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A trumpet sounded outside the house, sudden, piercing, frightening.

"My goodness!" Katia said. "What is that?"

The cook—usually calm but now almost hysterical—came running from the kitchen. "Munich is invaded! It's the communists...I saw from the kitchen window the Bolsheviks coming back!"

A shout of men's voices. A brass band started with a violent crash.

Katia and the cook rushed to the front window and pulled back the heavy shutter. On terms of the utmost equality now, their shoulders touched as they watched the marching troops. They stood looking at the unexpected sight. Opposite their house a reviewing platform had been erected. Upon it, facing the Bruhn house, stood a large number of officers, all generals, it seemed. They saluted the soldiers who marched at attention with the old German Army precision step. As long as the soldiers marched, the generals saluted. And as long as the generals saluted and the soldiers marched, the band played.

From upstairs came the voice of Thomas shouting, "What's going on here?"

Then they heard footsteps on the stairs. Thomas opened the front door and went outside.

The other two, still as if bound together, followed.

The three of them—the cook, Thomas, and Katia—stood frozen in place, watching. Finally, realizing the impropriety of her position, or perhaps feeling she could go upstairs with the other servants for a better view, the cook disappeared inside the house.

As if the cook's departure were a signal, Thomas said suddenly, "They played that marching song when I was in training."

Katia looked at him, surprised. He had never talked before of his military experiences.

After a while, Thomas spoke to Katia in a voice much different from his usual. "Yes," he said, seeming very young. "Yes, that is the very tune."

They listened in silence.

Thomas said finally in a soft, almost tender voice, "We had words to go with the music."

Deciding that he, like all men, was crazy, Katia asked, "What were those words?"

Thomas was greatly shocked. "I couldn't repeat them. The song is extremely improper." And with a foolish reminiscent smile, he went on humming tunelessly.

Katia was more surprised by Thomas than ever before in her whole life with him. Thomas Bruhn...the greatest German writer...perhaps the greatest writer in the whole world. An improper song? She tried to picture Thomas as a soldier clothed in the same gray uniform that the soldiers on parade now wore as they came by. She tried to imagine Thomas singing along with the others. She tried to imagine him singing a bawdy song. She failed in all those attempts. Greatly curious, she asked: "Those soldiers, they sang like that in front of everybody?"

Thomas drew himself up stiffly. "Certainly not! We made sure the officers and non-coms couldn't hear."

"Oh..."

"When they were around, we sang under our breath."

"Oh..." she said again.

Thomas felt her unspoken reproach. He continued: "Men just like us but of later classes singing the same song marched fearlessly off to the War without hesitation or doubt."

A shadow of something frightening came over her that chilled her very soul. "What did you think while you were marching like that?"

Without hesitation, as if the answer to that question had never been out of his mind, Thomas replied, "That we were part of something greater than ourselves."

Katia gestured toward the continual stream of marching men. "Like this?"

"Yes." Then he said crossly, as if she were prying into a personal affair. "Not of just that group of soldiers. But of the Army, the nation, the German people."

Then Katia asked an important question that suddenly became very troubling to her. "Would these young men also march off to war as dutifully as those of your — what's the word — your *class*?"

By now Thomas was thoroughly annoyed. "Why are you asking that question? There's no point to it."

She and Thomas watched the parade. Katia thought there seemed an endless supply of marching men all identical, all ready to disappear into the holocaust of war. "And Heinrich too?"

"My brother was strange before he entered the Army. After he left he was a rebel."

The continual playing of the bands made Katia somewhat nauseated. The viewing stand and the marching troops seemed to take on an air of permanency, as though the houses and trees across the way were to be hidden forever. Then came a change. Machines appeared, both vehicles and cannon. Some of the cannon were on trucks, some dragged by the vehicles. And then came clanking roaring metal boxes, each with a cannon sticking out. Katia didn't have to be told that these awesome terrifying objects were tanks.

Thomas was not particularly disturbed by the sight, but neither was he pleased. Inside him something departed from its usual serenity and assurance. One might even say—although Thomas would not accept such a description of his state of mind—that the dreaded specter of doubt arose. He looked past the repetitious sight of marching men and ever-more powerful instruments of war to the reviewing stands. Their occupants either froze in salute or excitedly whispered at intervals among themselves as a particular piece of destructive armament passed by. Then he noted one figure, of course a general, equally at attention but unlike the others. The general departed not at all from his posture either to relax or to smile and respond to the others' excitement. The face was that of a man withdrawn from the others, perhaps withdrawn from the life about him, but nevertheless typical of a Prussian officer. He differed little in outward appearance from any of the others. But there was some source of strangeness in the man that showed itself only in his immobility.

It began to appear to Thomas that that man's face was familiar. He had seen either the man's picture or the man in person. Thomas would have been familiar with the portraits of generals in the news during the War: A Hindenburg or a Ludendorff or some of the many generals leading the mad dash into the heart of France. But this general seemed too young to have that rank in the War. For a moment Thomas was consumed with a burst of wild, nearly irrepressible inward laughter at the thought that perhaps this general had been one of the junior officers Thomas observed while he was in the Army, but he dismissed that as an unlikely coincidence and doubtless a childish fancy.

