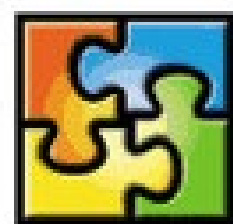


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**The Story of Emil Sinclair's Youth**

by Hermann Hesse

Introduction by Thomas Mann

Translated from the German by

Michael Roloff and Michael Lebeck

*a.b.e-book v3.0 / Notes at EOF*

**Back Cover:**

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## **Introduction**

A FULL DECADE has passed since I last shook Hermann Hesse's hand. Indeed the time seems even longer, so much has happened meanwhile -- so much has happened in the world of history and, even amid the stress and uproar of this convulsive age, so much has come from the uninterrupted industry of our own hand. The outer events, in particular the inevitable ruin of unhappy Germany, both of us foresaw and both lived to witness -- far removed from each other in space, so far that at times no communication was possible, yet always together, always in each other's thoughts. Our paths in general take clearly separate courses through the land of the spirit, at a formal distance one from the other. And yet in some sense the course is the same, in some sense we are indeed fellow pilgrims and brothers, or perhaps I should say, a shade less intimately, confreres; for I like to think of our relationship in the terms of the meeting between his Joseph Knecht and the Benedictine friar Jacobus in *Glasperlenspiel* which cannot take place without the "playful and prolonged ceremony of endless bowings like the salutations between two saints or princes of the church" -- a half ironic ceremonial, Chinese in character, which Knecht greatly enjoys and of which, he remarks, Magister Ludi Thomas von der Trave was also past master.

Thus it is only natural that our names should be mentioned together from time to time, and even when this happens in the strangest of ways it is agreeable to us. A well-known elderly composer in Munich, obstinately German and bitterly angry, in a recent letter to America called us both, Hesse and me, "wretches" because we do not believe that we Germans are the highest and noblest of people -- "a canary among a flock of sparrows." The simile itself is peculiarly weak and fatuous quite apart

from the ignorance, the incorrigible arrogance which it expresses and which one would think had brought misery enough to this ill-fated people. For my own part, I accept with resignation this verdict of the "German soul." Very likely in my own country I was nothing but a gray sparrow of the intellect among a flock of emotional Harz songsters, and so in 1933 they were heartily glad to be rid of me, though today they make a great show of being deeply injured because I do not return. But Hesse? What ignorance, what lack of culture, to banish this nightingale (for, true enough, he is no middle-class canary) from its German grove, this lyric poet whom Moerike would have embraced with emotion, who has produced from our language images of purest and most delicate form, who created from its songs and aphorisms of the most profound artistic insight -- to call him a "wretch" who betrays his German heritage simply because he holds the idea separate from the form which so often debases it, because he tells the people from whom he sprang the truth which the most dreadful experiences still cannot make them understand, and because the misdeeds committed by this race in its self-absorption stirred his conscience.

If today, when national individualism lies dying, when no single problem can any longer be solved from a purely national point of view, when everything connected with the "fatherland" has become stifling provincialism and no spirit that does not represent the European tradition as a whole any longer merits consideration, if today the genuinely national, the specifically popular, still has any value at all -- and a picturesque value may it retain -- then certainly the essential thing is, as always, not vociferous opinion but actual accomplishment. In Germany especially, those who were least content with things German were always the truest Germans. And who could fail to see that the educational labors alone of Hesse the man of letters -- here I am leaving the creative writer completely out of account -- the devoted universality of his activities as editor and collector, have a specifically German quality? The concept of "world literature," originated by Goethe, is most natural and native to him. One of his works, which has in fact appeared in America, "published in the public interest by authority of the Alien Property Custodian, 1945," bears just this title: "Library of World Literature"; and is proof of vast and enthusiastic reading, of especial familiarity with the temples of Eastern wisdom, and of a noble humanistic intimacy with the "most ancient and holy testimonials of the human spirit." Special studies of his are the essays on Francis of Assisi and on Boccaccio dated 1904, and his three papers on Dostoevski which he called *Blick ins Chaos (Glance into Chaos)*. Editions of medieval stories, of novelle and tales by old Italian writers, Oriental fairy tales, *Songs of the German Poets*, new editions of Jean Paul, Novalis, and other German romantics bear his name. They represent labor, veneration, selection, editing, reissuing and the writing of informed prefaces -- enough to fill the life of many an erudite man of letters. With Hesse it is mere superabundance of love (and energy!), an active hobby in addition to his personal, most extraordinarily personal, work -- work which for the many levels of thought it touches and its concern with the problems of the world and the self is without peer among his contemporaries.

Moreover, even as a poet he likes the role of editor and archivist, the game of masquerade behind the guise of one who "brings to light" other people's papers. The greatest example of this is the sublime work of his old age, *Glasperlenspiel*, drawn from all sources of human culture, both East and West, with its subtitle "Attempt at a Description of the Life of Magister Ludi Thomas Knecht, Together with Knecht's Posthumous Writings, Edited by Hermann Hesse." In reading it I very strongly felt (as I wrote to him at that time) how much the element of parody, the fiction and persiflage of a biography based upon learned conjectures, in short the verbal playfulness, help keep within limits this

late work, with its dangerously advanced intellectuality, and contribute to its dramatic effectiveness.

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German? Well, if that's the question, this late work together with all the earlier work is indeed German, German to an almost impossible degree, German in its blunt refusal to try to please the world, a refusal that in the end will be neutralized, whatever the old man may do, by world fame: for the simple reason that this is Germanic in the old, happy, free, and intellectual sense to which the name of Germany owes its best repute, to which it owes the sympathy of mankind. This chaste and daring work, full of fantasy and at the same time highly intellectual, is full of tradition, loyalty, memory, secrecy -- without being in the least derivative. It raises the intimate and familiar to a new intellectual, yes, revolutionary level -- revolutionary in no direct political or social sense but rather in a psychic, poetical one: in genuine and honest fashion it is prophetic of the future, sensitive to the future. I do not know how else to describe the special, ambiguous, and unique charm it holds for me. It possesses the romantic timbre, the tenuousness, the complex, hypochondriacal humor of the German soul -- organically and personally bound up with elements of a very different and far less emotional nature, elements of European criticism and of psychoanalysis. The relationship of this Swabian writer of lyrics and idyls to the erotological "depth psychology" of Vienna, as for example it is expressed in *Narziss und Goldmund*, a poetic novel unique in its purity and fascination, is a spiritual paradox of the most appealing kind. It is no less remarkable and characteristic than this author's attraction to the Jewish genius of Prague, Franz Kafka, whom he early called an "uncrowned king of German prose," and to whom he paid critical tribute at every opportunity -- long before Kafka's name had become so fashionable in Paris and New York.

