John Henry Mackay

# Fenny Skaller

and

Other Prose Writings

from the

**Books of the Nameless Love**

Translated from the German by Hubert Kennedy

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This edition is essentially the same as the 1988 edition. A few corrections and minor changes have been made. The illustrations are new to this edition.

Comments and suggestions are welcome. Please write to hubertk@pacbell.net.

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# Foreword

In his memoirs, written late in his life, Mackay recalled, "In the middle of my life there arose, like a deliverance to a new goal, the task of which it still seems too soon to speak (as late as it already is)." This "deliverance" was from the grief he felt over the death of his mother in 1902, when Mackay was thirty-eight years old. The "new goal" was the task of gaining recognition for the equal rights of man/boy love: Mackay began planning his campaign in 1905. This campaign was carried out under the pseudonym "Sagitta", and although it was an open secret by the time he wrote his memoirs in 1932, he never publicly revealed his identity. In his will, however, he stated that any further publication of the writings of Sagitta were to show his true name. The present volume contains a selection of those writings.[1]

John Henry Mackay was born in Greenock, Scotland, on 6 February 1864 of a Scottish father and German mother.[2] His father, a marine insurance broker, died when Mackay was only nineteen months old, and his mother, of a well-off merchant family in Hamburg, returned with her son to her native Germany, where she later married a widower who also had a son. Mackay did not get along well with his stepfather, a strict Prussian civil servant, and found the small-town atmosphere of Saarbrücken, where he grew up, too restrictive. Thus he was happy to complete his schooling in another town as a boarder with another family. He then spent a year as an apprentice in a publishing house, leaving there to study at three universities, but only as an auditor. Although he often visited his mother afterwards, much of his early life was spent in restless travel. An allowance from his mother gave him enough money to live modestly, so that he was able to choose a career as a writer without worrying about eventual sales of his books. This situa-

1. The complete German text of *Die Buecher der namenlosen Liebe* (Books of the nameless love) includes "The History of a Fight for the Nameless Love" as an introduction, and the following titles: 1. *The Nameless Love: A Creed*; 2. *Who Are We? A Poem of the Nameless Love*; 3. *Fenny Skaller: A Life of the Nameless Love*; 4. *Over the Marble Steps: A Scene of the Nameless Love*; 5. *On the Edge of Life: Poems of the Nameless Love*; 6. *Listen! Only a Moment! A Cry.*

2. Mackay did not become a German citizen until around 1900, after he had decided to settle permanently in Berlin. Friedrich Dobe, *John Henry Mackay als Mensch* (Koblenz: Edition Plato, 1987), p. 39.

tion changed in later years, especially after the First World War when the runaway inflation in Germany wiped out the value of the annuity he had purchased with money inherited from his mother, so that his last years were spent in relative poverty. He died in Berlin on 16 May 1933, just six days after the infamous burning of books of "un-German spirit" by the Nazis.

Some of Mackay's books were probably in that bonfire, but the state had already declared several Sagitta writings "immoral" and had ordered them destroyed a quarter of a century earlier. Indeed, Mackay's anarchist poetry had been forbidden in Germany as early as 1887, and it was as an anarchist writer that he remained known to the general public: an obituary in the *New York Times* said that in Germany he was called an "anarchist lyricist."

Mackay's first publication was in 1885 when, following a brief visit to Scotland, he wrote a narrative poem in imitation of Walter Scott's *The Lady of the Lake*.[3] Instant fame came to him, however, with the publication in 1891 of *Die Anarchisten* (The Anarchists), which also appeared in English that same year and was quickly translated into six other languages. By 1898, when his biography of Max Stirner appeared, Mackay was also known as the rediscoverer of that philosopher of egoism. But Mackay also wrote many love lyrics, several of which were set to music, including the popular "Morgen" of Richard Strauss. (These poems were inspired by boys, but Mackay carefully left the age and gender of the poems' "beloved" unstated.) And in 1901 his novel *Der Schwimmer* (The Swimmer)—which Mackay later tried, unsuccessfully, to have made into a film—was one of the first literary sports novels.

Thus Mackay, who had settled in Berlin by then, was at the height of his fame when he conceived in 1905 the idea of using his writing ability in the cause of "the nameless love". He chose the term "nameless love" since, as he said, "no name yet correctly names it". Today's North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA) uses the term "man/boy love", giving equal weight to "man" and "boy" in a "love" relationship. But, as Mackay could have predicted, its spokespersons must constantly oppose the prejudice that holds such relations to be impossible. This was Mackay's love, however, and in the

3. See Edward Mornin, "A Late German Imitation of Walter Scott", *Germanic Notes* 17 (1986): 49–51.

novel *Fenny Skaller*, in which Mackay wished to "deepen psychologically" the concept of the "nameless love", he naturally called on his own life.

In addition to the autobiographical novel *Fenny Skaller*, the present volume contains two short propaganda pieces and "The History of a Fight for the Nameless Love", in which Mackay wanted to "let the facts speak for themselves", so that future historians could understand the origin of the movement he believed would eventually triumph. Nevertheless, the world has changed greatly since then, so that the context of the "facts" needs to be clarified if they are "to speak for themselves". To this end, notes have been added that, for example, name some of the names Mackay deliberately chose to omit from his account. But some further background may also be helpful.

The first self-acknowledged homosexual to publicly speak out for the equal rights of sexual minorities was Karl Heinrich Ulrichs (1825–1895). This was at a Congress of German Jurists in Munich on 29 August 1867. Ulrichs proposed a resolution urging repeal of all anti-homosexual laws. But he was shouted down on that occasion and, afterwards, the first actual proposal in the German parliament to repeal the law did not occur until 1898. This was a result of the activity of the Scientific Humanitarian Committee, founded in Berlin the previous year by Magnus Hirschfeld (1868–1935), who was then, and for many years following, the leader of the German movement for homosexual emancipation. Hirschfeld had taken over Ulrichs's so-called third sex theory ("a feminine soul confined in a masculine body") and developed it into his own theory of "sexual intermediates", whereby the homosexual was considered a mental/physical type somewhere between true men and true women. Indeed, Hirschfeld appeared many times in court as an expert witness to give his opinion as to whether or not a particular individual was homosexual, based on his observation of their physical characteristics. But whereas this theory can be considered progressive when Ulrichs introduced it, since it gave him the courage to speak out publicly for homosexual rights, it appears less so in the time of Hirschfeld, since, as Mackay clearly saw, it excluded by definition individuals such as Mackay, who saw himself as entirely masculine. Further, Hirschfeld's suggestion that an arbitrary "age of consent" (of sixteen) be written into the law ruled out, again by definition, boy-lovers and the boys who love them.

To be sure, Hirschfeld's view was not without opposition at the time. A group composed mostly of bisexuals and/or boy-lovers, organized around the periodical *Der Eigene* (The Self-Owner) in Berlin, promoted "male culture" or, perhaps better, the cult of the male. Mackay had personal friends among this group and felt closer to it, but as an individualist anarchist he could not accept the view that one gender or one kind of love was better than another. In all aspects of life his slogan was "equal freedom for all".

In discussing the "Books of the Nameless Love", Mackay's American biographer Thomas A. Riley wrote:

> Of these books the novel *Fenny Skaller* is peculiarly interesting in that it seems to be entirely autobiographical; at least the writer has found no important disagreements between the novel and what he knows of Mackay's life. It seems, therefore, to describe the whole sexual development of Mackay himself, a case history turned into a novel by a master poet.[4]

It is doubtful if Riley would have begun his study of Mackay if he had known then of Mackay's homosexuality, for he was never sympathetic to it and showed no real understanding of that side of his life. For Riley, Mackay could have been a case history in Richard von Krafft-Ebing's perennial best-seller *Psychopathia sexualis*. Hence his description of *Fenny Skaller* as a "case history turned into a novel by a master poet". More open-minded Mackay scholars, however, do not hesitate to discuss the artistic interest of this novel.[5]

But if Riley sees *Fenny Skaller* much too narrowly as a description of Mackay's "sexual development"—once again misconstruing Mackay's love—it is true that the novel is largely biographical, as has been expressly stated by Kurt Zube, Mackay's German biographer. Yet Zube, who knew Mackay personally, cautions that "*Fenny Skaller*,

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4. Thomas A. Riley, *Germany's Poet-Anarchist John Henry Mackay* (New York: The Revisionist Press, 1972), p. 108.

5. An example of treating this novel parallel to other works of Mackay is the critical study by Edward Mornin, *Kunst und Anarchismus: "innere Zusammenhänge" in den Schriften John Henry Mackays* (Freiburg/Br.: Verlag der Mackay-Gesellschaft, 1983).

as fact and fiction, describes only *one* side of Mackay's nature."[6] A more recently discovered and published memoir by Friedrich Dobe shows that *Fenny Skaller* is closer to Mackay's life than either of his biographers stated. Dobe, twenty years Mackay's junior, was a longtime friend and confidant. In a memoir written in 1944, which remained unknown for over forty years, he recalled the time before the First World War:

> He used to say to me that he had known little love in his younger years, because that time was completely occupied by oppressive struggles with his orientation. Now that he was clear about himself, he wanted to catch up on all that. And he was catching up. The type he describes in *Fenny Skaller* (Third Book of the Nameless Love), his confessions of life and love—small, fifteen or sixteen years old, with blue peaked cap, hardly noticed by others—he sought and found everywhere, sometimes for a day, sometimes longer, and in a single case even for life. He found them in the streets, at amusement parks, in baths. And the boys went with him gladly and willingly, for he had a charming manner of associating with them.[7]

The only important deviation in *Fenny Skaller* from the actual story of Mackay's life is in the description of Skaller's father: Mackay's stepfather appears not to have had such a bad character. Also, the chronology of *Fenny Skaller* suggests that Skaller's mother died when Skaller was younger than Mackay was at the death of his own mother in 1902, when he was thirty-eight. This last change was perhaps made so that Skaller could say that he never told his mother about his sexual orientation because, by the time he became clear about it, she had died and so it was too late. Mackay, of course, was quite clear about this by the time of his own mother's death.

Skaller's continued effort to help an ungrateful boy who would not help himself may appear unlikely, but is certainly based on a real experience. Mackay had earlier expanded

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6. Kurt Zube [K. H. Z. Solneman], *Der Bahnbrecher John Henry Mackay: Sein Leben und sein Werk* (Freiburg/Br.: Verlag der Mackay-Gesellschaft, 1979), p. 31.

7. Dobe, op. cit., pp. 59–60.

the event into a long poem, published anonymously in 1888, in which he changed the central character from a boy into a young woman.[8]

But *Fenny Skaller* is not only a portrait of Mackay; it is also a picture of the times. To appreciate the historical context of the novel, it may be helpful to review some of the things that would have been familiar to early readers. The enthusiasm shown for the Italian painter Giorgione, for example (Skaller refers to his "La Tempesta" as "that most wonderful of all pictures"), may surprise modern readers, but as Eduard Hüttinger has noted, "Precisely around the turn of the century there awakened a kind of general enthusiasm for the Master of Castelfranco... The name of Giorgione became a synonym for art altogether."[9] And art historian Wayne Dynes has noted "the affinity of German homosexual visual taste ca. 1900 (as seen, e.g., in illustrations in *Der Eigene*) with the Italian Renaissance."[10]

Mackay does not name the author or the book with a "curious Latin title, a title in two words" that opened Skaller's eyes (and surely his own) to the existence of others like himself, but it could only have been Richard von Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia sexualis* (1886), mentioned above. Probably more than anyone else, Krafft-Ebing was responsible for branding homosexuality as a sickness. Skaller's description of him as "a limited, even if honest, spirit" thus seems mild, but perhaps reflects Krafft-Ebing's partial retraction of his position shortly before his death in 1902, as well as his stand against the legal persecution of homosexuals. At the time, Krafft-Ebing was widely respected in the mainstream homosexual emancipation movement.

After noting that "Mackay does see the problems Fenny Skaller encounters in his love of boys as brought about by a hostile society," James W. Jones, in his Ph.D. dissertation, criticizes Mackay for never showing Skaller "taking action against that hostility." But Jones also finds positive characteristics in the novel:

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8. See Hubert Kennedy, "No good deed goes unpunished: John Henry Mackay's *Helene*", *Germanic Notes* 17 (1986): 6–8.

9. Eduard Hüttinger, "Leonardo- und Giorgione-Kult: Materialien zu einern Thema des Fin de Siècle" in *Fin de Siècle: Zu Literatur und Kunst der Jahrhundertwende*, ed. by Roger Bauer et al. (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1977), p. 157.

10. Personal communication from Wayne Dynes, 19 January 1987. It was in *Der Eigene* that Mackay published his first poem under the pseudonym Sagitta in 1905.

> It portrays homosexuality as an emotion which is completely natural and does not need any medical or scientific justification; Fenny Skaller remains firm in the acceptance of his sexual preference. The novella's chief value, however, lies in its portrayal of the emotional life of a homosexual man.[11]

And Jones adds that "such a thorough description of these feelings and desires was rare indeed in German literature of this time."

Thus *Fenny Skaller* achieves Mackay's purpose in writing it: to "deepen psychologically" an understanding of the "nameless love". It is also a novel that can stand on its own artistic merit, whose appeal is not limited to boy-lovers, although they will no doubt most deeply appreciate it, for this story of "a life of the nameless love"—as Mackay subtitled it—probes genuine human values.

Mackay's campaign to gain recognition for "the nameless love" was directed at first to other boy-lovers. His *The Nameless Love: A Creed*, the first of the "books of the nameless love", issued in 1906, was directed to them. His pamphlet *Listen! Only a Moment!*, written for the general public, was prompted by the sensational events in late 1907, when several close advisers of the emperor were publicly accused of homosexuality. This resulted in libel trials in Berlin that were widely reported in the press—the "scandals" mentioned near the end of *Fenny Skaller*,[12] which probably contains the only literary reference to the effect these scandals had on the boys of Berlin.

As detailed in "The History of a Fight", both of these titles were condemned as "immoral writings" in 1909. A complete edition of the "Books of the Nameless Love", now including *Fenny Skaller* and the "History", was published with a Paris imprint in 1913. A second edition in 1924, ostensibly printed in the Netherlands, added only a new preface,

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11. James W. Jones, "The 'Third Sex' in German Literature from the Turn of the Century to 1933", Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1986, p. 300.

12. For an excellent discussion of these "scandals", see James D. Steakley, "Iconography of a Scandal: Political cartoons and the Eulenburg Affair", *Studies in Visual Communication* 9, no. 2 (Spring 1983): 20–51.

but two years later Mackay returned once again as Sagitta with the long novel *Der Puppenjunge*.[13]

Mackay died in 1933 only a few months after the Nazis came to power, when all political action for homosexual emancipation in Germany ceased. Indeed, much of its early history was forgotten, for when such activity resumed in the 1960s it was more often inspired by similar action across the Atlantic. By then much of Hirschfeld's theory had been discredited by science and in practice. The mainstream view of man/boy love, however, has remained much the same as it was then. But the organization of boy-lovers that Mackay only dreamed of is slowly coming about.

The North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA) has foiled repeated attempts to crush it by the FBI and other agencies of the state, and by its existence gives hope and a sense of self-worth to those isolated individuals whom Mackay tried in vain to reach. Perhaps the most progress has been made in the Netherlands, where many of Mackay's writings, under his own name and as Sagitta, had earlier appeared in Dutch translation. It was from there, too, that his Dutch friend J. H. François (who used the pseudonym Charley van Heezen)[14] took orders for the 1924 edition of the complete "Books of the Nameless Love".

Although two of the following selections were legally declared "immoral" in imperial Germany and all were on the Nazi's list of forbidden books, their purity of language will probably strike the modern reader. That this topic can now be discussed at all is surely progress. But the extent to which Mackay's description and analysis still applies today is also a measure of how far we have to go. Yet, the fact that we can now read and consider his words is a confirmation of Mackay's final optimism when he wrote: "They murder our love—and it lives. They strangle our cry—and it echoes back from the future."

Hubert Kennedy

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13. This classic man/boy love novel, set in the milieu of boy prostitutes in Berlin in the 1920s, has been published in English as *The Hustler* (Boston: Alyson Publications, 1985).

14. [Added 2003. In the original edition I confused the real name François with the pseudonym.]

# Fenny Skaller

A Life of the Nameless Love

## From Afternoon—

He had waited—a half—one—almost two hours. But the boy had not come.

He had waited, as he had so often in his life already: first in cheerful and impatient excitement, early and in the hope that the other perhaps would also be prompted to arrive early; then, as the appointed hour drew nearer and nearer, in the almost physically painful longing to see the slim figure pop up before him again and to feel the pressure of the small, warm hand in cheerful greeting; and, when the hour had finally come, but not the one expected with it, in the effort to force him here with a trembling, feverish wish.

He had waited long beyond the hour and was now at last slowly overcome by the presentiment that this waiting was now over: that he would not come—not today or ever.

They had meant to meet here at two o'clock and now the hand of the clock on the church tower had long since passed three. And yet Fenny Skaller continued to stand on this square, as if he could not quite give up the hope of seeing him yet again.

It was Sunday and the streets of this part of town were almost empty. Although summer was over and an early fall was drawing near, the air was still soft and clear. They still would have been able to go out—for a walk through the pine forest and for a trip on one of the lakes. So he had planned and imagined.

Now he had not come! Why not? Just why had he not come? Skaller asked himself this again and again, and could find no answer. He had so firmly believed that the boy would keep his promise.

They had met one another quite by chance one evening, in the street, only a couple of days ago. His walking stick slipped from him. The boy had picked it up, and the way he did so, looking at him at the same time, immediately pleased him. Thus they had spontaneously got into a conversation and had walked a way together. The boy was tired and still had a long way to his house, and Skaller gave him the coin for the trip home, which was, hesitantly at first, but then gratefully, accepted. To Skaller's secret joy, they finally

had to wait quite a while at the streetcar stop, and there he made a date for today, for an excursion on this Sunday—from here, at this square, and for two o'clock.

The boy had chatted so merrily, full of trust right off, and had told him while they were waiting that he was just one year out of school and wanted so much to study music—that for a long time already he could play the violin, but that this would probably not do—that he had just now started in a new position and almost always got home late, like today. And then as the car came rumbling up and Skaller asked once again: "But will you then definitely come?" and received the firm reply: "When I have once given my promise to come, then I come," he had been quite sure of seeing him again today, and during the week he had happily looked forward to this day, as much as he still could be happy.

He had not come, however, and in these hours of waiting Skaller saw him yet: the way he stood on the platform of the car, turned around and, merrily and friendly, tipped his cap in farewell, so that the blond hair and the part that divided it on one side became visible, and his forehead under it, with the stripes that the cap had drawn.

Then he was already fond of him. For it was always like that with him: either immediately or not at all. He had liked him so much!

He had believed so surely that he would come! Why should he not? Pleasure had just gleamed out of the blue eyes at his suggestion: "A boat trip! Oh great! I'd like to do that!" And he had given his hand on the promise, just like a little man who keeps his word.

Now he had not come, and he would not see him again, not today or ever. For where was he to find him among the millions of this big city? And if he were to find him again, with the help of some unheard-of chance—it would not be the same anymore!

He had lost him, just as he had found him. He would never see him again. Skaller knew it. He could do nothing but bend under the new blow of the hand that lay over his life. It was already almost four.

Yet where was he to go now? What was he to do with this long afternoon and this longer evening, and what with himself? He suddenly shivered. There fell over him a dread of these hours, which now lay before him, endless and empty. How was he to fill them?

Should he go out alone? No. He had looked forward to this outing with the boy too much to still be able to take any pleasure in it—now, without him.

Should he go to a party? He could go—to the salon that gathered every Sunday afternoon in the house of the clever and liberated woman, who, as he knew, was always glad to see him. It was not the worst company—one could talk there about everything, frankly and with the right to one's own opinion respected—about everything, only not about one thing! But that was precisely what he could stand today less than ever.

He could visit his friend, the only one who knew everything. But what was the use? He would listen to him, patiently and friendly as ever, and then expect Skaller to listen to him—in the same way. This, too, he could not bear today.

He could have gone to a table in a public cafe, where artists and people of the day and its activities, all of them clever and some important, gathered daily for relaxation and stimulation, and where everything was spoken about, even this! But *how*: not moralistically, as about a vice, but rather in the manner of men-about-town and mockingly, as about a sport. He alone had to keep silent—and today he would not have been able!

No—not among people! But where to then? Still he hesitated. Not because he hoped that the boy would still come, but rather with a feeling of indomitable discouragement and indifference. As he had for almost two hours, he walked incessantly about this small and quiet square with its grey church, for the hundredth time and yet another hundredth. Whoever had seen him earlier and now saw him, would not have recognized him. But no one concerned himself about him. The square was empty and remained so.

Finally he turned to go. Once more he looked down the street. And as with the strength of his longing, he conjured up the image one last time: how he would come at the very last moment—running up to him quite out of breath, taking his cap from his hot forehead—and embarrassed by the long delay, stammering out his excuses—embarrassed, but still happy at having come just in time—and joy in his blue eyes. But the street remained empty and Skaller turned away.

He walked home, without knowing where he was going. It was not far. He walked with quick and regular steps, his head sunk onto his breast and close to the buildings, as if he did not wish to be seen. The house in which he lived appeared deserted. He met with

no one as he climbed the stairs. Here, too, was the quiet of Sunday and its oppressive solitude.

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It was also still in the rooms he entered. There were three of them: his study, the small library in which he also took his meals, and his bedroom. The door between the first two stood open.

Skaller opened the door that led from the study onto the small balcony. Then he sat himself at his desk and reached for the work he had begun. Translations from foreign languages, with which he had earned a part of his livelihood for long years. But he had scarcely written a few sentences, when he let the pen fall again. He felt how impossible it was for him to work today. The means, which he wanted to seize, as he had so often, failed him today. Today it failed once again entirely.

He stood again and, almost with an expression of disgust, shoved the work aside. Then he leaned with his back against the stove, lightly heated in the early hour, and, warming his hands on the white tiles, as he liked to do, he stood and looked into the rooms, which he had furnished with a hundred pieces from his restless life of travel, so as to finally find here a home of sorts. He had to tell himself again, that they were comfortable rooms, and yet they appeared to him today, as so often, empty and cold, and he shivered in them.

The pain that had been artificially dammed up came over him again, and he gave up the fight against it. It was, after all, useless. Again he felt how very much he had looked forward to this afternoon, to meeting this unknown boy again.

He knew himself and he knew what would now come: that this afternoon, which lay before him and which he had only begun to conquer, was only the beginning of weeks full of lethargy, in which life would flow from him as blood from a secret and unbound wound.

He knew himself. He would have to go down again to the known and familiar grounds, in which nothing reigned but comfortless silence and icy darkness, and from which he would struggle up to the light of day and life again only with the effort of his

last strength. But how much strength did he still have altogether? He did not want to go back, not down there again!

In mute fear he grasped for all that was still able to stop him—for the help of his intelligence and its reasoning. What was it, then, that had happened again? So many things could have kept him from coming. What all prevents such a boy from keeping his promise: the next incident—a mood—some new sensation.

Or the most likely and obvious: his parents forbade him to go with a strange gentleman, whom they did not know—one of these dangers, these thousand dangers, that threaten from all sides, these dangers, born in the dirty corners of suspicion and dragged out of their sinister hiding-places by stupidity and meanness, by hatred and superstition, by mistrust: a suspicion often justified, but—oh!—how often did it not senselessly intrude between those who wanted to come together in this love.

Or finally: the genuine, quick forgetting of the young mind, not yet able to resist, which thoughtlessly and without hesitation sacrifices every old impression to the new, and is at hand only for what is obviously expressed by its presence, and which only lives its right: to forget—from yesterday to today, from hour to hour—the right of youth!

But it was precisely this that he did not want to believe this time. So brightly had the blue eyes gleamed at his suggestion, and so firm had been the pressure of his hand, with which he promised to come.

Why was he still surprised, he, who was acquainted with all this? Should he not have been much more surprised if he had really come, if they had really met again? A hundred possibilities against the one: that the boy, also touched by the short-lived meeting, would have foiled all the others and gone his own path, the path to him! Skaller laughed gloomily. He still asked too much! He still asked for something!

He really was acquainted with all that. Why then was he still at all surprised? And besides was it not his fate that he never—but no, he did not want to believe anymore in his fate! For then all was over for him.

With his hands he shoved himself away from the tiles of the stove and again walked up and down, restless as before.

Why then did it pain him so much? Certainly it would pass, as so much had passed that had been more bitter and painful than this. But still it was one wound more added to

the old ones, a small one, only just visible, and yet it would cause the other, scarred-over wounds to break open again, and strength and courage, which he needed so much to continue living, would again flow out of them—uselessly.

No, he wanted it no more.

Once, in a gloomy hour, he had sworn to himself not to let himself be so taken by every new acquaintance that it was able to throw him willy-nilly back into the darkness down there, the darkness which he had escaped with the sacrifice of half his life. By every new acquaintance? He laughed bitterly. How often did it happen, then, that a face so captivated him as this one?

What else had his half-living been, than a resistance against himself and his happiness? And what importance did it still have for him: to give in or to resist? To resist himself and renounce, or seek and follow? Did he suffer less when he fought against himself? Against himself still? Always against himself anew? And for what and why?

No. He wanted to no more. For a long time he wanted to no more.

Why could he not just breathe in the sun and light? And why must he live in shadow and gloom?

There was probably a third way, and he knew that there was. The life of pleasure. But he could not lead the life of the majority, the life of the level plains, where there is no happiness and no sorrow, but only dull satisfaction and shallow blindness about oneself and one's own misery, the life of amusements without joy. Many could do it and thus coped with their accursed lives. He could not do it. That was his true misfortune. For this he suffered and had to suffer thus. For this he suffered today.

Was there indeed any person who could suffer like him, and who was still meant for joy? Who had so suffered, and was yet capable of reviving under the first ray of hope? One whose fate banished him into the shadows of life, and who constantly longed to come up to the light? Who was so entirely a man, and yet could still be entirely a child? Who had grown old so soon and still could not age? Who remained young in his desires, and yet had never really been young?

He did not know if there was one other such person. But he knew that he was this person. He also knew that he was not a joyful person, just as he knew that he would have

become a joyful person—in the freedom of his love: a hundred, perhaps even a thousand years later.

He walked up and down, from the balcony door to the stove and back—always the same path. Fear of life again lay over him—of *his* life. Fear of the afternoon—of the long and sleepless night.

He was suffering. Again and again he sought to persuade himself. Just why?

Because of this little face that he had seen for only fifteen minutes? Which had been a nice and clever face, but still not a face that had stunned, infatuated, captivated at first glance? That did not come into question at all.

Then why could he not forget it? Why did it torment him and why did he still see it before him?

Suddenly he believed he knew: because it reminded him of another face. Another—which?

He racked his brains and could not find it. And yet it must lie somewhere, down there at the bottom of memory, buried by the years, buried and forgotten.

He stood still a moment in thought. Then he walked with sudden decision into his bedroom and came back with a box. He set it on his desk.

It was immediately clear to him, however, how foolish it was, what he wanted to do. Not here, among the pictures that were enclosed in this box, not among them would he find what he was looking for. For these pictures showed him the features of those whom he had loved: features so deeply engraved in his heart that he did not need to look among them, if the one he had waited for in vain had reminded him of one of them.

No, what tormented him now was the memory of something long forgotten, something that, like this, had occurred once somewhere in his life and the next second had disappeared, which he had lost before he hardly knew it, and whose disappearance had still wounded him with a slight pang; of a face he had forgotten and would never find again in his memory, a little face that was lost and forgotten, undiscoverable, just as this one, once forgotten, would be one day when he later wanted to look for him once again among the hundreds and thousands on whom his glance had once rested—interested, touched, admiring, in awakening and yet never awakened inclination. In vain! In vain! He would never find what he was looking for.

No, it was not here among these pictures. He picked up the box, to take it back.

*

But then it became heavy in his hands. Like a hot wave, it suddenly struck him: here was what could carry him over this afternoon, as if on wings. The disappointment of the last hours would be driven away. Here was his rescue—from himself and life.

Why did he still hesitate? It was a dangerous means. It would help him for the moment, but leave traces in him whose effect he would still feel weeks later. For remembering was a poison, sweet and numbing, but weakening life's strength.

Was he strong enough to drink it? And already old enough that it could no longer hurt him, because even the healthy medicine of life had lost its effect, and there was nothing more to forfeit, nothing more to lose? No. He did not want to. He wanted to live yet. The eternal hope for tomorrow should still heal the suffering of today, the days of his life should maintain themselves through their own strength, even if already one had to support the other.

He stepped back from the table, as if in fear. He knew what happened, if he gave in. He had to live his life over again, and again had to fight his fight. What he had suffered, he must once again suffer; overcome anew what he believed overcome.

With the impact of an army against a poorly guarded castle, they would storm at him again, all the things he believed he had made a truce with—a truce, not peace: hate and madness, bitterness and despair, regret and sorrow, fear and terror—and behind them the vast supply line of insults, malicious offences, dirty prejudices—an army, led by stupidity, but terrible in its immensity. And when the assault came over him, then he would again lie in a corner as a casualty, bleeding from a hundred wounds, and it would last a long, long time before he breathed again; could with difficulty breathe again in the light of life.

Only it would no longer be empty around him—no longer empty! His room would be immediately populated: young and bright voices would reverberate in it, and eyes glowing with delight and life would sparkle and gleam.

They would go, as they had come—certainly he knew this too, as he knew that they would all change, these voices so bright and fresh: a requesting one would threaten, a laugh would turn to tears; and they would all age, these young and fresh faces, so that when their shadows had passed, he would again be alone, lonelier and more hopeless than before.

He could now no longer turn back. Already he had heard a voice, one that had long since died away. He must follow it. Whose voice had it been?

And softly he said to himself: “Climb up, then, my life, you who have always been my best life, in your bliss and your torment, your despair and your charm, and make me happy once again on this gloomy day, strike me once again—I will keep today quiet for you.”

*

He drew out the little chest. It was of old workmanship, such as is no longer done today, of rare wood and expensive metalwork. He opened it and his hand shook like the hand of a painfully sick person reaching for his narcotic so as no longer to feel his pain. From the paper-covered packets that it held, he took only the one on top. Then he closed it again and set it aside.

This packet, which he held between the fingers of his hand and which he could easily enclose with them, this small packet contained the pictures of those whom he had loved, pictures from the time when he loved them.

He untied the ribbon that held them. They fell apart and he spread them over the top of the table, just the way they belonged together, these over here and those over there. For while there was only one picture of one of them, there were several of the others, and of one of them there was even a whole little packet by itself. Then he stood there, looking down at them, and his breathing was difficult as he bent over them, his hands on the edge of the table.

There were eight, exactly eight different faces. All were the faces of boys, none, or rather only one—the first—under fourteen, none over seventeen, from that age alone that

the word boy really designates—no longer children, not yet youths—the age to which his, Fenny Skaller's, love was directed.

The glances of the eight plunged into his glances, some joyful and laughing, others serious and questioning, just as they had looked into his eyes and into life—and he had to resist them. The way they looked at him seemed to Skaller as if they were all demanding their tribute from him as they had done earlier, demanding to be heard, and doing it with the impetuous urgency of their years. He must resist them, them and himself.

He was now decided. His life was to arise again before him today with them. None of those he loved would be left out. But—he softly smiled—there must be order. One after the other.

While he released his hands from the table edge and laid them over the pictures, so as to see their eyes no more, he said to himself softly and at the same time consolingly, as if to them: Be patient! You will all have your turn! All! This very day!

# The First Picture

Before he began, however, he stepped once more onto the balcony, into the clear, still warm air of the autumn day. The streets lay empty, the houses appeared deserted, with their closed windows and the archways through which people usually thronged. If he bent over he could see the tower of the church, at whose square he had waited in vain an hour ago. The clock on it now showed almost five o'clock. The sky was cloudless, covered in a dull and tired gray, motionless and leaden.

Once again—as he stood there, his hands propped on the railing and bending over—there appeared before Skaller the little face, the sight of which he had today so longed for in vain, and he saw again quite clearly before him the blue sailor cap, which all the boys were wearing today, and the red stripes, which it had drawn on the already unusually

strong forehead, the blond hair, parted on one side, and the blue, clever, and cheerful eyes.

What if he had still come, hours late, and was waiting down there now? Should he not rather go back there once more and see? But in the same moment he also realized how senseless his wish was. Now, after three hours! How impossible! But he was like that: he was always unable to give up and he always still fought until the final impossibility of that on which he had set his heart.

Over! It was over!

He stepped back into the room, to the table, and while his eye sought the first picture his thoughts slowly began the hard and sweet task of remembering.

*

The first—which was the first picture?

This? No, it must be this one. He held in his hand a yellowed, well-worn photograph, on which nothing more was recognizable than the delicate oval of a child's face and a gigantic, white collar over thin, narrow shoulders.

The picture of a child? How did it come here, and where did he get it? What was it doing here, this eleven- or twelve-year-old among the older ones?

Skaller smiled. Then suddenly he knew where he had got the picture. He had stolen it. From the album of an unknown family whom he was visiting with his, in a large parlor, where it lay on a table, stolen with shaking hands and in terrible fear, but with full consciousness. It was the first and only theft of his life. He himself was still almost a child then. Hardly fourteen. He smiled. It arose from the darkness of an early dawn.

He had to climb deep down into the years of his own childhood in order to find what he sought. There, from the twilit background of earlier days, the first, pale memory of his love vaguely arose, like a first, unconscious longing.

Deep down there—from the twilight—the pale shadow of a small, tender figure.

*

Early morning. In the streets it is still dark. From all sides the pupils stream toward the school, some quickly and excitedly, others slowly and indifferently.

All go first to the lofty great hall for the morning prayers. Long, backless benches, in front the rostrum, like a pulpit, and the chair of the teacher. The little ones sit in front, behind them the bigger ones, and the biggest ones in the rear. Ferdinand Skaller, the seventh grader, has his place this winter in a corner of the middle aisle. Diagonally across from him, two benches forward, sits the little fifth grader with the blond hair and the tall English collar.

The service lasts exactly ten minutes. The boy does not hear the words of the director who is leading it. He only sees the blond crown, slender limbs, and, at a turning of the head, a small, delicate mouth with quite red lips, and eyelids threaded with unusually blue veins. He has to keep looking over at him.