Katia looked away from the spectacle. She was unable make herself leave the spot, to hide from the terrible sight by going back inside the house. She felt that she would be abandoning Thomas. She looked beyond the parade and the viewing stand to the houses on the other side of the street and the trees that were the pride of the neighborhood, as if God had given them as a mark of special favor. Beyond the houses and trees, she lost herself in the view, the pale, very bright blue sky with very white clouds in the blue so the land beneath could be forgotten. There was only the sky, a dream of space. She found herself looking again at the houses of

her neighbors. The shades were open, but from none of the windows did people look out. As far as she could tell, in the whole world only Thomas and she watched the parade. *How very odd*, she thought. *What could that mean?*

Her first thought was that this was a good sign. Their neighbors were turning their backs on a Germany producing this childish display of toys the function of which was only to kill and maim. Germans had undergone a moral revolution and were giving a powerful if wordless rebuke to Mr. Hitler's bloodthirstiness. Then she thought, "Impossible! A revolution like that without anyone noticing?" The country had just voted Hitler in. "Well," she amended her thought, "of course the communists had split the opponents' vote, and it was Hindenburg who had been elected, not Hitler." But it turned out to be the same thing, hadn't it? And the people in these houses had voted solidly for Hindenburg, she was sure. One would expect them to rejoice at the sight of the Army at parade. Then why? She thought she understood. This was somehow a private parade for the Army, its generals, and not for the other Germans. After all, they hadn't been told about a parade. With their infinite delicacy of understanding and compliance with authority, they would understand they should not intrude as she and Thomas had. As their cook had.

Stirring himself away from undesirable thoughts, Thomas said once more, "There seems to be something to be said for Mr. Hitler. He promised us an army and he seems to have given us one. And an impressive one at that."

Annoyed with both Thomas and Mr. Hitler, Katia spoke fretfully: "Why do they use this street for their display?"

Thomas was pleased to be able to demonstrate his masculine knowledge: "This is the road to the great beech forests just outside the city where the Army does its training for maneuvers, under conditions as close as possible to those of war. After all, battles are conducted in open fields and forests, not in cities. Besides, here the Army is out of the sight of the Peace Commission."

The parade continued to pass. Thomas's calm, proud demeanor that Katia rather mockingly assumed to have been put on for the occasion began to alter. A frown of concentration marred his forehead. After a while, with an air of relief at solving an important problem, he spoke: "Surely it was the Republic that reconstructed our Army. The Army appeared on the street practically the moment Mr. Hitler assumed the position of Chancellor. There was no time for him to do anything. People have accused Hitler of being all sorts of things, but never of being a magician. Definitely it was the Republic, from its inception."

Katia was dismayed. "The Republic," she repeated. "Why should the Republic want an army?"

"We are a great state," Thomas said stiffly as the bands played and the troops marched by. "Of course, the Republic wanted an army. It was a question of German honor."

Then the sight of the marching men and the roaring tanks and trucks and the cannon and the soldiers saluting a single individual above all gave Thomas the essential clue: "That's the man there! The general at the front of the review stand. Surely you recognize him? That's General Seekt!"

Katia remained uncomprehending.

Thomas went on excitedly. "Seekt is the general who designed, organized and built the new German Army. See the tanks—the most modern in the world!—and those cannons? It is widely known that the tactics of the tank divisions are brand new too. All done right under the eyes of the Versailles Peace Commission. It was Rathenau, the greatest genius of the Weimar Republic...By a treaty with Russia...we and the Bolsheviks were outcasts from Europe, and Rathenau though a Jew was a great German patriot. We made a treaty with Russia to circumvent the provisions of the peace treaty and together we built modern armies. At least our side did. What the Russians did, I have no idea. When Rathenau was assassinated by a crazy right-wing Free Corps madman, we lost one of the greatest figures in German history. And one of the best things he did was to bring in Seekt."

"Oh ..." Katia looked at the man who Thomas said was responsible for this formidable mass of men and material. A man who looked very much like other men, probably intelligent, but not particularly authoritative or frightening. He looked like the other officers on the stand, perhaps somewhat older. Thomas said he had genius, but Katia saw no signs of that. She saw only the bearer of a disease. For Rathenau to rebuild the Army he had to find a germ that carried the image from the past. A man who was willing, even eager, to believe that war would again be possible, even desirable. Or was Rathenau himself a victim of a disease that Germany secreted in the dreams of the Army? Could it be that the Army recreated itself, making use of the Republic, and since the Republic could not be trusted to make war, the Army invented a Hitler to replace the democratic Republic? A sense of terror filled Katia. What would come next?

Then the anxiety, the fear that seldom left Katia, reentered. Thomas is mad, keeps us here against all advice, against all common sense. Germany was no longer the Germany Thomas imagined. Perhaps it never had been. Or it had changed beyond the powers of reason to recall it. Or was this display simply courage on Thomas's part? Might he have understood as well as Katia the danger they were in? Any day the police could come to their door for Katia. For both of them.

The troops marched. The bands played. The sky seemed to change

into a darker blue as if a terrible night was approaching with serene yet merciless eyes.

Katia shivered. She said, "I am tired. Let's go inside."

Thomas immediately responded with attentive concern. With grave meticulous courtesy he escorted Katia inside and closed the door. Once behind the shut and locked door, the spell was broken and Thomas, without another word concerning the parade which was still going on outside, returned upstairs to the study and to his work.

Katia sat down in her chair in the living room, but found it difficult to pick up her lace work again. The closed door gave the illusion of protection. Outside the events had thundered by, the War, the revolution, the civil war, the taking of the city by the Reds, the re-conquest by the Whites and the subsequent murderous clearing away of all who had disagreed. Then the Republic again took power. The last echoes of the war, the influenza epidemic that killed more than the cannon and the gas did, and then finally the dreadful inflation. For a moment a stable peace, and there was now hope. Then the Depression came from outside Germany, outside Europe, and stability along with hope vanished and the Nazis came. What next for God's sake?

