as handkerchiefs to fend her off, but Clarisse slung her legs and arms around him and sealed his mouth with the hot phosphate breath of her own. In the extremity of his fear the Greek defended himself by confessing that he was homosexual. The unfortunate man had no idea what to do when she declared that that was precisely why he had to love her.

He was one of those half-sick, half-sociable people who wander through
sanatoriums like hotels in which one meets more interesting people than in the ordinary kind. He spoke several languages and had read the books that were on everyone’s tongue. A southeastern European elegance, black hair, and indolent dark eyes made him the focus of admiration of all those women who love intellect and the demonic in a man. The story of his life was like a lottery of the numbers of the hotel rooms to which he had been invited. He had never worked in his life, had been set up by his wealthy merchant family, and was in accord with the idea that after the death of his father his younger brother would take charge of their affairs. He did not love women but became their prey out of vanity, and was not resolute enough to follow his preference for men other than occasionally in the circles of big-city prostitution, where they disgusted him. He was really a big fat boy in whom the predilection of that indeterminate age for all vices had
never given way to anything subsequent, and who had merely wrapped himself in the protection of a melancholy indolence and irresolution.

This wretched man had never experienced from a woman an attack of the kind Clarisse was now subjecting him to. Without his being able to grasp it from anything specific, she addressed herself to his vanity. “Great hermaphrodite,” she said again and again, and there shone from her eyes something that was like the King of the Mountain, for him playful and yet frenzyed. —Remarkable woman, the Greek said. —You are the great hermaphrodite—she said—who is not able to love either women or men! And that’s just why you’ve been called to redeem them from the original sin that weakens them!

Of the three men who influenced Clarisse’s life, Walter, Meingast, and Ulrich, Meingast, without its ever having become
clear to her, was the one who had through his manner made the greatest impression on her by most powerfully stimulating her ambition—if one may so characterize the desire for wings of the uncreative mind banished to an ordinary life. His league of men, from which she was excluded, clanking in her imagination like archangels, had transformed themselves into the idea that the strong and redeemed person (and along with this: redeemed from marriage and love) was homosexual. “God himself is homosexual,” she told the Greek. “He penetrates the believer, overpowers him, impregnates him, weakens him, rapes him, treats him like a woman, and demands submission from him, while excluding women from the Church. Impregnated by his God, the believer walks among women as among petty, silly elements he doesn’t notice. Love is unfaithfulness to God, adultery; it robs the spirit of its human dignity. The madness of sin and the madness of
bliss entice human action into the marriage bed (bed of adultery). O my female king, assume along with me the sins of humanity in order to redeem it by committing them, although we already see through them.”

“Crazy—crazy,” the Greek murmured, but at the same time Clarisse’s ideas made unresisting sense to him and touched a point in his life that had never been treated with such seriousness or such passion. Clarisse roused his indolent soul like a dream raging in deepest darkness but, in doing so, treated him the way an older boy in puberty gets hold of a younger one and fondles him in order to carry out on him the most insane sacrifices of the cult of first love. The Greek’s dignity as an interesting man was most violently compromised by this role being forced upon him, but at the same time this role hit upon fantasies buried deep within him, and Clarisse’s ruthless visits aroused in him a trembling condition of bondage. Nowhere
did he any longer feel safe from her; she invited him on outings in a carriage, during which she molested him behind the drivers back, and his greatest fear was that one day she would do it in the sanatorium in front of everybody, without his being able to defend himself. Finally, he began to tremble as soon as she came near him, but let her do whatever she wanted. *Cette femme est folle*—he said this sentence softly, plaintively, incessantly, in three languages, like a magic charm.

But at last—this peculiar, half-transparent relationship was attracting attention, and he imagined people were already making fun of him—his vanity tore him out of it; weeping almost from weakness, he gathered all his strength to shake this woman off. When they got into the carriage he said, averting his face, that it was the last time. As they were riding, he pointed out a policeman to her, claimed that he was having a relationship
with him and that the policeman wanted him to have nothing more to do with Clarisse; he slung his glances around this massive man standing in the street as if he were a rock, but was torn away by the rolling carriage, feeling nevertheless strengthened by his He, as if someone had sent him some kind of help. But it had the opposite effect on Clarisse. To see the lover of her “female king” affected her as a surprising concretization. In poems she had already characterized herself as a hermaphrodite, and now thought she could distinguish hermaphroditic qualities in her body for the first time. She could hardly expect them to break through to the surface. It’s a divine constellation of love, she said.

The Greek was concerned about the coachman and pushed her away. He breathed into her face that this was their last trip. Without looking around, the coachman, apparently sensing that something was going
on behind him, whipped the horses on. Suddenly a thunderstorm came up from three sides and surprised them. The air was heavy and filled with an uncanny tension; lightning flashed and thunder came crashing down. “This evening I’m receiving a visit from my lover,” the Greek said. “You may not come to me!” “We’re leaving tonight!” Clarisse answered. “For Berlin, the city of tremendous energies!” Just then, with a shattering crash, a bolt struck the fields not far from them, and the horses strained in a gallop against the traces. “No!” the Greek shouted, and involuntarily hid himself against Clarisse, who embraced him. “I deem myself a Thessalian witch!” she screamed into the uproar that now broke loose from all sides. Lightning blazes roared, mingled water and earth flew up from the ground, terror shook the air. The Greek was trembling like some poor animal body jolted by an electric charge. Clarisse was jubilant, embraced him
with “lightning arms,” and enveloped him. That was when he jumped out of the carriage.

When Clarisse got back, long after he did—she had forced the coachman to drive slowly through the storm, and slowly on after the sun had come out again and fields, horses, and the leather of the coach were steaming, while she sang mysterious things—she found in her room a note from the Greek informing her once again that the policeman was in his room, forbidding her to visit, and declaring that he was leaving in the morning. At dinner, Clarisse discovered that his departure was the truth. She wanted to rush to him, but became aware that all the women were observing her. The restlessness in the corridors seemed never to end. Women were passing by every time Clarisse stuck her head out of the door in order to scurry to the Greek’s room. These stupid people looked mockingly at Clarisse, instead
of comprehending that the policeman was scorning all of them. And for some reason Clarisse suddenly no longer trusted herself to walk upright and innocently to the Greek’s door. Finally, it was quiet, and she slipped out barefoot. She scratched softly at the door, but no one answered, although light was coming through the keyhole. Clarisse pressed her lips to die wood and whispered. It remained quiet inside; someone was listening but not answering. The Greek was lying in bed with his “protector” and despised her. / Or: a strange man angrily opens the door. The Greek already gone? / Then she, who had never loved, was overcome by the nameless torment of submissive jealousy. —I am not worthy of him—she whispered—he thinks I’m sick, and, whispering, her lips slid down the door to the dust. She was befuddled by a heartrending rapture; moaning softly, she pushed against the door in order to crawl to him and kiss his
hand, and did not understand that her rapture had been thwarted.

When she awoke in her bed and rang for the chambermaid, she discovered that the Greek had left. She nodded, as if it had been agreed upon between them. —I’m leaving too, Clarisse said. —I’ll have to tell the doctor—the girl. Hardly had the girl left the room when Clarisse sprang out of bed and, in a frenzy, dumped her belongings into a suitcase; what did not fit, and the rest of her baggage, she left behind. The girl thought the gentleman had taken the train for Munich. Clarisse fled. “Error is not blindness,” she murmured, “error is cowardice! He recognized his mission but did not have enough courage for it.” As she slunk out of the building, past his abandoned room, she again encountered the pain and shame of the past night. “He thought I was sick!” Tears streamed down her cheeks. She even did justice to the prison that she was escaping
from; she took leave of the walls and the benches outside the door with compassion. People had meant to help her here, the best they could. —They wanted to cure me—Clarisse smiled—but curing is destroying! And when she was sitting in the express, the energy of whose storming bounds permeated her, her resolves became clear.

How can one be mistaken? Only by not seeing. But how can one not see what is there to be seen? By not trusting oneself to see. Clarisse recognized, like a broad field without a boundary, the general law of human progress: Error is cowardice; if people were to stop being cowardly the earth would make a leap forward. / In an analogous way, Ulrich recognizes why there is no radical progress. / Good, the way the train sped on with her without stopping. She knew that she had to catch up with the Greek.
They had all been against her, the sick ones too.

Clarisse took a sleeping compartment. When she got into the carriage she immediately told the conductor: Three gentlemen must be on this train, go and look for them, I absolutely must speak with them! It seemed to her that all her fellow passengers fell under the strong personal influence that emanated from her and were obeying her commands. The waiters in the dining car as well. But nevertheless the conductor had to report that he had not found the Greek, Walter, and Ulrich. After that, with a completely clear sensory impression, she recognized herself in the mirror now as a white she-devil, now as a blood-red madonna.

When she got off the train in Munich the next morning, she went to an elegant hotel, took a room, smoked the whole day, drank brandy and black coffee, and wrote letters and telegrams. Some circumstance or
other had led her to assume that the Greek had traveled to Venice, and she issued instructions to him, the hotels, consular offices, and government bureaus. She displayed enormous industriousness. —Hurry up! she said to the page boys, who galloped around for her the whole day. It was a mood like at a fire when the fire trucks rattle up and the sirens wail, or like a mobilization, where horses trot and endless processions of resolute, helmet-enclosed faces march through the streets as if dreaming, the air filled with thrown flowers and heavy with gray tension.

That evening she herself went on to Venice.

In Venice, she registered at a pension frequented by Germans, where she had stayed on her honeymoon; people there dimly recalled the young woman. The same
life as in Munich began, with abuse of alcohol and alkaloids, but now she no longer sent off any telegrams or messengers. From the moment she had got to Venice, perhaps because the official emissaries were not already waiting for her at the station with their reports, she had been convinced that the Greek had slipped through her net and fled to his homeland. The task now was to stem the flood and prepare a final assault, without haste and with the strictest measures toward oneself.

It was clear that she would sail to Greece, but first the frenzied desire for the man, a desire that had pushed her almost too far, had to be restrained. Besides coffee and brandy, Clarisse took no meals; she stripped naked and barricaded herself in her room, into which she did not allow even the hotel personnel. Hunger and something else, which she was not able to make out, put her in a state of fever-like confusion that lasted
for days, in which impatient sexual arousal gradually faded to a vibrating mood in which all sorts of delusions of the senses were mingled. The abuse of strong substances had undermined her body; she felt it beginning to collapse under her. Constant diarrhea; a cavity appeared in a tooth and bothered her night and day; a small ugly wart began to form on her hand. But all this drove her to exert her mind more and more passionately, like the moment just before the end of a race, when one has to lift one’s legs at every step by willpower. She had got hold of brush and paint pots, and from the arm of a chair, the edge of the bed, and an ironing board that she had found outside her door she built herself a scaffolding that she pushed along the wall, and began to paint the walls of her room with large designs. What she crisscrossed on the bare walls was the story of her life; so great was this process of inner purification that Clarisse was convinced that
in a hundred years humanity would make a pilgrimage to these sketches and inscriptions in order to see the tremendous works of art with which the greatest of souls had covered her cell.

Perhaps they really were great works for someone who would have had to be in a position to disentangle the wealth of associations that had become tangled up in them. Clarisse created them with enormous tension. She felt herself great and hovering. She was beyond the articulated expression of life that creates words and forms, which are a compromise arranged for everyone, and had again arrived at that magic first encounter with herself, the madness of her first astonishment at those gifts of the gods, word and image. What she created was distorted, was piled up in confusion and yet impoverished, was unrestrained and yet obeyed a rigid compulsion; externally. Internally, it was for the first time the expression of her entire
being: without purpose, without reflection, almost without will, becoming literally a second thing, enduring, greater, the transubstantiation of the human being into a piece of eternity: finally, the fulfillment of Clarisse’s longing. While she painted she sang: “I am descended from luminous gods.”

/ Noted outside the novel: Does greatness never he in content? In a way of ordering things? /

When they broke into her room, uncomprehending eyes stared at these walls like the eyes of hostile animals. Clarisse had bought a boat ticket and laid out a blanket and a towel twisted into a turban as her imperial attire, which she was going to take on board with her. Then it occurred to her that a person who finds himself on sacred paths is not allowed to have any money with him without falling victim to a ridiculous
incongruity, so she gave away her money and jewelry to laughing gondoliers. As she was about to give a speech in the Piazza of St. Mark’s to the people assembled for her departure, a man spoke to her and gently brought her back to her pension. But since this man was unwise enough to recommend her to the protection of her hosts, everyone now poured into her room; the padrona screamed about the damage, gave orders to seize Clarisse’s property, swore in vulgar language when none was to be found, and the staff tittered. A horrendous cruelty stared at Clarisse from every side, that primal hatred of inert matter, one part of which pushes another from the spot unless attraction and understanding mold them together into one. Silently Clarisse took her turban and cloak in order to leave this land and go on board. But at the canal steps the always friendly brown-black chambermaid came after her and begged her to wait, because a gentleman
wanted to have the honor of showing her something before she left. Clarisse stopped in silence; she was tired and really no longer had the strength to travel. When the gondola with the man and two strange men appeared she stared gravely into the girl’s friendly eyes, which were now almost floating in a moist shimmer, and thought the grievous word: Iscariot. She had no time to reflect on this shattering experience. In the gondola she calmly and seriously kept her eyes on the strange man and had the distinct impression that he was shrinking from her. This satisfied her. They came to the Colleone monument, and now the strange man spoke to her for the first time. ‘Why don’t we go in here,” he said, indicating a building beside the church that stood there. “There’s something particularly nice to look at.” Clarisse suspected the trap being set for her by the official of public security. But this suspicion had no value for her, no causal valency, so to speak. I’m tired
and ill, she said to herself. He wants to lure me into the hospital. It’s unreasonable of me to go along. But my madness is merely that I fall out of their general order and my causality isn’t theirs: only disturbance in a subordinate function, which they overestimate. Their behavior is the crassest lack of ethics / In their causal associations what I do and how I do it is sick; because they don’t see the other.

When they entered the building she divided the rest of her jewelry and her towel among the matrons, who accepted them, seized her, and strapped her to a bed. Clarisse began to cry, and the matrons said “poveretta!”

After Confinement

This time, it was Wotan who went to get her and brought her back; he took her to Dr. Fried’s clinic. When she was brought in, the
doctor on duty merely looked at her and had her taken to the ward for the distracted.

The very first scream of a madman forced on her the idea of the migration of souls; the ideas of reincarnation, of the attainable Nirvana, were not far away.

“Mother! Mother!” That was the cry of a girl who was covered with horrible wounds. Clarisse longed for her mother on account of the many sins with which her mother had sent her out into the world. Her parents were now sitting around the table at breakfast; there were flowers in the room; Clarisse was covered with all their sins, they felt good; her migration of souls began.

Clarisse’s first walk led to the bath, since she had been excited by being brought in. It was a square room with a tile floor and a large pool. filled with water and without a raised edge; from the doorway steps led into it. Two wasted bodies fastened longing
glances on her and screamed for redemption. They were her best friends, Walter and Ulrich, in sinful form.

During the night the Pope lay beside her. In the shape of a woman. —Church is black night—Clarisse said to herself—now it longs for the woman. There was a dim light, the patients were sleeping, when the Pope fumbled at her blanket and wanted to slip into bed with her. He was longing for his woman; Clarisse had no objection. —The black night longs for redemption, she whispered, as she yielded to the Pope’s fingers. The sins of Christendom were extirpated. King Ludwig of Bavaria was lying opposite her, etc. It was a night of crucifixion. Clarisse looked toward her dissolution; she felt free of all guilt, her soul floated weightless and bright as these visions crept to her bed like poems and vanished again without her being able to seize their shapes and hold them fast. The next morning, Nietzsche’s soul in the shape
of the chief doctor was for her the most glorious sight. Beautiful, kindly, full of profound seriousness, his bushy beard grayed, his eyes seeing as from another world, he nodded to her. She knew it had been he who during the night had bidden her extirpate the sins of Christendom; hot ambition, like the ambition of a schoolgirl, soared in Clarisse.

During the next two weeks she experienced Faust, Part II. Three characters represented Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and Modernity. Clarisse trampled them with her feet. That happened in the water chamber. For three days. Cackling screams filled the enclosed room. Through the vapors and tropical fogs of the bath naked women crept like crocodiles and gigantic crabs. Slippery faces screamed into her eyes. Scissor arms grasped at her. Legs twined around her neck. Clarisse screamed and fluttered above the bodies, striking her toenails into the damp, slippery flesh, was pulled down, suffocated
beneath bellies and knees, bit into breasts, scratched flabby cheeks bloody, worked herself to the top again, plunged into the water and out, and finally plunged her face into the shaggy wet lap of a large woman and “on the shell of the Triton goddess” roared out a song until hoarseness stifled her voice.

One should not think that insanity has no sense; it merely has the turbid, fuzzy, duplicating lens of the air above this bath, and at times it was quite clear to Clarisse that she was living among the laws of a different but by no means lawless world. Perhaps the idea explicity governing all these minds was nothing other than die striving to escape the place of interdiction and compulsion, an unarticulated dream of the body rebelling against its poisoned head. While Clarisse was trampling with her feet the less agile in the slippery knot of people, there was in her head a “sinless Nirvana” like the broad white air outside a window, the longing for a
painless and unconflicted state of rest, and like a buzzing insect she bumped with her head against the wall that sick bodies erected around her, fluttering aimlessly, driven from one moment’s inspiration to the next, while the conviction hovered like a golden halo behind her head, a halo she could not see and could not even imagine but which was nevertheless there, that a profound ethical problem had been laid upon her, that she was the Messiah and the Ubermensch joined in the same person, and would enter her rest after she had redeemed the others, and she could redeem them only by forcing them down. For three days and three nights she obeyed the irresistible will of the community of the mad, let herself be pushed and pulled and scratched till the blood came, threw herself symbolically on the cross on the tiles of the floor, uttered hoarse, disconnected, incomprehensible words and answered similar words with actions, as if she not only
understood them but wanted to stake her life on the communication. They did not ask, they had no need of meaning that dumps words into sentences and sentences into the cellar of the mind; they recognized one another among themselves, and like animals differentiated themselves from the attendants or from anyone who was different, and their ideas produced a chaotic common thread, as during the revolt of a crowd where no one knows or understands anyone else, no one thinks any longer except in fragmented beginnings and endings, but powerful tensions and blows of the oblivious common body unite everyone with one another. After three days and nights, Clarisse was exhausted; her voice was only a bare whisper, her “tiber- strength” had conquered, and she became calm.

She was put to bed and for a few days lay in a state of profound fatigue, interrupted by attacks of tortured, shapeless resdessness.
A “disciple,” a rosy blond woman of twenty-one, who had regarded her from the first day as a liberator, finally gave her her first redemption. This woman came to her bed and said something or other; for Clarisse it meant: I am taking over the mission. Clarisse later found out that the rosy blonde had, in her stead, exorcised the devil through song in the water chamber day and night. But Clarisse stayed in the big hall, took care of the sick, and “lay in wait for their sins.” The communication between her and her confessing charges consisted of sentences like dolls, implausible, wooden little sentences, and God alone knows what they originally meant by them; but if children playing with dolls would have to use concrete words in order to be able to mean the same thing and understand each other, then the magic sleight of hand that pretends a shapeless stick of wood is a living being would never succeed, a trick that excites the soul more
than the most passionate lovers are later able to do. Finally, one day, an ordinary woman, who had earlier pounded on Clarisse’s back with her fists, spoke to Clarisse, saying this: “Gather your disciples in the coming night and celebrate your Last Supper. What kind of food does the great lord desire? Speak, that it shall be prepared for you. But we intend to leave, and will no longer appear before your eyes!” At the same time another woman, who suffered from catatonia, passionately kissed Clarisse’s hands, and her eyes were transfigured by approaching death like a star that in the night outshines all others. Clarisse felt: “It is really not a miracle that I believed I had to fulfill a mission,” but in spite of this already more focused feeling, she was uncertain about what it was she had to do. Fortunately, this was the day on which she was transferred to the ward for calm patients.

On Clarisse
1. “Impoverished life”—This is a concept that makes an impression on her, like decadence. Her version of the fin de Steele mood. Drawn from her experience with Walter.

2. Along with Walter she adores Wagner, but with rising opposition; whenever he has played Wagner his hands are covered by a cold dampness, so this petit-bourgeois heroism comes out at his fingers, this heroic petit-bourgeois posturing. She imagines an Italian music that is driven beyond itself by the cruel cheerfulness of the blue Italian sky (omen!), “the destiny over her”: “Her happiness is brief, sudden, unannounced, without pardon.” (Omen, but Ulrich at first sees only what is usual for the times.) “The tanned one,” “cynical” (omen!). She criticizes how empty
Walter’s face becomes in so many ways when he is making music.

3. Love is to be understood as fate, innocent and therefore cruel— that’s how it hovers before her. She means by this: that’s how she would like to be so filled by her own destiny that she would not think at all of the man who had unleashed it. Walter’s love is for her only a “finer parasitism, a nesting oneself in an alien soul”; she would like to shake it off.

4. “Being able to forbid oneself something harmful is a sign of vitality”—she will not allow Walter into her bed. “The harmful lures the exhausted person.”

5. Later: “Illness itself can be a stimulus to life, but one has to be healthy enough for this stimulus.”
6. Decadence is for instance the agitated perspective that Wagnerian art compels, “which forces one to change one’s position in regard to it at every moment.” That is directed squarely at Ulrich, who sees in this changing of positions the energy of the future.

7. But then she disconcerts him with things that he believes too: “What characterizes all literary decadence? That life no longer dwells in the whole. The word becomes sovereign and jumps out of the sentence, the sentence reaches out and obscures the sense of the page, the page takes on life at the expense of the whole—the whole is no longer a whole. That’s the sign of every decadent style:... Anarchy of the atoms, dispersion of the will... life pushed back into the smallest structures...
the remainder poor in vitality” (Voluntarism. A direct power against what is soft, boyish in Ulrich.)

8. Prophetic: “... that in cultures in decline, that everywhere where the power of decision falls into the hands of the masses, what is genuine becomes superfluous, disadvantageous, ignored. Only the actor still evokes great enthusiasm. This means that the golden age for the actor is dawning.” Talma: What is supposed to affect one as true can be not true.

9. Against Walter: “The healthy organism does not fight off illness with reasons—one does not contradict a disease—but with inhibition, mistrust, peevishness, disgust,... as if there were a great danger slinking around in it.”
10. Against Ulrich: “Innocence among oppositions ... this is almost a definition of modernity. Biologically, modern man represents a contradiction of values, he sits between two stools, in the same breath he says yes and no ... All of us have, against our knowledge, against our will, values, statements, formulas, and moralities of opposing Uneages within us—physiologically regarded, we are false... a diagnostic of the modern soul—where would it begin? With a decisive incision into this contradictoriness of instinct...”

11. “Everything that is good makes me fruitful. I have no other gratitude ...”

_Nietzsche_ asks: Is there a pessimism of strength? An intellectual preference for the

_Clarisse_
hardness, the horrible, evil, problematic aspects of existence? (from fullness of existence) Ulrich and Clarisse come together in this intellectual preference. It separates Clarisse from Walter. So that here the problem of adultery starts right off with the intellect. “Depth of the anti-moral propensity.”

The desire for the terrible as the worthy foe is one of the forebodings that seize her as she reads Nietzsche. Predisposition to her falling sick.

Nietzsche regards dialectic, the contentedness of the theoretically oriented person, as signs of decline, science as a delicate self-defense against truth, an evasion. Here Ulrich distances himself from Nietzsche, for he is enthusiastic about this theoretical person. Indeed, otherwise one would arrive at an imbecilic idolatry of life; but Ulrich runs aground with the ultimate ataraxia [stoical indifference] of the theoretically oriented person.
This could already be initiated in [Part] I and determine the situation in which he encounters Agathe.

What fascinates him so about Nietzsche, and fascinates Clarisse as well, is Nietzsche’s intervention on behalf of the artistic person. He writes for artists who have the ancillary disposition of analytic and retrospective capacities, an exceptional kind of artist—therefore really for Ulrich. That Nietzsche says he really does not want to appeal to this kind of artist (but apparently to ones who are less divided) is something Ulrich passes over; that is something which youth reserves to itself as an achievement that it will reveal.

Is madness perhaps not necessarily the symptom of the degeneration, the decay, of a superannuated civilization? Are there perhaps ... neuroses of health? Of the youth and youthfulness of the Volk? What does the synthesis of god and he-goat in the satyr show?
From what experience of the self, in response to what impulse, was the Greek led to imagine the Dionysian enthusiast and primal man as a satyr? And concerning the origin of the chorus in tragedy: were there perhaps in those centuries in which the Greek body blossomed, and the Greek soul overflowed with life, endemic transports? Visions and hallucinations that imparted themselves to entire communities, whole gatherings of cults? What if the Greeks, precisely in the abundance of their youth, had the will to the tragic and were pessimists? What if it was precisely madness, to employ a term of Plato’s, that brought the greatest blessings to Hellas? And if, on the other hand and inversely, what if it was precisely in the periods of their dissolution and weakness that the Greeks became increasingly optimistic, more superficial, more theatrical, also, according to the logic and logicizing of the world, more
ardent—that is to say, at once more cheerful and more scientific?

In the Preface addressed to Richard Wagner [Musil is referring to Nietzsche’s *Birth of Tragedy*], art—and not morality—is already posited as the real metaphysical activity of mankind; in the book itself, the pertinent sentence that the existence of the world is justified only as an aesthetic phenomenon recurs several times.

... betrays a spirit that will at some point, at whatever risk, set itself against the moral explication of existence.
Life is motion. Therefore never-ending. After death, life again dissolves into motion.

Since the motion is never-ending, nothing remains unreveved. To break out of this chain, the mind must dissolve into harmony before it dies and enters cosmic space. That is the idea of Nirvana, which therefore, accordingly, also issues “unrevedved” from the feeling of guilt; the longing for harmony is the desire to emerge from this condition.

Do you believe in the migration of souls, hell, purgatory? she exclaims. Perhaps some individuals have attained Nirvana in their earthly life, but then they were the final links in a long chain of people—”in their person the ring closed” (Wagner’s magic world again comes to life). But everyone else runs around laden with guilt and shame, tortured, reviled, from the first day of their lives
onward, sacrifices to a crime committed before their birth.

But there is justice. What we call injustice is only the path to eternal justice.

The earth cannot perish before Nirvana has been attained.

She also explains it mathematically: births and deaths balance each other (everyone who is born dies, a tremendous discovery!), therefore the souls of modern people are the souls of ancient people. There are no free souls!

Even Darwinism agrees with this: in human beings, animal instincts are in many people reincarnated animal faces. They are still burdened with the animal soul.

Liquidation...

Ideas become clearer and more banal. Clearing, boring sky. Only a deep sadness remains.
King Ludwig was lying facing her already in Venice.

This is associated with the idea: Between Wagner and Nietzsche stood the snake. This snake is Ludwig, the “feminine king,” who loves the artist and in doing so robs him of his only dignity. Evidently the reflex of her resistance against her sexual role as a woman for Walter; the same thing disappointed her in Ulrich, and in the Greek it struck her so strongly that he was free of it. Therefore a single line of action. Even in Munich, Walter and Ulrich appeared to her in their “sinful shapes.”

Nietzsche, the great friend, turned away horrified from this ignominy, and from that time on had to follow his solitary path alone. Here she identifies herself with Nietzsche.

What was done to him and to her is “a sin against the holy spirit/’ It must be
“reconciled by a human sacrifice.” Nietzsche’s death—a second Christ.

Yet neither Christ nor Nietzsche could redeem mankind from evil: “People remain people.”

“Destiny hovers over us, a second reality,” is how she expressed her impotence simultaneously with the thought that in spite of her predecessors she had to suffer.

In between, the thought crosses her mind: “Between Nietzsche and Wagner stood Jewry!”

The thought later goes on: There are two realities!

“One” is called: “The way I see it”—

The “Other”: “The way I don’t see it.”

They are the same ideas as before, but they no longer have the components of manic redemption.
In the clinic in Munich she sees a fat blond woman with a masculine voice, a Polish woman. Immediately the thought “Overwoman” springs to her mind. She thinks it over. This person before her is a primitive example. She thinks of Semiramis, Catherine the Great, Elizabeth of Austria. She is helpless because she has no books.

Such women have superhuman strength.

Her thoughts veer off: even before Nietzsche there were Overmen, she discovers: Napoleon, Jesus Christ. Suddenly she thinks: Christ was ignorant. Like her. That’s why in our reckoning of time, our epoch, he is one of the most mysterious figures. For she is locked up.
Sometimes she slips into confused cursing. Men today are horrible idiots, cowards, weaklings, with no backbone, without courage, bravery, or stamina.

They are either brutal or soft. They have lost the skill of using the whip with dehcacy. Their dress is unaesthetic. Their manner of thinking cowardly, stupid. Their eyes blue or black (Ulrich and Walter).

If from time to time one comes across a man of chivalric appearance, with steely muscles—he is certainly abnormal, therefore no man either.

Suddenly she realizes: The woman puts on the secret trousers. That’s why. She becomes only half natural. She no longer understands how to be a mother. She longs for motherhood. Divine pregnancy is a reminder of Nietzsche. Longingly she imagines the degenerate women on whose physical beauty the “sucking pulls.” She would like to feel it.
Later these two words occur again, in another context in which no one understands them. Helplessness of the expression.

Menwomen and womenmen.

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Délire à deux: It’s a question of two people, one of whom is insane and the other predisposed to insanity. The former usually has some talent, the latter not a great deal of intelligence. Through constant contact, by being constantly bombarded with confused and inchoate ideas, the predisposed person ends up acting like his companion, and gradually the same madness shows up in him. A dependent relationship establishes itself between the two unfortunates; one is the echo of the other:

The impact of confused and inchoate ideas—is not only a danger for the inferior person. Cf. enjoyment of Expressionism and poetry in general.
Being together with Clarisse in Italy often makes Ulrich feel like a hot-air balloon that can be released at any moment. He lives through the essence of Expressionism. He, who is so precise, writes such poems. At that time poetry had not got to that point.

Happiness is madness, the not-communicable!
Ulrich wanted to see Meingast once more; this eagle, who had floated down from Zarathustras mountains into the domestic life of Walter and Clarisse, made him curious. Following a sudden inspiration, he invited Schmeisser to go with him; he hoped to summon up in his adversary reasons to soften the latter’s opposition to him through the impression made by his friends. He said nothing to Agathe about the expedition; he knew she would not come along.

Meingast had now been whiling away a considerable amount of time with his admirers and adherents Walter and Clarisse, part of whose home consisted of a separate, empty room whose windows looked out on
the narrow side of the house. Somewhere the couple had dug up an iron bedstead; a kitchen stool and a tin pail served as bath, and aside from these objects the only other thing in the room, which had no curtains, was an empty dish cupboard, in which there were some books, and a small table of unpainted soft wood. Meingast sat at this table and wrote. That was enough to lend the room, even when he was not in it and Clarisse or Walter glanced in in passing, that ineffable quality of an old cast-off glove that has been worn on a noble and energetic hand. But now, as Meingast was sitting in the room writing, he knew (moreover) that Clarisse was standing beneath his window. Working in such a situation was splendid. Meingast’s will formed words on the paper, abandoned them, flowed over the windowsill, and arrived at Clarisse, who, wrapped in the “invisible cloak of an electric northern light,” was staring obsessively and absently before her.
Meingast did not love Clarisse, but this ambitious pupil whom he paralyzed gave him pleasure. Meingast’s pen was driven across the paper by a mysterious power; the nostrils of his sharp, narrow nose quivered like a stallion’s, and his beautiful dark eyes glowed. What he had begun under these conditions was one of the most important sections of his new book; but one ought not call this book a book: it was a call, a command, a mobilization order for New People. When Meingast heard a strange male voice beside Clarisse, he interrupted himself and went down.

Ulrich had seen Clarisse right away as he and Schmeisser turned in at the garden gate. She was standing by the fence beside the vegetable garden, with her back to the house, quite stiffly and gazing into the distance, blind to the new arrivals. It did not seem that she was aware of her (frozen) position; her attitude seemed more the involuntary copy of significant ideas with which she
was inwardly preoccupied. And so it was. She was thinking: —This time Meingast is transforming himself in our house. He had come to them without saying a word about it, but Clarisse knew that his life contained several of the most remarkable transformations, and was certain that the work he had begun here had something to do with this. The memory of an Indian god, who before every purification settles down somewhere, mingled in Clarisse’s mind with the memory that insects choose a specific spot to change into a chrysalis and the memory of the fragrance of espaliered peaches ripening against the sunny wall of a house; the logical result was that Clarisse was standing in the burning sunshine beneath the window of the shadowy cave into which the prophet had withdrawn. The day before, he had explained to her and Walter that Knecht signified [The English cognate is “knight,” but knecht now means ‘farmhand’, ‘laborer’], according to its
original meaning, youth, boy, page, a man capable of bearing arms, hero; and Clarisse said: —I am his Knecht! She didn’t need any words, she merely stood fast, motionless, her face blinded, against the arrows of the sun.

When Ulrich called out to her she turned slowly toward the unexpected voice, and he immediately discovered that she was disappointed at his coming. There was no longer any mention of her telling him her childhood stories; she had completely forgotten that. Her eyes, which before he went on his trip had always snatched love for him from the very sight of him, observed him now with that insultingly purposeless indifference that is like an extinguished mountain range after one has seen it in the sunlight. Indeed, this is a petty and also quite common experience, this extinction of light in the eyes when they no longer want anything from what they are looking at; but it is like a small hole in the veil of life through which
nothingness gazes / but it has something of the absolute coldness that is concealed beneath the warm blankets of life, in the absence of the sympathy of empty space.

As Meingast was on his way down, Walter joined him, and it was decided, without making many inquiries of the guests, that they would all walk together to the hill with the pine trees that lay halfway between the house and the edge of the woods. When they reached it, Meingast was charmed. The tree-tops hovered on their coral-colored trunks as dark-green islands in the burning blue ocean of the sky: hard, insistent colors created room and respect for themselves alongside each other; ideas that are as impossible in words as islands on coral trunks, which one does not trust oneself to think without a cowardly smile, were visible and real. Meingast pointed upward with his finger and spoke with Nietzsche: —A yes, a no; a straight line: formula of my happiness! Clarisse, who had
thrown herself down on her back, understood him instantly and answered, with her eyes in the blueness, holding the words firmly between her teeth like a character in the last act where there is a lot of disjointed talking anyway: —Light-showers of the south! Cheerful cruelty! Destiny hovering over one! What need was there to paste sentences together when nature was like an echoing stage; she knew that Meingast would understand her! Walter understood her too. But as always he also understood something more. He saw the feminine softness of his wife lying in the feminine softness of the landscape; for all around, meadows sloped to the valley in soft billows, and aside from the group of pines, a small quarry was the only heroic thing in the midst of a good-natured corporeality that moved him to tears because Clarisse saw nothing of it and knew nothing about herself but had of course chosen just the one place where the landscape was in
weighty contradiction to itself. Walter was jealous of Meingast, but he was not jealous in the ordinary way; he was as proud as Clarisse was of their new old friend, who had, after all, returned laden with fame as, in a way, her own messenger whom she had sent out into the world. Ulrich noticed that in this brief time Meingast had acquired enormous influence over Clarisse, and that jealousy of Meingast tortured Walter far more than had his previous jealousy of him, Ulrich, for Walter felt Meingast’s superiority, while he had never felt Ulrich’s, except physically. At any rate, these three people seemed to be deeply entangled in their affairs; they had already been talking to each other for days, and their guests were as little able to catch up with them as with people who have gone into a jungle. Then too, Meingast did not seem to attach any importance to orienting the newcomers, for without any consideration he went on talking at the point where
the discussion might have been broken off hours or days ago.

—Music—he declared—music is a supra-spiritual phenomenon. Not the band-masters or nickelodeon music, of course, which rules the theater; and also not the music of the erotics, upon which a lightning-bright explication followed as to who such an erotic person was, in a great zigzag from the beginnings of art to the present; but absolute music. Absolute music is suddenly, like a rainbow, from one end to the other, in the world; it is radiantly vaulted, without advance notice; a world on whirring wings, a world of ice, which hovers like a hailstorm in the other world.

Clarisse and Walter listened attentively, flattered. Clarisse, moreover, made note of the chain of ideas “music-ice-hailstorm” in order to use it in the next domestic musical struggle with Walter.
Meingast meanwhile, having worked himself up to a high pitch, explained himself by way of examples from the old Italian still-healthy music. He whistled it for them. He had stepped a little to the side and was standing in the meadow like a totem pole, the describing hand long-limbed, his words an interminable monologue. This really had nothing to do anymore with mere art or an exchange of aesthetic views: Meingast whistled metaphysical examples, absolute shapes, and phenomena of sound that occur only in music and nowhere else in the world. He whistled hovering curves or ineffable images of grief, anger, love, and cheerfulness; challenged the couple to test the extent to which this resembled what in life is understood under the name of music, and expected of Clarisse and Walter that they, pursuing their own feelings, would arrive at the end of a bridge that breaks off in the middle, from which point they would first glimpse
the absolute melodic figure as it drifted away in its total ineffability.

Which was also, as it appeared, what happened, diffusing a fixed shudder of happiness over the three of them. —Once it’s been pointed out, you yourself feel—said Meingast—that music cannot arise out of us alone. It is the image of itself, and just for that reason not merely an image of your feelings. So it’s not an image at all. Not anything that would receive its existence through the existence of something else. It is itself simply existence, being, scorning every motivation. And then, with a motion of his hand, Meingast pushed music far behind him, where it became the fragment of something greater, —for—he said—art does not idealize, but realizes. One must, to come to the essential point, break entirely with the view that art lifts up, beautifies, or the like, something within us. It is precisely the other way around. Take greed, greatness, cheerfulness,
or whatever you like: it is only the hollow earthly characterization of processes that are far more powerful than their ridiculous trailing thread, which our understanding seizes in order to pull them down to us. In truth, all our feelings are inexpressible. We press them out in drops and think that these drops are our feelings. But they are clouds rushing away! All our experiences are more than we experience of them. I could now simply apply the example of music to this; all our experiences would then be of the essence of music, were it not surrounded by a still greater circle. For—

But here an interruption ensued, for Schmeisser, whose lips had long mated dryly together, could no longer restrain the birth of an objection. He said loudly: —If you derive the birth of morality from the spirit of music, you’re forgetting that all the emotions you might care to talk about receive their
meaning from middle-class habits and middle-class assumptions!

Meingast turned amicably to the young man. —When, ten years ago, I came to Zurich for the first time—he said slowly—something of that sort would have been considered revolutionary. At that time you would have had great success with your interjection. I may tell you that it was there that I received my first spiritual training, in the left wing of your party, which had members from all the countries of the world. But today it is clear to us that the creative accomplishment of Social Democracy—he emphasized the component “Democracy”—has so far remained zero, and will never get beyond whitewashing the cultural content of liberalism as neo-revolutionary!

Schmeisser had no intention of responding to this. It was sufficient that he threw back his hair with a shake of his neck muscles and smiled with sternly closed lips.
One could perhaps also say: Oh, don’t let me bother you! He was thinking that a few lines in The Shoemaker, a few juicily pointed sarcastic comments, would be appropriate anytime as warning yet again against bourgeois like these, who never stuck it out for long in the movement. But Ulrich interrupted: —Don’t run him through with a quotation from Marx; Herr Meingast would answer with Goethe, and we’d never get home today! But still Schmeisser let himself be carried away, because he had to say something. Since he lacked the will to do battle his answer was too modest. He simply said: —The new culture that socialism has brought into the world is the feeling of solidarity…. The response was not immediate; Meingast seemed to be leaving himself time. He replied slowly: —That’s correct. But it’s precious little. Now Schmeisser lost his patience: —So-called academic learning—he exclaimed—has long since lost its right to be
taken seriously as an intellectual center! Poking around among antiquities, pasting together treatises about the poems of some fifth-rate writer, cramming Roman un-Law; that only breeds empty arrogance. The workers’ movement, with its definable goals, has long been developing the real intellectual workers, the fighters in the class struggle with their clear aims, who are going to do away with the barbarism of exploitation, and they are the ones who will create the foundations for a culture of the future!

Now it was Meingast’s turn to get angry; for years he had not felt as warmly about the culture of the present as he did now, faced with this battler for the future. But with a good-natured motion, Meingast cut off his counterattack. —We are really not at all as far apart as you think, he answered Schmeisser. —I don’t think much of academic learning either, and I, too, believe that a new feeling of community, a turning away
from the individualism of the most recent age, signifies the most important development under way today. But— And again Meingast stood in the meadow like a totem pole, stretching out the hand that descriptively accompanied his words, and could continue precisely where he had been interrupted: But that had happened before his new doctrine of the will. By “will” one was not, of course, to understand something like the intention of seeking out a specific business because its drawing paper is cheaper, or composing a poem meant to be arrhythmic because up to then all other poems had been rhythmic. Nor was trampling on a superior in order to get ahead a sign of will. On the contrary, that’s merely the scum of will, caused by the many obstacles that today stand in the way of will, and is, therefore, broken will. That one applies the word “will” to such things is a sign that its true meaning is no longer felt. Meingast’s charter was the
unbroken cosmic stream of will. He illustrated its appearance by great men like Napoleon. Compare Shaw’s assertion that it is only great men who do anything, and that in vain. The will of such people is uninterrupted activity, an art of burning up like breathing, it must incessantly produce heat and movement, and for such natures standing still and turning back are equivalent to death. But one can illustrate this just as well by the will of primeval mythic times; when the wheel was invented, language, fire, religion: those were breakthroughs with which nothing since can be compared. At most in Homer there are perhaps the last traces of this great simplicity of the will and collected creative energy. Now Meingast brought together with extraordinary force these two discrepant examples: It was no accident that they were talking about a statesman and an artist. —For, if you all remember what I was telling you about music, the aesthetic phenomenon
is that which needs nothing in addition to itself; as a phenomenon it is already all that it can possibly be: in other words, purely realized will! Will belongs not to morality but to aesthetics, to unmotivated phenomena. There are three conclusions that can be drawn from this: First, the world can be justified only as an aesthetic phenomenon; every attempt to give it a moral basis has failed up to now, and now we can understand why it must be that way. Second, our statesmen must, as the ancient wisdom of Plato already demanded, learn music again; and Plato drew his impetus for this from the wisdom of the East. Third, systematically executed cruelty is the only means now available for the European peoples, still stupefied by humanitarianism, to find their strength again!

Even though this conversation might at times have been rather opaque to ear and understanding, it was different with eye and
feeling; it came tumbling down from a philosophical height where everything is in any case One, and Clarisse felt its onrush. She was enthusiastic. All the emotions in her were stirred up and swam, if one may put it this way, once more in feeling. For a while she had placed herself in the meadow not far from Meingast in order to hear better and to be able to conceal her excitement behind a glance that appeared to be distractedly gazing into the distance. But the inner burning of the world of which Meingast spoke opened her thoughts like nuts bursting with flames. Strange things became clear to her: summer noons, freezing with the fever of light; starry nights, mute as fish with gold scales; experiences without reflection or preparation that sometimes overcame her and remained without response, indeed really without content; tension, whenever she made music, certainly, today, worse than any concert pianist, but to the absolute best of her ability and
clearly, with the uncanny feeling that something titanic, nameless experiences, a still-nameless person, greater than the greatest music can encompass, was forcing itself against the limits of her fingers. Now she understood her battles with Walter: they were suddenly moments as when a boat glides over an infinite chasm; in words, perhaps not comprehensible to anyone else. Clarisse’s fingers and wrists began barely perceptibly to play along; one saw the young woman translating the prophet’s wisdom into her own bodily will. The effect he had on her was related to the essence of a dance, a dancing wandering. Her feet released themselves from the impoverished and hardened present; her soul released itself from the uncertainty of instinct and weakness; the distance reared up; she held a flower with three heads in her hand; to follow after Meingast, following Christ, to redeem Walter, those were the three heads; if they were not, then
Clarisse was not thinking it the way one counts or reads, from left to right, but like a rainbow from one end to the other; out of this rainbow arose the smell of the closet in which she kept her traveling clothes, then the three flowers consisted of the three terms I seek, self-search, self-seeking—Clarisse had already forgotten what the flower had consisted of before. Walter was a stem, even Meingast was just a stem, from the soles of her feet Clarisse grew taller and taller, it happened with dizzying speed, before one could hold one’s breath, and Clarisse threw herself down in the grass, horrified at her enthusiasm for herself. Ulrich, who was already lying there, had misunderstood her movements, and thoughtlessly tickled her with a blade of grass. Clarisse shot out sparks of loathing.

Walter had been observing Clarisse, but something he had to talk about drew him more strongly to Meingast. This was Homer.
Homer already a phenomenon of decay? No, decay first set in with Voltaire and Lessing! Meingast was probably the most important person one could encounter today, but what he said about music only showed what a misfortune it was that throughout his life Walter had felt too crippled to put his own views in the form of a book. He could understand Clarisse so well; he had long seen how she was carried away by Meingast; he felt so sorry for her; she was wrong, for despite everything she put the fortissimo of her enthusiasm into unimportant things; this coupling pregnant with destiny made his feelings for her flare up in great flames. While he was walking over to Meingast, Clarisse lay stretched out in the grass, Ulrich at her side not understanding anything at all, only, by lying there, pushing the optical center of gravity of the picture somewhat in his direction; Walter felt totally like an actor walking across a stage; here they were playing out
their destiny, their story; in the seconds before he spoke to Meingast he felt lifted out of himself and frozen to icy silence, performer and poet of his self.

Meingast saw him coming. Four paces away like four ages of the world to be strode through. He had recently called Walters helplessness that of a democracy of feelings, and with that given him the key to his condition, but he had no desire to carry this discussion further, and before Walter reached him he turned to the quarrelsome stranger.

—Perhaps you are a Socialist—Schmeisser answered him—but you are an enemy of democracy!

—Well, thank God you noticed! Meingast turned completely to face him and succeeded in forgetting Walter and Clarisse. —I was, as you heard, a Socialist too. But you say that a new culture will arise by itself out of the workers’ movement; and I say to you:
on the path that socialism has taken among us, never!

Schmeisser shrugged his shoulders.
—The world is certainly not going to be put on a better path by talking about art, love, and the like!

—Who’s talking about art? It seems that you haven’t understood me in the least. I am of the same opinion as you that the present condition will not last much longer. The culture of bourgeois individualism will perish the way all previous cultures have perished. Of what? I can tell you: Of the increase of all quantities without a corresponding increase of the central quality. Of there being too many people, things, opinions, needs, wills. The firming energies, the perfusing of the community with its mission, its will to get ahead, its community feeling, the connective tissue of public and private institutions: these are not all growing at the same rate; it is rather left far too much to accident and
falls further and further behind. The point comes in every culture where this disproportion gets to be too much. From then on, the culture is vulnerable like a weakened organism, and it takes only a push to bring it down. Today the growing complexity of relations and passions can still barely be maintained.

Schmeisser shook his head. —We’ll give the push, when the time comes.

—When it comes! It will never come! The materialistic view of history produces passivity! The time will perhaps be here tomorrow. Perhaps it’s already here today! You won’t take advantage of it, for with democracy you ruin everything! Democracy produces neither thinkers nor doers, but gabblerers. Just ask yourself what the characteristic creations of democracy are! Parliament and newspapers! What an idea—Meingast exclaimed—taking over from the whole
despised bourgeois world of ideas precisely the most ridiculous one, democracy!

Walter had stood irresolute for a moment and then, since politics repelled him, joined Clarisse and Ulrich. Ulrich was saying: —Such a theory functions only when it is false, but then it’s a tremendous machine for happiness! The two of them seem to me like a ticket machine arguing with a candy machine. But he found no echo.

Schmeisser had stood up to Meingast smiling, without responding. He told himself that it made no difference at all what an individual person thought.

Meingast was saying: —A new order, structure, cohesion of energy, is what’s needed; that is correct. Pseudohistorical individualism and liberalism have been ruined by mismanagement; that is correct. The masses are coming; that is correct. But their agglomeration must be great, hard, and with
the power to do things! And when he had said that he looked probingly at Schmeisser, turned around, plucked a handful of grass, and silently strode away.

Ulrich felt himself superfluous and went off with Schmeisser. Schmeisser did not say a word. —We’re each carrying—Ulrich thought to himself—beside each other two glass balloons on our necks. Both transparent, of different colors, and beautifully, hermetically sealed. For heaven’s sake don’t stumble, so they don’t break!

Walter and Clarisse remained behind on their “stage.”

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Addendum: Clarisse notices criminal instincts everywhere (which later lead to war).