The pupils separate into their classes. Skaller is listless and inattentive. He still thinks about ‘him’.

He never talks about him. He never asks about him. Why not? He himself does not know.

He would have never dared to speak to him. He goes out of his way, moreover, if he sees him by chance. He does not even know who he is and what his name is.

Only one time—he sees his picture in an album. He takes it for himself and hides it like a treasure. He is terribly ashamed, but he is happy in the possession of his prize.

Every morning—ten minutes—his eyes hang on the blond hair, which shines like the sun. Then the hours that follow no longer seem so difficult, the teacher no longer so cruel, and that which he is supposed to learn, no longer so senseless.

So it goes this one winter.

When the school begins again, the place across the way is empty. A couple of times he still thinks of him, when he is very unhappy. Then he forgets him.

*

Skaller was still smiling as he looked at the little picture that he held in his hand and which he must have found years later among the toys of his childhood, since he still possessed it.

But something thoughtful came into his smile. How curious it was! Already at that time! Already at *that* age!

His senses had still lain in deep slumber, and already his longing had taken the path that nature had prescribed for him! Why, then, had it not been a little girl, as with the others? Instead of a boy, as always—and, as always, a younger one?

He laid down the picture—the picture of his ‘first love’. His smile had gone.

# The Second Picture

He looked for the second picture, found it in one glance, and the blood shot hot to his heart. The small, pale and unreal shadow disappeared into its nothingness before the life that, with its desires, now sprang into the plot on both feet and demanded its right.

He, whose picture Skaller now held in his hand, *he* had been his first love, his first love and his first passion! From the first day on, when they had met on the wide steps of the strange school, they had loved one another until the last, when they left this school, never to see one another again; and they never knew that their friendship was love, their love passion. What more did they know of life than that it was life? They had loved one another with all the wonderful signs of love: tender and violent at the same time, obstinate and shy, fearful and joyful, jealous and watchful. They did not reflect that they were young, they did not know that they were beautiful. They had not the least idea that their love was a crime in people's eyes.

They loved one another. They dreamed together their first dream of life: of its glory and its fame, of the life that lay beyond the prison walls of this school and beyond this miserable town, which to despise was their delight, of the life that must open up soon before them, that was only waiting for the two of them in order to receive them and shower them with its infinite gifts!

The picture began to tremble in the hand that held it.

How handsome he had been, his first friend! How soft the cheeks, how shining the eyes, how full the lips! It seemed to Skaller as if he must kiss them again, those lips. But he only bent deeper over the picture.

It had lost none of its splendor, as old as it was, as little as had his memory. For Skaller saw everything again, as it had been then twenty-five years ago, as clearly as if it had been yesterday. In unheard-of clarity, the words that had been spoken returned, the glances that had been exchanged. What foolishness, what extravagance, what mistakes! And yet: how full of life everything was, as it was full of fervor and fierce desire, and therefore—how genuine and true it all was!

He, Fenny, sixteen, and the other, a year younger, Gustav—there must also be another picture, which shows the two of them together: it was there already. There they stood beside one another—two proper boys in their school caps and ill-fitting suits, somewhat comical in the early self-consciousness of those years, but still charming in their vitality.

Skaller looked into his own face. Had he also been so serious already at that time? And it occurred to him that it had almost always been like that: he the serious and thoughtful one, and the one he loved mostly careless and unconcerned. Again the blood shot quickly to his heart.

He laid the picture down and seated himself before the table. He covered his eyes with both hands and walked the path of his life backwards, back to its first source, and—was again young, quite young.

Clearly to be grasped with all his senses, he suddenly saw again the scenes of his happiness, his first, great, boundless happiness.

*

"Fenny! Fenny!" the boys shout. He should play with them. For they all like him. In spite of his being so serious. But he already no longer hears them.

On paths that only he knows, he walks around the small town with the large school, leaves it behind him, and steals past the shouts up to the wooded hills.

Here is their 'nest'. No path leads to it. But he knows the way.

He bends branches apart, slips through under them, slides over the carpet of moss—in the depth of the night he would know where he was going. He has reached it. He is the first today.

It is truly a ‘nest’. They have built it under hanging branches, here in the middle of the forest: they dug a deep hole, propped it with boards that they secretly and with immense effort dragged here, and buried their treasures under the thick cover of moss. A covering of green arched over it, so thick that no rain came through.

He goes to work. Carefully he raises the cover of fern and moss from the hole, and takes out what they hide: books, candy, and smoking tobacco, protected against moisture in leaden boxes. Then he cleans the bed of needles and berries, spreads an old blanket over it, stretches himself at length, his hands folded under his head, and looks through the branches at what he can see of the blue sky.

He is waiting for his friend.

Bugs creep around him through the tendrils and quite near a thrush is singing. He waits. His heart beats faster and once a trembling goes through his slender body like unbearable expectation.

He turns around and listens. With all his might. For from below there sounds the cracking of twigs. And then: another sound, like a light whistle.

No doubt: it is he! But he remains lying. Only from his lips cautiously comes the same answer.

The breaking of twigs becomes louder and comes nearer and nearer. Then the branches are quickly thrown apart and his friend stands before him, deep red and out of breath. His short pants have shoved up over the bare knees and one shows bloody scratches. He throws himself without a word onto the blanket beside him. He is unable to speak, he is so out of breath. Then little by little words are exchanged. They wanted to keep Gustav back too and he had to free himself.

Now they have eaten and drunk, taking turns from their one glass with the broken pedestal, smoked their short pipe, and are finally done telling their experiences of the past day. They lie mutely beside one another. Without knowing it, they have drawn quite close together.

There is a damp and oppressive sultriness under the thick, leafy canopy. The thrush, near them in the crown of a beech, is still singing, and in the town below the tower clock strikes. They count the strokes: six.

The silence between them becomes ever more uneasy. They both have the same thought: Who will begin today? And each knows what the other is thinking.

Then the older one bends over the younger and kisses him on the lips, hastily and shyly. And suddenly they embrace, both at the same time, quickly and impetuously.

*

In the chair before his desk, on which the pictures lay, Skaller was sitting with his hands in front of his eyes.

Fenny! Fenny! Thus the boys had shouted.

Fenny—so he had been named once: by his mother, his family, his playmates. He had been christened Ferdinand: Ferdinand Skaller. But he was called Fenny by those who loved him. He was called Fenny...

By whom else yet?

He started. Abruptly. Where had he been? Just now! And what had so aroused him?

A picture lay close in front of him. Again he picked it up.

How beautiful it was, this young face! How wonderfully beautiful it had been!

*Had been?!*

He was again conscious of where he was: in the room of his own apartment, on the third floor of a large house, he was sitting on this Sunday afternoon, an aging man, old not in years, but in their disappointments.

Yes, life had come, but not as they had dreamed it: as the great liberator from restraint and narrowness, but rather as the great enemy, with which he had to fight, fight as he was still fighting today and must fight until the end, with never the hope of victory!

Murderers, not warriors, had been sent against him, and he himself had paid these murderers with his own blood. This very day he would have to look these murderers in the face, the murderers of his youth!

It had not been as he had dreamed at that time with the beloved of his youth: fame and glory, honor and victory. Rather stupidity and cowardice, fear and difficult self-control. But finally there was a victory, a quiet one in his own breast, and something like the elevation of disdain over stupidity and meanness, and rest after the long battle.

Once again Skaller picked up the two pictures, but only the features of the other boy still held his glance. Where was he today? They had continued to write, frequently at first, then more and more seldom, and only once more had he heard from him, by chance, after long years: married, a father, in a high judicial position. Skaller smiled bitterly: surely he sentenced, had to sentence those who were dragged before him because of this love, for the sake of this same love with which he himself once loved—of which he knew nothing more today—which he had forgotten—or which he thought of yet only as an aberration of his youth.

But he, Skaller, had never forgotten it. For him, it was still today what it had been then: the first love of his life and his first, great passion! Yes, much more than that even: the only love of his young life that had come as love must come—uncalled and overpowering, without the sequel of second thoughts, without the burden of regret. And beautiful: played over by the cheerful light of young and strong vigor, entirely desire of the senses and entirely pleasure in one another. Love, which indeed hid itself, but not shyly and fearfully, rather secretly and thoughtfully, so as not to be touched by a stranger's hand—his first love, not his strongest and certainly not his deepest, but surely his most blessed.

As he laid the two pictures aside with the first one, he felt that it was a farewell—a farewell to his youth, his youth and the greatest happiness that this youth had given him.

# The Third Picture

From outside the coolness penetrated into the room. Skaller stood yet another moment on the balcony before he closed the door. The sun of the ending year, still mild in its comforting warmth, but weak, had sunk behind rising clouds and the sky was gray. It was nevertheless still quite light outside.

So suddenly, he thought, was the sun of his love also extinguished. Its morning had been sunny. Its midday was to be gloomy, sad, and cold. Veils sank over the years that followed those of school: the years of the university, those of his first, long journey.

He quickly closed the door.

He knew whose the third picture was even before he held it in his hands. It was an unusually clever and at the same time unusually delicate face. Firm forehead, dark brows, dark searching eyes under them. A face of almost too early seriousness.

There rose up in Skaller something like the bitterness of an inexpiable guilt.

*

And the years came back, those which should have been the strongest and merriest, the most careless and most beautiful of his life, and which in reality had been nothing but a single, never ending, hopeless battle against himself. Accusation and prosecution, each

of them, and everything was crumbled and crushed—in self-rebellion and self-defense, and always new, joyless defeat. Dark years. So dark that they could only be illuminated by the light of his present knowledge, which was to fall over them yet today.

Thus had everything come, little by little, one thing after the other:

First the smiles over the 'woman-hater'—his indifference towards girls and women, who were so necessary for his comrades and fellow students, and as easily attained as their daily bread.

Then his first awakening as from a deep sleep—oh, how well he remembered that little event, which was to become so meaningful to him: he was walking with a boy, whom he had met, on the main street of the small university town, harmlessly, laughing and chatting. Then in the evening, in the usual crowd of the tavern, the first veiled, wary remark—more than twenty years had passed since then, but after another twenty years he would still see before him as today the cowardly and sardonic smile of the person who was sitting across from him and who had seen him with the boy, and who now, apparently harmlessly, asked who it had been; never would he forget the following icy and expectant silence around him, while he himself at first wanted to jump up and strike the questioner in the face, and then, as if held fast by a stronger power, he remained seated and acted as if he had not understood what the other meant, to find finally the strength for an indifferent and evasive answer, with which he betrayed his love for the first time—for the first time and the last.

Even if he could ever forget the smiles on the faces around him and the sudden, sinister fright in himself, never would he be able to forget the night that followed this evening, the night in which he—finally alone with himself—as if struck by the blow of a brutal fist, fell onto his bed and in dull torment came face to face with himself, as before an insoluble riddle.

One after the other: the morning after the night, and then the days and weeks. And with them an uneasiness at first, such as we feel when a sickness steals over our bodies, without our knowing what is actually wrong; then the fear of never being able to fight it and never again recover; further, the horror, like a guilt we have not earned, but which nevertheless weighs on us like an ugly suspicion; and finally the fear, the upsetting, terrible fear of perhaps being one of those, who are not named and not known, who are only

designated by this smile, who are more shunned than lepers, who are in general more deeply despised than are dishonorable people, and who are punished like criminals.

What was it? He found no answer. He had none.

But for the first time in his young life he now asked himself: What was it that drew him to boys? To the younger ones of his sex—his own sex? For the first time he asked it of himself. Then not again. Not again for years.

For as the battle of this night and the days that followed was fought out indecisively, he was determined!

He did not know what it was with him. He did not want to know. He would not let himself know. It was a secret, which he must close within himself with a thousand seals. Which no one was allowed to even guess, which he himself was no longer allowed to touch.

If he was sick, then he must hide his sickness like a stain, a mark of Cain; if he was guilty with an inherited or unconsciously gained guilt, then he must bear his guilt as his destiny. Only no one was to know of the stain and guilt. No one!

And with the terrible energy of those years, when the one thing that it wants is everything, those years, which are still too young to know how to compare, recognize, and comprehend, he carried out his resolution: to live as a dead man, for whom there was no life of love more!

He closed his eyes. He shut up his heart. He shoved away from him the youths who approached him. He shoved himself away even from those to whom he was still drawn with a mysterious and forceful might. He looked away, quickly and shyly, if his glance lingered unconsciously on a boy-face whose features, without his becoming aware of it, fascinated him; he breathed a sigh of relief if he met a boy whose form made him uneasy and then saw that it was a face that left him indifferent, so that he could calmly walk on.

His spirit *must* remain the victor over his body. His will must be stronger than his flesh! He took an oath on it.

If he knew nothing about it, then the others could also guess and know nothing. He kept himself upright, quite erect. He walked straight ahead with steps that were no longer to feel the earth under them. He lay under the cover of silence that he had drawn over

himself. Buried alive. Without light, without joy, without warmth. Without anything that love gives.

Thus he lived his youth, without living it. He himself became its murderer. The weapons with which he murdered it were the thoughts of others, the stupid, senseless, and dirty thoughts of the others.

But those he guarded against by day, his own thoughts, returned as dreams by night. They came to revenge themselves for having been rejected during the day. At night he could not guard himself against them. Bound by the fetters of sleep, he was powerless against them. By night they came, all of them, out of the corners into which they had been shoved during the day, and they brought him the comfortless fulfillment of unreality. On inaudible soles, through the cracks of the doors, protected by darkness and silence, they came. They slipped beside his bed, bent over him, slid to him under the covers, and under their immaterial caresses his young body, tormented by cruel renunciation, relieved itself of the surplus vigor that the madness of his will forced on it—flared up and relieved itself, without the awakening giving him new strength to take up again the hopeless battle against himself.

He awoke then, shattered, entirely conquered.

He began to fear the night and its dreams. And longed for them at the same time!

His dreams—how he feared and hated them! And how he loved them! For they alone were still life.

As a last salvation, he made an attempt with a woman. His companions, who spoke of nothing else altogether and seemed to think of nothing else, incited him to it. He overcame his fear—for he had fear!—and went along.

When he was alone again an upsetting sobbing shook him—for hours. Instead of charming him, this strange body of the woman, which pressed on his its forms, its scent, and above all its desire, filled him with horror and inexpressible disgust, and shaken by it, as by a fever, and shattered by shame, he stood before the mystery of his love, more strange and fearful than before.

It could only be thus: he was sick. He was entirely alone among all the healthy ones around him. And his sickness knew no cure. There was no doctor in whom he was al-

lowed to confide. The sickness did not even have a name. Silently to be ruined by it—that was his fate.

Silence—yes, that he wanted again!

Only, to stoop so low again, so deeply and so senselessly—that he could no longer do! Never again did he touch a woman.

He kept silent. But just as every human life is maintained by a last hope, however weak and foolish it may be, so too his life was maintained by the hope of a dream. When he felt that his strength was coming to an end, he dreamed: Once, somewhere and sometime, he too would meet his love. It would suddenly stand before him—in the form of a boy, a boy of sixteen years, a boy slender and beautiful, with defiant and yet inviting eyes, unruly and shy at the same time, whose hair fell over his forehead, so that he often had to brush it back with his brown, already strong hand, a boy full of longing and desire for life and its happiness. And: drawn to one another by one will, stronger than theirs; spellbound together by a might greater than human; chained together by a mystery that was entirely theirs and of which no one, except them, knew—their bodies and souls would unite into one union, which—unconsecrated—was indissoluble for their life. He, however, would live, work, and die for him. And the other would love him!

That was the love he dreamed of, the love that proved its right through its existence and therefore was immune. Not a love that had an origin. A love that was there—at first glance. Not a love that questioned, quibbled, and doubted. Not a love that asked: What will you do with me? Rather, that said: Do with me what you will! Not a love that doubted: Am I also allowed? Rather, that exulted: I am yours, as you are mine! Not one to quibble: What are the others saying about it? A love that was sufficient to itself and knew nothing of others.

A love that was there—because nature wanted it thus and not otherwise. A love—inexorable as fate, beautiful as life, and strong as death!

Then it *was* there.

Then its mystery would resolve itself. Then it was—'proven'! Also proven to him.

He stood and waited! He waited, not as a child waits for his party, with beating heart; not as a pious person waits for the heaven that is to be his redemption from earth. He waited—with closed eyes and inert heart, as if for something that life owed him, the life

that had created him thus; waited with the secret bitterness of a creditor who will not give up the advancement that alone can still save him and on whose ultimate payment he nevertheless can no longer believe.

He waited.

But the fulfillment never came. Something else came, however, an experience that threw him back with the power of an ocean wave onto the deserted beach of his mistake. An experience that he was never to forget: unimportant to be sure, ridiculous in itself, but above all fateful in its consequences for him.

An elderly man of his acquaintance (he himself, Fenny, was now twenty-one) showed attentions more tender than he was used to, and more conspicuous than he suspected. He, the older, sought him out, the younger; was around him; obviously made an effort to draw him to himself by all means.

It is an interest in your studies, Skaller told himself; and he returned the interest with interest in the thoroughly cultivated, clever, and serious man.

Then—one day it happened. He still saw before him the room in which it happened, the table at which the two were standing, the chair that was shoved between them, and the books and prints that lay on it. They were speaking about the riddle of Giorgione. Before them lay the reproduction of that most wonderful of all pictures, which at that time was still called ‘La Tempesta’ and today is named ‘Adrastes and Hypsipyle’.

Then Skaller felt, almost suddenly, how a silence came over them and a pressure lay on them, heavy and expectant, like the atmosphere before the storm in the picture there before them. And then it happened: a face bent to his, near, too near; an arm was lightly laid around his neck; and lips, bearded lips, sought his.

He jumped up, pulled himself away, smothered a cry, and—was alone.

In the night, as he lay there with open eyes staring into the darkness, from darkness into darkness, as his heart beat and his thoughts revolved, this one thing clawed in his brain:

Thus, thus, with the same disgust, the same inner horror will he turn from you, if you should ever dare touch him, him, whom you love! For never can a younger one truly love an older one of his sex!

That night he buried his love, which was already in its coffin, buried it for years to come! For—this he knew and thus he knew himself—never would he be able to bear or survive seeing on the face of him he loved the smile of liking and trusting change itself into the expression of alienation and coldness, of disgust and disdain. Never!

Let the way the world saw this love be so, all that was nothing in the face of this one thing: that a younger one would never be able to return the love of an older one of his sex; and if this love were free and tolerated and respected: on *this* it *must* die for him. He, Fenny Skaller, who now knew that *his* love could only be for the younger and never for an older, exclusively—he knew it and now also felt that what there still was of life in him must slowly die out.

While his thoughts were still held by the past, as if spellbound, he saw that he was holding a picture in his hand. He had to recollect whose picture it was.

Then he knew it again. And another scene from that time, shortly after that time, shortly after that scene, stood again before him, just as clearly, equally unforgettable. It was the hour in which he had lost him, who—as he now knew—had loved him in spite of having been the younger and he, Fenny Skaller, the older!

He was looking steadfastly into the eyes of the picture, young and yet already serious eyes, eyes full—

How long ago that was! But Skaller saw everything as if it had been yesterday.

*

He, the student, had lived with a family, one of those honest and numerous families of the *petite bourgeoisie* of the small university town.

He has moved away from them. Why? A son is there, a fifteen-year-old. He cannot bear his glance, his presence.

Now, on one of those last evenings before his departure from the university, he meets the family in the garden by the river, to which his boat has taken him on one of his solitary outings. Ernst, too, is with them. He has to sit at their table. He cannot avoid it. All are friendly with him, their former, so “solid” renter.

They are returning in the carriage in which they came. A place is taken by chance by an acquaintance who has joined them. Thus they ask him to take Ernst back with him in the boat. He himself does not ask, but stands to one side. But it is impossible to refuse.

Thus they travel back: Skaller himself rowing; the boy, facing him, at the rudder. They are traveling downstream. The rower has to brake more than pull. It is an evening of infinite peace. And quite bright. The moon is full in the sky and a light mist rises from the water. Only the banks on the sides lie in the shadow of thick trees. They hardly speak to one another.

The boy answers only briefly and softly to the apparently indifferent questions of the older man; he lets his right hand hang down into the warm water of the river. So as not to have to see his face, Skaller looks steadfastly at this hand. He sees now how fine and firm it is, this boy-hand with its slender fingers and its short white nails. He looks at the hand so long that the boy becomes uneasy. Then he feels that he must speak, if the silence is not to choke him.

As he now speaks, quickly and precipitously, and questions and receives answers, his glance glides of itself from the hand up to the face before him, and never has he seen it so clearly as now, white in the light of the moon. It seems to him as if he were really seeing it now for the first time. He looks away no more from the serious smile of those eyes and this mouth. He cannot. He loves it too much. Wild and adventurous thoughts rise up in him as they are talking together, freely and almost calmly now. Should he travel or remain here? Under some kind of quick excuse? Move in again with them? See him every day? Should he?!

He would like it, this boy, if he remained. Certainly he would like it!

The lights of the houses glowed between the trees. They landed, climbed out, and walked into the town. Then their paths separated. It is late and the street is completely empty. And suddenly this silence lies between them, oppressive and strange. As Ernst is standing before him now, his eyes lowered and as if waiting for a word of farewell—or what?—it seems to Skaller as if he must now lay his arms around him and kiss him.

Already he is bending closer to him, when a thought tears him back: “If you do it, will he shrink back from your touch, will those eyes open wide in fright, will this beautiful mouth draw up in disgust—” and he forced himself back!

A couple of indifferent words of farewell, a thank-you that he had taken him along, something like “meet again somewhere”, a handshake, and they parted.

That night, however, as he once again bit his pillow so as not to have to howl out loud in the stillness like a wounded animal, the glance of the boy, as he had last looked at him, pressed in unforgettably, that look of quiet reproof, foreign and offended at the same time, as if over something incomprehensible, from eyes behind which tears stood, tears like those over a still misunderstood and undeserved pain, but manfully held back.

*

Never would he forget that look. He still saw it today. It was the same glance that looked back at him now from the eyes of this picture, which he still held in his hand and with which he now walked to the window to see more clearly by the weakening light of the day, before he was willing to set it down.

But he was not so easily done with this picture and what it again conjured up in him: his lost youth. And Skaller looked at the picture no more, but rather through the panes out into a broad and sunken distance.

He felt a horror creep over his back. It was the horror of himself and the immeasurable stupidity of those years. What madness!—and what method in it! So cruel against himself, so blindly offering up his happiness to an idea, so stubbornly fixed in an idea, as was only possible in those years, which are so falsely called “the happiest”: between twenty and twenty-five!

What had it basically been? Respect for people? Or rather the fear of no longer being held by them to be a “decent person”? Reverence for life? Or rather a cowardly flight from it? Respect and reverence—yes, he had had them above all. Only not for his love!

His life had been “pure”. But the dreams of his mishandled fantasy had stained it worse than all the errors of reality would have been able to do.

He could not be a criminal in the eyes of people. But today he stood before himself: a criminal in his own eyes, a criminal to his love!

No, he had been no “conqueror”, no “victor over himself”. He had been a fool, nothing more!

He had seen *everything* in a false light. At that time.

That man who loved him, what had he done to him? He had certainly suffered for him. Why had he driven him away, like a murderer, instead of calmly saying that he could not return his love, because it—according to eternal, inexorable laws—was meant for others?

That woman who wanted to give him her best for a little money, why had he disdained her? He had hurt her in the one way that she could still perhaps be hurt: in her inclination. Why had he gone to her, since he knew that he could never give her what she gave him?

And he, the forgotten one, whose picture he held here in his hand, whose first tender inclination had been for him, whom he had fled from and shoved away, instead of taking him to his breast—was he not guilty of the first, great disappointment of that young life?!

He had stood there with blind eyes and closed heart, waiting for love, the great love: the love that was to come like a fulfillment, and which he awaited from—a boy! And what was the most bitter: it had been there beside him, and ready for his signal! But he—

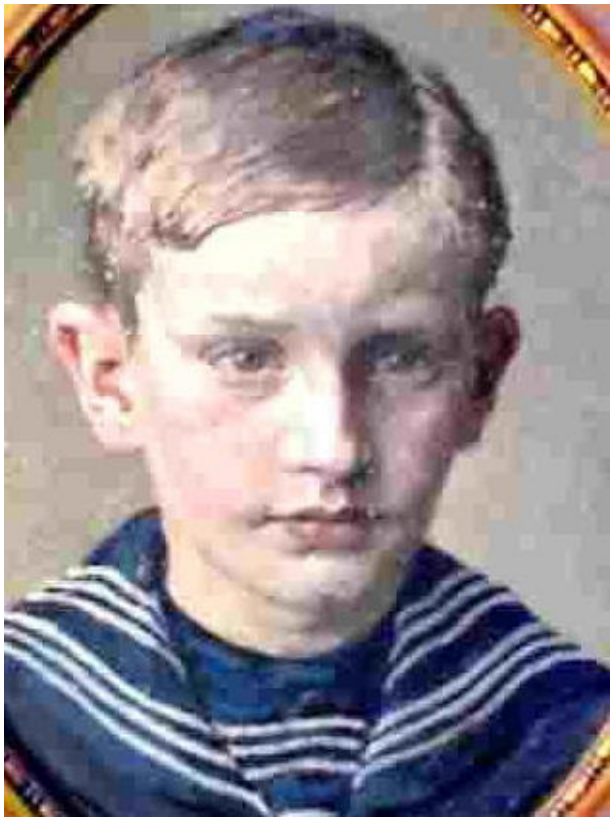
He could not endure looking at those pleading eyes any longer. He covered the picture with both hands.

"Forgive me! I did not know what I was doing! I did not know what I know today. There was night around me and around everything. In us and around us. There was silence yet at that time and everywhere. Where was a call? Where even a glimmer of light? And I myself was still so young and foolish! Forgive me! I did not know... and I have suffered for it more than you!"

Skaller did not hear his own words, which he appeared to whisper to the picture, secretly, like the unspoken words of a long-vanished love. It seemed to him as if he were choking. He shoved the picture aside, to the left of the first ones. He could bear it no longer.

He could no longer bear the memory of his own youth!

# The Fourth Picture



A slight darkening, the first of the approaching night, came into the room. Skaller walked up and down as before, his hands folded behind him, but his steps had become slower and his eyes only stared.

His youth! He sensed now that he was no longer able to suffer from it. It lay too far distant. Nothing arose from it that in the remembrance could still have the strength to overpower him: no great suffering, no great joy. Only this silence, this great, self-chosen, perhaps proud, but certainly insane silence, with which he answered the silence around him! It had been a youth without love. Without warmth and without light. And thus it was lost for him. And so he wanted to forget it, and he had forgotten it—his dead youth.

*

He again saw himself roving through the world. A restless wandering from place to place. A flight from himself. A fleeing from people.

His studies were broken off; plans made were put off, given up. They did not understand him. He had not one friend, to whom he could have told everything. He did not have a friend even in himself. For he was his own worst enemy. He did not even listen to himself.

He had just enough that he could live modestly. Here or there. It made no difference where.

He did not know life, and he did not get to know it, for he went out of its way. Only the dull feeling that somewhere out there in the world a person must be living who was ready to take the curse from him drove him further and further. But that person must come of himself. He was not seeking him.

He was not entirely alone. He met people everywhere. But everywhere they remained strangers to him.

Firmer and firmer the idea was planted in him: you are a decent person. They believe you and take you for such. But what if they knew? With one blow everything would be different. They would shove you away. But now he could bear no insult. Thus he drew back from people, above all from those to whom he felt himself drawn.

—Skaller shook his head and laughed silently and bitterly to himself. How stupid, how unspeakably stupid that had all been! A decent person? As if all that had even the slightest thing to do with decency or indecency! No insult? All people who are in a minority are daily and hourly exposed to the mindless and brutal insults of the majority. But he had been blind, deaf, and mute—something he disputed with the others but not with himself. Better to strike out as not lived the years that were only desert sand under the hands of memory, instead of raking about in them without ever being able to find anything but dust and chaff. Did he really believe that he could thus continue his life until its end?

In this too he had deceived himself. This belief had also been nothing but the madness of a fanatic. Life was long, and his love had been stronger than he was! Away with it! Away with all that!

Life had come all the same.

In all those years there was perhaps not one day that he could recall in complete clarity. All of them—with the nights that followed—had dissolved into a sad picture of sorrow, longing, despair, shame and fear.

All, except one!

This day, however, still stood before him again, after twenty years, in such clarity that he could have seized it, and thus in this hour he again lived through his great adventure:

—It was—where?—yet it did not matter where it had been! It is in a large city in the South on a summer day when he enters a bookstore to rummage about in the newly arrived books, among which there were usually German ones also. The shop is, as always around this quiet hour of noon, empty of customers.

He sees himself again, as he walks into the side room where the new books lie on a long table; how he indifferently takes one after another in hand and lays it aside; how he then suddenly reads on one book—a large, yellow book—a curious Latin title, a title in two words, opens it, scans a few lines, lines from which a raw flame of still not understood words strikes against him; how he quickly lays it down again, but in the next instant picks it back up, strides to the cashier's table with it, and with beating heart, but outwardly calm, asks for the price. And how he pays the price without being shocked at the expense, which almost devours the remainder of his money; and how he finally is again standing on the sunlit street, clutching the book like plunder, occupied now with only the one thought: Where to go with it, so that no one will disturb you and where you are alone with it, with this book!

Not in the hotel room! A visitor can intrude there! Not where people are nearby. A place occurs to him, which is empty of people at this hour: the large room of a popular music hall, filled up in the evening, but completely deserted by day: a large, cool hall, where he had once written a hasty letter while he drank his afternoon coffee. He goes there. He sits down in the farthest corner of the large, empty hall. And there he opens the book and—reads!

To be sure, *what* he read on that afternoon, in which he sat in the corner, his head propped in his hands, while far up front at the buffet a glass only clinked now and then, and from the street the noisy life of the South sent its echoing cries, and turned page after

page, chapter after chapter, what he had read on this long afternoon—that he no longer knew! He read and read: it was a path through a burning forest, in a night with thunderstorms; tree-tops break and tumble to his feet; lightning rumbles and flashes, and flames flare up; clouds and smoke cover him and bite painfully into his eyes; through the breaking of tree limbs human voices cry, which have nothing human left, and laments and groans go along his path. But he reads and reads. About things he has never heard of, and which he nevertheless knows; which he had never held to be possible, and which he nevertheless understands; which he had never imagined, and yet recognizes; he reads of things monstrous. The cold marble slab becomes hot under his hands and he grips it so as not to jump up and cry out—from outrage or from jubilation, he does not know which! But he reads, reads, reads until evening falls, the first arrivals fill the hall, the lights are lit, and the waiter drives him from his solitary place.

Then he walks into the street. His look is still confused and unsteady, but at the same time how changed and sharpened, and he sees the people and their affairs differently from the way he did hours before. And in the night, in which he walks through the streets until morning, he awakes as if to another life.

He *begins* to comprehend.

He still knows nothing. But he does now know one thing: *There are others like him!* He is no longer alone among people, no longer alone on this earth! Now it is to be his too, this earth, and he wills to live on it!

At the memory of this day and his tremendous experience, Skaller's hands had become as hot as they were on that afternoon when he gripped the marble table. For it had touched his life tremendously.

He remained the same outwardly: closed in his usual silence. It would still have been quite impossible for him to speak to another person. But he kept silent no longer within himself, and from then on no longer silent about his love. He still knew nothing of it. He did not yet understand it. He still did not comprehend himself. But he no longer had a horror of himself. Quite secretly, inwardly, there arose a shy hope: that he, too, would one day be fortunate in this love.

He did not open the book again for many years. What it could give him, it had given him. He had forgotten what he had read. He understood only so much: they had locked up

his love in science's wax-figure cabinet of monsters, of deformities and monstrosities of all kinds—there they had also classified him: among people with whom he had nothing in common, and could and would have nothing in common.

But the love *existed*. It was there, and among those pages, filled with the confessions of the desperate, who did not understand themselves and who hoped for salvation from the doctor by opening up to him, it glowed as the will-o'-the-wisp glows on the edge of the swamp or as the home light of a hut glows in the night. An error prevailed here, a misunderstanding, still unexplained, a prejudice that no science dared to touch yet. Only life itself was able to give it meaning and explain it to him. People could not. Thus he had to ask life, he who until then had not dared to ask.

He must learn to see. For until then he had been blind. He wanted to demand an answer from life, demand until an answer was given him. He wanted to live, in order to finally understand life, his life. It was not yet too late for that.

He, the blind one, had learned to see. Slowly. Bit by bit.

A boy opened his eyes.

Where was his picture? Here: the cheap picture of a suburban studio, quite smeared and creased, but the still recognizable roguish smile on the young lips and the cap on the tangled hair and the sailor blouse with the open neck.

*"Georges, mon petit Georges!"*—over Skaller's lips involuntarily slipped the pet name again, with which he had so uncountably many times caressed him.

He had found him in Paris on a street corner where, hungry and freezing in his blue, carefully mended smock, he was hawking his newspapers. Each day he bought one from him, spoke a couple of words with him, and tipped him. It was his only joy. He knew no one in Paris. He never walked to the corner without his heart pounding. He was still so stupid and inexperienced, and still always believed that the whole world was pursuing him and this little love, and he still always feared losing it if the little urchin guessed how much he liked him. How stupid he had still been at the time.

But one evening they did get together. Skaller still very self-conscious inwardly, but the little French boy jolly and full of chatter: in front of one of the small cafes on the

great Place de la République, in the shadow of the building, at one of the little yellow brass tables.

He got this little picture on that evening. When they had already parted and Skaller was again looking at it by the light of the lamp, and secretly lifted it to his lips, the boy appeared before him with his roguish smile, a bit mocking, but so friendly:

"You are kissing my little picture, Monsieur? Wouldn't you rather kiss me instead?"

The street was empty. But even if people had been standing thick around them—in that moment nothing would have hindered him from taking the boy in his arms in front of all the people. They did not separate again that evening, and not for many days. For *now* the spell was broken and he finally began to see.