If he is "German," there is certainly nothing plain or homely about him. The electrifying influence exercised on a whole generation just after the First World War by *Demian*, from the pen of certain mysterious Sinclair, is unforgettable. With uncanny accuracy this poetic work struck the nerve of the times and called forth grateful rapture from a whole youthful generation who believed that an interpreter of their innermost life had risen from their own midst -- whereas it was a man already forty-two years old who gave them what they sought. And need it be stated that, as an experimental novel, *Steppenwolf* is no less daring than *Ulysses* and *The Counterfeiters*?

For me his lifework, with its roots in native German romanticism, for all its occasional strange individualism, its now humorously petulant and now mystically yearning estrangement from the world and the times, belongs to the highest and purest spiritual aspirations and labors of our epoch. Of the literary generation to which I belong I early chose him, who has now attained the biblical age, as the one nearest and dearest to me and I have followed his growth with a sympathy that sprang as much from our differences as from our similarities. The latter, however, have sometimes astounded me. He has written things -- why should I not avow it? -- such as *Badegast* and indeed much in *Glasperlenspiel*, especially the great introduction, which I read and feel "as though 'twere part of me.

I also love Hesse the man, his cheerfully thoughtful, roguishly kind ways, the beautiful, deep look of his, alas, ailing eyes, whose blue illuminates the sharp-cut face of an old Swabian peasant. It was only fourteen years ago that I first came to know him intimately when, suffering from the first shock of losing my country, my house and my hearth, I was often with him in his beautiful house and garden in the Ticino. How I envied him in those days! -- not alone for his security in a free country, but most of all for the degree of hard-won spiritual freedom by which he surpassed me, for his philosophical detachment from all German politics. There was nothing more comforting, more healing

in those confused days than his conversation.

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For a decade and more I have been urging that his work be crowned with the Swedish world prize for literature. It would not have come too soon in his sixtieth year, and the choice of a naturalized Swiss citizen would have been a witty way out at a time when Hitler (on account of Ossietzky) had forbidden the acceptance of the prize to all Germans forevermore. But there is much appropriateness in the honor now, too, when the seventy-year-old author has himself crowned his already rich work with something sublime, his great novel of education. This prize carries around the world a name that hitherto has not received proper attention in all countries and it could not fail to enhance the renown of this name in America as well, to arouse the interest of publishers and public. It is a delight for me to write a sympathetic foreword of warm commendation to this American edition of *Demian*, the stirring prose-poem, written in his vigorous middle years. A small volume; but it is often books of small size that exert the greatest dynamic power -- take for example *Werther*, to which in regard to its effectiveness in Germany, *Demian* bears a distant resemblance. The author must have had a very lively sense of the suprapersonal validity of his creation as is proved by the intentional ambiguity of the subtitle "The Story of a Youth" which may be taken to apply to a whole young generation as well as to an individual. This feeling is demonstrated too by the fact that it was this particular book which Hesse did not wish to have appear over his own name which was already known and typed. Instead he had the pseudonym Sinclair -- a name selected from the Hölderlin circle -- printed on the jacket and for a long time carefully concealed his authorship. I wrote at that time to his publisher, who was also mine, S. Fischer in Berlin, and urgently asked him for particulars about this striking book and who "Sinclair" might be. The old man lied loyally: he had received the manuscript from Switzerland through a third person. Nevertheless, the truth slowly became known, partly through critical analysis of the style, but also through indiscretions. The tenth edition, however, was the first to bear Hesse's name.

Toward the end of the book (the time is 1914) Demian says to his friend Sinclair: "There will be war. . . But you will see, Sinclair, that this is just the beginning. Perhaps it will become a great war, a very great war. But even that is just the beginning. The new is beginning and for those who cling to the old the new will be horrible. What will you do?"

The right answer would be: "Assist the new without sacrificing the old." The best servitors of the new -- Hesse is an example -- may be those who know and love the old and carry it over into the new.

THOMAS MAN

*April, 194*

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I wanted only to try to live in accord with  
the promptings which came from my true self.  
Why was that so very difficult?

## Prologue

*I cannot tell my story without reaching a long way back. If it were possible I would reach back farther still -- into the very first years of my childhood, and beyond them into distant ancestral past.*

*Novelists when they write novels tend to take an almost godlike attitude toward their subject, pretending to a total comprehension of the story, a man's life, which they can therefore recount as God Himself might, nothing standing between them and the naked truth, the entire story meaningful in every detail. I am as little able to do this as the novelist is, even though my story is more important to me than any novelist's is to him -- for this is my story; it is the story of a man, not of an invented, or possible, or idealized, or otherwise absent figure, but of a unique being of flesh and blood. Yet, what a real living human being is made of seems to be less understood today than at any time before, and men -- each one of whom represents a unique and valuable experiment on the part of nature -- are therefore shot wholesale nowadays. If we were not something more than unique human beings, if each one of us could really be done away with once and for all by a single bullet, storytelling would lose all purpose. But every man is more than just himself; he also represents the unique, the very special and always significant and remarkable point at which the world's phenomena intersect, only once in this way and never again. That is why every man's story is important, eternal, sacred; that is why every man, as long as he lives and fulfills the will of nature, is wondrous, and worthy of every consideration. In each individual the spirit has become flesh, in each man the creation suffers, within each one a redeemer is nailed to the cross.*

*Few people nowadays know what man is. Many sense this ignorance and die the more easily because of it, the same way that I will die more easily once I have completed this story.*

*I do not consider myself less ignorant than most people. I have been and still am a seeker, but I have ceased to question stars and books; I have begun to listen to the teachings my blood whispers to*



*me. My story is not a pleasant one; it is neither sweet nor harmonious, as invented stories are; it has the taste of nonsense and chaos, of madness and dreams -- like the lives of all men who stop deceiving themselves.*

*Each man's life represents a road toward himself, an attempt at such a road, the intimation of a path. No man has ever been entirely and completely himself. Yet each one strives to become that -- or in an awkward, the other in a more intelligent way, each as best he can. Each man carries the vestige of his birth -- the slime and eggshells of his primeval past -- with him to the end of his days. Some never become human, remaining frog, lizard, ant. Some are human above the waist, fish below. Each represents a gamble on the part of nature in creation of the human. We all share the same origin, our mothers; all of us come in at the same door. But each of us -- experiments of the depths -- strives toward his own destiny. We can understand one another; but each of us is able to interpret himself to himself alone.*

## **1) Two Realms**

I SHALL BEGIN my story with an experience I had when I was ten and attended our small town's Latin school.