The blue parasol of the sky stretched above the green parasol of the pines; the green parasol of the pines stretched over the
red coral trunks; at the foot of one of the coral trunks Clarisse was sitting, feeling the large, armadillo-like scales of the bark against her back. Meingast was standing to one side in the meadow. The wind was playing with his leanness as it does around the fence of a steel tower; Clarisse thought: If one could bend one’s ear that way one would hear his joints sing. Her heart felt: *I am his younger brother.*

The struggles with Walter, those attempted embraces from which she had to push her way out—chiseling herself out, she called it, although she herself was not made of stone—had left behind in her an excitement that at times chased over her skin in a flash, like a pack of wolves; she had no idea where it had broken out from or where it vanished to. But as she sat there, her knees drawn up, listening to Meingast, who was speaking of men’s groups, her panties under
her thin dress lying as tight as boy's trousers against her thighs, she felt calmed.

—A league or covenant of men—Mein-gast was saying—is armed love that one can no longer find anywhere today. Today one knows only love for women. A covenant of men demands: loyalty, obedience, standing one for all and all for one; today the manly virtues have been turned into the caricature of a general obligatory military service, but for the Greeks they were still living eros. Male eroticism is not restricted to the sexual; its original form is war, alliance, united energies. Overcoming the fear of death! He stood and spoke into the air.

—When a man loves a woman it is always the start of his becoming a bourgeois: Clarisse completed the thought, convinced. —Tell me, does one have any business wishing for a child in a time like ours?
—Oh God, a child! Meingast warded her off. —Well, yes; only children! You should desire a child. This eroticism of the bourgeoisie, it’s all people know today, and the only possibility leading to suffering and sacrifice is by means of a child. And anyway, childbearing is still one of the few great things in life. A certain rehabilitation.

Clarisse slowly shook her head. They had recently begun addressing each other again with the familiar Du and had recalled their friendship of long ago, but not in the sensual form it had had before. —If it were only a child of yours! Clarisse said with a smile. —But Walter isn’t fit for that.

—Me? That’s a really new idea! Besides, I’m going back to Switzerland in a few days. My book is finished.

—I’m coming with you, Clarisse said.

—that’s out of the question! My friends are expecting me. There’s hard work to be
done. We’re subject to all sorts of dangers and have to stick together like a phalanx. Meingast said this with a quiet, inward-directed smile. —That’s no job for women!

—I’m not a woman! Clarisse exclaimed, and jumped up. (—Didn’t you call me “little fellow” when I was fifteen years old?)

The philosopher smiled. Clarisse jumped up and went over to him. —I want to go away with you! she said.

—Love can be revealed in any of the following relations—the philosopher answered—servant to master, friend to friend, child to parents, wife to spouse, soul to God.

Clarisse put her hand on his arm; with a wordless request and awkwardly, but as deeply moving as a dog’s faithfulness.

Meingast bent down and whispered something in her ear.
Clarisse whispered back hoarsely: —I’m no woman, Meingast! I am the hermaphrodite!

—You? Meingast made no effort to hide a little contempt.

—I’m traveling with you. You’ll see. I’ll show you the first night. We won’t become one, but you will be two. I can leave my body. You will have two bodies.

Meingast shook his head. —Duality of bodies with a certain cancellation of the emphasis on self: a woman can accomplish that. But a woman will never lose herself in a higher community—

—You don’t understand me! Clarisse said. —I have the power of transforming myself into a hermaphrodite. I’ll be very useful to you in your band of men. You hear that I’m speaking very calmly, but pay attention to what I’m saying: Look at these trees and this round sky above them. Your breath goes
further, your heart goes further, health is working in your viscera. But the longer you look, the more the picture sucks you out of yourself. Your body remains standing in its place alone. The world sucks you up, I say. Your eyes make you a woman. And if all your feelings could reach the top, for the world you would be dead and your body decayed.

—Am I right? But there are other days. Then all your muscles and thoughts become urgent. Then I’m a man. Then I stand here and raise my arm, and the sky shoots down into my arm. As if I were tearing down a banner, I say to you. I’m not a megalomaniac. My arm, too, tears me away from the place where I’m standing. Whether I dance, fight, weep, or sing: all that’s left are my movements, my song, my tears; the world and I are blown up.

—Now do you believe that I belong in the league of men?
Meingast had been listening to Clarisse with an uncertain and almost anxious expression. Now he bent down and kissed her on the forehead. His words inspired Clarisse. —I did not know you! he said. —But it still won’t do. A woman’s love renders me infertile.

With this, he walked slowly with his high gait through the meadows on the shortest way back to the house. Clarisse did not run after him and did not let any word run after him. She knew that he was leaving. She wanted to wait, to spare him the leave-taking. She was certain that he needed time to come to terms with her proposal, and that a letter would soon call her. Her lips were still murmuring words, like two little sisters talking over an exciting event; she reprimanded them, and closed them.

Addition to hermaphrodite: For the first time again like it used to be, when young girls had secrets. You really know what it
means to be married, and you know how Walter is. (Each of these sentences occurs to her as at the beginning.) And I’m sometimes a man. I’ve never “perished” in a man’s arms; I push! I permeate him! I don’t belong to anyone; I’m so strong that I could have a friendship with several men at once. A woman loves like an enormous pot that draws all the fire into itself. Clarisse says of herself: To love not like a woman but the way a brave little fox loves a big dog against which it is helpless. Or like a brave dog its master. That’s what you love. Or: I’m a soldier, I disarm you, then disarm you just one degree more. Can’t move a limb because of so much superior strength. That’s the way you love boys. Young people. But I’m a person too, why then just a woman.

But isn’t she still—hermaphrodite—a woman too? Perhaps depict it this way: as if a man would think it beautiful.
I go my way, I have my tasks; but you open my dress and fall upon me and draw my helplessness out of me. And I lean on you, unhappy at what you’re doing to me but unable to resist. And go on and wear a black crepe on my helmet.

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She would like to have intercourse (possibly with Walter too).

It is weakening.

From this the idea: You will weaken me, make me a woman, so that you remain radiant... (at times)

We struggle hand to hand and are like the bath after the battle.

Concretely: I have the character and duties of a man. I don’t want (this time) a child and don’t want love, but I want the deep phenomenon of desire, of purification (salvation) through weakness. I-you like you-me? even if servant and master.

[?] I’ll press one leg against yours and wind the other around your hips, and your eyes will mist over.
I’ll be insolent and forget my shyness toward you.

The woman has feminine feelings for the superior man, masculine feelings for the subordinate man. Therefore something hermaphroditic arises, a spiritually intertwined threesome.

Clarisse waited for Meingast’s letter; the letter did not arrive. Clarisse became agitated. Ulrich, whom she suddenly thought of again, was away. She did not want to talk to Walter.

One morning, something strange happened. Clarisse was reading the newspaper; Walter had not yet left for the office. Suddenly Clarisse asked: —Wasn’t there something in the paper yesterday about a train wreck near Budweis? —Yes, said
Walter, who was reading another part of the paper. —How many dead? —Oh, of course I can’t remember; I think two or three; it was a small accident. Why are you asking? —Nothing. Reading on for a while, Clarisse said: —Because there’s been an accident in America too. Where’s Pennsylvania? —I don’t know. In America. They went on reading. Clarisse saw strands like railroad tracks fanning out before her, which went on tangling wildly. Had she not seen these strands of tracks weeks or months ago? She reflected. Little trains shot out on the tracks, roared through curves, and collided. Clarisse said: —The engineers never mean for their locomotives to collide. —Of course not, Walter said, without paying attention. Clarisse asked whether her brother Siegfried was coming later that afternoon. Walter answered, he hoped so. He was bothered, it was time for him to be off, and Clarisse was constantly interrupting his reading.
Suddenly Clarissee said: —I want to talk with Siegfried about taking me to see Moosbrugger.

—Who is Moosbrugger?

—You mean you don’t remember? Ulrich’s friend the murderer.

Now Walter understood whom she meant. She had once talked about this man. —But Ulrich knows him either not at all or only very slightly, he corrected Clarissee.

—Well, in any case—

—You really shouldn’t be so eccentric.

Clarissee did not dignify this with a response. Walter leafed through the paper once more and thought he was surprised at not finding any mention of this person; he had assumed that Clarissee had been moved to make her comment because of some article; but he didn’t have time for a question or genuine surprise, because he had to find his
hat and rush off. Clarisse made an unpleasant face when he kissed her on the forehead; two arrogant long lines ran down alongside her nose, and her chin jutted forward. This very unreal face, which Walter did not notice, might have been grounds for anxiety.

But the strange thing that happened was this. While Clarisse was asking her question, she had recognized that an accident happens not because of evil intent but because in the confused network of tracks, switches, and signals that she saw before her, the human being loses the power of conscience with which he ought to have checked over his task once more; had that happened, he would certainly have done whatever was necessary to avoid die accident. At this moment, where she saw this before her eyes like a child’s toy, she felt an enormous power of conscience. So she possessed it. She had to half close her eyes so that Walter would not notice their flashing. For she had recognized
instantly that when one said “letting things prevail,” it was only another expression for it. She understood that one was forced to let things have their way. But she did not let Walter have his, and would not do so.

That was the moment when Moosbrugger had occurred to her.

Everyone is familiar with what a miracle it is when a long-forgotten name, and one that moreover may be unimportant, suddenly pops up in one’s memory. Or a face, with details that one is not at all aware of having seen. Evoked by some accidental stimulus. It is really as if a hole were to open in the sky. Clarisse was by no means wrong when she felt it as a process with two ends, Moosbrugger at one end, and far away, looking at him, herself; although one could of course say that in general this is not correct, because memory outside ourselves is nothing.
But precisely if something is not true in general, but is in particular, then this was something for Clarisse. It now occurred to her that Moosbrugger was a carpenter. And we know who else was a carpenter? Right. So at one end there was the carpenter, and at the other, Clarisse. Clarisse, who was not permitted to let things prevail, who had a black mole on her thigh that fascinated every man. For there was no question that Mein- gast had run away from her; it had come too suddenly, he had wanted to save himself.

One cannot expect everything to be equally clear in the first moment. Somehow, of course, the carpenter was also connected with Ulrich; when a person whom one has almost forgotten after having loved him suddenly walks in the door, without, so to speak, being inwardly announced, as Ulrich now did, even though in the company of other people, this is in and of itself something of the kind that makes one have to hold one’s
breath for a moment. Nor was it clear what all this had to do with the hermaphrodite that Clarisse was in order to enter the league of men; but she would get to that, she felt, and at the root of the emotion there most certainly was a connection; that could be seen in the manner of activity among these thoughts, which up there, on the outside, remained isolated for now.

For all these reasons Clarisse considered it her duty to meet Moosbrugger. That certainly wouldn’t be difficult. Her brother was a physician and could help her with it. She waited for him, and the time passed quickly. She considered how little Meingast had meant to her when she had known him beforehand how great he had become since. While he was present, everything here in the house had been elevated. She had the feeling that he had simply taken her and Walter’s sins upon himself, and that was what had made everything so
easy. Perhaps now, in the next phase, she would have to take Meingast’s sins upon herself.

But what are sins? She used this word perhaps too often, without thinking enough about it. It is a poisonous Christian word. Clarisse could not discover what she herself meant, precisely. A butterfly occurred to her, which suddenly falls motionless to the ground and becomes an ugly worm with dead wings. Then naturally Walter, who sought the milk of love at her breast and thereafter became stiff and lazy. Besides, had she not once known quite clearly that she would redeem this carpenter from his sins? She had, had she not, once written a letter? It was uncanny to recall that only so dimly. It obviously signified that something was still to come.

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No letter came from Meingast, the business with the league of men remained out of Clarisse’s purview; sometimes she forgot it because of the new things that were happening. She had to think how she might get into the clinic again in spite of Dr. Friedenthal, who had forbidden her to return. She realized that it would be difficult. Climb over the wall surrounding the grounds? she thought; this idea of penetrating the forbidden space like a warrior appealed to her greatly, but since the clinic was not in open country but in the city, if it was to be done without being seen it could be risked only at night, and then, once on the grounds, how was Clarisse to find her way among the many locked buildings? She was afraid. Although she knew that it would have to be considered out of the question, she was frightened by the image of falling into the hands of a madman among the black trees and being raped or strangled by him. She still had the screams of
the maniacs in her ears: at the last station, before she went past the lovely ladies and returned once more to rational life. She often saw before her the naked man standing in the center of a totally empty room that had nothing in it but a low cot and a toilet that were of a piece with the floor. He had a blond beard and light-brown pubic hair. He ignored both the opening of the door and the people looking at him; he stood with his legs spread apart, kept his head lowered like a savage, had thick saliva in his beard, and repeated like a pendulum the same motion again and again, throwing his upper body around in a shallow circle, always with a push, always toward the same side, his arms forming an acute angle to his body, and the only thing that changed was that with every one of these motions another finger jumped up from his clenched fist; it was accompanied by a loud, panting scream, forced out by the requisite monstrous exertion of the
whole body. Dr. Friedenthal had explained that this went on for hours, and had allowed Clarisse to look into other cells, where for the moment quiet reigned. But this had been if anything even more horrifying. He showed her the same bare cement room containing nothing but a person whose fit was imminent, and one of these people was sitting there still in his street clothes; only his tie and collar had been removed. It was a lawyer with a lovely full beard and carefully parted hair; he sat there and glanced at the visitors as if he had been on the point of going to court and had sat down on this stone bench only because he was compelled, for God knows what reason, to wait. Clarisse was especially horrified by this person because he looked so natural; but Dr. Friedenthal said that just a few days before, in his first fit, he had killed his wife, and almost all the transient inhabitants of this section were murderers. Clarisse asked herself why she was afraid of them,
when it was precisely these patients who were best secured and supervised? She feared them because she did not understand them. There were several others in her memory who affected her the same way. —But that’s still no reason for my having to meet them if I’m walking through the grounds at night! she said to herself.

But it was like this. It was almost certain that she would meet them; that was an idea it was impossible to eradicate, for no matter how often Clarisse imagined the process of climbing over the wall and then walking forward through the gloomy, widely spaced trees, sooner or later it came to a gruesome encounter. This was a given fact one had to reckon with, and therefore it was reasonable to ask what it meant. Even as solid a man as the famous old American writer Ralph Waldo Emerson, whom she had read in her adolescence because her friends told her he was marvelous, maintained that it is a
general law of nature and man that like is attracted by like. Clarisse remembered a sentence which went, roughly, that everything that comes to a person tends toward him of itself, so that cause and effect only apparently succeed each other but in reality are simply two sides of the same thing, and all cleverness is bad because with every precautionary rule against danger one is put in the power of this danger. All Clarisse had to do, when she remembered this, was to apply it to herself. If it was established that she, even if at first only in some mysterious fashion in her mind, was continually meeting murderers, then she was attracting these murderers. But is like being attracted by like? That meant that she bore within herself the soul of a murderer. One can imagine what it means when such extraordinary thoughts suddenly find solid ground beneath their feet! Mein- gast had run away from her; she was apparently too strong for him. It was like lightning
bolts striking each oilier! Walter was attracted by her to murder his talent again and again in her, no matter how much she pushed him away. She carried a black medallion at the crease of her hip, and the insane divined it: perhaps such people can see through clothes and came toward her rejoicing. In a confusing way, all the facts fit.

Laughter and difficulties struggled around Clarisse’s mouth; it alternately opened and clamped tight. She had got up too early; Walter was still sleeping; she had hastily thrown on a light dress and gone outside. The singing of birds reached her from the woods through the empty morning stillness. The hemisphere of the sky had not yet filled with warmth. Even the light was still shallowly dispersed. —It only reaches as far as my ankles—Clarisse thought—the cock of the morning has just been wound up. Everything was before its time. Clarisse was deeply moved that she was wandering
through the world before its time. It almost made her cry. She fervently regretted that during her visit to the madhouse she had seen through Moosbrugger's situation too late. What she had seen being played out before her was worthless devils gambling for a soul. She heard herself being called to turn back there once more, but Dr. Friedenthal blocked her path. She felt quite ashamed, and went on like that for a ways. But at some point a thought took shape that released her from this depression: Many great men had been in insane asylums. And they had been derided by those who had remained in possession of their reason. They had now become incapable of explaining themselves to those for whom earlier they had had only contempt. She remembered the muteness of the late Nietzsche, whom she worshiped. And what had vexed her just now because she had not seen through it in time, how the three devils had intentionally brought her
before Moosbrugger in so miserably casual a fashion in order to get the better of her through cunning and paralyze her, indeed that she had really shown herself to be stupid and weak, now slowly made her understand as a sign that the fate of the great man among the repulsive jailers of the world would be laid upon her too. Her heart was filled by a drifting rain of light and tears. It was uncanny, putting oneself on an equal footing with the insane; but being on the same footing with the uncanny is to cast one’s lot for genius! She decided to free Moosbrugger from his jailers. Thoughts regarding how she might do this flitted around in her mind. The swallows had meanwhile begun to flit through the air. In some way it would have to work. Clarisse was so absorbed in these thoughts that she felt the depths like the narrow incline of an abyss. She had to draw in her shoulders and could only cautiously venture a smile. It occurred
to her that this would be the “depth of anti-moral inclination” that Nietzsche demanded of his disciples. She was astonished at this, for she had not expected that it was possible to experience it so palpably. It was a path through a “landscape of counter-morality.”

The landscape of counter-morality lies deep beneath that of ordinary life, not deep in yards but many octaves deeper. That is how it seemed to her. Everything great lives in the landscape of counter-morality (there). It goes the same ways others go, but without touching them. Against that Clarisse said to herself half aloud: —I am following in Nietzsche’s footsteps. She could also imagine that Moosbrugger had taken Nietzsche’s sorrow upon himself and was Nietzsche in the shape of a sinner. But that was not her object at the moment. Now she had to take “the sorrow” upon herself: this is what preoccupied her. She felt it hovering, otherworldly, in the
vacancy of the morning. She was carrying something that towered up hugely from her shoulders. But then she thought something over and went home.

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When she got there, Walter was not yet up, although he ought to have been on his way to the office already. He slept so badly that he could not get up on time in the morning. Dreams tortured him, leaving behind when he woke up, although he could not remember them, a feeling of being inwardly wiped out. Walter felt like a piece of paper that has been rolled up by an unpleasant warmth, and so dried out that it cracks at the slightest touch. That was the effect of Clarisse, who slept beside him, dressed and undressed beside him, but hardly permitted him to kiss her. His blood stagnated and became restless. It was dammed up like a crowd of people that is stopped at its head, while behind, where people no longer see the cause, they begin to
push forward until they're out of control. Walter pulled himself together; he did not want to hurt Clarisse, he understood her, she moved him with her childish resolve, there was nobility in her agonized exaggerating. But perhaps, too, that nervous exaltation which stigmatized everything she did. It seemed to Walter that it was his duty to clear away the obstacles she erected, even with force, if need be. It would be necessary to go through such brutality in order to restore normal intellectual opposition, if opposition there had to be. He felt it in himself; both their minds needed a surgeon: a mental growth had proliferated wildly and needed to be cut out. But he was convinced that a sorrow such as had been laid upon them would not be any less deep or strange than Tristan and Isolde's.

Only his most extreme personal need had prompted him, a few days before, to seek a consultation with Clarisse's brother
Siegfried. — You know Clarisse—he had said—that is, of course you don’t know her, but you know a lot about her, and perhaps you can just this once, as a doctor, also give some advice. Siegfried gave this advice. It was remarkable how much patronizing he accepted from Walter. Life is full of such relationships, where one person humiliates and brushes aside another, who offers no resistance. Perhaps only healthy life. The world would probably already have perished at the time of the great migrations if people had all defended themselves to the last drop of blood; instead of which the weaker gave in and moved on, preferring to seek other neighbors, whom they in turn could brush aside. This is the model on which human relationships are still carried on, and with time everything works out by itself. In the circle where Walter was thought to be a genius who had not yet found his definitive expression, Siegfried was considered a lout and a
blockhead. He had accepted that, never argued against it, and even today, if it should come to an intellectual collision with Walter, Siegfried would be the one to yield and pay homage. But for years he had as good as never been in this situation, for they had grown apart, and the old relations had become quite insignificant in comparison with new ones. Siegfried not only had his practice as a doctor—and the doctor rules differently from the bureaucrat, through his own intellectual power and not that of others, and comes to people who are waiting for his help and accept it obediently—but he also possessed a wife with means, who within a short time had been required to present him with three children and whom he cheated on with other women, if not often at least now and then, when he felt like it. Siegfried was quite logically also in a situation where he could give Walter the advice he demanded. —Clarisse—he diagnosed—is excessively
nervous. It was always her way to charge through walls, and now her head has got stuck in a wall. You have to give a good tug, even if she resists. It is against her own advantage if you let her get away with too much. Neurotic people demand a certain strictness. Walter had answered that doctors understand absolutely nothing about spiritual processes, but meanwhile he managed to put Siegfried’s advice in a form that was personally agreeable to him: that two people had to suffer in order to accomplish their burdensome destiny of loving each other. As far as the situation itself was concerned, this amounted to the same thing. And he said to Clarisse: —Please, Clarisse, be reasonable!

Clarisse had just got home, had called out: You layabout! to Walter, filled the bath with cold water, and slipped out of her thin dress, when she felt Walter behind her. He was standing there the way he had got out of bed, in a long nightshirt that fell down to his
bare feet, and had warm cheeks like a girl’s, while Clarisse, in her brief panties and with her skinny arms, looked like a boy. She put her hand on his chest and shoved him back. But Walter reached out for her. With one hand he seized her arm, and with the other sought to grasp her by the crotch and pull her to him. Clarisse tore at the embrace, and when that didn’t help shoved her free hand into Walter’s face, into his nose and mouth. His face turned red and the blood trembled in his eyes while he struggled with Clarisse. He did not want to let her see that she was hurting him, but when he was in danger of suffocating he had to strike her hand from his face. Quick as lightning, she went at it again, and this time her nails tore two bleeding furrows in his skin. Clarisse was free. Just then Walter again snatched at her, this time with all his strength. He had become angry, and feared nothing in the whole world so much as becoming rational again. Clarisse
struck at him. She had lost her shoe and kicked at him. She understood that this time it was for real. Walter was gasping out meaningless sentences. The voices of loneliness, as if a robber had jumped on them. She felt she had the strength of giants. Her clothing tore; Walter seized the shreds; she reached for his neck. She would have liked to kill him. She did not know what she was doing. Naked, slippery, she struggled like a wriggling fish in his arms. She bit Walter, whose strength was not sufficient to overpower her calmly; he swung her this way and that, and painfully sought to block her attacks. Clarisse got tired. Her muscles became numb and slack. There were pauses where she was pressed by Walter’s weight against the wall or the floor and could no longer defend herself. Then again there would come a series of defensive movements and ruthless attacks against sensitive parts of the body and face. Then suffocation again, powerlessness, and the
heart’s beating. Walter was intermittently ashamed. The pain hit him like a ray of light: Reasonable people don’t act this way! He thought that Clarisse looked as ugly as a madwoman.

But it had taken so much to get himself this far that the acting man ran on by himself, paying no attention to the feeling man. Clarisse, too, no longer had the feeling that she was being raped by Walter; she had only the feeling that she was not able to insist on her will, and when she was forced to yield she uttered a long, shrill, wild cry, like a locomotive. She herself found this inspiration quite strange. Perhaps her will was escaping in this cry, now that it was of no more use to her. Walter was scared. And while she had to endure his will she had the consolation: Just wait, I’ll get my revenge!

The moment this repulsive scene was over, shame crashed down on Walter. Clarisse sat in a corner, naked as she was,
with a thunderous face and made no response to his pleas for forgiveness. He had to get dressed; blood and tears flowed through his shaving foam. He had to leave in a hurry. He felt that he could not leave the beloved of all the days since his youth in this condition. He sought to at least move her to get dressed. Clarisse countered that she could just as well remain sitting this way until Judgment Day. In his despair and helplessness, his whole life as a man shrank back; he threw himself on his knees and with hands raised begged her to forgive him, as he had once prayed against blows; he could not think of anything else to do.

—I’ll tell Ulrich everything! Clarisse said, slightly reconciled.

Walter begged her to forget it. There was something in his lack of dignity that called for reconciliation: he loved Clarisse; the shame was like a wound from which real, warm blood was flowing. But Clarisse did not
forgive him. She could forgive him as little as an emperor who bears the responsibility for a kingdom can forgive; such people are something other than private individuals. She made him swear never to touch her again before she gave him permission. Walter was expected at a meeting; he gave his oath quickly, with the clock in his heart. Then Clarisse gave him the additional task of sending Ulrich over; she agreed to keep silent, but she needed the calming presence of a person she could trust.

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During a break at work Walter took a taxi to Ulrich’s, to get there as quickly as possible.

Ulrich was at home. His life wearied him. He did not know where Agathe was. Since she had separated herself from him he had had no news of her; he was tortured by worries about what might be happening to her. Everything reminded him of her. How
short a time ago he had restrained her from a rash decision. Yet he did not believe she would do it without speaking to him once more.

Perhaps for that very reason: for the intoxication—a real intoxication, an enchantment!—was over. The experiment they had undertaken to shape their relationship had failed irrevocably. Vast regions of emotions and fancies that had endowed many things with a perennial splendor of unknown origin, like an opalizing sky, were now desolate. Ulrich’s mind had dried out like soil beneath which the layers that conduct the moisture that nourishes all green things had disappeared. If what he had been forced to wish for was folly—and the exhaustion with which he thought of it admitted of no doubts about that!—then what had been best in his life had always been folly: the shimmer of thinking, the breath of presumption, those tender messengers of a better home that flutter
among the things of the world. Nothing remained but to become reasonable; he had to do violence to his nature and apparently submit it to a school that was not only hard but also by definition boring. He did not want to think himself born to be an idler, but would now be one if he did not soon begin to make order out of the consequences of this failure. But when he checked them over, his whole being rebelled against them, and when his being rebelled against them, he longed for Agathe; that happened without exuberance, but still as one yearns for a fellow sufferer when he is the only one with whom one can be intimate.

With distracted politeness, Walter inquired about Ulrich’s absence; Ulrich waited with embarrassment for him to ask about Agathe, but fortunately Walter forgot to. He had recently come to realize that it is insanity to doubt the love of a woman whom one loves oneself, he began. Even if one should
be disappointed, it was only a matter of letting oneself be disappointed fruitfully, in such a way that the inner lives of all concerned be raised a degree. All feelings that are only negative are unfruitful; on the other hand, there was nothing in which one could not find a core of fruitfulness if one peeled off the layers of world community. For instance: He had often committed the wrong of being jealous of Ulrich.

—Were you really jealous of me? Ulrich asked.

—Yes, Walter confessed, and for an instant, in an unconsciously significant but ridiculously chilling fashion, he bared two teeth. —Of course I never thought of it in any other way than intellectually. Clarisse feels a certain sensual kinship with your body. You understand: it’s not that your body attracts her body, or your mind her mind, but your body attracts her mind; you’ll have to admit
that’s not so simple, and that it wasn’t always easy for me to behave properly toward you.

—And Meingast?

—Meingast has left—Walter began by saying—but that was different. I admire Meingast myself. Nobody today can compare with him, all in all. There’s no way I could forbid Clarisse to love him.

—Yes, you could. First you would have to tell her that Meingast is a woolgatherer—

—Cut it out! Today I need your friendship, not a quarrel!

—Then you could always say to Clarisse that it’s not the mission of a great man to draw the nails out of every marriage like a giant magnet; therefore, on the side of the marriage, there has to be something that can’t be changed by the superiority of this third person. You’re conservative, you’ll no doubt be able to work that out. Moreover, it’s
an absorbing question. Just consider: Today every writer, musician, philosopher, leader, and boss finds people who think he’s the greatest thing on earth. The natural consequence, especially for women who are more easily moved, would be that they flock to him as a whole person. Their own personal, bodily philosopher or writer! These words have a right to be taken literally; for where else should one wish to go with soul and body if not to this ultimate refuge? But it’s just as certain that this doesn’t happen. Today only hysterical women run after great minds. And why?

Walter answered reluctantly. —You said yourself that there are other reasons for living together. Children, the need for a solid place; and then there’s a suitability of two people for each other that’s greater than the meeting of their minds!

—Those are just excuses! The agreement you’re talking about is nothing more
than trusting opinions even less than a life of habit that has turned out to be not entirely unbearable. It’s just lucky that one doesn’t quite trust the person one admires. The confusion through which one is always robbed of vitality by the other has obviously become a means of preserving life. The inclination for each other holds together through a delicate remnant of disinclination against the third person. And altogether, of course, it’s nothing but the soul of the Pharisee, which, once it’s got inside a body, imagines that every other body has secret defects!

—I started out by saying—Walter exclaimed indignantly—that if Clarisse really loved Meingast I could not forbid it.

—Then why don’t you permit her to love me? Ulrich asked, laughing. —Because you don’t like me. And you don’t like me because when we were children I beat you up a couple of times. As if I had never run into stronger boys who beat me up! That’s so
absurd, so narrow-minded and petty. I’m not reproaching you; we all have this weakness of not being able to shake off such things, indeed that such idiotic chance happenings actually form the inner building blocks of our personalities, while our knowledge is no more than the breeze that blows around them. Who’s stronger, then: you or I? Engineer Short or Art Historian Long? A master wrestler or a sprinter? I think that (the individual) this business has lost a lot of its meaning today. None of us are isolated or individual. To speak in your language: We’re instrumentalists who have come together in expectation of playing a marvelous piece, the score for which has not yet been located. So what would happen if Clarisse were to fall in love with me? The idea that one can love only one other person is nothing but a legal (civil law) prejudice that has totally overrun us. She would love you, too, and in those circumstances precisely in the way that suits
you best, because she would be free of die gnawing anger that you don’t have certain qualities which she also considers important. The only condition would be that you would really have to behave toward me as a friend; that doesn’t mean you have to understand me, for I don’t understand the cells in my brain either, although something far more intimate exists between us than understanding!... And you could contradict me with all your emotions and thoughts, but only in a certain way: for there are contradictions that are continuations, for example those within ourselves; we love ourselves along with them.

This seemed to Walter like a bucket being emptied down a flight of steps. What Ulrich said spread out and at some point had to stop; he, meanwhile, paced back and forth in the room but couldn’t wait for that to happen. He stopped and said: —I must interrupt you. I don’t want to either contradict you or
agree with you. I have no idea why you’re saying these things; it seems to me that you’re talking into the air. Both of us are some thirty years old, everything isn’t hovering in the air the way it was when we were nineteen, one is something, one has something/and everything you’re saying is infinitely humdrum. But what’s horrible is that I’ve had to promise Clarisse to send you out to see her today. Promise me that you’ll speak less unreasonably with her than with me!

—But for that I’d have to first promise that I’ll go. Today I don’t have the slightest desire to! Excuse me, I don’t feel well either.

—But you must say yes! It doesn’t matter to you, you can put up with it; but for days Clarisse has been in an alarming state. And on top of that I’ve let myself be guilty of a great mistake, repulsive, I assure you; one is sometimes like an animal. I’m worried about her! For a moment the memory
overwhelmed him. He had tears in his eyes and looked at Ulrich angrily through the tears. Ulrich placated him and promised to go.

—Go right now, Walter begged. —I had to leave her all upset. And he hurriedly told Ulrich that Meingast’s unexpected departure, which had strangely affected him too, had obviously shaken Clarisse, because since then she was strikingly changed. —You know what she’s like—Walter said, a veil of tears again and again running over his eyes—her whole nature keeps her from allowing something she doesn’t think right to prevail; letting things happen, which our whole civilization is full of, is for her a cardinal sin! He reported the incident with the newspaper, which he himself suddenly saw in a new light. Then he added softly that after Meingast’s departure, Clarisse had confessed to him that while he had been there she had often suffered from obsessive ideas, which all
added up to her regarding the entire peculiar progression to greatness that Meingast had gone through, since he had left them long ago as an ordinary young Lothario, as having their basis in his taking upon himself the sins of all the people with whom he came into contact and, it turned out, also the sins of Clarisse and Walter himself.

Ulrich must have looked involuntarily at his childhood friend in inquiry, for Walter instantaneously added a defense. —That only sounds unsettling, he asserted, but it hasn’t by any means gone too far. Everyone rises by taking on other people’s mistakes and improving them in himself. It was only that Clarisse had an unusually vehement intensity when such problems suddenly got hold of her, and a way of expressing them without making any concessions. —But if you knew her as well as I do, you would find that behind everything that seems strange in her there is an incomparable feeling for the
deepest questions of life! Love made him blind, while it made Clarisse transparent for him, all the way to the bottom, where one’s thoughts lie, while all distinctions between bright and stupid, healthy and sick minds take place in the shallower layers of what one says and does.

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After the scene with her husband, Clarisse had washed her whole body and run out of the house. The blue line of the edge of the woods attracted her; she wanted to crawl in. And while she was running, the sparkling, shining, drop-spraying of the white water was around her, like a hedgehog with outward-pointing needles. She was pursued by an obsessively irritating need for cleanliness. But when she had reached the woods, she plopped down between the first tree trunks behind the bushes at the edge. From there she looked straight into the small, dark, nostril-like open windows of her house,
and this already made her feel much better. The smell of herbs burned in the morning sun; growths tickled her; she was comforted by nature’s sticking, hard, hot inconsiderateness. She felt removed from the restrictiveness of her personal bonds. She could think. It had become obvious that Walter was being destroyed by the attraction she radiated; he hardly needed to sink much further than he had today. So it was up to her to make the sacrifice! (Clarisse got up and walked deeper into the woods.) What was it, this sacrifice? Such words pop up like a poem (but she wished to conceal herself with this word, in order to get behind it). The word “sacrifice” followed (first) the same way it followed that she bore within herself the soul of a murderer, and, especially after the scene with her husband, she had to assume that she also concealed in herself the soul of a satyr, a he-goat. Like is, after all, only attracted by like. But whoever sees must sacrifice himself: that
is the merciless law by which greatness lives. Clarisse began to understand; but at the same time that she realized that she bore within herself the soul of a he-goat, the fright that had rolled into her like a block of ice began to melt, and the excitement caused by the body and inhibited by the soul thawed out in her limbs. It was a marvelous condition. The contact with the bushes pressed deep into her nerves through her skin; the swelling of the moss under her soles, the twittering of the birds, became sensual and covered the interior of the world with something like the flesh of a fruit. —You will all deny me when you recognize me! Clarisse thought. As soon as that was thought, it also came to her that Walter would really have to learn to deny her, for that was the only way he could be freed from her. At this thought she was overcome by an immense sadness. —Everyone will deny me, she said once again. —And only when you have all denied
me will you be grown up. Only when you have all grown up will I return to you! she added. That was like the beginnings of splendid poems, whose second lines were already lost in an excess of excitement and beauty. Golgotha Song, she called it. A tension as if she would have to break out in a stream of tears at any moment accompanied this incredible achievement. What she admired most deeply was the incredible compulsion in this storm of freedom. —If I were only a little superstitious and not so hardy— she thought—I would really have to be afraid of myself! Her thoughts went now one way—as if she were only an instrument on which a strange and higher being were playing, her beautiful idol that gave her answers before she had managed to ask the questions, and built up ideas that came to her like the outlines of whole cities, so that she stopped in astonishment—and now another way, so that Clarisse herself seemed quite empty, a
feathery light something that had to restrain its steps with effort, for everything upon which her eye fell, or every recollection the ray of memory illuminated, led her hurriedly forward and handed her on to the next thing and the next idea, so that Clarisse’s thoughts seemed at times to be running alongside her, and a wild race with her body began, until the young woman in her mental alienation was forced to stop and, exhausted, throw herself into some berry bushes.

She had found a clearing into which the sun shone, and while she felt the warm earth on which she lay, she stretched herself out as if on a cross, and the nails of the sun’s rays penetrated her upward-turned hands.

She had left a note for Ulrich in the house, which said nothing but that she was waiting for him in the woods.

After the conversation with Walter, Ulrich had set out and had indeed found the
note. He automatically assumed that Clarisse was hiding somewhere and would make her presence known when he entered the woods. Oppressed by the hot morning, he set out (listlessly) on the path that they were accustomed to taking when they went to the woods, and when he did not find Clarisse, he pushed on at random farther into the forest. From everything Walter had said, what most stuck in his mind was the news that Clarisse was preoccupied with Moosbrugger. As far as he was concerned, Moosbrugger could have been long dead and hanged, for he had not thought about him for weeks, which was quite remarkable when he thought that not all that long ago the image of this crude figure of fantasy had been one of the focal points in his life. —One truly feels, as a so-called normal person—he told himself—just as incoherent as someone who is insane. The heat relaxed his collar and the pores of his face, and slowly entered and emerged from
his softened skin. Meeting Clarisse aroused no particularly pleasant expectations. What could he say to her? She had always been what one calls crazy without meaning it seriously; if she were now really to become so, she might perhaps be ugly and repellent, that would be simplest; but what if she was not repellent to him? No; Ulrich assumed that she would have to be. The deranged mind is ugly. In this way he suddenly almost tripped over her, for they both had spontaneously followed the direction of a broad path that was the continuation of the one that had led them to the woods. Clarisse, a patch of color among the colorful weeds and concealed from his glance, had seen him coming. She had quickly crawled out into his path and lay there. The many unconscious, manly, and resolute shifts in his face, which believed itself unobserved and was living in no more than vegetative rapport with the obstacles through which it was coming toward her,
gave her a marvelous sensation. Ulrich only stopped, surprised, when he discovered her lying almost directly beneath him, her smiling glance lifted up to him. She was not in the least ugly.

—We have to free Moosbrugger, Clarisse declared, after Ulrich had asked her to explain the sudden inspirations he had heard about. —If there’s no other way, we have to help him escape! Of course I know you’ll help me!

Ulrich shook his head.

—Then come! Clarisse said. —Let’s go deeper into the woods, where we’ll be alone. She had jumped up. The senselessly raging will that emanated from this small being was like clouds of unfamiliar insects buzzing and swarming among blackberry shoots exhalining their odors in the sun, inhuman but pleasant. —But you’re all hot! Clarisse exclaimed. —You’ll catch cold among the trees! She took
a kerchief from her warm body and swiftly threw it over his head; then she climbed up him, disappearing likewise under the kerchief, and, before he could throw her off, kissed him like a high-spirited little girl. Clarisse stumbled, and fell to a sitting position. —I haven’t forgiven you—Ulrich threatened grumingly— that during the time you were in love with this muddlehead Meingast I simply didn’t exist for you! —Oh? Clarisse answered. —You don’t understand. Meingast is homosexual. So you didn’t understand me at all!

—But what’s this chatter about redeeming all about? Ulrich asked severely. —That only blossomed because of him, didn’t it?

—Oh, I’ll explain that to you. Come! Clarisse assured him.

Ulrich started with what Walter had already told him.
—All right. But that’s not the main point. The main point is the bear.

—The bear?

—Yes; the pointed muzzle with the teeth that tear everything to pieces. I arouse the bear in all of you! Clarisse showed with a gesture what she meant, and smiled innocently. —But, Clarisse! —Of course! Clarisse said. —You deny me when I’m being honest! But even Walter believes that every person has an animal in him whom he resembles. From which he has to be redeemed. Nietzsche had his eagle, Walter and Moosbrugger have the bear.

—And I? Ulrich asked, curious.

—I don’t know yet.

—And you?

—I’m a he-goat with eagle’s wings.

So they wandered through the woods, eating berries now and then, heat and
hunger making them as dry as violin wood. Sometimes Clarisse broke off a small dry twig and handed it to Ulrich; he didn’t know whether to throw it away or keep it in his hand; as with children, when they do such things, there was something else behind it, for which there was no articulated notion. Now Clarisse stopped in the wilderness, and the light in her eyes shone. She declared: —Moosbrugger has committed a sexual murder, hasn’t he? What’s that? Desire separated in him from what’s human! But isn’t that the same in Walter too? And in you?

Moosbrugger has had to pay for it. Isn’t one obliged to help him? What do you say to that? From the foot of the trees came the smell of darkness, mushrooms, and decay, from above of sunlit fir twigs.

—Will you do that for me? Clarisse asked.
Ulrich again said no, and asked Clarisse to come back to the house.

She meandered along beside him and let her head droop. They had gone quite far from the path. —We’re hungry, Clarisse said, and pulled out a piece of old bread she was carrying in her pocket. She gave Ulrich some of it too. It produced a remarkably pleasant-unpleasant feeling, which quieted hunger and tortured thirst. —The mills of time grind dryly—Clarisse poetized—you feel grain after grain falling.

And it occurred to Ulrich without thinking about it much that among these totally meaningless annoyances he felt better than he had in a long time.

Clarisse set about once more to win him over. She would do it herself. She had a plan. She only needed a little money. And he would have to speak to Moosbrugger in her
stead, because she wasn’t allowed in the clinic anymore.

Ulrich promised. This derring-do fantasy filled up the time. He guarded himself against all consequences. Clarisse laughed.

As they were on the way home, chance had it that they caught up with a man leading a tame bear. Ulrich joked about it, but Clarisse grew serious and seemed to seek protection in the closeness of his body, and her face became deeply absorbed. As they passed the man and the bear, she suddenly called out: —I’ll tame every bear! It sounded like an awkward joke. But she suddenly reached for the bear’s muzzle, and Ulrich had difficulty pulling her back quickly enough from the startled, growling beast.

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The next time, Ulrich met Clarisse at the painter’s studio of friends of hers, where a
circle of people had gathered and was making music. Clarisse did not stand out in these surroundings; the role of odd man out fell to Ulrich instead. He had come reluctantly and felt repugnance among these people, who, contorted, were listening ecstatically. The transitions from charming, gentle, and soft to gloomy, heroic, and tumultuous, which the music went through several times within the space of a quarter hour, musicians don’t notice, because for them this progression is synonymous with music and therefore with something of the highest distinction!—but to Ulrich, who at the moment was not at all under the sway of the prejudice that music was something that had to be, this music seemed as badly motivated and unmediated in its progression as the carryings-on of a company of drunks that alternates periodically between sentimentality and fistfights. He had no intention of imagining what the soul of a great musician might be like and passing
judgment on it, but what was usually considered great music seemed to him much like a chest with a beautifully carved exterior and full of the contents of the soul, from which one has pulled out all the drawers, so that the contents he all jumbled together inside. He usually could not understand music as an amalgam of soul and form, because he saw too clearly that the soul of music, aside from rarely encountered pure music, is nothing but the conventional soul of Jack and Jill whipped to a frenzy.

He was, notwithstanding, supporting his head in both hands like the others; he just did not know whether it was because he was thinking of Walter or closing his ears a little. In truth, he was neither keeping his ears entirely closed nor thinking of Walter. He merely wanted to be alone. He did not often reflect about other people; apparently because he also rarely thought about himself as “a person.” He usually acted on the
opinion that what one thinks, feels, wants, imagines, and creates could, in certain circumstances, signify an enrichment of life; but what one is signifies under no circumstances more than a by-product of the process of this production. Musical people, on the other hand, are quite often of the opposite opinion. They do produce something, to which they apply the impersonal name of music, but what they produce consists for the most part, or at least for the part that is most important to them, of themselves, their sensations, emotions, and their shared experience. There is more momentary being and less lasting duration in their music, which among all intellectual activities is closest to that of the actor. This intensification, which he was being forced to witness, aroused Ulrich’s antipathy; he sat among these people like an owl among songbirds.

And of course Walter was his exact opposite. Walter thought passionately and a
great deal about himself. He took everything he encountered seriously. Because he encountered it; as if that were a merit that can make one thing into another. He was at every moment a complete individual and a complete human being, and because he was, he became nothing. Everybody had found him captivating, brought him happiness, and invited him to remain with them, with the end result that he had become an archivist or curator, had run aground, no longer has the strength to change, curses everyone, is contentedly unhappy, and goes off punctually to his office. And while he is in his office something will perhaps happen between Clarisse and Ulrich that could arouse in the person he is, if he should find out about it, an agitation as if the entire ocean of world history were pouring into it; while Ulrich, on the other hand, was far less agitated. But Clarisse, immediately after she had come in—Walter was not there—had sat down
beside Ulrich; with her back bent forward, her knees drawn up, in the darkness, for the lights had not yet been turned on, right after the first beats they heard she had spread her hand over his, as if they belonged together in the most intimate fashion. Ulrich had cautiously freed himself, and that was also a reason for supporting his head with both hands; but Clarisse, when she saw what he was up to, and saw him from the side sitting there just as moved as everyone else, had gently leaned against him, and she had been sitting that way for half an hour now. He was not happy either.

He knew that what he committed over and over was nothing but the opposite error from Walters. This error gave rise to a dissolution without a center; the person was subsumed in an aura; he ceased to be a thing, with all its limitations, as precious as they were accidental; at the highest degree of intensification he became so indifferent toward
himself that the human, as opposed to the supra-human, had no more significance than the little piece of cork to which is attached a magnet that draws it back and forth through a network of forces. At the last it had been like that for him with Agathe. And now—no, it was a calumny to put these things next to each other—but even between himself and Clarisse something was now “going on,” was under way, he had blundered into a realm of effects in which he and Clarisse were being moved toward each other by forces, forces that showed no consideration for whether, on the whole, they felt an inclination for each other or not.

And while Clarisse was leaning on him, Ulrich was thinking about Walter. He saw him before him in a particular way, as he often secretly saw him. Walter was lying at the edge of some woods, wearing short pants and unbecoming black socks, and in these socks had neither the muscular nor the
skinny legs of a man, but those of a girl, of a not very pretty girl, with smooth, unlovely legs. His hands crossed behind his head, he was looking at the landscape over which, one day, his immortal works would roll, and he radiated the feeling that talking to him would be an interruption. Ulrich really loved this image. In his youth, Walter had actually looked that way. And Ulrich thought: What has separated us is not the music—for he could quite well imagine a music rising as impersonally and beyond things and each-time-once-only as a trail of smoke that loses itself in the sky—but the difference in the attitude of the individual to music; it is this image that I love because it is left over, a remainder, while he surely loves it for the opposite reason, because it swallows up within itself everything that he might have become, until finally it became precisely Walter. —And really—he thought—all that is nothing but a sign of the times. Today socialism is
trying to declare the beloved private self to be a worthless illusion, which should be replaced by social causes and duties. But in this it had long since been preceded by the natural sciences, which dissolved precious private things into nothing but impersonal processes such as warmth, light, weight, and so forth. The object as a matter of importance to private individuals, as a stone that falls on their head or one they can buy in a gold setting, or a flower they smell, does not interest up-to-date people in the least; they treat it as a contingency or even as a “thing in itself,” that is, as something that is not there and yet is there, a quite foolish and ghostly personality of a thing. One might well predict that this will change, the way a man who deals daily with millions happens to take with great astonishment a single banknote in his hand; but then object and personality will have become something different. But meanwhile there exists a quite
comical juxtaposition. Morally, for instance, one still looks at oneself somewhat as physics looked at bodies three hundred years ago; they “fall” because they have the “quality” of avoiding heights, or they become warm because they contain a fluid: moralists are still attributing such good or bad qualities and fluids to people. Psychologically, on the other hand, one has already gone so far as to dissolve the person into typical bundles of typical averages of behavior. Sociologically, he is treated no differently. But musically, he is again made whole.

Suddenly the light was turned on. The final notes of the music were still swinging back and forth like a branch someone has just jumped off; eyes sparkled; and the silence before everyone started talking set in. Clarisse had promptly moved away from Ulrich, but now new groups formed, and she pulled him into a corner and had something to tell him.
—What is the extreme opposite of letting something prevail? she asked him. And since Ulrich did not respond, she herself gave the answer. —To impose oneself! The tiny figure stood elastically before him, her hands behind her back. But she tried to keep her eyes fixed on Ulrich’s, for the words she now had to look for were so difficult that they made her small body stagger. —Inscribe yourself onto something! I say. I thought of that before while we were sitting next to each other. Impressions are nothing; they press you in! Or a heap of earthworms. But when do you understand a piece of music? When you yourself create it inwardly! And when do you understand a person? When you do as he does. You see—with her hand she described an acute angle lying horizontally, which involuntarily reminded Ulrich of a phallus—our entire life is expression! In art, in love, in politics, we seek the active, the pointed form; I’ve already told you that it’s
the bear’s muzzle! No, I didn’t mean that impressions don’t mean anything: they’re the half of it; it’s marvelously in the word “redeem,” the active “re” and the “deem”; she became quite excited by the effort of making herself comprehensible to Ulrich.

But just then the music making started up again—it had been only a short intermission—and Ulrich turned away from Clarisse. He looked out at the evening through the large studio window. The eye first had to adjust to the darkness again. Then wandering blue clouds appeared in the sky. The tips of a tree reached up from below. Houses stood with their backs upward. —How should they stand otherwise? Ulrich thought with a smile, and yet there are minutes when everything appears topsy-turvy. He thought of Agathe and was unspeakably depressed. This new, small creature, Clarisse, at his side, was rushing forward at an unnatural speed. That was not a natural process, he
was quite clear about that. He considered her
crazy. There could be no talk of love. But
while behind his back the music seemed to
him like a circus, it pleased him to imagine
running alongside a circling horse jumping
hurdles, with Clarisse standing on it erect
and shouting “Aie-ya” and cracking her
whip.
She comes upon Walter in the “studio”; bare, chilly space. He is half-dressed and has a dressing gown on. The brushes are dry, he is sitting over some sketches. He really should have been at the office already.