—Curious: not from the weeks that followed this evening, which were for him like a beautiful and warm summer, full of fragrance and light after a long and hard winter, weeks in which they parted happily, to happily meet again, and in which everything had been gaiety and laughter, kindness and friendship, devotion and genuine affection, weeks in which they, the abandoned child of the streets who probably never in his life had heard a friendly or even kind word, and he, the lonely young man, serious far beyond his years, who until then believed that he was alone in the world with his fearful and insoluble secret, they had been at one in their affection for one another, united like children and like brothers—curious: not from those weeks, where every day ran into the next, full of sun and warmth, not from those long and yet too short weeks did there arise before Skaller's eyes a definite picture of memory, but rather after years, years after that year, there stood before him one scene that formed itself and recalled to him once again his first great happiness, his first small affection.

And—the faded picture in his hand, on which the twilight shadows from outside fell—he saw himself again, years older, far from Paris, tired and discouraged to bear his life longer, packing his bags in a sudden attack of despair, throwing together what he possessed, to travel with the next train, day and night, back to the city where he had been happy, in order to—he did not know what—perhaps to seek for what was lost forever... And this was what he saw again today with an almost frightening clarity:

*

The train speeds along. It becomes dark and again light. The towns and people change. Instead of German, the sounds of French again strike his ear. But he hears and sees nothing; until he arrives he continues to sit in the corner he had taken when he came aboard, he looks out through the window of the train, where the telegraph lines constantly rise and fall, and he thinks of one thing... always only the one: He had delivered him then... he must deliver him again, like then!

Finally he is in Paris. A black hall: the Gare du Nord. He climbs into a cab, gives the name of the hotel, the same hotel he had lived in then, cleans himself faster than his usual fashion from the dust of the trip, and walks onto the street.

He heeds nothing; he walks down the boulevards, past St. Lazare, through the darkening streets, to the northeast part of the city. He knows the way. He walks and walks. The streets become darker and emptier, narrower and sinister. He takes no wrong turn. He rounds corner after corner. He finds the one thing he is looking for. He finds the house. He stands before it: a building with furnished rooms, no more inviting or repellent than thousands of others in Paris. But this is it.

He knocks. The door opens as if by itself. The concierge looks out from his partition.

"Number four, if it is free, please," he says. He shoves his money across, receives his lamp and door key, climbs the worn stairs, and is in the room.

It is still exactly as it was then. Sober and bare, but quite clean. Even the furniture is standing just as it stood then. But how many must have come and gone since then! How many!—and who! Once more he looks around him with a long glance. Then he sits on the chair by the window, the same chair in which he had so often sat when he was waiting for him, or when he held him on his knees, listening to his cheerful and precocious chatter, and looking down with him at the ugly street.

He is now looking again in the same way. As if he were waiting. Now and then someone creeps like a shadow along the wall of the building opposite. A child cries. The noise of a drunk comes up. In the house itself, however, the same mysterious, discreet coming and going as then: a door is slammed, a repressed cry of a voice penetrates through the thin walls; over the halls shuffle steps like people who would rather not meet anyone, here in this house of—love.

Will he still come? Why has he not yet come? It is time. He has always come. Why does he not come today? A terrible uneasiness arises in him. He trembles from longing. It drives him to his feet. Then he sees the bed, the large, white bed that almost fills the narrow room. And with a cry he stumbles to it, spreads his arms over the white cushions, as if he held him again: the white, young, so affectionate and passionate body, again as then!

*"Georges, mon petit Georges!"* Again and again, stammering and confused from longing and pain: *"Georges, mon petit Georges..."*

Late, quite late in the night, he goes back down the steps. When he passes the concierge and gives him back the lamp and key with a tip, he hears him ask with pity: "Monsieur has waited in vain?"

"Yes, in vain..." he answers.

He walks back the way he came. A great peace is in him. The great peace of a great emptiness. The intoxication is over. He now knows where he is going. He does not remain in Paris. The same night he travels on, toward the South, to his old life of a wanderer without goal or purpose.

*

That was how it was in those years. But Skaller drove his memory back: it is not yet their turn, *those* years.

He returned once more to him, with whom his youth had gone from him, his youth that had received its only light from the little smile that this picture in his hand showed him again. Yes, those had been his two rescuers: a dead book and a living street boy.

The book he had laid aside and hidden for many years, until those years came in his life in which he made a study of this love, and when he read not only this first book, but all those that had ever been written about this love, and read thoroughly until he knew who he was and who the others were. For the fact that it was the first to tell him that he was not alone, he still had to be grateful today. Otherwise, however, he had a horror of the shameless, final confessions of desperate and poor people, these confessions which, in the name of a new science, a limited, even if honest, spirit had collected, ordered, re-

corded and labeled—a mockery for the knowledgeable, and for those who did not understand, a source of fateful errors and confusion.

The boy, however, his poor boy who was a man today—how could he have ever forgotten him! He had given him more. He had given proof of this love, which in his despondency he was unwilling to believe. And when he was still unable to believe in his happiness, and asked him again and again: "But Georges, are you really fond of me too?" how he had laughed at him and kissed him, until he had to believe, he, the blind one!

Yes, it did exist, this love. It existed, even if people did not see it. It existed, even if it did not see itself and was not allowed to show itself. It existed, everywhere, in every hour and among every people. Existed and had always existed. It existed and would always exist, as long as the world lasted and there was love between people. It existed, as everything existed in the tremendous variety of love.

The love of a younger one for the older of his own sex: It existed among the young. There were those who from youth on felt themselves drawn to their own sex, who as boys and adolescents, and as adults, always loved only their own sex; those who with a feminine sensitivity desired to let themselves be loved. He, from youth on, would *never* have been able to love one of them. For everything that was feminine and effeminate was foreign to him in love. He would have been able to love a girl just as well as such a youth, who was really a girl. And girls—girls he did not once love.

On the other hand there were those who in their youth were able to return the love of an older one of their sex just as well as later that of a woman, whose feelings in their youth did not yet go in a definite direction. Among them, *only* among them was he able to find those who were also in a position to return his love. Excluded from this love for an older one of their sex were probably only those adolescents whose whole instinctive life from the beginning on was directed to the other sex, only to it and in such a strength as made them incapable of any approach to their own sex.

And finally those who were like him: who likewise from the very beginning on were drawn *only* to the younger ones of their own sex, always so strongly only to the younger that for them the love for an older one was completely impossible.

He had not comprehended this at first. He had believed that all younger ones must feel toward the older just as he felt. It had been the great mistake of his youth, under which he had suffered so terribly. Now he had begun to understand.

Certainly, these were theories which life would never exactly fit. But on the whole everything that he had since seen and experienced in long years confirmed the truth of this first perception, which dawned on him at that time and then took this form.

This love existed, and it existed much more widely than people imagined and knew. He had experienced it and had been fortunate and unfortunate in it, as he would be fortunate or unfortunate in it until the end of his days.

He also became clear about the essence of *his* love: boys, proper boys must it be, whom he loved. Boys such as they all were, whose pictures he held in his hands today. Boys like his little Georges had been.

And he continued to smile.

Glad to do it? Reciprocate? Oh, that had been the most impetuous desire, yes, wild passion and unconditional offering, which this little French boy had given him. It had been love, and nothing but love... love with all its shy tenderness, its jealousy, its boyish and sharp defiance!

Where might he be now? Certainly, he was one of those who today sought their happiness in the arms of women. But, this he knew, that would never hinder him from thinking back with gratitude and friendliness on the days when they loved one another, on the rich days among the poor ones of his youth.

Where might he be? They had written one another for a long time. Things were no longer going so badly for him. Skaller remembered his letters: those letters that gave him pleasure long afterwards, until they became more and more seldom, and finally ceased. All bore in the upper corner an awkwardly drawn heart with an arrow through it and the inscription: "*L'amour à Paris*", and all were full of gratitude and longing, the frank and unconcerned chatter of a boy who was growing into a youth and who still saw in him his best friend.

Where he was now, Skaller did not know. But his soul was also in this hour still full of gratitude to him, who had given him more than he himself imagined; and as he now laid aside to the left with the others the small, faded and creased, hardly recognizable pic-

ture, there came once more over his lips: *"Georges, mon petit Georges!"* And once more it sounded like undying gratitude from this final tenderness.

# The Fifth Picture

Once more, for the last time this day, Skaller stepped outside. Evening had fallen and the sky lay gray, as if threatening. It was not raining, however. The wind blew over the roofs of the houses. From the street below the first lights flamed up. Yet the windows of the houses were mostly still dark. The people were probably still outside.

He, too, still needed no light in his room. Nor did he want it bright. This twilight of the evening comforted him.

He wanted to think of other things, and yet he could not. He was always drawn back to where the pictures lay. The objects in the room were still easily distinguishable; he noticed it as he returned. He sat down in the chair that stood in front of his desk, leaned far back, and covered his eyes with his hand.

For he knew which picture came now! It did not lie with the other pictures. It stood there before him on the desk and he looked at it there, day after day, hour after hour. As often as his glance rose from his work, he saw it before him—the only picture on the desk, there opposite the other, the picture of his mother.

These four eyes always looked into his. He always looked into the eyes of these two people whom he had loved best of all, and who had loved him in return, just as he had loved them. They were both dead. But he still lived under the glance of their eyes.

Love for his mother had kept him alive altogether until now. Without her love he would certainly have given up living then as a burden too heavy for him.

Love for the boy had elevated his life for a time. He did not need to lift his hand from his eyes: he saw through every shadow the features of this picture, every feature. His forehead broke out in a cold, anxious sweat.

But it must be. His thoughts were stronger than he. He only pressed his hand firmer over his eyes.

*

He finally understood now. It had to be a boy. It would be a boy, and his whole life would belong to him, this boy, if he was the right one.

—He was again settled, had completed his studies, made new plans: and secretly he was again hoping. His life really still lay before him. He had found it, this love, and he would find it again. He still believed in happiness. One day the great happiness would also come to him. Only it would no longer be allowed to blindly pass him by. He must keep his eyes open. He must *seek* it. He had to seek, if he wished to find. Then his happiness would come.

—And it came, and was there. It was there before he even began to seek. And it was his happiness. It was not the great and jubilant passion that tears us into the arms and chokes us with kisses.

It was thus: One day, while we are walking along unconcerned, there steals a little, warm hand into ours, little, bold feet walk beside us and seek to keep step with us, and we take the hand, walk on together, and suddenly we are no longer alone.

Thus it had been. It had come differently from what he imagined, but it had come, and it was there as if it had always been there.

How had he met him? When had he loved him?

They did not need to meet. They knew one another before they had even spoken together. They were fond of one another from the first moment when they had seen one another, when the boy had smiled at him and he had returned that smile.

Earlier this would not have been possible, as he still turned away from each smile of young eyes as if in fear. But he had become a different person. He now often spoke with the young, here and there, just as it came, harmlessly and freely, and he felt what freshness and joy could come from such chatter, which is still untouched by doubt and reflection, and bubbles like the stream, perhaps empty and without content, but pure and clear. Thus he only now learned to understand youth, its first wishes and hopes: and it was he who taught him, who saw how much he still had to learn here, he, who still knew almost nothing of that which he yet loved most of all.

It was probably thus that they had chatted together at first and thus it had come about. And now he was there and they loved one another. They were happy only when they were together. They thought of nothing else but being together. They did not desire each other. One desires what one does not possess. They possessed one another. They did not see people around them.

—Skaller was sitting on the chair in front of his desk. His hand lay firmly over his eyes and his fingers now stretched even more firmly over his cold forehead.

What happened? Nothing. What came? Everything.

Just as on a warm summer evening we are suddenly chilled, apparently without reason, so a cold breath came over their love. He did not know where it came from. But he felt it. The faces of the parents of the boy and his unfortunately so numerous family appeared to him to be less friendly, their questions more insincere, and their allusions more open.

The boy noticed nothing. He must not be allowed to notice anything—that was the first thing Skaller told himself. He himself resisted seeing at first. But he could no longer shut out the danger that distantly threatened and came closer and closer, for he had to watch over his love.

Then one day he understood from a single remark: suspicion, dirty suspicion had stretched out its ugly hundred-eyed face from some corner or other and was snooping after them.

They were unable to betray themselves, for they had nothing to betray. They did nothing that anyone could not see; they said nothing that anyone could not hear. But that they were so fond of one another, this they could not hide and everyone could see how much the boy was attached to him and how much he meant to him—how indeed could they have hidden it! And now the first word had fallen, a spiteful glance exchanged, a different meaning than before was given to their being together, and their conversation was overheard.

Then Skaller understood the danger with fear for his love. For everyone who loves fears for his love. This happiness should not be taken from him.

Thus he decided to watch over him. He, whom he loved, should not be disturbed. He would also not have understood what they wanted from him.

To see him somewhat less often for a while, as difficult as this was for him, seemed to Skaller the only thing he could do. He was also no longer so free and easy. But he had to appear so and act as if he saw no glance, heard no remark. What should he otherwise have done? These people must see in time how groundless their suspicion was.

Then he was called away: his mother had become sicker.

At parting, when they were alone for a moment and the boy had wrapped his arms around his neck, he kissed him for the first and last time. Then he departed.

—For weeks he fought for a life, until it was extinguished. The greater fear smothered the smaller. He fought with death for the life that had given him life.

—He saw again the house of his childhood, the still, gray house "up there" in the North, where the sky hangs over the day like fog and the nights are long and clear—he saw how it was again! The house whose only son he was. In the winter it lay lonely and closed in the masses of snow. For his father went to the large cities for his strong pleasures, while his mother sought a cure on southern coasts, and he, her son, was mostly with her. But in summer it stood open with wide halls and rooms, and no summer passed without his coming for long weeks to be together with her there, where the two most preferred to be together. In her white dress she strode through the park, from border to border, light and slim as a young girl—he loved her there best, his mother, where he was entirely alone with her.

For there they sat together in the evening in the hall by the garden, and read and talked, quietly, often only whispering, so as to hear how the wind blew through the alleys by the window.

He talked about everything with her, only not about the one thing. For since he still did not understand himself, he did not know how he was to make himself understandable to her. He was afraid of hurting her; and he could not hurt her. Then when he finally understood himself years later, it was too late!

They talked together, often into the night until they heard the heavy step of his father as he returned home from his wild carousing in the neighborhood and his unbridled dissolution, for which he was well known in the whole region. For he lived for all women, only not for his own, who lost not a word over it, not over him nor anyone.

—He saw again the summer nights up there in the North! When all were asleep, he was still awake and walked over the borders of the park out onto the land. The boys of the village bathed in the ponds on warm nights. Their white bodies shone through the dark tree trunks, and their laughter and calls penetrated up to him. But he stood there and dared not come closer, mad with longing and sick with the horror of himself in those dreadful nights that did not let him sleep. Then in the morning the dear voice, always a

bit tired, of his mother: “Did you sleep badly, my dear boy? You look pale. Don’t you feel well at home?” Indeed, he felt well at home, better than anywhere else in the strange world. But he was not at ease here either.

—He saw it again, that house! As he saw her again, who had still been for the man what she had been for the child: home, refuge, and ultimate comfort. Now he had no home, no more certainty or refuge; and there was no longer anyone to comfort him. He still had only one thing—one last thing. And he saw the day and the hour in which this last thing was also taken from him. He does not want to see it. Yet he *must* see it.

*

Everything is over. He buried her under the oaks of her park, at the place she had wished.

Now he returns. After a long trip he has again arrived here. Toward evening. An autumn evening. He now has in the whole world nothing more than a little heart. But he knows that this little heart beats only for him. He is near him again. Tomorrow he will again feel it beating on his own. Tomorrow!

He has only one place left in the world where he can set his foot: thus he will claim it with all his power and no one shall drive him from this little place. No one!

He is standing, tired, before his desk, looking at the confused heap of mail of all kinds that has arrived for him in the recent time.

That too, tomorrow. Tomorrow he will take up again the daily work. But for today he must sleep, for the first time in weeks at least try again to sleep one night.

Then he sees how a black-bordered envelope is protruding from the pile. Indifferently—for whom has he yet to lose?—he draws it out. He opens it. He reads: “By the inscrutable decision of God... after a short illness... at the age of fourteen years... our dear son Franz...”

He reads, and does not know what he is reading. He understands not a word. He puts the card back into the envelope and shoves it again among the others.

No, he is not crazy! His upper lip draws back, as if he wanted to laugh. No, he is not crazy!

Suddenly he leaves the room. He takes a carriage, names a street, climbs out and up the steps, and rings. He shoves the person who answers aside, goes down a hall, enters a room in which people in black clothing spring up, walks past them into a small side room, and—

And he lays both hands against his breast, for otherwise he would be tearing it. Only his eyes see. They see the change in this small room: the desk empty of books, his poor books, over which he suffered... the little, narrow bed... the little bed, empty...

He hesitates a moment. Then, holding his arms before him so that no one can approach him, he walks back through the room, through the people who fall back from him and the expression on his face, an expression such as they have probably never before seen on the face of a human being, walks through the hallway, and goes out.

Then, as he is standing on the steps outside, he hears behind him shuffling steps and a trembling voice. An old and withered hand is laid on his arm. It is the old grandmother.

"Herr Skaller," she says, "dear Herr Skaller, if you had only come earlier! He longed for you so much..."

Then he groaned aloud. It is the groan of a person who, in a railroad accident, is caught between two cars and can neither scream nor move, since his breast is crushed.

He looks at the old woman. Yes, it is the grandmother. Then she also shrinks back. And he walks down the steps again, climbs into the carriage again, is again in his room, takes his suitcase, which was standing there still unopened, rides to the railway station and on through the night, somewhere, he no longer knows where.

In some town or other—he hardly knows today in which he stopped—he collapsed the next morning in the street. There he lay in a hospital in a feverish dream, between life and death, for weeks, months—he no longer knows how long.

*

Somewhere and sometime. Where and when, Skaller did not know. Everything from that time seemed to have been erased from his memory forever. But he had been awakened.

When he was released from the hospital and for the first time saw himself again in a mirror, he did not recognize himself. His temples had turned gray and his face seemed to him old and strange. He was not even startled.

They told him that he was cured.

At first he remained in the town. Then he traveled on farther. And farther. And farther still. For long years. After months he spoke for the first time again to a human being. It was an old lady, by whom he had sat at a table. She had lost her husband and her three children in a shipwreck and was alone rescued. Since then she traveled around the world, aimlessly, like him. They never spoke of what had happened to them. But they talked, as people talk together who entirely agree on one thing. At parting the old lady kissed him on the forehead as he bent over her hand.

Then they traveled on. Skaller did not know where; he did not know why.

Why indeed was he still living? He often asked himself this. If he could have given himself an answer, it would probably have been only this, that he did not even find it worth the effort to put an end to his life. One day it would come to an end of itself.

He now knew again, oddly, everything that had happened. Everything had come back. He saw it, and saw it clearer and clearer. Time erased nothing. On the contrary. It only dug everything deeper and deeper into him, like sharp claws into his living flesh. But it was as if his body had become entirely insensitive to every pain. He hardly suffered any more from it. He only thought about it always. He could sit thus for many hours every day and think about it.

He had become someone entirely different. In relation to other people, too. They, who had once meant so much to him that he bent himself to their judgment, were now not once worth thinking about: what they did and what they thought. Only that he now had a horror of them! A horror, just as he had a horror of all of life!

He still had only one fear. He still had an unequaled fear of love... of every love... above all, of his own. When he now heard a young laugh, he closed his ears; and if his eyes looked by chance into the bright eyes of a boy, he turned away.

Yes, this love *existed*. But this love was *death*.

# The Sixth Picture

Skaller lay in the chair before his desk like a dead man. He had hardly moved for hours. His left hand covered his still firmly closed eyes; his right hung limp on the armrest. Both were ice cold. He scarcely breathed. He was no longer thinking. He was no longer feeling. Then he abruptly started.

Where was he? What had happened?

He came to himself. He rubbed his hand over his forehead, on which the cold sweat of his anxiety stood in pearls. He looked around. He was in his room, but it was completely dark around him. He stood up with difficulty. By the weak light that penetrated from the arc lamps on the street he looked at the clock. It showed ten. So he had sat there over two hours. He lit the two wax candles in the tall candelabrum before him, then lit the lamp on the side table. With the brightness the room seemed to become warmer. He stepped to the window, laid his hands against the frame and his moist forehead against it. He stood thus a while.

Suddenly there came over him a weakness, so strongly that he had to hold onto the window bolt so as not to fall. He was reeling. He remembered that he had eaten nothing since noon. Then he walked into the next room where, as always, his simple evening

meal was standing ready, and he ate some of the sandwiches. He then uncorked a flask of light red wine and quickly drank two glasses.

His thoughts returned, and with them recognition. What was he doing? What had he begun? No, that was more than a human being was able to bear! That meant to tear one's own flesh, open up old wounds and dig into them. What he was doing was madness and criminal! No! Away with them and out for yet another walk in the fresh air! How much better it would have been to spend the afternoon outside, even if alone and lonely, than to bury oneself here hour after hour, to unravel with cold hands the tangled ghost of dead years!

He walked quickly back to his desk. Away with the pictures! And then out for an hour or two, however late it already was. But first, away with the pictures!

Then, as he wished to lay them together, his glance fell on the nearest. How, what? How did this picture come here?! What was it still doing among these pictures? That was... and he clenched his hand to crumple it. But he did not do it. He looked thoughtfully down at the features. And he forgot what he had just decided: to put an end to this torment.

It was in vain. He felt that he must take to its end this path of memory, take it today, all the way to its end. He had started; now it no longer let go of him. He was not tired. He walked up and down again. With pale face, his teeth grinding, he set himself anew to the work of remembering, for it was just like work.

*

He again dove into the years that had come *afterwards*, as into a thick and impenetrable fog. Years of travel, passed in foreign lands. He had argued with his father. He hardly saw him or knew anything more of him. He was independent within modest limits. What he needed further he earned by translating from foreign languages. This was at the same time an activity that filled his hours and distracted his thoughts. It was still today the work that he did. He had mastered several languages, but he really spoke none. In those years in foreign lands—had he spoken with people at all?

Weeks, months, and finally years had passed, and they were all alike wherever he stayed. At times he remained longer at one place. Then suddenly, from one hour to the next, with no reason, he would travel on. For just as his life had no more purpose, so too it had no goal; and nothing drove him on, neither restlessness nor any hope. Only: one could not just remain always in the same place. He traveled, traveled, traveled...

He traveled, as he had earlier also traveled for long years. And yet, so very differently. For what had earlier driven him through countries had been a secret longing to find, somewhere, what he desired; and in the end the hope that fortune waited for him, a happiness that he must find. And if he was tired and disappointed, he still always knew that up there a heart beat for him and a lap waited for him, to which he could fly and bend over at any time, to rest in it—the lap that bore him. All that was over. No one asked him any more where he was going; he owed no one an accounting or even a word; and no one waited for him any longer. Thus he traveled. He no longer saw people, just as they did not see him. How many years had it been? Even he no longer knew. He scarcely knew any more where he had stayed.

At times he thought, if he thought at all, that he would one day end like this—between the walls of some hotel or hospital, in a strange bed under the hands of strangers and hired servants. He did not shudder at the thought. Only, it should not wait so very much longer. He was no longer even unhappy. No longer even that.

—But then the day finally came that tore him away from that life, which was no longer living, but rather only a slow and sad dying. And among all the many days of those long years only this one stood again before him. This one, however, in its full clarity. Again even today.

—After a long trip he had arrived at the strange place. Fall was already approaching, so he had gone further south. He had no other reason. He was only glad to sit in the sun—for hours.

He had selected a room in the large hotel like all the others who had arrived with him, but with the quiet consideration and indifference that always assured him the best; had, with a single pressure, opened the suitcases in which, from his proven habit of long trips, everything was handy in meticulous order, just as he needed it: the large one with his clothes and underwear by the side of the bed, and the small, flat one with his books

ready for work on the table; had washed himself and changed clothes; laid out his work and set his pictures upright in their travel frames: the same two that now stood before him; and had then gone down to dinner. He had done all this just as he had done it a hundred times already that year, and as he would presumably do yet another hundred in the next. For he was nowhere a stranger; and he was nowhere at home. Truly—he did not think about it.

When he sat down in a corner of the dining room (he always sought corners) and his glance now went indifferently over the other tables, he saw that a gentleman with a boy was sitting not far from him, and with this one glance he also saw already that they were neither father and son nor relatives. After a second, brief look in their direction, he moved his seat so that he could not see them. He slowly ate his solitary meal as always, but on leaving he also avoided glancing at the table with the two.

He then worked in his room, to pass the evening hours. It gave him no pleasure, his work, since nothing gave him pleasure any more. But it distracted him, and therefore he was grateful that he had it.

Now he was genuinely tired after the trip and wanted to go to bed. First, however, he stepped to the open window to have yet another glance into the famous garden of the hotel, of which he had heard, and to get yet another breath of fresh air. He did not want to and yet he must think about it this evening: it would now go on and on like this, from one place to another, and one day it would be at an end—but when, when finally?! And he felt: it should not last much longer—no, not much longer. For it was becoming heavier, this burden that he dragged about with him, heavier and not lighter. But he should not think about it, he should not! He wanted to see the garden and then he wanted to sleep.

Yes, it was a splendid garden. The moon poured its full light through the high, tropical trees, which seemed to prosper very well here, and over the white, raked paths. Early tomorrow he wanted to walk through them and see where he could find himself a solitary corner for the next weeks.

Then two forms stepped into the light. It was the gentleman from the dining room and his young companion. They must have believed themselves unobserved at this already late hour, for they talked, while they walked arm in arm, as if they were alone, familiarly and quite intimately. He was unable to hear what they were saying, although they

were now standing almost under his window. But he saw how suddenly the boy removed his arm from that of the older man, raised it up, and wrapped it around his neck, while he—so much smaller than the other—drew him down to himself and kissed him intimately on the mouth. Then, while the latter affectionately laid his arm around his shoulder, they walked on farther, close beside one another, and disappeared among the trees of the park.

Pale down to his lips, he stepped back into his room as if he must not see what, against his will, he had nevertheless seen.

Now he was standing again at the window, his hands grasping the curtains. He felt a pain as strong as he had felt only once in his life and which he believed he could never again feel. But this pain was stronger than he was. He stood thus for a long time. Slowly his forehead sank, deeper and deeper. Then, as he raised his hand to it, to prop it up, he felt that his eyes were moist: as if the ice that had lain on his heart for years was melting, as if an epoch was opening with these tears. He was not ashamed of them. For he had understood! *Finally he had understood!*

—Despite the late hour he rang for service. He had champagne brought to him. As the solitary celebration came to an end in that night, which had given life back to him, it was all clear to him. He was quite clear, quite calm, quite decided. In this night he had looked his destiny in the eyes, whose glance he had so long avoided, and—finally he had understood it. He bowed to it and then—raised his head.

He departed with the first train that left in the morning.

*

—Two days later, in the evening, he was in that large city, the largest of the empire, where he had lived for so many years now in the small apartment he had set up for himself. It was his home, which he rarely left for a long period. He had grown tired of traveling. He knew now what he was missing and what he needed in his life: a human being, whom he could love. He sought him, and—had he found him?

This picture here was of him. And Skaller picked up the picture: for the first time in years he looked again at those features. It was certainly a handsome face. But—the more

he now regarded it—how had it been possible that he was unable to see then what he now saw so clearly in every feature: the empty coldness of those eyes, the stupid arrogance of that forehead, the cruel line of those lips? Because he had been blind? Because his eyes had been turned away for so long from life that he had forgotten how to see? Perhaps. Perhaps that was the reason. But surely too, because now the first who came across his path seemed to him the best, and he took in order to finally be able to give.

He scarcely knew any more where and when he had found him. He only still knew, knew today, that he had clung to him, to him who was already sinking in the mire of life, like a drowning man—and that he had been foolish enough to believe that in that way he could rescue them both. For thus he had found him—in the mire.

He cleaned, fed and clothed him. He helped him: he took care of him with the love of a mother and the concern of a brother. He let him do as he liked. For everyone should find the way back up again for himself. He did not want to force him to another life. He only wanted to help him, finally help for once, truly be able to help. For at that time he still believed—how foolish he had still been!—that such a life itself must have the wish to cleanse itself, if the possibility were offered. He did not yet know what he knew today, that there are beings who are comfortable only in dirt and who never think of wanting to cleanse themselves, simply because it is too uncomfortable for them to wash in the cold water of work.

It lasted a long time before his eyes were to open. Perhaps they would have seen earlier. But something happened that bound him more firmly to this person than anything else at that time could have done: he became ill. By his earlier traffic with women he had contracted one of those terrible diseases that Skaller knew only by name until then, but which he was now to become acquainted with, to become acquainted with like a doctor.

He was sick. This meant for Skaller: to help him and to stand by him at any price, until he was cured! And he helped: week after week; month after month; one year, two—again and again the sickness broke out, the poison boiled up anew in this young but already so infected body, and always anew—outwardly healed—the other placed his sickness between himself and every possibility of having finally to go to work. Skaller went with him from doctor to doctor and, shuddering, got to know what this sickness meant. He comforted him and spoke words of encouragement, he who was himself so much in

need of courage. He tore from him the weapon with which in desperation he wanted to put an end to it, as if this life were *his* life for which he fought. He helped and helped, and he never tired of helping.

For so he now understood the meaning of his life: that the older had to be for the younger a friend in everything without wavering. He wanted to fulfill this meaning. So he helped, and gave and gave, and worked for both of them. But just as he never became tired of giving, so the other never became tired of taking: taking with that air of obliviousness that is never moved or pleased, but rather always leaves in the one giving the feeling of never really having given enough. He, Skaller, never became tired, because he did not want to become tired. Only, with time he could no longer deny that he gave with joy what was taken without joy. But he wanted to carry out his task without resting.

Did he love him? He probably did not know himself. There was no question here of any other love than that of friendship, from which even a kiss was excluded. He had never touched him. He did not allow himself to touch him. But did this love not show itself to be love, by the very fact that it could refuse nothing?

Did he love him? He did not know. He often believed it himself no longer. But if the other suddenly stayed away and he ran through the streets, mad with anxiety, to look for him, then, in those hours, he felt that his fear of again losing the last thing he possessed was the chain that still bound them together. For if he no longer had this fear, then everything was empty in his life, empty as before, in his life that had indeed just gained its one meaning: to help! But it was difficult; and it was triply difficult, because it was made so difficult for him. Yet he stood by his oath: to rescue this soul! But just as everything in the world comes to an end, so too a day came here that, from one day to the next, put an end to it. Skaller also saw it again before him, that day, and it too as if it had been yesterday.

*

The day and the hour. It is here, in this room, on an afternoon. He has been waiting for him.

Again he had thought everything over. He had mulled over, again and again, how he was to make it possible to continue to help here, where every help was refused. And he had finally made an accounting. He can delude himself no longer: his help was misused, disgracefully misused; misused so as to lead with it the life of an idler and loafer. For he has long since been able to work again, he for whom he had cared for so long. Long since. The doctors laughed at him when he asked. For a long time already. He is not entirely cured, for this disease is probably never entirely cured. But he is able to work. His sickness is now just an excuse.

Therefore, he intends to speak to him today, friendly and affectionate as always, but still seriously, quite seriously. He intends to say to him that he will never leave him: but he intends to say too that it cannot go on like this.

He arrives. How tired and listless his steps are as he walks in, how tired and indifferent this greeting thrown out! But then, has he ever come otherwise?

He speaks and the boy listens. That, too, is like always: always he has to speak to start any kind of conversation at all between them; it always has to be he who keeps the conversation going—that is tiring, really tiring with time. He speaks to him: not unfriendly, for he has never spoken in an unfriendly way to him, but seriously, just as he intended. He looks straight ahead as he does so. He knows: every word he says must cut him, although that is not its intention, for it is the truth.

He speaks. He tells him that it is now time to finally pull himself up out of his passive existence; it is time to think about the future; time to work, yes, to work. He speaks and the old, obstinate silence is the only answer he gets.

He leans over. His searching glance sinks deeply into those eyes, and what he reads there is—a threat! He does not want to believe what he sees. He bends over once again. But he can no longer doubt: what he reads in those eyes full of fathomless coldness is a hidden, but clearly recognizable threat. A threat that says: “Talk as much as you want to. You will continue to give to me what I want and need. For—you *must* give!”

This threat was suddenly erased, however. He has stood up, walked toward him, and is now standing close before him, looking at him as if he meant to bring this threat out of its hiding place, and so frightful must have been in this moment the expression of his own

eyes that the threat crept back completely and only an ashen and cowardly fear showed itself on the pale face.

All that he said was the one word: “You?... You!... You!!... You!?” The first time in amazement, like something inconceivable. The second in a sudden perception, but still not a true comprehension. The third in bitter pain, as if something finally lost entirely. The fourth time, however, only unspeakable disdain, a ridicule, an ending. And then only the silent wave of his hand at the door, through which he walked out, through the door that opened and closed, and would never open again for him who had just slipped out through it like a beaten dog.

He remains alone. He is standing there, without movement, as if before a grave into which he has thrown years and years of his life, years and more *dead* years. He is again completely alone. Only he knows *how* alone he is and what that means for him: to again be so alone. But then something jolts him and grips him by the throat: it is disgust, which wants to choke him. Yet, he raises his forehead and shakes it off. He will live, For he *wills* to live.

*

And the same disgust jolts him again. But also the same liberating smile that had broken out on his lips then—he found it today too.

How stupid this young person had been, in spite of all his slyness, if he believed he was able to drive fear into him with a threat! And how little he knew him, in spite of their so long connection! He did not know him at all. He had understood nothing and comprehended nothing. Yes, it was true: he, Skaller, knew anxiety, that basic feeling of every living being, he knew anxiety and horror: of life, of himself, of the others, their stupidity and their malicious cruelty—but fear, no, he did not know *fear*, least of all of people and their laws, and thus that person with his threat had achieved only the opposite of what he wished, and everything had come to an end between them with one blow. He laughed over *that* again now.

What did not let the disgust disappear from his lips and what filled him today with almost the same outrage as then was that this person, who owed him his miserable life

and who himself, from the standpoint of that absurd law, did not have the least hold on him, that this person wanted to use the monstrous and stupid prejudice against *him*, who in the years of friendship had shown him—if nothing else—what this love was and what it could be! And he had understood *nothing*! Nothing!

Disgust, yes, disgust!