She sat motionless for a long time in the darkening room. Then she finally noticed. The band music had ceased. Likewise the trampling of boots and the clacking and roaring of vehicles. She rose and went to the window, looking through the shutters. The street was empty of soldiers. Even the reviewing stand had gone. All was normal. Katia saw then that normal was also strange.

In her front room Katia Bruhn sat daily over her intricate lace work. She still listened with part of her attention to sounds coming through the partially shuttered window from the outside world, which of late had been particularly threatening. She waited for the tramp of marching soldiers. The tall beech on the front lawn shadowed the windows so that the bright illumination required for her work had to be supplied by electric lamps. This of course led to arguments with Thomas, who claimed the husband's privilege of supervising all household expenses, and insisting that opening the shutters would provide the needed light. Katia was firm. The shuttering gave the illusion of keeping the world away, and even though she knew it to be only an illusion, it gave some comfort. With Mr. Hitler's ascent to the office of Chancellor of the German Republic, the marching troops never ceased coming by twice a day, in the morning going to the training exercise in the great beech wood that lay about the city, and in the late afternoon returning to their barracks.

Katia looked at the clock. The soldiers were late today, and she had a momentary hope they wouldn't come. However they arrived as usual

on their accustomed path. Her ears had grown sensitive to marching feet even when not accompanied by a brass band. She would hear the nearly soundless tread, stealthy as though trying not to be heard, the frightening sound of someone trying to take others by surprise.

The days passed with very little change from one to the other. Neither Katia nor Thomas paid attention to the noises coming from outside. They deliberately forced all intrusions to the backs of their minds. Only the life within the walls of their house had meaning for them. Thomas wrote, Katia read or worked at the intricate lace as if her life depended on it. Their meals came to the table with unfailing regularity. The cook supervised every detail from the marketing to the selection of menus, with Katia content to hand over the decision making. The maid kept the house clean and in order. The gardener-chauffeur-handyman carried out his duties diligently. However since the car was not used much, most of his time was spent polishing its already spotless surface.

Katia began going out of the house less and less until she stopped going out altogether. She never told Thomas the reason. For quite a while he urged her to take exercise, but she always found different excuses: it was too cold too hot too windy too dry too sunny. She would be tired one day and had twisted her ankle slightly the next. Eventually Thomas ceased urging, though he noted the change in her behavior.

Did Thomas guess at the true reason? Perhaps he did, but he also dared not give it voice. Simply, Katia was afraid. She had a vision that one day she would step outside, that two policemen would stop her and would take her forever away, and that only the locked door could protect her.

Truth be told, Thomas also greatly reduced his outside activities, and likewise never told Katia the reason. His reason, if nearly unconscious thought could be called a reason, was that some hidden part within his mind had the fear that if he was to go away from Katia even for a short while, he would find on his return the door broken in, the servants in hysteria, and Katia taken away. Where to? He dared not speculate. And as the fear persisted and drove eventually into his consciousness, he reproached himself for not leaving Germany, or taking the advice of their friends who had urged them to depart. And now it was too late, that is, too late to leave with honor. There was no rational reason to leave, and what he had wanted to remain for was still to be done. He must demonstrate that the ordinary life of the past still had value and must go on. He still thought that, even as he understood more and more that his was a fool's errand.

The two constants that remained to connect them with the world outside were the daily mail and the telephone. The radio, not at all.

Neither Thomas nor Katia could endure the speeches and lies that came in on the wireless, and that were one and the same. The post brought letters almost daily. Well-wishers from all over the world and, yes, even still from Germany, did not slacken in their admiration of Thomas's works. Each letter was another testimonial to Thomas's actions and a reaffirmation of his value in his own eyes.

The telephone was less attractive. There were no more friends in Germany left to call. The phone calls that they did receive were mostly from his publishers, giving the account of his numerous works, their sales, and reviews and questions on the progress of his writing. These questions for the first time in his life did not please him. There seemed to be a hidden reproach in those voices urging that Thomas should somehow write differently.

One day a letter arrived from neither a well-wisher nor Thomas's publishers. It was a very official-appearing document. The maid who had a glimpse of the letter told the other servants, stirring up uneasy speculation. When Katia saw the letter as the maid brought it to Thomas, she felt paralyzed, as if the time she had endured had suddenly come to an end.

Even Thomas was stirred. "Oh, what is this! A letter from the Prussian Academy?"

But his voice conveyed joy rather than apprehension, so a weight lifted from Katia's heart and she could breathe again. She even dared ask in a normal voice: "What is the letter about?"

Hastily Thomas tore the envelope open. With amazement he said, "They want me to give a lecture in front of them on a topic of my choosing! It's a great honor. I have done so before. But to invite me now is a positive triumph. A harbinger of good fortune for our cause."

Then he read the missive through. "My goodness! The invitation is extended by the Prussian State President himself. That makes sense; the State President is likewise the President of the Prussian Academy of Arts and Sciences..."

"Well...?" Katia demanded. "Who is it?"

"Ah who...?" Thomas tried to make sense of the indecipherable signature. Then he looked at the neatly typed name below. He tried to control his own shock. "Hermann Goering...he is the State President after all..." Thomas added this last bit hastily, for he knew Katia's feelings about Goering and he himself shared most of them. He continued: "And you are invited likewise. There will be a banquet after the lecture. And imagine! State President Goering himself will be present."

The silence that followed seemed endless.