He is irritated that Meingast went off without saying good-bye, and Clarisse is secretly excited. Possibly here: He really wanted... as long as Meingast was in the house ...

Already from the doorway Clarisse called out to him: Come, come! We’re going to Dr. Friedenthal to ask him to entrust Moosbrugger’s care to us.
Walter can’t turn his head away from her and looks at her.

Don’t ask! Clarisse commands.

Could Walter have any more doubts at this moment that her mind was disturbed? The answer to this question will always be quite dependent on the circumstances. Clarisse looked impetuous and beautiful. The fire in her eyes looked exactly like that of a healthy will. And so what her brother Siegmund had said of her, and had recently repeated when Walter again asked him about it, took hold of Walter: She is excessively nervous, you just have to grab her vigorously.

But for the moment it was Clarisse who was doing the vigorous grabbing: She hopped around Walter incessantly, repeating: Come, come, come! Don’t make me have to ask you!
The words seemed to fly around Walter’s ears, they confused him. One might have said that he was laying back his ears and digging his feet into the ground the way a horse, a donkey, a calf does, with the obstinacy that is the weak creature’s strength of will: but to him it represented itself in the form: Now you’ll show her who’s master!

“Just come along,” Clarisse said, “then you’ll see why!”

“No,” exclaimed Walter. “You’ll tell me right this instant what you’re up to!”

“What I’m up to? I’m up to something weird.” She had meanwhile begun to gather up in the neighboring room what she needed to go out; now she pulled off her gardening gloves, held them in her hand for a moment, and with a sudden heave flung them among her husband’s paint and brush jars. Something fell over, something rolled, something clattered. Clarisse observed the
effect on Walter and burst out laughing. Walter got red in the face; he had no desire to hit her but was ashamed of this very lack. Clarisse went on laughing and said: You’ve been crouching over these jars for a year and a day and haven’t produced a thing. I’ll show you how it’s done. I’ve told you I’ll bring out your genius. I’ll make you restless, impatient, daring!” Suddenly she was quiet and said seriously: “It’s weird, putting oneself on the same level as the insane, but it’s resolving for genius! Do you believe that we’ll ever amount to anything the way we’ve been going along? Among these jars that are all so nicely round and picture frames that are so nicely rectangular? And with music after supper! Why, then, were all gods and goddesses antisocial?”

Antisocial? Walter asked in astonishment.

If you must be precise: uncriminally antisocial. Because they weren’t thieves or
murderers. But humility, voluntary poverty, and chastity are also the expression of an antisocial mentality. And how otherwise could they have taught mankind how the world is to be improved but have denied the world for themselves?

Now Walter was so constituted that in spite of his initial astonishment he was capable of finding this assertion correct. It reminded him of the question: “Can you imagine Jesus as director of a mine?” A question that would obviously have to be answered simply and naturally “no,” if one could not just as well say “official of the Bureau for Monuments” in place of “mine director,” and if one didn’t feel the accompanying flash of a ridiculously warm spark of ambition. Obviously there was not only a contradiction but a more profound incompatibility separating two world systems between nurturing the middle class and nurturing the divine, but Walter, despite his already long-determined
inclination to the middle class, wanted both, or wanted, what is even worse, to renounce neither, and Clarisse possessed what he had once already felt as “calling upon God,” the decisiveness of a resolve that shows no consideration for anything. And so it happened that after she had spoken, he felt exactly as she had said, as if he were jammed up to his knees into the life he had created for himself, like a wedge in a block of wood, while she flitted about in front of him as the restless, impatient, daring one who was experimenting with him. As a man of many talents, he knew that genius lay not so much in talent as in willpower. To the person being overtaken by paralysis, which he intuitively understood himself to be, it seemed related to the fermenting, the must, indeed even to the mere foam. He enviously recognized in her the improbable, the zigzag dots of variations around the mean, the creature that at the edge of the crowd half goes along ahead of it
and is half lost within it, which lies in the notion of genius. Clarisse was the only person in whom he loved this, who still linked him to it, and because her association with genius was pathological, his fear for her was also a fear for himself. This was how the desire not to listen to her, indeed to show her “the man,” as Siegmund, the brother and physician, had advised him to do, arose out of his assent to the words with which she was persuading him and explaining her intention, and out of her powerful charm in pleasing him, which she exercised in an apparently natural way and without any awareness of contradiction.

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So after a short pause Walter said rather roughly: “But now be reasonable, Clarisse, stop that nonsense and come over here!” Clarisse had meanwhile taken off her clothes and was in the process of drawing a cold bath. In her short panties and with her thin
arms, she looked like a boy. She felt the stale warmth of Walters body close behind her and immediately understood what he was after. She turned around and put her hand on his chest. But Walter reached out to grab her. With one hand he held her arm, and sought with the other to grasp her by the crotch and pull her to him. Clarisse tore at the embrace, and when that didn’t help shoved her free hand into Walters face, into his nose and mouth. His face turned red and the blood trembled in his eyes while he struggled with Clarisse, but he did not want to let her see that she was hurting him. And when he threatened to suffocate, he had to strike her hand from his face. Quick as lightning she went at it again, and this time her nails tore two bleeding furrows in his skin. Clarisse was free.

They stood this way opposite each other. Neither of them tried to speak. Clarisse was startled by her cruelty, but she was
beside herself. Some intervention from above had torn her out of herself; she was totally turned to the outside, a bush full of thorns. She was in ecstasy. None of the thoughts that had preoccupied her for weeks was any longer in her mind; she had even forgotten what she had just been talking about and what it was she wanted. Her whole self was gone, with the exception of what she needed to defend herself. She felt incredibly strong. Just then Walter again snatched at her, this time with all his strength. He had become angry and feared nothing in the whole world so much as becoming rational again. Clarisse struck at him. She was instantly ready to scratch again, to bite, to knee him in the groin or shove her elbow in his mouth, and it was not even anger or dislike that determined this, let alone any rational consideration; rather, in some wild way, this struggle made her like him, even though she was ready to kill him. She wanted to bathe in
his blood. She did so with her nails and with the short glances, which, shocked, followed his efforts and the small red gutters that opened up on his face and hands. Walter cursed. He swore at her. Vulgar words, which had no relation to his usual self, came from his mouth. Their pure, undiluted masculinity smelled like brandy, and the need for common, insulting speech suddenly revealed itself to be just as primeval as the need for tenderness. Apparently what was coming out was nothing but a grudge against all the higher ambition that had tortured and humiliated him for decades and was finally raising its head against him once more in Clarisse. Of course he had no time to think about this. But he still felt distinctly that he was not merely on the point of breaking her will because Siegmund had advised him that way, but was also doing it on account of the breaking and snapping itself. In some fashion the ridiculously beautiful motions of a
flamingo went through his mind. ‘We’ll see what’s left after a bulldog gets hold of it!’ was his thought about the flamingo mind, but what he muttered half aloud between his teeth was: “Stupid goose!”

And Clarisse, too, was inspired by the one idea: “He can’t be allowed to have his way!” She felt her strength still growing. Her clothes tore, Walter seized the shreds, she seized hold of the neck in front of her. Half naked, slippery as a wriggling fish, she struggled in her husband’s arms. Walter, whose strength was not sufficient simply to overpower her, flung her to and fro and painfully sought to block her attacks. She had lost her shoe and kicked at him with her bare foot. They fell. They both appeared to have forgotten the goal of their struggle and its sexual origin, and were fighting only to assert their will. In this utmost, convulsive gathering of their selves they really disappeared. Their perceptions and thoughts
gradually took on a totally indefinable texture, as in a blinding light. They almost felt amazement at still being alive / that their selves were still there.

Clarisse especially was worked up to such a pitch that she felt insensitive to the pain inflicted on her, and when she came to herself again this intoxicated her in the conviction that the same spirits that had recently illuminated her were now standing by her in her mission and fighting on her side. So she was all the more horrified when she was forced to notice that with time she was growing fatigued. Walter was stronger and heavier than she; her muscles became numb and lax. There were pauses where his weight pressed her to the ground and she could not defend herself, and the succession of defensive maneuvers and ruthless attacks against sensitive face and body parts, during which she caught her breath, were succeeded more and more frequently by powerlessness and
suffocating poundings of her heart. So that what Walter had anticipated happened: nature conquered, Clarisse’s body left her mind in the lurch and defended its will no longer. It seemed to her as if she were hearing within herself the cocks crowing on the Mount of Olives: incredibly, God was abandoning her world, something was about to happen that she could not divine. And at moments Walter was already ashamed of himself. Like a bolt of lightning, remorse struck him. It also seemed to him that Clarisse looked horribly distorted. But he had already risked so much that he no longer wanted to stop. To continue anesthetizing himself, he used the excuse that the brutality he was exercising was his right as a husband. Suddenly Clarisse screamed. She made an effort to utter a long, shrill, monotone cry as she saw her will escaping, and in this final, desperate defense it was in her mind that with this cry and what remained of her will
she could perhaps slip out of her body. But she no longer had much breath left; the cry did not last long and brought no one rushing in. She was left alone. Walter was alarmed at her cry but then angrily intensified his efforts. She felt nothing. She despised him. Finally, she thought of an expedient: she counted as quickly and as loudly as she could: “One, two, three, four, five. One, two, three, four, five,” over and over. Walter found it horrible, but it did not stop him.

And when they separated and straightened up, in a daze she said: “Just wait. I’ll have my revenge!”
NEW IDEAS ABOUT THE CLARISSE-WALTER-ULRICH COMPLEX

To make Clarisse human, use the problem of genius. Or instead of genius, one can also say: the will to greatness, to goodness. A miserable Prometheus. Genius in that case about the same thing: a person who is an exception. The person who sees the errors, sees what is out of joint in the world, and has the will not to let the matter drop. In her case she doesn’t have the strength.

This defines part of Walters problem: what has to happen if the strength is lacking? —island, discussion.
The fact already that she always clung to older men!

The relation to her parents: here she learned to see the world as exception to her. —[Part] I, or wherever her early history is recounted.

The whole development of her insanity would then fall—which makes Clarisse more human and motivates the conclusion—under the tide: Struggle for Walter as struggle for genius.

In order not to have to speak of Ulrich: she gave him a name, from the beginning. The leader? The Buddha? The Great One? The Eternal One? The Mysterious One? The Redeemer? — Or several names? The Beloved? The Healthy One? The Great Friend?

*Clarisse in Rome*
Clarisse, however, could not bear to stay in Rome long. Even the square in front of the railway station, with its palm trees, its shops, and the proximity of big hotels, repelled her.

Nevertheless, she walked to the center of the city and checked into a small albergo. In the meantime her impression had changed. The evening sky was orange almost to the zenith; the trees stood black and feathered before it. The air in the Ludovisi quarter, that unique, deliciously light mixture of sea and mountain air, refreshed her. She inhaled the acquaintance of a new strength. Prophecy of fascism. She began to notice the pretentious splendor of the elevated private gardens that rested on walls five to eight yards high above the heads of ordinary pedestrians, and the giant gates and high windows, which in this neighborhood were a feature even of the apartment buildings. Behind a park wall a donkey brayed. —How the donkeys bray here! Clarisse
thought. —Differently from home. They don’t go “hee-haw,” they go “ya”! It was a metallic, persisting trumpet call. She thought she could tell at first glance that there were no philistines in this city. Or there were, but a whirling energy threatened them. As she approached the center, everything was full of energy, rush, and noise: cars raced unpredictably around corners and crossed the plazas on unpredictable paths; bicyclists cheerfully and at risk of their lives teemed their way through between them; from the bursting trams clusters of young men who were trying to ride hung like grapes, clinging to each other in bold and impossible positions. Clarisse felt that this was a city after her own temperament, she was experiencing such a place for the first time. At night she could not sleep because a small bar had placed its tables in the narrow alley under her windows; people sang popular songs into the early morning and after every verse screamed a cheerfully
dissonant refrain. This completely electrified Clarisse. Although it was still relatively early in the year, it was already quite warm, and Clarisse got diarrhea from the heat; it was an enchanting state, as light as elder pith, fledged, and fatiguingly exciting.

Clarisse ordered all the impressions Rome made on her under the color red. When she thought back to her experiences in the sanatorium they had changed from a wa-tery green, a color belonging to the present, the color of the German woods, into this red, which had been the red of the processions in her imagination; but it must be said that Clarisse did not clearly remember the experiences that had driven her to make this journey, but had the clear feeling of running from a green state into one that was glowing red. Unfortunately, it was quite impossible for Clarisse to hit upon the idea that she was suffering from mad delusions. For green states even have their composers, who set
them to music; these days sounds are painted, poems form sensory spaces, thoughts are danced: this is a vague kind of associating that has become popular because thinking has lost its authority; it’s about one eighth sensible and seven eighths nonsensical, and Clarisse could still regard herself as being very cautious and deliberate. So it was with calm, anticipatory attentive-ness that she found herself on the way from a green state into a red one.

On an excursion through Rome’s palaces she encountered the marvelous, totally red portrait of Innocent X by Velazquez; the sight shot through her like a bolt of lightning. Now she saw clearly that this burning color of life, red, was at the same time the color of Christianity, which, in Nietzsche’s phrase, had given classical Eros poison to drink, the color of ascesis and inculpation of the senses. —Oh my friends—Clarisse thought—you will not catch me! Her
heart beat as if she had recognized a mortal danger at the last moment. She had discovered the ambivalent countenance of this city. It was the city of the Pope, and she remembered that Nietzsche had attempted to live here and had fled. She went to the house where he had lived. She took in nothing. The house was “spiritually closed.” She walked home smiling, outwitting this city at every step. It was a double city. Here the dark pessimism of Christianity flared up to cardinal red, and here the blackness of insanity had flowed into Nietzsche’s red blood. But what she thought was not so important to Clarisse; the main thing was the smiling ambivalence in everything she saw. She went past palaces, excavations, and museums; she had still seen only the least part of them, and her impressions had not sunk to the measure of reality; she had assumed that the most marvelous treasures of the world were here set up side by side, but they were laid out like
a bait; she had to remove this beauty from its hook very, very carefully. And everything that is beautiful in youth depends on the things around which people circle having one aspect that is known only to oneself.

In some way or other, the idea had seized Clarisse that she had to take up the mission at which Nietzsche had failed here in a different way, by beginning with the north. Evening had come. Once more she looked out the window of her small room: in the bar below, the first guests were already beginning to shout and sing, and if you leaned your body way out—above their heads, like a northern gargoyle—and craned your neck, you could see the round serrated shape of a gray church standing like a tiara before the still-darker gray of the night.

From what remained of her money she bought a ticket that took her back to one of the small towns through which she had passed on her way down. An unerring feeling
told her at the railway station that it was not the right place. She went on by the next train. In this way Clarisse traveled for three days and four nights. On the fourth morning she was traveling along a seacoast and found a place that held her fast. With no money, she went into the hotels. This fact, that she had no money, was quite sudden and very peculiar; she made a rather long speech to the people in the hotels, in order to get them to serve her, and they listened politely but without understanding; then she hit upon the idea, because Walter was not to know where she was staying, of appealing to Ulrich. she sent him a long telegram in German.

*Clarisse—Island*

That Clarisse appealed to Ulrich was not only due to her needing money and wanting to keep her whereabouts concealed from
Walter. Involved as well was an “I mean you,” a grasping with rays of feeling across mountains and far distances. Clarisse had come to the conviction that she was in love with Ulrich. That was not quite so simple as such a thing can be. She explained the horrible scene between the two of them that had upset her so, and everything that preceded it, by saying that at the time it had been too soon for Ulrich; it was only now that he was in the right spot in the system of her imaginings (but that is love, when a person finds himself in the right spot in the system of our imaginings), and the energy of the whole was streaming toward him in a way that was unheard of. Wherever his name fell, the earth melted. When she uttered it her tongue was like a wisp of sun in a mild rain. Clarisse explored her new surroundings. They consisted of a small island pitched close to the mainland, bearing an old fort left half open, and a gigantic sandbank that pushed out from this
island farther into the sea and that with its trees and bushes formed a large empty second island, belonging to Clarisse alone when she had herself rowed over there. It seemed people did not have much confidence in its stability, for although there was an old hut on it in which to store nets and other fishing gear, this hut, too, was abandoned and decayed, and there were no other signs of settlement or division of possessions. Wind, waves, white sand, sharp grasses, and all sorts of small animals lived here freely together; the resonance of water, earth, and sky was as empty and loud as tin banging on tin.

The inhabited island behind it boasted high, fortified walls overgrown with green; cannons that did not intimidate but, wrapped in sailcloth, looked astonishingly like prehistoric animals; moats, near which were unbelievably large rats; and in the midst of the rats running around in broad
daylight there was a small tavern shaped like a cube, with a four-sided pyramid for a roof, under shaggy trees. There Clarisse had taken a room for herself and Ulrich. The house was also the canteen for the fort, and all day long dark-blue soldiers with yellow stripes on their sleeves stood around nearby. One did not have the feeling of people going about life but rather felt an oppression, which emptied the heart, as if before a deportation or something similar. The young men too, strolling with rifles on their arms in front of the cannons wrapped in sails, reinforced this impression: who had put them there? Where, at what distance, was the brain of this madness that expressed itself in a joyless, pedantic automatism preserved in cata-tonic rigidity?

It was the right island for Ulrich and Clarisse, and Ulrich baptized it the “Island of Health,” because every fit of madness seemed bright against its dark background.
He had received Clarisse’s telegram in the night when he came home and was crossing his garden. In the light of a lamp on the white wall of his house he had torn open the dispatch and read it, because he thought it came from Agathe. It was already the end of May. But the May night was like a belated March night; the stars looked down sharply, withdrawn to their heights, icily crisp out of the unilluminated, infinitely remote canopy of the sky. The telegram’s sentences were long and confused, but held together by a rhythm of excitement. When Clarisse turned her back on the small military middle of her island, loneliness stretched before her like the desert of the anchorite. Connected with this idea of retiring from the world was an overloud, unchanging emotional tone full of covetous horror, something like the final purification and trial on the path of the “great one.” The adultery to which she had condemned herself would have to be
consummated on this island as on a cross, for a cross on which she had to lay herself was what the empty sand over there across the waves, trodden by no one, seemed to her to be. Something of all this came through in the telegram. Ulrich guessed that the great disorder had now really overtaken Clarisse, but that was precisely what suited him.

In their small inn they had a room that contained barely the most indispensable furniture, but a chandelier of Venetian glass hung from the center of the ceiling, and large mirrors in broad glass frames that were painted with flowers hung on the walls. In the mornings they went over to the Island of Health, which hovered in the air like a mirage, and from there they looked back on the inhabited island, which, with its cannons, embrasures, serrations, and little houses and trees, lay there like a round, perfect, exiled word that has lost the connection to its discourse.
Clarisse arrives while Agathe and Ulrich are still together. Stays 1-3 days in the hotel, during which time she seeks and finds her island. This is when she tells the Moosbrugger story. Invites Ulrich to the island (or Ulrich and Agathe) and Ulrich comes over. Spends half a day with her. Her hut, etc.

So it apparently goes not as far as intercourse but only to Clarisse’s readiness. This is the way to utilize the material from the old coitus scene.
Something like:

[I] Agathe has left only a few lines in a note. Contents?

[II] Shortly thereafter Walter arrives toward evening. Ulrich spontaneously: Did you see Agathe? That did not happen. But that Agathe had been there until just now calms his jealousy. Walter, somewhat paunchy belly.

Ulrich takes him to Clarisse. Clarisse is sitting somewhere on the beach. Ulrich hadn’t been paying attention to her. Walter feels profound solidarity with the ill and abandoned.

They enter the fishermen’s hut. It looks as if the three of them had lived there. They
arrange things for the three of them. Walter doesn’t say anything about it; acts *as if it is a self-explanatory matter of being chaperon.

[III] How does Clarisse take this? — That also depends on what came before (Island I), which is still undetermined.

Idea: She confesses. If there had been intercourse with Ulrich, that way; but more probably (because of Agathe’s proximity) coitus is only to be reduced to hints, a half seduction of Ulrich by Clarisse. So nothing took place, and it also makes the scene stronger if she confesses made-up sins and Ulrich listens. Usable as climax: suddenly or by degrees, the powerful sexual arousal turns into the mystic emotion of transfigured union with God, which is almost unimaginable.

Walter doubtless does not believe, Ulrich makes him a sign, but still there is something
credible in it, as if its not being true were merely accidental.

[IV] In order to leave Clarisse alone while she gets undressed, they go outside, then toward the beach. Walter says, because he is jealous: it is madness to doubt a person’s faithfulness. There are situations in which one is quite properly uncertain. In the half-light he looks at Ulrich from the side. But you must have the courage to let yourself be deceived. That is the way a bullet must sometimes heal over without being removed. Out of this deception that you encapsulate within yourself something great can arise. It’s a matter not only of faithfulness between man and wife but also of other values. He did not say: greatness, but that’s what he was probably thinking. He seemed important to himself, and above all manly, because he wasn’t making a scene and forcing Ulrich to confess the truth. Somehow he was grateful
to fate for this great trial. Transitionally or combined with:

[V] They sit down by the edge of the melancholy of the evening sea.

She was the star of my life! Walter said.

But Ulrich starts at contact with the word faithfulness. He’s not nearly as magnanimous as Walter.

[VI] Walter now picks up on star of my life, develops it.

Now it is sinking into night; what is to become of me? At this moment he has this sense of self-importance they had when they were young. He steps outside himself: I am at a critical juncture. You have no idea what I’ve had to fight through and suffer this past year. In the last analysis my whole life has been a battle. Fought like a madman / fought day and night with a dagger in my fist. But
does it mean anything? I think I have now come so far as really to be the man I wanted to be; but is there any sense in it? Do you believe that the way things are today, we could really carry out anything at all of what we desired as young people?

Ulrich sat there in a dark-blue wool fisherman’s sweater; he had lost weight, which only emphasized the breadth of his shoulders and the muscular power of his arms, which, leaning forward, he had rested on his knees—and he wanted most of all to howl at this crepuscular comradeship. He replied gloomily: Don’t talk to me about your victories. You were beaten and finally you want to throw up without being embarrassed. You’re now in your early thirties, and at forty everyone is through. At fifty everyone sees himself contented in life and soon after that will have all his troubles behind him. The only people who have it good are the ones who seek refuge in conformity! That’s
the wisdom of life! The best part is reserved for those who are defeated! And nothing is worse than being alone!

He was dejected. His crassness did not prevent Walter from noticing it.

[Visit to the Madhouse]

What met her eyes was, in any event, peculiar enough: a game of cards.

Moosbrugger, in dark everyday clothes, was sitting at a table with three men, one of whom was wearing a doctors white smock, the second a business suit, and the third the rather threadbare cassock of a priest; aside from these four figures around the table, and their wooden chairs, the room was empty, except for the three high windows that looked out over the garden. The four men looked up as Clarisse came toward them, and Friedenthal performed the introductions.
Clarisse made the acquaintance of a young intern at the clinic, his mentor, and a doctor who had come to visit, from whom she found out that he had been one of the experts who had declared Moosbrugger sane at his court hearings. The four were playing three-man games, so that one was always sitting watching the others play. The sight of a cozy, ordinary game of cards dashed, for the moment, all Clarisse’s ideas. She had been prepared for something horrifying, even if only that she would have been led endlessly farther through such half-empty rooms in order finally to be mysteriously informed that Moosbrugger was once again not to be seen; and after everything she had been through in the last few weeks, and especially today, all she could feel now was an extraordinary sense of oppression. She did not grasp that this card game had been arranged with the others by Dr. Friedenthal in order that Moosbrugger could be observed at leisure; it
seemed to her like devils playing with a soul in an ignoble fashion, and she thought she was in empty, icy tracts of hell. To her horror, Moosbrugger stood up straight and gallantly came up to her; Friedenthal introduced him too, and Moosbrugger took her unsteady hand in his paw and made a quick, silent bow, like a big adolescent.

After that was done, Friedenthal asked that they please not disturb themselves and explained that the lady had come from Chicago to study the organization of the clinic and would certainly find that there was no other place in the world where the guests were treated so well.

"Spades were played, not diamonds, Herr Moosbrugger!" said the physician, who had been observing his protégé reflectively. In truth, Moosbrugger had enjoyed Friedenthal’s referring to him, in the presence of these strangers, as a guest of the clinic and not as a patient. Savoring this made
him misread the cards, but because of the game he overlooked the reproach with a magnanimous smile. Ordinarily he played more carefully than a hawk. It was his ambition to lose to his learned opponents only through the luck of the cards, never by playing worse than they did. But this time he also, after a while, allowed himself to count his tricks in English, which he could do up to thirty even if it interfered with his game, and he had understood that Clarisse came from America. Indeed, a little later he put his cards down entirely, pressed his fists against the table, leaned his strong back so broadly backward that the wood embracing it creaked, and began an involved story about his time in prison. “Take my word for it, gentlemen—” he began, because he knew from experience: if you want to get anywhere with women you have to act as if you aren’t even aware of their existence, at least in the
beginning; that had brought him success with them every time.

The young asylum physician listened to Moosbrugger’s bombastic story with a smile; in the priest’s face regret struggled with cheerfulness, while the visiting doctor, who was playing, and who had almost brought Moosbrugger to the gallows, encouraged him from time to time with sarcastic interruptions. The giant’s proud but ordinarily basically decent manner of conducting himself had made him a comfortable presence to them. What he said made sense, even if not always in exactly the right places; the spiritual counselor in particular had come to like him sinfully well. When he reminded himself of the brutal crimes of which this man of lamblike piety was capable, he mentally crossed himself in fright, as if he had surprised himself in some reprehensible negligence, humbled himself before the inscrutability of God, and said to himself that such a
vexed and complicated affair was best left to God’s will. That this will was being manipulated by the two doctors like two levers working against each other, without its being for the moment apparent which was the stronger, was not unbeknownst to the man of the cloth.

A cheerful antagonism prevailed between the two doctors. When Moosbrugger lost the thread of his story for a moment he was interrupted by the older man, the visitor, Dr. Pfeifer, with the words: “Enough talking, Moosbrugger, back to the cards, otherwise the Herr Intern will arrive at his diagnosis too soon!” Moosbrugger immediately replied with subservient eagerness: “If you want to play, Doctor, we can play again!” Clarisse heard this with astonishment. But the younger of the two doctors smiled, unmoved. It was an open secret that he was trying to arrive at an unassailable clinical picture of Moosbrugger’s inability to be held
accountable for his actions. This doctor was blond and looked ordinary and unsentimental, and the traces of fraternity dueling scars did not exactly make his face any more cultured; but the self-confidence of youth made him advocate the clinical view of Moosbrugger’s guilt, and his requisite punishment, with a zeal that scorned the customary detachment. He would not have been able to say precisely in what this clinical view consisted. It was just different. In this view, for example, an ordinary bout of intoxication is a genuine mental disorder that heals by itself; and that Moosbrugger was in part an honorable man, in part a sex murderer, signified, as this view had it, competing drives, for which it was a matter of course that he had to reach a decision according to whether the stronger or the more sustained drive was uppermost at the moment. If others wanted to call that free will or a good or evil moral
decision, that was their affair. “Whose deal?” he asked.

It developed that it was his turn to cut and deal the cards. While he was doing this, Dr. Pfeifer turned to Clarisse to ask what interest had brought his “esteemed colleague” here. Dr. Friedenthal raised his hand to ward off the question and advised: “For heaven’s sake, don’t mention anything about psychiatry: there’s no word in the German language this doctor wants to hear less!” This was true, and had the advantage of allowing the unauthorized visitor to appear to the others to be a doctor without Friedenthal having to say so expressly. He smiled contentedly. Dr. Pfeifer left off the banter with a flattered grin. He was a somewhat older little man, whose skull was flat on top and sloped out and down at the back and was festooned with wisps of unkempt hair and beard. The nails on his fingers were oily from cigarettes and cigars, and retained around the edges a
narrow rim of dirt, although in medical fashion they appeared to be cut quite short. This could now be clearly seen because in the meantime the players had picked up their cards and were carefully sorting them. “I pass,” Moosbrugger declared; “I play,” Dr. Pfeifer; “Good,” the young doctor; this time the cleric was looking on. The game was languid and ran its uneventful course.

Clarisse, who was standing to one side next to Friedenthal, hidden slightly behind him, raised her mouth to his ear and, indicating Moosbrugger with her glance, whispered: “All he ever had was ersatz women!”

“Shh, for heaven’s sake!” Friedenthal whispered back imploringly, and to cover the indiscretion stepped up to the table and asked aloud: “Who’s winning?” “I’m losing,” Pfeifer declared. “Moosbrugger was lying in wait! Our young colleague won’t take any advice from me; there’s no way I can convince
him that it’s a fatal error for doctors to believe sick criminals belong in their hospitals.” Moosbrugger grinned. Pfeifer went on joking and picked up the skirmishing with Friedenthal where it had broken off; there was no point going on with the game anyway. “You yourself,” he pleaded ironically, “ought to be telling a young Hippocrates like this, when the occasion arises, that trying to cure evil people medically is a Utopia and, moreover, nonsense, for evil is not only present in the world but also indispensable for its continuation. We need bad people; we can’t declare them all sick.”

“You’re out of tricks,” the calm young doctor said, and put down his cards. This time the cleric, looking on, smiled. Clarisse thought she had understood something. She became warm. But Pfeifer looked loathsome. “It’s a nonsensical utopia,” he joked. She was at a loss. Presumably it was only the undignified game of devils playing for a soul. Pfeifer
had lit a fresh cigar, and Moosbrugger was dealing the cards. For the first time he looked over at Clarisse for a moment, and then he was asked for his response to the others’ bids.

This time the intern was odd man out. He seemed to have been waiting for the opportunity, and very slowly pulled his thoughts together in words. “For a scientist,” he said, “there is nothing that does not have its basis in a law of nature. So if a person commits a crime without any rational external motive, it must mean he has an inner one. And that’s what I have to be on the lookout for. But it’s not subtle enough for Dr. Pfeifer.” That was all he said. He had turned red, and looked around with amiable annoyance. The cleric and Dr. Friedenthal laughed; Moosbrugger laughed the same way they did and threw a lightning glance at Clarisse. Clarisse said suddenly: “A person can also have unusual rational motives!” The intern
looked at her. Pfeifer agreed: “Our colleague is quite right. And you are really betraying a criminal nature just by assuming that there are also rational motives for a crime!” “Oh, nonsense!” the younger man retorted. “You know exactly what I’m talking about.” And again to Clarisse: “I’m speaking as a doctor. Splitting words may have a place in philosophy or somewhere else, but I find it repulsive!”

Whenever he was entrusted with preparing a faculty report, he was known for getting angry and upset at the concessions he was expected to make to an unmedical way of thinking and at the unnatural questions to which he was expected to respond. Justice is not a scientific concept any more than the concepts derived from it are, and the doctor associates quite different ideas than does the lawyer with “deserving of punishment,” “free will,” “use of reason,” “derangement of the senses,” and all such things that determine
the destiny of countless people. Since the lawyer, for whatever reasons, will neither dispense with the doctor nor yield to his judgment, which is understandable, medical experts who testify in court not seldom resemble little children forbidden by an older sister to speak in their natural way, even though at the same time she commands them to do so and then waits for the truth to emerge from their childish mouths. So it was not from any emotional sentimentality but from pure ambition and cutting zeal for his discipline that the young researcher with the dueling scars was inclined to exclude the persons in his report as much as possible from the court’s cerebral cortex, and since this had a chance of succeeding only when these persons could be classified quite clearly and distinctly under a recognized category of disease, he was in Moosbrugger’s case also collecting everything that pointed to one. But Dr. Pfeifer did exactly the opposite, although
he only occasionally came to the clinic to inquire after Moosbrugger, like a sportsman who, once his own match is over, will sit on the rostrum and watch the others. He was recognized as an outstanding expert, even if a rather odd one, on the nature of mentally ill criminals. His practice as a physician could be called at most complaisant, and that only with the accompaniment of disrespectful statements against the value of his discipline. He lived mostly from a modest but steady income from testifying as an expert witness, for he was very popular in the courts on account of his sympathy for the tasks of justice. He was so much the expert (which also earned him Friedenthal’s benevolence) that out of sheer scientism he denied his science, indeed denigrated human knowledge in general. Basically, perhaps, he did this only because in this fashion he could abandon himself without restraint to his personal inclinations, which goaded him to treat with great
skill every criminal whose mental health was questionable, like a ball that was to be guided through the holes of science to the goal of punishment. All kinds of stories were told about him, and Friedenthal, doubtless fearing that the usual conversation between the two adversaries might well erupt in a quarrel that was better left unheard this time, quickly seized the initiative by turning to Clarisse right after the young doctor and explaining to her what he understood by “splitting words.” “According to the opinion of our esteemed guest Dr. Pfeifer,” he said with a soothing glance and smile, “no one is capable of deciding whether a person is guilty. We doctors can’t because guilt, being held accountable for one’s actions, and all those things aren’t medical concepts at all, and judges can’t because without some knowledge of the important connections between body and mind, there is no way of arriving at a judgment about such questions
either. It’s only religion that unambiguously demands personal responsibility before God for every sin, so ultimately such questions always become questions of religious conviction.” With these last words he had directed his smile at the pastor, hoping by this teasing to give the conversation a harmless turn. The priest did turn slightly red in the face and smiled back in confusion, and Moosbrugger expressed by an unmistakable growl his complete approval of the theory that he belonged before God’s tribunal and not psychiatry’s. But suddenly Clarisse said: “Perhaps the patient is here because he is standing in for someone else.”

She said this so quickly and unexpectedly that it got lost; several astonished glances brushed her, from whose face the color had drained except for two red spots, and then the conversation proceeded on its previous course.
“That’s not entirely so,” Dr. Pfeifer responded, and laid down his cards. “We can’t even talk clearly about what it means to say I’m speaking as a doctor,’ about which our colleague has such a high opinion. A ‘case’ that occurred in life is placed before us in the clinic; we compare it with what we know, and the rest, simply everything we don’t know, simply our lack of knowledge, is the delinquent’s responsibility. Is that the way it is, or isn’t it?”

Friedenthal shrugged his shoulders in statesmanlike fashion, but remained silent.

‘That’s the way it is,” Pfeifer repeated. “Despite all the pomp of justice and science, despite all hairsplitting, despite our wigs of split hairs, the whole business finally just comes down to the judge saying: 1 wouldn’t have done that’ and to us psychiatrists adding: ‘Our mentally disturbed patients wouldn’t have behaved that way’! But the fact that our concepts aren’t better sorted out
can’t be allowed to lead to society’s being hurt. Whether the will of an individual person is free or not free, society’s will is free as far as what it treats as good and evil. And for myself, I want to be good in society’s sense, not in the sense of my private emotions.” He relit his dead cigar and brushed the hairs of his beard away from his mouth, which had become moist.

Moosbrugger, too, stroked his mustache, and was beating rhythmically on the tabletop with the edge of his telescoped hand of cards.

“Well, do we want to go on playing, or don’t we?” the intern asked patiently.

“Of course we want to go on,” Pfeifer responded, and picked up his cards. His eyes met Moosbrugger’s. “Moreover, Moosbrugger and I are of the same opinion,” he went on, looking at his hand with a worried expression. “How was it, Moosbrugger? The
counselor at the trial asked you repeatedly why you put on your Sunday clothes and went to the tavern—”

“And got shaved,” Moosbrugger corrected; Moosbrugger was ready to talk about it at any time, as if it was an act of state.

“Calmly got shaved,” Pfeifer repeated. “You shouldn’t have done that!’ the counselor told you. Well!” He turned to the rest. “We do exactly the same thing when we say that our mental patients wouldn’t have done that. Is this the way to prove anything?” This time, his words were subdued and relaxed and only an echo of his earlier, more passionate protest, because the game had again begun to go around the table.

A patronizing smile could be discerned on Moosbrugger's face for quite some time; it slowly faded in his absorption in the game, the way pleats in a stiff material soften with constant use. So Clarisse was not entirely
wrong when she thought she was seeing several devils struggling for a soul, but the relaxed way in which this was happening deceived her, and she was especially confused by the manner in which Moosbrugger was behaving. He apparently did not much like the younger doctor, who wanted to help him; he put up with his efforts only reluctantly and became restless when he felt them. Perhaps he wasn’t acting any differently from any simple person who finds it impertinent when someonebusies himself about him too earnestly; but he was delighted every time Dr. Pfeifer spoke. Presumably what he was expressing in this case was not exactly delight, for such a condition formed no part of Moosbruggers demeanor, oriented as it was toward dignity and recognition, and much of what the doctors said among themselves he also found incomprehensible; but if talk there had to be, then it should be like Dr. Pfeifer’s. That this was, on the whole, his
opinion was unmistakably evident. The collision of the two doctors had made him cheerful; he began to count his tricks again out loud and in English, and in conspicuous repetition threw into the conversation or into the silence from time to time the observation: “If it must be, it must be!” Even the good cleric, who had seen a good deal, shook his head at times, but the scorn heaped on earthly justice had pleased him not a little, and he was also pleased that the scholars of worldly science were not able to agree. He no longer recalled how all these problems that they had been talking about were to be decided according to canon law, but he thought calmly: “Let them carry on, God has the last word,” and since this conviction led him not to get involved in the verbal duel, he won the game.

So among these four men there was a quite cordial understanding. It was true that the prize being offered was Moosbruggers
head, but that was not in the least troublesome as long as each person was completely preoccupied with what he had to do first. After all, the men concerned with forging, polishing, and selling knives are not constantly thinking of what it might lead to. Moreover, Moosbrugger, as the only one personally and directly acquainted with the slaying of another person, and whose own execution was in the offing, found that it was not the worst thing that could befall a man of honor. Life is not the highest of values, Schiller says: Moosbrugger had heard that from Dr. Pfeifer, and it pleased him greatly. And so, as he could be touching or a raging animal depending on how his nature was appealed to or manipulated, the others too, as friends and executioners, were stretched over two differing spheres of action that had hardly a single point of contact. But this greatly disturbed Clarisse. She had seen right away that under the guise of cheerfulness
something secret was going on, but she had grasped this only as a blurred picture and, confused by the content of the conversation, was just now beginning to understand; but not only did she understand, she saw persistent evidence, ominous and indeed urgent in its uncanniness, that these men were surreptitiously observing Moosbrugger. But Moosbrugger, unsuspecting, was observing her, Clarisse. From time to time he furtively directed his eyes at her and tried to surprise and hold her glance. The visit of this beautiful lady who had come so far—it was only Clarisse’s thinness and small size that were just a little too unimpressive—flattered him greatly, in spite of all the deference with which he was generally treated. When he found her extraordinary glance directed at him, he did not doubt for an instant that his bushy-bearded manliness had made her fall in love with him, and now and then a smile arose beneath his mustache that was meant
to confirm this conquest, and this, along with the superiority practiced on servant girls, made a quite remarkable impression on Clarisse. An inexpressible helplessness squeezed her heart. She had the notion that Moosbrugger found himself in a trap, and the flesh on her body seemed to her a bait that had been cast before him while the hunters lurked around him.

Quickly making up her mind, she laid her hand on Friedenthal’s arm and told him that she had seen enough and felt tired.

“What did you really mean when you said he had always had only ‘ersatz women?’” Friedenthal asked after they had left the room.

“Nothing!” Clarisse, still upset at what she had been through, responded with a dismissive gesture.
Friedenthal became melancholy and thought he needed to justify the strange performance. “Basically, of course, none of us are responsible for our actions,” he sighed. Clarisse retorted: “He least of all!”

Friedenthal laughed at the “joke.” “Were you very much surprised?” he continued, in apparent astonishment. “Some of Moosbrugger’s individual traits emerged quite nicely.”

Clarisse stopped. “You shouldn’t allow that to continue!” she demanded forcefully.

Her companion smiled and devoted himself to dramatizing his state of mind. “What do you expect!” he exclaimed. “For the medical man everything is medicine, and for the lawyer, law! The justice system is in the final analysis a function of the concept of ‘compulsion’ which is part of healthy life but is mostly applied without dunking to sick people as well. But in the same way, the
concept of ‘sickness’ our starting point as doctors, and all its consequences, are also applicable to healthy life. These things can never be reconciled!”

“But there are no such things!” Clarisse exclaimed.

“Oh, but there are,” the doctor complained gently. “The human sciences developed at different times and for different purposes, which have nothing to do with each other. So we have the most divergent concepts about the same thing. At most the only place it comes together is in the lexicon. And I bet it’s not only the priest and myself but you, too, and, for instance, your brother or your husband and I—each one of us would know only one corner of the contents of every term we would look up in it, and of course each of us would know a different corner! The world hasn’t been able to arrange things any better than that!” Friedenthal had leaned over Clarisse, who
was standing in a window alcove, and supported his arm against the window bars. Some sort of genuine feeling resonated in his words. He was a doubter. The insecurity of his discipline had opened his eyes to the insecurity of all knowledge. He would have loved to be someone important, but in his best hours had an inkling that for him the paralyzing confusion of everything about which truth existed, did not yet exist, or would never exist, permitted nothing more than a vain and sterile subjectivity. He sighed, and added: “I sometimes feel as if the windows of this building were nothing more than magnifying glasses!”

Clarisse asked seriously: “Can we go to your office for a bit? I can’t talk here.” Two arrows shot forth from beneath the shield of her eyelids. Friedenthal slowly disengaged his hand from the window and his glance from her eyes. Then he also disengaged his thoughts from the absorption he had
revealed, and said, as they walked along the tiled corridor: “This fellow Pfeifer is an extraordinary figure. He lives without friends or girlfriends, but he has the biggest collection of paintings, trial proceedings, and memorabilia connected with the death sentences of the last twenty or thirty years. I saw them once. Extraordinary. Drawers full of his ‘victims’: polished and brutal faces of men and women, some marked by crime, some quite ordinary-looking, smile up at you from yellowed newspapers and faded photographs, or gaze into their unknown future. Then there are scraps of clothing, rope ends—real gallows ropes—canes, vials of poison. Do you know the museum in Zermatt, where what’s left behind by those who’ve fallen from the surrounding mountains is preserved? It’s that kind of impression. He obviously has a tender feeling for these things. You notice it, too, whenever he talks of the ‘victims’ to whose legal murder,
or whatever you want to call it, he himself has contributed. As astute observer might see in this something like a rivalry, the joy of intellectual superiority, sexual cunning. All of course entirely within the bounds of what is permissible and scientifically admissible. But one could indeed say that being preoccupied with danger makes one dangerous—"

“He hunts them?” Clarisse asked in a choked voice.

“Yes; you could almost say he’s a hunter in love with his prey.”

Clarisse froze; she did not know what was happening to her. Friedenthal had conducted her back along a somewhat different route, and as he was speaking opened the door of a ward they had to traverse, which seemed to contain the most glorious thing she had ever seen. It was a large hall, and she thought she was looking into a living flower bed. They were crossing the ward for
hysterical women. These women were standing around singly and in small clusters, and lying in beds. They all appeared to be wearing snow-white clothes and to have loosened and flowing inky-black hair. Clarisse couldn’t take in a single detail; the totality resembled something unutterably beautiful and dramatically agitated. “Sisters!” Clarisse felt softly but powerfully in that moment when attention streamed in irregular pulses toward her and Friedenthal; she had the feeling of being able to fly higher with a swarm of wondrous lovebirds than all the excitements of life and art allow. Her companion made only slow forward progress with her, for all sorts of humble enamored souls approached him from every side, or wandered in his path with a strength of erotic gentleness such as Clarisse had never before experienced. Friedenthal directed placating or severe words to them, and with soft movements pushed them away; and meanwhile
other women lay in their beds in their white jackets, having spread out their hair darkly over the pillows, women whose bellies and legs under their thin blankets performed the drama of love. Sinning figures. Paired with a partner who remained invisible but was palpably present, against whom they pushed their arms with exaggerated resistance, who exaggeratedly stimulated the swelling of their breasts, from whose mouths they withdrew with superhuman effort and toward whom their bellies vaulted with superhuman effort, while in the midst of this obscene play their eyes shone innocently with the enchanting inert beauty of large, dark flowers.

Clarisse was still deeply confused by this flower bed of love and suffering, by its morbid and yet intoxicating aroma, by its aura, by the gliding-through and not-being-allowed-to-stop, when she was sitting in Friedenthal’s office being observed by him with an unflagging smile. Collecting herself
and returning from her almost spatially deep distraction, she clung to something she managed to get out in a raw, almost mechanical voice: “Declare him not accountable for his actions!”

Friedenthal looked at her with astonishment. “My dear lady,” he asked in a joking tone, “of what concern is that to you?”

Clarisse recoiled because she could not think of an answer. But since nothing occurred to her, she said simply and suddenly: “Because he can’t help it!”

Dr. Friedenthal now scrutinized her more closely. “What makes you so sure of that?”

Clarisse energetically withstood his glance and answered haughtily, as if she was not certain whether to condescend to giving him such a response: “But he’s here only because he’s standing in for someone else!” Annoyed, she shrugged her shoulders, jumped
up, and looked out the window. When after a short while she perceived that this did not have any effect, she turned around again and came down a peg. “You can’t understand me: he reminds me of someone!” she observed, half attenuating the truth. She did not want to say too much and held back.

“But that’s not a scientific reason,” Friedenthal drawled.

“I thought you’d do it if I asked you to,” she now said simply.

“You’re too casual about that.” The doctor was reproachful. He leaned back in his armchair like Faust and went on with a glance at his studio: “Have you at all considered whether you are doing the man a favor by wanting him committed instead of punished? It’s no fun living within these walls.” He shook his head disconsolately.

His visitor replied clearly: “First the executioner must leave him alone!”?
“Look,” Friedenthal said. “In my opinion, Moosbrugger is probably an epileptic. But he also shows symptoms of paraphrenia systematica and perhaps of dementia paranoïdes. He just happens to be in every respect a borderline case. His attacks, in which excruciatingly terrifying delusions and sensory disorientation certainly do play a role, can last minutes or weeks, but they often pass over imperceptibly into complete mental clarity, just as they are also capable of arising with no fixed boundaries from this same clarity, and besides, even in the paroxysmal stage consciousness never quite disappears but is only diminished in varying degrees. So something probably could be done for him, but the case is by no means one in which it would be necessary for a doctor to exclude his responsibility as a physician!”

“So you’ll do something for him?” Clarisse urged.

Friedenthal smiled. “I don’t know yet.”
“You have to!”

“You’re strange,” Friedenthal drawled. “But... one could weaken.”

“You don’t have the slightest doubt that the man is sick!” the young woman asserted emphatically.

“Of course not. But it’s not my job to judge that,” the doctor defended himself. “You’ve already heard: I am to judge whether his free will was excluded during the deed, whether his consciousness was present during the deed, whether he had any insight into his wrongdoing: nothing but metaphysical questions, which put this way have no meaning for me as a physician, but in which I do have to show some consideration for the judge!”

In her excitement Clarisse strode up and down the room like a man.
“Then you oughtn’t to let yourself be used like that!” she exclaimed harshly. “If you can’t prevail against the judge, it has to be attempted some other way!”

Friedenthal tried another tack to dissuade his visitor from her annoying ideas. “Have you ever really tried to picture to yourself what a horrible raging beast this momentarily calm half-sick man can be?” he asked.

“What’s that to us now?” Clarisse retorted, cutting off his effort. “When confronted with a case of pneumonia, you don’t ask whether you can help a good person go on living! Your only task now is to prevent yourself from becoming accessory to a murder!”

Friedenthal sadly threw up his hands. “You’re crazy!” he said rudely and dejectedly.

“One has to have the courage to be crazy if the world is to be set right again! From time to time there have to be people
who refuse to go along with the lies!” Clarisse asserted.

He took this to be a witty joke, which in the rush he had not quite understood. From the start this little person had made an impression on him, especially since, dazzled by General von Stumm, he overestimated her social position; and in any case, many young people these days give a rather confused impression. He found her to be something special, and felt himself restlessly stirred by her spontaneous eagerness as if by something relentlessly, even nobly, radiant. To be sure, he perhaps ought to have seen this radiance as diamond-like, for it also had something of the quality of an overheated stove: something distinctly unpleasant that made one hot and icy. He unobtrusively assessed his visitor: stigmata of a heightened nervousness were doubtless to be perceived in her. But who today did not have such stigmata! Friedenthal’s response was no different from
the usual one—for when there are hazy notions of what is really meaningful, what is confused always has the same chance to excel that the con artist has in a hazily defined society—and although he was a pretty good observer, he had always managed to regain his composure no matter what Clarisse said. In the last analysis, one can always regard any person as a small-scale swatch of mental illness; that’s the job of theory, how one looks at a person at one time psychologically and at another chemically; and since after Clarisse’s last words a chasm of silence yawned, Friedenthal again sought “contact” and at the same time sought once more to divert her from her insistent demands. “Did you really like the women we saw?” he asked.