Away, away with this picture! But as he grasped it and spread his hand over it again to crumple it, he did not close it, and the picture fell down onto the table with the other pictures. And there it was to remain. He knew now that he had never loved him. But he had believed he loved him, and he had never fought for any person more than for this one. That was possible only once, and only then. Today he would have neither the strength nor the will for it. He was quite clear about it in this hour.

When he wanted to lay the picture aside, his glance rested yet a last time on the features that had become foreign and forgotten, and again he was astonished over how clearly he saw today what had been completely hidden at the time: the coldness of those eyes, the indolence of that mouth, and the emptiness of the forehead. But even today he did not shut out the beauty of those so cruelly wasted lines, the beauty of the full lips with the flawless teeth, that nose with its slightly flaring nostrils, those soft cheeks with their still so faultless skin.

Probably today that no longer young face was unrecognizably ruined. He would no longer recognize it if he saw it again. But he would never see it again, just as he had never seen it again since that final hour. He heard of him once more: he had entirely gone to ruin; then he read his name in the newspaper: he had been given a long sentence for blackmail and pimping. That was the inevitable end. He hardly felt pain any more when he read it. For it was still always the same, as if he could feel no more pain at all. It was always as if he had used up to the last bit his ability to suffer. Even if that person was still alive—he was dead for him.

—Why could he never get rid of those years in his thoughts? Nothing but a dull and heavy sadness over the lost years was in him, but only today, really today for the first time, there entered his consciousness how entirely comfortless those years had also been. He sought in vain in them for an hour, only one, in which he could have breathed like other people—freely in the light of day; in vain, too, for a glimmer of joy, such as from

love and friendship breaks out in the mutual opening up of hearts; in vain for a friendly word, for a shadow of sympathy for his own life, while he pined away in concern and anxiety for that of the stranger—nothing, nothing but this never ending, wearing struggle for a being who—not happy, not youthful, and early inwardly broken—only followed one conscious goal: to live at his expense, indolent and lazy, just as long as he could.

It had gone on for a long time, much too long. He had kept the word he had given, until the end. But today he could no longer hide from himself how useless and purposeless this struggle had also been. Yet even today, as so often earlier, he searched for excuses and he found many. Certainly: he himself at that time had not been a happy and easy friend, such as youth sought and needed. He must have attempted many things wrongly. Since he had always given, the other had always taken. His always-even patience had been taken for weakness; until the end the thought could have nested in that dull and little brain: it is fear.

He did not yet know young people, not yet those odd years of life in all their confusion and ambiguity. He had come from years that had been nothing but *one* long night, and he had brought little more from them than the burning will to love and to help. He had still believed that love *must* awaken love, and thus here, too, the eternal victory of a cold over a warm heart had been inexorably carried out once again.

So it had been. He had wanted to rescue a soul. Only there was no soul there. If that was a fault, well—he had done severe penance for his sin.

—Skaller did not tear up the picture. He walked restlessly up and down. He could not free himself from those years. Even if they had been empty, empty as the earlier ones of love and warmth—in comparison to the dead ones they had been life. For they had opened his eyes. The great tear in the veil that separated him and life—it had gone through *these* years and now it had fallen; and as he had begun to see, he had also begun to live.

He now had to begin to learn. But with life he also wanted to get to know his love and its narrow and dangerous place on the edge of this life. No longer from books. Other books had followed that one, which many years before he had clutched to himself with pounding heart and carried off like booty. He read them with no more excitement. They could no longer tell him anything that he did not know. He wanted to seek it in life, this

love, and he found it everywhere. It was restricted to no age and no class, no sex and no social circle of people; it was found in the country just as in town; among the rich as among the poor; among the cultured and those who called themselves so, as among the uneducated; around and on thrones, just as at their feet; it was found among those who worked with their intellect, just as among those who worked with their hands; it had existed everywhere and at every time—among all peoples of the earth from its beginning on. It was found in individuals who hid themselves with it, as with their darkest secret, in the farthest corners of their life, whom no one, even the closest, suspected; and Skaller now knew that everywhere there were small circles among the larger, of the public world, unattainably secluded, to which only he found the way who knew the secret sign that opened their discreet gates.

He thought it over, and what he further saw was this: that within the circle of this love for the same sex there was a huge, unbridgeable contrast, as strong as that between man and woman: that between the masculine man, whose masculine inclination was for masculine youth—the ancient love of the Greeks—and that of the man with a feminine disposition, or perhaps better said, of the outwardly masculine female who is inclined to men—the late Roman empire showed these cases unmistakably and in large numbers, even if they may have had nothing to do with its downfall.

Doctors had taken over this love. For doctors, people had value only if they were sick. Thus a new sex was constructed, a third, which stood between the two sexes: stages that were supposed to lead from the one to the other, and everywhere signs were sought that were to distinguish them from the norm, and thus demonstrate their “scientific justification”.

Naturally there were such transitions. In nature there are only transitions. Transitions of the most variable kind. But to seek to line up here men who differ from other men in nothing but that their inclination is for the younger of their own, instead of the other sex, and only for that reason, was an absurdity only still possible in a time like ours, which allows only doctors to have the word in this matter. A new error, fateful above all for those whom it touched.

He, Skaller, was a man and he felt himself entirely as such. Nothing in his being, his manner, his inclination was feminine. So much so, that everything called feminine re-

pelled him, above all in love. He also felt himself in no way “deprived” by nature. More unbearable than disdain appeared to him a pity he did not want, and that faint-hearted excusing appeared insulting, which they were beginning to show these “unfortunates and outcasts”.

Was nothing to be spared this love? Cursed by parsons of all religions and all sects as an unmentionable sin; prosecuted by judges, whom people in their foolishness had set over themselves as such, it had now happily fallen into the hands of the doctors, some of whom still sought to cure it as a sickness, but the others, who knew that it could not be a sickness, sought to rescue it by placing it between the sexes, dug for bodily and spiritual differences, in order to systematize them in thick books, in which they were then shut up all together, all together, beyond help. It was horrible!

No, this love was truly spared nothing. Nothing.

Cursed as a sin, outlawed as a crime, pitied as a sickness—the last was the worst of the three. One could return the hatred of the fanatical glance, disdain the prosecutors, but to endure the pity of the timid and curious—that was simply unbearable!

He, Skaller, did not want it at all. He had had enough of all that. He wanted neither to return those glances, nor to resist them. He simply wanted to no longer see them. He did not want to have anything to do with the parsons, nor with the judges, and least of all with the doctors. They were to leave him in peace, entirely in peace. He also wanted to have nothing to do with women. As gladly as he spoke now and then with clever, especially elderly clever women, distasteful to his soul were all those specifically feminine traits that the other men obviously did not see at all: their vanity in purely external things, their pettiness and liking for gossip, that vainness, that completely hollow and senseless social chatter, and that silly fuss and behavior with which they unceasingly carry on their hunt for a husband, and it seemed just inexplicable to him how such a man could let himself be caught with it, particularly into the lifelong yoke of marriage.

But he did not want to wander down that path today with his thoughts—what did that matter to him?—and today! Once more, however, he let them return to that picture—he again remembered a night with complete clarity, a night in which he had taken a deep look into that strange world and had really seen how strange it was to him, this world in

which those men lived, who—were *not* like him. Into this night, too, it was he, whose picture he again held in his hand, who had enticed him.

For in it he was seeking him, whom he still always hoped to rescue, still wanted to rescue at any price, like a gambler who seeks to rescue what he has lost with always new stakes.

It was an odd night. He had lost him again for days. He no longer knew where he should look for him, except there where he feared to find him. His reason told him again and again: let him go; but his heart, his lonely heart, which possessed nothing except him, drove him on: seek! So he sought in this night, with an inner resistance, but driven by restlessness and anxiety, in places he only knew by hearsay—taverns of the third and fourth class, to which they fled with their fate, to feel themselves together here and among their own. What Skaller saw filled him with disgust and deep sadness. But the latter prevailed. He did not find the one he was seeking there, and he should have been happy over that, but he had not a trace of pleasure from that night, and not for days afterwards.

These places were in all the regions of the city: some in the north, others in the south, and Skaller got around a lot in those hours. In some of these places it was quiet and peaceful, and they scarcely differed from others in their dull boredom; in many it was all the louder. Everywhere, as a stranger, he was at first stared at with a look of curiosity and mistrust, or of fear, but soon they did not notice him sitting in a corner and he could observe undisturbed. There were men, if one could call them so at all, some even in women's clothing, of whom one did not know whether they were still men, or were already women—of an effeminate appearance, effeminate manner, and obviously quite feminine feelings, and they conducted themselves entirely like women, obviously feeling quite at ease in the role. They called one another with women's names, acted affectionate, and there was a shouting and screeching such as one usually finds only where women frequent. There were others, obviously men, of whom one did not know just what had brought them here, and of whom one noticed nothing special, but who must indeed have had some kind of interest in visiting here. And there were—it pained Skaller—young people, young and fresh lads, many still boys, who were driven here by need and poverty, neglect and frivolity, and sold themselves here. He spoke a couple of words with one who

approached him. But when the boy then openly offered himself, Skaller's interest vanished and he walked on, but not before giving the surprised boy what he perhaps would have expected for his service.

He had not found the one he was looking for and had returned home. But once the night was begun, he, who so seldom interrupted the regularity of his life, wanted to end it by casting a glance into that life that did not need to hide itself, and from which the noisy and insolent world, which was at home there, borrowed its name, and he went from cafe to bar. Was this life basically so different from that other? There, poor and cast out people, who came together to forget the misery and loneliness of their existence for a couple of hours. And here? Was it not the same addiction of numbing oneself and forgetting? Here just as there, a loud and noisy joviality, an intoxication that could only be followed by a sad awakening, but here just as there, no trace of joy. Joy? How could amusements give joy? Only love could do that. And he saw no love in that night. But it seemed to him downright monstrous, this contrast between those who defied the world in their shameless openness, who wanted to show themselves in order to be seen; and those who must hide themselves from it, in order not to be seen!

—He, however, needed it, this joy, which he found nowhere, this joy of love. A love that did not need to creep behind petticoats and hide itself, not from the day nor from the night, and which required no protection, not that of the doctors, not even that of science. A love that was sufficient to itself and had need of nothing other than its own courage. A love that must be gained and held in the work of deciding for it. A love that could not be given him by the one he wished to teach and whom he sought in vain for the last time in that night. A love that he therefore must look for in another heart and on another breast in order to find it.

He felt it again on that afternoon and stronger than ever: he needed a human being, a young person, whom he loved and who loved him in return. It only had to be the right one. This one was not he. For he who was the right one would have loved him in return.

Once more, for the last time this day and perhaps forever, Skaller looked into the beautiful and cold features of the picture. And the lost years seemed to sink into their nothingness. Lost? No, they were really not. For those years had opened his eyes and showed him life. Therefore this picture was to remain untorn.

But now away from it, to brighter and better years. And as it fell to the other pictures, he picked up the next.

# The Seventh Picture

Skaller walked to the window. It had become night outside. Now the people had returned home, lights had been lit in the rooms and put out again, and the Sunday was at an end. The morning began again a new week of joyful or joyless work for all. It was always

the same, week after week, Sunday after Sunday, but one day it was all over for each one. For him too.

Skaller again walked up and down through his two rooms. He was no longer hungry and only mechanically, so as to empty the plate that was standing there, slowly ate the last slices of his evening bread and in sips emptied another glass of wine with them. While he still held the glass in his hand his glance fell on the back of a book and he read a beloved name—the name of a poet whom only they could *entirely* understand, who knew who and what he was, and whom, therefore, the majority did not understand at all. He stretched out his hand to pick up the book. He wanted to read a bit and then go to bed. But he drew his hand back again. He was not finished yet, not by a long way.

He began again. Again he walked up and down.

Fate had been hard on him, as hard as only something undeserved can be. Truly it had begrudged him nothing—had burdened him with as much as he was able to bear, and more. But he did not want to let this fate get him down. When he had recognized it for what it was, he began his fight with it, the fight that he was still fighting today and which he would fight until the end of his days. He had looked it in the eyes—his fate. Only then, when he had set himself in opposition to what it wished to impose on him and no longer shrank back, but rather met its gaze eye to eye and held his ground, only then did his life become different. Different and—brighter. His life had meaning. It had become a fight. A fight for his love! Skaller stopped pacing around. And he again stepped to his desk. Onward! Which was the next picture?

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Three, held together by a ribbon. He stripped it off and held them in his hand.

Bernhard. Yes, that was his good Bernhard: his friendly eyes, which always looked at the world somewhat questioningly; his friendly, always friendly smile; and the brown cheeks, then still smooth. His face: a good face and a nice face, but neither handsome nor especially intelligent. Just as Bernhard himself had been: good, honest and trustworthy. What an honest and thoroughly decent boy he had really been! And what a good, peace-

ful, untroubled friendship, that between them in those three years, until he had to go away!

As he was in the first picture, that was how he had been when they had met; and in that one when they had to part and he went to sea: from the boy of fifteen he had become the youth of eighteen, tall, strong and healthy, the first fuzz showing on his lip and his breast, and shoulders broad in the powerful growth of those years. But his eyes, the good-hearted and childlike eyes, with which he had looked into his own with boundless trust and without a deceitful thought, those eyes were entirely the same in the two pictures, in their questioning and always a bit astonished expression.

Even in the third picture he had not entirely lost it. For there was yet a third picture. This, however, was no longer a youth, but already almost a man: in his sailor uniform with his bare, wide breast and his downy cheeks. Yet, even here, in his eyes, which had already seen many foreign lands and many peoples—oddly, here too there was still a bit of that childlike and questioning expression, as if life still seemed a marvel not quite understood. Skaller had received this picture not so very long ago, and the eyes of the man, who had changed so much, reminded him again of the boy whom he had loved, and they told him that he had remained the same good and true person that he had been, as long as he had known him.

He still wrote to him from time to time of his wide travels, from some distant overseas port, sometimes a card, but now and then also a letter, and in all this correspondence, in which he faithfully related what he had experienced and told of his fleeting sailor's love for foreign women and girls, one note was sounded: "But it is still not as beautiful as it was with you, dear Fenny, and I don't believe I can be as fond of any girl as I was of you." Skaller received and read these awkward letters with a peculiar feeling: there really must be something about this love.

And he thought of the time when they had gone a ways beside one another in such good friendship. Certainly, it was not the exultant, heaven-storming happiness that draws the stars down to earth, of which he had once dreamed; it was also not the indissoluble melting of souls, who have only one thought left, since they are only one thought; it was not even the deep, mutual understanding of friendship in each and every thing, and in going after the same goal—it was only that warm sympathy of two decent human beings,

that joy in one another, that understanding of the heart in small, everyday things, sharing on the one side, gratitude on the other—and thus it was indeed a happiness: a small happiness, a corner of happiness. And Skaller took pleasure in it, in the bright and warm light that it brought into his dark life, and he carefully and affectionately guarded the sweet flame. For he now had a person he could think about, could care for, and of whom he knew that he too was thinking about him without deceit, that he too is happy when he sees him, that he too shares in him as far as he is able.

His thoughts now went clearer and more peacefully; his life no longer seemed so completely unbearable; and like his thoughts, his senses also found peace in this love, and distinctly, like an enlightenment, he recognized its hidden mutual effect. He returned refreshed from those young arms, those arms that were always ready to draw him close and so reluctant to let him go—refreshed, yes, that was it. Not elevated—that would have been perhaps too much. But he was just happy that he had what he no longer needed to thirst for so much.

It had been a healing. Only now did he feel how much until then he had sinned—against himself!

In quiet gratitude he thought of the time, and of an evening, one among many.

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They have spent the evening together. At a strange place. They have chatted together, eaten and drunk, and they have loved. It has been like often before. Now his boy wants to depart, for he must go home. They have already taken their leave. Then, already at the door, he turns once again, goes back to him, lays his arms once more around his neck and once again gives him a parting kiss. He only smiles. He says nothing. Then he quickly walks out.

Skaller, alone now, also smiles. He knows why he returned. He had wanted to tell him by it, what a boy never says: that he loves him. He smiles. He is happy. It is so comforting to know that one is loved by such a young person. It is something he scarcely knows. And if he does know it, it was so long ago.

He sits down again comfortably in the armchair by the open window and looks through the smoke of his cigar at the strange area of the city. Down there before him stretches in the burning heat of the falling summer evening the wide square, over which the wagons roll and people come and go, stretches the gigantic iron hall of the railway station with its black mouth that sucks in and spits out the hissing trains, stretches and extends itself immeasurably in its sultry, damp summer mist the metropolis with its smoking roofs, yellow-red in the clash of its own uncountable lights with the rays of the sinking sun. Hot and stirring it penetrates inside, this summer evening, as if it wanted to entice him in thought to once again live through the last hours. He gives in. He dreams... and the dream is as beautiful as the reality had been.

There on the vacant bed he again sees the slender, symmetrical body that he has just now held in his arms, he senses again the fresh scent of the clean skin, and he hears again the young heart beating on his own, feels those warm lips on his lips. How beautiful it was, how beautiful and—how pure!

He smiles. A peacefulness is in him as never before in his life. Finally his longing is silent. It has been stilled. He would like nothing further, than always to sit like this at the open window and wait until he returns through that door there.

He smiles. For he may be at ease. Just like today will it be many times yet, many times yet. Until Bernhard then will stand before him one day, a bit ashamed, but still not embarrassed: “I have met a girl, and...” and he will let him go to the strange arms and to his new happiness. For he wills his happiness, and he knows that every person seeks it where he believes he will find it.

Today he is still his, still entirely his—with every thought, with every beat of his heart, with all that he can give him and so gladly gives. And that time is still distant. May it yet be quite distant, he thinks. He smiles. He cannot separate himself from that strange place of their happiness. Finally he holds it. Finally he calls someone his own. And as he smiles, there comes into his smile the glow of a secret triumph. He has fought for it and conquered it, this little happiness. He has ripped it from his persecutors and he must hide it from them so that they will not come and take it away again. And he clenches his fist against the sea of stone out there before him:

"Great whore, you who scatter the joys of love over everyone, even the poorest of the poor, and who begrudge the smallest to us alone—I defy you, you great whore!"

He clenches his fist, but then smiles, and again his smile is full of a secret happiness as he looks at the smoke of his cigar, which is drawn out the window, as if it, a little cloud, wanted to unite with the big cloud that lay heavy and moist, like the sinking summer evening, over this great city that today he had just begun to love.

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Skaller threw his head back with a movement that was peculiar to him. Yes, the people and their judgment of his love, to which he had long since become indifferent, he had entirely overcome at that time, down to the last bit. Finally he had become free, late, but now completely free.

Their judgment was no judgment. It was a sentencing without grounds, without proof, without a hearing even from the one sentenced. A sentence not spoken before the eyes of the world, in the light of day, but rather passed in the dark dungeons of silence—"behind closed doors". It was worthless, this judgment, just as the laws were meaningless on which it was based. For the laws forbade what nature ordered. Long, all too long, he had obeyed those human laws. From now on he intended to obey only the laws of his nature. For to continue to obey the former and submit himself to them meant to destroy himself. To finally listen to himself, however, meant to rescue himself. Rescue from sickness, from madness, from despair. For what else did those insane laws demand than lifelong chastity? But however different people might be in the degree of their need—no saint and no monk had ever done it. Whoever tried it perished, and was not only a criminal against himself, but also a fool. For this reason those laws were only on paper and in reality no one concerned himself about them.

He had tried to. Not from respect for laws (they had never been important to him), and also not from respect for people (which was less and less, the more he came to know them), no—he had just not understood his love himself; and when he understood it, he had learned to be afraid of it, as—but no, he could not go back this evening once again to those years! He would have been unable to bear it.

Onward therefore, onward.

He was still in fear of it, as every person fears, who loves. But he was neither a saint nor a monk. He was a healthy human being with healthy senses. He could not force himself to a woman, and to attempt it would seem to him now a betrayal and a crime against them both. He had tried it once, many years ago, and he still thought back on it with horror and shame.

He knew that there were some, even many, whose inclination was directed to both sexes. Not his own: he knew only *one* love—his *own*. He wanted to give to it, consciously and knowingly give, what he was still able to give. But in no way did he want to violate his nature any more.

He paused in his restless walking up and down. His glance once again met the three pictures. Calmly and trustingly the good eyes looked directly into his... and his thoughts continued. It was stimulating to think this question out to its final conclusion: to pose to himself the question, into which he now saw so clearly, quite naked, and pure in its nakedness.

There was no human question that was so veiled, and under its veil so distorted, as this one. None where the incongruity between illusion and reality was so shockingly and at the same time so laughably great as this. Therefore, down with all veils!

What did people really know of this love, of which they could know nothing for the very reason that they wanted to know nothing? Nothing. The mob in the street trampled it under dirty jokes and vulgar insults. That was “popular feeling”. And the educated rabble stifled it under the cover of silence with their highly suggestive smiles. That was “education”. All, however, all together were thinking here always of “acts” that, *if* they spoke of their own love, they would never associate with it. What these acts were, which ones... here Skaller’s thoughts stopped short. Always when he had got this far he found it impossible to continue and go on, so impossible did it appear to him and so inconceivable *what* those people thought. And he was ashamed by those strange thoughts.

He knew that sad passion knows every sad depth and that whatever could be thought of here, also happened in reality. Money—money was also all powerful here, being able to buy itself everything. He knew that there are people whose gratification consists in

causing pain, just as there are those who desire to feel pain so as to reach their gratification. He knew that—

But no! To this point and no farther in his thoughts! These sad depths did not entice *him* and had never enticed him, and above all it was monstrous to touch this love, which was his, even from a distance and with even only *one* of those thoughts!

If people were unable to think of it otherwise in their errors that had not been contradicted for centuries, it was nevertheless an error, which must be cleared up one day like all errors. What did he have to do with it? In what way did it concern him? None! Only, that he suffered under it.

Never had he sought any other kind of gratification in his love than breast on breast, lips on lips with his beloved, and that other seemed to him unthinkable; and never had he drawn another breast to his than that which gladly and willingly nestled on it.

What did it matter to him, what people thought! And why did they always speak only of seduction! Whoever looked impartially here and accepted the facts as they were must see quite otherwise. Who, then, "seduced" the one he loved? Who, on the contrary, did not take care, anxiously take care, to guard him from seduction of any kind that lurks in his life, to guard against it as long as possible? And were not things here in reality—unfortunately—such that—no matter where—among thousands of adolescents there was scarcely one who was not seduced, not by an older man, but rather by someone his own age with whom he was growing up, in constant touch with them? School provided the first seduction, and where was the fifteen- or sixteen-year-old who (how often not already earlier!—yes *much* earlier) did not succumb to it? *That's the way it was.* Everyone who in any way came into close contact with that age knew that this was so. In that age that question just posed itself spontaneously and unavoidably, and if it got no answer, then it gave itself one playfully or sought from contemporaries, whom it drove in the same unrest and anxiety to them, just as they were driven, an answer that much too strongly was branded with the word "vice" and quite wrongly with that of "juvenile pranks". Was it not much better, then, that this age found its answer in a love that was still the best answer among all that could be given, since love was there and not the crudeness of some chance event?

Seduction? All right, if it was really seduction and was carried out under some injury to the right of the other, by persuasion or even force, then it could be punished as an interference in the right of the other. But only then. On the other hand, one should not touch mutual affection. Here others could only harm, never help; and what concerned only two people was no business of a third.

Skaller again threw his head back. He laughed briefly to himself.

Oh no, he had truly not been born to be a libertine. He had seduced no one. He had harmed no one. And none of those whom he had frequented had ever thought of making an accusation against him of any such kind. When it had come to acts between them—well, no words were lost over them, so self-evident did it seem that their love and inclination also found that expression. What did others want there? He was willing to bear the responsibility for himself and for those who had been his friends. But he owed the others no accounting and no explanation.

—The eyes of the pictures looked at him as they had always done—calmly, friendly and trustingly. He returned their gaze.

Nothing had given him such a confirmation of the rightness of his love, if he still needed it, than this friendship of years. He thanked him for it yet with a glance that the other was no longer able to return, and yet now seemed to return.

That knowledge had come late, but then unshakably.

His youth was over. But he still felt within himself the whole power to love, still not at all used up, and it seemed to him that it was in the time of this friendship that it first began for him—his youth—for him, who had known no youth.

# The Eighth Picture

Quiet reigned now in the street below. Scarcely even a wagon rolled by now and then. It was dark and the turning from day to night had long since passed.

The candles burned with a light scent and the old, faithful lamp beamed its gentle light from under its green shade. Ferdinand Skaller was still smiling to himself with a serious smile. But a deep tenderness came into his smile when his glance fell on the next picture, on the top of a small bundle of pictures.

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For it was an entire, small bundle of pictures that now fell apart when he untied the string that held them. Of no one were there so many and so varied pictures as of this one. Very diverse pictures: different in format, different in their quality. This one here he had taken himself with his Kodak on one of the excursions—where had it been? This one came from the canvas studio of a wandering photographer—it was certainly no work of art, but had therefore only cost fifty cents. And this was a proud confirmation picture, one or two years earlier, when they had met—a dozen had been made for the family—and was very comical. And finally there were these, in several positions, which he had had made in a good studio after much effort getting him there—the man had been wise enough to watch for the moment when he was talking and laughing: they therefore all looked just like him.

Diverse pictures, but on all of them the same small, dear face and the cheerful eyes with their fine wrinkles in the corners, the cheeks with the two dimples, and the somewhat pouting, full and red lips with their charming laugh, that laugh—Skaller abruptly pressed his hand against his eyes, so clearly did he hear that laugh again, and so strongly was the longing suddenly in him, to hear again once more, only once more, that silver, that unforgettable laugh!

How he had loved it! How he had loved him! He had been his “little one”, his little lamb, his Walter! His poor little one!

For it had been poor, that little life to which nothing was given besides cheerfulness of temper and goodness of heart, and thus no strength of resistance at all to guard himself against this life. He should have lived on a blessed island, under eternal sun, in an atmosphere that was no burden, not here in this northern, gray city with its inhuman demands by day and its comfortless pleasures by night!

Skaller looked at the pictures.

Where did he come from, that small creature that one day nestled on his breast as if to warm itself? Where does the butterfly come from, which one summer day alights on our hand and delights our eye for a while with the colorful brilliance of its wings?

Where did he go? Where has that laugh gone, which unexpectedly strikes our ear and charms us with its silver sound, and has already died away before we have had time to turn our head to listen for whence it came?

Thus it had been: today he was there, and Skaller scarcely knew any more when and whence he had come; and tomorrow he could already be gone again, gone as if he had never been. Three or four times like that: one time it lasted a couple of weeks, another time even several months—but it was always the same in the end: today he possessed him, happy to hold him, and tomorrow the street could have swallowed him again, that street, long and broad, on which all walked, who had no home and no refuge, and whose insatiable current swallowed everyone who let himself be carried along by it, without being a path to any goal.

He had fought with the street for him, and always he was the one who was beaten! He had tried everything, again and again: he had taken a room for him with a decent family—one day he had vanished, without leaving behind even a word of farewell; he had found him one position after another—he could not keep any of them; in one already on the third day he had lost a valuable letter that he was supposed to carry to the post office; and in another he was soon let go because of his absolute inability for any kind of punctuality (whereby Skaller himself once received from the well-meaning manager the laughing advice that it was easier to teach a poodle to sail than to get this feather-duster used to regular work). Only his own good sense had saved him from a final attempt: that of breaking off everything here and going with him somewhere or other down there in the South, in the sun, to seek out a little house in a quiet corner and live there with him—he for him and his work, and the other for him and himself. He had not carried out this decision—fortunately not: when everything had been ready for the trip, he would perhaps have waited at the railway station in vain for him; and if he had actually had him there, how long would it have probably lasted before he would have gone away, how long indeed?

The bird must fly and flowers bloom, and only man is not allowed to live. But this little man just wanted to live as he wished, to live and nothing further... and: did he not have a right to it?

Skaller looked at the pictures. He was thinking of the hours of infinite happiness and the hours of infinite bitterness—the hours of waiting, of eternally waiting in vain; and he was thinking how the former were bought with uncounted many of the others—those of waiting, waiting, waiting in uneasiness, in anxiety, in despair—and ever and again for nothing, nothing.

Waiting—yes—that he learned at that time! And the hours lost in that way became weeks and months—wasted, squandered, lost, and destructive. Why had he waited? Yes, why! Stupid question! Because he had loved him.

How could it otherwise have been that, when his uneasiness turned to anger, anger to rage, rage to fury, how could it otherwise have been possible that he was so completely powerless if he then actually came, came laughing and beaming and, oh!—only two hours too late—and for all the accusations had only this sincere and honestly sad astonishment: “But I just didn’t know...”; how could it otherwise have been possible that he only needed to beg: “Oh Fenny, don’t be angry!” and everything was directly forgotten and forgiven! However angry he had been, he could not be so any more when he saw him like that. However angry he still wanted to be, since he was ashamed of his own weakness, what else remained to him but to take him in his arms and even comfort him when the first tears of regret came into those large, brown, and silently begging eyes? And what would it have helped? Must he not just be happy to have him again at all? He could just as easily have stayed away for weeks, to then on return wonder with the same sincerely astonished expression: “Has it really been such a long time since we have seen one another?”

Waiting—it often seemed to him that this whole year in which he had known him had been one single waiting in vain. Finally he had got used to it, just as he had forgotten how to be happy at his return; and only one last thing remained in him, if he did not come again—anxiety, the anxious question: Will he come again at all, or have I now lost him forever?

He knew that this final hour would come, he knew it all too well.

It had come. And of all those he had waited, at the end really no longer waiting, of the countless and uncounted hours, which he only passed in the tired thought: “One day he will come again...”, it was those hours that he remembered most distinctly, which he could never forget, although they were in no way different from the many others—those, the last, which now came to him again and stood before him.

*

An autumn evening. An evening almost like this one just passed. The air still soft and warm. He, here at the desk, at this table. The sky, with its last bit of blue, is quickly becoming completely white, pale and yellow-white. Over the roofs opposite, however, lies now like a ribbon a strip of yellow redness, like the reflection of a fire.

He is looking outside. He has been at home the whole day and hardly stood up from this table. It is now time to change clothes and look for some place to eat. But how boring that is! Can he not remain here and satisfy himself with the leftovers from his noon meal, which he would probably still find outside his door?

There is no hurry. He wants to wait longer. There is nothing to hurry for. Why always hurry? Only he no longer wants to work. It no longer gives him any pleasure, his work. For whom is he really working? For himself? In the end he can get by without it, with his small needs.

He leans back and looks at the yellow stripe, whose lower edge is colored with an always threatening redness. He knows it is not a fire. It is the sun, which is sinking. If it were a fire and struck in his direction, would he get up or would he remain seated? I believe I would remain seated, he thinks.

He plays with this thought, although he knows how stupid it is. But he often has such silly thoughts now, when he just sits and waits. Waits? But he is no longer waiting. He has not been waiting for a long time. He will surely no longer come. It is finally over. It is good that it is over. It is just that the joy has once again gone from his life, the joy...

Only he still has to think about him every day—often only for a moment, when something or other reminds him of him; other times for hours and hours, like now. For he cannot forget him. He is *unable* to forget him. He knows that being able to forget is the

only thing that makes growing old in life bearable. He wants to forget. He wants to, but cannot. How does one bring about the ability to forget? If one presses his hands against his temples, quite firmly, perhaps the thoughts then withdraw. He tries it. His hands are very hot. They must have to be cold hands to do it. How does one cool hot hands? He presses his hot hands against his temples. Long and firmly. But his thoughts do not withdraw.

There is a ring outside.

He does not listen. It rings so seldom. Who could it be? A beggar; a messenger; some rare and yet always undesired visitor. No, he will not open the door.

But suddenly the blood shoots to his heart and his hands sink down. He knows who has rung!

He listens. Breathlessly. No, it has not rung at all—it was only his wish, his insane wish. He listens. Then it rings again, softly, almost shyly—only one person rings like that at his door, only one, and so it could only be he—if he has returned! It is he! He has returned!

A moment yet. Then he walks calmly out to open.

He is standing there before him in the twilight, his head sunk so that he cannot see his face, and grown oddly tall. He just cannot have grown so tall, he thinks, that has not been possible in this short time.

He walks in without speaking and silently hangs his little cap on its accustomed place, and still without speaking follows him into the room. But hardly has he seated himself again at his place than he is already by him, his arms thrown around his neck and his head hidden on his breast, so that he still cannot see his face, and crying, crying as only he can cry—crying uncontrollably, crying as if he could never stop crying.

He lets him cry. He does not question him. He does not comfort him. He knows that nothing helps here. So he lets him cry and only now and then draws him more firmly to himself and caresses his tangled hair.

While he is holding him like that, he again looks out as before—the red stripe yonder has vanished and the sky lies white over all the buildings. There is nothing in him, no more pain and no more longing, but also no more joy.

He knows what will come now: he will cry himself out on his breast, the crying will little by little become sobs, and the tears will slowly dry up. Then he will stammer the first, shy words for forgiveness and try to get out superfast some kind of tangled and incomprehensible tale; and since his mouth will not make an end of it, he will seek it with his own, and while he kisses away the last tears, the first smile will already be stealing onto the little face and the first protestations will come: that now everything is certainly to be completely different; that he will go to work “like never before”, and finally become a regular person; and how they would never part again, never ever, and he would come every day, every day... And already he would be reaching for the first cigarette, while the smile has already turned into the old laugh, and soon that laugh, his laugh, would fill the room and all that would be as if it had never been.

But his eye would look into the beloved face, which was now still hidden on his breast, at the new lines that had been added to the old ones in the past weeks, and see how the bloom of youth was more and more crumbling under them; would become more clearly aware of the traces of neglect and wasting than ever before, the ravages and the dust of the street, like a layer no longer to be washed away; and he would despair, inwardly despair.

He glanced outside and was anxious for the moment. So it would be. Also again this evening. He knew it.

—And it is so.

*

Slowly Skaller laid the pictures together and combined them again into a small, separate bundle. That, which by chance now lay on top, was the best likeness of all, and he could no longer separate himself from the sight.