A thoroughly nervous Thomas had to break that unbearable silence. For his life to continue in its customary way, for his household to function, for his family to hold together, for dealing with the innumerable and difficult problems of existence, to maintain his status in society, for dealing with people, even to maintain the surroundings essential for his work—it was essential that Katia be more than merely acquiescent. He needed a supportive, inventive, and adventurous Katia. In fact, he thought darkly, their lives would be even more threatened if she would not come around. And this from one simple even ordinary invitation! Intolerable! Cautiously Thomas began his campaign. A misstep might make Katia inflexible and all would be ruined. Surely life has its ironies. But this irony Thomas could not let triumph. If Katia didn't yield, didn't attend the banquet, the consequences would be catastrophic. What catastrophic meant, Thomas didn't formulate clearly to himself. The word alone was sufficient to arouse his sleeping anxieties. He dared not go into it more deeply than that.

In his most reassuring, even paternal tone, Thomas said, "My dear Katia, truly the State President Goering is a villain. I won't argue that description although it oversimplifies the man, but if he is a villain he is likewise one who hasn't yet committed any great crimes. I certainly agree that the assumption of power by the National Socialists is a most unfortunate folly—one as great as any Germany has yet committed. But consider how they came to power. By the most legitimate of means, in the best traditions of the Republic. They, in the person of Mr. Hitler, were chosen by President Hindenburg to form a government when it become apparent none of the other parties could do so successfully. And what kind of government did Mr. Hitler succeed in forming? One with National Socialists of course. After all, that is his own party. But also with all the other parties of the right. Some of them have extremely right-wing tendencies. They're descendants of the terrible Free Corps who turned civil strife into a horror, and they also come from the monarchists who dream of the Emperor's return from Holland. But they also consist of more central parties. The Catholic parties. The parties representing the financial and industrial world, bastions of fiscal responsibility.

"President Hindenburg chose Mr. Hitler, but who else had he to choose from? Not from the parties of the left. Those Social Democrats would irresponsibly spend in the guise of social good. Or what about the Communist Party? It's even more adventurous and threatening and potentially more violent than the parties of the right. Surely Hindenburg could not choose from them. So he had no one else to choose except Mr. Hitler. It is all quite logical and straightforward. I grant you there is a terrible side to that choice. But that does not necessarily mean the end of Germany. German civilization continues...must continue.

"Now let us talk a little of ourselves. We remained here to support that good Germany we love...the good parts of that same Republic, to maintain that essential goodness at the heart of the people. This is now our chance to address directly those who at this crucial moment hold the levers of power. We are representative of the past and of the future of Germany. Truly we are in a sense more powerful than they. This is our great chance. Can we reject this opportunity by showing our disgust for a single individual?"

From his knowledge of Katia gained over all these years, he understood that he had gone as far as possible. He stopped. Watching Katia's reaction without seeming to, he decided he had succeeded.

Indeed Katia was thinking. "One further step on the way down. What does it really matter? Thomas is too far along on his path. He cannot turn back...Very well, we shall go on. At the very least it will be interesting." Katia nodded her acceptance grudgingly, but still it was acceptance, and Thomas's heart overflowed with love.

On the train that carried them one morning from Munich to Berlin, Thomas and Katia sat mutely side by side. Katia's face was as grim as if she was being borne to her own execution in a tumbrel. Thomas was scarcely more cheerful. His dreams of changing the course of history with a single speech had in the light of succeeding days seemed fanciful. He decided people change through neither words nor actions, but remain themselves forever. Sobs could perhaps move the hearts of wild animals but not those of humans. So why then had he come on the journey? To show that one need not be evil to be brave? To show them, Goering, the Academy no doubt entirely composed of sycophants and fellow travelers? To show to himself that he was brave? Was that not enough? Yes, he thought, that would be enough, and he regained some of his confidence.

What further preoccupied Thomas was the lecture. What should it be on? He had three lectures more or less prepared that he had given on other occasions, certainly before groups considerably more sympathetic with his ideas and principles. Which one should it be? He pondered the subjects. Doctor Sigmund Freud and his theories. Lessing, the founder of the idea of a united Germany and the ideal of tolerance. Goethe, both German and internationalist. Each of these had points Thomas wished to make. Which would be best? Freud and his theories would be the boldest certainly, one can't deny that, but one couldn't say that other ones were timid choices, either. Which one would it be? On the rail journey through the heart of Germany as the two silently sat together and yet apart, Thomas turned that question over in his mind.

Of course the most powerful talk would be on Freud. Truly the most revolutionary thinker of our time. Perhaps of any time. A revolution in

thinking, in feeling, in action. The world had utterly changed because of that one man. True, those changes had been foreshadowed by other German writers, Novalis for example, who through intuition came to very much the position that Freud attained through reasoning and observation. Life is forced oxidation. Life and death go hand in hand. Along with the life force goes the death wish. Along with the sex drive to reproduce oneself and make oneself eternal comes the wish to destroy everything, including oneself.

Freud states in so many words that he is most interested in unconscious mental activities rather than conscious mental action. That is the source of the revolution Thomas would talk about. Before him only poets talked about the sleeping mind. The world has now the idea of the mind that both knows itself thinking, the conscious mind, and that which does not know itself, the unconscious, and he states further that the power of the conscious mind is weak compared to that of the unconscious. That reason is feeble as measured to the strength of the irrational. What we seemingly will with our conscious mind, the Will that philosophers such as Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and Kant talk of, is nothing compared to the Will that is hidden, unknown inside the depths of the soul, hidden from all, yes, from all thought. What we think of as the results of our willing is due to something else entirely. And thus we have the power of Freud, the originality, the importance. The world—the crystal clear world whether of day or night—is turned upside down. Suddenly all is darkness. Unconsciousness and irrationality dominate.