“Oh, enormously!” Clarisse exclaimed. She stood quietly before him, and the hardness was suddenly gone from her face. “I don’t know what to tell you,” she added softly. “That ward is like a monstrous
magnifying glass held over a woman’s triumph and suffering!”

Friedenthal smiled with satisfaction. “Well, so now you see,” he said. “Now you’ll have to concede that the attraction that illness exercises is not alien to me either. But I must observe limits, I have to keep things in their places. Then I wanted to ask you whether you have ever considered that love, too, is a disturbance of the mind. There is hardly anyone who does not conceal something in his most private and proper love life that he reveals only to his guilty partner, some craziness or weakness: why not simply call it perversity and madness? In public you have to take measures against it, but in your inner life you can’t always arm yourself against such things with the same rigor. And psychiatrists—psychiatry is ultimately an art too—will celebrate their greatest success when they have a certain sympathy and rapport with the medium in
which they are working.” He had seized his visitor’s hand, and Clarisse ceded to him its outermost fingertips, which she felt lying between his fingers as softly and helplessly as if they had fallen from her like the petals a flower drops. Suddenly she was completely a woman, full of that tender capriciousness in the face of a man’s beseeching, and what she had experienced in the morning was forgotten. A soundless sigh parted her lips. It seemed to her that she had never felt this way, or not for the longest time, and evidently at this moment something from the magic of his realm rubbed off on Friedenthal, whom she by no means especially liked. But she pulled herself together and asked sternly: ‘What have you made up your mind to do?’

“I have to make my rounds now,” the doctor replied, “but I would like to see you again. But not here. Can’t we meet somewhere else?”
“Perhaps,” Clarisse responded. “When you have carried out my request!”

Her lips narrowed, the blood drained from her skin, and this made her cheeks look like two small leather balls; there was too much pressure in her eyes. Friedenthal suddenly felt exploited. It is extraordinary, but when a person sees another as merely a means to an end, it is much easier for him to take on that impenetrable look of someone who is mentally ill, the more natural it seems to him that consideration ought to be shown him. “Every hour here we see souls suffer, but we have to stay within our bounds,” he countered. He became circumspect.

Clarisse said: “Good, you don’t want to. Let me make you another proposition.” She stood before him, small, legs apart, hands behind her back, and looked at him with a bashfully sarcastic, urgent smile: “I’ll join the clinic as a nurse!”
The doctor stood up and asked her to talk it over with her brother, who would make clear to her how many necessary prerequisites for such a position she was lacking. As he spoke, the sarcasm that was squeezed into her eyes drained out of them and they filled with tears. “Then I want,” she said, almost voiceless from excitement, “to be accepted as a patient! I have a mission!” Because she was afraid of spoiling her chances if she looked directly at the doctor, she looked to one side and up a little, and perhaps her eyes even wandered around. A shudder heated her skin, which swelled up red. Now she looked lovely and in need of tenderness, but it was too late; irritation at her importunity had sobered the doctor and made him reserved. He did not even ask her any more questions, for it seemed politic not to know too much about her out of consideration for the General and Ulrich, who had brought her here, and also in view of the
almost forbidden favors he had granted her. And it was only out of old medical habit that from this point on his speech became still gentler and more emphatic as he expressed to Clarisse his regret that there was no way he could meet her second request, and he advised her to confide this wish to her brother too. He even informed her that before that happened he could not allow her to continue her visits to the clinic, much as this would be a loss to him personally.

Clarisse offered no real resistance to what he said. She had already imputed worse to Friedenthal. “He’s an impeccable medical bureaucrat,” she told herself. That eased her departure: she casually extended her hand to the physician, and her eyes laughed cunningly. She was not at all depressed, and even as she went down the steps was thinking about other possibilities.
It was Ulrich’s bad conscience that drove him to Gerda; since the melancholy scene between them, he had not heard anything from her and did not know how she had come to terms with herself. To his surprise, he found Papa Leo at the Fischels’ house; Mama Clementine had gone out with Gerda. Leo Fischel would not let Ulrich go; he had rushed out to the hall himself when he recognized his voice. Ulrich had the impression of changes. Director Fischel seemed to have changed his tailor; his income must have increased and his convictions diminished. Then too, he had usually stayed later at the
bank; he had never worked at home after the air there had become so irksome. But today he seemed to have been sitting at his desk, although this “roaring loom of time” had not been used for years; a packet of letters lay on the baize cloth, and the chrome-plated telephone, otherwise used only by the ladies, was standing askew, as if it had just been in use. After Ulrich had sat down, Fischel turned toward him in his desk chair and polished his pince-nez with a handkerchief that he drew from his breast pocket, although earlier he would certainly have objected to such a foppish action, saying that it had been sufficient for a Goethe, a Schiller, and a Beethoven to carry their handkerchiefs in their trouser pocket—whether that was the case or not.

—It’s been a long time, said Director Fischel.

—Yes, Ulrich said.
—Did you inherit a great deal? Fischel asked.

—Oh, Ulrich said. —Enough.

—Yes, there are problems.

—But you look splendid. You somehow seem to have got younger.

—Oh, thanks; professionally there have never been any problems. But look— He pointed in a melancholy way to a pile of letters that lay on the desk. You do know Hans Sepp?

—Of course. You took me into your confidence—

—Right! Fischel said.

—Are those love letters?

The telephone rang. Fischel put on his pince-nez, which he had taken off to listen, extracted a paper with notes from his coat, and said: — Buy! Then the inaudible voice at
the other end spoke to him for quite a while. From time to time Fischel looked over his spectacles at Ulrich, and once he even said: —Excuse me! Then he said into the instrument: —No, thank you, I don’t like the second business! Talk about it? Yes, of course we can talk about it again—and with a short, satisfied pause for reflection, he hung up.

—You see, Fischel said. —That was someone in Amsterdam; much too expensive! Three weeks ago the thing wasn’t worth half as much, and in three weeks it won’t be worth half what it costs now. But in between there’s a deal to be made. A great risk!

—But you didn’t want to, Ulrich said.

—Oh, that’s not really settled. But a great risk...! But still, let me tell you, that’s building in marble, stone on stone! Can you build on the mind, the love, the ideals of a person? He was thinking of his wife and of
Gerda. How different it had been at the beginning! The telephone rang again, but this time it was a wrong number.

—You used to put more worth on solid moral values than on a solid purse, Ulrich said. —How often you held it against me that I couldn’t follow you in that!

—Oh—he responded—ideals are like air that changes, you don’t know how, with closed windows! Twenty-five years ago, who had any notion of anti-Semitism? No, then there were the great perspectives of Humanity! You’re too young. But I still managed to hear some of the great parliamentary debates. The last ones! The only thing that’s dependable is what you can say with numbers. Believe me, the world would be a lot more reasonable if it were simply left to the free play of supply and demand, instead of being equipped with armored ships, bayonets, diplomats who know nothing about economics, and so-called national ideals.
Ulrich interrupted with the objection that it was precisely heavy industry and the banks whose demands were urging peoples on to armament.

— Well, shouldn’t they? Fischel replied. — If the world is the way it is, and runs around in fool’s outfits in broad daylight, they shouldn’t take account of that? When the military just happens to be convenient for customs dealings, or against strikers? Money, you know, has its own rationale, and it’s not to be trifled with. By the way, apropos, have you heard anything new about Arnheim’s ore deposits? Again the phone rang; but with his hand on the instrument, Fischel waited for Ulrich’s answer. The conversation was brief, and Fischel did not lose the thread of their conversation; since Ulrich knew nothing new about Arnheim, he repeated that money had its own rationale. — Pay attention, he added. — If I were to offer Hans Sepp five hundred marks to move to
one of the universities of his revered-above-all Germania (Germany), he would reject them indignantly. If I offered him a thousand, ditto. But if I were to offer him ten thousand—though I never in my life would, even if I had so much money! It almost seemed as if Fischel, horrified at such an idea, had lost the connection, but he was only reflecting, and went on: —One just can’t do that, because money has its own rationale. For a man who spends insane amounts, the money won’t stick; it will fly from him, make him a spendthrift. That the ten thousand marks refuse to be offered to Hans Sepp proves that this Hans Sepp is not real, is of no value, but an awful, swindling scourge with which God is chastising me.

Again Fischel was interrupted. This time by longer communications. That he was conducting such transactions at home instead of at the office struck Ulrich. Fischel gave three orders to buy and one to sell. In
between he had time to think about his wife. —If I were to offer her money so she would divorce me—he asked himself—would Clementine do it? An inner certainty answered: No. Leo Fischel mentally doubled the amount. Ridiculous! said the inner voice. Fischel quadrupled. No, on principle, occurred to him. Then in one swoop he breathlessly increased the sum beyond any human resistance or capability, and angrily stopped. He speedily had to switch his mind to smaller fortunes, which literally shrank in his mind the way the pupils narrow with a sudden change of light; but he did not forget his affairs for an instant, and made no mistakes.

—But now tell me, finally—Ulrich asked, having already become impatient—what kind of letters these are that you wanted to show me. They appear to be love letters. Did you intercept Gerda’s love letters?
—I wanted to show you these letters. You should read them. I would just like to know now what you would say about them. Fischel handed Ulrich the whole packet and sat back, preoccupied meanwhile with other thoughts, gazing into the air through his pince-nez.

Ulrich glanced at the letters; then he took one out and slowly read it through. Director Fischel asked: —Tell me, Herr Doktor, you used to know this singer Leontine, or Leona, who looks like the late Empress Elizabeth; may God punish me, this woman really has the appetite of a lion!

Ulrich looked up, frowning; he liked the letter, and the interruption bothered him.

—Well, you don’t have to answer, Fischel placated him. —I was just asking. You needn’t be ashamed. She’s no royalty. I met her a little while ago through an acquaintance; we found out that you and she
were friends. She eats a lot. Let her eat! Who doesn’t like to eat? Fischel laughed.

Ulrich dropped his gaze to the letter again, without responding. Fischel again gazed dreamily into the firmament of the room.

The letter began: —Beloved person! Human goddess! We are condemned to live in an extinguished century. No one has the courage to believe in the reality of myth. You must realize that this applies to you too. You do not have the courage of your nature as goddess. Fear of people holds you back. You are right to consider ordinary human lust as vulgar; indeed, worse than that, as a ridiculous regression from the life of us people of the future into mere atavism! And you are right again when you say that love for a person, animal, or thing is already the beginning of taking possession of it! And we don’t even need to mention that possessing is the beginning of despiritualization! But still you have
to distinguish: being felt, perhaps also being sensed, is called being mine. I only feel what is mine; I don’t hear what is not meant for me! Were this not so, we would be intellectualists. It’s perhaps an inescapable tragedy that when we love we are forced to possess with eyes, ears, breath, and thoughts! But consider: I feel that I am not, so long as I am only I myself, I-self. It’s only in the things outside me that I first discover myself. That, too, is a truth. I love a flower, a person, because without them I would be nothing. The grand thing about the experience of “mine” is feeling oneself melt away entirely, like a pile of snow under the rays of the sun, drifting upward like a gentle dissipating vapor! The most beautiful thing about “mine” is the ultimate extirpation of the possession of my self! That’s the pure sense of “mine,” that I possess nothing but am possessed by the entire world. All brooks flow from the heights to the valleys, and you too, O my soul, will not
be mine before you have become a drop in the ocean of die world, totally a link in the world brotherhood and world community! This mystery no longer has anything in common with the insipid exaggeration that individual love experiences. In spite of the lust of this age one must have the courage for ardor, for inner fire! Virtue makes action virtuous; actions don’t make virtue! Try it! The Beyond reveals itself in fits and starts, and we will not be transported in one jump into the regions of untrammeled life. But moments will come when we who are remote from people will experience moments of grace that are remote from people. Don’t throw sensuality and supra-sensuality into a pot of what has been! Have the courage to be a goddess! That’s German! ... 

—Well? Fischel asked.

Ulrich’s face had turned red. He found this letter ridiculous but moving. Did these young people have no inhibitions at all about
what was exaggerated, impossible, about the
word that will not let itself be redeemed?
Words constantly hitched up with new
words, and a kernel of truth hazed over with
their peculiar web. —So that’s what Gerda’s
like now, he thought. But within this thought
he thought a second, unspoken, shaming
one; it went something like: —Aren’t you in-
sufficiently exaggerated and impossible?

—Well? Fischel repeated.

—Are all the letters like that? Ulrich
asked, giving them back to him.

—How do I know which ones you’ve
read! Fischel answered. —They’re all like
that!

—Then they are quite beautiful, Ulrich
said.

—I thought as much! Fischel exploded.
—Of course that’s why I showed them to you!
My wife found them. But no one expects me
to have any clever advice in such questions of the soul. So fine! Tell that to my wife!

I would rather talk to Gerda herself about it; there’s a lot in the letter that is, of course, quite misguided—

—Misguided? To say the least! But talk to her! And tell Gerda that I can’t understand a single word of this jargon, but that I’m ready to pay five thousand marks—no! Better not to say anything! Tell her only that I love her anyway and am ready to forgive her!

The telephone again called Fischel to business. He, who all his life had been only a solid clerk, had begun some time ago to operate on the stock exchange on his own: from time to time and with only small amounts, the scanty savings he possessed and a few stocks belonging to his spouse, Clementine. He could not talk to her about it, but he could be quite satisfied at his success; it was
a real recreation from the depressing circumstances at home.

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Ulrich is driven to see Gerda. He hadn’t spoken to her since the hysterical scene. Conscience impels him. But he finds Gerda very much taken up with Hans Sepp.

Ulrich seeks to be conciliatory with Gerda and to be kind. She pays him back with her involvement with Hans Sepp, which Ulrich perceives as intellectual felony.

Arnheim has become the ideal, the messiah, the savior. The spiritual man of intellect for our time.

Effect of the nabob.

Leo Fischers belief in progress is part of the problem of culture.

Hans Sepp stimulated by the conflict of the national minorities.
“German-ness” as a vague reaction to the cultural situation.

Ulrich receives a Stella shock [Goethe’s play—TRANS.] (letters!) for Agathe.

Gerda is “beyond” love. Also against religious mysticism. In future: conflict indicated in letter.

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Double orientation: Mysticism - Antidemocracy

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Soon after his visit to the Fischels’, Ulrich was again driven to see Gerda. He had not seen her since the sad scene that had taken place between them, and felt the desire to speak kindly and reasonably to her. He wanted to suggest that she leave her parents’ house for a year or two and undertake something that would give her pleasure, with the aim of forgetting him and Hans Sepp and
taking advantage of her youth. But he found her in the company of Hans Sepp. She turned pale when she saw him come in; the thoughts flew out of her head, and even though she looked composed, there was really nothing at all in her that she could compose; she suddenly felt nothing but an emptiness surrounded by the stiff, disciplined, automatic motions of her limbs.

—I don’t want to ask your pardon, Gerda—Ulrich began—because that isn’t important—

She interrupted him right there. —I behaved ludicrously—she said—I know that; but believe me, it’s all over.

—I’ll only believe that everything’s fine when I know what you’re up to and what your plans are.

Hans Sepp was listening with the jealous eyes of one who does not understand.
—What makes you think that Fraulein Fischel has plans? he asked.

Ulrich remembered the letters that Leo Fischel had shown him. Since then he had had a lot of sympathy for this young person in whom mystic feelings raged. But at the same time, seeing him reminded him, God knows why, of a skinny dog that wants to mount a bitch much too big for him. He collected himself and, ignoring his question, asked Hans to explain to him what he wanted. —That is to say, he added, he would like to know what he had in mind to turn his ideas into reality when he was not talking about “human being,” “soul,” “mystery,” “ardor,” “contemplation,” and the like, but about the future Dr. Hans Sepp, who would be compelled to live in the world.

Ulrich really wanted to know, that was sincerely to be heard in his question; and in addition he had managed to invest it with a Masonic choice of words that astonished
Hans, and Gerda’s glance rested on Hans with a challenging reproach. Hans scratched his head, because he did not want to be rude and felt embarrassed. —Those aren’t my ideas—he finally said— but those of German youth. Ulrich repeated his request to show him how they could be made reality. Hans thought he knew what Ulrich was getting at: whenever Hans courted Gerda with such ideas, the words were like the texture of an orchestra through which, as voice, the sight of Gerda hovered; could one tear that apart and separate it? —You’re asking me to make a political treatise out of a piece of music! he said.

Ulrich added: —And the language of politics, of trade, of arithmetic, is the language of the fallen angels, whose wings have long since become as vestigial as, say, our caudal vertebra. It can hardly be articulated in such a language—is that what you mean? But that’s exactly why I would like to know
what you’re thinking of doing. Hans gave him the simplest answer to this: —I don’t know! But I’m not alone. And if several thousand people want something that they can’t picture, then one day they’ll get it, as long as they remain true to themselves!

—Do you believe that too, Gerda? Ulrich asked.

Gerda wavered. —I’m convinced too—she said—that our culture will perish if something isn’t done.

Ulrich jumped up. —My dear children! What concern is that of yours? Tell me what you’re proposing to do with each other!

Hans set about defending his view. —Don’t talk down to us! It’s quite certain that this hugger-mugger called culture will perish, and everything else along with it—and nothing will prevail against it but the New Man!
—But Hans overestimates the significance of love between people, Gerda added.
—The New will also leave that behind.

Hans was really a melancholy person. An emerging impurity on his skin could put him in a bad mood for days, and that was no rare occurrence, for in his petit-bourgeois family care of the skin did not rank very high. As in many Austrian families, it had stopped at the state it had reached before the middle of the nineteenth century: that is, every Saturday the bathtub or a wash trough would be filled with hot water, and this served for the cleaning of the body that was forgone on all the other days. There were just as few other luxuries in Hans Sepp’s family home. His father was a minor government functionary with a small salary and the prospect of an even scantier pension, which in view of his age was imminent, and the principles as well as the conduct of life in his parents’ house were distinguished from those at
the Fischels’ about the way that a cardboard box carefully tied together with knotted bits of string, in which the common people pack their belongings for a journey, differs from a magnificent valise. If he looked around, all that Hans Sepp could claim as a distinction was his German name, and it had taken him a long time before he learned to regard it as more than a gift of fate, on the day that he became acquainted with the view that being German meant being aristocratic. From that day forward he bore a noble name, and it is not necessary to waste words about how nice it is to know that one is personally distinguished; one should rather write a whole book about how one ought to want not to be distinguished but to distinguish oneself; but that would turn into a book that would be absolutely and completely unsocial.

The titles Count and Prince pale in comparison with the title Hans Sepp. No one today values belonging to a secret clan whose
signs are an ox’s head or three stars. On the other hand, to have a German name when one had German sentiments was, among lower-class youth in Austria, a rarity. The friends through whom Hans had been introduced into the movement were named Vybral and Bartolini. It had about it something of a symbolic cover, the miracle of the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, when one was named Hans and in addition had the family name of Sepp.

Hans Sepp felt himself one of the elect, and in the absence of a bathroom he acquired the ideal of racial purity. But within this ideal there is enclosed the ideal of purity of principles. In this way, even in his early years, Hans Sepp came to fight for all the commandments of morality, which is otherwise the privilege of the incapacity for sinning, and is a position in which one has no desire for any further changes. It is a quite remarkable thing when young people
become enthusiastic about virtue: a union of fire and stubbornness.

This union is facilitated if there is the possibility of combining the affirmation with a powerful negation. But in order to arrive at the real significance of such a negation, one must leave aside what is accidental, in this case the racial aspect, which is the form in which it expresses itself though not its sense.

But that was just the smaller and less serious advantage. Far greater is the advantage that a young person who adopts a negative view of the world makes the world into a comfortable nest. It is well-nigh impossible to demonstrate something as notorious as the meager intellectual content of one of those novels that among the German public pass for profound; it is much easier to make this credible by saying that these novels aren’t German, or at least it penetrates reality more easily. One should not (on the whole) underestimate the advantage of
saying no to everything that is considered great and beautiful. For, first, one almost always hits upon something true, and second, determining it more precisely, and the process of proving it, are in all circumstances extremely difficult and, in terms of having any effect, futile. In Germany there was once the ideal: “Test everything and keep the best”; this ideal ended in filth and scorn; it was the ideal of the dignified life and the cult of the home, which, in a time of obligatory specialization deprived of the aid of interconnections, had the same inner consequence as the purposefulness of a snail: I’ll hitch a ride on anything. One must never forget this impotence into which we have put ourselves if one wishes to understand the idealism of maliciousness and evil. When the change of worldview to which every new outfitting of humanity is called stalls and becomes impossible, almost nothing remains but to say
no to everything; the lowest point is always a point of rest and balance.

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Closing one’s eyes and gently touching one’s leg is the simplest picture of the world one can have.

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So there are two main lands of pessimism. One is the pessimism of weltschmerz, which despairs of everything; the other is the contemporary kind, which exempts one’s own person from the process. It is quite understandable that when one is young one would rather consider other people bad than oneself. This was the service that the German world-view performed for Hans Sepp. He did not so soon experience the futility of ordering his ideas, he could free himself from everything that oppresses us by calling it “un-German,” and he could appear ideal to himself without having to restrain himself.
from besmirching / scorning the ideals of everyone else.

However, the most remarkable aspect of Hans Sepp was still a third thing. But one should not be deceived by this manner of presentation, taking one thing after another; in reality these reasons were not layers swimming atop one another; any two of them were always dissolved in a third. And what needs to be added to the two reasons named above can perhaps be called, in a correspondingly broad sense, “religious.” If one were to have asked Hans Sepp whether, in school, he had believed in the teaching of his catechist, he would have answered indignantly that the German must cut himself loose from Rome and its Jew religion, but it would also not have been possible to win him over to Luther, whom he would have characterized as a pusillanimous compromiser with the Spirit of the World. Hans Sepp’s religion did not fit any of the three great European
religions; it was a plant of unintelligible ancestry run to seed.

This wild religious nature of nationalism is very peculiar.

Break off: This would be the place to develop the possibility of the Other Condition as something like the component freed by the weathering of religion as well as of liberal heroism.

Perhaps as a supplement to Lindner religious development. But in contrast to Professor August Lindner, God had never once appeared to Hans Sepp. In spite of that, or indeed perhaps just because of it, because he could not bring his vague feelings of faith and love into the solid framework of religion, they were in him especially wild.

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One cannot say whether it is a remnant of bisexuality, the remnant of another primitive
stage, or the lost natural tenderness of life, this need to make a community out of people. To feel every action inwardly, that is, a symbol...

Of this kind his love for Gerda, which is really less for the woman than for the person.

His misunderstanding of Ulrich, whom he considers a rationalist because he does not understand the difficulty of what Ulrich has an intimation of, and because he makes things easy for himself through community, insolent youthful hordes, etc.

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(Definition after Unger: Symbol. View sees in those events we cannot incorporate in any order (e.g., those of the Pentateuch) images to represent the higher world that our consciousness cannot grasp in any other way.)

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Excitement also in the air as the guests left Diotima’s house! Gusts of wind ran behind waves of darkness; the streetlamps reeled in their light on one side and let it flow out widely on the other; the leaves in the canopies of the trees pulled and tugged at their thin stems, or suddenly became quite still, as if on command; the clouds played high above the rooftops with the pale fire of the moon like dogs playing with a brown cat; pushed it, jumped over it, and when they retreated, it cowered with arched back, motionless in their midst. Ulrich had fallen in with Gerda and Hans Sepp; all three were surprised that it had already got dark.

Feuermaul had had an effect on Gerda. It seemed to her horribly ruthless that one is an “I,” calmly mirrored in the eyes of a “you.” She applied it to the whole nation. To universal love. It was a new emotion; how was it to be understood? One is no longer linked with just one other person. That’s basically always
horrible; one can’t stir on account of the other; in spite of love one must feel a lot of resentment. It’s also quite unnatural; the only natural thing is getting together to raise a brood, but not for one’s whole life, and not because of oneself, or love. Individual love seemed to her like a snowman, hard, cold; on the other hand, if the same thing is spread like a blanket over the whole field ... she imagined life beneath the pure soft snow cover that hovered before her, warm and protecting every seed. —Strange—Gerda thought—that I happened to think of a snowman! But then she still felt only the other, distant, soft, melting—even if that was not quite the case! —Loving many, many people! she said to herself softly. And it was like: Sleeping with everyone; but with no one so brutally to the very end, but only as in a dream that is never quite clear. Kissing everybody, but the way a child lets itself be stroked. To say something nice to everyone,
but not giving anyone the right to forbid her saying it to his enemy as well... She felt happy and anxious as she portrayed this to herself, like a tender being that has to slip through rough hands until the hands, fumbling beside it, also learn to be tender.

“A happy-anxious soul”: that had been in one of Feuermaul’s poems, as if the poet had uttered this expression for no one else but her, the unknown girl. From far away word was dispatched to her, a man who knew nothing about her had sent out this word and still had no idea that the word had already found her; but she knew it, for she bore his word in her breast, which he would never see: That seemed to her like a marriage through magic. Gerda thought over whether she really had a happily anxious soul. She had one that constantly hovered between happiness and fear, without quite making contact with either. Was that the same thing? She was not certain of it, but she felt herself
really hovering like a moonbeam in the roaring night, filled with love and free of all misfortune, which rarely happened to her. She squinted over at Ulrich, who was walking mutely beside her; he frightened her and only occasionally gave her a little happiness. Ulrich noticed that she was looking at him; he was angry with her. —The first time some blockhead babbles at you in verses you overflow! he said, smiling; but there was really some pain in this smile. —Didn’t you notice that this person is the most vain and selfish creature in the world?

Gerda answered quite seriously. —You’re right, he’s weak; Stefan George is greater. She named her favorite poet—she knew that Ulrich had an aversion to him as well. She was a little drunk with happiness and felt: —I can love two people who hate each other. At this moment she was all love.

But at this moment Hans Sepp pushed forward from the other side; jealous
restlessness impelled him, for Gerda and Ulrich had been speaking softly, and he only half understood; he did not want to be left out.

—Feuermaul is a prattler! he exclaimed angrily.

—Oh, why! Ulrich said.

—Because!

They were just passing beneath a streetlamp. Hans wanted to stop, because his mouth was full of words. But Ulrich did not stop. Hans was dragged on like a screaming child and emptied his words into the darkness. Gerda knew them all. The Beyond, contemplation, Christ, Edda, Gautama Buddha, and then the punishment meant for her: Feuermaul, as a Jew, had appropriated these things with his intelligence but inwardly had no idea what they were about. She looked straight ahead, and even at the next streetlamp did not look at Hans. In the
darkness she felt his dark mouth wide open at her side. It made her shudder. She did not understand that Hans no longer knew what he was saying. The darkness was terrible for him. He imagined that the two of them were laughing at him. He knew no bounds, and his words poured out as if each were trying to trample the next, the way people do in a panic.

In between, Gerda heard Ulrich speaking quietly and objectively, seeking to divert this storm. —The emotional scribbler—he said—is in himself the most vain and self-seeking person in the world; something like women who have no understanding, only their love. What would happen if these people became you-seeking? ...

Gerda liked Ulrich’s words rather better than Hans’s, but they, too, made her cold. With a hasty good-bye, she left the two of them standing there and ran up the steps.
Hans gasped for air, hardly touched his hat, and left Ulrich.

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But he stopped at the next corner and under cover of darkness looked to see what Ulrich was going to do. Ulrich went home, and Hans began to have regrets. He knew that Gerda’s parents would be home late today; Gerda was alone, and he could imagine how much his churlish behavior must be eating at her. He saw light in a window and ran away in order not to go weak. But he only ran around the block, then without stopping went up the steps. He was still excited; his clothes sat on him angrily, the dark-blond hair over his forehead was standing crookedly in the air, and his cheeks had disappeared beneath his cheekbones.

—Forgive me! he begged. —I’ve behaved badly.
Gerda looked at him without understanding why he was there; her emotions had grown deaf.

—I don’t know what I said, Hans went on. —It was probably something ugly. But you’re so far gone that you can’t even separate Jewish spuriousness and your ideals!

—Ulrich’s not a Jew! Gerda said spontaneously. —And I forbid you—she added—to speak that way about Jews! For the first time she dared to say such a thing.

—I was speaking of Feuermaul! Hans corrected her. —But this Jewish poet we heard today might at least be said to have great and honest feelings if his race permitted it, but Ulrich, your father’s friend, is ten times worse! Gerda was sitting in an easy chair and looked at Hans doubtingly. Hans was standing in front of her; her behavior unnerved him. —If someone acts—he said—like Feuermaul, as if he had seized
hold of the true life, he’s a swindler. The Beyond withholds itself; out-of-body contemplation reveals itself only rarely and intermittently. There are whole centuries that know nothing about it. But it is Germanic, nevertheless, never to lose the feeling here below of the Beyond that shimmers through.

—Since I have known you, every second thing you’ve said has been about out-of-body contemplation—Gerda countered, eager to attack— but you haven’t ever, not one single time, really seen anything! Tell me what you’ve seen! Words!

Hans implored Gerda not to lose her strength! She ought not to be so sensitive, not want to be so clever! She should get away from this Ulrich!

—Where does “sensitive” come from? he exclaimed. —From the senses! It’s sensualistic and base!
For heaven’s sake, Gerda knew that; but it had never seemed to her so hurdy-gurdy. —If I want, I will also love a Jew, she thought, and thought of Feuermaul. A very gentle smile struggled with the anger in her face. Hans misunderstood it; he thought the tenderness in the resistance was for him. He was so excited by everything that had gone on before that he thought he would break into pieces right then and there. Over Gerda’s face there is a breath of the Orient, it occurred to him at this moment, and in the same moment he thought he understood that what he loved most secretly about her was the other-racial, the Jewish; he, with his melancholy, who never felt sure of himself! Hans broke down. He hardly knew what was happening to him; he hid his face against Gerda’s legs, and she felt that he was weeping in despair. That tore at her breast like the wild, covetous fingers of a small child; she, too, was suddenly excited, and tears were
running down her cheeks without her knowing whether she was weeping over Hans, Feuermaul, herself, or Ulrich. So they gazed into each other’s eyes with crumpled faces, when Hans raised his from her lap. He lifted himself half up and reached for her face. Youth’s ecstatic desire for words came from his mouth. —There are only three ways back to the Great Truth, he exclaimed. —Suicide, madness, or making ourselves a symbol! She did not understand that. Why suicide or madness? She connected no filled-out notions with these words. —Perhaps Hans doesn’t ever know exactly what he means, went through her head. But somehow, if one got free of oneself through suicide or madness, it seemed to be almost as high as being uplifted by some mystic union. Madness, death, and love have always been closely linked in the consciousness of humanity. She did not know why; she did not even think of posing such a question. But the three words,
which made no sense as an idea, had somehow come together at this moment in a trembling young person who was holding Gerda’s face in his hands as if he were holding in them the deepest import of his life. What they then went on talking about did not matter at all; the great experience was that they said to each other what shook them. Whoever would have heard them wouldn’t have understood them; entwined, they pressed forward to God’s knee and thought they saw His finger. It was possible, since this scene was being played out in the Fischels’ dining room, that this finger pointing the way out of the world and into their own consisted partly of the tasteless self-conscious pictures and furnishings that gave them the feeling of having nothing to do with the universe of the bourgeois.

One evening several days after this (the) musical evening in the studio, Gerda appeared at Ulrich’s, after having called
excitedly on the telephone. With a dramatic swoop she removed her hat from her head and threw it on a chair. To the question of what was up, she answered: —Now everything’s been blown sky-high!

—Has Hans run off?

—Papa’s broke! Gerda laughed nervously at her slangy expression. Ulrich recalled that the last time he had been with Director Fischel he had wondered at the kind of telephone conversations the latter had been conducting from his house; but this recollection was not vivid enough to enable him to take Gerda’s exclamation with complete seriousness.

—Papa was a gambler—imagine! the excited girl, struggling between merriment and despair, went on to explain. —We all thought he was a solid bank official with no great prospects, but yesterday evening it came out that the whole time he had been making the
riskiest stock speculations! You ought to have been there for the blowup! Gerda threw herself on the chair beside her hat and boldly swung one leg over the other. —He came home as if he’d been pulled out of the river. Mama rushed at him with bicarbonate and chamomile, because she thought he was feeling ill. It was eleven-thirty at night; we were already asleep. Then he confessed that in three days he had to come up with lots of money and had no idea where it was to come from. Mama, splendid, offered him her dowry. Mama is always splendid; what would the few thousand crowns have meant to a gambler! But Papa went on to confess that Mama’s little fortune had long since been lost along with everything else. What can I tell you? Mama screamed like a dog that’s been run over. She had on nothing but her nightgown and slippers. Papa lay in an armchair and moaned. His job of course is
also gone once this gets out. I tell you, it was pitiable!

—Shall I speak to your father? Ulrich asked. —I don’t understand much about such things. Do you think he might do something to himself?

Gerda shrugged her shoulders. —Today he’s trying to convince one of his unsullied business friends to help him. She suddenly turned gloomy. —I hope you don’t think that that’s why I’ve come to you? Mama moved out to her brother’s today; she wanted to take me with her, but I won’t go; I’ve run away from home—she had become cheerful again. —Do you know that behind the whole thing there’s a woman, some sort of chanteuse? Mama found that out, and that was the last straw. Good for Papa! Who would ever have thought him capable of all that! And no, I don’t think he’ll kill himself, she went on. —Because when it afterward came out about the woman, today, in the
course of the day, he said some remarkable things: he would rather let himself be locked up and afterward earn his bread by hawking pornographic books than go on being Director Fischel with family!

—But what’s most important to me—Ulrich asked—what do you intend to do?

—I’m staying with friends, Gerda said saucily. —You don’t need to worry!

—With Hans Sepp and his friends! Ulrich exclaimed reproachfully.

—No one’s going to bother me there!

Gerda inspected Ulrich’s house. Like shadows, the memory of what had once happened here stepped out of the walls. Gerda felt herself to be a poor girl who possessed nothing outside of a few crowns, which in leaving she had, with amazing ease and freedom, taken from her mother’s desk. She was sorry for herself. She was inclined to
weep over herself as over a tragic figure on the stage. One really ought to do something good for her, she thought, but she hardly expected that Ulrich would take her comfortably in his arms. Except that if he had, she would not have been such a coward as she had been the first time. But Ulrich said:—You won’t let me help you now, Gerda, I see that; you’re still much too proud of your new adventure. I can only say that I fear a bad outcome for you. Remember, please, that you always, without hesitation, can call upon me if you need to. He said this reflectively and hesitantly, for he really could have said something else that would have been more kind. Gerda had stood up, fiddled with her hat before the mirror, and smiled at Ulrich. She would have liked to kiss him goodbye, but then it might well not have come to a good-bye; and the stream of tears that was running invisibly behind her eyes bore her like a tenderly tragic music that one cannot
interrupt out into the new life which she could still not quite picture to herself.

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Hans Sepp was forced to double-step, kneel down in puddles in the barracks yard, present arms and put them down again until his arms fell off. The corporal torturing him was a green peasant boy, and Hans stared uncomprehendingly into his apoplectic young face, which expressed not only anger, which would have been understandable because he was forced to do extra duty with this recruit, but all the malice of which a person is capable when he lets himself go. If Hans let his glance roam across the breadth of the yard—and a barracks yard has in and of itself something inhuman, some locked-in regularity of the sort the dead world of crystals has—it rested on squatting and stiffly running blue figures painted on all the walls, meant to be assaulted with one’s weapon; and this universal goal of being shot at was
expressed in the abstract manner of these paintings well enough to drive one to despair. This had already weighed down Hans Sepp’s heart in the first hour of his arrival. The people in these pictures painted on the barracks walls had no faces, but instead of faces only a bright area. Nor did they have bodies that the painter had captured in one of those positions such as people and animals, following the play of their needs, assume of themselves, but bodies that consisted of a crude outline filled in with dark-blue paint, capturing for an eternity the attitude of a man running with a weapon in his hand, or a man kneeling and shooting, an eternity in which there will never again be anything so superfluous as the drawing of individual people. This was by no means unreasonable; the technical term for these figures was “target surfaces,” and if a person is regarded as a target surface, that is the way he looks; this cannot be explained away (changed). From
this one might conclude that one should never be allowed to regard a person as a target surface; but for heaven’s sake, if that is the way he looks the minute you lay eyes on him, the temptation to look at him that way is enormous! Hans felt drawn again and again, during the tedium of his punishment drill, by the demonic nature of these pictures, as if he were being tortured by devils; the corporal screamed at him that he was not to gawk around but to look straight ahead; with such raw language he literally seized him by the eyes, and when Hans’s glance then fell straight ahead, on the corporal’s red face, this face looked warm and human.

Hans had the primitive sensation of having fallen into the hands of a strange tribe and been made a slave. Whenever an officer appeared and glided past on the other side of the yard, an uninvolved, slender silhouette, he seemed to Hans Sepp like one of the inexorable gods of this alien tribe. Hans
was treated severely and badly. An official communication from the civil authorities had come to the army at the same time he had, characterizing him as “politically unreliable,” and in Kakania that was the term used for individuals hostile to the state. He had no idea who or what had gained him this reputation. Except for his participation in the demonstration against Count Leinsdorf, he had never undertaken anything against the state, and Count Leinsdorf was not the state; since he had become a student, Hans Sepp had spoken only of the community of Germanic peoples, of symbols, and of chastity. But something must have come to the ear of the authorities, and the ear of the authorities is like a piano from which seven of every eight strings have been removed.

Perhaps his reputation had been exaggerated; at any rate, he came to the army with the reputation of being an enemy of war, the military, religion, the Habsburgs,
and the Austrian state, suspected of plotting in secret associations and pan-German intrigues directed at “the goal of overthrowing the existing order of the state.”

But the situation in the Kakanian military with regard to all these crimes was such that the greatest part of all capable reserve officers could be accused of them without further ado. Almost every German Austrian had the natural sentiment of solidarity with the Germans in the Reich and of being only provisionally separated from it by the sluggish capacity of the historical process, while every non-German Austrian had (making the necessary allowances) twice as much feeling of this land directed against Kakania; patriotism in Kakania, to the extent that it was not limited to purveyors to the Court, was distinctly a phenomenon of opposition, betraying either a spirit of contradiction or that tepid opposition to life which constantly has need of something finer and higher. The only
exception to this was Count Leinsdorf and his friends, who had the “higher” in their blood. But the active officers (of the standing army) were also just as implicated in these reproaches that an unknown authority had raised against Hans Sepp. These officers were for the most part German Austrians, and insofar as they were not, they admired the German army; and since the Kakanian parliament did not appropriate half as many soldiers or warships as the German Reichstag, they all felt that not everything about the pan-Germanic claims could be reprehensible. Then too, they were all antidemocratic and latent revolutionaries. They had been raised from childhood to be the bulwark of patriotism, with the result that this word aroused in them a silent nausea. They had finally got used to leading their soldiers in the Corpus Christi procession and letting the recruits practice “kneel down for prayers” in the barracks yard, but among
themselves they called the regimental chaplain Corporal Christ, and for the rank of field bishop, which was associated with a certain fullness of body, these heathens had thought up the army name “skyball.”

When they were among themselves, they did not even take it amiss if someone was an enemy of the military, for over a fairly long period of service most of them had become that way themselves, and there were even pacifists in Kakania’s army. But this does not mean that later on, in the war, they did not do their duty with as much enthusiasm as their comrades in other countries; on the contrary, one always thinks differently from the way one acts. This fact, of such extraordinary importance for the condition of world civilization as we know it today, is ordinarily understood to mean that thinking is a charming habit of the individual citizen, without damaging which, when it comes to action, one joins in with what is customary
and what everyone is doing. This is not quite true, however, for there are people who are totally unoriginal in their thinking; but when they act, they often do so in a very personal way, which, because it is more appealing, is superior to their ideas, or, because it is more common, inferior to them, in any case more idiosyncratic. One comes closer to the truth if one does not stop with the object of the action, as opposed to the idea, but recognizes from the beginning that one is dealing with two different kinds of ideas. A person’s idea ceases to be only an idea whenever a second person thinks something similar, and between these two something happens, even if it is only being aware of each other, that makes them a pair. Even then the idea is no longer pure possibility but acquires an additional component of ancillary considerations. But this might be a sophism or an artifice. Nevertheless, the fact remains that every powerful idea goes out into the world of
reality and permeates it the way energy enters a malleable material and finally rigidifies in it, without entirely losing its effectiveness as an idea. Everywhere, in schools, in law books, in the aspect of houses in the city and fields in the country, in newspaper offices awash in currents of superficiality, in men’s trousers and women’s hats, in everything where people exercise and receive influence, ideas are encapsulated or dissolved in varying degrees of fixity and content. This is of course no more than a platitude, but we are hardly always aware of its extent, for it really amounts to nothing less than a monstrous, inside-out, third half of the brain. This third half does not think; it emits emotions, habits, experiences, limits, and directions, nothing but unconscious or half-conscious influences, among which individual thinking is as much and as little as a tiny candle flame in the stony darkness of a gigantic warehouse. And not last among
these are the ideas held in reserve, which are stored like uniforms for wartime. The moment something extraordinary begins to spread, they climb out of their petrification. Every day bells peal, but when a big fire breaks out or a people is called to arms, one sees for the first time the sort of feelings that have been clanging and churning inside them. Every day the newspapers casually write certain sentences that they habitually use to characterize habitual happenings, but if a revolution threatens or something new is about to happen, it suddenly appears that these words no longer suffice and that in order to ward off or welcome, one must reach back for the oldest hats in the store and the spooks in the closet. The mind enters every great general mobilization, whether for peace or for war, unequipped and laden down with forgotten things.

Hans had fallen into this disproportion between the personal and the general,
between living and reserve principles. In other circumstances, people would have been satisfied to find him not very likable, but the official document had raised him out of the midst of private individuals and made him an object of public thought, and had admonished his superiors that they were to apply to him not their uneducated, highly variable personal feelings, but the generally accepted ones that made them vexed and bored and that can at any moment degenerate wildly, like the actions of a drunk or a hysteric who feels quite distinctly that he is stuck inside his frenzy as inside a strange, oversize husk.

But one should not think that Hans was being mistreated, or that impermissible things were being done to him: on the contrary, he was treated strictly according to regulations. All that was missing was that iota of human warmth—no, one cannot call it warmth; but coal, fuel, on hand to be used on a suitable occasion—which even in a
barracks still finds a niche. Through the absence of the possibility of any personal sympathy, the right-angled buildings, the monotonous walls with the blue figures, the ruler-straight corridors with the innumerable parallel diagonal lines of guns hanging on them, and the trumpet signals and regulations that divided up the day, all had the effect of die clear, cold crystallizing of a spirit that till then had been alien to Hans Sepp, that spirit of the commonality, of public life, of impersonal community, or whatever it should be called, which had created this building and these forms.

The most crushing thing was that he felt that his whole spirit of contradiction had been blown away. He could, of course, have thought of himself as a missionary being tortured by some Indian tribe. Or he could have expunged the din of the world from his senses and immersed himself in the currents of the transcendental. He could have looked
upon his sufferings as a symbol, and so forth. But since a military cap had been clapped on his head, all these thoughts had become like impotent shadows. The sensitive world of the mind paled to a specter, which here, where a thousand people lived together, could not penetrate. His mind was desolate and withered.

Hans Sepp had settled Gerda with the mother of one of his friends. He saw her rarely, and then he was mostly surly from fatigue and despair. Gerda wanted to make herself independent; she did not want anything from him; but she had no way of understanding the events to which he was exposed. Several times she had had the idea of picking him up after his daily duty, as if he were his usual self and was just coming from some land of event. Lately he had taken to avoiding her. He did not even have the strength to let it bother him. In the pauses during the day, those irregular pauses that
fell at the most useless times, he hung around with the other conscripts doing their year of military service, drank brandy and coffee in the canteen, and sat in the disconsolate flood of their conversations and jokes as in a dirty creek, without being able to make up his mind to stand up. Now for the first time he came to hate the soldier class, because he felt himself subjected to its influence. —My mind is now nothing more than the lining of a military coat, he said to himself; but he felt astonishingly tempted to test the new movements in this clothing. It happened that even after duty he stayed with the others and tried out the rather coarse diversions of these half-independent young people.

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An elegant gentleman had his car stop and called out to Ulrich; with effort Ulrich recognized in the self-confident apparition (that leaned out of the elegant vehicle) Director
Leo Fischel. —You’re in luck! Fischel called to him. —My secretary’s been trying for weeks to get hold of you! She was always told you were away. —He was exaggerating, but this magisterial confidence in his manner was genuinely impressive.

Ulrich said softly: —I thought I’d find you in much different shape.

—What have you been hearing about me? Fischel probed, curious.

—I think pretty much everything. For a long time I’ve been expecting to hear about you through the newspapers.

—Nonsense! Women always exaggerate. Wont you accompany me home? I’ll tell you all about it.

The house had changed, taken on an aura of the top offices of some business enterprise or other, and had become totally unfeminine. But Fischel said nothing specific.
He was more concerned with shoring up his reputation with Ulrich. He treated his departure from the bank as a minor incident. —What did you expect? I could have stayed there for ten years without getting anywhere! My leaving was entirely amicable. He had taken on such a self-important manner of speaking that Ulrich felt constrained to express his dry astonishment at it. —But you had ruined yourself so completely—he said inquiringly—that people assumed you had to either shoot yourself or end up in court.

—I’d never shoot myself, I’d poison myself, Leo corrected. —I wouldn’t do anyone the favor of dying like an aristocrat or a section chief! But it wasn’t at all necessary. Do you know what a “starching,” a transitory illiquidity, is? Well! My family made a ridiculous to-do about it that they’re very sorry for today!

—By the way, you never said a word—Ulrich exclaimed, having just thought
of it—about becoming Leona’s friend; I should at least have had the right to know that I

—Do you have any idea how this woman behaved toward me? Shameless! Her upbringing!

—I always left Leona the way she is. I suppose that with her natural stupidity she’ll end up in a few years as a pensioner in a brothel.

—Far from it! Moreover, I’m not as heartless as you, my friend. I’ve tried to arouse Leona’s reason a little and, so to speak, her economic understanding, as far as they apply to the exploitation of her body. And on the evening when my illiquidity began to make itself palpable to me, I went to her to borrow a few hundred crowns, which I assumed Leona would have laid aside. You ought to have heard this harpy scolding me for being a skinflint, a robber;
she even cursed my religion! The one thing she didn’t claim was that I had robbed her of her innocence. But you’re wrong about Leona’s future; do you know who her friend is now, right after me?

He bent over to Ulrich and whispered a name in his ear; he did this more out of respect than because the whispering was necessary.

—What do you say to that? You have to admit she’s a beauty.

Ulrich was astounded. The name Fischel had whispered to him was Arnheim.

Ulrich asked after Gerda. Fischel blew his soul’s breath out through pursed lips; his face became anxious and betrayed secret worries. He raised his shoulders and slackly let them fall again. —I thought that you might know where she’s staying.
—I have a suspicion—Ulrich answered—but I don’t know. I assume she’s taken a job.

—Job! As what? As governess in a family with small children! Just think, she takes a job as a domestic servant when she could have every luxury! Just yesterday I concluded a deal on a house, top location, with an apartment that’s a palace by itself: But no, no, no! Fischel beat his face with his fists; his pain about his daughter was genuine, or at least was the genuine pain that she was preventing him from enjoying his victory completely.

—Why don’t you turn to the police? Ulrich asked.

—Oh, please! I can’t advertise my family affairs to the world! Besides, I want to, but my wife won’t hear of it. I immediately paid my wife back what I had lost of hers; her high-and-mighty brothers aren’t going to
wear out their mouths about me! And in the last analysis, Gerda is as much her child as mine. In that line I’m not going to do anything without her agreement. Half the day she rides around in my car and searches her eyes out. Of course that’s absurd; that’s not the way to go about it. But what can one do when one’s married to a woman!

—I thought your divorce was under way?

—It was. That is, only verbally. Not yet legally. The lawyers had just fired the first shots when my situation visibly improved. I don’t know myself what our current relation is; I believe Clementine is waiting for a discussion. Of course she’s still living at her brother’s.

—But then why don’t you simply hire a private detective to find Gerda? Ulrich interrupted, having just thought of it.

—Good idea, Fischel replied.
—She can be tracked down through Hans Sepp!

—My wife intends to drive out to Hans Sepp yet again one of these days and work on him; he’s not saying anything.

—Oh, you know what? Hans must be doing his military service now; don’t you remember? He got a six-month postponement on account of some exams he had to take, which he ended up not taking. He must have gone in two weeks ago; I can say that precisely because it was very unusual, since around this time only the medical students are called up. So your wife will hardly find him. On the other hand, his feet could really be held to the fire through his superiors. You understand, if someone there squeezes him between his fingers, it will really loosen his tongue!