The sweetness of many things from that time still stirs and touches me with melancholy: dark and well-lighted alleys, houses and towers, chimes and faces, rooms rich and comfortable, warm and relaxed, rooms pregnant with secrets. Everything bears the scent of warm intimacy, servant girls, household remedies, and dried fruits.

The realms of day and night, two different worlds coming from two opposite poles, mingled during this time. My parents' house made up one realm, yet its boundaries were even narrower, actually embracing only my parents themselves. This realm was familiar to me in almost every way -- mother and father, love and strictness, model behavior, and school. It was a realm of brilliance, clarity, and cleanliness, gentle conversations, washed hands, clean clothes, and good manners. This was the world in which morning hymns were sung and Christmas celebrated. Straight lines and paths led into the future: there were duty and guilt, bad conscience and confession, forgiveness and good resolutions, love, reverence, wisdom and the words of the Bible. If one wanted an unsullied and orderly life, one made sure one was in league with this world.

The other realm, however, overlapping half our house, was completely different; it smelled

different, spoke a different language, promised and demanded different things. This second world contained servant girls and workmen, ghost stories, rumors of scandal. It was dominated by a loud mixture of horrendous, intriguing, frightful, mysterious things, including slaughterhouses and prisons, drunkards and screeching fishwives, calving cows, horses sinking to their death, tales of robberies, murders, and suicides. All these wild and cruel, attractive and hideous things surrounded us, could be found in the next alley, the next house. Policemen and tramps, drunkards who beat their wives, drove of young girls pouring out of factories at night, old women who put the hex on you so that you fell ill, thieves hiding in the forest, arsonists nabbed by country police -- everywhere this second vigorous world erupted and gave off its scent, everywhere, that is, except in our parents' rooms. And that was good. It was wonderful that peace and orderliness, quiet and a good conscience, forgiveness and love ruled in this one realm, and it was wonderful that the rest existed, too, the multitude of harsh noises, of sullenness and violence, from which one could still escape with a leap into one's mother's lap.

It was strange how both realms bordered on each other, how close together they were! For example, when Lina, our servant girl, sat with us by the living-room door at evening prayers and added her clear voice to the hymn, her washed hands folded on her smoothed-down apron, she belonged with father and mother, to us, to those that dwelled in light and righteousness. But afterwards, in the kitchen or woodshed, when she told me the story of "the tiny man with no head," or when she argued with neighborhood women in the butchershop, she was someone else, belonged to another world which veiled her with mystery. And that's how it was with everything, most of all with myself. Unquestionably I belonged to the realm of light and righteousness; I was my parents' child. But in whichever direction I turned I perceived the other world, and I lived within that other world as well, though often a stranger to it, and suffering from panic and a bad conscience. There were times when I actually preferred living in the forbidden realm, and frequently, returning to the realm of light -- necessary and good as it may have been -- seemed almost like returning to something less beautiful, something rather drab and tedious. Sometimes I was absolutely certain that my destiny was to become like mother and father, as clear-sighted and unspoiled, as orderly and superior as they. But this goal seemed far away and to reach it meant attending endless schools, studying, passing tests and examinations, and this way led past and through the other, darker realm. It was not at all impossible that one might remain a part of it and sink into it. There were stories of sons who had gone astray, stories I read with passion. These stories always pictured the homecoming as such a relief and as something so extraordinary that I felt convinced that this alone was the right, the best, the sought-for thing. Still, the part of the story set among the evil and the lost was more appealing by far, and -- if I could have admitted it -- at times I didn't want the Prodigal Son to repent and be found again. But one didn't dare think this, much less say it out loud. It was only present somehow as a premonition, a possibility at the root of one's consciousness. When I pictured the devil to myself I could easily imagine him on the street below, disguised or undisguised, or at the country fair or in a bar, but never at home with us.

My sisters, too, belonged to the realm of light. It often seemed to me that they had a greater natural affinity to my father and mother; they were better, better mannered, had fewer faults than I. They had their faults, of course; they had their bad moments, but these did not appear to go very deep as they did with me, whose contact with evil often grew so oppressive and painful, and to whom the dark world seemed so much closer. Sisters, like parents, were to be comforted and respected; if I had quarreled with them I always reproached myself afterwards, felt like the instigator, the one who had

ask for forgiveness. For by offending my sisters I offended my parents, all that was good and superior. There were secrets I would far rather have shared with the lowest hoodlum than with my sisters. On good days, when my conscience did not trouble me, it was often delightful to play with them, to be good and decent as they were and to see myself in a noble light. That's what it must have been like to be an angel! It was the highest state one could think of. But how infrequent such days were! Often at play, at some harmless activity, I became so fervent and headstrong that I was too much for my sisters; the quarrels and unhappiness this led to threw me into such a rage that I became horrible, did and said things so awful they seared my heart even as I said them. Then followed harsh hours of gloomy regret and contrition, the painful moment when I begged forgiveness, to be followed again by beams of light, a quiet, thankful, undivided gladness.

I attended the Latin school. The mayor's son and the head forester's son were in my class; both visited me at home at times, and though they were quite unruly, they were both members of the good the legal world. Yet this did not mean that I had no dealings with some of the neighborhood boys who attended public school and on whom we usually looked down. It is with one of them that I must begin my story.

One half-holiday -- I was little more than ten years old -- two neighborhood kids and I were roaming about when a much bigger boy, a strong and burly kid from public school, the tailor's son, joined us. His father drank and the whole family had a bad name. I had heard much about Franz Kromer, was afraid of him, didn't at all like that he came up to us. His manners were already those of a man and he imitated the walk and speech of young factory workers. Under his leadership we clambered down the riverbank by the bridge and hid below the first arch. The narrow strip between the vaulted wall of the bridge and the lazily flowing river was covered with nothing but refuse, shards, tangled bundles of rusty wire and other rubbish. Occasionally one could pick up something useful here. Franz Kromer instructed us to comb the area and show him what we found. He would either pocket it or fling it into the river. He put us on the lookout for objects made of lead, brass, and tin, all of which he tucked away -- also an old comb made of horn. I felt very uneasy in his presence, not only because I knew that my father would not have approved of my being seen in his company, but because I was simply afraid of Franz himself, though I was glad that he seemed to accept me and treat me like the others. He gave instructions and we obeyed -- it seemed like an old habit, even though this was the first time I was with him.