Where then do we have a place to live in peace and love in understanding? Is there any hope? Perhaps Dr. Freud is mistaken? But we have witnesses to tell us that irrationality truly rules most of our lives. We speak of the irrationality of the Great War, how the nations of Europe of the world hurled themselves into the chaos of war. And did not all rejoice at that outbreak? Did we not wish a world destroyed that now in retrospect seems so pleasant? Did we not all wish our daily lives overturned? Did we not find peace stale? Was there not a rush of humanity to the Front? We call it the Front. But is that not an inappropriate denotation? It is the rear guard of humanity. The front is elsewhere, leading toward a future where these horrors would not happen, could not happen.

And what does all this have to do with a Dr. Freud, the first psychoanalyst sitting in his apartment in Vienna seeing his patients? It is simply this: Freud states that the voice of reason, no matter how faint, how inaudible, however seemingly ignored, persists in seeking a hearing. By this persistence it eventually does get one, and the one genuine good and useful revolution is achieved. The patient becomes well. The one revolution that is genuinely and completely good, without the self-seeking,

envy and hatred that even the best secular and religious revolutions carry along with them, is at long last victorious. Often it takes a long, seemingly endless time, but the voice of reason is patient.

What does this have to do with the world outside? Does not irrationality dominate in our country? Did not the voice of irrationality dominate throughout history? Dr. Freud offers us hope that the voice of reason however timidly spoken or thought must yet prevail in human history. Evil, which rides on the wild stallion of all our irrational instincts and thoughts, fears and hates, will someday be defeated forever. Then eventually we shall achieve the truly good future.

Even as Thomas went over the lecture, even as he read the carefully typed manuscript of his previous talk, he understood that it would not work, that in order to be understood, the words demanded the absence of that irrationality he attacked. For the appeal to the good to be heard, the assembly for this talk had to be of the good. Would the Prussian Academy trembling under the eyes of Goering, watching Goering turn blank and terrible, waiting for the thunderbolt to destroy the insolent interloper, would they hear those words?

No, he thought, the talk would have no effect except perhaps to increase the personal danger to Katia and himself. Any credibility and power Thomas had to influence events would be lost. Let's try again, a better way, a simpler way. To present Nietzsche, perhaps the philosopher the Nazis love best? Perhaps.

Thomas tried once more. In his mind he started again. The first words of the talk. Dr. Sigmund Freud. In his mind, truly without volition, he heard the words, "That Jew...." Thomas felt his face turning pale, and he knew in that assembly those two words would be the response of all. Not a word further would be heard.

Lessing then, the hero of the creation of Germany. He considered the writer of that great epic of tolerance, *Nathan the Wise*. Again Thomas saw that at the mention of Lessing the words Jew-lover would be inside everyone's head. And Thomas's efforts to make a change would be useless.

Then with a heartfelt sigh, Thomas saw he would have to turn to Goethe after all. Goethe the German and internationalist. The Devil take it, he'd go with that.

From their hotel they rode in state in a great Daimler to the Prussian Academy. The building itself showed the touch of Frederick the Great, elegant, the shapes and colors of the joyous lightness of the Enlightenment. Inside however were the signs of the ancient Prussia created by Charlemagne to battle the Slavs, and then the pagans. The ultimate Prussian expression was the Order of Teutonic Knights, then the wars and

battles that dominated the memories of the French court of Frederick and all of Germany. Yes and likewise that apparition was still strong enough to have a distressing effect upon Thomas and Katia.

To Thomas the sight was distressing enough, but to Katia it was cataclysmic. It made clear to her that Thomas would be talking in front of Goering and the whole Prussian Academy. Of course she knew all that along, but she hadn't thought about what Thomas was going to say. Now the frightening question came to her, what topic? What words would be in his mouth, would come to his tongue? She couldn't know exactly, but she knew enough and knew too that those words couldn't be changed. He couldn't turn back if it meant his life, and she wouldn't want him to. Even if Thomas became uncharacteristically timid and cautious, that would not save them either. They had to go on with what they started, Thomas and Katia, no matter how Goering and the Academy received those words.

In the great hall the Academicians were dressed in scarlet gowns. At the center was a single large grouping of scarlet surrounding a figure larger, more massive. This figure did not wear a gown but a uniform of military cut, light blue adorned with gold medals and golden epaulettes. Thomas and Katia did not have to ask themselves who that man was. He could only be Hermann Goering, the State President of Prussia.

An attendant dressed in eighteenth-century coat, breeches and boots, all white, led Thomas and Katia toward the center group. A figure in scarlet robes detached himself and greeted them. "My dear Bruhn and Mrs. Bruhn, I am delighted to see you. It's been, I fear, a long time."

This was Heerlich, a writer with nearly an equal reputation to Thomas in Germany or even in the world depending on whether Thomas or someone else made the evaluation. Heerlich was heavier and much shorter than Thomas, but as he held himself erect he had a much more majestic appearance.

"Yes, Heerlich," Thomas said, "It has been a long time. And how is Mrs. Heerlich?"

Heerlich gave a gesture which seemed to indicate both he and Mrs. Heerlich were as well as could be expected, and that small talk should be dispensed with. Straightaway he took Thomas by the arm and led him, with Katia following, directly to the splendidly attired Goering. The white-uniformed attendant returned to the front of the room, taking his position again by the entrance. At their approach Goering's booming voice dominated all other voices. Then he abruptly fell silent, and all the members of that group turned in unison to face the approaching Heerlich with Thomas and Katia behind him.