—Splendid, and thank you! I hope my wife will see that too. For as I said, without
Clementine I don’t want to undertake anything in this direction; otherwise I’ll immediately be accused again of being a murderer!

Ulrich had to smile. —Freedom seems to have made you anxious, my dear Fischel.

Fischel had always been easily irritated by Ulrich; now that he had become an important man, even more so. —You exaggerate freedom— he said dismissively—and it appears that you’ve never quite understood my position. Marriage is often a struggle as to who is the stronger; extraordinarily difficult as long as it involves feelings, ideas, and fantasies! But not difficult at all as soon as one is successful in life. I have the impression that even Clementine is beginning to realize that. One can argue for weeks over whether an opinion is correct. But as soon as one is successful, it is the opinion of a man who might have been mistaken but who needs this incidental error for his success. In the worst case, it’s like the hobbyhorse of
some great artist; and what does one do with the hobbyhorses of great artists? One loves them; one knows that they’re a little secret. Since Ulrich was laughing freely, Fischel did not want to stop talking. —Listen to what I’m telling you! Pay close attention! I said that if one has no other ambitions / nothing to do / has nothing / besides feelings and ideas, the quarrel is endless. Ideas and feelings make one petty and neurotic. Unfortunately, that’s what happened with me and Clementine. Today I have no time. I don’t even know for certain whether Clementine wants to come back to me; I only believe that she does; she’s sorry, and sooner or later that will come out of itself, but then most certainly in a simpler and better way than if I were to think out down to the last detail how it has to come about. You could never do business, either, with a plan that is unhealthily pinned down in every detail!
Fischel was almost out of breath, but he felt free. Ulrich had been listening to him seriously, and did not contradict. —I’m quite relieved that everything has taken a turn for the better, he said politely. —Your wife is an excellent woman, and when it will be advantageous for you to have a great house, she will fulfill that task admirably.

—Exactly. That too. Soon we’ll be able to celebrate our silver anniversary, and joking aside, if the money is new, the character at least ought to be old. A silver anniversary is worth almost as much as an aristocratic grandmother, which, moreover, she also has.

Ulrich got up to leave, but Fischel was now in high spirits. —But you shouldn’t think that Leona managed to clip my wings! I left her to Dr. Arnheim with no envy whatsoever. Do you know the dancer ... He mentioned an unfamiliar name and pulled a small photo from his wallet. —Well, where should you know her from, she has seldom
appeared in public; private dance evenings, distinguished, Beethoven and Debussy, you know, that’s now the coming thing. But what I wanted to tell you: you’re an athlete, can you manage this? He stepped over to a table and accompanied his words with an echo of arm and leg. —For instance, she lies this way on a table. The upper body flat on the top, her face leaning with one ear on her propped-up arms, and smiling deliciously. But at the same time her legs are spread apart, like this, along the narrow edge of the table, so that it looks like a big T. Or she suddenly stands on her forearms and palms—like this—of course I can’t do it. And she has one foot way over her head and almost on the ground, the other against the cabinet up there. I tell you, you couldn’t do a tenth of it, in spite of your gymnastics. That’s the modern woman. She’s lovelier than we, cleverer than we, and I believe that if I tried to box with her I’d soon be clutching my
belly. The only thing in which a man is stronger today than a woman is in earning money!

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Who had been responsible for Hans Sepp’s receiving his black mark? Remarkably enough, it was Count Leinsdorf. Count Leinsdorf had one day asked Ulrich about this young man, and Ulrich had presented him as a harmless muddlehead; but Count Leinsdorf had recently taken to mistrusting Ulrich, and this information confirmed his conviction that in Hans Sepp he had before him one of those irresponsible elements who are continually preventing anything good from being done in Kakania. Count Leinsdorf had lately become nervous. He had heard through General Director Leo Fischel that a quite distinct group of immature young people that had formed around Hans Sepp had been the real instigator of the demonstration that had caused His Excellency more
unpleasantness than might be supposed. For this political procession had created “a quite unfavorable impression upstairs.” There was no question that it was completely harmless, and that if one had seriously wanted to prevent such a thing it could be done by a handful of police at any time; but the impression such events make is always much more terrifying than they actually merit, and no true politician dares neglect impressions. Count Leinsdorf had had serious discussions about this with his friend the Commissioner of Police, which had not produced any results, and when Count Leinsdorf afterward learned the name of Hans Sepp, the Commissioner was quite ready to have this lead followed up in order to appease His Excellency. The Commissioner had been convinced from the start that any findings that might have previously escaped his police would be trifling, and was only confirmed in this opinion by the results of the inquiries he had ordered. But still, the
preoccupation of a bureaucracy with an individual always leads to the conclusion that this individual is shady and unreliable, that is to say, as measured by the standards of precision and security according to the rules and regulations one applies in a bureaucracy. For this reason the Commissioner found it expedient, when there was room for doubt, not to reproach a man like Count Leinsdorf for imagining things but rather to allow the case of Hans Sepp to be treated according to the model that at the moment nothing could be proved against the suspect, on which account he only remained under suspicion until the matter could be completely cleared up. This complete clearing up was tacitly set for Saint Never-Plus-One’s Day, when all the files that are still open rise up from the graves of the archives. That in spite of this it brought suffering on Hans Sepp was a totally impersonal matter, which did not involve trickery of any kind. A buried open file must
from time to time be raised from its grave in order to note on it that it is still not possible to close it, and to mark it with a date on which the archivist is again to present it to his supervisor. This is a universal law of bureaucracy, and if it should involve a file that was never intended to be closed, on the pretext that its documentation was not complete, one must pay very close attention, for it can happen that bureaucrats are promoted, transferred, and die, and that a neophyte receiving the file causes, in his excessive zeal, a small supplementary investigation to be added to one of the last investigations that took place years ago, which causes the file to be kept alive for a few weeks until the investigation ends as a report to be inserted in, and disappear with, the file. Through some such process Hans Sepp’s file, too, had, without any particular purpose, become current; since Hans Sepp happened to be in the army, his file had to go to the Ministry of
Justice, from there to the Ministry of War, and from there to the Commanding Officer, etc., and it is easy to understand how, handed on through the various in and out stamps, presentation stamps, confirmations of action, additions with bureaucratic courtesy, Relinquished, For Report, Not Known in this Office, and such, this file took on a dangerous appearance.

Meanwhile, in desperation, Gerda had run to Ulrich and reported that Hans had to be rescued, because he was not up to the conditions he had fallen into and was already clearly showing alarming signs of cracking up completely. She had still not returned to her parents’ house, kept her whereabouts hidden, and was quite proud at having found some piano lessons to give and being able to add a few pennies to the money her friends lent her. At that time Leo Fischel was making the most strenuous efforts to win her back, and so Ulrich intervened as mediator. After
long back-and-forth and paternal admonitions, Gerda let herself be talked into considering favorably a promise to move back to her parents’ if Papa would declare himself ready and bring about, and Ulrich would support, freeing Hans from his doom. Ulrich spoke with General Director Fischel about it, and General Director Fischel had by then done many a worse thing than was now being asked of him in order to get his daughter back. He turned to Count Leinsdorf. General Director Leo Fischel was actively involved in business relations with Count Leinsdorf; after some commiseration and reflection, His Excellency recommended him to Diotima, who at the moment was on intimate footing with the Ministry of War and, for this reason too more suitable than he was, because this whole affair, especially because of the slightly irregular solution required, was more the province of woman, of the heart,
and of feminine tact. In this way Leo Fischel came to Diotima.

Count Leinsdorf had already prepared her for the visit, and she made a powerful impression on Fischel. He had thought that the time when anything intellectual could compel his admiration lay behind him. But it appeared that beautiful women were especially qualified to soften his newly acquired hardness. He had had his first relapse with Leona. Leona had a face of the sort that General Director Fischel’s parents would have admired, and this face again came to his mind when he saw Diotima, although there was really no similarity. At that time, the most miserable drawing teacher or photographer would not have been at peace with himself if he had not felt in his hair or his necktie some breath of genius. For this reason Leona, too, was not simply beautiful for Leo but a genius of beauty; that was the special charm through which she had led him
astray into risky undertakings. —A pity she had such a mean character, Fischel thought. —Her long fat legs were a long sight lovelier than the desiccated legs of these modern dancers. He did not know whether it was the desiccated legs or the unpleasant character that made him think of his wife, Clementine, but at any rate he remembered with emotion the happy years of his marriage, for then Clementine and he had still believed in the value of genius, and if one considers this in a well-disposed way, it was not so misplaced; the line of Leo Fischel’s life, looked at in this light, showed no break, for in the last analysis the belief that there were privileged geniuses was a possible way of justifying ruthless and risky deals. Diotima possessed the quality of awakening such ideas that roam through the far reaches of the soul when one sat opposite her for the first time, and General Director Fischel meanwhile needed only to brush his hands through his sideburns
once and set his pince-nez to rights before he began to speak with a sigh. Diotima confirmed this sigh with a motherly smile, and before Fischel even got to what he wanted to say, this woman with a wholly justified reputation for her gift of empathy said: —I have been told the purpose of your visit. It is sad; humanity today suffers grievously from its failure to produce more geniuses, while on the other hand it denies and persecutes every young talent that might perhaps develop into one.

Fischel ventured the question: —You have heard what’s happening to my protégé? He’s a troublemaker. Well, and what of it? All great people were troublemakers in their youth. I do not, by the way, in the least condone it. But he was also, if you will permit me the observation, a forceps birth; his head was somewhat compressed; he is extremely irritable, and I thought that that might perhaps be a way... ?
Diotima raised her eyebrows sadly. —I spoke about it with one of the leading gentlemen of the War Ministry; unfortunately, I must tell you, General Director, that your request is meeting with almost insurmountable difficulties.

Sadly and indignandy Fischel raised his hands. —But one cannot force an intellectual person when it goes against the intellect! The fellow has some ideas about refusing service in wartime, and the gentlemen will end up shooting him on me!

—Yes, Diotima replied. —You are so right! One should not force an intellectual when it goes against the intellect. You are voicing my own opinion. But how is one to make a general understand that?

A pause ensued. Fischel almost thought he should leave, but when he scraped his feet Diotima laid a hand on his arm with mute permission to remain. She seemed to be
thinking. Fischel racked his brains to see if he could help her find a good idea. He would have gladly offered her money for the leading gentleman of the War Ministry she had mentioned; but such an idea was at that time absurd. Fischel felt helpless. —A Midas! occurred to him; why, he did not exactly know, and he sought to recollect this ancient legend, without quite being able to. The lenses of his spectacles almost misted over with emotion.

At this moment Diotima brightened. —I believe, General Director, that I perhaps might indeed be able to help you a little. I would in any case be delighted if I could. I can’t get over die idea that an intellectual can’t be forced against the intellect! Of course, it would be better not to talk too much to the gentlemen of the War Ministry about the nature of this intellect.

Leo Fischel obligingly concurred with this circumspection.
—But this case has also, so to speak, a maternal side—Diotima went on—a feminine, unlogical aspect; I mean, given so-and-so many thousands of soldiers, just one can’t be so important. I’ll try to make clear to a high officer who is a friend of mine that out of political considerations His Excellency considers it important to have this young man mustered out; the right people should always be put in the right places, and your future son-in-law is not of the slightest use in a barracks, whereas he ... well, somehow that’s the way I see it. Unfortunately, the military is uncommonly resistant to exceptions. But what I hope is that we can at least get the young man a fairly long leave, and then we can think what to do about the rest.

Charmed, Leo Fischel bent over Diotima’s hand. This woman had won his complete confidence.

The visit was not without its effect on his way of thinking either. For
understandable reasons, he had lately become quite materialistic. His experiences of life had led him to the viewpoint that a right-thinking man had to watch out for himself. Be independent; need nothing from others for which you did not have something they wanted in return: but that is also a Protestant feeling, much as it was for the first colonists in America. Leo Fischel still loved to philosophize, even though his time for it had become much more limited. His affairs now sometimes brought him into contact with the high clergy. He discovered that it is the mistake of all religions to teach virtue as something which is only negative, as abstinence and selflessness; this makes it anachronistic and gives the deals one has to make an aura of something like secret vice. On the other hand, the public religion of efficiency, as he met it in Germany through his business, had seized hold of him. People are glad to help a capable and enterprising
person; in other words, he can get credit anywhere: this was a positive formula that allowed one to get somewhere. It taught one to be ready to help without reckoning on gratitude, just as Christian teaching demands, although it did not include the uncertainty of having to rely on noble feeling in someone else, but made use of egotism as the single dependable human quality, which it without doubt is. And money is a tool of genius that makes it possible to calculate and regulate this basic quality. Money is ordered selfishness brought into relation with efficiency. An enormous organization of selfishness according to the hierarchical order of how it is earned. It is a creative umbrella organization built on baseness—emperors and kings have not tamed the passions the way money has. Fischel often wondered what human demiurge might have invented money. If everything were to be accessible to money, and every matter to have its price, which
unfortunately is still far from being the case, then any other morality besides the existence of trade would be of no use at all. This was his opinion and his conviction. Even during the time when he had revered the great ideas of humanity, he had always felt a certain aversion to them in the mouth of anybody else. If someone simply says “virtue” or “beauty,” there is something as unnatural and affected about it as when an Austrian speaks in the past tense. Now even that had increased. His life was consumed by work, striving for power, efficiency, and the dependence on the greatness of affairs, which he had to observe and exploit. The intellectual and spiritual spheres came to seem to him more and more like clouds having no connection with the earth. But he was no happier. He felt himself somehow weakened. Every amusement seemed to him more superficial than before. He increased his stimuli, with the result that he succeeded only in
making himself more distracted. He made fun of his daughter, but secretly he envied her her ideas.

And as Diotima had spoken so naturally and freely of maternal feeling, soul, mind, and goodness, he was constantly thinking: —What a mother this would be for Gerda! (?wife for you) He wept inside to hear the beauty of her speech, and he had great satisfaction in noticing how these great words gave birth to a tiny element of corruption—however elegantly—for she was ultimately fulfilling his request, whatever reasons might have been behind it. In certain cases, when there is a question of some injustice, idealism is almost better than naked calculation; this was the teaching that Fischel drew directly from the impressions of his visit, and that he intended to think about urgently on his further course.

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Hans Sepp had left the barracks and not shown up for duty, although he had been transferred from the hospital back to his company. He knew that his return would entail the most unbearable consequences; being punished like an animal and, still worse—for punishment is solitary—beforehand the dull, set face of the captain and the necessity of having to be interrogated by him. Hans knew that he had made up his mind not to go back. For the first time the holy fire of defiance again flared up in him, and the unbending sense of purity that avoids contamination with the impure flashed through him. This made even more of a torture the memory that he had lost the right to it. He considered his illness incurable and was convinced that he had been sullied for the rest of his life. He had resolved to kill himself; he had left the barracks to completely cut off a return to life; the thought that in a few hours he would have killed
himself was the only thing that could to some degree substitute for his self-respect, even if it could not restore it.

In order not to be immediately recognized if they should be looking for him, he had put on civilian clothes. He walked through the city on foot, for he felt incapable of taking a cab; he had a long route before him, as it had seemed to him for some reason a matter of course that he would kill himself only in the open countryside. He actually could have done it on the way, in the middle of the city; presumably, certain ceremonies merely serve to postpone the business a bit, and among these Hans included a last glimpse of nature; but he was not at all one of those people who think about such questions in a situation such as the one he was now in. The famous dark veil that arises when the moisture content of the emotions becomes extreme without precipitating tears lay before his eyes, and the noises of the
world echoed softly. Passing cars, the throng of people, housefronts stretching for blocks, all looked like a bas-relief. The tears that Hans Sepp did not want to shed outwardly in public or for other reasons nonetheless fell through him inwardly as if down an incredibly deep, dark shaft onto his own grave, in which he already felt himself lying, which signifies about the same thing as that he was simultaneously sitting beside it and grieving for himself. There is in all this a force that is very cheering, and by the time Hans got to the city line, where the train tracks ran upon which he wanted to throw himself as soon as a train came along, his grief had become attached to and affiliated with so many things that it really felt quite good. The stretch he was on was apparently not well traveled, and Hans had to tell himself that upon arriving he would have immediately thrown himself in front of a train had one happened to be passing by at that instant, but that not
knowing the schedule, he could not simply lie down on the tracks and wait. He sat down among the sparse vegetation on the slope at the top of a cut where the railway made a curve, and he could see in both directions. A train passed, but he gave himself time. He observed the incredible increase in speed that takes place when the train shoots, as it were, through one’s vicinity, and listened to the din of the wheels in order to be able to picture how he was going to be pounded in it by the next train. This clanging and bawling seemed, in contrast to what he saw, to last for an extraordinary length of time, and Hans turned cold.

The question of what had made him want to end his life by means of a railway train was not at all clear. Hanging had something distorted and spooky. Jumping out a window is a woman’s way. He had no poison. To cut his veins he needed a bathtub. On this path of eliminating other
possibilities, he pursued methodically the same course he had taken in blind determination with a single step: it satisfied him; his instincts had not yet been affected. To be sure, he had left out death by shooting; he thought of it now for the first time. But Hans did not own a pistol, nor did he know what to do with one, and he did not want to share his last moment with his army rifle. He had to be free of small misfortunes when he exited this life. This reminded him that he had to prepare himself inwardly. He had sinned and contaminated himself: he had to hold on to that. Someone else in his situation might perhaps have hoped for the prospect of recovery; but while recovery might be possible, salvation was irrevocably lost. Involuntarily, Hans pulled out of his coat his little notebook and a pencil; but before he could jot down his idea, he remembered that this was now quite pointless. He idly held notebook and pencil in his hands. His whole mind was
directed at the phrase that he had become impure and godless. There was a lot to be said about that. For instance, that Christianity, influenced by Judaism, permitted sin to be redeemed through remorse and penitence, while the pure, Teutonic idea of being healthy and whole permitted of no bargaining or trading. Wholeness is lost once and for all, like virginity; and of course that is precisely where the greatness and challenge of the idea lies. Where today does one find such greatness? Nowhere. Hans was convinced that the world would suffer a great loss from his having to eliminate himself. The size and force of a train was really almost the only possible way of expressing the size and force of such a case. Another one went past. This technological marvel was small and tiny if one compared it to the astronomical construction techniques of the Egyptians and Assyrians, but at all events a train almost succeeded in enabling the present to express
itself gothically, yearning outward beyond the limitations of matter. Hans raised his hand and almost irresolutely waved at people, who waved back and shoved their heads out the window in bunches, like the people-grapes on ancient naive sculptures. This made him feel better, but feeling good, grief, and everything he could think of was simply like smoke, and when it had drifted away the sentence that Hans Sepp had become impure and was not to be saved lay there again, undisturbed; nothing lasting was connected with it, the idea no longer wished to grow. If Hans had been sitting at home before a table with pen and paper, it perhaps might have turned out otherwise; it was just this that gave him the feeling that he was here for no other purpose than to put an end to his existence.

He snapped the pencil in two and tore the notebook into little pieces. That was a major step. Then he climbed down the slope,
sat in the grass at the edge of the gravel ballast, and threw the shreds of his intellectual world in front of the next train. The train scattered them. Nothing was to be found of the pencil; the bright paper butterflies, broken on the wheels and sucked up, covered the right-of-way on both sides for five hundred paces. Hans calculated that he was approximately twelve times larger than the notebook. Then he seized his head in both hands and began his final farewell. This pulling everything together was to be devoted to Gerda. He wanted to forgive her and, without leaving her a written word, to die with the all-embracing thought of her on his lips. But even though all kinds of thoughts appeared and disappeared in his mind, his body remained quite empty. It seemed down here in the narrow cut that he could not feel anything and needed to go and sit up above again in order to embrace Gerda once more in his mind. But it seemed silly, it
annoyed him to have to crawl up the slope. Gradually the emptiness in his body increased and became hunger. —That's my mind beginning to disintegrate, he told himself. Since his illness, he had lived in constant fear of going insane. He had let train after train go by and had sat down here in the narrow, stupid world of the railway cut without thinking of anything at all. It might already be late afternoon. Then Hans Sepp became aware, as if someone suddenly turned something around in him, that this was his final state, to be succeeded only by its execution. He had the nauseating feeling of an imaginary skin eruption over his whole body. He pulled out his pocket knife and cleaned his nails with it; this was an ill-bred habit he had, which he considered very tidy and elegant; it made him want to cry. Hesitantly he stood up. Everything inside him had receded from him. He was afraid, but he was no longer master of himself; the sole master
was the irrevocable resolve that ruled alone in a dark vacuum. Hans looked left and right. One might say that he had already died as he looked in both directions for a train, for this looking was all that was alive in him, this and isolated feelings that drifted past like clumps of grass in a flood. For he no longer knew what to do with himself. He still noticed that his head commanded his legs to leap before the train approached; but his legs were no longer paying attention, they sprang when they wanted to, at the last minute, and Hans’s body was struck in the air. He still felt himself plunging down, falling on great sharp knives. Then his world burst into fragments.

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Gerda had come back. After Hans’s death she had, for the moment, nothing to live for. But if Fischel had expected to find his daughter crushed, he was mistaken. A young lady who
obviously had far-reaching plans walked in, wearing the insignia of a Red Cross nurse.

—I’m going to go as a nurse, Papa, Gerda said.

—Not right away, not right away, my child! General Director Fischel answered submissively. —We have to wait and see. No one has any idea what this is going to turn into—

—What should it turn into! I’ve already seen the young men at the mobilization stations. They’re singing. Their wives and fiancées are with them. No one knows how he is going to come back. But if you walk through the city and look in people’s eyes, including the people who aren’t going to the front yet, it’s like a big wedding.

Fischel, concerned, looked at his daughter over his glasses. —I would wish another kind of wedding for you, may God preserve us. A Dutch firm has offered me a shipful of
margarine, available at the port of Rotterdam—do you know what that means? Five crowns difference per ton since yesterday! If I don’t telegraph right away, tomorrow it will probably be seven crowns. That means prices are going up. If they come back from the campaign with both eyes, the young men will need them both to look out for their money!

—Well—Gerda said—people are talking about increases, but there have always been increases at the beginning. Mama is quite wild too.

—Oh? Fischel asked. —Have you already talked with Mama? What’s she up to?

—At the moment, she’s in the kitchen—Gerda motioned with her head toward the wall, behind which a hall led to the kitchen—and laying in canned goods like mad. Before that, she cashed in her change, like everyone else. And she fired the kitchen
maid; since the manservant has to go in the army anyway, she wants to really cut down on the servants.

Fischel nodded with satisfaction. —She’s in favor of the war. She hopes the brutality will cease and people will be purified. But she is also a clever woman and is being prudent. Fischel said this a little mockingly and a little tenderly.

—Oh, Papa. Gerda flared up. —If I had wanted to be the way you are, I would have married a knight in shining armor. You keep misunderstanding me. I’m not letting myself be left by the wayside because my first romantic experience wasn’t a good one! You’ll manage to get me into a field hospital. When the patients come in from the front they should find real, up-to-date people as nurses, not praying nuns! You have no idea how much love and emotion of a sort we’ve never experienced before are (to be seen) in the streets today! We’ve been living like animals,
brought down one day by death; it’s different now! It’s tremendous, I tell you: everyone is a brother; even death isn’t an enemy; a person loves his own death for the sake of others; today, for the first time, we understand life!

Fischel had been staring at his daughter with pride and concern. Gerda had got even thinner. Sharp, spinsterish lines cut up her face into an eye segment, a nose-mouth part, and a chin-and-neck section, all of which, whenever Gerda was trying to say something, pulled like horses dragging a load that was too heavy: now one part, now another, never all together, giving the face an overstrained and deeply moving quality.

—Now she has a new craze—Fischel thought—and will manage once again not to lead a settled life! In his mind he ran down a list of a dozen men who, now that Hans Sepp was fortunately dead, could be regarded as qualified suitors; but in view of the damned
uncertainty that had broken out, there was no predicting what was going to happen to any of them tomorrow. Gerda’s blond hair seemed to have become shaggier; she had been neglecting her appearance, but this made her hair look more like Fischel’s, and it had lost the presumptuous soft, dark-blond smoothness characteristic of her mother’s family. Memories of a brave, unkempt fox terrier and of himself, who had fought his way up and at the moment was standing again before something as yet unseen by man, over which he would go on climbing, mingled in his heart with the brave stupidity of his daughter into a warm togetherness. Leo Fischel straightened up in his chair and laid his hand on the desktop with emphasis. —My child!—he said—I have a strange feeling when I hear you talk this way, while people are shouting hurrah and prices are rising. You say I don’t have any idea, but I do, except that I can’t say myself what it is.
Don’t believe that I’m not caught up in this too. Sit down, my child!

Gerda did not want to, she was too impatient; but Fischel repeated his wish more strongly, and she obeyed, sitting hesitantly on the extreme edge of an armchair. —This is the first day you’re back; listen to me! Fischel said. —You say I understand nothing about love and killing and such things; that may be. But if nothing happens to you in the hospital, which God forbid, you ought to understand me a little before we part again. I was seven years old when we had the war with Prussia. Then too, for two weeks, all the bells pealed and in the synagogue we prayed to God to annihilate the Prussians, who today are our allies. What do you say to that? What should anyone say to that?

Gerda did not want to answer. She had the prejudice that what was going on now belonged to the enthusiastic young, not the cautious old. And only reluctantly, because
her father was looking at her so penetratingly, did she murmur some sort of response. —Over the course of time, people simply learn to understand each other better—was what her answer about the Prussians amounted to. But Leo Fischel snatched up her words spiritedly: —No! People don’t learn to understand each other better in the course of time; it’s just the opposite, I tell you! When you get to know a person and you like him, it may be that you think you understand him; but after you’ve been around him for twenty-five years you don’t understand a word he says! You think, let’s say, that he ought to be grateful to you; but no, just at that moment he curses you. Always when you think he has to say yes, he’ll say no; and when you think no, he thinks yes. So he can be warm or cold, hard or soft, as it suits him; and do you believe that for your sake he’ll be the way you want him to be? It suited your mother as little as it suits this armchair to be a horse,
because you’re already impatient and want to be off!

Gerda smiled weakly at her father. Since she had come back and seen the new situation, he had made a strong impression on her; she could not help herself. And he loved her, there was no doubting that, and it comforted her.

—But what are we going to do with the things that won’t let us understand them? Fischel asked prophetically. —We measure them, we weigh them, we analyze them mentally, and we direct all our keenness to finding in them something that remains constant, something by which we could get hold of them, on which we can rely and which we can count. Those are the laws of nature, my child, and where we have discovered them we can mass-produce things and buy and sell to our heart’s content. And now I ask you, how can people relate to one another when they don’t understand one another? I tell
you, there’s only one way! Only when you stimulate or inhibit his desire can you get a person exactly where you want him. Whoever wants to build solidly must make use of force and basic desires. Then a person suddenly becomes unambiguous, predictable, dependable, and your experience with him is repeated everywhere in the same fashion. You can’t rely on goodness. You can rely on bad qualities. God is wonderful, my child; he has given us our bad qualities so that we can achieve some semblance of order.

—But in that case the order of the world would be nothing but baseness jumping through hoops! Gerda flared up.

—You’re clever! Perhaps so. But who can know? At any rate, I don’t point a bayonet at a person’s chest to have him do what he thinks is right. Are you following the newspapers? I’m still getting foreign papers, although it’s beginning to be difficult. Here and abroad they’re saying the same things.
Get the screws on them. Tighten the screws on them. Cold-bloodedly continue the tight-screw policy. Don’t hesitate to apply the “strong method” of breaking windows. That’s the way they’re talking here, and abroad it’s not much different. I believe they’ve already introduced martial law, and if we should get into the war zone we’ll be threatened with the gallows. That’s the strong method. I can understand that it makes an impression on you. It’s clean, precise, and abhors chatter. It qualifies the nation for great things by treating each individual person who is part of it like a dog! Leo Fischel smiled.

Gerda shook her tousled head decisively, but in a slow, friendly way.

—You must be clear about this, Fischel added. —When the industrialists’ association supplied a bourgeois workers’ opposition party with an election fund, or when my former bank made money available for something, they weren’t doing anything
different. And a deal only comes about at all if I either force another person to meet me halfway, because otherwise it will hurt him, or if I give him the impression that there’s a good deal to be made; then I mostly out-smart him, and that’s also a form of my power over him. But how delicate and adaptable this power is! It’s creative and flexible. Money gives measure to a man. It’s ordered selfishness. It’s the most splendid organization of selfishness, a creative super-organization, constructed on a real notion of bearish speculation!

Gerda had been listening to her father, but her own thoughts buzzed in her mind. She answered: —Papa, I didn’t understand everything, but you’re surely right. Of course, you’re looking at things as a rationalist, and for me it’s precisely the irrational (what goes beyond all calculation) in what’s going on now that’s fascinating!
—What does irrational mean? General Director Fischel protested. —By that you mean illogical and incalculable and wild, the way one sometimes is in dreams? To that I can only say that buying and selling is like war; you have to calculate and you can calculate, but even there what is decisive in the last analysis is will, courage, the individual, or, as you call it, the irrational. No, my child—he concluded—money is selfishness brought into relation with enterprise and efficiency. All of you are trying another way to regulate selfishness. It’s not new, I acknowledge it, it’s related. But wait and see how it works! For centuries capitalism has been a proven way of organizing human powers according to the ability to make money; where its influence is suppressed, you will find that arbitrariness, backroom deals, kowtowing for advantage, and adventurism will spring up. As far as I’m concerned, you can do away with money if you like, but you won’t abolish
the superior power of whoever is holding the advantages in his hand. Except that you’ll put someone who doesn’t know what to do with them in the place of someone who did! For you’re mistaken if you believe that money is the cause of our selfishness; it’s the consequence.

—But I don’t believe that at all, Papa, Gerda said modesdy. —I’m only telling you that’s what’s going on now—

—And furthermore—Fischel interrupted her—it’s the most reasonable consequence!

—What’s going on now—Gerda went on with her sentence—rises above reason. The way a poem or love rises above the commerce of the world.

—You’re a deep girl! Fischel embraced her and released her. He liked Gerda’s youthful ardor. —My fortune! he called her mentally, and followed her with a tender glance. A discussion with a person one loves
and understands is bracing. He had not philosophized this way for a long time; it was a remarkable period. In conversation with this child Fischel had achieved some clarity about himself. He wanted to buy. Not a ship; at least five ships. He summoned his secretary. —We can’t do this ourselves—he told him—it wouldn’t look good, but let’s do it through an intermediary. But for Leo Fischel this was not the main thing. The main thing was that he had gained a feeling of connection with events and yet a feeling of isolation, too. In spite of the ups and downs going on around him, he had created order within himself.
1936

TO THE COMPLEX: LEO FLSCHEL-GERDA-HANS SEPP

Note: Development of a Man of Action (Leo Fischel)

Title: Return to an abandoned world / Leo Fischel as messenger from the world / Encounter with a messenger from an abandoned world / News from a lost world

Walking through the train, Ulrich saw a familiar face, stopped, and realized that it was Leo Fischel, who was sitting in a compartment by himself, leafing through a stack of
flimsy papers he held in his hand. With his pince-nez far down on his nose, and his reddish-blond mutton-chop sideburns, he looked like an English lord of the 1860s. Ulrich was so in need of contact with everyday life that he greeted his old acquaintance, whom he had not seen for months, almost joyfully.

Fischel asked him where he was coming from.

“From the south,” Ulrich responded vaguely.

“We haven’t seen you for quite a while,” Fischel said with concern. “You’ve been having trouble, haven’t you?”

“How so?”

“I just mean in general. In your position with the campaign, I’m thinking.”
“I never had a connection with the campaign that could be called a position,” Ulrich objected with some heat.

“You just disappeared one day,” Fischel said. “Nobody knew where you were. That led me to think that you were having problems.”

“Except for that error, you’re very well informed: how come?” Ulrich laughed.

“I was looking for you like a needle in a haystack. Hard times, bad stories, my friend,” Fischel replied with a sigh. “The General didn’t know where you were, your cousin didn’t know where you were, and you weren’t having your mail forwarded, I was told. Did you get a letter from Gerda?”

“Get it? No. Perhaps I’ll find it waiting for me at home. Has something happened to Gerda?”
Director Fischel did not answer; the conductor was passing by, and he motioned him in to give him some telegrams, requesting that he send them off at the next stop.

Ulrich now first noticed that Fischel was traveling first class, which he would not have expected of him.

“Since when are you seeing my cousin and the General?” he asked.

Fischel looked at him reflectively. Obviously he did not understand the question right away. “Oh,” he then said, “I think you hadn’t even left yet. Your cousin consulted me on a matter of business, and through her I met the General, whom I wanted at that time to request something of on account of Hans Sepp. You know, don’t you, that Hans shot and killed himself?”

Ulrich gave an involuntary start.
“It even got into some of the newspapers,” Fischel confirmed. “He was called up for his military service and a few weeks later shot himself.”

“But why?”

“God knows! Frankly speaking, he could just as well have done it sooner. He could always have shot himself. He was a fool. But in the final analysis, I liked him. You won’t believe it, but I even liked his anti-Semitism and his diatribes against bank directors.”

“Was there anything between him and Gerda?”

“Bitter quarrels,” Fischel confirmed. “But it wasn’t that alone. Listen: I’ve missed you. I searched for you. When I’m talking with you I have the feeling I’m talking not with a reasonable person but with a philosopher. Whatever you say—please permit an old friend to say this—is never to the point,
never has hands and feet, but it has head and heart! So what do you say about Hans Sepp’s having shot himself?”

“Is that why you were searching for me?”

“No, not because of that. On account of business and the General and Arnheim, who are friends of yours. The man before you is no longer with Lloyd’s Bank but has gone into business for himself. It’s a handful, let me tell you! I’ve had a lot of trouble, but now, thank goodness, things are going splendidly—”

“If I’m not mistaken, what you call trouble is losing your job?”

“Yes; thank goodness I lost my job at Lloyd’s; otherwise today I would still be a head clerk with the title of Director and would remain one until I was put out to pasture. When I was forced to give that up, my
wife began divorce proceedings against me—”

“Honestly! You really do have a lot of news to tell!”

“Hmph!” Fischel went. “We no longer live in the old apartment. While the divorce is going on, my wife has moved in with her brother”— he took out a business card—”and this is my address. I hope you’ll pay me a visit soon.” On the card Ulrich read several ambiguous titles, such as “Import/Export” and “Trans-European Goods and Currency Exchange Company,” and a prestigious address. “You have no idea how one rises all by oneself,” Fischel explained to him, “once all those weights like family and job responsibilities, the wife’s fancy relations, and responsibility for the leading minds of humanity are taken off one’s shoulders! In a few weeks I became an influential man. And a well-off man, to boot. Perhaps the day after
tomorrow I’ll have nothing again, but I may have even more!”

“What are you now, actually?”

“It’s not easy to explain casually to an outsider. I conduct transactions. Transactions of goods, transactions of currency, political transactions, art transactions. In every case the important thing is to get out at the right moment; then you can never lose.” As in the old days, it seemed to give Leo Fischel pleasure to accompany his activity with “philosophy,” and Ulrich listened to him with curiosity. —Philosophy of money of the free man, among others—

Then Ulrich: “But with all that, it’s also important for me to know what Gerda said about Hans’s suicide.”

“She claims I murdered him! But they had broken up definitively well before!”
And while Ulrich was letting the notion of remorse surface in his reflections, in order to dissolve it immediately again in the deep play of thought, his little friend Rachel was suffering this word in all its tortures, dissolved by nothing but the palliative effect of tears and the cautious return of temptation after the remorse had gone on for a while. One will recall that Diotimas intense little maid, ejected from her parents’ house because of a misstep, who had landed in the golden aura of virtue surrounding her mistress, had, in the weakest of a series of increasingly weak moments, submitted to the attacks of the black Moorish boy. It happened and made her very unhappy. But this un-happiness aspired to repeat itself as
often as the scanty opportunities that Diotimas house offered would allow. On the second or third day after every unhappiness a remarkable change occurred, which can be compared to a flower that, bent over by the rain, raises its little head again. Can be compared to fine weather that, way up above, peeks from a remote corner of the sky through a rainy day; finds friendly little spots of blue; forms a blue lake; becomes a blue sky; is veiled by a light haze of the overwhelming brightness of a day of happiness; is tinged with brown; lets down one hot veil of haze after another and finally towers, torrid and trembling, from earth to sky, filled with the zigzags and cries of birds, filled with the listless droop of tree and leaf, filled with the craziness of not-yet-discharged tensions that cause man and beast to roam madly about.

On the last day before the remorse, the head of the Moor always twitched through
the house like a rolling head of cabbage, and little Rachel would have loved to creep on it like a caterpillar with a sweet tooth. But then remorse set in. As if a pistol had been fired and a shimmering glass ball been turned into a powder of glassy sand. Rachel felt sand between her teeth, in her nose, her heart; nothing but sand. The world was dark; not dark like a Moor, but nauseatingly dark, like a pigsty. Rachel, having disappointed the confidence placed in her, seemed to herself besmirched through and through. Grief placed a deep drill in the vicinity of her navel. A raging fear of being pregnant blinded her thoughts. One could go on in this fashion—every limb in Rachel ached individually with remorse—but the main thing was not in these details but seized hold of the whole person, driving her before the wind like a cloud of dust raised by a broom. The knowledge that a misstep that has happened cannot be rectified by anything in the world
made the world something of a hurricane in which one can find no support to stand up. The peaceful-ness of death seemed to Rachel like a dark feather bed, which it must be delightful to roll on. She had been torn out of her world, abandoned to a feeling whose intensity was unlike anything in Diotima’s house. She could not get at this feeling with an idea, any more than comfortings can get at a toothache, while it actually seemed to her, on the other hand, that there was only one remedy, to pull little Rachel entirely out of the world like a bad tooth.

Had she been cleverer, she would have been able to assert that remorse is a basic disturbance of equilibrium, which one can restore in the most various ways. But God helped her out with his old, proven home remedy by again giving her, after a few days, the desire to sin.

We, however, cannot of course be as indulgent as the great Lord, to whom earthly
matters offer little that is new or important. We must ask whether in a condition in which there is no sin there can be any remorse. And since this question has already been answered in the negative, except for a few borderline cases, a second question immediately arises: from which ocean did the little drop of hell’s fire fall into Rachel’s heart, if it may not be said to have originated in the ocean whose clouds Ulrich had discovered? Every such question was suited to plunge Ulrich out of the sky on which he wanted to set foot purely theoretically. There are so many lovely things on earth that have nothing to do with divine, seraphic love, and most decidedly there are among them things that forbid anything and everything to be expected from their rediscovery. This question was later to be of the greatest significance for Ulrich and Agathe.
The weeks since Rachel had left Diotima’s house had passed with an improbability that a different person would hardly have accepted calmly. But Rachel had been shown the door of her parents’ house as a sinner, and at the conclusion of that fall had landed, straight as an arrow, in paradise, at Diotima’s; now Diotima had thrown her out, but such an enchantingly refined man as Ulrich had been standing there and had caught her: how could she not believe that life is the way it is described in the novels she loved to read? Whoever is destined to be a hero fate throws into the air in daredevil ways over and over, but it always catches him again in its strong arms. Rachel placed blind confidence in fate, and during this entire time had
really done nothing but wait for its next intervention, when it might perhaps unveil its intentions. She had not become pregnant; so the experience with Soliman seemed to have been only a passing incident. She ate in a small pub, together with coachmen, out-of-work servant girls, workers who had business in the neighborhood, and those undefinable transients who flood a large city. The place she had chosen for herself, at a specific table, was reserved for her every day; she wore better clothes than the other women who frequented the pub; the way she used her knife and fork was different from what one was accustomed to seeing here; in this place Rachel enjoyed a secret respect, which she was acutely aware of even though not many people wanted to show it, and she assumed that she was taken for a countess or the mistress of a prince, who for some reason was compelled for a time to conceal her class. It happened that men with dubious
diamonds on their fingers and with slicked-down hair, who sometimes turned up among the respectable guests, arranged to sit at Rachel’s table and directed seductively sinuous compliments to her; but Rachel knew how to refuse these with dignity and without unfriendliness, for although the compliments pleased her as much as the buzzing and creeping of insects and caterpillars and snakes on a luxuriant summer day, she still sensed that she could not let herself go in this direction without running the risk of losing her freedom. She most liked to converse with older people, who knew something of life and told stories of its dangers, disappointments, and events. In this way she picked up knowledge that, broken into crumbs, came to her the way food sinks down to a fish lying quietly at the bottom of its tank. Adventurous things were going on in the world. People were now said to be flying faster than birds. Building houses
entirely without bricks. The anarchists wanted to assassinate the Emperor. A great revolution was imminent, and then the coachmen would sit inside the coaches and the rich people would be in harness, instead of the horses. In a tenement block in the vicinity, a woman had, in the night, poured petroleum on her husband and lit him; it was unimaginable! In America, blind people were given glass eyes with which they could really see again, but it still cost lots of money and was only for billionaires. These were the gripping things Rachel heard, of course not all at once, as she sat and ate. When afterward she stepped out into the street, nothing of such monstrosities was to be seen: everything flowed on in its well-ordered way or stood there exactly as it had the day before; but was not the air boiling in these summer days, was not the asphalt secretly yielding underfoot, without Rachel having to picture clearly that the sun had softened it?
On the church roofs the saints stretched out their arms and lifted their eyes in a way that made one think that everywhere there must be something special to be seen. The policemen wiped away the sweat of their exertions in the midst of the commotion that roared around them. Vehicles going at high speed braked violently as an old lady crossing the street was almost run over because she was not paying attention to anything. When Rachel got back to her little room, she felt her curiosity sated by this light nourishment; she took out her undergarments to mend them, or altered a dress or read a novel—for with astonishment at the way the world was run, she had discovered the institution of the lending library—her landlady came in and chatted with her deferentially, because Rachel had money without having to work and without one’s being able to discern any misconduct; and so the day passed, with no time to miss anything in the least, and
poured its contents, filled to the brim with exciting things, into the dreams of the night.

To be sure, Ulrich had forgotten to send money promptly, or to ask Rachel to come to him, and she had already begun to use up the small savings from her work. But she was not concerned, for Ulrich had promised to protect her for the present, and to go to him to remind him seemed to her quite improper. In all the fairy tales she knew, there was something one was forbidden to say or do; and it would have been exactly that had she gone to Ulrich and told him she was out of money. This is not in any way to imply that she expressly thought that her manner of life seemed like a fairy tale, or that she believed in fairy tales at all. On the contrary, that was the way the reality that she had never known differently was constituted, even if it had never been as beautiful as it was now. There are people to whom this is permitted, and people to whom it is forbidden; the ones sink
from step to step and end in utter misery, while the others become rich and happy—and leave behind lots of children. Rachel had never been told to which of the two groups she belonged; she had never revealed to the two people who might have explained the difference to her that she was dreaming, but had worked industriously, except for the two unintentional missteps that had had such serious consequences. And one day her landlady actually reported that while she was out to eat, a fine lady had asked for her and announced that she would return in an hour. Anxiously, Rachel gave a description of Diotima; but the lady who was looking for her was most decidedly not tall, the landlady asserted, and not stout either, not even if by stout one did not mean fat. The lady who was looking for Rachel was most decidedly, rather, to be called small and skinny.
And indeed the lady was slender and small, and returned within a half hour. She said "Dear Fraulein" to Rachel, mentioned Ulrich's name, and pulled from her purse a tightly folded, rather considerable sum of money, which she gave to Rachel on behalf of their friend. Then she began to tell an involved and exciting story, and Rachel had never in her life been so enthralled by a conversation. There was a man, the lady said, who was being pursued by his enemies because he had nobly sacrificed himself for them. Really not nobly; for he had to do it, it was his inner law, every person has an animal which he inwardly resembles. —You, for example, Fraulein—the lady said—have either a gazelle or a queen snake in you—it can't always be determined at first glance.

If it had been the cook in Diotima's kitchen who had said that, it would have made either no impression on Rachel or an unfavorable one; but it was said by someone who
with every word radiated the certainty of a well-bred lady, the gift of command that would make any doubt appear to be an offense against respect. It was therefore firmly established in Rachel’s mind that there was some link between herself and a gazelle or a queen snake, a link that at the moment was over her head, but that could doubtless be explained in some fashion, for one sometimes does hear such things. Rachel felt herself charged with this piece of news like a candy box one can’t get open.

The man who had sacrificed himself, the lady continued, had within himself a bear, that is to say, the soul of a murderer, and that meant that he had taken murder upon himself, all murder: the murder of unborn and handicapped children, the cowardly murder that people commit against their talents, and murder on the street by vehicles, bicyclists, and trams. Clarisse asked Rachel—for of course it was Clarisse who was
speaking—whether she had ever heard the name Moosbrugger. Now, Rachel had, although she later forgot him again, loved and feared Moosbrugger like a robber captain, at the time when he had horrified all the newspapers, and he had often been the topic of conversation at Diotima’s; so she asked right away whether it concerned him.

Clarisse nodded. —He is innocent!

For the first time Rachel heard from an authority what she had earlier often thought herself.

—We have freed him, Clarisse went on. —We, the responsible people, who know more than the others do. But now we must hide him. Clarisse smiled, and so peculiarly and yet with such rapturous friendliness that Rachel’s heart, intending to fall into her panties, got stuck on the way, somewhere in the neighborhood of her stomach. —Hide where? she stammered, pale.
—The police will be looking for him—Clarisse declared—so it has to be where no one would think of looking for him. The best thing would be if you would pretend he was your husband. He would have to wear a wooden leg, that’s easy to pretend, or something, and you would get a little shop with living quarters attached, so it would look as if you were supporting your invalid husband who can’t leave the house. The whole thing would be for only a few weeks, and I could offer you more money than you need.

—But why don’t you take him in yourself? Rachel dared to counter.

—My husband isn’t in on it and would never allow it, Clarisse answered, adding the he that the proposal she had made came from Ulrich.

—But I’m afraid of him! Rachel exclaimed.
—That’s as it should be, Clarisse said.
—But, my dear Fraulein, everything great is terrible. Many great men have been in the insane asylum. It is uncanny to put oneself on a level with someone who is a murderer; but to put oneself on a level with the uncanny is to resolve to be great!

—But does he want to? Rachel asked.
—Does he know me? He won’t do anything to me?

—He knows that we want to save him. Look, his whole life he’s known only substitute women; you understand what I mean. He’ll be happy at having a real woman to protect him and take him in; and he won’t lay a finger on you if you don’t let him. I’ll back you up on that all the way! He knows that I have the power to compel him, if I want!

—No, no! was all Rachel could get out; from everything Clarisse was saying she
could hear only the shape of the voice and language, a friendliness and a sisterly equality that she could not resist. A lady had never spoken to her this way, and yet there was nothing artificial or false in it; Clarisse’s face was on a level with hers and not up in the air like Diotima’s; she saw her features working, especially two long furrows that constantly formed by the nose and ran down by the mouth; Clarisse was visibly struggling together with her for the solution.

—Consider, Fraulein— Clarisse went on to say—that he who recognizes must sacrifice himself. You recognized right away that Moosbrugger only appears to be a murderer. Therefore you must sacrifice yourself. You must draw what is murderous out of him, and then what’s behind it, which corresponds to your own nature, will come out. For like is attracted only by like; that’s the merciless law of greatness!

—But when will it be?
—Tomorrow. I’ll come in the late afternoon and get you. By that time everything will be arranged.

—If a third person could live with us, I’d do it, Rachel said.

—Ill drop in every day—Clarisse said—and watch over things; the living arrangement is only for show. Then too, it wouldn’t do to be ungrateful to Ulrich if he needs you to do him a favor.

That clinched the matter. Clarisse had confidently used his Christian name. It appeared to Rachel as though her cowardice were unworthy of her benefactor. The portrayal our inner being gives us of what we ought to do is extraordinarily deceitful and capricious. Suddenly the whole thing seemed to Rachel a joke, a game, a trifle. She would have a shop and a room; if she wanted, she could bar the door between them. Then too, there would be two exits, the way there are in
rooms on the stage. The whole proposal was only a formality, and it was really exaggerated of her to make difficulties, even though she was horribly afraid of Moosbrugger. She had to get over this cowardice. And what had the lady said? What corresponds to your own nature will come out in him. If he really was not so fearsome, then she would have what she had earlier passionately wished for.