After a while we sat down. Franz spit into the water, and he looked like a man; he spit through a gap between his teeth and hit whatever he aimed at. A conversation started up, and the boys began boasting and heaping praise on themselves for all sorts of schoolboy heroics and tricks they had played. I kept quiet and yet was afraid I'd be noticed, that my silence might particularly incur Kromer's wrath. My two friends had begun to shun me the very moment Franz Kromer had joined us. I was a stranger among them and felt that my manners and clothes presented a kind of challenge. As a Latin school boy, the spoiled son of a well-to-do father, it would be impossible for Franz to like me, and the other two, I felt acutely, would soon disown and desert me.

Finally, out of sheer nervousness, I began telling a story too. I invented a long tale about a robbery in which I filled the role of hero. In a garden near the mill, I said, together with a friend, I had stolen a whole sackful of apples one night, and by no means ordinary apples, but apples of the very best sort. It was the fear of the moment that made me seek refuge in this story -- inventing and telling,

stories came naturally to me. In order not to fall immediately silent again, and perhaps become involved in something worse, I gave a complete display of my narrative powers. One of us, I continued, had had to stand guard while the other climbed the tree and shook out the apples. Moreover, the sack had grown so heavy that we had to open it again, leaving half the apples behind. But half an hour later we had returned and fetched the rest. When I had finished I waited for approval of some sort. I had warmed to my subject toward the end and been carried away by my own eloquence. The two younger ones kept silent, waiting, but Franz Kromer looked sharply at me out of narrowed eyes and asked threateningly:

"Is that true?"

"Yes," I said.

"Really and truly?"

"Yes, really and truly," I insisted stubbornly while choking inwardly with fear.

"Would you swear to it?"

I became very afraid but at once said yes.

"Then say: By God and the grace of my soul."

"By God and the grace of my soul," I said.

"Well, all right," he said and turned away.

I thought everything was all right now, and was glad when he got up and turned to go home. After we had climbed back up to the bridge, I said hesitantly that I would have to head for home myself.

"You can't be in that much of a hurry." Franz laughed. "We're going in the same direction, aren't we?"

Slowly he ambled on and I didn't dare run off; he was in fact walking in the direction of my house. When we stood in front of it and I saw the front door and the big brass knocker, the sun in the windows and the curtain in my mother's room, I breathed a sigh of relief.

When I quickly opened the door and slipped in, reaching to slam it shut, Franz Kromer edged in behind me. In the cool tiled passageway, lit only by one window facing the courtyard, he stood beside me, held on to me and said softly:

"Don't be in such a rush, you."

I looked at him, terrified. His grip on my arm was like a vise. I wondered what he might have in mind and whether he wanted to hurt me. I tried to decide whether if I screamed now, screamed loud and piercingly, someone could come down from above quickly enough to save me. But I gave up the

idea.

---

"What is it?" I asked. "What do you want?"

"Nothing much. I only wanted to ask you something. The others don't have to hear it."

"Oh, really? I can't think of anything to say to you. I have to go up, you know."

Softly Franz Kromer asked: "You know who owns the orchard by the mill, don't you?"

"I'm not sure. The miller, I think."

Franz had put his arm around me and now he drew me so close I was forced to look into his face inches away. His eyes were evil, he smiled maliciously; his face was filled with cruelty and a sense of power.

"Well, I can tell you for certain whose orchard that is. I've known for some time that someone had stolen apples there and that the man who owns it said he'd give two marks to anyone who'd tell him who swiped them."

"Oh, my God!" I exclaimed. "You wouldn't do that, would you?"

I felt it would be useless to appeal to his sense of honor. He came from the other world: betrayal was no crime to him. I sensed this acutely. The people from the other world were not like us in these matters.

"Not say anything?" laughed Kromer. "Kid, what do you take me for? Do you think I own a mint? I'm poor, I don't have a wealthy father like you and if I can earn two marks I earn them any way I can. Maybe he'll even give me more."

Suddenly he let go of me. The passageway no longer smelled of peace and safety, the world around me began to crumble. He would give me away to the police! I was a criminal; my father would be informed -- perhaps even the police would come. All the dread of chaos threatened me, everything ugly and dangerous was united against me. It meant nothing that I'd filched nothing. I'd sworn I had!

Tears welled up in my eyes. I felt I had to strike a bargain and desperately I groped through all my pockets. Not a single apple, no pocket knife, I had nothing at all. I thought of my watch, an old silver watch that didn't work, that I wore just for the fun of it. It had been my grandmother's. Quickly I took it off.

I said: "Kromer, listen! Don't give me away. It wouldn't be fair if you did. I'll give you my watch as a present, here, take a look. Otherwise I've nothing at all. You can have it, it's made of silver and the works, well, there's something slightly wrong with them; you have to have it fixed."

He smiled and weighed the watch in his palm. I looked at his hand and felt how brutal and deeply hostile it was to me, how it reached for my life and peace.

"It's made of silver," I said hesitantly.

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"I don't give a damn for your silver and your old watch," he said scornfully. "Get it fixed yourself."

"But, Franz!" I exclaimed, trembling with fear that he might run away. "Wait, wait a moment. Why don't you take it? It's really made of silver, honest. And I don't have anything else."

He threw me a cold scornful look.

"Well, you know who I'll go to. Or I could go to the police too. . . I'm on good terms with the sergeant."

He turned as if to go. I held on to his sleeve. I couldn't allow him to go. I would rather have died than suffer what might happen if he went off like that.

"Franz," I implored, hoarse with excitement, "don't do anything foolish. You're only joking, aren't you?"

"Yes, I'm joking, but it could turn into an expensive joke."

"Just tell me what I'm supposed to do, Franz. I'll do anything you ask."

He looked me up and down with narrowed eyes and laughed again.

"Don't be so stupid," he said with false good humor. "You know as well as I that I'm in a position to earn two marks. I'm not a rich man who can afford to throw them away, but you're rich -- you even have a watch. All you have to do is give me two marks; then everything will be all right."

I understood his logic. But two marks! That was as much and as unattainable as ten, as a hundred, as a thousand. I didn't have a pfennig. There was a piggy bank that my mother kept for me. When relatives came to visit they would drop in five- or ten-pfennig pieces. That was all I had. I had no allowance at that time.

"I just don't have any," I said sadly. "I don't have any money at all. But I'll give you everything else I have. I have a Western, tin soldiers, and a compass. Wait, I'll get them for you."

Kromer's mouth merely twisted into a brief sneer. Then he spit on the floor.