Goering's voice again boomed out, loud even for one of his extreme size. "Well! Doctor Bruhn. At last I have the honor of meeting the man

who as much as anybody represents the culture of Germany and casts honor upon the German people. And Mrs. Bruhn!"

He said the last with as deep a bow as his figure could make in Katia's direction.

Thomas was embarrassed at the sudden spotlight of attention. "I thank you but you're too kind..."

"No no..." Goering insisted. "I have no time for conventionalities. I say only what I believe. My position as State President doesn't allow me to pose."

In proof of that, Goering's attention was completely focused upon Thomas with nothing left to acknowledge Katia. Thomas warmed perceptibly under the sun of Goering's attention even though the beaming smile on his handsome broad face with those icy eyes gave the impression of winter rays that illuminate coldly.

Goering went on without taking breath but certainly not without thought. "Your first novel—that of your family history or at least one assumes such—took all of Germany by storm, myself included. What you wrote of one set of people and family of a town of the North, imaginary in some sense, struck to the heart of all Germans everywhere. What you have written, so brilliant so insightful, illuminates Germany's past as well as its future. Family fortunes rise and families change and fall. One cannot deny that, but in the background a new Germany has been born that you illustrate most vividly. The old forms are changed and the new are ready to go onto the stage of history. That is what you teach. We mourn for the past, that is true, that past in which there was much greatness, but even in the fall of one family in the old Germany, we see the people, genius rising, the new Germany rising greater than before. In your book the new Germany is that of the Empire with the industrial gains that transform the Empire. The importance of your book is that you show a continuing process. The Empire was glorious and had its moment of triumph before all the world. An even newer Germany now rises to the challenge and carries us to even greater glories. Is that not what Spengler that great historian talks about? One family one nation falls, another rises. That is the fate of families and nations."

Katia could not help noting the self-congratulatory expression on Goering's face as he put the name of Spengler in its proper place. She decided that he had been prepared carefully by a scholar, perhaps one of the Academicians here. Certainly he had not time to study for himself. Nevertheless one could not infer that Goering did not understand what he was saying, that he was only a parrot. In fact that demonstration of quick learning was even more impressive than if he had known all this stuff before.

"Spengler says, does he not," continued Goering, "that the cycle of nations follows that of individuals, and so do families. But the effects vary enormously. The fall of a family, what comes of it, and another family rises, perhaps even the same family. The fall of an empire, Rome for example, almost took civilization with it. But that had good effects in the long run. The civilization of the South was worn out, decayed, effeminate. The barbarians came—that is, we Germans—and we built a new civilization and again it decayed, but again the Germans, those uncorrupted by the old civilization, are building civilization. Humanity shall thank us! Excess capital was the cause of the civilization of the first part of the twentieth century. Courage and strength shall be the cause of the civilization rising in the new part of the century. I repeat again, humanity shall thank us..."

Katia looked at the cold face and marveled. Imagine that man daring to talk of humanity!

"...and your great work brought forth the history and culture of Germany to the world stage. Not since Goethe has someone been both German and international without giving up an iota of his Germanness. Can anything be more marvelous than that? You are truly on the side of German destiny!"

"Thank you," Thomas said.

In despair Katia yet sought a gleam of hope. Thomas would be as usual pedantic and longwinded and would put Goering to sleep with his endless flow of words. And the Academy too would hopefully find him boring. Then she thought, "The wall surrounding a city does not find the battering ram uninteresting. Nor do the people within a castle find the pounding ram at the gate pedantic. These people won't consider the hammering of Thomas's logic pedantic either. No they will listen and later take their revenge." Then she heard more of what Goering was saying.

"Your acceptance of the invitation to speak at the Prussian Academy does us all honor. Unfortunately, due to the pressure of governmental affairs, I myself will not be able to hear you speak, but I will return to talk more with you at the banquet following."

Katia's relief was almost overpowering. But her sensation of release did not persist for long. Goering would want to know what Thomas had spoken, but who would be the one to tell him? Heerlich, she decided, who else but? And what would Heerlich say? An old friend, she thought, but still she wondered.

And Goering swept away from them suddenly as his retinue arose from the crowd. This stirred the Academicians as if a great wind had blown through, as the Prussian State President departed the floor.

What did Thomas think of Goering's departure from the scene? He felt many things, but relief was not one of them. Chiefly Thomas was

annoyed, angered, even embarrassed, a slight he felt more painfully since many, himself included, considered him to be the greatest German writer of the day. What else do you expect from a Nazi politician who had not the wit to understand the importance of what he would have missed? He thought, trying to put a good light on it, Goering was a practical man who did things rather than think about them. With this, Thomas's annoyance was assuaged.

Silence reigned. There was a great space in which one could breathe again, but then a barely concealed ripple of movement swept the hall as if everyone at once relaxed.

"Well," an Academician said, "I suppose this is the first time you've met our State President. What do you think of him?"

"Mr. Goering seems like a very pleasant man."

A sudden roar of laughter burst from the group.

Another man said, "Pleasant? Why shouldn't he be? You're not a Communist or Social Democrat or a..." There was a tiny hesitation. Then the man went on, "a threat to him in some way or even an inconvenience."

Heerlich accepted this. "Definitely pleasant, I must agree. He is truly a remarkable choice to be President of the Academy. But Goering is not unintelligent. Quite the reverse...One mustn't underestimate him even though one continually is tempted to do so. He is a fish out of water here, nevertheless he learns quickly. It would be a great mistake to misjudge his intelligence, his power of concentration, and his ability to learn."