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The shop and the adjoining room and the two exits came to nothing. Clarisse had appeared and declared that at the last minute the rent had posed an obstacle; since time was pressing, they had to take what was available, and fate perhaps depended on a matter of minutes. She had found another room. Had Rachel already packed up her things, and was she ready? The taxi was waiting downstairs. Unfortunately, it was not a nice room. And above all it was not yet furnished. But Clarisse had hastily had the most
necessary items brought over. Now it was only a matter of getting Moosbrugger settled quickly. Everything else could be taken care of tomorrow. Today everything was only provisional. Clarisse reported the greater part of this when they were in the taxi. The words were dizzying. Rachel had no time to think. The taxi meter, half lit by a tiny light, advanced incessantly; with every revolution of the wheels Rachel heard the ticking of the meter, like a jug that has sprung a leak and drips unceasingly; in the darkness of the old cab Clarisse pressed a sum of money into her hand, and Rachel had to concentrate on stuffing it into her purse; in the process, the paper expanded, individual notes sailed away and had to be pursued and caught; laughing, Clarisse helped her find them, and this took up the rest of the long ride.

The taxi stopped in a remote alley in front of an old tumbledown “court,” one of those deep plots of land where, from a
narrow frontage on the alley, low wings run to the back, with workshops, stables, chickens, children, and the small dwellings of large families opening directly onto the courtyard or, one story higher, onto an open gallery connecting everything from the outside. Clarisse helped Rachel drag her things and seemed anxious to avoid the superintendent; they bumped into wagons standing in the dark, into tools that lay around everywhere, and into the well, but they arrived undamaged at Rachel’s new dwelling. Clarisse had a candle in her pocket and with its aid found a large oil lamp she had remembered to sneak from her parents’ attic. It was a tall piece worked in metal, incorporating all the latest advances the petroleum age had made just before it was irrevocably shunted aside by electrical illumination, and it filled the entire room, because it lacked a shade, with moderate light. Clarisse was very proud of it, but she had to hurry, since she had had the
taxi wait at the next corner in order to fetch Moosbrugger.

As soon as she was alone and looked around in her new surroundings, tears filled Rachel’s eyes. Except for the dirty walls, the thick white light of the lamp was almost the only thing in the room. But her fright had made Rachel misjudge; on closer inspection she found against one wall a narrow iron bed, on which there was something like bed-clothes; in a corner, a pile of blankets was heaped up in disorder, no doubt meant to be the second sleeping place; blankets were also hanging in front of the windows and the door that led outside, and formed before a small and extremely plain table a kind of carpet, on which a roughly finished chair stood. Sighing, Rachel sat down on it and drew out her money in order to count and sort it. But now she again got a fright, this time over the size, indeed the excess, of the amount Clarisse, throwing caution to the winds, had thrust at
her in the taxi. She smoothed the banknotes and concealed them in a small purse, which she wore on her breast. If she had known that she was sitting at the table at which Meingast had created his great work, and that the narrow iron bed had also been his, she might perhaps have understood a little more. But as it was, she simply signed once more, already made easier about the future, and even discovered an old fireplace, a spirit stove, and odds and ends of dishes before Clarisse returned with Moosbrugger.

This moment was like the terrifying moment when one is called in by the dentist, which Rachel had experienced only once, and she stood up obediently as the two entered.

Moosbrugger allowed himself to be led into the room the way a great artist is introduced to a circle of people who have been waiting for him. He pretended not to notice Rachel, and first inspected the new room;
only then, after he had found fault with nothing, did he direct his glance at the girl and nod by way of greeting. Clarisse seemed to have no more to say to him; she pushed him, her tiny hand against his gigantic arm, toward the table and merely smiled, the way a person does who during a risky enterprise has to tense every muscle and is meanwhile trying to smile, so that the delicate facial muscles have to pull themselves together sharply in order to force their way between the pressure of all the other muscles. She maintained this expression while she placed a bag of groceries on the table and explained to the other two that she could not stay a minute longer but had to rush home. She promised to come back the next morning around ten and would then take care of anything else they might need.

So now Rachel was alone with the revered man. She covered the table with a pillowcase, since she could not find a
tablecloth, and spread out on a large platter the cold cuts Clarisse had brought. These duties greatly eased her embarrassment. Then, placing the meal on the table, she said in carefully chosen German: “You will most certainly be hungry”; she had thought out this sentence ahead of time. Moosbrugger had stood up, and with a gallant gesture of his big paw offered her his place, for it turned out that there was only the one chair. —Oh, no thank you— Rachel said—I don’t want much; I’ll sit over there. She took two slices from the platter Moosbrugger offered her and sat down on the bed.

Moosbrugger had taken a horrifying long folding knife from his pocket and used it while eating. In the days of his flight he had eaten irregularly and badly, and had developed a great hunger. Rachel took advantage of the opportunity to study him; more properly, she had to, for as soon as she turned in the direction of the table, this man
completely filled her field of vision; more, his appearance overflowed her eyes, spilling over their rims in every direction, and Rachel could not properly let her glance roam around; it was, for instance, quite a long distance across the whole extent of his chest, or from the edge of the table to his thick mustache, and also from his chin to the top of his powerful skull, and one could linger in the reddish-blond hairs of his mighty fists as in underbrush. In the meantime, all the ideas and some of the fantasies of which Moosbrugger had once been the object came back to Rachel. Above all, she sought to bring to mind how many women would envy the situation in which she found herself. For her, Moosbrugger was a great and famous man, which corresponded to the truth if one leaves aside the different degrees of public notoriety that are made but are by no means clear or precise. She did not at all overlook the fearfulness of the notoriety, which had been
acquired by cruel, indeed even treacherous deeds, for she was trembling with fear, although she was also burning with excitement. But like all people, she admired the energy in this cruelty, and like all impulsive people she assumed that in contact with her, this herculean strength would not be dangerous but could be turned toward the good, so that her fear seemed to her only a petty external habit, while her soul became braver and braver the longer she was together with Moosbrugger. And indeed, whoever lives in the proper relation to criminals lives as securely among them as among other people.

Moosbrugger had not found it proper to be bothered by the girl's glances during such an important an occasion as eating. But when he had finished he leaned back, snapped his knife shut, stroked the crumbs from his mustache, and said: —Well, little Fraulein, now a glass of schnapps wouldn't be—
Rachel hastened to assure him that there were no alcoholic drinks in the house, adding the lie that Clarisse had charged her not to provide any.

Moosbrugger hadn’t meant it that seriously. He was not a drinker, indeed he himself took care not to drink, out of fear of its unpredictable effects. But he hadn’t seen a drop for months, and after the substantial meal had thought it wouldn’t be a bad idea to try one on this dull evening. He was angry at her refusal. These women had him really locked up. But he did not show it, and undertook to carry on the conversation in the most civilized manner.

—So here we are, man and wife, in a way, for the time being, little Fraulein, he began. —What should I call you? He used the natural Du of simple people; Rachel did not find this unpleasant, but just as naturally she stayed with the formal Sie. —My name is Rachel or Rèle, whichever you like.
—Oo-la-la, Rèle, my compliments! He pronounced the French name twice over, with pleasure. —And Rachel was the loveliest daughter of Laban. He laughed gallantly.

—Tell me how you beat the masons! Rachel asked. She dared not ask about anything more exciting.

Moosbrugger turned away and rolled a cigarette. He was insulted. In his circles such a question was regarded as an unwarranted intimacy after so short an acquaintance. He smoked several cigarettes in succession. He was bored. Insignificant, importunate women meant nothing to him. He became sleepy. In prison and the asylum he had become accustomed to going to bed early.

Rachel was upset that he was smoking so inconsiderately. She also had the feeling of having done something wrong, without knowing what.
Moosbrugger stood up, stretched his legs, and yawned.

—Do you want to go to sleep? Rachel asked.

—What else is there to do? Moosbrugger said. He inspected the bed; then, remembering the commandments of chivalry, turned to the corner where the bedding lay.

—Sleep in the bed; you need rest, Rachel said.

—No, you can sleep in the bed. Indolently, he removed his coat. Rachel was embarrassed when Moosbrugger took off his pants. But then he lay down on the blankets as he was, and pulled one of them over himself. Rachel waited awhile, then blew out the lamp and undressed in the dark.

During the night she again grew afraid; she imagined that if she were to fall asleep it might happen that she would never wake up
again. But soon she did sleep, and when she awoke, morning was shining into the room. Moosbrugger lay covered up in the corner like a huge mountain. Everything was still quiet in the house. Rachel took advantage of it to fetch water from the well. She also cleaned her shoes and Moosbrugger’s out in the courtyard. When she softly slipped in the door again, Moosbrugger said good morning to her.

—Would you like coffee, tea, or hot chocolate? she asked him. Moosbrugger was astonished. He said coffee, but did not find the decision an easy one. Then too, he liked Rachel better in the daylight than he had last evening; there was something delicate and refined in her appearance. He took care getting dressed, and turned away from the wall only when he was finished.

—Were you angry at me last evening? Rachel asked, noticing his good humor.
—Oh, women always want to know everything, but if you like I’ll tell you the story about the masons. That will show you what people are like; they’re all the same. And what have you been doing up to now?

—I was in a very elegant house, where I was treated like a daughter.

—Well, and what got you turned out?

—Oh! said Rachel, not at all resolved to tell the truth. —You know, the master in this house is a very high diplomat, and there was this business with a Moorish prince—

—Are you pregnant? Moosbrugger asked suspiciously.

—For shame! Rachel exclaimed indignantly. —You’re taking too many liberties in speaking to me that way! Would the lady have entrusted you to me?

Moosbrugger definitely liked her. She was something finer, you could see and hear
that. When he thought over the females he knew, he had never had anything so fine. —Well, all right, he said. —I didn’t mean to insult you. The story with the masons went like this:

He told it minutely and with dignity, together with all the scheming and corruption that a man like himself encounters before the court, and because she had mentioned an acquaintance with a Moorish prince, he felt he had to match it, so he also told her about his march to Constantinople.

—Do the Turks have more than one wife? Rachel asked.

—Only the rich ones. But that’s why the Turks aren’t worth anything, he answered with a gallant smile. —Even one wife will ruin a man!

—Have you had bad experiences with women? Rachel asked, her blood twitching
in circles like the tail of a cat lying in ambush.

Moosbrugger looked at her inquiringly, and became serious. —All my life I’ve had only bad experiences. If I were to write down my life, a lot of people would be surprised!

—You ought to! Rachel proposed enthusiastically.

—Writing is much too uncomfortable for me! Moosbrugger said proudly, and stretched his shoulders. —But you’re an educated girl. Perhaps I’ll tell you something. Then you can write it.

—I’ve never written a book, Rachel replied modestly; but she felt as if she had been offered Section Chief Tuzzi’s job. And this man before her was no idle gossip; he had shown that he could put meaning into his words.
Thus the time passed in animated conversation, and it got to be ten o’clock, but Clarisse did not appear.

Moosbrugger pulled his large, fat, chrome-plated watch from his vest and determined that it was ten thirty-five.

When they next looked, it was seven minutes before eleven.

—She’s not coming; I thought as much, Moosbrugger said.

—But she has to come! Rachel said.

The conversation ran down. They had got up early and had not left the room. Being cooped up made them tired. Moosbrugger stood and stretched. Rachel finally declared herself ready to go and get something to eat without waiting any longer. But first Moosbrugger had to put on the green eyeshade and strap on the wooden leg, in case during Rachel’s absence a stranger should come in;
wooden leg and eyeshade were a legacy of Clarisse’s. It was no simple matter to get his leg, which was bent back to the thigh and on whose knee the wooden leg was strapped, through a pant leg; Moosbrugger had to place his arm around Rachel’s neck, and he took the opportunity to draw her gently toward himself.

He hobbled around the room alone for more than a quarter of an hour; it was nauseatingly tedious; then Rachel cooked, but she did not know much about cooking, and the meal was not exactly cheerful. Gradually, Moosbrugger became fed up with this seclusion, but realized that it would be a long time before he could give it up. He wanted to sleep a bit to make the time pass, yawned like a Hon, and sat on the bed to unbuckle the damn leg, which was driving the blood to his head. Rachel had to help him. And as he again laid his arm around her shoulder, he thought that after all she really was his wife
for the time being. Surely she had never expected anything else of him and had made fun of him yesterday when he went straight off to sleep. As the wooden leg fell to the ground, with the arm that was around her shoulder he pulled Rachel back on the bed and drew her up on it a little, until her head rested on a pillow. Rachel did not resist. His large mustache descended on her mouth. But her small mouth came to meet it. Went into this mustache as into a forest, as it were, and sought the mouth in it. When the man pushed himself up on her, Rachel lay with her face almost under his chest and had to move her head to one side in order to be able to breathe; it seemed to her as if she were being buried by soil that was trembling volcanically. The really great bodily arousals are brought about by the imagination; Rachel saw in Moosbrugger not a hero without his peer on earth—for comparison and reflection would then have killed the power of
imagination—but simply a hero, a notion that is less definite but blends with the time and place in which it appears and with the person who arouses admiration. Where there are heroes the world is still soft and glowing, and the web of creation unbroken. The adventurous room with the covered windows suddenly took on the appearance of the cave of a big robber who has withdrawn from the world. Rachel felt her breast lying under an enormous pressure; the scurrying quality that was part of her nature was pinned down for the moment by an overpowering force and compelled to be patient; her upper body could move as little as if it had fallen under the iron wheels of a truck, and this position would have been torture had not all the spontaneity and independence of which her body was capable gathered in her hips, where a giant was struggling with clouds and which despite their helplessness were embracing him again and again, and were just
as strong in their way as he was in his. A desire such as Rachel had never felt in her life, indeed had never suspected, pressed upon her mind and from there opened up her entire person: she wanted to conceive and bear a hero. Her lips remained open in astonishment, her limbs lay where they were when Moosbrugger got up, and her eyes remained for a long time misted over with a bluish-yellow mist, the way chanterelles do when one breaks them. She did not get up until it was time to light the lamp and think of the evening meal; till then she had waited, with a kind of emptiness of mind, for a continuation that she was not able to picture to herself but did not think of at all as simply a repetition.

For Moosbrugger, the matter was finished until further notice. People who on occasion commit sexual crimes are, as one knows, ordinarily anything but flamboyant lovers, since their crimes, to the extent that
they do not spring from external influences, express nothing but the irregularity of their desire. Moosbrugger felt nothing more than boredom while Rachel lay demolished on the bed. So what had given their being together a certain tension was now, in his opinion, over and done with before one had thought of it.

Clarisse did not come; she did not come the next day either; she did not come at all.

Moosbrugger smoked cigarettes and yawned. Several times Rachel put her hand around his neck and her hand in his hair; he shook her off. He pulled her onto his lap, and then immediately set her on her feet again because he had changed his mind. What he felt beside boredom was that he had been insulted. These women had fetched him out of school like a boy and taken him home; he had sometimes observed this picture and thought that such sonny boys could never develop into real men. But he realized that for the time being he had to go along with it;
he did not dare venture out on the street as long as the zeal of the police was still fresh, and to visit Biziste or other friends would not be a good idea at all. He had Rachel bring him the newspapers and looked for what was being said about him; but this time he was not at all pleased with his press: the papers dismissed his escape in three to five lines. He knew that Rachel was just as downcast as he was at Clarisse’s not showing up; but he still laid on her the resentment that was building in him, even if he did not regard Rachel as its cause, since she was Clarisse’s representative. Rachel committed the error of continuing to refuse to provide alcohol, though if she had done so, that would have been a mistake as well. Moosbrugger was silent after such refusals, but the insults to which he was exposed formed, together with the stale boredom and his longing for a tavern, a tangle of revulsion whose spindle was the skinny girl who moved around him the entire day. He
spoke only when he had to and disregarded all Rachel’s attempts to bring the conversation back to the level of the first morning. Tortured in addition by her own cares, Rachel was very unhappy.

A few days later they had their first scene. After supper and a period of yawning, Moosbrugger pulled over the little purse from which Rachel paid for their daily needs, and tried to fish out a coin with his thick fingers. Rachel, who immediately saw what he was up to, could not get her purse away from him in time; she ran around the table and fell on his arm. —No! she exclaimed. —You mustn’t go to the tavern! You’ll be— But she did not get to finish her sentence, for Moosbrugger’s arm shoved her away so violently that she lost her balance and had to make strenuous efforts not to fall. Moosbrugger put on his hat and left the room, as unapproachable as a huge stone figure.
In desperation, Rachel thought over what she should do. She decided to do battle against Moosbruggers indiscretion. She reproached herself with letting herself be frightened by the change in his behavior, which in the loneliness of reflection seemed to her understandable. As the weaker person, it was easy for her to be the cleverer, but she had to bend every effort to make clear to him that in this case she really was more clever; and if he saw that, then he might possibly accommodate himself to his situation; for Rachel understood quite well that it was no situation for a hero to be in. But when Moosbrugger came home he was drunk. The room filled with a bad smell, his shadow danced on the walls, Rachel was dispirited, and her words chased after this shadow with sharp reproaches she did not intend. Moosbrugger had landed on the bed and was beckoning her with his finger. —No, never again! Rachel screamed. Moosbrugger pulled from his
pocket a botde he had brought along. He had left die tavern at eleven, only one third filled with schnapps; the second third was filled with a bad conscience, and the third third with anger at having left. Rachel committed the strategic error of rushing at him in order to tear the bottle away. The next moment, she thought her head was bursting; the lamp revolved, and her body lost all connection to the world; Moosbrugger had warded off her attack with a powerful slap of his paw to her face, and when Rachel came to, she was lying far away from him on the floor; something was dripping out between her teeth, and her upper lip and nose seemed to have grown painfully together. She saw how Moosbrugger was still staring at the bottle, which he then rudely smashed on the floor; after which he stood up and blew out the lamp.

Whether deliberately or merely in his stupor, Moosbrugger had taken the bed, and Rachel crept weeping onto the pile of
blankets, near which she had fallen. The pain in her face and body did not let her sleep, but she did not dare light the lamp to make poultices for herself. She was cold, humiliation filled her mind with a hazy restlessness that closely resembled feverish fantasies, and the spilled schnapps covered the floor with a nauseating, paralyzing haze. All night she thought over as well as she could what had to be done. She had to find Clarisse, but she had no idea where Clarisse lived. She wanted to run away, but then she told herself that she would be betraying Clarisse’s confidence if she left Moosbrugger in the lurch before Clarisse returned; she had taken money for this. It also occurred to her that she could go find Ulrich, but she was ashamed and put that off for later. She had never been beaten before, but aside from the pain it wasn’t so bad; it simply expressed the fact that she was weaker than this giant whom she loved, that her entreaties did not penetrate to his ear,
and that she had to be circumspect; he did not mean to harm her, she realized that quite well, and the most unpleasant thing remained the fear that her chastisement would be repeated, an idea that robbed her breast of courage and made her totally miserable.

So day came before she reached any conclusions. Moosbrugger got up, and stumbling with inner emptiness, she had to follow his example. A glance in the mirror showed that her nose and mouth were badly swollen in a discolored, greenish-yellow, half-extinguished face; the magic of this night had made Rachel ugly and unprepossessing. Neither she nor Moosbrugger said anything. Moosbrugger had a fuzzy head; in his sleep he had smelled the schnapps and woken up with the feeling of not having drunk enough. When he saw Rachel’s swollen face, he had an inkling of what had happened the day before; a dim recollection that she had provoked him kept him from asking her about it.
But he really would have liked to ask her; he just did not know how to go about it. And Rachel waited for a kind word from him the way any girl in love waits; when he let himself be served in silence, she became more and more sulky. Moosbrugger would have liked most of all to go straight back to the bar, but he was afraid of this girl, who would again make a scene, and he could not go on beating her every time. Her eyes, swollen with weeping, repelled him even more than her swollen mouth, which was visible every time she moistened the cloth she was holding to it. It was indeed his fault, he said to himself, what’s right is right, but to have this around first thing in the morning was too much. Rachel’s tender back and her slender arms, which she exposed as she washed, the devil take them, he didn’t like them, they looked like chicken bones.

He summed it all up by finding himself in a really stupid situation that he had to
stick out as honorably as he could. In the evenings he went to the tavern; he had made up his mind to risk it in this part of town where no one knew him, and Rachel no longer dared to refuse him the money or reproach him for it. Not even when he began to play cards and needed more. There was pretty good company in the bar; in this way, Moosbrugger thought, you can stick it out if you sleep a lot during the day. But Rachel did not sleep during the day, and bothered him like a bat. A few times he caught her in his arms. A few times, too, he made an attempt to begin a better life and to talk with her as the little Fraulein whom she indeed was. But then it came out that Rachel could do no more. She answered evasively and monosyllabically. Whenever Moosbrugger opened his mouth she froze, without meaning to, for she would have liked to talk with him; but he had poured something alien into her, violence, and the well that is the source of everything
worth saying had frozen over. So there remained nothing for Moosbrugger to do but turn to the wall.

But there was one occasion when she always spoke up, and that was when Moosbrugger returned from the tavern. If he was not drunk he did not respond, or merely growled incomprehensible answers, and Rachel pursued him into sleep with reproaches about his heedlessness. He had beaten her in the tension, the very unpleasant tension, that ruled in him as long as he had been tempted to leave the house but could not make up his mind to do so; now that this was no longer a problem, he was tender and well-mannered, and Rachel, sensing that she was not in any danger, became bolder and bolder. He stayed out longer from one day to the next, in the hope of returning only after she had gone to sleep. But Rachel had developed a strange habit of sleeping. When he left the house after dark
she instantly fell asleep, and when he returned she woke up, and with an assurance as if it were only the continuation of her dream, she began to quarrel with him. Her poor soul, condemned to be unable to resolve her situation through reflection and thought, allowed itself to be borne upward by the drunken powers of sleep.

—Such a scrawny little chicken! Moosbrugger thought about her, and the insult that such a meager chicken was allowed to scratch around him, day in, day out, gnawed at him. But Rachel, as if she knew what he thought about her without his having said it aloud, and in almost telepathic (somnambulent) concord with the silent man who groped his way through the room in the night, felt an obsessive desire to cackle and argue. And when Moosbrugger came home drunk, which was not exactly seldom, his stumbling and tottering was like a large ship dancing on the same waves as the girl’s
small, excited sentences. And if one of these sentences struck too close to home, the powerfully drunken Christian Moosbrugger grabbed at her. As mentioned, it was never again the impulsive rage it had been the first time, when he had nearly crushed Rachel with a sweep of his hand, but he wanted to make this screeching, rebellious child shut up, and with cautiously measured force, the way a drunk carefully calculates his step over the curb, he let his hand fall on her. When Rachel was beaten she became still for a moment. A boundless astonishment came over her, as at a totally unexpected, conclusive answer. Since leaving her parents’ house she had not been religious; the way she had grown up, she thought religion was something for coarse people: but if Elohim, or better yet an evil spirit, had suddenly sat on a bench in the park among the dressed-up people, that was exactly how it seemed to her when she was beaten. She was drawn to
observe this evil spirit closely once more and sought to set it in motion. Then she would open her mouth again and say something about which she knew just as surely that it would irritate Moosbrugger as that if he would follow it it would be what he needed for his salvation. Then Moosbrugger would hit her with the back of his hand, or shove her to the wall. And Rachel, although again astonished, would find another expression, as sharp and penetrating as a knitting needle. And then of course Moosbrugger would have to increase the size of his gift. This giant, not wanting to kill her, beats her wildly on her back, her buttocks, tears her shift, throws her by the hair to the ground, or with a kick sends her flying into the corner; but he does all this with as much care in his wildness as his drunken condition permits, so that no bones will be broken. Rachel is amazed at the evil spirit of force and brutality that demolishes all words. When
Moosbrugger shoves her she becomes completely weightless. No will can prevail against his strength. The will returns only when the pain stops. And as long as the pain is there she howls, and is herself astonished at the way she screams at the walls. And Moosbrugger would like to seize his head and, raising it from his fists, smash his own head against the ground, if that would only get this damned nothing of a person to shut up!

On the days after such evenings it seemed to Rachel as if she herself had been drunk. Her reason told her that she had to put an end to this. She went looking for Ulrich. But she was told he was away, and no one knew where he was or when he would return. On her way back she thought she noticed that everything in the world was secretly contrived for beatings. It was just a thought that went through her mind. Parents their child. The state its convicts. The military its soldiers. The rich the poor. The
coachman his horse. People went walking with big dogs on leashes. Everyone would rather intimidate another person than come to an understanding with him. What had happened to her was no different from what it would have been if she had thrust her hand into pure lye instead of the diluted lye that is used everywhere for laundering. She had to get out! Her mind was confused. She resolved that in the evening, when Moosbrugger was out of the house, she would flee with everything she still possessed. It would be enough to last her for a few weeks by herself. She put on an innocent face when she entered the room, so as not to make Moosbrugger suspicious. But although it was only six o’clock and still daylight, she did not find him there. An instant suspicion made her inspect the room. Almost all her clothes were missing. The lamp and some of the blankets were gone. If thieves hadn’t broken in during
his absence, Moosbrugger himself must have thrown it all together and pawned it.

Rachel packed up what was left. But then she did not know where to go, as evening was falling. She decided to stick it out one more night and hold her tongue when Moosbrugger came back sodden drunk, as was to be expected from these preparations. Then in the morning she intended to disappear without a trace. She lay down on the bed, and even though Moosbrugger had also taken the pillow, for the first time she slept soundly the whole night.

Despite her deep sleep, in the morning she immediately knew, even before she opened her eyes, that Moosbrugger had not come home. She looked around, wanting quickly to take the opportunity to make herself ready. But she was sad; she feared that in his rashness Moosbrugger had fallen into the hands of the police, and that grieved her. Involuntarily she hesitated while she tied up
her bundle. In truth, Moosbrugger had for quite a while had something in mind. He had noticed that Rachel kept her money on her breast, and wanted to take it from her. But he shrank from reaching for it. He was afraid of those two girlish things between which it lay; he didn’t know why. Perhaps because they were so unmasculine. So he fell back on his other plan. It was the more natural one. It lifted Moosbrugger up and set him down again. But if it worked out the way he wanted, it would give him travel money and he could let himself be borne away. He really liked living with Rachel. She had her oddities, which dully persecuted him; but each time he fell into a rage or caught her for love, he unloaded a part of his unease, and this made the water level of his plan rise fairly slowly. He felt reasonably secure with Rachel; indeed, that was what it was, a really ordered life, when he went out in the evenings, drank something, and then had his
quarrel with her. It removed, so to speak, the bullet from the magazine every evening. Both were lucky that he beat Rachel, as it were, in small installments. But just because life with her was so healthy, she did not greatly arouse his fantasies, and he nourished his secret plan to disappear into the world; he wanted to begin by getting totally drunk. When it got to be nine in the morning Rachel went for a newspaper to see if there was any bad news in it. She found it immediately. During the night a woman had been torn to pieces by a drunk or a madman; the murderer had been seized, and the establishment of his identity was imminent. Rachel knew that it was none other than Moosbrugger. Tears started to her eyes. She did not know why, for she felt cheerful and relieved. And should it occur to Clarisse to free Moosbrugger again, Rachel would tell the police about her. But she had to cry all day long, as
if it were part of herself that would go to the gallows.
A dreadful chapter
The dream

Around midnight, no matter what the night, the heavy wooden door of the entryway was closed and two iron bars thick as arms were shoved in behind it; until then, a sleepy maid with the look of a peasant about her waited for late guests. A quarter of an hour later a policeman came by on his long, slow rounds, overseeing the closing time of inns. Around 1:00 a.m. the swelling three-step of a patrol from the nearby supply barracks emerged from the fog, echoed past, and faded away
again. Then for a long time there was nothing but the cold, damp silence of November nights; only around three did the first carts come in from the country. They broke over the pavement with a heavy noise; wrapped in their coverings, deaf from the clatter and the morning cold, the corpses of the drivers swayed behind the horses.

Was it like that or wasn’t it, when on this night, shortly before the closing hour, the couple asked about a room? The maid, unhurried, first shut and barred the door, and then without asking any questions went on ahead. First there was a stone staircase, then a long, windowless corridor, and suddenly two unexpected corners; a staircase with five stone steps hollowed out by many feet, and another corridor, whose loosened tiles wobbled under their soles. At its end, without the visitors being put off by it, a ladder with a few rungs led up to a small attic space onto which three doors opened, doors
that stood low and brown around the hole in the floor.

“Are the other rooms taken?” The old woman shook her head while, by the light of her candle, she opened one of the rooms. Then she stood with her light raised and allowed the guests to enter. It might not have happened often that she heard the rustle of silk petticoats in this room; and the tattoo of high heels, which in fright gave way to every shadow on the tile floor, seemed stupid to her; obtuse and obstinate, she looked the lady, who now had to brush past her, straight in the face. The lady nodded patronizingly in her embarrassment; she might be forty, or somewhat older. The maid took the money for the room, extinguished the last light in the corridor, and went to bed in her room.

After that there was no sound in the whole house. The light of the candle had not yet found time to creep into all the corners of the wretched room. The strange man stood
by the window like a flat shadow, while the lady, with uncertain expectations, had sat down on the edge of the bed. She had to wait an agonizingly long time; the stranger did not stir from his place. If up till now things had gone as quickly as the beginning of a dream, now every motion was mired in a stubborn resistance that did not let go of a single limb. He felt that this woman was expecting something from him. Opening her stays—that was like opening the doors of a room. A table was standing in the middle. At it sat the man, the son. He observed it secretly, hostilely, and fearfully, full of arrogance. He would have liked to throw a grenade, or tear the wallpaper to tatters. With the greatest effort he finally succeeded in at least wresting a sentence from the stubborn resistance. “Did you really notice me right away when I looked at you?”

Oh, it worked. She could not control her impatience any longer. She had let herself be
led astray, but no one should think she was a bad woman. So in order to save her honor she had to find him still magical. The blood that had risen to her throat in fear and vexation now rushed pell-mell down to her hips.

At this moment he felt that it would be quite impossible to take a bird in his hand, and this naked skin was to be pressed against his naked and unprotected skin? His breast was to be filled with warmth from her breast? He sought to draw things out with jokes. They were tortured and fearful. He said, “Isn’t it true that fat women lace their feet too. Along with their shoes. And above the knot the flesh spills over a little, and there is a little unpleasant smell there. A little smell that exists nowhere else in the world.”

She said to herself: “He must be a writer; now I understand his odd behavior. Later I will play the elegant lady with him.”
She resolutely began to undress; she owed it to her honor.

He became anxious; now he knew for certain: I can never take this leap into another human being, let myself into an utterly alien existence. Since he did not move, she stopped; she was suddenly bad-tempered; she too became fearful. What if she had fallen victim to an unconscionable man? She did not know him. The woman, who had not revealed her name, began to have regrets. She still waited. But something told her: it will get better once we’ve gone further.

He felt all that. The idea “Open up!” tortured him. like a child’s toy. That’s what she wants. But over and over again there is some new wall of disappointment with no way through, and then she will get angry with me.

And the second torture was: She’s pursuing me. She’s just unrolling herself. Always right in front of me. What’s she talking about
so incessantly? I’m supposed to fall like a dog all over the round, rolling ball of her life. Otherwise she’ll do something to me. His eyes darted back and forth in the darkness like fish.

Now she was sitting before him in only shoes and stockings. Her hips rolled down in three swelling folds. She began to tremble.

She had taken off all her clothes because he had spoken about her. That seemed certain to her. And she felt that she was wronging him; did he not have to mistrust her, since he knew nothing more about her than that she had followed him? She wanted to tell him that Leopold was, of course, a good person....Again silence intervened.

Then he heard himself saying the nonsensical sentence: Whoever loves is young. At the same moment he felt her arms around his neck. To save herself she had to find him
enchanting. “Beloved, beloved! Leave your eyes, you look so suffering and noble!”

Then with the strength of despair he lifted up his burden and heard himself asking: “Would you rather make Kung Fu-tse, or do you prefer rollies?” She took these for technical terms from men’s talk. She did not want to expose her ignorance. She made herself cozy with them. What does your Kung Fu-tse do? The tip of his tongue touched her lips. This ancient manner of understanding between people, such foreheads always sitting above such lips, was familiar to her. The stranger knew so much. She slowly flattened out her tongue and pushed it forward. Then she quickly drew it back and smiled roguishly; when she was still a child she knew herself to be already famous for her roguish smile. And she said without thinking, moved perhaps by some unconscious association of sounds: “I’d like rollies. My husband will be gone for a week.”
At this moment he bit off her tongue. It seemed to him to be a long time before his teeth got all the way through. Then he felt it thick in his mouth. The storm of a great deed whirled up in him, but the unfortunate woman was a white, bleeding mass, beating all around her in a corner of the room, circling around a high, hoarse, screeching note, around the reeling root of a sound.

In those places where the woman and his reaction to her is described: Is this a woman at all? Or is it the being pushed from the experience into a jackal’s den of the imagination, condensation of all the hatefulness of the world in the infantilely special person with skirts and ringlets, rage against the most lovable thing on earth?

It is probably unnecessary to say that this is not a true experience but a dream, for no
decent person would think such a thing in a waking state.

The place of this dream lay on one of the major traffic arteries that radiate out from the center of Vienna. Even though from that time on, when world metropolises full of enormous rushing around came into being, Vienna was still only a big city, traffic in the peak hours filled this tube of streets with a dizzying stream of life, which can best be compared with swill being poured into a trough. Dark lumps of cars shot around in a no-longer-transparent fluid of voices, metals, air, stones, and wood, in a pleasantly tart smell of haste, through the standing throng of interests running in and out at the opening of a thousand stores, and the constitutive stream of pedestrians hastening toward some distant goal pushed forward. This is the city person’s drink that invigorates the nerves. At the place of this dream fifty cars a
minute came by on average, at a speed of twenty miles an hour, and six hundred pedestrians. If the eye, or at least the mind, took all that in, then the stimulus had to traverse a path of 1,800 feet per second, leaving aside smell, hearing, aroused desire, and everything else, and observing only the mad film.

An unnatural spread.

But the place itself did not appear on this film; only the fence around its grounds did. If one were propelled on past this garden fence, there lay behind it well-tended grounds, and among trees one saw a small white house with broad wings and looked into the noble stillness of a scholar’s home. Between it and the nature in front of the fence the un-nature of trees, muffled sound, and pure air intervened; as indeed the un-
nature of various ideals and antiquities also lie between life and the thinking of a scholar (and only a quite complicated connection makes it possible for life to afford scholars).

The scholar who had unfortunately had this dream had a great many friends among men and women, and was a quite pleasant, handsome, and well-to-do young man. In order not to expose him, and for various reasons, let us assume that his name was simply antlers [literally, “different”: an earlier name for Ulrich—TRANS.].

Here it could also go on:

One of his women friends happened to be with him at the moment and was called... and because of the moral songs she sang. She looked like a beautiful woman from an illustrated magazine of 1870. Her beauty was like a lion’s skin stuffed by a furrier. She spelled out this beauty from an
invisible book and underlined the teasing as well as the tragic qualities of love with gestures like the emphases of an eight-year-old schoolgirl reciting Schiller.

It would not be appropriate to inquire further into the meaning of his horrible dream, but on the other hand we cannot avoid mentioning Christian Moosbrugger, for Moosbrugger doubtless had something to do with its source. Who was Christian Moosbrugger?

What distinguished him from other good-natured and right-thinking carpenters was merely that he was to be executed on account of several sex murders.

In one of the newspaper reports, a collection of which lay in front of antlers (while he held an unopened letter in his hand), it was said of Moosbrugger that he was good-natured. All the other reports described him in similar fashion, but the thing about his
smile, for instance, was wrong, and in general the business about his self-important smile, his good nature, and his monstrous deeds was by no means a simple affair.

There was no doubt that he was, at times, mentally ill. But since the bestial crimes that he committed in this condition were presented in the newspapers in the most extreme detail, and thirstily sucked up by their readers, his mental illness must have somehow partaken of the general mental health. He had cut up a woman, a prostitute of the lowest class, with a knife in the most horrifying manner, and the newspapers fully and pitilessly described the delights, to be sure incomprehensible to us, of a wound reaching from the back part of the neck to the middle of the front part; further, two stab wounds to the breast, which bored through the heart, two more in the left side of the back, and the cutting off of the breasts. In spite of (the most vivid retching of) their
loathing, the reporters and editors could not look away before adding up thirty-five stab wounds to the belly, which, moreover, was slit open by a wound running to the sacrum and continuing on up the back in a swarm of wounds, while the neck bore traces of strangulation.

Perhaps one ought not repeat this at all, for it is dubious whether the novelist will be allowed the protection of the duties of his calling enjoyed by the newspapers, which, like those men who prowl in the dark of night with shielded lanterns and seamen’s boots, have to climb into all those things in which mankind, upon waking, is accustomed to proclaim its interest. But ultimately it cannot be said anywhere but in a less serious place than the newspapers how remarkable it is that no sooner were Moosbrugger’s abominable excesses made known to thousands of people, who lose no opportunity to scold the public’s desire for sensation, than they were
immediately felt by these very people to be “at last something interesting again”: by capable officials in a hurry to get to the office, by their fourteen-year-old sons, and by their spouses immersed in a cloud of household cares. People of course sighed over such a monster, but inwardly he preoccupied them more than their professions did. Indeed, it might happen that on going to bed the very correct Section Chief Tuzzi, or the second in command of the Nature Cure Association, said to his sleepy wife: What would you do if I were a Moosbrugger now?
Often Ulrich thought that everything he was experiencing with Agathe was reciprocal hypnotic suggestion and conceivable only under the influence of the idea that they had been chosen by some unusual destiny. At one time this destiny represented itself to them under the sign of the Siamese twins, at another under that of the Millennium, the love of the seraphs, or the myths of the “concave” experiencing of the world. These conversations were no longer repeated, but they had in the past assumed the more potent shadow of real events, of which mention was made earlier. One might call it merely half a
conviction, if one is of the opinion that the kind of thinking involved in conviction is one that has to be entirely certain of its subject; but there is also a total conviction that arises simply from the absence of all objections, because an emotional mood that is strong and one-sidedly motivated keeps all doubt away from conscious awareness: there were times when Ulrich already felt almost convinced of something without even knowing what it was. But if he then asked himself—for he had to assume that he was suffering from delusions—what it was that he and Agathe must have reciprocally imagined at the beginning, their wondrous feeling for each other or the no less remarkable alteration in their thinking in which this feeling expressed itself, that could not be determined either; for both had appeared at the very beginning, and taken singly, one was as unfounded as the other.

This sometimes made him think of the idea of a hypnotic suggestion, and then he
felt the uncanny anxiety that steals up on the independent will which sees itself treacherously attacked and shackled from within. ‘What am I to understand by this? How is one to explain this vulgar notion of hypnosis, which I use as facilely as everyone else, without understanding it? I was reading about it today,’ Ulrich noted on a piece of paper. “The language of animals consists of affective expressions that evoke the same affects in their companions. Warning call, feeding call, mating call. I might add that these utterances activate and permeate not only the same affect but also quite directly the action associated with it. The terror call, the mating call, goes right through them! Your word is in me and moves me: if the animal were a person it would feel a mysterious, incorporeal union! But this affective suggestibility is also supposed to be still completely intact in people, in spite of the highly developed language of reason. Affect
is contagious: panic, yawning. It easily evokes the ideas appropriate to it: a cheerful person spreads cheerfulness. It also encroaches on unsuitable vehicles: this occurs in all gradations, from the silliness of a love token to the complete frenzy of love, whose brainstorms are worthy of the madhouse. But affect also knows how to exclude what is inappropriate, and in both ways evokes in people that persistent unified attitude that gives the state of hypnotic suggestion the power of fixed ideas. Hypnosis is only a special case of these general relations. I like this explanation, and I’ll adopt it. A singular, persistent, unified attitude, but one that blocks us off from the totality of life: that is our condition!"

Ulrich was now beginning to write many such pages. They formed a sort of diary, with whose aid he sought to preserve the mental clarity he felt was threatened. But immediately after he had put the first of his
notes on paper, he thought of a second: “What I have called magnanimity may also be connected with hypnotic suggestion. By passing over what is not part of it, and seizing hold of what furthers it, it is magnanimous/’ When that was done, his observations did not, of course, seem nearly as remarkable as they had before he had written them down, and he made another effort to look for an indisputable milestone of the condition in which he found himself together with his sister. He found it once more in the realization that thinking and feeling were changed in the same sense, and they not only corresponded with each other to a remarkable degree but also stood in contrast to the ordinary condition as something one-sided, indeed almost insoluble and addictive, an inevitable synthesis of aspirations and insights of all lands. When their conversations were in the right mood—and the susceptibility to this was extremely great—the impression they gave was
never that one word was forcing another, or one action dragging the next along after it, but that something was aroused in the mind to which the answer followed as the next-higher step. Every movement of the mind became the discovery of a new, even finer movement; they furthered each other reciprocally, and in this manner gave rise to the impression of an intensification that did not end, and of a discussion that rose without falling. It seemed that the last word could never be spoken, for every end was a beginning, and every final result the start of a new opening, so that every second shone like the rising sun but at the same time carried with it the peaceful passing of the setting sun. “If I were a believer, I would find in this the confirmation of the unfathomable assertion that His nearness is for us as inexpressible a raising up as our oppressive helplessness allows us to feel!” Ulrich wrote.
He recalled having read with his senses on fire, in those early years when he was entering upon his intellectual life, the description of similar feelings in all sorts of books that he never read through to the end because impatience and a will that urged him to assert his own power prevented him, although he was moved by them, indeed for just that reason. Then too, he had not lived as was to have been expected, and when he now happened to pick up several of these books again, which was something he did gladly, meeting the old witnesses once more made it seem as if he were quietly entering a door in his house that he had once arrogantly slammed shut. His life seemed to he unrealized behind him, or perhaps even before him. Intentions not carried out can be like rejected lovers in dreams, who have remained beautiful over many years while the astonished wanderer returning home sees himself devastated: in the exquisite
expansion of the power of one’s dreams, one thinks these lovers make one grow young again, and this was the mood, divided between enterprise and doubt, between the tips of flame and ashes, in which Ulrich now most frequently found himself. He read a great deal. Agathe, too, read a great deal. She was already content that the passion for reading, which had accompanied her in all the circumstances of her life, no longer served as mere distraction but had a purpose, and she kept up with her brother like a girl whose blowing dress leaves her no time to think about the path she’s taking. It happened that brother and sister got up in the night, after just having gone to bed, and met each other anew with their books, or that they prevented each other from going to bed at all, in spite of the late hour. About this Ulrich wrote: “It seems to be the only passion we permit ourselves. Even when we are tired we don’t want to part. Agathe says:
‘Aren’t we brother and sister?’ That means: Siamese twins; for otherwise it would be meaningless. Even when we’re too tired to talk she won’t go to bed, because we can’t sleep beside each other. I promise to sit beside her until she falls asleep, but she doesn’t want to undress and get into bed; not out of shame but because she would be doing something before I did. We put on bathrobes. A few times we’ve even fallen asleep leaning on each other. She was warm with the fervor of her mind. I had, to support her, wrapped my arm around her body and didn’t even realize it. She has fewer ideas than I do, but a higher temperature. She must have a very warm skin. In the morning we are pale with fatigue, and sleep for part of the day. Incidentally, we don’t derive the slightest intellectual progress from this reading. We burn in the books like the wick in oil. We assimilate them really without any effect other than our burning....”
Ulrich added: “The young person listens with only half an ear to the voice of those books which become his destiny: he flees them in order to raise his own voice! For he is not seeking truth; he is seeking himself. That’s the way it was with me too. Large-scale conclusion: There are always new people and always the old events, merely mixed in new combinations! Moral fragility of the age. They are essentially like our reading, a burning for its own sake. When was the last time I told myself that? Shortly before Agathe’s arrival. Ultimate cause of this phenomenon? The absence of system, principles, a goal, and also absence of the possibility of intensifying life and any logical consequence in it. I hope to be able to write down some things that have occurred to me about this. It’s part of the ‘General Secretariat.’ But the strange thing about my present condition is that I am further away than ever from such active participation in intellectual
work. That's Agathe's influence. She radiates immobility. Nevertheless, this incoherent state has peculiar weight. It is pregnant with meaning. What characterizes it, I would say, is the great amount of rapture it contains; although this notion is of course as vague as all the rest. Temporizing restriction, which I allow myself to be guilty of! Our condition is that other life which has always hovered before me. Agathe is working toward it, but I ask myself: can it be carried out as actual life? Not long ago she, too, asked me about that

But Agathe, when she had done so, had merely lowered her book and asked: "Can you love two people who are enemies?" She added by way of explanation: "I sometimes read something in a book that contradicts what I have read in another book, but I love both passages. Then I think of how both of us, you and I, contradict each other about
lots of things. Isn’t that what it depends on? Or is conscience not involved?”

Ulrich immediately recalled that in the irresponsible state of mind in which she had altered the will, she had asked him something similar. This led to a remarkable depth and undermining beneath the present situation, for the main current of his thoughts led Agathe’s statement without reflection back to Lindner. He knew that she was seeing him; she had, to be sure, never told him so, but also made no efforts to conceal it.

The response to this open manner of concealment was Ulrich’s diary.

Agathe was not supposed to know anything about it.

When he wrote in it, he suffered from the feeling of having committed an act of disloyalty. Or it reinforced and liberated him, for the chilling state of the wrong secretly
committed destroyed the intellectual magic spell that was feared as much as it was desired.

That is why in response to Agathe’s question Ulrich smiled but gave no other answer.

But now Agathe had suddenly asked: “Do you have mistresses?” This was the first time that she was again addressing such a question to him. “You should, of course,” she added, “but you told me yourself that you don’t love them!” And then she asked: “Do you have another friend besides me?”

She said this casually, as if she were no longer expecting an answer, but also in an easy and playful way, as if a tiny quantity of a very precious substance were lying in the palm of her hand and she was preoccupied with it.

Late at night Ulrich wrote down in his diary the answer he had given.
It was only one of life’s small challenges that she asked me this question, and what it means is: But you and I are still living outside of the “condition”! One might just as well exclaim: “Give me some water, please!” or: “Stop! Leave the light burning!” It is the request of a moment, something hasty, unconsidered, and nothing more. I say “nothing more,” but still I know that it’s nothing less than if a goddess were running to catch a bus! A most unmystic gait, an implosion of absurdity! Such small experiences demonstrate how much our Other Condition assumes a single, specific state of mind, and capsizes in an instant if one disturbs its equilibrium.

And yet it is such moments that make one really happy. How beautiful Agathe’s
voice is! What trust lies in such a tiny request, popping up in the midst of a high and solemn context! It’s touching, the way a bouquet of expensive flowers snagged with a wool thread off the beloved’s dress is touching, or a protruding piece of wire for which the hands of the bouquet maker were too weak. At such moments one knows exactly that one is overestimating oneself, and yet everything that is more than oneself, all the thoughts of mankind, seem like a spider web; the body is the finger that tears it at every moment and to which a wisp still clings.

I just said: The hands of the bouquet maker and abandoned myself to the seesaw feeling of a simile, as if this woman could never be old and fat. That’s moonshine of the wrong sort! And that’s why I gave Agathe a methodical lecture rather than a direct answer. But I was really only describing the life that hovers before me. I’d like to repeat that and, if I can, improve on it.
In the center stands something I have called motivation. In ordinary life we act not according to motivation but according to necessity, in a concatenation of cause and effect; of course something of ourselves is always involved in this concatenation, which makes us think we are free. This freedom of will is man’s ability to do voluntarily what he wishes involuntarily. But motivation has nothing to do with wishing; it cannot be divided according to the opposition of freedom and compulsion: it is the highest freedom and the most profound compulsion. I chose the word because I couldn’t find a better one; it’s probably related to the painter’s term “motif.” When a landscape painter goes out in the morning with the intention of finding a motif he will usually find it, that is, he will find something that fulfills his intention; yet it would be more accurate to say: something that fits in with his intention—the way a word, unless it happens to be too big, fits in
every mouth. For something that fulfills is rare, it overfills immediately, spilling over the intention and seizing hold of the entire person. The painter who originally intended to paint “something,” even though “from his own point of view,” now paints to paint, he paints for the salvation of his soul, and only in such moments does he really have a motif before him; at all other times he merely talks himself into thinking he does. Something has come over him that crushes intention and will. When I say it has nothing at all to do with them, I am of course exaggerating. But one must exaggerate when one is looking at the region that one’s soul calls home. There are surely all sorts of transitions, but they are like those of the spectrum: you go through innumerable gradations from green to red, but when you are there you are all there, and there is no longer the slightest trace of green.

Agathe said the gradation is the same as when one more or less lets things happen,
does some things from inclination, and finally when one acts from love.

At any rate, there is something similar in speaking, too. One can clearly make a distinction between a thought that is only thinking and a thought that moves the entire person. In between are all sorts of transitions. I said to Agathe: Let’s only talk about what moves the entire person!