Harshly he said: "You can keep your crap. A compass! Don't make me mad! You hear, I'm after money."

"But I don't have any, I never get any, I can't help it."

"All right, then you'll bring me the two marks tomorrow. I'll wait for you after school down near the market place. That's all. You'll see what'll happen if you don't bring it."

"But where am I going to get it if I don't have any?"

"There's plenty of money in your house. That's your business. Tomorrow after school. And I'm telling you: if you don't have it with you. . ." He threw me a withering look, spit once more, and vanished like a shadow.

I couldn't even get upstairs. My life was wrecked. I thought of running away and never coming back, or of drowning myself. However, I couldn't picture any of this very clearly. In the dark, I sat down on the bottom step of our staircase, huddled up within myself, abandoning myself to misery. That's where Lina found me weeping as she came downstairs with the basket to fetch wood.

I begged her not to say a word, then I went upstairs. To the right of the glass door hung my father's hat and my mother's parasol; they gave me a feeling of home and comfort, and my heart greeted them thankfully, as the Prodigal Son might greet the sight and smell of old familiar rooms. But all of it was lost to me now, all of it belonged to the clear, well-lighted world of my father and mother, and I, guilty and deeply engulfed in an alien world, was entangled in adventures and sin, threatened by an enemy, -- by dangers, fear, and shame. The hat and parasol, the old sandstone floor I was so fond of, the broad picture above the hall cupboard, the voice of my elder sister coming to me from the living room were all more moving, more precious, more delicious than ever before, but they had ceased to be a refuge and something I could rely on; they had become an unmistakable reproach. None of this was mine any more, I could no longer take part in its quiet cheerfulness. My feet had become muddied, I could not even wipe them clean on the mat; everywhere I went I was followed by darkness of which this world of home knew nothing. How many secrets I had had, how often I had been afraid -- but all of it had been child's play compared with what I brought home with me today. I was haunted by misfortune, it was reaching out toward me so that not even my mother could protect me, since she was not even allowed to know. Whether my crime was stealing or lying -- (hadn't I sworn a false oath by God and everything that was sacred?) -- was immaterial. My sin was not specifically this or that but consisted of having shaken hands with the devil. Why had I gone along? Why had I obeyed Kromer -- better even than I had ever obeyed my father? Why had I invented the story, building myself up with a crime as though it were a heroic act? The devil held me in his clutches, the enemy was behind me.

For the time being I was not so much afraid of what would happen tomorrow as of the horrible certainty that my way, from now on, would lead farther and farther downhill into darkness. I felt acutely that new offenses were bound to grow out of this one offense, that my presence among my sisters, greeting and kissing my parents, were a lie, that I was living a lie concealed deep inside myself.

For a moment, hope and confidence flickered up inside me as I gazed at my father's hat. I would tell him everything, would accept his verdict and his punishment, and would make him into my confessor and savior. It would only be a penance, the kind I had often done, a bitterly difficult hour, a ruefully difficult request for forgiveness.

How sweet and tempting that sounded! But it was no use. I knew I wouldn't do it. I knew I now

had a secret, a sin which I would have to expiate alone. Perhaps I stood at the parting of the ways, perhaps I would now belong among the wicked forever, share their secrets, depend on them, obey them, have to become one of their kind. I had acted the man and hero, now I had to bear the consequences.

I was glad when my father took me to task for my muddy boots. It diverted his attention by sidestepping the real issue and placed me in a position to endure reproaches that I could secretly transfer to the other, the more serious offense. A strange new feeling overcame me at this point, a feeling that stung pleasurably: I felt superior to my father! Momentarily I felt a certain loathing for his ignorance. His upbraiding me for muddy boots seemed pitiful. "If you only knew" crossed my mind as I stood there like a criminal being cross-examined for a stolen loaf of bread when the actual crime was murder. It was an odious, hostile feeling, but it was strong and deeply attractive, and shackled me more than anything else to my secret and my guilt. I thought Kromer might have gone to the police by now and denounced me, that thunderstorms were forming above my head, while all this time they continued to treat me like a little child.

This moment was the most significant and lasting of the whole experience. It was the first rent in the holy image of my father, it was the first fissure in the columns that had upheld my childhood, which every individual must destroy before he can become himself. The inner, the essential line of our fate consists of such invisible experiences. Such fissures and rents grow together again, heal and are forgotten, but in the most secret recesses they continue to live and bleed.

I immediately felt such dread of this new feeling that I could have fallen down before my father and kissed his feet to ask forgiveness. But one cannot apologize for something fundamental, and a child feels and knows this as well and as deeply as any sage.

I felt the need to give some thought to my new situation, to reflect about what I would do tomorrow. But I did not find the time. All evening I was busy getting used to the changed atmosphere in our living room. Wall clock and table, Bible and mirror, bookcase and pictures on the wall were leaving me behind; I was forced to observe with a chill in my heart how my world, my good, happy, carefree life, was becoming a part of the past, was breaking away from me, and I was forced to feel how I was being shackled and held fast with new roots to the outside, to the dark and alien world. For the first time in my life I tasted death, and death tasted bitter, for death is birth, is fear and dread of some terrible renewal.

I was glad when I finally lay in my bed. Just before, as my last torment, I had had to endure evening prayers. We had sung a hymn which was one of my favorites. I felt unable to join in and even the organ note galled me. When my father intoned the blessing -- when he finished with "God be with us!" -- something broke inside me and I was rejected forever from this intimate circle. God's grace was with all of them, but it was no longer with me. Cold and deeply exhausted, I had left them.

When I had lain in bed awhile, enveloped by its warmth and safety, my fearful heart turned back once more in confusion and hovered anxiously above what was now past. My mother had said good night to me as always. I could still hear her steps resound in the other room; the candle glow still illuminated the chink in the door. Now, I thought, now she'll come back once more, she has sensed something, she will give me a kiss and ask, ask kindly with a promise in her voice, and then I'll weep



then the lump in my throat will melt, then I will throw my arms around her, and then all will be well; will be saved! And even after the chink in the door had gone dark I continued to listen and was certain that it simply would have to happen.

Then I returned to my difficulties and looked my enemy in the eye. I could see him clearly, one eye screwed up, his mouth twisted into a brutal smile, and while I eyed him, becoming more and more convinced of the inevitable, he grew bigger and uglier and his evil eye lit up with a fiendish glint. He was right next to me until I fell asleep, yet I didn't dream of him nor of what had happened that day. I dreamed instead that my parents, my sisters, and I were drifting in a boat, surrounded by absolute peace and the glow of a holiday. In the middle of the night I woke with the aftertaste of this happiness. I could still see my sisters' white summer dresses shimmer in the sun as I fell out of paradise back into reality, again face to face with the enemy, with his evil eye.