Odd: in those cheerful eyes lay hidden an expression of deep melancholy—they had it at times, only in rare moments to be sure, as if looking toward a distant homeland that was not of this world, with an expression of strange longing and sadness, an expression that had deeply gripped him, all the deeper when he found no explanation for it. How did it come to a face on which usually a thousand devils of gaiety and high spirits carried out their playful changes? It seemed odd to him, and never had his love been more anxious

about his life than in those moments when he looked up and noticed it, without his little one being aware.

For it was odd: also in his own, in Skaller's eyes, there lay this expression, as if naturally related—he had seen it once when he caught his glance in a mirror. Did they both long to leave this world? And yet, there was no other for them and their poor love!

Love? Then he had loved him? Perhaps love was too strong a word for that creature of blissful ease, which was unable to bear any burden, even the lightest, and fled everything that oppressed it! But he was fond of him, infinitely fond, and never before had he felt how great the blessing is, which alone streams from being together with cheerful and lighthearted youth, before whose chatter and laughter sinister thoughts withdraw, and all somber feelings must vanish, whether they will or not. For the young want one to laugh with them and chat with them, and whoever wants to truly win them and see his affection truly returned, must take part in all their great joys and their little sorrows, as if they were his own. What he then receives in return is that he never grows numb in listlessness and sadness, that he can never grow old. Never had Skaller comprehended this more deeply than at that time. Also—he knew—if, after what he had experienced and suffered, he would never again without reservation be completely happy, he would still have to be cheerful with him, with his little one, who was so averse to gloom and seriousness.

He had been the sun in his life. He would never be able to think of him otherwise than with the deep tenderness with which he was thinking of him in this hour. He had caused him sorrows, many sorrows. They were all forgotten and there only remained the joy of having held in his arms this child of humanity—that something like that existed was indeed already splendid beyond measure! However much pain he had caused him, he had never willfully caused him pain; and if he never thought about making him happy, he had indeed made him happy by being with him and near him. For he had been joy itself, the incarnate, blessed joy that is called youth!

What would he not give today for the return of only one of those hours in which they had sat—he here, working at his table, and the little one there, entirely buried in the large chair, cigarette between his red lips and condemned to a book for a half hour (for he had to finally finish now a pressing job: "Lamb, you *must* leave me in peace for a half hour, do you hear!"). But already after five minutes came the first sighs and, after they had

sounded unheard, an accusing murmur: “You *always* have to work!”; and finally his giving up in resignation, watch in hand, until finally the half hour was over. What would he not give to feel again the small, warm hand on his, as it then took away his pen, and to hear his bright voice, which stormed at him so long with its comic nonsense that he gave up and went out with him, wherever, of course, *he* wanted to go.

Again Skaller pressed his hands against his forehead. It was madness, what he desired, and eternally impossible! That youth had long since withered, whose bloom was so shamefully bent that even his love had not been able to straighten it; that voice had long since changed, husky surely and rough; and if those eyes still looked at the world, how long already had their gleam and laughter been erased, so as to look, as a stranger surely and enemy, into an inimical world, or were spiritless and resigned now! Nothing, nothing remained, nothing could have remained than that melancholy alone in those eyes in itself inexplicable, a secret, something not comprehended.

Skaller shuddered. What he had so often thought, he must now think again: Surely he was no longer living! He wished that *he* was no longer alive. He wished it for *him*! For he was not created for this world. He had not been bad, not vicious and depraved like the clever people who may well have known him, who were once more wrong, not his little one, but rather good, good and therefore pure, of that rare and unassuming goodness that is nowhere understood and therefore abused, until it is used up to the last bit.

Thus had he *certainly* been abused. Infinitely rich, he had thrown away and squandered himself and his riches. Now he had to be poor. He, however, had not been able to help him.

For that evening had been the end. Once again he had cleaned him, clothed him and fed him; once again everything was discussed for the coming time. And once again they had been happy together. Then he had again stayed away, and this time forever. One more card had come, in that handwriting of a child who has never learned to write, senseless and incomprehensible, a card with many greetings and a thousand kisses. And then nothing more.

Afterwards Skaller had often sat there just as he did that autumn evening—four years had since passed—tired from his work, tired of his life, but never again had the doorbell sounded as it had when he touched it on his return.

Now he was waiting no longer. For he knew that he would not come now or ever again.

# The Ninth Picture

Deep silence reigned in the room. Skaller was measuring it again with his restless steps. The candles had burned far down and the lamp was also beginning to shine more dimly. In the street the last noise had also been silenced. It was the brief span between night and morning, in which the people truly seemed to be asleep. All of them.

Skaller, too, felt that his work must now finally come to an end. But on the table lay to the right yet another picture. It was lying with its backside up. He did not know which it could yet be. As he turned it over, he saw whose picture it was. He laid it back down again.

*

And again, torn from one picture to another, his thoughts took a new path. But as they now set to work, his heart remained quite calm—this time. There was a period when this young person had interested him. He had never loved him. If this picture lay here as the last, it still did not belong here. There had not even been a friendship between them. Why was the picture still here? But it did concern him. It was a contribution to this love. Again he, Skaller, had learned much at that time.

It was an exquisite picture. Werner von Rhaden would also probably never have handed out a bad picture of himself. For the indifferent observer it would probably have been the most attractive of all these pictures: clever, almost too clever eyes under a nicely arched forehead, eloquent lips over a perhaps somewhat too fleshy chin—when one looked at the face, one saw the elegant form, from which nothing was missing, except that inner warmth that glows from an inner life.

As Skaller looked at it now, in this night, it was even more foreign to him than it had ever been, and he threw it down as if the view had wounded him.

He knew that person. It had not been difficult to meet him and only in the very beginning had he been able to deceive himself. He awakened his interest, when he saw him, by his precocious assurance and cleverness, as he probably interested everyone who first saw him. That interest had not remained with him.

When he had first seen him, he was in that age according to which he should have been a boy. But he had probably never been a boy. At least he could only picture him as such with difficulty. Clever, quick-witted, self-assured; from an early age accustomed to being with people, and mostly people of an unusual kind; in an unstable home, sometimes neglected and then again pampered and spoiled; and early left to his own judgment, he was early, all too early mature. Too clever and gifted to become haughty, but not clever enough not to become vain; without being given to lying, he was still ready to stoop to any lie; and amiable from indolence and weakness, without his heart taking part, he was every inch one of those people, so incomprehensible to Skaller, who wanted to relish their lives, and he already early knew what he wanted and how he had to set about it. He

suited his time and this large city, which possessed no shocks and only too soon also no more secrets for him.

The acquaintance between them came about of itself. Chance renewed it again and again, as if they were supposed to meet: on the street, swimming, in the theatre—he always met him. In the theatre was also where he became acquainted with his mother, the well-known *artiste*. She came directly to him with outstretched hand: "You are always so kind to my son! I'm always glad when he has someone who takes an interest in him. Unfortunately, my time is so taken up that I can almost never be at home."

No, he did not take an interest in him and he could not at all be there for him. This young man went his way with the assurance of someone experienced in life, and this way lay far from his own.

He had suspected it for a long time. He was certain of it when he met him one evening in a large restaurant—in the company of a gentleman. Doubt was impossible. Skaller acted as if he did not see him, but Werner greeted him with astonishing ease and came close to introducing them. That was bad enough. Worse, however, far worse was what he heard by chance one day: that he frequented those circles whose mere mention caused Skaller to become nauseous. But when he heard Werner von Rhaden's name mentioned even in connection with that of a person who—half criminal, half idiot—drew the young to himself, so as to use them not only for his own purposes, but also for further, deceitfully veiled pandering, then it became difficult for him to speak with him at all, when he still occasionally met him. Since, however, the other sought him out again and again, it had to come to a break one day. And the break came.

*

On one of his solitary excursions he had encountered somewhere the whole company, the performers and actors, and him with his mother in it; very much against his will he was drawn into the loud laughter and the self-satisfied talk with which they drowned the garden by the water, but now he wants to free himself and go back alone. Already, however, Werner is by him and cajoles him to allow his accompaniment. Since his mother also asks that he take him along, he cannot refuse. Thus they leave the company

together and walk along the bank a half hour, and the young man talks almost without interruption: about everything in that learned way of repeating judgments acquired from others; nowhere with the originality of youth in its own sudden ideas and its so characteristic way of seeing. Bored and angered, he listens to him. A steamboat station is now nearby.

"I want to walk over the hill. That will be too far for you. If you take the next boat, which lands here at six, you can be home for dinner. Werner."

But he will not be let loose: "May I not walk a ways with you yet, Herr Skaller? I—I still have something to tell you, something I have long wanted to tell you."

Thus they walk on in silence up the hill, seat themselves at one of the empty tables, order, and he looks at him questioningly. But the younger one keeps silent.

The view from up here goes far over the flat land and the rivers that throughout it widen into lakes. They glitter up here and in the distance the city is dark in dust and smoke. No one hears or disturbs them up here.

"Now, what did you want to tell me, Werner?"

A short hesitation. Then: "I have long wanted to ask you, Herr Skaller, why you have been so opposed to me recently?"

And question and answer go back and forth:

"Rather don't ask!"

"But yes. I would like to know."

"But you do know!"

"No, I don't know."

"Well, then, because I don't like the life you lead."

"What, then, do you know of my life?"

"More than you think. But it is your life and no business of mine. Live it in the way you think best."

"I can guess what you mean. Well, then I will also tell you what I know of you. That, too, is more than you think. I know..."

"Well, what do you know?"

"That you are so too."

"How—so?"

“You also do not love women. You just love only boys. You also loved me once too! Isn’t that so?”

“No, Werner, I have never loved you. Perhaps I once believed that there could be a friendship between us. Then I saw that I had deceived myself.”

“But you love him, whom I have seen you together with recently?”

“I don’t know whom you mean.”

“Oh, it was a quite common boy.”

“You mean Willy. But you are mistaken again, Werner. That is no common boy; on the contrary that is a quite uncommon boy.”

“A working lad!”

“Yes, a lad who works—hard and honestly for his living, and a boy whom I respect and am fond of. But what are you? A lad who does not work, but rather lets himself be kept by others, so as to be able to pursue his pleasures!”

“Now you offend me, Herr Skaller!”

“I speak the truth, and you wanted to hear it. Why did you ask me? You know that it is the truth. Bad enough if it can offend you.”

“What I do, many others in my school do, more than you think.”

“Sad enough, if it is so, but no excuse for you.”

“Does it harm us in any way?”

“Probably not your bodies. Your characters more than you imagine.”

“How then?”

“Because this going from hand to hand—from one strange hand to another strange hand—weakens you and makes you incapable of any genuine friendship and love.”

“Love? But that is not love! They only want to amuse themselves.”

“I don’t know what they want, whom you think you are not too good to frequent. And you don’t know how much you prove me right with what you just said, and how much you judge yourself with it. But I know that we think too differently about this love to be able to reach an understanding. And if you continue to live in that way, you will never learn to understand it, because you will never get to know it. For one can only understand what one feels himself.”

“But he understands it, I suppose, with whom I have seen you?”

“Yes, he understands it. In his way, certainly.”

“Who was that then?”

“That’s none of your business. I have answered your questions as far as I thought best. I will not undergo an interrogation.”

“Me you let go, and you go with such a boy!”

“I’ll tell you again that this boy, whom you do not know and yet dare to speak of in that tone, is a person whose shoe laces you are not worthy of untying. And I’ll tell you again that I have not let you go. You have gone the paths you wanted to go, paths that are not mine and which I do not want to know. You have a right, I’ll say it once again, to go down them. But our conversation should have convinced you by now that they are not mine. So. If you walk to the dock down there now, you will still be in time to meet the steamer that leaves at seven, and you will still arrive at home in good time.”

“I’m not going home. I still have a date. One where at least I don’t need to listen to any lecture on morals. Adieu, Herr Skaller.”

“Adieu, Werner.”

He waved and was gone, without a parting handshake.

It was quiet up there on the hill. “Amuse themselves!” thinks the one left behind. If he had just heard that word! Far in the distance, in clouds of haze and smoke that are reddish colored, the great city lies and smolders like a dying fire.

*

What was this picture still doing here? Skaller took it, tore it into pieces, and threw it into the waste basket.

That was also one of those for whom love was an amusement like any other: an external one of the senses, in which the heart had no part and calculating reason alone decided. But if he had a horror of anything, it was of this cold sensuality that makes love a business.

Again he had learned much and seen much in that period. Again the times had changed and a few years more had set his love in a new light. Scandals, with their hideous criminal processes as a consequence, were unrolled before the public, whereas up to

then they had been played out behind closed doors, and, treated down to their last details, not for nothing filled again and again the long columns of the newspapers. If the older generation did not want to become wiser through them, the younger surely did. For the matter concerned them.

Thus the boys formed their own judgment and acted accordingly. If some shied away more than before from every, even the most harmless, approach, others followed it up only too willingly, and alongside that prostitution that has a firm place in all large cities and which, occasionally driven out, always ineradicably returns, there arose that other, the occasional, which took what chance offered when it corresponded to its momentary mood. And they came from all over, not only from the circles that were occasionally driven to it by need and unemployment. Apprentices came from their workshops and schoolboys came, not least from the academies with their colorful caps, and it was horrible for insiders like Skaller to see how certain individuals from the latter seemed to draw whole classes with them. The parents, however, seemed to be blind and not to see where the savings came from which their young son made and where he got the pocket money that they did not give him.

Especially the parents! Skaller laughed aloud when he thought of it, but it was a bitter laugh. That was a chapter for itself, an astonishing chapter and a long one, but one too long for the last, tired thoughts of this night. One thing stood firm: how many parents indeed were there who knew anything at all of their growing sons? Of that which moved them most intimately, and not only occupied them outwardly? Few, hardly any. Most of them fulfilled their duty, and believed that they fulfilled it by the fact that they reared them, usually completely wrongly, sent them to school, clothed and fed them, and perhaps also, when they looked out for their future by providing a profession and a marriage.

Of that which their sons really thought and experienced, these parents knew as good as nothing. They required that they should be home at a certain hour and for the rest let them do as they wished; some watched every step they took, as far as this was possible for them, and would have preferred to put a chain on each, without suspecting how many of those steps went on paths whose existence they did not once imagine; and again others concerned themselves about nothing at all and were happy if they were themselves left in peace.

And just as completely diverse was their position on this love with respect to their sons. Since the majority of parents knew nothing of this love, they never hit on the thought that their sons—their sons—could ever come into the least contact with that horrible vice; then here and there once placed before the not at all so horrible fact, there was of course a great horror and a—for the most part wisely kept between the four walls of their house—scandal, whereby they began to understand and come to terms with the facts. But others began already before such a scandal to comprehend—"from the spirit of the times"—and there were even those who were rational enough to say to themselves (if not to others): Better than my son running around with questionable women is that he have a decent friend who means him well and is fond of him, and whose company at least keeps him far from women as long as he is not really drawn to them; and those who thought like that and kept their eyes open often found their sons' friends the best friends of their house at the same time. To be sure, there were still few of these. All-powerful prejudice, to which almost all people without any effort to resist bend themselves, still always defeated every calm mention. Probably only when it had fallen here too would this love find the place where it belonged. Until then, however, the majority would probably only be shaken if this fate struck one of their own, if they were standing before the bier on which a person lay whom they had loved and known in every connection as a love-worthy person; and only when their astonishment turned to horror, horror to shock, probably only then would their lips become silent of abuse and insults.

The parents, the parents—Skaller was thinking—no, he did not want to fight against them. The fight was too unequal, and the one whom it was over too valuable. And he further thought: it is probably the mothers who understand us the quickest—even if they also know nothing, they feel with their instinct who is truly fond of their boys.

But then he walked back to his desk. There all the pictures were lying as before and only their order had changed: the last were now on top and the first were below. As he now separated them so as to restore the old order, it happened that they spread out before him like a fan, and seven young faces, and above them an eighth in its frame, poured over him once more the magical flood of their youth so that he paused.

Eight young faces; none (except the first) under fourteen, none over sixteen; all of them not of children and not of adolescents; all of boys—boyfaces in the sweet and mys-

terious, the inexplicable ripening age. And as Skaller was thus looking at them all together before him he saw really for the first time how different they had all been from one another! None was like another, hardly were they alike in any one feature, and they were probably only alike in this: full lips, parted hair, and this rounding of the cheeks, which had nothing in common with the classical ideal of beauty: the narrow mouth, the strong nose, and the straight forehead. Probably none of them was really good-looking. They had all seemed good-looking to him. They were faces—and Skaller smiled—"over whom the hand of the creator has once more lightly passed, after he had created them." Proper boyfaces all! For this reason, precisely this, he had liked them so much, had loved them so!

He thought it over. Not the color of the hair—there was dark and blond here; not that of the eyes—they were black and blue, brown and dusky gray. It was not something so generally distinct that drew him. It was a certain something, something unknown to himself and inexplicable in words, which drew him here and repelled him there: a scent, a mysterious one, of a dry skin, a scent like a related being. And then many other things: a laugh, a walk, a glance, often only a movement, such as only he had. But he did not know *what* it basically was. He only knew always, and knew it directly, if it was so.

As different as they themselves were—and this, too, had never become so clear to him as in this hour—had also been his love for them. How oddly did there not play here a confused mixture of friendship and tenderness, concern and camaraderie, passion and the ability to abstain, and how precipitously did they not change from one to the other!

Yes, there was probably something special about this love, and if love was already unfathomable, how much more so was this one!

Skaller continued to reflect.

Then he jumped up with a start. From the street a noise penetrated up to him—the last bawl of a drunk, the eternal last greeting of the night to its great city.

It is time, he thought, time for me to make an end of it! And quickly, without his glance grazing them once more, he laid the pictures on one another, so that they lay as before, fastened the ribbon around them again, and laid the small bundle in its old place in the box. "It weighs light," he murmured to himself as he held it, "light, and yet contains my whole, heavy life." It seemed as if he were entombing them forever.

Then he closed the box and carried it into his bedroom, from which he had taken it.

As if he had entombed them... For when would he indeed find again the courage for what he had done today! Slowly he walked back.

# The Tenth Picture

As he was walking through the middle room again and caught a glimpse of the empty plate, the feeling of hunger suddenly seized him like a dizziness. He found a few more crackers in a box, and the flask also had a final glass. He at once felt himself strengthened. He was still not tired, not at all. But he wanted to go to bed, finally. It was now really time.

He extinguished the lamp and the candles, which had burned far down. As their smoke and the fine scent of wax went through the room, he saw that the first light of the new day was coming in, while outside the dark wall of the sky was beginning to lighten. For the first time in hours he looked at the clock: twelve hours had passed since he had

hesitantly separated himself from the square where he had waited in vain, twelve in which he had sat like a prisoner here in his rooms, spellbound by the thoughts of his memory.

And was he now free again? Had he finally been released? Why did they not leave him and what tormented him further? What was still tormenting him?

He stepped over to the stove and laid his burning forehead against the white and cool Dutch tiles. What had he said—it was long ago—the one up there on the hill? He had seen him with someone? And what had he then answered?

Willy! Yes, Willy!

There was still a picture of him. It must be in his briefcase. It was not good. But what need had he of a picture! It stood clearly before him again now. And again, as at noon, leaning against the tiles of the stove, his hands behind him, he looked straight ahead into the dawning of the morning, and there arose that final picture. Willy!

*

Before him stood the last years of his life, close and thick.

They had changed from the earlier ones, just as he himself had become another person in many ways. He observed and knew life; and he lived it, as he had to live it and now also wanted to live it. He hardly traveled any more. Why should he travel? What he was looking for, and wanted to find, was to be found soonest here. He was no longer entirely alone. He made many acquaintances, but none of them led to a friendship such as he wanted.

More and more he got to know the age to which his love was directed. It was a terrible age; only now did he see how cold and cruel that age was. Cruel, yes, it was cruel and pitiless. Once—in Paris—as he was looking in his guide book for the description of a statue, he read that of another, which was supposed to stand in the same park: *"L'âge sans pitié"*. He no longer needed to ask which age this was. It was the statue of a boy who was catching birds and tormenting them.

What was he still seeking and desiring? Actually, he desired nothing more than a bit of heart. But this age just had no heart. And if it was there, the path to it was hard and

long, and those who had it mostly now closed it up entirely and from the beginning, because they believed they should not be open to a love that was forbidden and outlawed.

This age was confused and uncertain, impulsive and lacking in insight. They say it must be taught. But there was nothing of the teacher in him. He could only be its friend, no more, no less. He could only understand it. But that was probably the hardest of all. For it was in itself incomprehensible and did not understand itself. It was an age that was never the same, because it changed from day to day. Monstrous respect for everything superficial; no trace of reverence for the interior and its worth. Curiosity that pried into everything so as to see what was behind it. Unruliness and impudence, with nothing behind them but anxiety. Greediness always only for the nearest thing, and always for a nothing. Defiance, secret and open, against everything that it was not supposed to do, yet without even knowing what it actually wanted to do. This age was one single whim, an eternally changing one. If need be, one could know an adult; this age, never.

It was a horrible age, and a curse to love it, an age of which one was never sure, since it was never sure of itself. The more Skaller got to know it, the less he comprehended it. A riddle to itself—how much more to every other! Quite certainly, however, it was alive with life, this youth, whereas people, the older they became, turned more and more to stone, became hidebound in their habits and views, smothered in their profession and family—where they no longer existed, but rather only wanted to give the appearance of existing; they had to give the appearance so as to maintain themselves and thereby always—become more boring.

This, however, this age still existed just as it was, without reserve and unconcerned. For life had not yet captured this young richness, and when it did begin to train its thoughts and views, in the meantime its only thought—thank God!—was just the one: to cope with reality one way or another, and this beautiful reality alone was what interested it. Hence the unconquerable freshness that streamed through this age like the scent of morning, and which streamed back again only onto him alone who loved it as he, Skaller, loved it.

How wonderful this love would be, if it were only free!—he thought again and again. What made it so difficult? People alone.

They were all against it. And if the healthy and strong sensitivity of those who felt themselves loved had not been there, all would have been lost, hopelessly lost. For people corrupted this love, and they corrupted those whom they pretended to protect: instead of teaching them to discriminate, they taught them nothing else than to abuse their power, and they sanctioned every betrayal, every dirty trick, even down to blackmail—if it happened *here*.

What power, however, was not laid with this love into those small and still so uncertainly groping hands! They then greedily reached out for the glittery tinsel of the nearest, small advantage, and thoughtlessly broke the precious gift that was laid in them, without being able to appreciate it. How great their power was, if they were loved, and how they abused that power! He was thinking of the types he saw, of whom he had heard, whom he knew: those youths who run around in this great city so as to lure older men to themselves, to exploit them, to ruin them, to drive them to despair and—how often not!—to death, often not even from a desire for profit, but rather from the natural cruelty of that age, from the pleasure of some kind of new, exciting sport; he was thinking of those who took everything, without ever giving anything in return, not even the smallest feeling of gratitude or of friendship; and finally of those who believed they were allowed to immediately return every friendly word with impudence, to feel an insult in every friendly deed, especially if they were good-looking and knew that they were. He knew them all, all who were proud of it in the bargain, and saw themselves praised and congratulated if they behaved like roughnecks and scoundrels, all those "decent" boys who seemed to themselves so noble when they treated those who loved them as they would never have dared to treat any other person. Woe to him who loved them!

Whoever loved this age dare not completely lose himself in his love, if he did not wish to be ruined. He must hold his heart firmly with both hands. He dare not expect what could not be given. And he must learn to be modest in his expectations: to be content with a first, ever so small liking, and above all to be content and unassuming in being allowed to give and only to give. To learn to be modest in his expectations—and he, Skaller, had learned it more and more. To help, wherever possible, to help again and again... and continue to learn.

That he did.

He learned. Quite spontaneously, with every one of his acquaintances, he gained deep insights into the life of his time. It was as if a curtain was raised before him in their tales; the walls of houses fell and allowed him to look inside through closed doors—he saw how the family lived, each of its members, and how their tiny histories were played out. For they recounted to him everything, those youths, and the pictures that he saw were changing and sheerly inexhaustible. He saw life as a doctor, a judge, a confessor sees it, only it was placed before him more truly, unpainted and even closer. But it did not remain fixed. It passed by him, as those whom he got to know passed him by and continued on. And inwardly he remained lonely.

Then Willy came. Again there came unhoped-for into his life that oddest of experiences.

They almost ran together on a dark evening; they remained standing a moment, while Skaller muttered an excuse and the other something coarse; they walked on; each looked back; they again remained standing, and in the next moment they walked toward one another and then beside each other as if they had long been acquainted.

They spoke little together, and nothing they said together brought them closer. But they naturally remained together. Something else, stronger than they were, bound them and did not let them loose. They did not know what it was, this other thing, but it forced them; and neither of the two opposed this strange power.

Not Skaller certainly. This time he gave in without resisting. And all the thrills and all the bliss of life came over him in this love.

All would have been well and probably one day, when the power was broken, they would have separated, just as they had come together.

Then he made the mistake of loving him. He took a liking to him. He loved him. He did not know him. He must get to know him, if he loved him. The more he tried, the more impossible it appeared to him.

For this still so young person—he was not yet sixteen—in contrast to all the other boys of that age could hardly be influenced and was quite his own person; and a person who, as young as he was, knew just exactly what he wanted and did not let himself be hindered or tied down in what he wanted. He made his own way through this life, which he knew, and he let no one tell him what he had to do. On his own since childhood in a

hard and merciless life, he had himself become hard and pitiless. Without pity, but not cruel.

Naturally he had no schooling, could hardly read and write, yet he was anything but stupid. He had his own, often very sharp, thoughts, and Skaller was astonished again and again by the sureness of his judgment and the correctness of his natural sensitivity. Willy did not let himself be fooled easily. He was defiant, at times of an unwise and childish defiance, obstinate and stubborn, but he knew what he wanted.

Naturally he took what his friend gave him, but he never took more than he thought the other could do without, and not everything that he was given. He never requested, and he seldom gave thanks. He appeared to be indifferent to what he received. If he had had more and made money, then he would have been the one giving. He would never have sold himself, not even in the greatest need. And he knew need from early on.

He was a young man of iron, his muscles of bronze, his nerves of steel. He knew no fatigue, no hunger, no weakness. He worked, but only, to be sure, when it suited him. He seemed to have numberless friends in his circles; but he himself was no one's friend. He did not care about girls. Not yet. He lived—Skaller never knew how he actually lived. But he lived as if he could never live himself out. He knew his strength and was proud of it.

Skaller loved him. He could do nothing but love him. And he admired him. But he did not get to know him. At his deepest, Willy remained a stranger to him—and he felt, he also to him.

He traveled with him. He took him along because he believed that even only a short period of being closely and constantly together must bring them nearer. He was mistaken. The days were too long and their dragging hours separated them more than they bound them, since no common interests could unite them.

But the nights—

Skaller shoved himself away from the tiles against which he was leaning. The stove was hot again, heated by the ardor of his rushing blood.

He dared not think about those nights. He then became another person. Or rather: he showed himself as he was—in the tremendous strength of a nature that sowed its wild oats without regard for itself or others. Then there came into those odd, blue-green eyes a

brilliance that they otherwise did not have; then his voice, usually so hard and often coarse, became almost soft; then he found words that must have been foreign to him, but he found them.

"No, I am too wild!" he sometimes said then. But he said it quite seriously.

For him, he was not too wild.

For him, he was right, just as he was. He took people now as they were, and he did not think about wanting to change them.

And so he now took his boys: as they were. This one, too, the oddest of all. Who and what would have been able indeed to change *him*!

Those nights... They were a fight, with all the fears and delights of a fight. No one the victor; no one the vanquished. And in each it began anew.

No, he dared not think about them! Never in his life had he thought such a passion possible, never with a boy, and never, never would he find one even similar to it, never. He knew it. Never!

He loved him. He went along with whatever the other wanted and wished. Why then could he not get to know him? He did not know him today, even if he understood many things about him—from the distance of memory—better today and indeed for the first time altogether. It was impossible to get to know him. For never did they really carry on a conversation together; a question wove itself into an answer and was spun away.

What he said was always only brief, and little. But how completely unforgettable for him were the words and tone in those sentences—the things he said and the way he said them. They sounded again now in Skaller's ear, as he slowly and thoughtfully walked up and down again, sounded as if he had heard them just yesterday.

Thus he once asked him, carefully feeling his way—for he noticed immediately how unwelcome such questions were—about his earlier life.

"Parents? I just don't have any parents! I never had any parents!"

"Rearing? No one reared me. I've grown up by myself, all alone."

And another time: "Stay with you? As what then? No, we don't suit one another. You just do your work, which I understand nothing about; and I'll do my work, which you don't understand. It's good that way."

He's right, Skaller said to himself then.

He was mostly altogether right in what he said, for those eyes looked remarkably sharply and coolly into the world.

And again (they were speaking of women): “What a woman can give, that I’ve long since known.”

“But Willy, you don’t know women at all—at your age!”

Laughter, superior and scornful: “The first time I had a woman, I was fourteen.” (He was now sixteen.)

“A woman?”

“Well then, it was a girl.”

“How old was she then?”

“Well, she was not much older than I was.”

“And did you love her?”

“How so? Love? No. I’ve never loved a girl. They’re too silly and soft for me.”

“But she did love you?”

“Me? No one at all has loved me yet!”

“Willy! Don’t I love you?”

“I don’t know it!”

“But I know it, Willy!”

“Well, that’s good then.” And he drew him to himself.

“I just can’t stand all that dumb talk,” he added, and was very astonished when he saw how heartily Skaller was laughing. But how could he do otherwise than laugh over the sixteen-year-old expert on women, with whom to talk less than they already did was really not possible.

Then they lost touch with one another.

He suffered for him. For a long time. He also could not forget him. Thus he would never forget the morning after one night—that wonderful spring morning after a night, that of a Sunday when he had taken him along somewhere after their week’s work—when he could not bring himself to wake the sleeping boy lying there before him in the peaceful and fast sleep of his years, splendid in his healthy strength and his young, raw beauty. Then he had taken his hand, a well-formed and not large hand, but one hardened by work, into his own, and as he was sitting thus by him on the bed—while the birds out-

side by the open window were singing their jubilant song and the first, tender green of the trees was rising up toward the blue sky—looked again into this face that was still strange to him and yet so beloved, whose every feature was familiar to him, stroked finally the dark hair back from his forehead and back over the defiant scar, got in an honest fight—and understood: the unshakable seriousness of this young face, which never laughs and never cries, and whose energy sleep itself does not temper, that deep seriousness was the heritage of the difficult and hard life of a class that, in difficult and hard work, from generation to generation and from hour to hour, must support itself with this work so as not to go hungry.

Then, while he was thus stroking his hair and then bent over him so as to wake him, he loved him more than ever before, and in his love was mixed something like pride over the fact that the boy loved him, precisely him! Never, however, did he also understand as in the hour of that summer morning that their paths must separate just as they had crossed, perhaps quite soon, and then certainly forever. For this one here was going down his path and their paths were not the same, were not and could not be!

Then already standing before him were the evening and the hour in which, after that silent separation, they met once again by chance—after months—and almost at the same place where they had first met.

*

The rain is whipping through the streets, a fine, sharp rain, which the wind drives before it so that it sweeps the pavement. He loves this weather and samples it outside, like today. He is walking without umbrella and coat, his hands buried in his pockets, and his collar turned up. So also is walking the one who is coming toward him, but with forehead sunk down. He recognizes him immediately.

“Willy!”

It almost appears as if the other wants to walk on by. But his arm stops him and links with his. They walk along the water. It is the same path that they once walked on another evening. The rain passes over them.

He knows ahead of time the answer to the question he wants to ask. He asks it anyway. “How’s it going, Willy?”

“How should it go? Good!”

Always ready to spring, like an animal that is on its guard, even if no one is doing anything to him, he thinks. The same tone in his voice. Only it sounds even coarser.

“Work?”

“Yeah, I’m working.”

He questions no further, but he shoves his arm closer to his.

At the next bridge, empty of people, in one of its recesses over the river, they stop and lean against the wet stone parapet. The river is flowing below black and sluggish; black, hardly recognizable, are the rowboats in it by the steep bank.

“You haven’t been at my place in a long time, Willy. Why don’t you come to me any more?”

“You can’t always be together.”

“But one doesn’t need to completely lose touch.”

Silence.

“Tell me at least, how it’s going.”

“How should it go? I’ve told you already. It’s going good.”

“Do you have time this evening?”

“No. I can’t today.”

He is not lying. He never lies. He has no time today. If he did not want to, he would have said: No, I don’t want to.

“Are you coming to me again? When will you come?”

“I don t know yet.”

“Do you *want* ever to come to me any more?”

“Sure. Perhaps.”

They are standing close beside one another on the empty bridge, wet from the rain.

“Do you need anything then?”

“I don’t need anything.” But he takes the bill that is offered and shoves it into his pocket without even glancing at it.

“You seem to have a lot of money,” he only says shortly.

“For you I always have something left, Willy. You know that.”

And with his wet hand he strokes the wet hair from his face. He searches for the glance of those eyes, those blue-green, remarkable eyes. He does not find it.

Then he feels how the boy—he has grown tall—presses against him, draws his head down, kisses, and then, quickly grasping for his hand, says: “Adieu. I must go.” He wants to keep him. He cannot.

He leaves. He is walking with his great, long strides, with which he always walks, as if this earth and the streets on it belonged only to him, through the rain and the night.

He does not know if his words are still heard, which he calls after him: “Come to me, Willy, whenever you want to!” The rain carries them after him.

He stands a long time yet on the bridge, the one left behind. He does not feel the damp nor the cold. He only feels the rushing of his blood, that wants to go after him and no longer dares or can, of his blood, blood of his blood!

*

He, too, had not returned. Not up to now. Skaller also did not believe that he would once more find his way to him. He probably wanted to no more. Why? Why, yes, why not? He probably did not know himself. “Never ask a boy for a reason. A boy does not know reasons.” Was it not so?

This one here surely not. He went his path on the strength of a law of his nature, and wherever that path took him, to poverty and need, to crime and any depth, he would walk it and it would be his own path.

He would not return; and yet he had loved him, Skaller. Skaller knew it. Once, one single time, he had betrayed himself with a word, when, as was his way sometimes, he slowly and thoughtfully said to himself, “I think I have altogether only once liked a person.”