But when I’m alone I think how murky that is. A scientific idea can also move me. But that isn’t the kind of moving that matters. On the other hand, an affect, too, can move me totally, and yet afterward I am merely confounded. The truer something is, the more it is turned away from us in a peculiar way, no matter how much it may concern us. I’ve asked myself about this remarkable connection a thousand times. One might think that the less “objective” something is, the more “subjective,” the more it would have to be turned toward us in the same way,
but that is false; subjectivity turns its back on our inner being in just the same way that objectivity does. One is subjective in questions where one thinks one way today and another tomorrow, either because one doesn’t know enough or because the object itself depends on the whim of the emotions: but what Agathe and I would like to say to each other is not the provisional or incidental expression of a conviction that on some better occasion could be raised to the status of truth, but could equally well be recognized as error, and nothing is more alien to our condition than the irresponsibility and sloppiness of such witty brainstorms, for between us everything is governed by a strict law, even if we can’t articulate it. The boundary between subjectivity and objectivity crosses without touching the boundary along which we are moving.

Or should I perhaps rather restrict myself to the uprooted subjectivity of the
arguments one carries on as an adolescent with one’s friends? to their mixture of personal sensitivity and impartiality, their conversions and apostasies? These are the preliminary stage of politics and history and of humanitarianism, with their vague wishy-washiness. They move the entire self, they are connected with its passions and seek to lend them the dignity of a spiritual law and the appearance of an infallible system. What they mean to us lies in their indications of how we ought to be. And all right, even when Agathe tells me something, it’s always as if her words go through me and not merely through the sphere of thoughts to which they are addressed. But what happens between us doesn’t appear to have great significance. It is so quiet. It avoids knowledge. “Milky” and “opalizing” are the words that occur to me: what happens between us is like a movement in a shimmering but not very transparent liquid, which is always moved along with it as
a whole. What happens is almost entirely a matter of indifference: everything goes through life’s center. Or comes from it to us. Happens with the remarkable feeling that everything we have ever done and could do is also involved. If I try to describe it as concretely as possible, I would have to say: Agathe gives me some answer or other or does something, and right away it takes on for me as much significance as it has for her, indeed apparently the same significance, or one like it. Perhaps in reality I don’t understand her rightly at all, but I complement her in the direction of her inner motion. Because we are in the same state of excitement, we are evidently guessing at what can intensify it and have to follow along unresistingly. When two people find themselves in anger or in love, they intensify each other in similar fashion. But the uniqueness of the excitement, and the significance that everything
assumes in this state of excitement, is precisely what is extraordinary.

If I could say that we are accompanied by the feeling of living in harmony with God, it would be simple; but how can one describe without presuppositions what it is that constantly excites us? “In harmony” is right, but with what cannot be said. We are accompanied by the feeling that we have reached the middle of our being, the secret center, where life’s centrifugal force is preserved, where the incessant twisting of experience ceases, where the conveyor belt of stamping and ejecting that makes the soul resemble a machine stops, where motion is rest; that we have arrived at the axis of the spinning top. These are symbolic expressions, and I absolutely hate these symbols, because they are so ready to hand and spread out endlessly without yielding anything. Let me see if I can attempt it once again, and as rationally as possible: the state of excitement in which we
live is that of correctness. This word, which used this way is as unusual as it is sensible, calms me somewhat. The feeling of correctness contains contentment and satiation. Conviction and the bringing of things to the still point are part of it; it is the profound state into which one falls after attaining one’s goal. If I continue to represent it to myself this way and ask myself: what is the goal that is attained? I don’t know. Yet it’s really not quite right, either, to speak of a state of the attained goal; it’s at least just as true that this state is accompanied by an enduring impression of intensification. But it is an intensification without progression. It is also a state of the highest happiness, although it does not lead beyond a weak smile. At every second we feel ourselves swept away, yet externally and internally we hold ourselves rather inert; the motion never ceases, but it oscillates in the smallest space. Also involved is a profound collectedness combined with a
broad dispersion and the awareness of animated activity, with a breakthrough by means of a process we do not sufficiently understand. Thus my intention to limit myself to the most neutral description immediately results again in surprising contradictions. But what presents itself so disjointedly to the mind is, as experience, of great simplicity. It is simply there; so to be properly understood it would also have to be simple! [“This dilemma, that the state of highest happiness is a state of inertness and passivity instead of leading to the simplicity of experience (= action), is one that Musil returns to again and again, both philosophically and in terms of how to work it into the fabric of the novel.] 

There is also between Agathe and me not the slightest discrepancy in the opinion that the question: “How should I live?,” which we have both taken upon ourselves, is to be answered: This is the way we should live!
And sometimes I think it’s crazy.

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END OF THE ENTRY

I now see the task more clearly. Something in human life makes happiness short, so much so that happiness and brevity apparently go together like siblings. This makes all the great and happy hours of our existence disjointed—a time that drifts in time in fragments—and gives to all other hours their necessary, emergency coherence. This “something” causes us to lead a life that does not touch us inwardly. It causes us to gobble people as easily as to build cathedrals. It is the reason why all that happens is always only “pseudo-reality,” what is real merely in an external sense. It bears the guilt for our being deceived by all our passions. It evokes the ever-recurring futility of youth and the senseless eternal upheaval of the ages. It
explains why activity is merely the result of the instinct for activity rather than a person’s decision, why our actions complete themselves as insistently as if they belonged more to each other than to us, and why our experiences can fly in the air but not in our will. This “something” has the same significance as our not quite knowing what to do with all the spirit we produce; it also causes us to not love ourselves and is the reason we may well find ourselves talented but, all things considered, see no purpose in it.

This “something” is: that over and over again we leave the condition of significance in order to enter the state of what is in and of itself meaningless in order to bring some significance to it. We leave the condition of the meaningful and enter the state of the necessary and makeshift; we leave the condition of life to step into the world of the dead. But now that I have written this down, I notice that what I am saying is a tautology and
apparently meaningless. Yet before I wrote, what was in my head was: “Agathe gives me some answer or other, a sign; it makes me happy”; and then the thought: “We do not step out of the world of the intellect in order to put intellect in an unintellectual world.” And it seemed to me that this thought was complete, and that the “stepping out” characterizes exactly what I mean. And I only need to put myself back in that state for it still to seem to me to be so.

I must ask myself how a stranger might understand me. When I say “significance,” he would certainly understand: what is significant. When I say “intellect,” he would first of all understand: stimulation, active thinking, receptivity, and the exercise of will. And it would seem to him a matter of course that one must step out of the world of the intellect and carry its significance into life; indeed, he would consider such a striving for “intellectualization” as the worthiest
fulfillment of human tasks. How can I express that “intellectualization” is already original sin, and “not to leave the world of the intellect” a commandment that knows no gradations but is fulfilled either entirely or not at all?

Meanwhile a better explanation has occurred to me. The state of excitement in which we find ourselves, Agathe and I, doesn’t urge us to actions or to truths, which means that it doesn’t break anything off from the edge, but flows back into itself again through that which it evokes.

This is of course only a description of the form of what happens. But when I describe in this way what I experience, I am able to grasp the changed, indeed quite different, role that my conduct, my action, has: What I do is no longer the discharge of my tension in the final form of a state in which I have found myself, but a channel and relay station on the way back to significance!
To be sure, I almost said: “Way back to an intensification of my tension”—but then one of those contradictions occurred to me which our condition exhibits, namely that it demonstrates no progression and therefore can’t very well demonstrate intensification either. Accordingly, I thought I ought to say “way back to myself—how imprecise all this is!—but the condition is not in the least egotistic but full of a love turned toward the world. And so I simply wrote “significance” again, and the word is good and natural in its context, without my having so far succeeded in getting at its content.

But as uncertain as all this is, a life has always hovered before me whose centerpiece this would be. In all the other ways I’ve lived, I always had the obscure feeling of having seen it, forgotten it, and not found it again. It robbed me of satisfaction in everything that was mere calculating and thinking, but it also made me come home after every
adventure and from every passion with the stale feeling of having missed the mark, until finally I lost almost all desire to have an effect in the world. That happened because I did not want to let anything compel me to leave the sphere of significance. Now I can also say what “motif” is. Motif is what leads me from significance to significance. Something happens, or something is said, and that increases the meaning of two human lives and unites them through its meaning, and what happens, which physical or legal concept it represents, is quite unimportant, plays absolutely no role in it.

But can I imagine what that means in its fullest extent, can I even imagine what it means in its smallest? I must try. A person does something...no, I can’t duck it: Professor Lindner does something! He arouses Agathe’s inclination. I feel this event, want to spoil it and negate it — and the moment I yield to my dislike, I step out of the sphere of
significance. What I feel can never become a motif for Agathe. My breast may be full of vexation or anger, my head an arsenal of sharp and ready objections—my heart is empty! My condition is then suddenly negative! My state is no longer positive! There’s another marvelous pair of notions I’ve got hold of! What makes me think of the characterizations "positive" and "negative"? I unexpectedly recall a day when I was also sitting with some paper in front of me and trying to write—at the time it was to be a letter to Agathe. And gradually it comes to mind: a condition of "do" and a condition of "don’t" as the two component elements of every morality, the "do" prevailing during its rise, the "don’t" during the satiety of its reign—is not this relationship between "challenge" and "prohibition" the same as what I am now calling positive and negative? The connection between Agathe and me characterized by everything being challenge and nothing
prohibition? I recall speaking at that time of Agathe’s passionate, affirming goodness, which in an age in which things of that sort are no longer understood looks like a primitive vice. I said: It’s like returning home after the longest time and drinking water from the well of one’s village! And challenge of course does not mean that we demand but means that everything we do demands the utmost from us.

Not leaving the sphere of the significant would therefore be the same as a life in pure positiveness? The thought that it is also the same as “living essentially” alarms me, although it was to be expected. For what else should “essentially” signify? The word probably comes from mysticism or metaphysics, and characterizes the opposition to all earthly happenings that are without peace and full of doubts; but since we have separated ourselves from Heaven, it lives on on earth as the longing to find among thousands
of moral convictions the one that gives life a meaning that does not change. Endless conversations between Agathe and me on the subject! Her youthful desire for moral instruction alongside the defiance in which she wanted to kill Hagauer and has at least really injured him in a material way! And the same search for conviction everywhere in the world; the intimation that man can’t live without morality, and the deep disquiet at how his own emotions undermine every one of them! Where is the possibility of a “whole” life, a “complete” conviction, a love that is without any admixture of not-love, without a shred of self-seeking and selfishness? What that means is: only living positively. And it means: not wanting to admit any happening without “significance” whenever I speak of a “never-ending condition,” in contrast to the “eternally futile moment-to-moment quality” of our usual way of acting, or of the alliance of every momentary state with a “lasting
state” of the emotions, which restores our “responsibility.” I could go on repeating such expressions for pages, expressions that characterized what we meant from one side or another. We summarized it as “living essentially,” always somewhat embarrassed by the term’s bombastic-transcendental overtones, but we had no other that would have been simpler to use. So it is no small surprise for me to suddenly find almost in my hands what I was seeking in die clouds!

Of course it is part of the peculiarity of our condition that every new observation assimilates all the earlier ones, so that there is no hierarchy among them; they seem, rather, to be infinitely entangled. I could just as well go on to call our condition magnanimous, which in fact I did some days ago, as I could characterize it as creative, for creating and creation are possible only in an attitude that is positive through and through, and so that, too, would be in accord; ultimately such a
life, in which every moment is to be as significant as possible, is also that “life in the sense of the maximal challenge” which I sometimes imagined as the spiritual complement to the laconic resolve of true science. But whether maximal, magnanimous, creative, or significant, essential or whole, how do I account for my feelings for Professor Lindner being what they are? That’s the problem I am drawn back to, the crux of the experiment, the crossroads! It occurs to me that I have deprived him of the possibility of having part of Agathe. Why? Because having part of, indeed even understanding, is never possible through “putting oneself in the place of the other,” but is possible only if both mutually take part in something greater. It’s impossible for me to feel my sister’s headaches; but I find myself transported with her in a state in which there is no pain, or where pain has the hovering wings of bliss!
I have doubts about this, I see the exaggeration in it. But perhaps that's only because I'm not capable of ecstasy?

Toward Lindner I would have to conduct myself as if I were somehow united with him in God. Even a smaller whole, like “nation” or some other confraternity, would suffice. At least it would suffice to prescribe my conduct. Even an idea in common would be enough. It merely has to be something new and dynamic that is not merely Lindner and I. So the answer to Agathe’s question, what a contradiction signifies between two books both of which one loves, is: it never signifies a calculation or a balance, but signifies a third, dynamic thing, which envelopes both aspects in itself. And that's how the life was that was always before my eyes, even if rarely clearly: the people united, I united with people through something that makes us renounce our hundred dislikes. The contradictions and hostilities that exist between
us cannot be denied, but one can also imagine them “suspended,” the way the strong current of a liquid picks up and suspends whatever it encounters in its path. There would then not be certain feelings among people, but there would be others. All impossible feelings could be summarized as neutral and negative; as petty, gnawing, constricting, base, but also as indifferent or merely rooted in connections that were necessary. So what remains would be great, increasing, demanding, encumbered, affirming, rising: in my hurry I can’t describe it adequately, but it lay in the depths of my body like a dream, and isn’t what I ultimately wanted simply to love life and everyone in it? I, with my arms, my muscles, trained to the point of malignity, basically nothing but crazy for love and lacking love? Is this the secret formula of my life?

I can conceive of that when I fantasize and think of the world and people, but not
when I think of Lindner, that specific, ridiculous person, the man Agathe will perhaps see again tomorrow in order to discuss with him what she does not discuss with me. So what’s left? That there are two groups of emotions which can be separated to some extent, which I would now again like to characterize only as positive and negative conditions, without placing a value on them, but merely according to a peculiarity of their appearance; although I love one of these two overall conditions from the depths (that also means: well hidden) of my soul. And the reality is left that I now find myself almost constantly in this condition, and Agathe too! Perhaps this is a great experiment that fate intends with me. Perhaps everything I have attempted was there only so that I could experience this. But I also fear that there’s a vicious circle lurking in everything that I think I have understood up to now. For I don’t want—if I now go back to my original
motif—to leave the state of “significance,” and if I try to tell myself what significance is, all I come back to again and again is the state I’m in, which is that I don’t want to leave a specific state! So I don’t believe I’m looking at the truth, but what I experience is certainly not simply subjective, either; it reaches out for the truth with a thousand arms. For that reason it could truly seem to me to be a hypnotic suggestion. All my emotions happen to be remarkably homogeneous or harmonized, and the resistive ones are excluded, and such a condition of the emotions, which regulates action in a unified way, is precisely what is regarded as the centerpiece of a hypnosis. But can something be hypnotic whose premonition, whose first traces, I can follow back through almost my entire life?

So there remains...? It isn’t imagination and it isn’t reality; even if it is not hypnotic
suggestion, I would almost have to conclude that it is the beginning of supra-reality.
Preface:

This novel takes place before 1914, a time that young people will no longer know at all. And the novel does not describe this time the way it really was, so that one could learn about it from this book. But it describes the time as it is mirrored in a person outside the mainstream. Then what does this novel have to do with people of today? Why don’t I write a novel about today instead? This has to be established, as best it can.

But that it concerns an (invented) story should also become part of the manner of its
telling. The path of history is to be applied not only in the novel but to it.

From the perspective of the book, the portrayal of the time has to be abridged. But I’m not capable of that. The Parallel Campaign, for instance, ought to connect with the Eucharistic Congress and other things about which I know too little. Absolute necessity of creating the technique from this error!

**Preface**

Ulrich considers himself a person who has a message to bring the world. Fragments are to be found here.

Later he judges [...]: In one’s lifetime one must have presented a good front and the like if one wants to have even a posthumous effect. He is not bad, just gives up.
That is also his development in the novel. *He does not write his book but is present in all the events.*

The narrator is, in a way, his friend.

Present Ulrich not as the “true-strong” person but as an important statement that has gone astray.

Mood: This is the tragedy of the failed person (more properly: the person who in questions of emotion and understanding is always aware of a further possibility. For he is not simply a failure) who is always alone, in contradiction with everything, and cannot change anything. All the rest is logically consistent.
Preface

People will find the excuse—because they don’t want to explore the idea—that what is offered here is as much essay as novel.

Query: Why is it that people today don’t pay attention to ideas in art, while in other respects they demonstrate an absolutely ridiculous interest in “doctrines”?

1st Section Before Agathe

An athletic young man—very intellectual—attempts normal life—has ideas that don’t seem to fit in—suspicious of the transparent humbug with ideals—tries to find a way out by means of functional morality—is himself morally indifferent—but unhappy about it—is arrogant toward his time but always looking for a way out of his arrogance—and from this an emotion crystallizes:
swimming through a space—jagged stage sets loom up—Ulrich was good. As a child. He simply saw that this “good” could not become the desiccated commonly accepted one. If among his ideas there are some that are right, then he is a precursor. But apparently evil develops the way he doesn’t imagine it a la journalism. He is interested in evil and despises the common.

**Preface**

I dedicate this novel to German youth. Not the youth of today—intellectual vacuum after the war—quite amusing frauds—but the youth that will come after a time and that will have to begin exactly where we stopped before the war, etc. (On this also rests my justification for writing a prewar novel today!)
Preface

“Superfluous,” “wandering” discussions: that’s a reproach that’s often been made against me, in which it was perhaps graciously conceded that I could tell a story. But these discussions are for me the most important thing!

I could have depicted many things more realistically. For instance, Hans Sepp and National Socialist politics. But there is already enough of the ridiculous in the book, and I then would not have been able to counterbalance it, which was what I was trying to do.
Preface

Where one speaks of relative originality: The phenomenon that a relatively or entirely original writer—completely inaccessible to the average critic—who in desperation analyzes him only in isolated, dependent particles—as has happened to me.

Preface

Why Vienna instead of an invented metropolis. Because it would have been more effort to invent one than a “crossed-out” Vienna.

Manner of Representation to be Frequently Used

Assemble a composite person, but with cards faceup! From settled ideas and a few obsessive linkages of ideas, e.g., the way
Hagauer is. All the intellectual characters this way: Arnheim, Diotima, etc. Whatever is added that is human and personal, particularly to those characters who are “only people,” is accidental; moreover, from the psychological point of view also characteristic, frequently repellent, like Arnheim’s predilection for the behind, or wishy-washy psychology like Schnitzler’s.

* Of the nature of the person, of changes in the physical and moral landscape
Theories, half ironic, chiefly in the agitations of the unsympathetic and half-sympathetic figures

Journey with Agathe

Trip across. Seasickness. Burgeoning awareness of a fearful passion for each other because they see each other in this state, bear it, feel it appropriate, with mouths agape, vomiting. The whole ship an orgy.

Ancona. Exhaustion. Taken for a married couple, room with double bed; they don’t want to reject it; fear almost amounting to a feeling of persecution, sweetness.

Only the terrible things about Rome. The smoothed and polished, the ravinelike streets with green window shutters. The being tortured from before.

That was the first trip. On the second, with Clarisse, he recalls it. In Venice, where
Clarisse is confined on the way back, meeting with Gus-tav [the model for Walter—TRANS.]. Rather fat paunch, deep devotion to Clarisse. Forced back to Vienna; meeting with Agathe, beginning of the spy story. The inner city entwined around St. Stephen’s Cathedral like a ball of tangled yarn. Yellow-gray darkness. Air like down.

On the trip: They really don’t do anything at all; they only suffer the fear that they could be accused, and the desire.

Someplace or other, memory from Esslingen. Second floor of the museum. He is sitting at the window; it mirrors nothing, reflects the room. But if one bends closer, then from all sides the blackness plunges in, and then the church, the jagged black houses with their caps of snow.
First trip. It’s boringly different; we’re traveling as man and wife. Nothing else; everything only in the hesitation that they have to overcome inwardly to do so. They are traveling without passports. Morning in Budapest. Conference with a lawyer. The square before the Parliament: something breaks under their feet like thin sheets of ice; gusts of wind sweep the square clean of people, mere existence makes itself palpable as an exertion. Impatience to get on the train. Just ten minutes before departure, resistance against order. Reacting to some land of feeling, they buy second-class tickets; some pleasant thought or other of black leather. Tip, alone. Everywhere they are taken for a young married couple. It’s boring, Agathe lies down to nap. It turns fine; white plain like a sea, forests buried in snow, heavy pillows of snow on the branches of the firs. Achilles [earlier name for Ulrich] wakes Agathe up; this white and black, perhaps a white and
mysteriously bottle-green landscape rushes through their eyes—lovely, she says, presses his hand—and melts into sleep; he stares at the strange countryside, sees in the darkness of the compartment Agathe’s shoulders and hips as she lies on her side, like hills, mysterious

Morning near Fiume. Through the opened window damp, warm air. Speckled flanks of the bowl of the valley they are descending into.

In Fiume rain, storm. Somebody in the train says that the steamer left already this morning; someone else: it will still be there. Going across the harbor square the storm turns their umbrella inside out—laughter on the flagstones, the rain soaks their clothes so that they are wading in their shoes.

Walk in the sunshine, palm trees, a street like a ribbon tied in bows.
What is an execution compared to an operation?

He drives back with someone else, who is horrified. When they get to where the pavement begins, the carriage jolts so that they don’t continue talking. Trees are torn past, sometimes the glance is flung through a hole into sand, pines


At his execution, Moosbrugger is simply embarrassed. Execution like a fire-brigade drill. The solemn flourishes at the end don’t move Ulrich. On his way out he nods vaguely and politely. Feels that it is perhaps out of place. Only when he looks into the face of his driver does he notice a difference of brightness and
warmth in the surroundings as opposed to before. This face seems to him quite hard, he sees every single hair of the beard stubble. A man who was there to do a journalistic study, whom he had invited to share his carriage and forgotten, gets in with him. Out of some vague feeling he remains sitting on the right. Country road, then extended city street. Pubs, people in black skirts and shirtsleeves. Ulrich feels a vague, scornful hatred for these people.

Study for Conclusion

Ulrich, to begin with without irony:

Reversal of a feeling about life with hard, bright, challenging...into soft, dark, smeared...What was so important to one a moment ago becomes completely indifferent.

One has the feeling that this passivity is not entirely without activity, but this activity
is something quite different from the disputatious passivity of before. Ulrich remembers having felt something similar in [chapter] 30. He was dissatisfied with himself and (1) his house made him shudder. He recalled once more his feeling of the “ahistorical,” the world new with every day. In addition: accidental and essential qualities, possibly being broken in spirit from strength; one’s being is still strength, but the object being seized is always simply larger.

(1) I was born, abandoned into this world; from one protective darkness into another. Mother? Ulrich had not had a mother. The world my mother? He stood up and stretched his muscles.

[Fragment]

I did not answer my father’s letter. An odd destiny had led me into the same aristocratic circles to which he owed his rise in life, the
naive lack of dignity of which irritated me; I had resolved to look around in these circles as in a room into which one had stumbled by some secret chance, and if in doing so I would have had to have the least thought of a resemblance, this would have been impossible for me. It was no doubt for this reason that I refrained from giving my father the satisfaction of having his wish fulfilled. He took it amiss, and I received no more letters from him, so that not long after, I was completely surprised by a message reporting his demise. I cannot say I was shaken; we had little fondness for each other. Also, I was totally lacking in the feeling for that continuity which, it is claimed, binds ancestors and posterity; the inheritance of certain dispositions and qualities, while certainly present, did not seem to me any more important than that the most disparate melodies can be constructed from the same notes, and the generally prevailing demand for pious respect is a
con game; at least that’s how most unconstrained young people feel it, although later they deny it. Besides, I was in a great hurry to complete the arrangements for my trip.

I remember that while I was overseeing the packing, the barbaric ideas of patriarchy that are dinned into shrinking children went through my head; the hand that strikes out at the father grows from the grave, the disobedient child is afflicted with its parents’ tears when they are dead, and many such techniques from the wild primitive era of mankind. Primal epochs come to life again in the nursery, where nannies let themselves go. Somewhat later I was overcome by the desolate feeling that the entire atmosphere surrounding the ultimate questions and their philosophy, which I had involuntarily been seeking in my memory, are of a pronounced banality. Just as when you look up at the starry sky for the space of five minutes. We know nothing, and what we feel is warmed-
over cabbage. I did not even know whether I ought to give myself over to my distaste or whether I should set it straight; the beginnings of both were in me. Whatever the philosophers may have contributed, no matter how enormous it might be as an intellectual accomplishment, from the human point of view we have remained in these questions undeniably limited and boring. Of course my own ideas shared in this too, except that it suddenly seemed to me incredibly remarkable that one lives with this quite contentedly. The well-known feeling of extraterritoriality rose up in me: even if I do not presume to be able to order things and thoughts any better, in the order that they have found for themselves they are for me immensely alien. And I gradually noticed that I had fallen into a quite specific stream of ideas and emotions that I had almost forgotten.

The thought of my father, whom I did not esteem, was unpleasant for me, the way a
plant might feel whose roots have been burned by acid. I remembered once having said to someone: The founders of empires have no ancestors! That, too, was now unpleasant to me, because it sounded so childishly arrogant, if I had meant just then that everyone ought to be such a founder of kingdoms. That person was my

Or: I had hardly begun to look around in my new circle when I received a telegram from my father that reported...I was now completely master of my life. When I stepped out onto the square in front of the railroad station...
THE MAN WITHOUT QUALITIES THOUGHT THROUGH
CONSISTENTLY

First Considerations

Don’t give him a name. Explain briefly in Part I. It’s not hard to say what a man without qualities looks like: like most other people.

There is only at times a shimmer in him, as in a solution that is trying to crystallize but always drops back.

Clarisse says and sees: You look like Satan. Colossal energy, etc.

Walter says: Your appearance is falling apart, etc. More or less what could be said about him.

Arnheim and Diotima are troubled. Arnheim says: The “cousin.”
It’s only for the police that he has qualities. For General Stumm: The old comrade.

For Count Leinsdorf he is something definite (true).

For Bonadea he is splendid, mean, etc.

I say: the or a man without qualities (and this is without overvaluing him, as would be the case with a “hero” Ulrich) is an object to be depicted. I constantly ask myself: what would a man without qualities say, think, do, in such a situation.

The ideas are such as present themselves to any clever person today. They could also be different; it doesn’t amount to the formation of a will or a conviction, beyond a given point or a paranoid system.

By this means one gains relations to the characters, the situative dialogue.
Of course they are all without qualities, but in Ulrich it is somehow visible.

He is tall, etc., sympathetic but also unsympathetic.

The other people, on the other hand, have their stories told properly. Possibly: Everything about the man without qualities in the present tense, everything else that is narrated in the imperfect. Characterize Ulrich as unsympathetically as myself.

Arnheim calls him: The young doctor.

Diotima: My learned cousin (with ironic undertone).

Bring out more strongly the leave from life: resolve to commit suicide (instead of that, then the war); don’t give reasons. They were neither concrete ones nor a disdain for life; on the contrary, although he found life
abominable he made an effort to love it, felt himself somehow obligated to.

Ocean trip: the way it was. To hang on to it, grab hold of it as concretely as possible.

For the first time as man and wife beside each other in this weakness afterward. Their bodies are as insubstantial as silk ribbons. Nothing happens. Only afterward the timorous walking among the loud people.

Railroad journey: their muscles are tossed back and forth, back and forth. Their bodies sway. The weak smile that was yesterday's day pales. Here and there a glance. Or a closing of the eyes. Need for the schedule, for a sturdy compartment conversation. But between silence, fatigue, gliding through a strange landscape, and even boredom, still a hanging on to the possession of something different.
First attempt to strip naked. Above rocks on an inaccessible rock terrace. Even undressing has no effect. Here the charming play of clothes in the room has no force. The naked body like a line. If at least it were burned by the sun.

Union, like two one-celled animals. Consciously—in a pause when the moon is gone—sexuality as concentration on a goal and a way. There must be this penetration. (Conversation) The moon is there again and the penetration begins. Until they release each other fatigued and satiated. Lying on their beds like flour dust in human shape. Happy, confused; but all human content was blown away. Can that be repeated? Only if an intellectual system is involved, such as *unio mystica* or the like. This system might perhaps be possible. Tragedy: an unborn world.

Normal desire in Ulrich. Also in Agathe. But repressed again and again until the
longing for ordinary obstacles like rivals etc. comes.

Diotima-Arnheim: Sitting knee-to-knee holding hands. Diotimas knees make a motion to open. She presses them together. She stands up, Arnheim kisses the curled hair on her neck. (He is unaware of this nestling up from behind.) The kiss down her back, through her legs, comes out at her breasts.

Diotima-Ulrich afterward. Diotima just looks at him, upset. Everything in her is destroyed. He has put her feelings back on track again.

Meingast. Is democracy a system that picks out leaders? No.

Does it further the intellectual and spiritual? No.

It drags down whatever is outstanding, while raising the general level only a tiny bit.

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My view of, or task I would set for, literature: partial solution, contribution to the solution, investigation, or the like. I feel exempted from having to give an unequivocal response. I have, after all, also postulated the morality of individual cases, etc.

A justified objection: That was from the period before the war. There was no way of snaking up the totality. It went further too: everyone had this feeling. Whether one wanted it that way or not, there was a firm system of coordinates. A floating ball, which one pushed and turned every which way. One’s interest exhausted itself in the variations. The tacit assumption was probably not the solidity of the environment but one’s lack of concern for it, without one’s being aware of it.

Disposition to understanding the way I am in, for instance, Martha [Musil’s wife] because she paid no attention to the totality in any event.
This situation has now changed. The whole person has been flung into uncertainty. Discussions are of no use to him, he needs the solidity that has been lost. Hence the desire for resolution, for yes and no. In this sense, a person with as little substance as Brecht is exemplary through the form of his behavior. He moves people because he demonstrates their own experience to them. One has to understand this completely.

Therefore the didactic element in the book must be strengthened. A practical formula must be advanced.

Not further thought out: apparently this gives the practical-theoretical opposition, the original spy concept, new content.
LATE 1920s

a. Loving Fear

It was spring. The air like a net. Behind it something that stretched the weave. But was not able to break through. They [Ulrich and Agathe] both knew it but no longer trusted themselves to talk about it. They knew, in the moment when they would seek words for it...it would be dead. Fear made them tender. Their eyes and hands (often) brushed each other, a trembling around the lips sought its reflection, one second seemed to separate itself from the ranks of the others and sink into the depths.

The second time, such a movement was a massive mountain of bliss.
The third time, very nearly comical.

Then the loving fear came over them.

They looked for a jest, a cynical word; just something unimportant but real; something that is at home in life and has a right to a home. It makes no difference what one talks about. Every word falls into the silence, and the next moment the corpses of other words are shining in a circle around it, the way masses of dead fish rise to the surface when one casts poison into the water. The order of words in a real connection destroys the deep reflective luster with which, unspoken, they lie above the unutterable, and one could just as well speak about lawyers as philosophy.

b.

Agathe is playing the piano.

Ulrich comes in, a book in his hand; it is Emerson, whom he loves. He heard only at
the last moment that Agathe was making music. What he hates: music as subterfuge, music as intoxicant deadening the life-forming will. He becomes gloomy, wants to turn around, but nevertheless reads aloud to Agathe the place he wanted to show her.

Can be applied to the description of the nature of an idea: “Tn common hours, society sits cold and statuesque. We all stand waiting, empty—knowing, possibly, that we can be full, surrounded by mighty symbols which are not symbols to us, but prose and trivial toys. Then cometh the god and converts the statues into fiery men, and by a flash of his eye burns up the veil which shrouded all things, and the meaning of the very furniture, of cup and saucer, of chair and clock and tester, is manifest. The facts which loomed so large in the fogs of yesterday—property, climate, breeding, personal beauty, and the like—have strangely changed
their proportions. All that we reckoned solid shakes and rattles.

His voice sounds despondently “cold and silent” as he reads with lost confidence. Agathe has interrupted her playing; when the words, too, have died away, her fingers take a few acoustic steps through the boundless land of music, stop, and she listens. “Lovely,” she says, but does not know what she means.

To her surprise Ulrich says: “Yes; it can drive one mad.” Agathe, who knows that Ulrich does not like it when she plays music, abandons the instrument.

—Pay attention! Ulrich says, having stepped back and drawn a pistol from his pocket. He fires at the piano, shooting into the center of its long black flank. The bullet cuts through the dry, tender wood and howls across the strings. A second churns up jumping sounds. The keys begin to hop. The
jubilantly sharp reports of the pistol drive with increasing frenzy into a splintering, screaming, tearing, drumming, and singing uproar. He does not know why he is shooting. Certainly not because of anger at the piano, or to express anything at all symbolically. When the magazine is empty Ulrich lets it drop to the carpet, and his cheeks are still hollowed out from tension.

Agathe had neither lifted her hand nor uttered the slightest sound to prevent the destruction of the expensive instrument. She felt no fear, and although the way her brother began must have been quite incomprehensible to her, the thought that he had gone mad did not seem terrifying to her, caught up as she was by the pathos of the shots and the strange wounded cries of the struck instrument.

When her brother then asked whether she was angry at him, she denied it with radiant eyes.—I ought to feel like a fool—Ulrich
said, somewhat ashamed—but if I tried to repeat that, it would turn into ordinary target practice, and its never being repeatable was perhaps the stimulus.

—Always, when one has done something, Agathe said.

Ulrich looked at her in astonishment and said nothing.

c.

It was only the next day that Ulrich referred to the incident again. “Now you won’t be able to play the piano for a while,” he tried saying by way of excuse; where the piano had stood there was emptiness in the room. “Why did you say yesterday that these books could drive one mad?” Agathe asked. “Before your mad idea. Are they very beautiful?”

“Just because they’re beautiful. It’s perhaps good that you can’t make music now.”
What followed was a long conversation. —It’s all like blowing bubbles, Ulrich said. Beautiful? With his hands he spontaneously formed in the air an iridescent ball—”completely self-contained and round, like a globe, and the next instant vanished without trace. I’ve been working again for a while—”

(But it is also possible to take everything theoretical out of the description of the Other Condition and apply it as fiction in an ironic way as depiction of the age. Then all that would remain here would be those remarks that have the character of events.)

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Agathe: *Depict a deep depression.*

It is as if a secret drawer within her had been turned upside down and contents never before seen had come to light. Everything is obscured. Little reflection; really an inability to reflect. The idea: I must kill myself, is
present only in the form of this sentence, unspoken, yet its presence eerily known; it fills the dark vacuum more and more completely.

The condition is uncanny. Much less free of the fear of death than were many of the healthy moments in which Agathe had often thought of death. And much less beautiful: dull, colorless. But the idea now has a fearful attraction.

*She begins to put her affairs in order: there really aren’t any.* Ulrich is right, when he struggles and works, that yields content; *he is marvelous the way he is*—she thinks.

Then: He’ll get over it. Ira *not leaving behind anyone who will weep over me.*

*Sadness at living.* The flowing of the blood is a weeping. Everything done badly, without energy, half; like a small parrot among coarse sparrows. Incapable of the
simple emotions. She had been afraid of her father; the same fear that had recurred often in her life: not being able to defend herself, because the defense leads to things that one finds just as meaningless. She never knew love, and the suggestion that this was now the most important thing; this child’s idea, this rapture of so many women, is a matter of indifference to her.

But *The sovereignty of the resolve.* Whoever is able to do this is free and owes no one an accounting. The world becomes quite calm. In spite of its rush. The strange loneliness! With which one is born.

***

All objects in the room become friends for the first time; have seriously found their place.
A long time ago she had obtained a capsule with cyanide; it was her solace in many hours. Pours it for the first time into a glass; the carafe with water beside it. Describe how it is done. Possibly the confidence that this world, in which Agathe feels herself so imperfect, is not the only one.

At the last moment, Ulrich enters.

Agathe would have had to say farewell, become sentimental, offer explanations. Or jump up and run away from him. She looks at him helplessly, and he notices the disturbance in her face. The spark jumps over to him. —Today you have no courage. He was still trying to jest. —I, at least, shot up a piano. —Let’s kill ourselves..., Agathe said. We are miserable creatures who bear within ourselves the law of another world, without being able to carry it out! We love what is forbidden and will not defend ourselves.
Ulrich threw himself down beside her and embraced her. We will not let ourselves be killed by anything before we have tried it!

What? Agathe looked at him, trembling.

God has...Ulrich smiled...The lost paradise! We don’t need to ask ourselves whether what we propose will stand every test: everything is fleeting and fluid. Whoever is not like us will not understand us. Because one understands nothing of what one sees and does, but only what one is. Do you understand me, my soul?

And if it fails, we’ll kill ourselves?

We’ll kill ourselves! Voices were singing in them like a chorus of heavenly storms: Do what you feel!!

Next chapter
If they had done what they were feeling, in an hour everything would have been over. But as it is, they travel.
This chapter, as reminder of the world, inserted in the progression of the extremely personal chapters. Also works as antidote to the other Ufe that Ulrich has devised.

Basic idea: presenting and ironizing “making everyone dance to the same tune/’ (But deeper basic idea: Age of empiricism.)

Extremes appeal more to the average person than does the strict truth.

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Sketch For Crisis And Decision Chapter

Preceded by: Ulrich-Bonadea
Ulrich stays behind; like a dog that has killed a chicken. Leaves the room briefly; Agathe comes in; she’s had enough of Lindner; Peter preceded her. Her thoughts and their result. This should be followed by a—not written—conversation to the effect that disavowal produced by the result justifies the crisis.

On the real and urgent level, Ulrich has to go on an errand. Agathe’s attempt at suicide. Saved by Ulrich. Final resolve.

What is the resolve based on? What Agathes attempted suicide?

Ulrich really ought to answer—in the sense of Schleiermacher’s moral indifference of the religious person—that the Other Condition offers no precepts for everyday life. You can marry, live as you wish, etc. Utopias, too, have not produced any practicable results. That’s also something like the
race of genius inside the race of stupidity. That also means: against the total solution and system. Against the sense of community. Adventure of rejecting life. But without going into the theory.

After the eruption he concedes: intimation and God, even if dubious. His real justification is fear of the sweetness of the three sisters [Agathe, Ulrich himself, and the Other Condition—TRANS.], and so they decide to go away, and coitus is unarticulated. So, at least for the time being, he half abandons image and the like.

Agathe wants a decision the way youth does.

Ulrich: I have decided. Suicide year.

Agathe: Mysticism that could not ally itself with religion allies itself with Ulrich.
Decision to be: instrument of an unknown goal.

Agathe: There is really no good and evil, but only faith or doubt. Let’s get away from all that.

Lacking faith, leave it to intimations. Ulrich rejects believing but follows intimations.

Agathe’s depression: One main argument: The lawyer proposed she should have herself declared ill. She did the will on account of Ulrich, and now everything threatens to fall on top of her. Lindner, too, she only treated badly.

She is for action (youth), but it also looks like this: Whatever one can object to about others, and also about God and the Other Condition, is a matter of indifference to her; she wants to live with Ulrich, thinks
it’s very bad of her but wants to anyway, and if that won’t work, then all that remains is badness and the end.

On Agathe’s depression: According to Adler, the person inclined toward God is the person deficient in a sense of community—according to Schleiermacher, the morally indifferent person, therefore evil. Woman, too, is a criminal. True sympathy for no one but Ulrich. I have to love you because I cannot love the others. God and anti-social. Her love for Ulrich has from the beginning mobilized hatred and hostility against the world.

Note: this mood has the quality of magnanimity; she has to (can) remember what Ulrich has said about it. It contains the continuation into life.

It has to happen with (undescribed) Clarisse! That’s why not with Bonadea! Disturbance,
interruption at the last minute. Ulrich knows that he has already given in.

***

In this mood, God is the hypostasized need to believe. But it is not given her to see God. The mood is really a fulfillment of the Other Condition, but still schematically.

Differently: When Ulrich comes in again she recalls his aversion to defectiveness. Impels her to do it quickly, but also inhibits her.

Ulrich: experimental year. Is there enough for both of them?

We will not kill ourselves until we have tried everything.

**Addendum:** Belief can only be an hour old. But then it is an intimation.
Missing: Ulrich’s depression and possible grounds for suicide.

49 now 50
CRISIS AND DECISION

Main point here: suicide attempt.

Content: Agathe hurt, feminine. Silly weeping, mindless weeping; but a fountain of the body, the body claiming its right. You have hurt me. As excuse: reading poems and newspapers. Insight: What is it then that I should give you? I could perhaps consent to it with a woman I love. Inwardly more than two people can be in love. Ulrich depicts what that would be like and confesses that he is too fainthearted for it. Ulrich develops the idea. Suddenly Agathe kisses him, and the kiss becomes sensual.

Between this chapter and the preceding there must be a brief separation, Ulrich’s
leaving the house or just the room. During this time Agathe’s mood suddenly changes.

Description of a deep depression and the happiness of such a resolve.

( Clarisse’s exaltation in 46 or 47 corresponds to this deep depression.)

Tentative resume: Always did everything badly, beginning with father, and one can’t defend oneself because the defense is still worse (more stupid).

Ulrich manages to prevent her. Used as motives for the resolve:

It is our destiny: perhaps we love what is forbidden. But we will not kill ourselves before we have attempted the utmost. Promise!

The world is fleeting and fluid: Do what you want!

We stand powerless before a perfected imperfected world. Other people also have
everything that’s in us, but they’ve shunted it aside without noticing. They remain healthy and idealistic; we skirt the edge of crime.

Loneliness: people who believe quarrel with God, unbelievers are getting to know him for the first time. There is no necessity in this. This world is only one of...experiments. God bestows partial solutions, creative people do the same, they contradict one another, out of this the world forms a relative whole that doesn’t correspond to any solution. Into the mold of this world I am poured like molten ore: that’s why I never entirely am what I do and think: an attempted form within an attempted form of the totality. One can’t listen to the bad teachers, who according to God’s plan have constructed one of His lives for eternity, but must humbly and stubbornly entrust oneself to God himself. Act without reflection, for a man never gets further than when he doesn’t know where he’s going. (That is Agathe’s
influence! Ironic, but already anticipated by Count Leinsdorf.) / narratively: Perhaps Ulrich reflects about this in a pause, so that there are no reflections at the end /

Over all a breath of *Stella* morality [Goethe’s play—TRANS.]. Otherwise he would have said literally the same things to Stumm and others. To be described more as mood and state than as idea. If they had now carried out what they were feeling, in an hour everything would have been over. But this way...

Poison as support. Confidence that this world, in which she feels incomplete, is not the only one—

On the suicidal mood: This sadness was like a deep ditch with slippery sides that had her going back and forth, while she heard Ulrich
above, invisible and inaccessible, talking with other people.

When Agathe returned home, this took place at twilight, she looked around for Ulrich, but he had (after Bonadea’s departure) left the house (for a while) in order to forget what had happened as much as he possibly could. She sat down in his study, laid her hat and gloves beside her on the sofa, and abandoned herself to the slow fall of darkness, which suited her mood. It was her intention not to visit Lindner so soon again, and she wanted to ask Ulrich’s forgiveness for her ill nature.

Just then her ringers came in contact among the pillows with a hard, gently curved, pronged object, and when she held it up to the light she recognized it as a small comb of the kind women wear in their hair. Bonadea had lost it. It quite confused Agathes hands as they held it. She looked at it with parted lips, and the blood drained
from her face. If the word “thunderstruck” means that all thoughts are struck out and the small house of the skull stands empty with opened drawers and doors, then Agathe was thunderstruck. Tears rose to her eyes without brimming over.

She waited vacandy—with few thoughts, which hardly tried to stir in her—for her brother. Among them was the thought that now everything was over, and the opposite one, that what she had stumbled upon was only natural and that she ought to have believed in it at any time; she appeared unable to grasp what lay between these thoughts until Ulrich should come.

When he came in, he immediately noticed the presence of someone else in the darkness and went up to his sister, who was the only person it could be, in order to greet her gently and ruefully. But Agathe asked him in such a voice not to come near her, but rather to turn on the light, that he turned on
his heel. When light came on she held out the little comb to him with outstretched arm, and he read in her eyes what she did not say. Ulrich could have denied it; it probably would not have been credible to explain her find through disorder, as something left behind from earlier times, and yet it would perhaps have deflected and softened the immediate effect: but he was overcome with remorse and made no attempt at denial.

Agathe got hold of herself and listened to him with a dismayed smile.

“Are you jealous of Bonadea?” he asked her, and wanted to stroke her face in order to turn the incident into a jest. But before it touched her, Agathe grabbed his hand and held it fast. “I have no right to be,” she said. At the same moment tears began streaming from her eyes. Ulrich’s eyes, too, nearly misted over—”You know how such things happen.”
Ulrich stays behind. Satiated like a beast of prey / Better: As he tells himself: like a dog that has torn a chicken to pieces and that on the one hand is oppressed by conscience, on the other contentedly suffused with having satisfied a basic instinct / Possibly: Remorse is nothing other than the collapse of a dominant affect brought about by the one competing with it / So he is predisposed to remorse.

Second Part

Finally they sat together for a while, held each other by the hands and did not trust themselves to either say or do anything. It had become quite dark. Agathe felt a temptation to undress without saying a word. Perhaps the darkness also enticed Ulrich to creep over to her or do something similar. Both resisted this energy of the sex drive that forms types of actions (or something
similar). But Agathe asked herself: Why doesn’t anything happen? / Why not...? Something from the paradise conversation, so to speak: why doesn’t he try it!

And when nothing happened she asked her brother: Don’t you want to turn the light on now?

Ulrich hesitated. But then out of fear he turned on the light.

And then it appeared that he had forgotten something he had to take care of himself. It was evident that he had to take care of it, it would take at most forty-five minutes, and Agathe herself persuaded him to do it. He had promised someone important some information, and it couldn’t be done over the phone. Thus even in this hour normal life intervened, and normal life was what it was, and after they had separated both became melancholy.
Ulrich became so melancholy that he nearly turned around, but continued on; Agathe, on the other hand, became more melancholy than she had ever been in her life. In contrast to all the other times, this melancholy seemed to her positively unnatural; she shrank back and even felt an inquisitive astonishment. Unnaturalness was a special kind of peculiarity. As far as this melancholy left any room at all for anything else; as it were like a shimmer at its margin. Profound melancholy, moreover, is not black, but dark green or dark blue, and has the softness of velvet; it is not so much annihilation as rather a rare, positive quality. This deep happiness in melancholy, which Agathe felt immediately, apparently has its origin in the relationship of single-mindedness and enthusiasm, that happiness is associated with the exclusive dominance of every individual emotion at being freed from all contradictions and irresolution, not in a cold,
pedantic, impersonal way, as through reason, but magnanimously. All great courage and bad temper have the quality of magnanimity. Without having to think for a moment Agathe remembered where she kept her poison and stood up to get it. The possibility of ending life and its ambivalences liberates the joy that dwells within it. Agathe’s melancholy became cheerful in a way she found barely comprehensible as she emptied the poison, as the directions prescribed, into a glass of water / when she put the poison in front of her on a table. She fetched a glass and a bottle of water and put them beside it. In the most natural way her future split into the two possibilities of killing herself or attaining the Millennium, and since the latter had not worked, there remained only the former.

It was time to take leave. Agathe was much too young to be able to part from Ufe totally without pathos, and to understand
her properly it cannot be passed over in silence that her resolve was not, affectively speaking, sufficiently fixed: her despair was not without remedy, it was not collapse after every attempt had been made, there was always for her, even if at the moment it seemed obscured, still a second way. Initially, her departure from the world was animated, like leaving on a trip. For the first time, all the people she had encountered in the world appeared to her as something that was quite in order, now that she was not to have anything more to do with it.

It seemed to her peaceful and lovely to look back at life. And besides, entire generations disappear in a flash. She was not the only person who had not really known what to do with her beauty. She thought of the year 2000, would have liked to have known how things would look then. Then she remembered faces from the sixteenth century she must have seen portrayed in some
collection. Splendid faces with strong foreheads and far more powerful features than one sees today. One could understand that all these people had once played a role. But for that you doubtless need fellow players: a profession, a task, and an animating life. But this ambition to have a role was completely alien to her. She had never wanted to be any of the things one could be. The world of men had always been foreign to her. She had despised the world of women. At times, she had brought the curiosity of her body, the desire of the flesh, in contact with others the way one eats and drinks. But it had always happened without any deeper responsibility, and so her life had led only from the desert of the nursery where it had started into a vague kind of happening with no borders. Thus everything ended in impotence.

To be sure, this impotence was not without a core: It was not only this world that God...World one of many possible
ones...The best in us a breathUke (mass) that flies eternally like a bird from its branch...There was always a vision contained within her dislike of the world’s authority. Indeed, more than a vision; she had almost got hold of it already: one comes to oneself when...vanishes. It is more than a seizure, this obscure twinkling...But it seemed to her not to make much sense to go over it again. All these experiences mixed up together echoed along with it, but they were not...before. They have something schematic and...real. It had not been given to her to see God clearly, as Utde as anything!

Without God, all that remained of her was the bad that she had done. She was uselessly besmirched and felt repugnant to herself. Everything, too, that she had just gone over had become clear to her only in Ulrich’s company, become more than a nervous playing of games. She spontaneously felt warmly
grateful to her brother. At this moment she loved him madly.

And then it occurred to her: everything he had said, everything he still might say, he had debased!