Next morning, when my mother came rushing up shouting that it was late and why was I still in bed, I looked sick. When she asked me whether anything was wrong, I vomited.

This seemed to be something gained. I loved being slightly sick, being allowed to lie in bed all morning, drinking camomile tea, listening to my mother tidy up the other rooms or Lina deal with the butcher in the hallway. Mornings off from school seemed enchanted, like a fairy tale; the sun playing in the room was not the same sun shut out of school when the green shades were lowered. Yet even this gave me no pleasure today; there was something false about it.

If only I could die! But, as often before, I was only slightly unwell and it was of no help, my illness protected me from school but not from Franz Kromer who would be waiting for me at eleven at the market place. And my mother's friendliness, instead of comforting me, was a distressing nuisance. I made a show of having fallen asleep again in order to be left alone to think. But I could see no way out. At eleven I had to be at the market. At ten I quietly got dressed and said that I felt better. The answer, as usual under these circumstances, was: either I went straight back to bed or in the afternoon I would have to be in school. I said I would gladly go to school. I had come up with a plan.

I couldn't meet Kromer penniless. I had to get hold of my piggy bank. I knew it didn't contain enough, by no means enough, yet it was something, and I sensed that something was better than nothing, and that Kromer could at least be appeased.

In stocking feet I crept guiltily into my mother's room and took the piggy bank out of her desk, yet that was not half as bad as what had happened the day before with Kromer. My heart beat so rapidly I felt I would choke. It did not ease up when I discovered downstairs that the bank was locked. Forcing it was easy, it was merely a matter of tearing the thin tin-plate grid; yet breaking it hurt -- only now had I really committed a theft. Until then I had filched lumps of sugar or some fruit; this was more serious stealing, even though it was my own money I stole. I sensed how I was one step nearer Kromer and his world, how bit by bit everything was going downhill with me. I began to feel stubborn; let the devil take the hindmost! There was no turning back now. Nervously I counted the money. In the piggy bank it had sounded like so much more, but there was painfully little lying in my hand: sixty-five pfennigs. I hid the box on the ground floor, held the money clasped in my fist, and stepped out of the house, feeling more different than I had ever felt before when I walked through the gate. I thought I heard someone calling after me from upstairs but I walked away quickly.

There was still a lot of time left. By a very devious route, I sneaked through the little alleys of a changed town, under a cloudy sky such as I had never seen before, past staring houses and people who eyed me with suspicion. Then it occurred to me that a friend from school had once found a thaler in the cattle market. I would gladly have gone down on my knees and prayed that God perform a miracle and let me make a similar find. But I had forfeited the right to pray. And in any case, mending the box would have required a second miracle.

Franz Kromer spotted me from a distance, yet he approached me without haste and seemed to ignore me. When he was close, he motioned authoritatively for me to follow him, and without once turning back he walked calmly down the Strohgasse and across the little footbridge until he stopped in front of a new building at the outskirts. There were no workmen about, the walls were bare, doors and windows were blanks. Kromer took a look around, then walked through the entrance into the house and I followed him. He stepped behind a wall, gave me a signal, and stretched out his hand.

"Have you got it?" he asked coolly.

I drew my clenched fist out of my pocket and emptied my money into his flat outstretched palm. He had counted it even before the last pfennig piece had clinked down.

"That's sixty-five pfennigs," he said and looked at me.

"Yes," I said nervously. "That's all I have. I know it's not enough, but it's all I have."

"I thought you were cleverer than that," he scolded almost mildly. "Among men of honor you've got to do things right. I don't want to take anything away from you that isn't the right sum. You know that. Take your pennies back, there! The other one -- you know who -- won't try to scale down the price. He pays up."

"But I simply don't have another pfennig. It's all I had in my bank."

"That's your business. But I don't want to make you unhappy. You owe me one mark, thirty-five pfennigs. When can I have them?"

"Oh, you'll get them for sure, Kromer. I just don't know when right now -- perhaps I'll have more tomorrow or the day later. You understand, don't you, that I can't breathe a word about this to my father."

"That's not my concern. I'm not out to do you any harm. I could have my money before lunch if I wanted, you know, and I'm poor. You wear expensive clothes and you're better fed than I. But I won't say anything. I can wait a bit. The day after tomorrow I'll whistle for you. You know what my whistle sounds like, don't you?"

He let me hear it. I had heard it before.

"Yes," I said, "I know it."

He left me as though he'd never seen me before. It had been a business transaction between the

two of us, nothing more.

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I think Kromer's whistle would frighten me even today if I suddenly heard it again. From now on I was to hear it repeatedly; it seemed to me I heard it all the time. There was not a single place, not a single game, no activity, no thought which this whistle did not penetrate, the whistle that made me his slave, that had become my fate. Frequently I would go into our small flower garden, of which I was so fond on those mild, colorful autumn afternoons, and an odd urge prompted me to play once more the childish games of my earlier years; I was playing, so to speak, the part of someone younger than myself, someone still good and free, innocent and safe. Yet into the midst of this haven -- always expected, yet horribly surprising each time -- from somewhere Kromer's whistle would erupt, destroying the game, crushing my illusions. Then I would have to leave the garden to follow my tormentor to wicked, ugly places where I would have to give him an account of my pitiful finances and let myself be pressed for payment. The entire episode lasted perhaps several weeks, yet to me they seemed like years, an eternity. Rarely did I have any money, at most a five- or ten-pfennig piece stolen from the kitchen table when Lina had left the shopping basket lying around. Kromer upbraided me each time, becoming more and more contemptuous: I was cheating him, depriving him of what was rightfully his, I was stealing from him, making *him* miserable! Never in my life had I felt so distressed, never had I felt more hopeless, more enslaved.

I had filled the piggy bank with play money and replaced it in my mother's desk. No one asked for it but the possibility that they might never leave my thoughts. What frightened me even more than Kromer's brutal whistling was my mother's stepping up to me -- wasn't she coming to inquire about the piggy bank?

Because I had met my tormentor many times empty-handed, he began finding other means of torturing and using me. I had to work for him. He had to run various errands for his father; I had to do them for him. Or he would ask me to perform some difficult feat: hop for ten minutes on one leg, pin a scrap of paper on a passer-by's coat. Many nights in my dreams I elaborated on these tortures and lay drenched in a nightmare's sweat.