But when Skaller, foolishly enough, asked, “Who, then, Willy? Me, isn’t that so?”—then it was over already and the gruff dismissal came immediately:

“If you know it, why do you ask!”

He had loved him—in his way. But could anyone indeed love other than his own way?

However much they had been strangers, they still had understood one another, and their best understanding had been in silence. How would he have been able to love him otherwise! For he just could not, still could not and never would be able to enclose a stranger in his arms—a strange person whom he did not know and whom he did not feel close to (he no longer said: whose soul he did not possess)! Others could do it, could come together for an hour and separate the same strangers in the next.

They could do more. It was here as there: just as there were men here who could go with every younger person, if he was only younger and it was otherwise right for them, so too there were those who could enter into the ultimate relationships with any woman, without knowing that woman. They were able to do even more: they were able to unite and remain together until the end of their lives from business and social motives, which they then called the marriage laws of God and man, and they consoled themselves by thinking that love would yet come. But if it did *not* come?

He could not. He could not draw a person to his breast if he did not feel that the other breast responded as his did to it. He could not buy love. He could only earn love. That was perhaps why he had it so hard; probably why the others had it so light.

Now, when he kept his eyes open for all the youths around and saw them everywhere, every day and almost every hour, he also saw how few there basically were who were "made for him". Among those, however, the few, how many were there yet whom he approached and who, when he had approached, returned his liking without having stayed away beforehand, since they did not understand at all *what* he wanted from them?

This one here had been made for him, as he for him. The life that they led together, that had again been what separated them.

How hard it was for him to get loose from this last picture of his memory!

"If only I were like you!" he had often said to himself. "Without thoughts, like you! Entirely life only, like you!" But he was not like his Willy! What the devil did it matter to him whether what he did was allowed or forbidden, if it was fun. He placed no thoughts between himself and life, but rather forced it by going for its throat like an enemy. It was therefore hard to get him down.

But he, Skaller, what did he do? He waged war and fought with the enemies sent out, and if he also became the victor over them, he still let come at him: the underminers, the disturbers, the destroyers, the—thoughts! Had he not revenged himself on them? Lived in spite of them? Did they not lie at his feet now like whimpering dogs and did they not obey his every word? But that was not enough. Guilt must be settled. He wanted to redeem it from life and not rest until he had paid it down to the last bit.

Again—he felt it—a part had been crossed out with this love. A good part. He knew that never again would there be anything like it in his life and so never again would there go over him and thoroughly shake him—the thrill, the passion, and all its bliss! He wanted to live yet! For now be knew what living was!

Skaller was standing in the middle of his room and stretching out his arms: away with thoughts! No thoughts gave a reason for life. None for this love, which was life. Away with them!

Away, too, finally with the shadows of this night. And as if to shoo them away, he threw out his arms, and those that fluttered about and wove themselves around him seemed to vanish.

"When I am old, quite old, and tired and ill, then, only then come again, you shadows who were around me today, come then and comfort me then again through the final hours, as you have comforted me today—in spite of everything! But leave now, go back into your silence!"

Again he threw out his arms. Suddenly, however, he felt a chill.

He stepped to the stove to warm his cold hands. Then he noticed that the stove must have long since cooled off. He turned again to the room.

But now the room was empty.

## —To Morning

There penetrated from outside the cold and gray of the morning. Noon had become evening, and evening night, but Skaller had not noticed it. Now night became this morning of a new day and the circle was closed.

He was standing at the frosted window looking out. Life was awakening down there again from sleep and inactivity. His work was done, the work of his memory, difficult and sweet.

The room was empty. The young shadows that had filled it had flown, their requests and their laughter, their defiance and their crying were stilled, and he was again alone with himself, alone as always. But not as he had feared: he was not lying in the corner of the room like someone struck down. He was standing erect. Indeed, his wounds had been opened again, but no more blood poured from them and he felt no pain. He knew that was because he had suffered too much. He would still be able to, and have to, suffer, but no more like that. That was over.

And he was not tired. He was standing erect, as if awaiting this day.

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For he had understood. He knew his life and the destiny of his life. He did not know what was still to come at its end, but what could come, that he knew. No more great love and no great happiness. No great love. He did not want it. He was afraid of it. He also no longer believed in it. What alone was still able to come was the love of a good and warm friendship. Would it one day indeed come? No great happiness. What did that mean—a great happiness? Did it exist? Who possessed it? And where was it? Here there was only the happiness of an hour, which the next could already take away, and provision was truly made against satisfaction, full satisfaction in this love. Of an hour—and perhaps one of the next.

Yet: happiness would still exist for him. For was it not already happiness to see young lips laugh and young eyes sparkle—to see what the others were not given to see? So completely had he now understood: Every happiness that could still come to him

could only come from this love. For it was his love. He had recognized it as such. It was no vice, it was no sickness. It was a misfortune, a great misfortune.

He paused. Again, as many times in these last years, he asked himself: Is it really, is this love a misfortune? How can it be, since it, a love like every other love, must for that reason be the highest and ultimate happiness?

Was it a misfortune? In and of itself certainly not. It was such because people contested its right to happiness and took it away. But those people were just wrong. They were in error. It was for them to correct their error and discard it. They did not do so because they did not suffer under it. They did not suffer under this error because it did not concern them. Often, when he saw them so impudently, so superiorly, and with such immense ignorance of this love, judge and condemn it, he thought—and it was almost a cruel pleasure to think it: What would you do—how would you love, you fool and you pharisee, if the same fate befell you? And those upright people pitiably collapsed, the loud ones were quickly stilled, and the otherwise brave ones crept into hiding, and—were finished.

They had long since been so for him. And never as now in this hour did he comprehend what it had been basically that had murdered his youth. It had not been the fear of them, the people who hated this love. It was the fear of seeing his love misinterpreted and misunderstood by those whom he loved! That had been, and still was today, the only thing that he trembled before!

And: that he had been unable to lie. For never had a second followed the first and only betrayal of his love. He had kept silent, and kept silent today, where to talk would have been insane and a crime against his love. But he had not lied and he did not lie. He lived his life, entirely his own life, and thus he wanted to live it until its end.

Understanding? He needed no understanding. What, then, was there to understand? He demanded freedom for this love and nothing further. Understanding? Did he even understand it himself? He no longer thought about it.

Perhaps it was like this: The trunk of the family tree struggles upward and spreads itself out wide. It had many boughs and branches. But however widely they reach, every branch reaches an end once. It still bears fruit, often the best and the finest. But it dares not branch further now, for its stored up strength is at an end here. It is not yet exhausted;

but it can and must be, if it seeks to stretch itself further. Was he such a final branch on a bough of his family, which should not spread itself and which bore the last fruit in itself? Perhaps it was like that. He did not know. What would it help him, if he knew? He no longer thought about it.

That was just the way it was. He was, as he was. He could not make himself different from what he was, and he would not have wanted to do it. He alone had to come to terms with his life. One way or another. No one helped him do it. Only he alone could help himself.

*

He had to help himself, if he wanted to live.

The high point of his life was almost reached. Soon it would be passed. Then it went downhill, faster and faster. He did not yet feel old. But he looked older than he was. His temples turned gray early and overnight. Certainly his body had also suffered, probably more than he knew now. Certainly also his nerves. Whose nerves would not suffer and break in this fight?

He was lonely. He had to be. He would always remain lonely. For only by hours could his loneliness be taken from him. Then he was again alone with himself.

He had nothing in the world that he could truly call his own, nothing but these rooms in which he lived. If their doors indeed would open once again to someone he loved—they would also close behind him again, and he would leave as he had come, the one he would yet love.

For this love was appointed only a modest span, and eternal it was not. They swore no oath and they did not bind themselves in a bond for life. They came and they went, and if friendship developed and the friendship remained, that was good. But this love should not complain if it died—of itself or of a new love.

Often he was tired. Only his heart, this terrible heart, appeared unable to grow tired. Once a blow had fallen and it had gone through his heart and split it. But it was not broken. He still lived on. As if its parts lived on, he often thought.

Nothing helped. He must cope with it one way or another. It was his fate. He must be stronger than his fate. Change the curse to a blessing—for himself and for those whom he loved—that was all!

He was standing at the window looking out as the day began, gray, cold and empty. But this day, too, would become alive, bright and heavy with life. The day was his life. Every day that began like this, every one that would begin after it, could be a fulfillment for him or a new disappointment, and with each that was still appointed for him, he must begin his life anew. For everything in this love—what was it but a moment, an occasion, a chance?—was as it was: without rules, without laws, without norms. Beyond all human laws, it went its path and there it was free. Dependent on itself, it stood and fell with itself. A life in life, entirely for itself and on its edge.

An unheard-of life. What fate! What linkage! What destiny! Everything unbelievable, monstrous, and completely incomprehensible in the world! And quite peculiar: a drama played out on the backstage of life, a play without spectators, and those who presented it walked in night and played it soundlessly. Cries that were not heard; pain that was derided and disdained; joys that were not grasped. Tormented hearts, foreheads shot through, tortured brains, surrounded by insanity and a victim to it. Existences, today still victors and tomorrow already shattered... and always and everywhere threatened. Corpses, corpses everywhere. Corpses, buried without being counted with the others and eternally forgotten in the mass grave of silence. A life never described, which no description yet dares to undertake.

And he, Skaller, had still been able to ask himself only a few hours before: With what was he to fill the empty days of his life? With this, that he observed this unheard-of drama, to which he had entrance at any time, with this he was able to fill each to the brim; and if that was not enough, by taking part more than before in the destiny of that cause that was also his cause. That, too, he wanted to do from now on. For he knew that for this love there was now only one thing left: the path up to light!

Skaller folded his hands over the crossbars of the window, and it was like giving a new promise to himself.

*

Day was there. Life had awakened down below. It was also his day. For he still lived. What would it bring him? Again there was the old, eternally unstilled longing!

He was waiting again. Down there at the church. Why had he not come? He saw him again before him: the slender, still quite boyish face, in his gray, belted jacket, simple but very clean, with short pants over his narrow calves in their black, long hose; his blue cap, with its little sport badge on the front, on his thick, blond hair, parted on the side, and over the bright eyes, which had secretly sparkled at his suggestion; the red lips that always seemed to open somewhat before he began to speak, as if they could not wait; and he heard again the clear voice as it said, "If I have once promised to come, then I will come!" And again he felt the pressure of the small, already remarkably firm hand in his.

Why had he not come? A voice, a cruel one within him, whispered to him now again and distinctly: "He would have been the one!" Yes, he would have been! He had liked him so much right off; they had chatted together really so familiarly; certainly they would have become friends, good friends, and, with time, perhaps more.

Now he had not come. And he knew nothing of him. He did not know where he worked. He did not know which paths he took. He did not know his name, not even his first name. How was he to look for him? And if he found him again through some rare chance—he knew it was no longer the same. The boy would no longer be the same. No longer open and cheerful, no longer innocent, but rather he would shy away from his questions and evade them, politely as ever, probably, for he was obviously well brought up, but distantly, thinking over every word and at the same time ruled by only the one thought: to get away from the strange gentleman as soon as possible. For suspicion, hateful and dirty, which had trickled into this young soul, had come between them. No, they would never again come as close as they had immediately been in the first ten minutes, no more. He knew it!

It was better if he did not see him again. If he were to actually meet him once again—he wanted to walk on by him, as if he did not remember him, as if he had never seen him. For he would have been unable to bear seeing him so changed.

He must forget him. It must be. Only why did it pain him so? But then, what was not painful!

They all stayed away. They all did not return. And if they did, they left again with full hands and the same empty hearts, and they left him behind, alone and discouraged as before... lonelier and again older under new disappointments. For they were young and endeavored to get out and away, away from everything that would hold them, and most intensely away from whatever would hold them in love. They did not yet need love and desired no repose on another's breast. If they returned, however, disappointed and sobered, having learned what love was or pretended to be, then it was too late: then they were no longer young, no longer so young, and no longer what they had been when he was still able to love them. Too late! For now he could no longer give them what they now wanted and desired themselves.

The blows of despair struck around him. But Skaller resisted them. No, it should not be so. It *should* not be so. For how would he be able to live if it were so! He defended himself.

He had found love nevertheless. He would find it again. He must find it again. He only had to seek it, seek it unceasingly until he found it. It did not come by itself.

His forehead became hot.

No, it was not so! Everything was to come. Everything lay before him. He had experienced nothing yet. He had not yet lived. Or: What he had experienced—he must experience again, and suffer everything again.

No, it was not so: If they all left, *one* must yet come one day and remain: to smile at him like Georges, walk beside him like Bernhard, chat with him like his Walter, tear into his arms like Willy, and be his, entirely his, like—Skaller's eyes turned to the table and the picture that was standing on it.

But he immediately turned away again and looked out the window, pale and numb as before. It was light outside and the new day was there.

*

Suddenly fatigue came over him so strongly that he reeled. He stepped back from the window and let himself fall into the chair. He closed his eyes. But he did not sleep. He was dreaming.

His last thoughts became confused.

*

They are going back down the path that they had taken today—back—farther, always farther back.

He is young again; a boy again among the other boys.

“Fenny! Fenny!” the boys are calling. But he does not hear.

He hurries up the hill. He knows the way. The branches strike in his face, but he breaks through them, storms on farther, tears them apart.

*

His heart was beating as if it would burst.

He was there with his friend.

# The Nameless Love: A Creed

Once, more than two thousand years ago, it was one of the roots from which the in so many ways unrivalled culture of a people, the most thirsty for beauty and drunk on beauty that the world has ever known, drew its best nourishment. Health, strength and greatness blossomed for the Greeks from the love of a man for a youth, of a youth for a man, a love prized by its thinkers and sung by its poets. A brightness was over it—the brightness of understanding and freedom.

Then came the night, and it came with Christianity and its monstrous falsification of all our natural feeling of optimism and joy in life. For centuries this love, which the Greeks set in its beauty and nobility in the bright sunshine and before the eyes of the world, was buried: its name was debased and outlawed, it was itself dishonored, persecuted and despised, so much so that it, which lived because it was imperishable and therefore could not die, hid and concealed itself from the world and from itself, and its martyred cries died away without echo in the silence of fear and terror for dark centuries.

*

We the living, the blessed-accursed children of the nineteenth century, which laid the foundation of all future freedom of the human race, we were the first to again dare to acknowledge it. But instead of finally raising it up from under the dirt and dust covering it and setting it in the triumph of its untouched beauty in the place it deserves, crowning its white brow with fresh roses and celebrating the festival of life at its feet, they dragged what had been dishonored at the judge's bench and the priest's pulpit onto the dissecting table of the doctor, gave it a place between the two sexes, and in their own opinion they were as mild as they were correct, those who decided: it does not belong here, but rather in the insane asylums.

This love, which lived in spite of all the chains and tortures, this healthy love was to be "healed" by the hypnotic treatments of quacks and the strait-jackets of force. Having branded it as a crime against nature until then, they began to do something worse—to kindly excuse it as an aberration of nature.

*

Then it finally raised its beautiful head and—smiled! It smiled again for the first time since the days when it saw a happier and therefore more beautiful race.

*

Nature! She who created us all, not as we wanted, but as she must, she alone knows why she created us as we are.

We are all her children. And she is the mother of us all. Everything in her is natural, for everything is in her and there is no crime against her that does not bring about its own downfall by itself.

Our life is carried out in the never ending struggle for self-preservation. Every being has to fight for its place on her life-giving breast.

We too, so long disowned, let us struggle finally for our place and not miserably hunger longer for it, just because her apparently privileged children shove us away from her.

*

To each love its own right.

The right of the love of man for woman, the love of woman for man, their right just as before.

The right, too, of the love of a masculine woman for a woman, of a feminine man for a man.

*But also the right of our love*: the love of a man for a youth, the love of youth for youth, the love of a youth for a man!

Mother nature spreads her riches among us in incredible abundance—unconcerned over how we use them to bless or curse ourselves, paying no attention to how we distribute them among ourselves. It is useless to want to search for goals of which she knows

nothing. All that we can do is to bow before the laws of her necessity, by recognizing them as such.

There is room enough for everyone. No one needs to hunger. No one needs to feel shut out.

Why do we quarrel over the best place? Is not the best for each that where he can be happiest in the fullest development of his own personality?

All seek their homeland in the foreign country of life. We too. And since our home is in the heart of a friend, whom we love, then we seek it there, seek until we find it.

Woe to whoever continues to rob us!

*

We? But then who are this "we"?

Every single one of us who has suffered undeserved and unsought loneliness has imagined that he is all alone. Despised in people's circles, shoved away from the table of life, he fought with the drives of his own nature as with a spiteful enemy, every day anew, today conquering and tomorrow beaten down, already feeling himself a criminal with every glance, every handshake, every kiss of his persecuted love, until the day he dares to open his eyes and recognize that there are others like him all around, alike and yet different.

And if his view widens and goes deeper, a new understanding must join his understanding of this difference: the understanding, as the most mature carried over from the century just past, that the welfare of the future lies in the liberation of the individual, of *each* individual, in his development, hindered in no way by social and group pressure, into himself as the highest happiness of his life, its meaning and its goal.

One day, when in this freedom the development of a person to be different takes new, not yet imagined paths, then will this love also show itself in its true form. No longer for sale because of need or calculation, no longer shamelessly placed under the eyes and the permission of others, the free gift of one heart to another, and the most precious, will be this creating and sustaining love and, even if not everywhere equally to

both, it will be given and taken—without worry or concern for hate and misunderstanding.

Then we shall see who we are and how many. For who today can even guess how many we are, when in fear and disgrace in the face of savage prejudices and laws that are themselves crimes we kill the most tender inclinations of our heart and hoist a screen between them and us, so as not to see and not to be seen!

A happier future will see and count us and—something today only guessed by a few among us—perhaps be astonished by the recognition that a Greek inheritance ineradicably lives on in the breast of each man, each youth, astonished and shocked at the same time by the thought of what we had to suffer, we who gained from the sorrows of our life the unheard-of courage to acknowledge our love. And it will not deny us the thanks it owes.

*

In the image of Eros, you our love stand again on the pedestal of marble, breathing beauty around careless limbs, the grace of eternal youth about slender hips, and a smile on mouth and brow: on the lips the charming, innocent smile of the boy who trusts his first inclination, on the brow the serious smile of the man who fights the hardest battle of his life for it.

There is no outrage that has not been wrongly done to you; no suffering that hate has not added to it; no misunderstanding with which folly has not persecuted you—and yet you smile!

*

You, my love from my childhood on—I see you smile and infinite longing fills my heart! And I fall down at your feet, which I have long avoided, and embrace your knees—cast off and rejected in the eyes of all except you, I come to you.

Let me rest here a while!

See how tired I am!

I have suffered so much, perhaps too much for my strength.

I want only to understand, to comprehend what was once incomprehensible to myself and still is for so many.

Teach me your smile of understanding!

And you smile—smile also on me. But strength goes out from you, infinite strength!

Let me rest yet a moment, so that it will stream from you into me.

When I rise up I will remain silent no longer. Then I will speak!

*

But how shall I name you, my life's love?!

Each name that has named you until now has become a term of abuse in the dirty mouth of the vulgar, a misunderstanding in dull minds, which is worse than all insults; and none names you correctly.

You still have no name.

So let me call you—*nameless!*

*

Nameless love!

Nameless love of the youth and the boy, who trustfully snuggles on the breast of the man because he feels that he finds everything there —friendship and love, help in word and deed!

Nameless love of the man, who draws his dearest up to him and desires to be everything to him at once—friend and father, brother and lover!

Nameless love—when will the future finally call you by your true name?

*

I will keep silent no longer.

I speak late. My fearful, oppressed breast choked off the cry of my youth; eternal disappointment murdered its longing; restless thinking early destroyed its freshness.

Thus the last hope of my life broke through to the recognition of a monstrous and unexampled injustice, and its highest wish now became this, to serve this understanding with my last strength.

If it is no longer a cry, then it will still be a call; and what it has lost in strength, it must have won in depth.

And I feel that it will fall on the ears of those who, in the terrible silence around them, still listen as if for an answer to the puzzling question of their lives—will fall like a word of comfort, a message of new courage.

*

I have lived in night.

Now I will loudly greet the dawning day, and cool my burning eyes, weary with lonely tears, in its young light.

Courage and comfort are necessary for us all today.

My late work shall yet give courage and comfort to me. And, if it is possible, also to others who in lonely fear despair, who silently hunger for love, who search for themselves in vain, unable to find themselves in confusion and distress—each alone and all undeserving of their fate!

Courage and comfort—for them and for me!

Courage and comfort!

# LISTEN! ONLY A MOMENT! A CRY

*And it will be like a cry!*

To you, whom I do not know, about whom I know nothing, but that you are a human being like myself, I turn and ask you to listen—to listen for only a moment.

I do not know you. But I assume that, since you are human, you would stop on your way if the cry of an injured person were suddenly to strike your ear. You would stop and, according to your character, hurry to help or continue on—but at least you would stop and listen for a moment, if only out of curiosity.

With a cry, with a cry of desperation, I call to you: not for help, but rather for a hearing, and for a moment only.

*

What do I want from you? It may happen that an hour comes in the life of each one of us in which we feel that its burden is becoming too heavy for us, that no living hand, no word of friendship is able to help us bear it. In such an hour—perhaps it is not a stranger to you—we walk, unable to be alone with ourselves any longer, into the streets, to wander aimlessly here and there and grasp, as if in the fear of death, for the hand of the first, the next passerby, and cry out, in order to feel that we are still alive.

In such an hour I come to you, who are a stranger to me.

*

You stop still. Astonished. “What do you want from me?” you ask.

What do I want from you?

I will speak to you. Only a moment. I will speak to you of love.

*

You laugh.

"Of love? Why the introduction? The whole world speaks of love. Everyone enjoys hearing of love. Speak!"

I begin, and have difficulty finding the first word.

Yes, I will speak of love. But not of the love the whole world talks about, but rather of the love the world keeps silent about. Of which the world knows nothing, because it wants to know nothing of it.

I will speak to you of the love—

*

You fall back and turn away. On your mouth lies a sign of scorn and disgust. Your eyes look cold and forbidding, and you interrupt me:

"I can guess what you are getting at. But I will hear nothing of it. Is it not enough that one can't pick up a newspaper anymore, or go to any social gathering, without running into a discussion of these things, which a couple of years ago no decent person would dare to even think about? Is this filth now to be brought across one's path? I want to know nothing about it, however! I will not listen! Do you understand me?"

I understand you. I knew that you would turn away, that you would interrupt me, that you would talk like that. But it is here that my cry begins: to listen to me, to listen for only a moment! Just hear at least the promise that I will give you. I promise that you will hear something from me that you did not know before, on which you never thought before. And I further promise that you will not hear from me a single one of those words, in which the misunderstood notions of our age take refuge, and of which I will only say that they disgust me a thousand times more than they could disgust you, that you will hear from me none of those words, not a single one. I give you an insight and you give me a hearing in return—for a moment—is that not a good exchange? And is it too much to ask?

*

You are uncertain and still hesitate. Then:

"All right, so be it. In the end, what more can I lose than a half hour? So talk. But make it short."

I will be brief. As brief as possible. Let us walk up and down here.

No one is listening to us. If anyone hears us, so much the better.

I will speak to you of love.

What is love?

Love is the deep and mysterious power that draws one person to another—often against his will, always against his resistance.

Love is—let me speak of it as we all, without exception, speak of it and in words just as they come to me.

Love is: the 'fulfillment of life', its 'beginning and end', the 'final end of wisdom'.

We did not know where it comes from or where it goes. It 'is there' and it 'dies of itself'.

It is our first and last happiness, it makes us 'human for the first time', 'lifts us above ourselves', discloses the 'treasures of our inner being', it awakens our best strengths; it is the hearth of our house and 'changes earth into paradise'.

Love—we love, and the world appears 'in a new light'; we are immersed in it; only in 'the beloved' do we still see it.

Love—it asks no questions, and it laughs at answers; it requires no excuse and no approval; it does not 'let itself be mocked'; it scorns the judgment of the world.

Love—it ennobles our actions and gives the least of them new meaning; it does not take, it only gives... And is blessed in receiving and giving... It is the only thing that cannot be bought in this mercenary world...

Love—it does nothing, except one thing alone: it *loves*.

Wonderful, like itself, are its ways.

It created the world, and holds it in existence.

What would the world be without it?!

Thus people speak of it—love!

We are in agreement on the wonderful strength of love, which rules the world, just as we are in agreement on its power, from which no one living can entirely escape.

And yet we exclude one love, declare it to be criminal, persecute it wherever we find it, and take from it every right, even the right to the name of love, one: the love of a man for a younger person of his own sex, his love for a youth, for a boy!

*

You stand still. Again disdain in your eyes, disgust on your lips.

"But you don't want to claim that the abominable vice you have started to talk about again has anything at all to do with love?"

Yes, I claim that, just as I claim that no love has anything to do with vice, if it is truly love. And I shall seek to prove my claim to you from the existence of this love.

But one thing I must ask of you: that you first banish from your imagination that dirty picture, which up to now has been the only way you could think of this love.

Think of your own love and you will understand me, you must understand me!

For since you are human, love cannot have remained a stranger to you: you love someone, you have loved someone.

Perhaps you are fortunate in love. Then you know the heavenly bliss of the heart, the agonizing pleasure of desire, the blessed feeling of understanding in two beings who belong to one another, the deep feeling of peaceful security on the beloved's breast.

Perhaps you are unfortunate in love. Then no torment of hell has remained a stranger to you: neither the infinite bitterness of not being heard, not being understood, the hopeless grief of futility, nor the passionate torment of never fulfilled longing, the raging pain of jealousy, the dull giving in to resignation and despair.

Now, *exactly* so, fortunate or unfortunate, do we feel our love. Thus it rejoices, thus it suffers, and it is distinguished in no way from yours, except in the one thing: that its object is not of the other, but of the same sex!

*

"But that is precisely what I do not understand," you say. "Why do you not love the other sex as we do? Explain to me this discrepancy."

I could just as well ask you to explain your love to me. You cannot do it. Just as little as I can explain mine. For love does not let itself be 'explained'.

Not this one either. Two thousand years buried it in silence. They 'explained' it as criminal, just as the majority still 'explain' it today as criminal. Then, as progressive science had to occupy itself with this question, it looked for physical and mental appearances of deviation and 'explained' it as a sickness. Yet, confronted with its own research and powerless to maintain this theory in the face of numberless cases of incontestable health, science admitted the inborn nature of this inclination, its inability to be changed or influenced, and today, provided that it goes about its work honestly and objectively, it must finally admit in shame that it is a question here of a phenomenon of nature like every other, not a question of 'another kind of human being', but rather of persons who differ from other people in no way, except in this their love.

Our time—at a loss and helpless—is faced, not with criminals, nor with sick people, nor with degenerates, but with people, healthy human beings, and indeed human beings who have finally begun to regard themselves as such and to demand to be treated as such.

*

Again you stand still, reflecting. But then—triumphantly:

"You forget one thing: the goals of nature. Its goals are preservation and reproduction. Therefore it created *two* sexes. The love you speak of, however, contradicts these goals. It is unfruitful and therefore against nature—unnatural!"

To this too I can only answer:

I do not believe in the goals of nature. I only see everywhere its meaningless and enormous extravagance: how it creates numberless germs, to allow *one* to mature to fruition, and how it everywhere destroys what it has just created. It thus fulfills its inner laws of necessity in eternal and unbroken transitions from form to form, but it fulfills no 'goals'. And we, who do not know from where we came or where we are going, nor yet why we are here, are only allowed to guess that the world subsists in this constant struggle between attraction and repulsion.

Subsists, just as our life subsists in love and hate. A struggle against nature, whose victory is the victory over itself!

I do not believe in the goals of nature. But you, who believe in these goals, you must then also believe that nature pursues a goal with us too, and it is up to you, not me, to discover this goal.

For do you want to doubt the existence of this love? Did you yourself not say that it has become a topic of the day: that one can no longer open a newspaper without running into it. Just as the powerful dammed up current finally breaks the dam, so has it broken its monstrous silence of centuries, and it is not its fault if today it so suddenly stands among us like a stranger.

A stranger that has only one homeland: among that unique people, of whose art the soul of our culture longingly seeks the last fragments, because it recognizes in it the revelation of the highest beauty.

A stranger everywhere, but nowhere foreign: all times, all peoples, every country and every class have known and know it, and everywhere it demands today its native right to tolerance. A stranger, whom we know and yet do not know, of which we do not know what it can and will bring, we still shove it off and back away from it, as if from a leper, and it wanders homeless about and must first earn its right as a citizen and—oh!—how gladly would it not want to earn it.

For who knows in how many hearts it already lives today, since everyone denies it!

Thus placed before the fact of its existence, powerless any longer to root it out and suppress it, there remains only one thing left: to come to terms with it; and experience will teach us that we can do this in only one way: by seeking to make it useful for our life, like every other strength of nature, by allowing the apparently fruitless to become fruitful.

How—that I cannot tell you here. The time is too short. Consider for yourself how great the educational effect of this love can be on the beloved youth, if it is allowed to function unhindered. We shall see mature as its finest fruit the virtues of manliness and sincerity, of justice and freedom.

*

Now, however, I hear your long awaited objection:

"But who and what hinders you today from effecting this? Surely not the law? Ridiculous! No law in the world has ever punished feelings, no law has any power at all to do that. Feelings are as free as thoughts. It is not those the law prosecutes, but actions; and punishment is the only thing that protects the youth from seducers."

Not true!—I answer you. It is not true! And I will prove to you that it is not true, will show you that the law seldom punishes actions alone, but always punishes love.

Laws are made by those who have the power to make them. They last only as long as the power that maintains them. But power is forever changing, and the laws change and fall with it. Power has its strongest support in what we call 'morality': the 'judgment of public opinion', the 'voice of the people, which is the voice of God', the 'moral consciousness of the general public'. And morality, in turn, rests on the law: it is still today the guiding principle of most people, of all those who are unable to feel and act independently: the 'great masses'. What the law allows is 'good'; what it forbids is 'bad'.

And now *this* law! There is none that is so untenable, since it is so completely unenforceable. Here and there, among innumerable cases, some unfortunate is ruined by it. Those, however, whom it concerns, or should concern, the true seducers of youth, they slip away always, or almost always. Well versed in all its tricks and ambiguities, basing their life on the enjoyment of their senses alone (too often only because they despair of the possibility of their love and have learned to doubt it), they struggle through between morality and law unharmed, and seek to win for their underground existence the cheerless stimulation of the secret and unusual—a life, not in the light of the sun, but in the artificial light of a hideout.

But why do I talk to you of such!

I wanted to bear witness to you of those alone who love. Of those who suffer the more, the deeper they love. Who are ruined, because they love; and who love, because they cannot live without love. Of those whom you murder, since you hinder them from loving— those who are the true victims of this law, always, even there where it does not reach, cannot reach!

*

"But cannot and will not your love also lead to actions?" you ask. It will not always necessarily do so. But certainly it can. Yet then it can be only actions of love: arising from the unique wish to make one another as happy as possible; to do good and not hurt one another; and so also to benefit and not harm one another. And that is all and should be all that I can tell you about the actions of this love, which people—and you too!—can only imagine, when you think about this love, unwilling and unable to investigate assumptions before you draw conclusions.

Nevertheless, a word more about seduction.

No law can protect youth from seduction. Only instruction can do that.

But never will instruction be more effective, more penetrating, more blessed than when love, genuine love gives it. Let us, therefore, trust less in the law than in this: the law of love, the unique unwritten law of eternal validity and durability, which one day will here too mock all our written laws—let us also safely entrust our youth to it!

And let us not always and everywhere see only seducers, who lead astray. For there are also leaders.

A seducer is one who misleads to questions and offers their solution, before they pose them themselves—who violently opens buds with impudent and impure hands, before their time of maturity has come. I have nothing to do with these seducers, as little as you, and with you I say that everything must be allowed us to keep them off.

A leader, however, is someone who carefully waits for the questions until he sees that they are pressing for an answer and are asked—who protects the bud, but does not refuse to nourish the ground for its blooming.

*Here* lies the border and *not* in the artificial establishment of age. One person is mature and appears still to be a child; another is still a child, while we would take him to be mature already, according to his years.

Distinguish, therefore, between leaders and seducers.

For, believe me, it can happen that your weapons are turned against your own breast.

The awakening boy, the awakened young person impetuously seeks for answers to his questions—for a *leader* in his confusion.

How do you answer him? I do not know. I see only the results of your answers.

How does his friend answer him, his older friend by whom he has up to then found the answer to all the little questions of his young life—how does he answer the first big one?

'Naturally,' you say, 'he advises him to love him!'

Not at all. He loves him and therefore will show him all the paths and then say: Now choose for yourself! Go in whatever direction you are impelled.

The boy, however, hesitates between you and him: between you, who have filled his soul with frightening hints and horrible warnings, and him, to whom he is drawn.

He doesn't know which way to turn. Where should he go? Should he go to a girl?—'seduce' her? Who will rescue him and her from the consequences? In the best case the sacrifice of the whole of his own life.

Should he go to a prostitute? He can buy her. But she can sell him out. And here no sacrifice will rescue him, not even that of his own lost life.

Should he finally turn to himself? In the solitary love of self seek release from his necessity? Give himself the answer that is everywhere denied and not understood, which slowly destroys him?

'He should not love at all, as long as he is young,' you say. 'He should remain continent.' You can just as well say to him that he should not live, as long as he is young. He feels that this is no answer. It seems too simple to him. He knows already that life, which is pounding on his senses with such questions, is not so simple.

'Thus he should love with his heart, but not with his senses. Thus you should and can also love him.' And this answer, which is the worst of all, will make him into the person we would least like to see: into an unstable dreamer, an idealist unfitted for life, a fanatic of some idea or other, whom life tosses about until it crushes him.

And with this you say to us: we should love him without—loving him.

He, however, who has hesitated so long between you and his friend, finally seeks his last refuge on the breast that loves him. And it will not shove him away. It will give him the answer that he seeks, in spite of the world and its judgment. It will not betray his love or him. It will also not disappoint him.

Therefore: Is it better that he comes secretly to it, behind your back, than openly and with your permission?

What is better: to place the danger of alienation between us, or to work in common for his happiness?

For what could I more earnestly ask of you than this: let us go together! And what could I more gladly welcome, than that you instruct him?