One voice spoke up, "He is dangerous."

Another man protested, "But not to us."

Heerlich said dryly, "My dear fellow...I hope not indeed."

Both Thomas and Katia were pleasantly surprised by this freedom of expression.

Then Katia said, "And the Chancellor...?"

What was it she wanted to know? And why did she ask at that moment? She couldn't precisely have explained either her motives for asking, nor could she entirely understand its significance, but at last she received all the attention she could have desired. A change came over the group, silence and immobility. But not complete immobility. Each turned his eyes toward his neighbor, making a definite effort not to turn around and see who stood behind him. Then the moment passed.

Heerlich said, somewhat vaguely, "The Chancellor is a quite different person..."

At that moment an attendant with strong lungs called out that the meeting was to begin. All went through the great door on the side of the hall. It led into a sumptuous room with well-cushioned chairs in dark almost black velvet, arranged in rising tiers as in an amphitheater. Katia

noted that the number of Academicians outside would scarcely suffice to fill half the seats. An Academician much older than the rest noticed Katia's inquiring glance and said to her in a low barely audible voice: "A good many of us are away. On vacation, you might say." "Vacation?" "Exile," said the man, even more softly.

The cheerfully chatting whispering gossiping crowd dispersed in the chamber, taking seats without ceasing their conversations. Heerlich conducted Thomas and Katia to the stage with a podium, a microphone and two rows of chairs facing the auditorium. One row now filled with dignitaries of the Academy. The three chairs in front of the others were reserved for Heerlich, Thomas and Katia.

When all were seated and a reasonable silence prevailed, Heerlich rose and approached the podium. He stood a moment in silence before beginning his introduction of Thomas. His survey of the audience was not without humor for it seemed as though he might be preparing a *bon mot*. But no, when he spoke he spoke soberly, as befitting the majesty of his robes and the impressiveness of the surroundings. The amphitheater was intended to emphasize the grandeur both of the State and the Academy. It represented both Prussia and culture. It was obvious to Katia that Heerlich had no doubt the Academy could serve both. Science history art economics and the other muses were all present as statues along the walls. Heerlich as a bastion of literature was clearly determined to carry her banner on to the field of honor and bring yet more glory to that flag. He spoke in a resonant, firm voice that scarcely needed artificial assistance to make it heard in every seat in the room, even the farthest.

"Academicians and guests, and honored speaker, I welcome you all to the opening of the new session of the Prussian Academy of Arts and Sciences. I speak in the name of the Academy and the State Government of Prussia, I speak for the State President who—in view of the demands of government—honored me by delegating to me the opening of the Academy session. The history of the Academy is glorious..."

Expanding upon that topic, he mentioned the various kings of Prussia, starting with the great Frederick and the Emperors of Germany. He then mentioned the first Emperor of the new Germany, likewise the King of Prussia, and the great scientists and artists and scholars who gave to the Academy a glory that had lasted to this very day. He named those individuals who had studied the secrets of language, of thought, of Troy and Rome, the scientists who plumbed the depths of nature to understand the atom and the secrets of radio and of flight. He did not of course mention the Jews Lillienthal and Hertz by name.

". . . the nation that we are constructing. But this is the grandest year in our German calendar. One day perhaps a thousand years from now

the German people will reckon this year to be Year One, as we rise from a pit dug by evil enemies and by people who in no way can be considered German. We are, I promise you, under the tutelage and leadership of a great man, the greatest man in German—no, in *world* history, to march to the future we sought so long but which now we shall attain...”

What that future would be, Heerlich began to explain very much as if he were the speaker for the occasion rather than poor Thomas. It seemed the future according to Heerlich was quite physically described...”We shall have wealth unlimited...”

Of what it would consist, he related in nearly endless detail: colonies, possessions, iron and coal mines, oil fields, the very ocean itself and the empty lands of Africa and Asia.

“...all that shall be ours...And our enemies shall be destroyed forever.”

Katia thought it a much more bellicose speech than anything Goering was reported to have said or even what the Chancellor had yet uttered. It was certainly more indiscreet. The audience, she thought, listened with patience rather than with interest. No doubt the good Heerlich had made similar speeches on various occasions. Clearly for his purposes Goering had chosen well.

Then abruptly derailing himself from the track on which he seemed fated to hurl his discourse endlessly into expanding realms of his imagination and desire, Heerlich came back to the task of the evening: introducing Thomas.

“...Thomas Bruhn who in truth needs no introduction to us either as the writer or the man...”

And naturally Heerlich proceeded to regale his listeners with a lengthy introduction upon every aspect of Thomas’s work, providing plots and critiques in thorough detail. Eventually, however, Heerlich was on the path to the goal which, Katia realized, he had all this time planned to attain. She heard the change in his voice, the words slowed to a measured pace. Instead of phrases tripping and jostling with one another in his hurry to get them said, he now pronounced each word loudly and distinctly so that each nuance registered upon the listening mind. It occurred to Katia at that moment that the seemingly vacuous Heerlich began to sound very much like Thomas, and not vapid at all. She noted that the audience likewise perceived the change. They had been politely nodding approval, but now they listened with their full attention.