For a while I actually became sick. I vomited frequently and came down with frequent chills, yet at night I would burn and sweat. My mother sensed that something was wrong and was very considerate, but this only tortured me the more since I could not respond by confiding in her.

One night, after I had gone to bed, she brought me a piece of chocolate. It reminded me of former years when, if I had been a good boy, I would receive such rewards before I fell asleep. Now she stood there and offered me the piece of chocolate. The sight was so painful that I could only shake my head. She asked me what was wrong and stroked my hair. All I could answer was: "No, no! I don't want anything." She placed the chocolate on my night table and left. The next morning, when she wanted to ask me about my behavior of the night before, I pretended to have forgotten the episode completely. Once she brought the doctor, who examined me and prescribed cold baths in the morning

My condition at that time was a kind of madness. Amid the ordered peace of our house I lived shyly, in agony, like a ghost; I took no part in the life of the others, rarely forgot myself for an hour at a time. To my father, who was often irritated and asked me what was the matter, I was completely cold.

## 2) Cain

My sALVATION CAME from a totally unexpected source, which, at the same time, brought a new element into my life that has affected it to this very day.

A new boy had just been enrolled in our school. He was the son of a well-to-do widow who had come to live in our town; he wore a mourning band on his sleeve. Being several years older than I, he was assigned to a grade above me. Still, I could not avoid noticing him, nor could anyone else. This remarkable student seemed much older than he looked; in fact, he did not strike anyone as a boy at all. In contrast to us, he seemed strange and mature, like a man, or rather like a gentleman. He was not popular, did not take part in our games, still less in the general roughhouse, and only his firm, self-confident tone toward the teachers won the admiration of the students. He was called Max Demian.

One day -- as happened now and again -- an additional class was assigned to our large classroom for some reason or other. It was Demian's class. We, the younger ones, were having a Scripture lesson; the higher grade had to write an essay. While the story of Cain and Abel was being drummed into us, I kept glancing toward Demian whose face held a peculiar fascination for me, and I observed the intelligent, light, unusually resolute face bent attentively and diligently over his work; he didn't at all look like a student doing an assignment, but rather like a scientist investigating a problem of his own. I couldn't say that he made a favorable impression on me; on the contrary, I had something against him: he seemed too superior and detached, his manner too provocatively confident, and his eyes gave him an adult expression -- which children never like -- faintly sad, with flashes of sarcasm. Yet I could not help looking at him, no matter whether I liked or detested him, but if he happened to glance my way I averted my eyes in panic. When I think back on it today, and what he looked like as a student at that time, I can only say that he was in every respect different from all the others, was entirely himself, with a personality all his own which made him noticeable even though he did his best not to be noticed; his manner and bearing was that of a prince disguised among farm boys, taking great pains to appear one of them.

He was walking behind me on the way home from school, and after the others had turned off I

caught up with me and said hello. Even his manner of greeting, though he tried to imitate our schoolboy tone, was distinctly adult and polite.

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"Shall we walk together for a while?" he asked. I felt flattered and nodded. Then I described to him where I lived.

"Oh, over there?" he said and smiled. "I know the house. There's something odd above the doorway -- it interested me at once."

I didn't know offhand what he meant and was astonished that he apparently knew our house better than I did myself. The keystone of the arch above the doorway bore no doubt a kind of coat of arms but it had worn off with time and had frequently been painted over. As far as I knew it had nothing to do with us and our family.

"I don't know anything about it," I said shyly. "It's a bird or something like that and must be quite old. The house is supposed to have been part of the monastery at one point."

"That's quite possible." He nodded. "Take a good look at it sometime! Such tilings can be quite interesting. I believe it's a sparrow hawk."

We walked on. I felt very self-conscious. Suddenly Demian laughed as though something had struck him as funny.

"Yes, when we had class together," he burst out. "The story of Cain who has that mark on his forehead. Do you like it?"

No, I didn't. It was rare for me to like anything we had to learn. Yet I didn't dare confess it, for I felt I was being addressed by an adult. I said I didn't much mind the story

Demian slapped me on the back.

"You don't have to put on an act for me. But in fact the story is quite remarkable. It's far more remarkable than most stories we're taught in school. Your teacher didn't go into it at great lengths. He just mentioned the usual things about God and sin and so forth. But I believe --" He interrupted himself and asked with a smile: "Does this interest you at all?"

"Well, I think," he went on, "one can give this story about Cain quite a different interpretation. Most of the things we're taught I'm sure are quite right and true, but one can view all of them from quite a different angle than the teachers do -- and most of the time they then make better sense. For instance, one can't be quite satisfied with this Cain and the mark on his forehead, with the way it's explained to us. Don't you agree? It's perfectly possible for someone to kill his brother with a stone and to panic and repent. But that he's awarded a special decoration for his cowardice, a mark that protects him and puts the fear of God into all the others, that's quite odd, isn't it?"

"Of course," I said with interest: the idea began to fascinate me. "But what other way of interpreting the story is there?"

He slapped me on the shoulder.

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"It's quite simple! The first element of the story, its actual beginning, was the mark. Here was a man with something in his face that frightened the others. They didn't dare lay hands on him; he impressed them, he and his children. We can guess -- no, we can be quite certain -- that it was not a mark on his forehead like a postmark -- life is hardly ever as clear and straightforward as that. It is much more likely that he struck people as faintly sinister, perhaps a little more intellect and boldness in his look than people were used to. This man was powerful: you would approach him only with awe. He had a 'sign.' You could explain this any way you wished. And people always want what is agreeable to them and puts them in the right. They were afraid of Cain's children: they bore a 'sign.' So they did not interpret the sign for what it was -- a mark of distinction -- but as its opposite. They said: 'Those fellows with the sign, they're a strange lot' -- and indeed they were. People with courage and character always seem sinister to the rest. It was a scandal that a breed of fearless and sinister people ran about freely, so they attached a nickname and myth to these people to get even with them, to make up for the many times they had felt afraid -- do you get it?"

"Yes -- that is -- in that case Cam wouldn't have been evil at all? And the whole story in the Bible is actually not authentic?"

"Yes and no. Such age-old stories are always true but they aren't always properly recorded and aren't always given correct interpretations. In short, I mean Cain was a fine fellow and this story was pinned on him only because people were afraid. The story was simply a rumor, something that people gab about, and it was true in so far as Cain and his children really bore a kind of mark and were different from most people."

I was astounded.

"And do you believe that the business about killing his brother isn't true either?" I asked, entranced.