She had to do it before he came back. She looked at her watch. What a delicate thing its tiny hand was. She pushed the watch away. A gloominess came over her...fear of death...dull, horribly painful, repugnant. But the thought that it had to happen—she had no idea how it had come in...horrible appeal. She found she had very little reflection left...inability...nothing but the idea...kill, and this only in the form of this sentence...emptiness.

She wanted to put her affairs in order; she had none. I’m not leaving anyone behind...not even Ulrich...She pitied herself. The pulse in her wrist flowed like weeping.
Ulrich was to be envied, when he struggled and worked. Possibly: He is marvelous just as he is!

But the sovereignty of her resolve calmed her. She, too, had an advantage. Whoever is able to do this...She felt the marvelous isolation with which she had been born.

And when she had emptied the powder into the glass the possibility of turning back was gone, for now she had committed her talisman (like the bee, which can sting only once).

Suddenly she heard Ulrich’s steps, sooner than expected. She could have quickly downed the glass. But when she heard him she also wanted to see him once more. After that she could have jumped up and...downed the glass. She could have said something peremptory and withdrawn from life that way.
But she looked at him helplessly, and he saw the devastation in her face. He saw the glass; he did not ask. He did not understand; the spark of excitement jumped over to him instantaneously. He took the glass and asked: “Is there enough for us both?” Agathe tore it from his hand.

With the exclamation...?...? I’ve never loved anything besides you! “he clasped her in his arms.”

Or: not a word, [but] an action, an event! He collapses or the like. Horrified at what he has brought about!

Better: Ulrich’s aversion against defectiveness. Suicide. But finally: one cannot make amends for anything but can only make them better. That’s why remorse is passionate. For both. Suddenly one of them is struck by this idea and laughs.

I have decided. Experimental year...kill myself.
That is the resolution that is now impetuously carried out.

But that would also mean, more or less: journey to God.

*Perhaps in place of the rejected jealousy chapter*

The period of mobilization. Agathe had, in spite of it, had a carpenter called in. He might be a Htde under thirty, is tall and really built like a mechanic, that is, slender, with broad shoulders, dry; long, well-formed hands of great strength, and sinewy wrists. His face is open and intelligent, his hair dark blond and quite natural. His overalls become him. He speaks dialect but without roughness.

Agathe in the next room with him. Ulrich—lost in thought—has left. He doesn’t want to be bothered by anything anymore.
But then he turned around and crossed a garden terrace back into the house and into his room, without Agathe noticing.

He eavesdrops on the next room. The expression of both voices strikes him. The man’s voice is explaining something: articulately, quietly, and with a certain superiority. Ulrich doesn’t understand what it’s about but guesses from his prior knowledge and the sound of wood that it has something to do with a rolltop desk of Agathe’s. It is opened and closed. The young workman demands Agathe’s assent to a more comprehensive repair than she would like, and she makes uncertain objections. Ulrich knows and understands all that. It must have something to do with a mystery of the old rolltop mechanism.

And suddenly it breaks loose from reality. For the conversation would have run exactly the same course if it had been a love transaction. The persuading, the easy
superiority, the positing-as-necessary or it’s-not-such-a-big-thing in the man’s voice. As if it were for him a sexual improvisation. And then that beloved voice! Resisting, intimidated, unsure. She would like to and doesn’t want to. She yields, but here and there still stands firm. She says in an undertone: “yes...yes...but...” She’s known for quite a while that she will yield. How Ulrich loves this restrained, brave voice and the woman who fears everything as she does darkness and yet who does everything! He would not have been able to bring himself to rush in with a gun and take revenge, or even call them to account.

Then a sigh of submission even comes over Agathe’s lips, and the cracking of wood is deceptively heard.

And in spite of this being-happy-for-Agathe that Ulrich has dreamed through, he goes off to the war. But by no means with conviction.
1930-1938/39

QUESTIONS FOR VOLUME TWO

Exposition of Volume Two of The Man Without Qualities

When I think of the reviews of Volume One [Musil is here referring to Chapters 1-123, which were published in 1930/31; Chapters 1-38 of Part III appeared in 1932/33], I note again and again as something they have in common the question as to what will or might happen in the second volume. The answer to this is simple: nothing or the beginning of the World War. Note the title of the major portion of the first volume: Pseudoreality Prevails. This means that in general today the personal givens of events are definite and delineated, but that what is general about them, or their significance, is
indefinite, faded, and equivocal, and repeats itself unintelligibly. The person awakened to awareness of the current situation has the feeling that the same things are happening to him over and over again, without there being a light to guide him out of this disorderly circle. I believe that this characterizes a major idea of the first volume, around which large parts of the material could be ordered. Above all, there is a continuity in that volume that permits the present period to be already grasped in the past one, and even the technical problem of the book could be characterized as the attempt to make a story at all possible in the first place.

I add that what I have just referred to in other terms as the unequivocal nature of the event (of life) is by no means a philosophical demand but one that in an animal would already be satisfied, while in a person it can apparently be lost.
This makes comprehensible that the major problem of the second volume is the search for what is definitely signified or, to use another expression, the search for the ethically complete action or, as I might call it ironically, the search for 100 percent being and acting.

The more general investigations of the first volume permit me to concentrate here more on the moral problems or, according to an old expression, on the question of the right life. I attempt to show what I call “the hole in European morality” (as in billiards, where sooner or later the ball gets stuck in such a hole), because it interferes with right action: it is, in a word, the false treatment that the mystic experience has been subjected to.

But here I would like to stop burdening your desire for information with the impossible problem of philosophical window dressing and conclude: Ulrich, who has
traveled to his father’s funeral, encounters in the house cleared out by death his almost unknown and unremembered sister. They fall in love, not so much with each other as with the idea of being siblings. I gready regret that this problem has a certain higher banality, but on the other hand, this proves that it is the expression of broad currents. My representation is aimed at the needs leading to this expression. I contrast the two theses, one can love only one’s Siamese-twin sister, and man is good. This means (the relation of brother and sister to each other is at first purely spiritual) Ulrich returns after a period filled with their being together in intense intimacy; his sister follows him, and they begin a provisional living together according to principles revealed to them, but they are disturbed by the attention of society, which is deeply touched by this act of brotherly and sisterly devotion. General Stumm reports on the state of the Parallel Campaign,
which is fed up with the spirit and longs for deeds. Diotima, whose relation with Arnheim is cooling, busies herself with sexual science and again devotes more attention to her husband, Section Chief Tuzzi.

Feeling has never had freedom of association.

Fundamental idea: The first part turns out to be too overloaded, even if consideration did have to be given to the problems brought up in Volume One. On the other hand, there was no way around them. What had been analyzed must somehow be summarized. Cf., e.g., the desire for a solution (Brecht) noted as justified in [a cross-reference—TRANS.]. This coincides with Ulrich having in any event to build his life anew after the journey with Agathe, during which the “reserve idea” of his life has collapsed. So the connection to
the ideas of Volume One and their new context is indicated from his point of view also. This, whatever may happen in between, is the content of the second half.

**Fundamental idea:** The coinciding of the contemporary intellectual situation with the situation at the time of Aristotle. Then people wanted to unite understanding of nature with religious feeling, causality with love. In Aristotle there was a split; that’s when analytical investigation arose. However much of a model the fourth century B.C. has been, this problem has not been admitted. In a certain sense, all philosophies, from scholasticism to Kant, have been, with their systems, interludes.

That is the historical situation.

What prevails today is what Ulrich wants: every age must have a guiding idea about what it’s here for, a balance between
theory and ethics, God, etc. The age of empiricism still does not have this. Hence Walter’s inconsistent demands.

**Fundamental idea:** This furnishes Ulrich’s relationship to the social sphere. Criminality out of a sense of opposition follows from this. Aims at the period after Bolshevism. Against total solutions.

Ulrich is, finally, one who desires community while rejecting the given possibilities.

**Fundamental idea:** War. All lines lead to the war.

**Fundamental idea:** Ulrich has sought to isolate: feeling—Other Condition. Now tries: deed—Moosbrugger. *(An idea: he arranges things but is then drawn as a spectator only out of curiosity.)* Corresponding to the way he thinks. Finally, orgy of the contemporary
horrible blending of qualities into the cultural type.

**Fundamental idea:** Keep putting depiction of the time up front. Ulrich’s problems and those of the secondary figures are problems of the time!

**Comprehensive structural idea:** The immanent depiction of the period that led to the catastrophe must be the real substance of the story, the context to which it can always retreat as well as the thought that is implicit in everything.

All the problems, like search for order and conviction, role of the Other Condition, situation of the scientific person, etc., are also problems of the time and are to be regularly presented as such.
Especially the Parallel Campaign is to be presented this way.

Clarisse is an aggressive, Walter a conservative embodiment of the changing times.

Diotima, Arnheim: impotence of the idea of culture, of its accompanying ideology.

This age desires deeds, exactly like the present time, because ideology, or the relation of ideology to the other elements, has failed.

There is today no lack of men of action, but of human deeds.

Man without qualities against deed: The man who is not satisfied by any of the available solutions. (I’m thinking of deed vs. intellect in National Socialism. Of the desire of youth today to find a resolution, etc. “Resolution”: a synonym for deed. Likewise:
“conviction.” This is what lends significance to Hans Sepp and his circle.)

The conception of life as partial solution and the like as anachronistic. Derives from the prewar period, where the totality seemed relatively immutable even for the person who did not believe in it. Today all of existence has been thrown into disorder; discussions, contributions, articles, and tinkerings are of no use, people want resolution, yes or no. The didactic element in the book is to be strengthened, a practical formula to be advanced. The opposition: practical-theoretical, the original idea of espionage, gains new importance through this.

Supplement: Up to now the answer has been Walters. Perhaps like this: Ulrich repeats this response from time to time, but no one believes him or even takes it seriously.
Germany’s enthusiasm for National Socialism is proof that a firm mental and spiritual mind-set is what is most important to people. The war was the first attempt.

Politics is only to be understood as education for action; what sovereignty, then, do thinking, feeling, etc., have. National Socialism = dominance of the political more than = part of collectivism.

I probably really ought to make “the idea of the inductive age” the central argument. Induction calls for pre-assumptions, but these may only be employed heuristically and not regarded as immutable. Democracy’s error was the absence of any deductive basis; it was an induction that did not correspond to the motivating mental and spiritual mind-set.

God, thought’s strong approach to Him, was an episode.
From today's vantage point the problem is: the (warlike) man capable of defense is to be preserved, but war is to be avoided. Or: The man without qualities, but without decadence.

What has so far been missing in Volume Two is intellectual humor. The Stumm chapters are no substitute for the theory of the Other Condition and the love between brother and sister being treated without humor. First attempt now in the Monster chapter (lass). Occurred to me as paradigm: The duel is a remnant of courtship rivalry, therefore our conceptions of honor are too. My principles are now nothing more than such an apergu: this awareness must still be added to its serious treatment!

What is the basic theme of the whole second volume? Really, perhaps, the Utopia of the
Other Condition. The Utopia of the Other Condition is replaced by that of the inductive way of thinking.

**Professor Lindners view of the world:** Example of a person who lives “For” and fears the “In”— Augustinian Christianity (therefore future) and incapability of believing— Lindners bearing arms corresponds to the wearing of swords in the B[riinn] chapter (Ulrich can be aware of the allusion)— His being energetic is not merely German, intended as a profound, irrational trait of the time— The contradictions of the time in the form: One would like to be this way and one would like to be different, and therefore feels oneself a whole man—the most vain time: from lack of metaphysical decisiveness—Credulity in the form of the “For”— His impression of liberalism. This expression of a particular constellation. It needs a strict new pulling together— *Since God speaks to him*
about “For” and “In” it’s not an Ulrich-Agathe problem but a general one—Religion is an institution for people and not for saints—The remarkable phenomenon of emotions not remaining fresh. Dogmatizing and constant reactualizing: aims at God as empiricism, transformation of the intimation that can be experienced into faith that is not experienced (along with: Do and Don’t do, affirmative actions) and distinction between good and goody-good. (The first comes from morality, the second from God)—Acquisition of a bureaucratic language of the emotions.

Ulrich’s relation to politics really reduces to the following: like all people who objectively or subjectively have their own mission, he wants to be disturbed by politics as little as possible. He did not expect that what was important to him could be endangered by it. That in any case even in the existing state of
affairs there is already a certain degree of implicit challenge, in other words that it could also get a lot worse, did not cross his mind. For him a politician was a specialist who dedicates himself to the by no means easy task of combining and representing various interests. He would also have been prepared to subordinate himself to a bearable degree and assume some sacrifice.

Ulrich was not unaware that the element of power is part of the concept of politics; he had often considered the question whether anything good could come about without the “supporting” involvement of evil. Politics is command. Astonishingly, his own teacher Nietzsche: Will to power! But Nietzsche had sublimated it into the intellectual. Power stands in contradiction to the principles / condition essential for life / of the mind. Here two claims to power compete. Power in the political way disappeared from his field of view, as did power in the manner
of war. It might exist, but basically it is as primitive as boys fighting.

He now becomes aware of this naivete.

The marasmus of democracy advanced to meet this. The tacit assumption of parliamentarianism was that progress would emerge from all the chatter, that it would yield an increasingly close approach to the truth. It did not look that way. The press, etc. The horrendous notion of “worldviews.” The politicizing of the mind through letting only what is acceptable prevail. Beyond that the fiction of the unity of culture, a fiction that had grown thin and brittle. (Represented by the monarchy.

Democracy had not yet been stripped of its skin.) Whatever was good in this life was done by individuals.
Today there are only dishonorably acquired convictions.

N.B.: If Ulrich looks away from his Other Condition adventure: The relation of power to mind will always be there, but it can take on sublimated forms (and will perhaps do so, after it has run through a series of collective attempts that are now just beginning).

If Ulrich imagined this practically: One would have to begin with the schools, no, one has no idea where not to begin! That is the individual’s feeling of being abandoned, etc., which leads Ulrich to his experiment and to crime.

“If Europe doesn’t join together, in the foreseeable future European culture will be destroyed by the yellow race.” “Unless Japan
harnesses all its energies, then...” etc. This could be reduced to the formula: they would rather destroy their own culture themselves! It’s comical, this hot, sudden, and doubtless momentarily not disreputable passion for one’s culture.

Incidentally, behind this also lies the experience that dependent countries are treated ruthlessly. Just like dependent people.

It’s the feeling for one’s own well-worn groove. Progress would be something shared and unifying.

They defend culture instead of having it.

The person with culture is alone all over the world.

There are only the two views: Culture! Then everything that happens is perverse.
Or: Power! or similar struggle between animal species. Between chosen peoples. A vision that could be great in certain circumstances but is completely unfounded, since the peoples involved have no goal beyond self-assertion.

Differently: A spirit rules without having been completely developed. Then someone comes along and imposes something different. In other words, perhaps: The totality is changed by an individual / produces him, many say. It seems to people to be absurdity, insanity, criminality. After a short time they adapt to it. Carrot-stick, the notorious lack of character and despicableness of people, what is it really? And spirit is always only a decorative frill in a room, the room can be laid out for it. That’s why mind and spirit are never constant but change with the change in power.
A useful pendant to government bureaucracy.

*Connected with this:* Nietzsche predicted it. The mind lives more or less the way a woman does: it subjects itself to power, is thrown down, resisting, and then finds pleasure in the process. And prettifies, makes reproaches, persuades in matters of detail. Offers pleasure. What need was it leaning on there?

Ulrich-Agathe is really an attempt at anarchy in love. Which ends negatively even there. That’s the deeper link between the love story and the war. (Also its connection to the Moosbrugger problem.) But what remains in the end? That there is a sphere of ideals and a sphere of reality? Guidelines and the like? How profoundly unsatisfying! Isn’t there a better answer?
*Utopia of Precision*: Ideal of the three treatises is characterized as the most important expression of a state of mind that is extremely sharp-sighted toward what is nearest and blind toward the whole. A laconic frame of mind. The less something is written about, the more productive one is. Presumably, therefore, one should conduct all human business in the manner of the exact sciences. That is the ideal of the precise hfe. It means that one’s lifework ought also to consist only of three poems or three treatises, in which one concentrates oneself in the extreme; for the rest, one ought to keep silent, do what is essential, and remain without emotion wherever one does not have creative feeling. One should be “moral” only in the exceptional cases and standardize everything else, like pencils or screws. In other words, morality is reduced to the moments of genius, and for the rest treated merely reasonably.
It is determined that this (utopian) person as man of action is already present today; but precise people don’t bother about the Utopias plotted out inside them.

In connection with this, the nature of Utopias is described as an experiment in which the possible alteration of one element of life, and its effects, are observed. A possibility released from its inhibiting bond to reality and developed.

The Utopia of Precision yields a person in whom a paradoxical combination of precision and vagueness occurs. Aside from the temperament of precision, everything else in him is vague. He places Utile value in morality, since his imagination is directed toward changes; and, as demonstrated, his passions disappear and in their place something like the primitive fire of goodness appears.
More developed version: Inductive attitude also toward his own affects and principles.

*Addendum*: It should be noted about “vagueness” that what occurs in its place is not a vacuum but simply the rational morality of a social, technical sobriety that jumps in. (The present version rehes rather too much on the Other Condition.)

But that implicidy assumes that the “nongenius” relationships could be regulated through reason. This is contested, and to a great degree properly so; the motor of social action is affect. We therefore have to see to what extent that is satisfactorily taken into consideration in what comes later.

*Provisional summation*: We have hit upon Ulrich’s three Utopias: The Utopia of inductive thinking or
of the given social condition;
the Utopia of life in love;
the Utopia of the Other Condition.

Of these, the Utopia of inductive thinking is in a certain sense the worst! That would be the standpoint to be adopted from a literary point of view (which justifies the other two Utopias). But this demonstration, or the representation that goes along with it, is only completed with the end (war). An apparent interim summary: the museum chapter. The journey into the Millennium places the other two Utopias in the foreground and disposes of them as much as possible. But a good deal about the Utopia of inductive thinking occurs in the Stumm, Parallel Campaign, Linden, Schmeisser, and Moosbrugger chapters.
So it is not necessary to master the Utopia of inductive thinking down to the last detail around the diary chapters, but it probably is necessary to be familiar with its important general characteristics.

**War and the age. Notes**

Individualism is coming to an end

This is of no concern to Ulrich

But the right thing to do would be to rescue something from it.

I am struck in my notes on Mo6r [Gyulia Moor, *On Eternal Peace: Outline of a Philosophy of Pacifism and Anarchism* (Leipzig, 1930)—TRANS.] how the just-concluded
Kellogg Treaty is immediately being interpreted by France according to its needs of the moment.

States are really such that they not only take account of aesthetic needs but also actually obey them, while interpreting the ideas involved the way passionate people do. (Hans Sepp would therefore be only an overt instance.) What is it that plays the role of the affect in this. Evidently the affects arising for statesmen through responsibility. In this regard, responsibility is as much a national egotism as is the individual and party egotism of the politician who is dependent on his people.

A goal, a striving, determine the emotions, and the emotions the argumentation.

States are intellectually inferior.
A question: How can one lose wars? (Stumm: That’s something we know something about!) Earlier: How could an absolute ruler miscalculate so badly as often happened? False intelligence, also lack of talent, will have played a role. But for the most part it was probably always a not-being-able-to-retreat, and the human quality that it is easier to assume the burden of a great remote danger than a smaller but closer one. Before one discards a city, rather than taking upon oneself a war that can cost one a province. Then the collective boastfulness; so great that no single person could achieve it, and there is no escaping it. Patriotism as affect instead of reason: the state is not conducted like a business but as an ethical “good.” Yet they are also manly affects!

But that doubtless happens as it should. What is striking is only that the moral nature of the state has remained far less developed than that of the individual.
The outstanding personalities of history are criminals: Ulrich’s plans to become a Napoleon. But for the most part, criminal here means: anti-philistine, someone unconstrained. But they really were criminals: murderers, oath breakers, liars, tricksters, in a word: on principle, the historical personality can be credited with any iniquity: the mature person is confronted with this idea. And has less sympathy for it. An effeminacy?

In a criminal, affects outweigh the inhibitions (except when caused by environment or degeneration, weakness and such). But don’t they in a man of action too? Revision of the reflections that are occasionally given to Moosbrugger? Clarisse?

The world calls for strongly affective, strong-willed leaders.

But compare it to the individual person: will and intelligence must be strong.
Beginning miscreants later become self-possessed. I must have a note about this (cf. men of action and human deeds).

The valuation of historical personalities and deeds is a functional one.

Here, in distinction to historical and private morality, is an example of functional evaluation. Absolutely the paradigm, for translated into the private sphere the historical is positively disgusting.
Concluding portion

Overall problem: war.

Pseudorealities lead to war. The Parallel Campaign leads to war! War as: How a great event comes about. All lines lead to the war. Everyone welcomes it in his fashion. The religious element in the outbreak of the war. Deed, emotion, and Other Condition join as one. Someone remarks: that was what the Parallel Campaign had always been looking for. It has found its great idea.

Arises (like crime) from all those things that people ordinarily allow to dissipate in small irregularities.

Ulrich recognizes: either real working together (Walters inductive piety) or Other
Condition, or from time to time this has to happen.

Agathe says (repeatedly): We were the last romantics of love.

Ulrich possibly: the genius’s needs and way of life are different from those of the masses. Perhaps better:...from the condition of genius and the condition of masses.

Individualist with the awareness of the impossibility of this viewpoint.

Doesn’t go to Switzerland because he has no confidence in any idea at all.

Regards it as his suicide.

The collectivity needs a stable mental attitude. Its first attempt.

Ulrich: It’s the same thing we did: flight (from peace).

Ulrich at the end: knowing, working, being effective without illusions.
Something like a religious shudder.

The fixed and stable is disavowed.

Other Condition—normal condition will never be resolved.

Most profound hostility toward all these people; at the same time one rushes around with them and wants to embrace the first person who comes along.

The individual will sink, a new age of multipolar relations emerges before the eye of the mind.

Ulrich sees what a fascinating moment it was that never quite happened between himself and Agathe. Ultimate refuge sex and war, but sex lasts for one night, the war evidently for a month, etc.

Arnheim: The individual is the one who is fooled.
Agathe: We go on living as if nothing were happening. Ulrich: Timidity before this robustness.

The priests: God’s Officer Corps.

Overpowered by a ridiculous feeling for his homeland. Strives to regret, do penance, let himself be swept up. At the same time mocked.

Te deum laudamus.

National romanticism, displacement into scapegoats and love-goats.

Nations have no intentions. Good people can make a cruel nation. Nations have a mind that is not legally accountable. More properly: they have no mind at all. Comparison with the insane. They don’t want to. But they have at each other.

Also a solution to: loving a person and not being able to love him.

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Anarchism couldn’t prove itself even in love! Ulrich stands and acts under this impression.

In general the mob chapters, and within them especially Ulrich, depend on the as yet undetermined outcome of the Utopia of Inductive Thinking. But apparently it will amount to: struggling (mentally) and not despairing. Intimation reduced to belief, belief in an inductive God, unprovable but credible. As an adventure that keeps the affects in motion. Main idea. Circulation of the emotions without mysticism. Discovery of God in Kohler’s fashion [Wolfgang Kohler, founder of gestalt psychology—TRANS.], or on the basis of other ideas: God’s becoming material. Intimation, Other Condition: someone else, who is better suited, might perhaps take these up. How one could force this on people: unimaginable. Either leave what is hated to the age. Or work toward it,
that is for it: write a book, therefore suicide, therefore go to war.

Once again the uppermost problem: To be advanced more concretely than both “Pseudorealities,” therefore externalized: collapse of the culture (and of the idea of culture). This is in fact what the summer of 1914 initiated.

Now it turns out that this was the great idea the Parallel Campaign was searching for, and what happens is the unfathomable flight from culture. Stumm might say that he is fleeing. All states claim to stand for something spiritual, which they don’t define and summarily call culture. It turns out to be Utopian in my assessments too. And that’s what people no longer have confidence in.
In a certain sense, the entire problem of reality and morality is also the problem of drives. Of their running their instinctive course without result, their causing mischief; they must be controlled in order to prevent murder, usury, etc. But the counterproblem of being controlled is weakness of the drives, the paling of life, and how this is to be compensated for cannot be clearly imagined.
Study for the closing session, and then Ulrich—Agathe

**Beginning:** No one wants to host the closing session of the Parallel Campaign. Finally, Count Leinsdorf: it ought to be ceremonial, not simply a leaving in the lurch, decides to host it himself. Again the hall, etc., as at the last meeting; but this time without the secretaries. And he delivers the concluding address.

Beforehand people gather (ceremoniously) in another room. This provides the opportunity (or also short conversations as
they hasten away) of having die other characters pass by in review.

Reconciliation scene between Tuzzi and Diotima. Tuzzi: Now reason wins out. Does he mean that against pacifism? He means: Now the situation is clearing up, perhaps: the situation that up to now has unconsciously hidden behind pacifism. And most profoundly: Reason belongs to the realm of evil. Morality and reason are the opposites of goodness. (Ulrich, too, might possibly say that, coming up to them.)

Then what dominates is: We are in the right; according to the rules of reason and morality we are the ones attacked: perhaps Count Leins-dorfs address. Everyone: We are defending what is ours (homeland, culture).

Arnheim: The world is perhaps perishing or entering a long hell-But perhaps Arnheim is no longer present.
Who?: The world would then perish not through its immoral but through its moral citizens.

Agathe: We go on living as if it were nothing. Ulrich: No. Suicide. I’m going to war. Agathe: If anything happens to you: poison.

The shadowing presence of death suddenly becomes visible. One’s personal death, without one’s having got anything straightened out, and ignoring which life stumbles on and continues unfolding its diversions. In the mob mood, moreover, everyone believes in giving up diversions for a long time. Isn’t the final result for Ulrich something like ascesis? The Other Condition has miscarried, and diversions belong to the mutation of emotions? So that would once again be in opposition to the healthy life. An end of Utopias.
Buildings—breathlike mass, condensation on surfaces that present themselves...

Freed from connections, every impulse momentarily deforms the individual.

The individual, who comes about only through expression, forms himself in the forms of society. He is violated and thus acquires surface.

He is formed by the back-formations of what he has created. If one takes away these back-formations, what remains is something indefinite, unshaped. The walls of the streets radiate ideologies.
General Reflections  
(c.1930-1942)

For the beginning

The stories being written today are all very fine, significant, profound, useful distillations and full of spirit. But they have no introductions.

Therefore I have decided to write this story in such a way that in spite of its length it needs an introduction.

It is said that a story needs an introduction only if the writer has not been able to shape it successfully. Splendid! Literature's progress, which expresses itself today in the absence of introductions, proves that writers are very sure of their subjects and their audience. For of course the audience is involved too; the writer has to open his mouth, and the audience must already know what it is he
wants to say; if he then says it a little differently and in an unexpected way, he has legitimized himself as creative. So authors and public are generally on good terms today, and the need for an introduction indicates an exceptional case.

A small variation. I would not, however, want to be understood to mean that in my view the greatness of the genius is expressed in the greatness of the variation. On the contrary—the age of fools.

But we also do not want to overlook the fact that in writing introductions a relationship with the audience can be expressed that is too good; looked at historically, this is even the way it has been most of the time. The author appears in his window in shirtsleeves and smiles down at the street; he is certain that people will obligingly look up to his
popular face if he says a few words personally. It is enough for me to say that I have been spoiled far too little by success to hit upon such an idea. My need for an introduction does not indicate a particularly good relation with the public, and although, as is already apparent, I will make abundant use of the custom of talking about myself in this preface, I hope to be speaking not about an individual person but about a public matter.

Preface, first continuation

Many will ask: What viewpoint is the author taking, and with what results? I can’t give a satisfactory account of myself. I take the matter neither from all sides (which in the novel is impossible) nor from one side, but from various congruent sides. But one must not confuse the unfinished state of something with the authors skepticism. I expound my subject even though I know it is only a part of the truth, and I would expound it in just the same way if I knew it was false,
because certain errors are way stations of the truth. Given a specific task, I am doing what I can.

This book has a passion that in the area of belles lettres today is somewhat out of place, the passion for rightness/precision. (Polgar [Alfred Polgar, writer and friend of Musil—TRANS.]: Spare us brief stories. In saying that he writes a long one.)

The story of this novel amounts to this, that the story that ought to be told in it is not told.

Possibly: Adduce as well the principle of partial solutions, which is vital to the way I have set up my task. For instanceTorless, Unions. The basis of many misunderstandings. The public prefers writers who go for the whole.
The term “essayism” is impossibly chosen if one thinks for instance of Carlyle.

Readers are accustomed to demanding that you tell them about life and not about the reflection of life in the heads of literature and people. But that is justified with certainty only insofar as this reflection is merely an impoverished and conventionalized copy of life. I am trying to offer them originals, so they have to suspend their prejudice too.

Mastering unreality is a program, so point to Volume Two, but as a way of concluding it is almost absurd.

Volume One closes approximately at the high point of an arch; on the other side it has no support. What moves me to publication (aside from Rowohlt [Musil’s publisher—TRANS.]) is what I have always done;
today the structure of a work of fiction is more important than its course. One must learn to understand that side again, then one will have books.

Behind the problems of the day the constitutive problems, which are not, however, the so-called eternal problems.

This is not a skeptic speaking but a person who considers the problem difficult and who has the impression that it is being worked at unmethodically.

Perhaps a preface at the end? A deferred preface.

A depiction of the time? Yes and no. A representation of constitutive relations. Not current; but one level further down. Not skin, but joints.
The problems don’t have the form in which they appear? No. The problems don’t seem modern. The problems of the present aren’t modern!

In the chapters on surface and precision I have sought to indicate how that works.

At bottom is the way the mind and spirit of an age are constituted. Here the opposition between empirical thinking and thinking with the emotions.

A glance at life teaches us that it is different. I am by neither talent nor inclination a “naturalist.”

There is a lot of talk here about an emotion that today apparently has no place in our lives. If the visitors at a racetrack move in an instant from dissatisfaction with the way the race is conducted to plundering the cash receipts, and a hundred policemen
hardly suffice to restore order, what then should...

What would it mean, further, in a time in which new forms of states...with power and older forms...with power.

Here, too, you will find wit and idea somewhat less responsive than they might be, badly informed, not up-to-date, at least three months behind. The significance lies less in the examples than in the teaching (exempla docent).

For example, the democracy of the spirit has already advanced as far as Emil Ludwig, while I am still depicting Arnheim-Rathenau. The schools as far as Minister of Education Grimm (the age of the great individualists is past), while I’m still with Kerschensteiner. The literature industry with looking for Bruckner. Sports at Schafers radiant report that in the list of celebrities in
the Bord he was far ahead of Jeritza. [Musil kept up with people and events. He had modelled those in
the novel on ones of an earlier day and is ruminating on the
possible effect of the march of time on his novel] —All
this has not escaped me entirely. But I am slow. And I have intentionally remained with
my old examples—here or somewhere ought to come, however, that I do not intend to be
historically accurate—because I believe that
investigating my examples will necessarily
lead to the same result. (By doing this I lose
effects but win anatomically, or something
similar.)

Nevertheless, in what they yield these
eamples are not complete either. What ulti-
mately emerges are major lines or only pre-
ferred lines, an ideal scaffolding from which
the Gobelins hang, if I may call these stories
such on account of their flat technique.

Think of Grimm’s speech. This is the
way the world is moved, and, moreover, the
struggle of power interests becomes ever
purer. But your criticism, your problem, is directed almost exclusively at democracy. How do you defend this? You represent as purely as possible the interests of the spirit and intellect, and can’t help it that democracy, too, has partially taken them up in its program and makes fine phrases out of them. The things you’re saying are prolegomena for every party, except of course for a party that is after fundamental change in a spirit that has remained unchanged for millennia. You are incessantly in motion beneath and behind the parties or, as people used to say, above them. You’re engaged in trying to find what’s independent.

The request that I write an announcement meets with such obstacles in the case of a book with...pages,...chapters,...characters, and thirty-three times as many lines, of which not a single one is intentionally empty, that I prefer to say what this book is not.
It is not the Great Austrian Novel people have been awaiting for ages, although...

It is not a depiction of the time, in which Herr...recognizes his spitting image.

It is just as little a depiction of a society.

It does not contain the problems we’re suffering from, but...

It is not the work of a writer, insofar as has the task (to repeat, what...) but as far as constructive variation.

One might add: Since the latter lies in the spirit of the totality, this book is idealistic, analytic, possibly synthesizing.

It is not a satire, but a positive construal.

It is not a confession, but a satire.

It is not the book of a psychologist.
It is not the book of a thinker (since it places the ideational elements in an order that—)

It is not the book of a singer who...

It is not the book of a successful unsuccessful author.

It is not an easy and not a difficult book, for that depends entirely on the reader.

Without having to go on in this fashion, I think that after this I can say that anyone who wants to know what this book is would do best to read it himself/ not rely on my judgment or that of others, but read it himself.

_TESTAMENT. Notes_

The unnecessary expansiveness. A function of the understanding.
Irony is: presenting a cleric in such a way that along with him you have also captured a Bolshevist. Presenting a blockhead so that the author suddenly feels: that’s partly me too. This kind of irony, constructive irony, is fairly unknown in Germany today. It is the connection among things, a connection from which it emerges naked. One thinks of irony as ridicule and jeering.

Mysticism: One can only advise every reader: he down in the woods on a lovely or even a windy day, then you’ll know it all yourself. It is not to be assumed that I have never lain in the woods.

The hardest thing to bear: the current misery. But I have to do my work, which has no currency, I must at least carry on with it, after having begun it beforehand.
People expect that in the second volume Ulrich will do something. People know what’s to be done. How to do it: I won’t give the German Communist Party, etc., any tips. Active spirit and spirit of action.

Why the problem is not an out-of-the-way one.

The practical (political-social) usefulness of such a book. (Avant garde.)

Wilhelm Meister was also well-to-do.

People want Ulrich to do something. But I’m concerned with the meaning of the action. Today these are confused with each other. Of course Bolshevism, for example, has to occur; but (a) not through books, (b)
books have other tasks. Similarity with the war situation and the Ministry of War Information.

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Quotes from Kerschenstein are used too. Arnheim. Lazarsfeld. Forster.

Psychoanalysis!

Frame of mind directed against the present. Therefore, too, against narration, action...

That I conclude unfavorably, and precisely in this volume make the greatest demands on the reader, without making it easier for him by means of recapitulation in what happens later.

Also unfavorable structurally.
(There must be something about well-to-do people that lets them admire Thomas Mann. And about my readers that they are people without influence.)

The religious today “represses” (that must be some kind of historical process). This book is religious with the assumptions of the unbeliever.

Always: An intellectual adventure, an intellectual expedition and voyage of exploration. Partial solutions are only one way of expressing this. Here really and truly in a different condition of life. That’s not why I’m describing it, but because it touches on a basic phenomenon of our morality. Perhaps a writer can’t say “basic phenomenon/” but it has to be deeper than the superficial phenomenon. Then it is independent of developments.
One tells a story for the sake of telling, for the significance of the story, for the sake of the significance: three steps.

*Afterword:* This book had to be broken off before its climax because of lack of money, and it is uncertain whether it will be continued.
“An affect can induce a violent external action, and internally too the person involved can appear to be quite agitated, and yet it can be a matter of a very superficial affect with little energy” (Kurt Lewin, “Researches on the Psychology of Actions and Affects I” Psychologische Forschung VII, no. 1/2 [1941], p. 309). A sentence such as this has been made possible only by psychology’s having become literary. But do we writers have a preliminary activity to fulfill? If we did, then in external nature our messiah would have been something like the geographer or botanist! The problem first arises, of course, with the novel. In the epic, and also in the truly epic novel, the character derives from the action. That is, the characters were embedded far more immovably in the action because the action, too, was far more of a piece. So how do I come to insert even a digression on psychology? In ten years it can be superseded
and thereby outdated. But the weightiness of the step, the responsibility of the turning toward God, compels the greatest conscientiousness. As does the nature of the adventure in the inductive picture of the world. And that of the “final” love story. And that of the hesitation.

Kitsch: Inadmissibly simplifying the task of life in every situation. (Hence, too, the affiliation of certain kinds of politics with kitsch.)

Quite presumptuously: I ask to be read twice, in parts and as a whole.

One of my principles: it does not matter what, but how, one depicts. In the psychology chapters that’s taken to the point of abuse. Hence the observation belongs (where?) that today one does not describe the
automobile as a miracle but says: car, brand Y, type X.

Moreover, in art one can also do the opposite of everything.

What is brief in relation to the whole, because the appropriate length becomes evident, can be considered long, indeed perhaps endless, if presented by itself. And the tempo is determined only as the sequence unfolds.

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About the chapters on the psychology of the emotions: this is not psychology (in its ultimate intention), but description of the world.

During my work on it and under my hand this book has become a historical novel; it takes place twenty-five years ago! It has
always been a contemporary novel developed out of the past, but now the span and tension are very great; but still, what lies beneath the surface, which is one of the chief objects of representation, does not need to be laid significantly deeper.

If I should be reproached with going in for too much reflection, then—without my wanting to go into the relationship between thinking and narrating—today there is too little reflection.

There are too many people in the world who say exactly what must be thought and done for me not to be seduced by the opposite. Strict freedom.

It appears that much is superfluous, present only for its own sake, in the first volume. It is
my view that narrated episodes can be superfluous and present only for their own sake, but not ideas. In a composition I place unpretentiousness above the so-called wealth of ideas, and in the case of this book there should be nothing superfluous. The statements about the joining together of emotions and ideas which this partial volume contains permit me to establish that hke this: The chief effect of a novel ought to be directed at the emotions. Ideas are not to be included in a novel for their own sake. And, a particular difficulty, they cannot be developed in the novel the way a thinker would develop them; they are “components” of a gestalt. And if this book succeeds, it will be a gestalt, and the objections that it resembles a treatise, etc., will then be incomprehensible. The wealth of ideas is a part of the wealth of emotions.

Noted to be mentioned:
Anachronisms in general, and particularly that the representation of the psychology of the emotions stands between that time and today.

Satire getting ahead of itself, procession, possibly Lindner.

Excuse for theory: today we have to explain what we describe.

Where?

Too heavy. Unsolved task of mediating instances.

For an expert, on the other hand, too unfocused!

H. F. Amiel quotes von Csokor: “There is no rest for the spirit except in the absolute, no rest for the feeling except in the infinite, no rest for the soul other than in the divine!” This book is just as opposed to such responses as it is to materialism.
From a book that was a world success (S. Salminen, *Katrina*, from the Swedish, Insel Verlag S. 334-335): ”...She pulled away from him to the wall, but when he folded her in his arms she did not resist. Only her soft, timid giggling sounded through the dark room. When Gustave saw Serafia with the other village girls on the street, he looked at her full of disquiet. No, no, it had all been in a dream, it had never ever happened. The whole night had been unreal. Yet a few days later, when, late at night, he was passing by Larssons farm, the unreal came to life again and everything real became strange. He left the road, went across the yard, opened the door and stepped into the room.” (A rather idiotic, misshapen creature with lovely eyes, exciting mouth, and voluptuous breast.)

If I could just accustom myself to this a little, I could write such passages too. It’s the inception of a double world, of a double
person—narrated. But I don’t want to. Any talented person can carry on this tradition. And so I have rather attempted the unenjoyable. Someone, sometime, must tie the final knot in this endless thread.

This is, provisionally, still a matter of analyzing peaceful times, but the analysis of pathological times has its foundation here (and some aspects of this will come out in what follows).

What is boring for one person goes by too quickly for another; the expanse of a book is a relation between its actual fullness of detail and the interests of the time.

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Because a specific section, an adventure, needs to be narrated extensively should not
make one forget that Ulrich was by nature energetic and a man with fighting instincts.

[Quoted by Musil in French]: “This feeling is regarded by the Germans as a virtue, as an emanation of the godhead, as something mystical. It is not vibrant, impetuous, jealous, tyrannical, as in the heart of an Italian girl: it is deep and resembles iluminism.” Stendhal, De Va-mour (p. i49)(chapter 48), quoting an author of 1809 (Voyage en Au-triche par M. Cadet-Gassicourt). (Invented? I don’t know.): So this book of mine is a little German?

That I cannot say what this book is, but rather what it is not...

A novel’s major effect should be on the emotions. Ideas can’t be present in it for their own sake. Nor can they—this is a particular
difficulty—be developed the way a thinker would; they are “parts” of a Gestalt. And if this book succeeds, it will be Gestalt, and the objections that it resembles a treatise and the like will then be foolish. The richness of ideas is part of the richness of feelings.

*Ulrich’s afterword, conclusion*

Idea from mid-January 1942.

Thought about the world’s political situation. The great yellow-white problem. The coming new epoch in cultural history. China’s possible role. On a smaller scale, the quarrel between Russia and the West. Hexner’s question, how do you imagine it happening in reality, can’t be put off. Even the man without qualities can’t ignore it. But that would be a volume of historical, philosophical, etc., essays, or the last of the volumes of aphorisms.
Moreover, influenced by my renewed interest in Dostoyevsky. Hastily noted the impression in a note for my style. I would like to write an essay about his “journalism.” About its interpretation by Zdanow, about Pan-Slavism, the Pushkin speech, etc. Before the current background it yields ideas about Russia that I have not even attempted to think through.

This is not to be taken up in the second part of Volume Two, although it is quite pertinent to it.

In this fashion concluding somehow and (instead of or after “A Kind of Conclusion”) write an Afterword, concluding word, of Ulrich’s.

The Ulrich of today grown older, who experiences the Second World War, and on the basis of these experiences writes an epilogue to his story and my book. This makes possible the union of my plans concerning
the aphorisms with this book. It also makes it possible to consider the story and its value for current and future reality.

To be harmonized: the romantic or even Pirandellesque irony of the character above the author.

The story of the characters, considered historically.

Important: the argument with Lao-tsu, which makes Ulrich, but also my task, comprehensible, carried out afterward by Ulrich. Abdul Hasan Summun and Sufism. The story of Agathe and Ulrich would have been more impressive told as a story about him!
Musil’s idiosyncratic prose style is unique in German. It is a medium intended to directly engage the readers emotions as well as his thoughts in a search for the right life in the midst of a crumbling social order. Musil’s use of language is virtuosic, and language itself is one of his subjects: it is our vehicle for relating to ourselves and the world and for shaping and expressing both our moral sense and our culture. But language is unstable: “No word means the same thing twice,” Agathe says in one place and the author in another.
Language, then, is much more than the vehicle of *The Man Without Qualities*; it is the lever that has the potential to raise up new worlds. This view of language has its roots in Nietzsche, who broke up the classical German sentence along with the attitudes behind it, and close parallels in Musil’s Austrian contemporaries Wittgenstein, Freud, Rilke, Kafka, and Karl Kraus. Musil’s language is radically experimental: analytical and essayistic, but at the same time permeated with powerful feelings, it is a vividly metaphorical language designed to fuse “precision and soul” and to make the reader feel the fusion. It is a unique achievement. This translator often found himself comparing the style of the novel with the ways in which color, form, and light are variously used in Impressionistic, Expressionistic, and Abstract painting in an attempt to create in the viewer an actual *sense impression* (including the medium of the paint itself), which is seen as
somehow closer to truth than a writer simply “telling a story” would be.

Musil’s writing is striking and challenging, not comfortable, and in the Modernist vein makes few concessions to the reader, who is expected to do some work. A translator usually looks around in his own language for a model on which to base his translation, so that readers will be able to relate the foreign work to something they are familiar with. Leishman and Spender did this in modeling the translation of Rilke’s *Duino Elegies* on the august tradition of the English elegy, with the result that Rilke’s great cycle was domesticated (in every sense) in English. Unfortunately, Rilke, Musil’s favorite poet, was doing something far more radical, disruptive, and astonishing with language than the Leishman-Spender model could encompass. But with Musil—all of Musil—one looks in vain in English for any equivalent. Lacking a model, the translator has to stick more
closely than he otherwise might to the original, every nuance of which was weighed with great precision by the author. The translators intention was to have the writing startle the reader in English in the same way it startles a reader in German.

Musil was an experimental writer who was trained as a scientist (behavioral psychologist, mathematician, and engineer) and widely read in psychology and philosophy, so that his impressive literary style is not based on a literary formation. He often writes on a level of semi-abstraction that is meaningful and focused in German but that only produces indigestion in English, the most ruthlessly concrete of languages.

While the novel is analytic and largely essayistic, Musil devoted enormous attention to his characters. He puts himself into their minds: what would this person see in this particular situation, how would he feel, she respond, how would they talk at this
moment? These characters speak in their individual voices of background, social class, and profession as well as of personality and mood, and all their perceptions are encapsulated within their individual languages, their idiolects, without the characters themselves being aware of it (as Musil makes the reader aware). Stumm talks like a general in the Austrian army he struggles to transcend; Fischel talks like a self-made businessman; Rachel talks like an uneducated servant girl with delicate feelings who yearns for “higher things.” Count Leinsdorf, the feudal aristocrat as influential politician, looks at the modern world through medieval eyes. The sex murderer Moosbrugger has a quite astonishing relation to language, one of the most subtle ventriloquistic effects in the entire novel. This is a function of his entire presentation, but for example the spin on Moosbrugger’s ingenious distinction between Weib (a loose woman) and Frau (a
woman one can respect) is beyond translation, rooted as it is in both his sick imagination and the cultural values of his time; and when he refers to Rachel’s breasts as *Dinger* (those things), he is indicating his own inability—which also has cultural overtones—to confront the female body.

The narrators essayistic language (that is, when he is speaking in his own voice), again differs from the characters’, as the characters’ language differs from individual to individual. The conflicts and misunderstandings on the level of language render vividly the ways in which the conflicted and dying culture of the old Austrian Empire, “Kakania,” had become in every sense a Babel.

As a writer, Musil was an obsessive perfectionist and polisher, and his words have a poetic concision and a freight of nuances that must be the despair of any translator. His sentences are rhythmic but often
syntactically convoluted, reflecting the old Austrian culture, itself a huge catalog of infinitely nuanced gradations, that this novel memorializes with wit and wonder. It is simply not possible to render all these subdeities in English. There is also the problem of anachronism: although the novel opens in 1913, Musil began working on it in earnest only after World War I, and he was still writing when he died, in exile, in the middle of World War II. So *The Man Without Qualities* is only ostensibly limited by its given year of 1913-1914. Writing after the collapse of the Austrian Empire in 1918 and through the Nazi period and World War II, Musil took subde but full advantage of anachronisms of reference and language in order to broaden his canvas.

A great help in translating was the discovery that Musil read his writing over aloud. Once the complex rhythms of this prose were understood as spoken rhythms,
in spite of the analytic and metaphoric incisiveness, it was possible to more closely approximate the original, whose hallmark in the polished sections is the cadence of clauses set off by semicolons. (Musil is the master of the semicolon!) Paying close attention to the rhythm of Musil’s German helped capture both the music and the unremitting sense of urgency that mark the original.

The material in Part 2 of “From the Posthumous Papers” presented different problems. It consists largely of unpolished drafts and fragments encompassing a wide range, from Musil’s cryptic notes to himself to fairly worked out scenes. Care had to be taken not to “brush up” inadequacies and inconsistencies but to keep a sense of the relative finish of the different passages, while at the same time making these fragments comprehensible to the reader. There were the mundane and not quite minor problems that always bedevil the translator, exemplified in
Musil’s extraordinarily plastic use of the pronoun es (it), which darts in all sorts of directions, often in flagrant disregard of the rules governing its use. Musil is fond of the term *unheimlich*, which is difficult to render in English; something that gives you a shiver is *unheimlich*, hence uncanny, haunted, haunting, spooky, weird—none of which, however, capture the immediacy of the German word in its literary use. (It also has a casual and vague colloquial usage.) Musil’s most noticeable tic is the overuse of the phrase *in diesem Augenblick* (at this moment), although it follows logically from his insistence on presenting his characters as living in a succession of particular moments, and this succession of moments consequently becomes at least the de facto organizing principle of the novel. There is also his use of the pronoun *man*, which was carefully kept, for the most part, as “one” in English, although its usual translation would be “you” or “we” or a passive
construction. Musil uses *man* as a distancing device, to keep his narrator detached from the plane of the characters. This narrator remains as the experimental moralist above the characters, including his protagonist, Ulrich.

I am grateful to many people for their assistance with the swarm of questions that arose in the course of my work. I would like to thank Dagmar Leupold for her patience in helping disentangle many impenetrabilities of Musil’s language. I also owe a debt to the cordial and tireless faculty and staff of the Musil Research Institute at the University of Saarbruicken for their help with textual cruxes, as well as to Musil’s German editor, Professor Adolf Frise, for elucidating some places in the German edition that were not clear to me. Not least, I would like to thank my colleagues in the German, psychology, and philosophy departments at the Graduate School of the City University of New York,
whom I have often pestered in tracking down a word, terminology, or notion in their disciplines that Musil had appropriated for his purposes.

• BURTON PIKE