But before you instruct him, instruct *yourself*.

*

And now that we have drawn closer—

But have we drawn closer?

You stand so indistinctly before me in the shadows of this night. I do not know who you are. But whoever you may be, man or woman, old or young, unhappy or happy, influential or powerless, poor or rich—you are a human being, and as such sympathy for another's suffering cannot be entirely foreign to you.

The time is short, which you have granted me, but not so short as to allow you to tarry a bit with me by a life of the love, of which you know nothing, and which is able to find its fulfillment in this love alone.

However it may appear from the outside, it is a poor life. It is a life of danger and fear, and it is a life of lies—a life that only he endures, who must bear it.

Danger and fear are around him and around all that he loves. The next chance can destroy him, can rob him of his family, alienate his friends, tear his beloved from his heart; can shake his position in society and make his presence impossible everywhere; destroy his reputation, stain his honor, drag his name into the mud, take his bread, and make him homeless.

Therefore he builds his whole life on one lie. No one, not even the nearest to him, is allowed even to imagine how he appears inside. The mask of indifference and contentment constantly before his frozen face, he simulates love and interest—how often does he not!—where he feels none; he sympathizes where no one sympathizes with him; he does

not look where he would dearly love to look, and he must lie, lie, lie—with every glance, with every word, continually.

Everything that makes up the 'happiness of the others', for which they live, is closed to him: he does not know a peaceful life in a secure position; knows no home adorned with a woman's care and the laughter of children; no peace of mind and feeling of serenity following a good and well-done day's work; does not even have the consciousness of being allowed to work for those he loves!

And he has no one to whom he can complain. Not even to the lap that conceived and bore him does he dare to bring his misery, out of fear of confusing, wounding, killing the last and dearest heart with his confession.

Everything is denied him. What the poorest of the poor may still dare, to show his bit of happiness to the world, he dare not do—he must hide it. Everything—even the last consolation of tears on the grave of the one he loved—for his tears could indeed arouse suspicion!

Loneliness is his destiny and bitterness his curse!

How is he still to live? He himself no longer knows.

Never is his love secure. Even when he succeeds in winning the trust of a young heart and calling it his, he is surrounded by suspicion, pursued by impudent curiosity, an eye is kept on every footstep, and how easily is the one who is young and therefore so easily influenced torn from him by a word, a threat, a prohibition!

Again and again he stands in mourning before the seeds of his happiness, trampled by stupidity and malice, from year to year losing the courage to begin anew the futile task.

With less and less courage to live—for how is he yet to live and work?

He himself no longer knows.

What is allowed him after all?

What he is still able to do—everything has of course only the one goal, to make the poor victim compliant to his lust: a smile—the snare he uses to trap; a friendly word, a small gift—the bait he uses to catch; help in word and deed—the price and hush money for some received or expected disgraceful act! He holds himself back— aha, he is lurking; he 'appears otherwise quite decent'—well yes, there you see the way he knows how

to hide his true nature; he is faithful, selfless, and self-sacrificing in his love—his bad conscience holds him back from the final deed.

You tell me: is there in all this even a trace of heart, sensitivity and understanding? I do not find it.

Thus he lives his corpse-life among you, a shadow of your happiness, lonely and silent, and little by little dies his feeling of being a man among human beings!

For how is he to prove that he too still belongs among them?

All around him is silence, nothing but silence.

And this silence, with which his love is buried, is the most dreadful of all: this impossibility of being able to defend himself; to seize this spectre of madness; to close the mouth that lies about us; to be able to choke the throat that spits out cowardly insults!

For this love is just not love. It is not there at all. Its nonexistence does not let it defend itself, nor grasp the inaudible whispers of rumor, nor crush the unspoken slander that prowls about.

Silence—who is able to fight against silence!

Where is the character that would not become callous or shallow in such a life, the heart that would not become bitter? Where the nerves that would not succumb?

But you all, who will hear none of this, you see nothing, you have no idea of it, you judge; his vice has ruined him; a person mistrustful and unhappy in life; a heart without love.

A heart without love? It is not without love, but is sentenced to what is the hardest for every decent person: to deny it, and more than this: to join in insulting it, in betraying it, so as not to be betrayed! For silence arouses suspicion, defense is self-accusation!

Thus he goes where you drive him. Damned to live without love and joy, to sacrifice his life to a phantom, he puts lust in place of love, frenzy in place of joy, seeks to numb himself, delude himself about himself, clings with the last hundredth part of his wasted tenderness to the warm, but unfeeling breast that tolerates it because it is paid for this tolerance, and is still satisfied to know at least one place yet where he will not be shoved away with complete disgust. And everything becomes more and more indifferent to him: your judgment and his life, until his nausea before the waste and emptiness of this his own life buries him!

*

"But," I hear you say, "be stronger than your life, greater than your destiny! Openly acknowledge your love and fight for it!"

Show me first, I answer you, the person who is so independent of his whole surroundings that he can defy your judgment. And if he is, who can ask that he bare himself in the open market place, to show that he is without stain? Who has become so indifferent to himself, that he would destroy forever his last hope for a small bit of happiness?

Nothing else than this would an open confession of this love be today, this condemned love, condemned like nothing else on earth.

Who can ask it? Surely not you, who have nothing to fear and yet do not have the courage to touch on the nature of this love for fear of somewhere being suspected of being in sympathy with it.

*

You shrug your shoulders. 'The time is not yet ripe. You were born too soon. And it seems to me that you exaggerate a bit—it really cannot be so bad.'

Only my smile answers you.

If I were to tell you all that I know—and I could tell you much—it would be the enormous sum of those sorrows that in the accounting book of humanity have alone remained unwritten and uncounted, because they were never taken into account, not a single one was entered!

*

You stand wavering. You are not shaken, for only that, which we ourselves are capable of suffering, is able to shake us.

However, you have become somewhat thoughtful.

"But what can I do?" you ask.

What can you do? You must know that yourself, I cannot tell you. For I do not know you. But one thing you can do today—everyone can—is *this*:

Do not make yourself an accessory to this most senseless of all judgments, this darkest of all madness, this most unfeeling of all injustices.

Take part no longer, as you have up to now: in those unspeakable jokes, with which the common and thoughtless dirty someone's lot, of which they have no idea; in the ugly and cheap smile that secretively plays around the lips of those who think themselves educated when they bury this love with silence; in the hideous hunting down of men, which has become a sport and which a never sufficiently prodded greediness for ever new sensations carries out in the open streets in our days; in the repugnant pleasure with which the rabble 'of all sorts' stones to death the one they have trampled to the ground; in the dirty suspicions with which the honor, the reputation, the name of someone who is 'so' or is under suspicion of being so is stained, until his existence is buried under them!

Guard yourself well from taking part any longer in the degradation of a love you do not know, for you degrade your own love with it!

If you believe in God, then profess: God, who takes even the least one to his heart, rejects no one for the sake of the love that he himself has planted.

If you do not believe, then investigate further and realize that no area of life may be closed to true research, and regard its phenomena not with the eye of a zealot and moralist, but with that of a searcher after the truth.

That is what you can do without fail, whoever you are, and indeed from tomorrow on!

What you are able and wish to bring about further in this sphere of your life, so as finally to order a halt to perhaps the greatest, certainly the most cowardly crime that one part of mankind has without punishment perpetrated on another part—your heart, your spirit, your love of justice alone can tell you.

*

The moment you allowed me is coming to an end.

I have kept my promise, have I not? You have heard nothing from me that you could not calmly listen to; no word has fallen that adds to the confusion; and I have only spoken to you of love.

Love—where is it not?

Listen: do you not hear a rustle around us in the silence of this night, deep and full like the rustle of a distant current? It is the current of love, which flows through the world. Its source wells up in the distant mystery of time. Its waters flow there pure and clear—at the beginning of the world, at the origin of all being. People bend over it, to drink in life. Everyone may come and drink: strength and health, beauty and joy.

Only we stand aside. Among all apart and alone. For our spring, also flowing here, is poisoned: poisoned by prejudice and made impure by hate. And as we bend down over it, to quench our thirst, there strikes against us the decaying smell of corpses, the corpses of those who drank nevertheless and had to die because they drank.

And we shudder back, again and again—to drink nevertheless and die like them; or—to die of thirst!

*

It is late. The moment has passed.

I do not thank you. You have me to thank. You gave me an audience, but I gave you the possibility of an understanding.

You turn away. You know that what I told you is the truth: indisputable in its facts.

What I wanted was: to show you that this love—the love of a man for a younger one: for a youth, for a boy—is as little a vice as every other love. I have gained nothing from you, if you have not grasped this.

You keep silent. Doubts probably afflict you, but your instinct, as you call it, rears up in opposition—that poison of slander, continually injected into generations through the centuries, is having its effect and is stronger than your will for truth. You ‘can do nothing against it’.

All right. So be it then.

Go. Continue to close your eyes and your ears, your heart and your understanding. Continue to help the work of persecution: sharpen the laws—no, better: make new ones that threaten a smile of this love with public dishonor, a word with prison for life! Just don't stand in the middle of the road: rip hearts from breasts, dissect their feelings, and when you run up against abominable ones, like ours, burn them in the light of your centuries, before the eyes of a mass of people screaming out to you!

Only then can you say that you have obtained what you wished!

Did you believe perhaps that I would have cried out to you because I hoped for sympathy, tolerance, understanding from you? Because I still believed in the possibility of justice in our time? Because I still had hope?

Happiness? None of us believes any longer in happiness. —Justice? We laugh at it, as at an empty word. —Hope? We have given it all up, down to the last.

No. I cried out to you, because I *had* to cry out!

*

Go. Do what you will. But do not believe that you can still do anything that has not already been done against us. The cup is empty. There are no more dregs.

But one thing, hear me, you should no longer do—no longer do for your own sake.

Speak no more of love. Genuine love makes one discerning and indulgent—broadens our faculty for understanding the lot of others, opens our hearts to their misfortune.

Speak no longer of justice. True justice knows only one crime: the crime against the equal freedom of others, seeks to understand its causes and to make it and them impossible, but does not create criminals out of innocent people, purely for the pleasure of punishing them.

And speak no longer of Christian charity. For under the scornful laughter of those cast out the word would die on your lips!

We, too, finally comprehend and know what we have to do.

You were able to murder those who *were*—unpunished.

But we, who *are* among you and of your race, and who will be among your progeny, not your and their enemies, but their and your friends and helpers, we shall be their aven-

gers: no more ‘outcasts of humanity’, but rather a part of it, and—with equal rights, equally respected in our actions, equally respected also in our love—we shall win and maintain our place in it.

How that will happen—that is our concern.

A path lies open to us and we shall walk on it. It is the path to the heart of the youth. And we have *one* weapon. It is the shield of our love.

We shall hold it over us and over those we love, and the arrows of your hatred, like the venom of your slander, will glance off it. Thus shall we conquer.

For the future of youth is also the future of our love. Our love lives on in youth, our vision becomes fact. Thus our last consolation is: that no one of them, the youth, who once has truly felt this love in himself, can misunderstand it again. Each of them, who has felt its strength in himself and has tested it in growing up, has experienced its blessing in his large and small needs, and has seen its loyalty kept; whoever was not seduced, dishonored, and disgraced by us, as you persuaded him, but rather found in us the helpers and comrades of his happy youth and his friends for life, he will, having become the father of a son himself, see in the one approaching the youngster not, to be sure, a friend from the outset, but also from the outset not an enemy, will examine him rigorously, and hold him to be a decent person until he proves himself to be the opposite.

Therefore we, who have nothing more to lose than our love, who are not without it, even if without any more belief and hope, we shall not become tired of loving. Over every trampled seed the work of our love will begin anew, until we too stand before our harvest; until the current of our love also, purified of poison and corpses, will flow clear and bright; until we too are allowed to drink of it without danger, drink as everyone drinks.

And we shall no longer keep silent. You can count on it, we shall no longer keep silent!

For *one* right is also ours: *one* right, one last one, which no power, no injustice, no maltreatment is able entirely to suppress, which even the most cruel hangman is unable to smother on the lips of his defenseless victim—the right of a final cry!

Dragged before your bar as an outlaw; convicted only by the witness of stupidity and meanness; sentenced without being heard; buried alive in the midst of the living; held in

the eternal fear of uncertainty about the hour of our death; and finally somewhere, sometime, strangled by the hands of some scoundrel, our last cry is our last and only right!

Only this cry is able to lift the cover of silence under which you have sought to further smother us.

Therefore we shall shout it—we shall cry out until we find a hearing, not a hearing for a moment in the darkness of night before this or that person, but a hearing before the whole world, and in everything we have to say! We shall cry, *cry*, as long as it takes to be heard, cry out as I have cried out to you with this cry!

*

You walk away. But do not believe that this hour will ever *entirely* vanish from your life.

Sometime, perhaps very soon, perhaps only after years, another hour will come, when a person who was dear to your heart, whom you believed you knew and yet did not know, incurs his undeserved fate, in which you stand stunned and disconcerted before the dead, and find always only the one question: "Why? Why?!"

And in this hour, in which your foot, which otherwise walks so securely over corpses, stumbles on the threshold of your own house, fouled by blood and tears, this hour in which you bend over him, whom you have without love or understanding offended and whom no love and no understanding can now awaken, and in which you nevertheless still hope that the silent lips will give you the answer to the question that tortures you—in this other hour there will pierce your numb ear, as if from a distance, the echo of a long forgotten cry, like the answer you seek, a cry that once, in a dark hour, a stranger who crossed your path and whom you shook off uttered, *and you will, too late, understand his meaning*.

# The History of a Fight for the Nameless Love

*Vanquished today, victorious tomorrow!*

## 1
## Introduction

I have fought a fight, a fight in which I am beaten. I fought it for the love that is also the love of my life, for the love I call "nameless", since no name yet correctly names it today.

I have fought it for the honor, the truth, and the beauty of this love.

I have fought it with all my strength: aware, steady, devoted.

I have been beaten in it. Perhaps beaten precisely because of this.

*

The fight is ended. It is ended for today, to begin again tomorrow.

But between this day and tomorrow lies a long night, whose end no one sees and whose dawn none of us will experience. For such a fight is fought only once in a lifetime, only once in the life of a generation.

*

It is night. The fight is ended and I have been beaten. All that I can still do—in the long hours of this night, in whose silence they continue to murder us and our love—is to narrate the history of this fight, my fight for the nameless love.

I owe it to myself to tell it, as I owe it to those who one day, in their search into our times for the first beginnings of the fight for this love, do not wish to stand—and should not stand—before vague and slanderous rumors, but rather before facts. Therefore, I first of all give the facts. Whoever gets tired of the narration of its particulars, or to whom one

or another of them should appear superfluous, let him recall that I am no longer speaking to him, who watched this fight with complete indifference, although it was also his fight, but rather to those who one day would be unable to comprehend its beginning without the knowledge of its history.

I shall, therefore, narrate its history in all its particulars. I wish to show with what weapons I fought; I wish to show with what weapons I was fought.

*

I speak no longer to my time, the time in which I have been condemned to live, a time that does not hear me and does not want to hear me because it wants to hear nothing of this love. I speak to that time that is coming after me, a future that will allow itself to be closed off from no question that life poses—to a freer, and hence better and more just, time.

It is night. Around the lonely fire of our love gather the few whose faith alone holds its meager flame alive in the long and anxious hours of this cold night.

They alone listen to me. To them I shall first tell the story of my fight for their love. As they hear me, the future will one day hear me.

They listen. But—oh!—how few they are! And how weakly our fire burns!

## 2
## Decision to fight

I do not wish to speak myself. I wish to let the sober and hard facts speak.

It was in the year 1905[1] that I thought out the plan of a series of writings that were to bear the common title, "Sagitta's Books of the Nameless Love". They were to dissemi-

1. Mackay does not mention it here, but his first publication with the pseudonym Sagitta was the poem "Der Fremde" (The stranger), which appeared in the February 1905 issue of *Der Eigene*. Three more poems followed in April, May and June. All four were reprinted in 1913 in the one-volume "Books of the Nameless Love".

nate light and truth about the nature of a love that quite generally for two thousand years was taken for a crime here, for a sickness there, but always, here and there, for a vice, the suppression of which was regarded in every case as the undoubted demand of culture—whereas this love in reality was neither a crime nor a sickness. If it was love, it could not be a vice for that very reason. It logically follows that it must be accepted, judged, and evaluated in the development of humanity as a love like every other love. And so it would follow, if the first and most pressing demand of each view and investigation of life were not that objectivity of judgment is to be left out of consideration and trampled under foot.

But that is what has happened up to now—always and everywhere! For, instead of investigating *whether* this love was truly a crime, a vice, or a sickness, science, in the persons of its representatives who felt themselves called upon to judge, to cure and to save humanity, without exception began from the standpoint that it is a crime, a vice, a sickness, and while the doctors recommended and demanded their cure, the judges their punishment, and the priests their damnation, all found themselves united—with the whole of public opinion—in the call for its suppression. This situation, in and of itself intolerable at the beginning of the twentieth century of human development, also had become completely intolerable for those who suffered under this general prejudice and were first affected; it became so for me, at least, who (perhaps more than any other) suffered under it.[2]

Thus, after a long struggle, there arose in me slowly, but surely, the decision to write these books.

## 3
## Battle Plan

I knew nothing, or rather almost nothing, of those who, like me, had suffered and were suffering. I knew only that their number must be much greater than I had ever imag-

2. Mackay's struggle to come to terms with his sexual orientation is vividly told in his autobiographical novel *Fenny Skaller*.

ined, much greater than was generally assumed, and at any rate large enough that a fight for their cause could be dared with the prospect of victory. They all, who up to now had kept silent, just as I had kept silent, were obviously only waiting for the first word of deliverance in order to be able to speak themselves. I wanted to speak the first word.

I decided, before I addressed myself to the broad public, to first address those in whom I was probably justified in seeking natural allies in this fight. These books were first to reach their hands, which were destined to pass them on later. To get to know them; to learn how large their number was in reality, how warm their desire and how strong their courage; to hear how they themselves thought about their own love and how they felt about it; finally to know who could be counted on in this fight—this was the first requirement. The way of a subscription by name, the public completely excluded at first under quite definite conditions, was consequently the way that spontaneously presented itself.

I thus wanted to take this path first: the books were for the present to be made available by subscription—two a year—in editions of one thousand (one thousand—what was a thousand among so many?) to the narrow circle of those who must have the closest and greatest interest in them, and indeed in a manner of announcement and composition that was to mitigate from the beginning any suspicion that here was a treatment of anything other than a serious matter. When the goal of making accessible a solidly fixed circle was reached, then the wider goal, the path to the broad public, was open and the real work for the final goal of enlightenment must begin.

The first path appeared to me easy in comparison with the second—a walk through the valley before the hard climb.

## 4

## "Sagitta"

I knew that it was going to be a fight. Here stood not man against man. Here stood, at the beginning at least, one against all.

I wanted to fight it as Sagitta.

I owe no person other than myself an account of the reasons that caused me to fight with visor closed, and only thoughtless curiosity or impudence could dare to ask for these reasons. Quite aside from the fact that it is not a question of whether one fights with armed or unarmed breast, but rather of how and with what weapons one fights, the result of this fight, the so easy victory of a power protected by an overwhelming prejudice, has shown how insane and useless at the same time the sacrifice of my own person would have been, instead of saving it as the last weapon for a final decision in the matter—even if it lay in other and distant days.[3]

If, therefore, I wished to fight this fight at all, I could only fight thus, and only thus did I also win as the first comrade and helper in it the brave man who is to be remembered here first at the very beginning: the man who—although without a personal stake in this cause and only through my books convinced of its right and importance—stood by my side in all the difficulties and dangers of the years to come up to the end, and whose manner of acting was of such generosity and courage that a blush of shame should come to the face of all those who, inactive and cowardly, watched this fight for their cause from a distance, instead of doing what would have been a duty they owed themselves. He, like myself, gained no thanks for his effort and sacrifice. But he, like myself, found his satisfaction in the knowledge of having put his strength in the service of a good cause, a cause that would be in a different situation if there had been more in its ranks like him. I do not need to give his name here. He stands on the title pages of the books as their publisher, and even if others have not thanked him, I do so today and here.[4]

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3. According to Mackay's longtime friend Friedrich Dobe, there was another reason why he used a pseudonym: "This fighter for the nameless love, who knew how deeply it was dragged into the mud, wanted by no means that, by connection with his person, the cause of freedom too, anarchy, be dragged into the same mud and exposed to renewed misunderstanding." Friedrich Dobe, *John Henry Mackay als Mensch* (Koblenz: Edition Plato, 1987), p. 5.

4. Mackay's publisher was Bernard Zack, who had been his publisher for a series of propaganda pamphlets for individualist anarchism. Zack also published the 8-volume edition of Mackay's collected works, *Gesammelte Werke*, in 1911.

## 5

## First Subscription Invitation

## First Disappointment

On 1 August 1905, as the first attack, the first subscription invitation was issued for the first two of the "Books of the Nameless Love": the first. *The Nameless Love: A Creed*; the second, *Who Are We? A Poem of the Nameless Love.* The first book, small in size, I wanted to bring out as a general preface to all the books, since "they themselves allowed no proper insertion of this introductory creed."

The conditions of the subscription were very precisely formulated: the public was completely excluded; each book would be individually subscribed for, but only by a personal signature on a certificate in which the subscriber expressly declared that he "takes no offence in principle in works of art and literature that perhaps may appropriately offend the modesty of so-called normal people", and that he was acquiring the book only for his private use.

The reasons that prompted this form of publication were—as is unfortunately all too obvious—explained as follows: "So long as it is possible for one part of humanity to control with force not only the actions but also the thoughts of another part, and so arbitrarily to interfere in a way that hinders the course of culture, there arises the duty to protect oneself against all possible interference in this way, not only for the authors, publishers and printers of works that serve this progress, but also for those acquiring them." In this way, it was stated, a path was taken that gave equal security to all the parties named. And most emphatically, "whoever is seeking any kind of thrills of a well-known kind behind this announcement of serious and strictly artistic works" was warned against subscribing, since he would only find himself very disappointed. On the other hand, for those who desired to see new light fall on a dark area where research and art have hardly taken the first steps, the hope of bringing these books of a nameless and not understood love to the knowledge of an appreciative circle was suggested. At the end the assurance was also given that here no name, to whomever it might belong, would be named: a promise that was kept as only a promise can be kept.

When the two books—printed in one of the foremost printing houses in Germany on the best paper, and exemplary in their external appearance—were published, the number of subscribers was still so small that I had to tell myself that mine was a first experience, an experience that was at the same time a first, great disappointment.[5]

## 6
## Second Subscription Invitation—Hopelessness

But the weapons could not be laid aside so easily. Perhaps from the very beginning such an intense hope expected too much; perhaps determination would obtain what would not succeed from courage alone.

Thus there followed on 1 July 1906, not quite one year later, the second subscription invitation for the third and fourth books: the third, *Fenny Skaller: A Life of the Nameless Love*, and the fourth, *Over the Marble Steps: A Scene of the Nameless Love*. The conditions of the subscription remained unchanged, exactly the same, and were repeated. But at their end it was stated that "since the first two books had appeared and allowed no more doubt about the pureness of the intention and the seriousness of the art", it had now been shown what kind of works they were and what was being treated; and it was at the same time pointed out that, if interest did not now set in and assure the publication of further books, the undertaking would, with the first two, find its termination.

This appeal, too, was in vain!

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5. Perhaps the first published review of these books was, rather oddly, in the *Monatsschrift für Harnkrankheiten, Psychopathia sexualis and sexuelle Hygiene* (Monthly for urinary diseases, sexual psychopathology and sexual hygiene). Dr. Wilhelm Hammer wrote there: "From these volumes sounds no longer the begging voice of the sick person crying for sympathy, but rather the trumpet call to battle; the writer resolutely fights against the teaching of the Christian church and the ascetics preaching total self-control." (Quoted in: *Monatsbericht des Wissenschaftlich-humanitären Komitees* [1907], p. 136.) However, Hammer went on to reject Mackay's views. An even less favorable review by Dr. Alfred Kind appeared the following year in the *Zeitschrift für Sexualwissenschaft* 1, No. 4 (April 1908), p. 248. The first favorable review was probably that written by Mackay's Dutch friend J. H. François (who used the pseudonym Charley van Heezen) and published in *Den Gulden Winkel* 11, No. 10 (October 1912), pp. 149–151.

Although the number of addresses grew and grew, and although nothing was neglected to reach by their help all those who were subjectively or objectively concerned with this question—the number of those who answered remained too small to be able to justify, in calm judgment, the risk of printing further books.

Before me stood the impossibility of continuing the fight I had begun. Even if I would have gladly placed my artistic powers in its service for still further years, the means were exhausted.

It appeared to me: hardly begun, already ended.

## 7

## Sole Help—Sole Joy

So it would have been, if help had not come to it from the side of a man whom I can remember here only with deep emotion. He lives no more. Among all the blows that this poor cause has met and meets from all sides constantly, the self-chosen death which this strong and completely unbroken spirit preferred to long sickness of the body, which he held to be incurable, has surely been the heaviest blow. Never has it had a more courageous and energetic friend than him.

His name, too, does not need to be named here by me.[6] Probably everyone who brings to the "Renaissance of the Uranian Eros"[7] more than the fleeting interest of curiosity and sees in it more than a topic of the day, who sees above all a question of male culture, has listened to him. And who, who longs for this renaissance as he did, does not know him and does not hold him in eternal honor!

With his help, which I accepted under conditions that imposed on me no other obligations than the voluntary one of gratitude, it became possible to take up again the inter-

6. Mackay's good friend Benedict Friedlaender shot himself in the night of 21 June 1908. He had long suffered from dysentery, which he contracted on a trip to India at the end of the 19th century.

7. Mackay is recalling here the title of Friedlaender's book *Renaissance des Eros Uranios* (Berlin, 1904; facsimile reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1975), in which Friedlaender argued for a rebirth of the Greek ideal of love. See my essay-review in *Gay Books Bulletin* No. 6 (Fall, 1981): 14–15, 30.

rupted work, and it continued on. Today, when it is ended, having been brought to an end under such entirely different conditions than any of us imagined or could imagine, when I look back on the following year of actual further fighting and being overcome, that year full of never-ending distress and uninterrupted agitation, of bitterness and ever new disappointments, the manner in which this rare man acted appears to me today even greater than it did at the time, and I look upon it as the only joy that these years and this fight have brought me.

## 8
## "Listen! Only a Moment!"

The work continued on. Then suddenly there occurred in the winter of 1907/1908 that event which shifted this cause and its fate into an entirely new light—into the full light of publicity, into glaring daylight.

The event concerned the destruction of a political opponent, who was influential in the circles of power.[8] In politics, however, where all notions that otherwise, at least here and there, have some validity in the social life of people, and for which at any rate a certain justification may be granted—notions such as honor and chivalry, respect for personal life and its freedom, and such like—in politics, where all these notions become null and void, and where every weapon, even the most poisonous, is allowed and customary—what was more convenient than to grasp what is so easily at hand and always sure of its goal, to hint at the "sexual orientation" of the opponent, and so with one blow, no, with one word already, destroy him? It happened, and this victim, too, would have unceremoniously fallen, had not the accompanying circumstances made this case into an event for the public that held them in suspense for months—a delight for the rabble and its sensa-

8. On 17 November 1906, Maximilian Harden, editor of the Berlin weekly *Die Zukunft*, published the first of two articles in which he attacked several friends and advisors of the emperor as homosexuals. Count Kuno von Moltke brought a libel suit against Harden, who was acquitted at first, but later convicted. But the central figure in the scandal was Philipp Prince zu Eulenburg-Hertefeld, who was probably the "political opponent" Mackay had in mind here. See James D. Steakley, "Iconography of a Scandal: Political Cartoons and the Eulenburg Affair", *Studies in Visual Communication* 9, No. 2 (Spring 1983): 20–51.

tion-hungry periodicals, a distaste and disgust for the friends of cultural progress, but a horror for insiders.

It was quite unheard of, what happened here: a matter that up to then, for thousands of years, had been suppressed, hushed up and kept in dead silence with all the means of forceful and secret suppression, which until then had been at most blinked and winked at, whispered about and shuddered at, was suddenly the conversation, the main topic of the day. No one could pick up a newspaper anymore without running up against a discussion, often columns long, of the problem of same-sex love, discussions that stopped at nothing, unless it was the one thing which alone could have made them and their tone excusable: the true foundation and understanding of the question treated. For what these discussions created, this bold "sex instruction", was in reality far worse than the complete ignorance that had until then so victoriously reigned. In its place came half-truths, which, quickly molded into new slogans, would bar the way to any new, deeper investigation of this love for a long time, and gave welcome nourishment to greedy curiosity alone, not to serious and unprejudiced observation and research.

Not that the persons in this particular case, which was the political game of that winter, could have been of any particular interest to us, who love our younger friends with masculine love[9]—our interest was the game itself, and would be in its outcome. We were again—as always—the ones who were hit the hardest in our love. For even if individual voices were raised to promote the "legalization of intercourse between adult persons", youth had to be "protected", and nowhere, but nowhere, was one voice raised that dared even to hint that no better protection for youth could be given than that which assured them true friendship and genuine love.

*One* voice at least finally had to be raised, and it had to sound loud and far if it was to have the prospect of being heard as it wished.

The field of battle had become different this winter; there was another opponent. This meant changing the battle plan in order to be able to conquer the enemy. The field of battle was now in public; the enemy, the masses. My earlier plan had to be, if not put away, at least postponed.

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9. Prince Eulenburg and others involved in the "scandal" were thought to have a "feminine love" for men. This was in line with Magnus Hirschfeld's *Zwischenstufentheorie*, the theory of sexual intermediates.

My books, with the means of distribution proposed at the time, were directed at a narrow, limited, almost closed circle. The concern was now to turn to *everyone*. They had been "too expensive". Therefore a price had to be fixed that could in no way be a hindrance any longer. A pamphlet alone, of small size and at a price of pennies, generally understandable and therefore effective in each of its sharply defined words—it alone was able to be the new weapon, forged in the fire of these days.[10]

At the same time, however, those whom it concerned must now become informed about the aims and goals of the fight. And—*now* they had to help it, or *never*!

I sent out this appeal at year's end in the circular "To the serious friends of the cause", which, along with a copy of the pamphlet *Listen! Only a Moment! A Cry* (so as to bring a knowledge of it right away to each one called upon), went in a closed envelope to all the addresses I had collected, almost one thousand.

Now it had to be seen how many and what kind of friends belonged to this cause, whether the fight was still possible at all and could be successfully continued, or whether it had to be given up because there were none, or at any rate too few, who supported it as their own. I still hoped for the former.

Now it had to be seen. The decision was near.

## 9

## First Circular

My circular read essentially as follows:

To the serious friends of the cause:

In these days, when the weak light of our love, so poorly shielded by the hands that have undertaken its care, threatens to go out in the storm of general hatred newly incited to rage, a choice stands before us: to succumb or to live on.

10. Mackay wrote (in English) to his good friend Benjamin R. Tucker, the American anarchist writer: "Nothing better, and almost all in short words, I can say about this love I have said in this pamphlet." Mackay to Tucker, 22 June 1908, Benjamin R. Tucker Papers, New York Public Library.

To succumb or to fight on. For living on means now more than ever for each of us: fighting on.

On the lips of those who are still resisting their own ruin lies one question: Something must be done—but what?

Earnest and sensible friends of the cause see all paths of further action closed; so-called scientific research has set in place of absolute ignorance those distorted half-truths under whose terrible confusion we suffer today worse than under the former ignorance; every kind of organization, sad experience demonstrates, today repels precisely those whom it would like to reach, the best, instead of attracting them; a periodical, if it appeared by subscription, would remain without effect on wider circles, and if it had the courage to address the public, would be suppressed; public lectures are not to be thought of for a long time; and the organs of public opinion, whether newspapers or periodicals, while indeed open to every kind of confused nonsense, to every attack from whatever side it may come, and eagerly sucking up every new sensation so as to satisfy the morbidly roused passions of their readers daily through new victims, are yet closed, in an otherwise unaccustomed unanimity, to even the calmest word of consideration that still dares to speak for the cause today. As the sole result of the campaign of enlightenment to date, we stand today, not before the repeal, but rather before the tightening up of that paragraph which brands us as criminals, and our love as vice!

And yet something must be done!

Complaints have often and repeatedly been made that we are still completely lacking in generally understandable instructional writings, penetrating, short and clear writings that are unobjectionably suitable to distribute to wide circles. The earnest and sensible friends of the cause, of whom I spoke, see in such writings alone yet a path of action, after all other paths are closed. But where a path is, there must also be a will today to take it.

When I began work on my "Books of the Nameless Love" three years ago, a definite plan was made from the beginning. I wished, after I had sought to define the concept "nameless love" and poetically to answer the question *Who Are We?* in the first two of these books, to deepen it psychologically in the third (*Fenny Skaller*) and sing its praises in the fourth (*Over the Marble Steps*) and the fifth, of poems, before I intended, in a sixth

and last, the *Book of Letters*, to finally come to terms with its questions in particular. This book was supposed to become the real book of the fight for this love, and for me it was a happy thought to hope that perhaps then, through the open publication of appropriate individual letters, to have an effect on wider circles which until then had been closed by the unfortunately necessary form of subscription.

The events of these days anticipated my thoughts and called, indeed forced, me to their realization. I have therefore decided to make a beginning toward a wider influence with the open publication of a letter that combines all questions into one answer.

This attempt must meet three conditions: it must first be completely unassailable with regard to outside reprimands, from whatever side they might come; second, it must be able to be given without hesitation into the hands of anyone who is at all able to read and understand simple German, no matter whether man or woman, young or old, educated or uneducated—therefore, in other words, to be addressed to that which all people, or almost all, believe they possess: to their heart; and finally, it must be effective. I believe I have fulfilled the first two conditions. How near I have come to the third, the result alone will tell.

It is now up to the serious friends of the cause to show whether they want to lend me their assistance in traversing the path I have struck out upon. For only with them, of course, can it lead to any kind of goal. I still hope to find these friends, although I know today how small their number basically is and how much the discouragements of the recent time have caused this number to diminish.