"Oh, that's certainly true. The strong man slew a weaker one. It's doubtful whether it was really his brother, but it isn't important. Ultimately all men are brothers. So, a strong man slew a weaker one: perhaps it was a truly valiant act, perhaps it wasn't. At any rate, all the other weaker ones were afraid of him from then on, they complained bitterly and if you asked them: 'Why don't you turn around and slay him, too?' they did not reply 'Because we're cowards,' but rather 'You can't, he has a sign. God has marked him.' The fraud must have originated some way like that. -- Oh well, I see I'm keeping you. So long then."

He turned into the Altgasse and left me standing there, more baffled than I had ever been in my life. Yet, almost as soon as he had gone, everything he had said seemed incredible. Cain a noble person, Abel a coward! Cain's mark a mark of distinction! It was absurd, it was blasphemous and evil. How did God fit in in that case? Hadn't He accepted the sacrifice of Abel? Didn't He love Abel? No, what Demian had said was completely crazy. And I suspected that he had wanted to make fun of me and make me lose my footing. He was clever all right, and he could talk, but he couldn't put that one over, not on me!

I had never before given as much thought to a biblical story or to any other story. And for a long time I had not forgotten Franz Kromer as completely; for hours, for a whole evening in fact. At home I read the story once more as written in the Bible. It was brief and unambiguous; it was quite mad to look for a special, hidden meaning. At that rate every murderer could declare that he was God's darling! No, what Demian had said was nonsense. What pleased me was the ease and grace with which he was able to say such things, as though everything were self-evident; and then the look in his eyes!

Something was very wrong with me, though; my life was in very great disorder. I had lived in a wholesome and clean world, had been a kind of Abel myself, and now I was stuck deeply in the "other world," had fallen and sunk very low -- yet it hadn't basically been my fault! How was I to consider that? And now a memory flashed within me that for a moment almost left me breathless. On that fatal evening when my misery had begun, there had been that matter with my father. There, for a moment, I had seen through him and his world of light and wisdom and had felt nothing but contempt for it. Yes, at that moment I, who was Cain and bore the mark, had imagined that this sign was not a mark of shame and that because of my evil and misfortune I stood higher than my father and the pious, the righteous.

I had not experienced the moment in this form, in clearly expressed thoughts, but all of this had been contained within it; it had been the eruption of emotions, of strange stirrings, that hurt me and yet filled me with pride at the same time.

When I considered how strangely Demian had talked about the fearless and the cowardly, what an unusual meaning he had given the mark Cain bore on his forehead, how his eyes, his remarkable adult eyes had lit up, the question flashed through my mind whether Demian himself was not a kind of Cain. Why does he defend Cain unless he feels an affinity with him? Why does he have such a powerful gaze? Why does he speak so contemptuously of the "others," of the timid who actually are the pious, the chosen ones of the Lord?

I could not bring these thoughts to any conclusion. A stone had been dropped into the well, that well was my youthful soul. And for a very long time this matter of Cain, the fratricide, and the "mark" formed the point of departure for all my attempts at comprehension, my doubts and my criticism.

I noticed that Demian exerted equal fascination over the other students. I hadn't told anyone about his version of the story of Cain, but the others seemed to be interested in him, too. At any rate, many rumors were in circulation about the "new boy." If I could only remember them all now, each one would throw some light on him and could be interpreted. I remember first that Demian's mother was reported to be wealthy and also, supposedly, neither she nor her son ever attended church. One story had it that they were Jewish but they might equally well have been secret Mohammedans. Then there was Max Demian's legendary physical prowess. But this could be corroborated: when the strongest boy in Demian's class had taunted him, calling him a coward when he refused to fight back,

Demian had humiliated him. Those who were present told that Demian had grasped the boy with one hand by the neck and squeezed until the boy went pale; afterwards, the boy had slunk away and had not been able to use his arm for a whole week. One evening some boys even claimed that he was dead. For a time everything, even the most extravagant assertions were believed. Then everyone seemed to have had their fill of Demian for a while, though not much later gossip again flourished: some boys reported that Demian was intimate with girls and that he "knew everything."

Meanwhile, my business with Kromer took its inevitable course. I couldn't escape him, for even when he left me alone for days I was still bound to him. He haunted my dreams and what he failed to perpetrate on me in real life, my imagination let him do to me in those dreams in which I was completely his slave. I have always been a great dreamer; in dreams I am more active than in my real life, and these shadows sapped me of health and energy. A recurring nightmare was that Kromer always maltreated me, spit and knelt on me and, what was worse, led me on to commit the most horrible crimes -- or, rather, not so much led me on as compelled me through sheer force of persuasion. The worst of these dreams, from which I awoke half-mad, had to do with a murderous assault on my father. Kromer whetted a knife, put it in my hand; we stood behind some trees in an avenue and lay in wait for someone, I did not know whom. Yet when this someone approached and Kromer pinched my arm to let me know that this was the person I was to stab -- it was my father. Then I would awake.

Although I still drew a connection between these events and the story of Cain and Abel, I gave little thought to Max Demian. When he first approached me again, it was, oddly enough, also in a dream. For I was still dreaming of being tortured. Yet this time it was Demian who knelt on me. And -- this was totally new and left a deep impression on me -- everything I had resisted and that had been agony to me when Kromer was my tormentor I suffered gladly at Demian's hands, with a feeling compounded as much of ecstasy as of fear. I had this dream twice. Then Kromer regained his old place.

For years I have been unable to distinguish between what I experienced in these dreams and in real life. In any event, the bad relationship with Kromer continued and by no means came to an end after I had finally paid my debt out of any number of petty thefts. No, for now he knew of these new thefts since he asked each time where I had gotten the money, and I was more in bondage to him than ever. Often he threatened to tell everything to my father but even then my fear was hardly as great as my profound regret at not having done so myself at the very beginning. In the meantime, miserable though I was, I did not regret everything that happened, at least not all the time, and occasionally I even felt that everything had had to happen as it did. I was in the hands of fate and it was useless to try to escape.

Presumably, my parents also were distressed by the state I was in. A strange spirit had taken hold of me, I no longer fitted into our community, once so intimate; yet often a wild longing came over me to return to it as to a lost paradise. My mother in particular treated me more like an invalid than a scoundrel, but my true status within the family I was better able to judge from my sisters' attitude. Theirs was one of extreme indulgence, which made it plain that I was considered a kind of madman, more to be pitied for his condition than blamed, but possessed by the devil nonetheless. They prayed for me with unusual fervor and I was infinitely miserable when I realized the futility of these prayers. Often I felt a burning need for relief, for genuine confession, and yet sensed in advance



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