For me, too, it was a great and certainly the last great disappointment of my life, when I saw to what mistrust, what bias of judgment, what spiteful, often even deliberate, misinterpretation serious work for this cause has been exposed, not only in the case of enemies, no, but also among those who know precisely how enormously hard it is. The completely exceptional position in life that we take in our love has—it should and must be said—produced a demoralization of character, a confusion of judgment, and a bitterness that, sad as it is, even turns against its own cause. And where that is not the case, then still a discouragement and a weariness that are so great that even those who still have a strong character have to defend themselves against it, when they see how help and cooperation are denied them from every side, even from their own.

But I also know today that there is a dispersed troop of those whom nothing can discourage. I am attempting to reach them with these words: not to gather them for any kind of purpose (nothing can be farther from me), but rather in order to feel myself beside them. It is probably worthwhile to gather together, but not *with* others or even *among* others, but rather to gather *oneself* together—to the hope that all is not yet lost, to the belief in a better time, and above all to gather to the love in which we live—in a word: to the recognition of how we can still be effective.

My joy is to hear your call. Whatever any one of you has to say, I will attentively listen to him, to his hopes and fears, his advice and suggestions; and, so far as time and strength allow, also answer.

Hence I do not address myself with this word to those who always only wait until something is done and then, when it is done, are constantly ready with a cheap and fruitless criticism, but never with any kind of cooperation; or to those who, instead of simply asking *what* a person has done, occupy themselves alone in impudent and completely unjustified, truly effeminate curiosity, with the question of *who* this person is; or to those who always only dispute, but never themselves put the good in place of the bad, the better in place of the good; or those who, when the cry of their cause sounds, run away instead of joining in it. Not to them do I address myself, but to those who are ready to join in!

I expect and request no “martyrs”. Nothing is more ridiculous than martyrs. But between them and that which one can do, what one would actually always like to do and yet never does, from indolence and inertia, which one under the pressure of time and all possible circumstances puts off and finally leaves undone, lies the whole difference.

I have cried out. I have pressed into my cry all that I myself have experienced and suffered, seen and heard, and I shall not find the strength and inclination for it a second time. Not again shall I speak to those for whom I have cried out as here, if this cry also dies away unheard.

At the turn of the year, 1907–1908.

Sagitta

## 10
## New Disappointment

In connection with this circular I explained, in the name of my publisher, in what way the distribution of the pamphlet was planned and thought out. Ways were named by which provisionally the distribution of 50,000 copies might be reached without difficulty: "not a great achievement, but still an achievement that could not be entirely overlooked in public." Yet this was, of course, to be only the beginning of a further distribution in innumerable copies: hundreds, and hundreds of thousands, everywhere.

Again it was actually only the same man, whom I have already remembered, who this time too immediately grasped what was of importance. He designated 500 marks for the distribution of the pamphlet.

For this sum, beside which the few other pledges were not of great weight since their number was too small, 3340 copies could be sent out. Of these 3340 copies, 1200 went, at the express wish of the giver, to the directors of the Evangelical [Lutheran] Youth Clubs in Germany (whose addresses could be obtained ready to send out). The remainder went to the members of the German parliament, to public and city libraries, and other institutions. (In addition, at my own cost, 1000 copies went for review to newspapers and periodicals—needless to say, not a single one of them even mentioned the writing, not even by title.)[11] With those sent to the directors of the clubs (and in a similar way also to the other addresses) was included a printed cover letter that I must repeat here in its complete text, since it, in a monstrous misunderstanding of its purpose, essentially became the stumbling-block. Signed by the publisher, it read thus:

> As I allow myself to convey to you as director of your club, at the recommendation of friends of the cause, the enclosed small writing, which treats a serious question of our time in a way that I presume can and will give offence to no one, I politely ask you make it available in your club houses and allow it to be passed from

11. In fact, this brochure was mentioned by Alfred Kind (see note 5), who wrote that it "will not gain for him the expected new friends. It wailingly attempts, on the grounds of aesthetics and altruistic morals, a quixotic fight against the basic instincts of humanity. A pity for the wasted effort."

hand to hand, so as to bring it as much as possible to the general knowledge of your members. I add that, if your club as such, or one or another of its members, wishes to give answer to the author, who will carefully listen to *every* one, from whatever side it might come, all letters reaching me at the above address for 'Sagitta' will be promptly passed on to him by me.

That this request would not be complied with everywhere was, of course, known to me; whoever closed his eyes to it could simply set the delivery aside. That anyone could feel himself offended by it never occurred to me at all. How indeed could a thinking and feeling person, how above all could those who taught the love of one's fellow men as the first and highest commandment, take offence in a request to help spread light on the true nature of a love that was a love like every other love, only poorer, persecuted, misunderstood? I have seen much since then, had to learn for the first time to entirely comprehend many things in their whole unpleasant clarity, including this: there is perhaps no class that exceeds Evangelical ministers in narrow-mindedness, intolerance and dark fanaticism. Even today, when I read over the letters that arrived as answer from those circles (apart from a few exceptions that vanish into nothingness), I stand uncomprehending before this flood of base insults, measureless hatred and mad rage, as before something inconceivable.

I did not know what was still to come.

That I was beaten for the second time, however, and this time definitively, overcome not by the hatred of the enemy but rather by the indifference and misunderstanding of those who now had to stand by their cause as they stand by their own selves—this I saw, and saw only too soon! To be sure, enthusiastic agreement was not lacking, and a few struck out on the path shown them, and indeed with uncontested success, but it failed completely in that on which it depended: concerted action, the energetic cooperation of every individual according to the measure of his strength, and thus on the willingness of all.

I was beaten for the second time, and a victory, such as I had always secretly hoped for, was forever impossible.

## 11
## Confiscation and Indictment

Thus what followed was only an epilogue, if a completely unexpected one, and easy for the enemy—the complete destruction of the opponent.

What no one had foreseen, what no one even in a dream would have held to be possible, happened: on 12 March 1908, not only the pamphlet, but also the first two published books were confiscated. A protest lodged immediately against this confiscation proved unsuccessful. (Afterwards there was a house search for the third and fourth books, which, however, could not be found, since they had not yet been published.)[12]

The confiscation was immediately followed by two charges: the first in Magdeburg for offending a church minister there by sending the pamphlet, a charge that—to make things short—after resulting in an acquittal in the first session on 15 May, ended in the second on 8 July with a judgment against the publisher of a fine of 50 marks "for giving offence", a decision confirmed by the high court in Naumburg.

The second, much more extensive charge, followed in Berlin: that of offending nineteen persons, without exception Evangelical ministers, who likewise all felt themselves offended by receiving the pamphlet. Its resolution was to take much longer.

At the same time however—and this was the main blow against the cause—the books and the pamphlet were charged with being "immoral writings" and the publisher was charged with the distribution of these immoral writings.

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12. Mackay does not mention here, of course, that it was his own house that was searched by the police. Nothing was found, since the Sagitta material, although in the house, was in a room with a separate outside entrance. He was probably suspected by the police because his publisher, Bernard Zack, had also published a series of pamphlets on individualist anarchism edited by Mackay. To uncover the connection would, no doubt, have delighted the police.

## 12
## Nineteen Months

This epilogue lasted nineteen long months, in which every activity was prevented, all further effectiveness lay fallow and became impossible.

Its phases were briefly as follows: the first session in the case took place on 14 October and was postponed, because the state's attorneys for their part likewise insisted on calling expert witnesses; the second, two months later, on 9 December, led to a stay of the proceedings "since the sending of the pamphlet was to be understood as a single action, and the Magdeburg court had already had occasion to inspect the pamphlet and books for their immoral contents". The state's attorney appealed this decision of the judges to the higher court in Leipzig, which at the end of April of the following year, 1909, heard the appeal and sent the judgment back for a new trial. The judges had "erred", and the pamphlet and books remained confiscated.

On 6 October 1909 the main trial took place, which ended by declaring the books and pamphlet "immoral writings", whereby their destruction was also pronounced, and their distribution in Germany placed under punishment. At the same time, their publisher was sentenced to a fine of 600 marks and court costs[13] for distributing these "immoral writings", as well as for giving offence by sending the pamphlet. (The state's attorney had asked for four months in prison and a fine of 300 marks.) With a clarity not to be misunderstood, the publisher was advised in the pronouncement of the sentence that any further step in the fight in this cause would be for him at the same time a step into prison.[14]

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13. Mackay informed Tucker that the court costs were about 1000 Marks, adding: "The work of years is lost and besides it costs me about 6300 Marks loss." (Mackay to Tucker, 12 October 1909, BRT Papers, NYPL.) Presumably, this last figure (more than $30,000 in today's dollars) includes not only the expenses of the trial, but all the printing and distribution costs of the books and pamphlets. But the destruction of the books, as ordered by the court, was not carried out: they were simply officially locked up at the publisher's—and then forgotten. Following the revolution of 1918, at the end of the First World War, Mackay took possession of them and sold them underground. See Friedrich Dobe, op. cit., p. 62.

14. Mackay had earlier written to Tucker: "If Zack is sentenced for prison, then I will say that I am Sagitta. Till then it is absolutely useless." (Mackay to Tucker, 22 June 1908, BRT Papers, NYPL.)

The fight was ended. Power had conquered.

## 13
## Third Subscription Invitation

In order that the long and distressing interval of waiting not be entirely lost, and not to let the valuable set of addresses become completely obsolete, I decided in the meantime to publish the fifth of these Books of the Nameless Love: the poems *On the Edge of Life*. Although, after what happened, *anything* was possible and nothing more would have surprised me, it did appear to me that this book, among those still to follow, was the most secure from the danger of a new confiscation. In fact, astonishingly, it remained untouched and until today, until the publication of this complete edition, has been the only one obtainable.

The subscription invitation for this fifth book, the *third* invitation, appeared on 1 May 1909 and in June the book was printed, like the first two, in an edition of 1000 copies and with the same exemplary appearance. The terms of delivery remained the same this time also, unchanged. The fateful history of the books to date was told: "this monstrous action of suppression of works of art, probably unexampled in the history of culture—a suppression even today only possible because it is here a question of works that dare to touch on another area than those that alone are still privileged by force and morality"—was briefly explained. But to this was added the assurance that Sagitta, when his time to speak came, would move these last actions into a light whose brightness would make possible in coming days the complete knowledge of all particulars of this suppression. (It may be seen that he has kept his promise.) At the end the request was made, "through support of this book at least, to lend the help so necessary to a *hard* fight," so that "the worst thing of all not happen: that is, if this fight should be ended in victory, the means, which have been exhausted to the fullest extent, no longer allow it to be continued."

At the time I still did not believe that power would obtain a complete victory: at least the books must be released, not only because they had in no way appeared publicly, but

also because in their publication a means had been adopted (as was said, no copy being given out except on the basis of a personally signed certificate that carried the name of the subscriber)—because a way had been followed here such as had, in this strictness, probably never before been selected, a way that, in the careful consideration of every possible intervention that could be thought of, had to secure it against every one. The judgment that fell five months later was to teach me how very much I had deluded myself here also.

The request of this third and last invitation too died away unheard. Interest in the new book remained equally small, and the fight was fought out to its by now inevitable end.

## 14
## Comments

Now it was finally ended. All that could be done had been done, and the accusation could not be raised that the last thing had not been sought out to thwart the blow.

One of the leading and most respected attorneys in Germany had been won over and had taken on the case with special interest. Not that I believed my books required a defender. Every word in them defended itself. But so far as possible the victory should be made difficult for the opponent. Expert witnesses of the first rank, with their widely known names, argued for the purity of these books and their artistic merit.[15] (The story of the search for expert witnesses, with its disappointments and surprises, would be a chapter to itself, and not the most uninteresting, but it must remain unwritten for the reason that here no names, whichever they may be, will be named.)[16] Everything was done in vain.

15. One of the expert witnesses was Bruno Wille (1860–1928), a well-known writer, philosopher and socialist.

16. According to Friedrich Dobe, Mackay's search for expert witnesses included all the well-known German writers, but many of them—Dobe names only Gerhart Hauptmann—refused. Dobe, op. cit., p. 31.

They wanted to destroy this work (probably by a signal from "above", for the Minister of Justice had the documents shown to him), and they *have* destroyed it. They know how it is done.

Today I see quite clearly, see what I did not yet see at the time. It was of less concern to strike the books and their distribution, than the will that stood behind them. They were able to imagine that here a will, conscious of its goal, was fighting a fight, even if they were unable to grasp what this fight was about. That may not be permitted, they told themselves, and intervened. They know how it is done.

Of course I am not going to go into the "judgment" and its "reasons" with even one word here. Such things are not worth discussing, and are only a question of power. No one can seriously expect me to even open that sordid bundle of documents, thick as a family Bible, much less read it. I could not do it, even if I wanted to. I just would not understand this hideous language alone, least of all its meaning, which is only understandable to the initiated, and sometimes not to them. Somewhere, I have been told, according to the judge's own admission, there is talk of "works in a completely artistic form". Now, if my books are works of art, then those who have destroyed them are simply barbarians. Someone wrote to me: "Whoever holds these books to be immoral is himself immoral." All that might be left to say appears to me to have been said in these words, and any further would be superfluous.

On the evening of the day the judgment was given I walked outside the gates of the city where I live. It was fall. The woods, which had early absorbed the shadows of the earth, lay lonely, lonely the quiet lakes in them, and the path I took by chance was deserted. But greater than this loneliness was the loneliness of my heart. Never before in my life, so accustomed indeed to all the sorrows of loneliness, had I felt myself so abandoned by all as in this hour. It seemed to me as if I were alone in this world, abandoned by my last friends, yes, abandoned by myself, and as if I were condemned to walk on in this way to a near and yet all too far-off end, alone with myself as now, nothing before me but this falling night and its threatening darkness, nothing behind me but the ruin of a senselessly destroyed strength. And in this hour I really comprehended for the first time what I had done, and I felt something like fear of myself and the force in me, which had driven me so far. It was an hour such as is probably known only to him who has staked his life on a

cause and now sees his life lost with it. And like such a person, who still walks forward only because he no longer can or knows how to go back, I walked on and on into the pathless woods.

But the farther I walked, the calmer I became, and slowly I found my way back to myself—the old recognition of the eternal law of necessity unshakably encompassed me again. I comprehended that I had done what I *had* to do, and that I would not have been able to live and die *before* I had done it. When I was in possession of myself again, however, I was no longer alone, and the new perception came to me as a comfort: *that nothing in the world was so much my own as my word*, and that no power in the world can bend and break it, as long as I myself was not bent and broken. Into this new perception, however, was absorbed discouragement and weariness, and the feeling of loneliness crumbled so completely, that as I saw the first lights that pointed my way to people, strangers, I left them and walked back alone through the night and toward a new day. And as I read the eternal confirmation of this love in the trusting and pure eyes of my boy, he found me calm and cheerful as always.

## 15
## Second and Last Circular

In the next weeks I wrote my last word to the "serious friends of the cause". It went out once again in a closed envelope to all the collected addresses, now about twelve hundred, and read:

To "The Serious Friends of the Cause":

The fate of our cause in Germany has been decided. It has been sealed perhaps definitively, certainly for years to come.

Recently, on 6 October—after they had been confiscated for nineteen months—the first and second of my "Books of the Nameless Love" (*The Nameless Love: A Creed*, and the poem of the nameless love, *Who Are We?*), as well as my pamphlet, *Listen! Only a Moment! A Cry*, were declared "immoral writings" through a court judgment that was

dragged through all appellate courts, and are thereby forbidden and impossible to distribute in Germany.

I say that, with this, the fate of our cause has been decided in Germany. Not only because *every* possibility of any kind of work for our cause in Germany once and for all has been taken from me, but also because from today on in Germany every serious attempt to spread light and truth on the real nature of our love must be viewed as completely hopeless.

Every serious attempt! In whatever form and kind it might be undertaken, whether it is directed to the public or to a closed circle, whether it appears in an indisputable work of art or in the truth of science—in the same moment in which it approaches its goal of enlightenment the hand of power will reach out and radically destroy it with every means suitable (and it possesses all), just as it has destroyed my whole work with one blow.

*

For—let us not deceive ourselves—*this love shall not be!* As the only one excluded in the twentieth century from life, and its investigation and representation, they believed they could eradicate it by taking from it *every* right, even the right of a last cry. There, where only silence reigns, the silence of death, are we to be strangled, apart from the path, where no one hears us. Let us no longer deceive ourselves, as for a short time we were able to deceive ourselves and believe that one right was still ours! Only a madman, only a fanatic can do so any longer.

A dismal literature will seek as before to come up out of underground passages into the light of the day to its own advantage, and a pseudo-science based on prejudices will continue to occupy itself with this love, so as to pass it on burdened with further prejudices. They will tolerate the former and graciously allow the latter to go about its pernicious work. But healthy, strong and beautiful as it is, to seek to step out of misunderstanding and contempt into the light of life and to assert its place in it—that is not allowed this love!

But what other than that do I want? And what other than that can help us!

Power has won.

Why it has won I want to say now.

It won because nothing opposed it to hinder it: no public opinion, no contradiction of its voice in the press; no united crowd to rise up against its judgment. Nothing. Nothing but the action of an individual—so easy to strike down.

That the leading people are against us, we have long known; that we are our own worst enemies, we should now finally recognize.

When I sent out the first of my books four years ago, I was convinced they must awaken a strong echo. I deceived myself. Then when I cast my circular into the howling rage of the day raving against us, almost two years ago, with it I believed myself able to rip their discouragement and lethargy from the despairing and frightened, and to pluck up their courage for a great action, and thus with their common help to dam "the flood of slander and hatred, meanness and stupidity". Again I saw myself deceived. Today I know with unshakable certainty: there are no serious friends of the cause, or at least not a number that could be counted on in this fight for life and death!

No doubt many will watch this downfall with pain and anger; others will seek to comfort themselves with the half-hearted activity of their small interest; others, again, will feel something like shame at having inactively stood aside. But a host of those who have made this cause truly their own, to stand by it, wherever it may be and upon it, where no social, religious and political views separate them, to unite in the one goal—they do not exist!

If they existed, this judgment would never have been pronounced. It is my firm conviction today, as it was two years ago, that if my circular had been distributed over all of Germany in one stroke, even in only one hundred thousand copies, the current of enlightenment created through it could not have been dammed and a blow like this last one against us could not possibly have happened.

It did happen. Nothing held it back. In dull submission and cowardice, it was allowed to fall, and that hour, which will not return, has passed us by.

Let us deceive ourselves no longer: there are no serious friends of this cause!

I waste no words, of course, on the charge itself. No human being can seriously hold these books and this pamphlet to be "immoral", and none has ever held them to be so. In order to be able to destroy them, it was necessary, since no other means were at hand, to

place them under this rubric. They therefore were “pronounced” to be “immoral”, and no one today even has the possibility of convincing himself that they are not.

Of course a judgment like this was only possible because it was here a question of writings that dare to touch on another area of love than that alone privileged up to now by law and morality. If that were not so, if it were a question here of the love between man and woman, and not of the nameless one of a man for a younger one of his sex, they would never have dared to touch these books; and if they had dared, a judgment like this one would have been buried under the unanimous outrage and unquenchable laughter of all those in Germany who still have any kind of interest in the freedom of art and science.

But then! This love *had* to be a vice, because it is held to be a vice, and to say that it is *not*, but is rather a form of love like any other love, is just a crime! This love, misunderstood and despised, persecuted and misconstrued like nothing else in the world! Here life ceases to be life, and art is no longer art!

They murder our love—and it lives. They strangle our cry—and it echoes back from the future!

They have murdered my books. But my books will live. If they are really, truly witnesses of art and life, then they will live!

*

In the meanwhile, however, power has won. And let us not deceive ourselves—it will win again and again, for a long time!

My work is thoroughly destroyed. I see no more path before me.

The only thing that I—when I have got over this blow—can perhaps still think of is, one day perhaps, somewhere abroad, to revive my books, so disgracefully murdered in Germany; to seek, in the hours that the fight for my own life still leaves me, to complete the third and fourth books, to put them together in one volume with the three already published and *Listen!* as the sixth and last, and—what is probably most important—with a “History of this Fight for the Nameless Love” as an introduction—a “Document of the Shame of Our Times”.

I no longer have the means for this.[17] What I could do, I have done, and what I could give, I have given. But it may perhaps be that one or another of the last friends of this cause is reflecting on it and saying to himself that these books at least *should* not be allowed to perish *entirely*.

Whoever thinks thus and wants to help, let him tell me if he wishes to help, and *how* he wishes to help. But spare me all empty words, superfluous expressions of regret and condolence, and the equally superfluous details of impossible suggestions. Simply tell me on whom I can count.

*

That is what I still had to say, and in all possibility altogether the last that I can say in this cause.

I do not find fault with myself. There was no wish to take what I offered; I was not helped; and I was left alone in this fight. So be it.

I do not find fault with myself. I find fault with those who deprive themselves of the purest happiness and noblest benefit of their lives: to take part in the destiny of a great cause, a destiny that is theirs.

A judgment has been pronounced—the judgment of the dismal and dark days in which we are condemned to live. Another judgment will be pronounced—by a brighter and better future. When, no one knows. But it is the only one I submit to.

In October 1909

Sagitta

17. The publication of the complete edition of the "Books of the Nameless Love" in 1913 appears to have been financed by the sale of a large part of Mackay's private library. See John Henry Mackay, *Abrechnung* (Freiburg/Br.: Verlag der Mackay Gesellschaft, 1978), p. 179.

## 16
## The End

To this my last statement, sent to twelve hundred who were known to me as close or distant, subjective or objective, friends of this cause, I received only six replies.

Six.

Six serious friends of this cause!

My fight was ended. I was defeated.

What still followed then no longer belongs to it or its history. In connection with my statement I had told, through my publisher, how the lawsuit had proceeded and what sacrifice it had cost. But this is not to be spoken of here. Let it just briefly be mentioned here that a great action, directed to summoning all of intellectual Germany against this most impudent of all assaults of power against the freedom of art and thought was cancelled at the last hour, after everything had been prepared. Cancelled for personal reasons. This, too, I still had to get to know: the omission of an action considered good and practical in the interest of the cause—for personal reasons![18]

Another action, of which I knew nothing, undertaken without my assistance, and which, however well it was intended, I still could not approve, since I wanted to reserve it for myself, for another time and in another way—another action, corresponding to the wish of those called friends of the cause, at least not to let these books *entirely* perish, naturally had to fail under these circumstances. But it was yet another of the reasons that gave rise to the decision (after the long inner reluctance to complete the third and fourth books and to write the history of this fight) to have a complete edition put together abroad,[19] meant for a small and narrowly limited circle, and with no hope, above and beyond this final edition, of being able to effect anything worth mentioning.

Here it is.

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18. According to Dobe, the person responsible for cancelling the "action" was Wilhelm Jansen, who kept for himself the large sum that Friedlaender, in his will, had entrusted to him to use to promote the cause. Friedlaender specifically mentioned the publication of the Sagitta writings. Dobe, op. cit., p. 55.

19. The 1913 edition gave Paris as the place of publication, but it was probably prepared by Mackay in Berlin and distributed from there by him. He sent Tucker a copy at the beginning of August 1913. (Mackay to Tucker, 10 August 1913, BRT Papers, NYPL.)

## 17
## The Complete Edition

It contains everything, this complete edition.[20] Besides the first and second of the books, forbidden in Germany as "immoral writings", it contains the likewise forcefully suppressed pamphlet as the sixth, the fifth of poems which so far escaped this fate, as well as the third and fourth, completed for this edition; and it contains as an introduction this detailed history of my fight for a still nameless love.

Alone remaining uncompleted is consequently only the projected sixth book, the "Book of Letters", or better said, it is not complete in the form I planned—the form of letters. This is of no consequence. For in place of these letters is *one* letter, but a letter that discusses every question of this love so fully that it can safely take their place. It, this cry for a hearing (which they did not understand, who saw a plea in it), is indeed my most essential fight for this love, and its destruction was the hardest blow of all.

One more remark. In these books I have not used *one* of those technical terms taken from foreign and dead languages, not *once* even *one* of those ambiguous words that appear to have become the most indispensable aids and the most effective tricks of science, and with which probably none operates so profusely as the science of the sexes and the sexual relations among and between them, most likely because it believes that it may only say thus what otherwise it would be impossible to say. I have sought to reach my goal of enlightenment without these bridges, and I believe I have indeed said *all* that I have to say. And this way will do (even if it is somewhat harder), and the uninitiated reader will only be grateful to me.

Thus I have indeed brought my task to an end, and it is not without a feeling of inner calm, a calm that can only be given by the consciousness of having kept an oath that one has given oneself, that I lay down from my hand today the weapon of my pen. I have done what I was able to do. And who can do more?

How far the effect of my books in this their new and definitive form will now reach, time alone can tell. Limited for the present to only the most narrow circle (in order to

20. As mentioned in the Foreword, the present edition omits the second, fourth and fifth of the "Books of the Nameless Love."

make this edition at all possible), there can of course be no talk of a wide-reaching influence. This was not what I wanted. What I wanted was—to fight in order to win! But that is past, and I must resign myself.

Nevertheless, the books are indeed no longer dead. They live again, if only a distant life in the dark. But at times it appears to me as if their words glow deeper in the night in which they have been buried than they did when they first ventured into the impudent light of these days.

## 18
## The Fate of the Cause

My fight is ended. Only this: as I went into it, I come out of it; poorer in the belief that this cause, which will not help itself, can be helped; disappointed in the hope that I could modestly help it; but completely unshaken in the conviction that this question, too, will find its solution—will find it, bypassing those who ought to work for it as for their own emancipation but instead stand aside in cowardice and ignorance, and overcoming those who, in the narrow constraints of their view and thought, hostilely face it and do not see what is happening around them, do not hear what is resounding around them. Life itself will find this solution, not in separation from its other questions, but rather with them. For the question of this love also is in its deepest basis a social question: the fight of the individual for his freedom against whatever kind of oppression.

My fight is ended. But I cannot take my leave from a cause to which I have given the best years of my life without having a word yet for its fate in the near future. Mistakes and errors have been made that must absolutely be avoided. *Two above all.*

In reaction to a persecution that had increased until it was unbearable, it has been sought to represent this love as special, as "nobler and better".[21] It is not. This love is a love like any other love, not better, but also not worse, and, if it is truly love, results in blessings as rich as any love. The fight *for* it should never degenerate into a fight *against* another, for every love is entitled to its nature and the same source of life nourishes all.

21. This was the view of, for example, Adolf Brand (1874–1945), editor of *Der Eigene*.

And from similar, often only too understandable feelings, it was sought to promote the freedom of the love of a man at women's expense.[22] This, too, is an error. However false the position of the other sex (in all classes) still is today—to prevent and to deny that sex its possibility of developing does not mean making friends out of enemies, but rather making the enemies of today into the implacable enemies of tomorrow and forever, and it is above all a complete misunderstanding of the great law of the future. This law is called freedom. Freedom includes all and excludes none.

A second mistake has been made that, in my eyes, is more disastrous than these others. This love, persecuted by judges and cursed by priests, has fled to the medical doctors as if it were a sickness that could be cured by them. But it is no sickness. Doctors have as little to look for and examine here as judges, and those who have accepted it as a sickness are mistaken if they believe they can free themselves from the clutches of power by making a pact with this power.[23] But this—making a pact—they are doing, and by doing it they seek to save some at the cost of others. Knowing well how very much "public opinion" (whose influence above all appears to them so important) opposes precisely the love of the older man for the younger of his sex, since the thoughtless always are able to see here only "seduction" while they are more and more inclined to the thought of a "legalization of love between adults", these dangerous helpers consent to, yes, advocate, a law that legalizes the one while it condemns the other .[24] And this they do, who can claim for themselves no excuse of ignorance and bias, but rather know, and know precisely, that here not the age but rather the maturity alone can be decisive, and who know and teach the inborn nature, the inevitability and the immutability of this love for the same sex as a scientifically grounded fact!

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22. This view had been expressed by Benedict Friedlaender (1866–1908) in his *Renaissance des Eros Uranios*. See note 7.

23. Here Mackay is referring to Magnus Hirschfeld (1868–1935) and the Scientific Humanitarian Committee, founded by him in 1897.

24. In 1898 the Scientific Humanitarian Committee petitioned the German legislature to legalize homosexual acts between adults, proposing an "age of consent" of 16. But the law remained unchanged until 1935 when, under the Nazis, it was made even stricter. This new law remained in effect in the Federal Republic of Germany until 1969, when an age of consent was set at 21; this age limit was lowered to 18 in 1973.

Is this their science? Then I shudder at it and them, and the quicker and more explicitly a clean cut separation takes place here, the better for them and for us!

My fight is ended. I have gained many enemies in it, few friends. The latter I shall probably never lose. The worst of my enemies, however, I have made among those for whom this love, instead of being the greatest thing of their life, has become its lowest—the satisfaction of sexual desire alone. They, so very much advantaged by the darkness that our time still spreads over this love, hide deeper and deeper in its shadows, and it is they who most vigorously resist any enlightenment. Sagitta has not fought for them and he is proud of their hatred. That the law can reach them, these professional seducers of youth who mock all laws, only in vanishingly rare cases; that their doings are only possible at all because this love, unrecognized in its nature and misunderstood in its results, must hide like a vice; and that to counter these noxious and shady persons and render them harmless is precisely that, and that alone, which critics of our love want and allege that they want—all this the fools and fanatics do not grasp, whose senseless mad blows always strike a life-warming love as the shots of the barbarians once struck the white images of Eros.

## 19
## Final Word

It is love, love alone, for which I have fought here. I have raised my voice against the crime of all crimes: to shut out one from the world-encompassing, all-human realm of its happiness through the misunderstanding of its nature and the denial of its right.

But the times are changing and the opinions of people with them. And we are living today quickly. A generation is growing up that must think quite differently about this love than ours still thinks. It has experienced it too much itself, and that of the city at least knows more of it today than all the legislators and scholars, doctors and parsons of all sorts taken together. This generation cannot think one day other than completely differently from us about this love, and it would have to forget its own youth if it forgot this love. It will have learned from its experience. Whoever was seduced will know how best

to protect his son from seduction; whoever was loved (as he perhaps was never again loved by a woman) and himself loved (as he perhaps never loved again) will see the love that his son is meeting in that light with which it shone upon his own youth; to despise and persecute it means for him to dishonor the memory of his own youth.

Therefore, it is our task, we who love youth, to win them for ourselves, not through persuasion and seduction, but rather through love and friendship. Then this nameless love, for which they will then also find the correct name, will be for them no longer a dark and shocking secret, but their best part. No better can we conquer the future for ourselves than by teaching shining eyes, happy hearts and laughing lips to give witness to it. Then it is ours, that bright future that we want, ours already in the dismal present. For the youth are always also the future.

Let us then no longer despair. Every night, even the longest and darkest, is followed by day. The vanquished of today are the victors of tomorrow, and the first words with which I began the fight for this love seven years ago now, let then also be today, when I stand at its end, my last about it—the words:

Courage and comfort!

1912

Sagitta

## Foreword to the New Edition

It has taken ten years—a decade in which all the horrors of living and dying have passed over us—to bring the first thousand copies of the complete edition of these books to those for whom they were written, and two years more to bring to a realization the plan for this new edition.[25] But when were difficulties ever counted in this fight!

What could be done to harm my work has fairly (and unfairly) been done. But suppressed, overlooked, shoved aside, it appears to bear an indestructible life in itself and to wish to act further through its inherent strength of truth. May it, then, for the present in this new form, so very different in its exterior from the first, live on.[26] For myself, these twelve years could only confirm and deepen two perceptions. The one: that time alone can bring deliverance to this love. It, too, like all the questions of our days, is a social question—a question of personal freedom, the freedom of the individual, and it can only be solved with and through freedom. When? No one now living knows. The other: that the circle from whom an understanding of this love might be expected today is even much smaller than I at first thought. For basically everyone just understands his own love and any other is foreign to him and unintelligible, if not sinister. Here too only the comprehension of the right to equal freedom, the tolerance of foreign life-styles as the final and highest result of civilization, can be salutary.

This circle is still small today, even among those who love their own sex. What do the indifferent, the empty, the dull, all these people of the day who basically hardly feel the injustice that is done to their love, what do they know of these books? What do they need to know of them? Nothing! And the others among them—the politicians in this fight, the effeminate and the half-and-half, the lukewarm and the sly—are likewise eliminated. The prejudiced and the malicious, they know, but cannot or will not allow themselves to see.

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25. The 1924 edition, which differed from the 1913 edition only in the inclusion of this new foreword, was ostensibly published in Holland, but, like the earlier edition, was probably produced entirely by Mackay in Berlin and again distributed from there by him.

26. Mackay received many letters from members of the "Wandervogel" movement, who noted that the large size of the 1913 edition made it cumbersome to carry in rucksacks. He therefore had the 1924 edition printed in a more handy size. Dobe, op. cit., p. 63.

For it has been shown again and again in these years that this love has to look for its worst enemies precisely among those not outside, but within, its own camp. Again those who call themselves "leaders" in this fight, and as such label themselves as responsible, have publicly advocated, in one of their ridiculous and degrading petitions to the ruling power, an "age of consent"—not in the case of a child, but rather for the mature boy and youth!—and with it the prosecution and punishment of those whom they, like no others, know are exactly as innocent as themselves. Once again those who love a higher age have sought to save themselves at the cost of the comrades-in-destiny of their time: a betrayal of the cause more harmful in its intentions and more terrible in its results cannot be imagined, and which once again here, as the only opportunity offered to me, just as before in the history of my fight, I would never be able to forgive myself for not having branded as such.

A circle of the best friends of the cause has been formed around my work in these last years, to be a friend and helper to it; it dissolved itself in the unfavorable times and has now founded itself anew: the circle of my Hundred. They, the Hundred Sagittas, will one day inherit these books and in their hands the further fate of them will lie.[27] I entrust the books to them with confidence, and let my greeting as well as my thanks to them be my last word in this cause, in which I "gave the best years of my life".

1924

Sagitta

27. At the time of Mackay's death in 1933 the "Hundred Sagittas" still numbered only forty-five. One of them (from 1927) was Kurt Zube, who founded the Mackay-Gesellschaft in 1974 and has since led it in the reprinting of Mackay's works, including the complete two-volume German edition of the Sagitta writings.