“And now we come upon a work on the border between art and life, where reason and imagination have an equal role, where imagination creates and reason criticizes, where facts assume their proper place and the weight and the illumination of imagination is so strong, the landscape

becomes more real than the daily world, the significance we do not find in the day is found as if in a dream...It will come as no surprise to any one conversant with German letters, that I am referring to Thomas Bruhn's masterpiece, *Observations by a Watcher from Afar*, the most important work, if I may risk my reputation by saying so, by an established German writer as to the nature of German society, drawing lessons from the past and looking to the future. It is not only a great work, but it was a most courageous work. Thomas Bruhn took a stand which at that time was guaranteed to make him unpopular among an important class of people. He said that Germany's actions in the Great War were completely justified, that a nation surrounded by enemies had a right to do what was necessary to survive."

Katia saw Thomas start at that. He seemed not very pleased by the compliment, and he became gloomily thoughtful. Thomas paid careful attention to Heerlich, as if counting the points raised in the speech. Yes, his expression indicated, *I said that but I didn't mean quite as it sounds...*

Heerlich went on praising Thomas's support for the war, for the Emperor, for his view of German destiny...In short, Heerlich repeatedly praised everything that Thomas had actually written: Praise to God, mine enemy has written a book. When Thomas had written during a period in which Germany suffered severe misfortune, he did in fact believe in what he wrote. Since then he had begun to doubt, and now he heard Heerlich throwing his words, presumably with the best of intentions, back into his teeth.

Now what was Thomas to do? Accept his own words? Back away from them in the most exposed of positions, the most dangerous of positions? Did not Goering, for example, and other officials believe each and every word?

Katia understood then that Heerlich had deliberately arranged for this...shall we say, trap? In this case, to attempt to avoid the pitfalls would be just as dangerous as tumbling into the trap itself. What was Thomas to do? Katia watched Thomas carefully; this clearly was not a mere academic question. She realized she was holding her breath. Was this the moment when all would be destroyed? Would Heerlich tell Goering how Thomas handled the situation? Yes, Heerlich would certainly be the one to tell Goering...What would he say?

Finally Heerlich finished his introduction by giving the title of Thomas's lecture and bringing him to the podium to a storm of cheers. Thomas stood there waiting for the applause to die. It did not, not for a long while. Was the applause for Thomas at all? Katia was doubtful. There was a quality about the noise that wasn't quite pleasant or even polite, as if the Romans were cheering either the gladiator or perhaps the lion and not drawing much distinction between the two.

Eventually Thomas was ready to talk. He took a drink of water from the glass that was before him, and glanced at his manuscript lying on the podium as if he were seeing it for the first time and didn't quite believe in its physical reality. Then he glanced briefly at Heerlich.

"Thank you," Thomas said. That was all.

Then he launched into his opening. "Goethe, German and internationalist. I've chosen that for my topic, for reasons I think that will become apparent..."

Then Katia realized that Thomas was not going to respond to Heerlich's introduction. With a mixture of pride and fear, she understood that Thomas solved the problem and evaded the trap Heerlich set for him by simply ignoring it.

"Goethe...certainly one of the great figures both of the German past and of the world...But I must make some preliminary remarks in the way of an explanation perhaps an excuse. To the scholars within the confines of this auditorium this would seem not more profound than a popular talk at some earnest gathering to gain knowledge. And yet there is no shame in knowledge wherever you can find it. But the scholars who know all the facts better than I possibly could, also know that there is no such thing as a simple fact. A fact can have a thousand aspects. Allow me the liberty of trespassing upon your territory. Perhaps from the heap of what is well known we still can find a facet that is new and perhaps even surprising.

"Let's talk a bit about why we are so interested in great figures. Can we not let them stand undisturbed on their pedestals? At one time not so long ago all one did with the great men was take their statues off the pedestals, dust them, and replace them unchanged in the slightest degree. Those were simpler days. What has been revealed us from the past were absolute immutable truths and those truths were of the simplest kind: Frederick in despair, Frederick amused by Voltaire as by a spiteful monkey, Frederick playing the harpsichord with fellow musicians, Frederick consoling wounded grenadiers...I speak now of Frederick because we are in his building, and it is impossible not to think of him...But nowadays we do not take statues down merely to dust them, or least not so gently. One seeks to hurl them down, sometimes to smash them to pieces and perhaps to put them together in a brand new shape. By that I mean that when we imagine flaws in our heroes, then we trumpet those flaws to the sky. Perhaps Frederick was too fond of his grenadiers, perhaps he lost battles he should have won, perhaps he won some battles by chance...Or they mock—that is, *we* mock, since we are of that same generation—declaring that the great Frederick had done silly things, shameful things.

"If you don't want Frederick's name, take any other name. All those we have honored and still honor, all abused made-over rebuilt covered

with mud or the reverse, covered with yet more praise with yet more gold leaf, placed in blazing light, so whether bad or good, the figure is no longer human at all...You ask yourself what then is the real person? Then you ask the further question, what does it matter what the man or woman was? It's by their works they are known and those works in every lineament bespeak greatness. And does not greatness preempt humanity? And that there was a human being somewhere in that pile of history, does that make any difference at all? Whether that human is good or bad? Let those achievements speak for themselves..."

He stopped to take another drink of water. Katia was pleased to see that Heerlich looked uneasy, but then Katia was uneasy herself. Thomas would never use ten or even a hundred words where a thousand could be employed. But the thousand words were so carefully employed so that a mere hundred words would seem so barren and lose so much meaning that one senses in those thousand words that one would gladly give him the right to go on and on. But were the Academicians prepared to listen? Katia decided they were indeed listening as intently as she, but what they were thinking she had no idea.

Thomas continued. "Do achievements really speak for themselves? Time, events change so much. It took Bismarck to finish Frederick's work. Or did it? Frederick wanted a Prussian state, not a united Germany. Do we get lessons from great men? What are the lessons we get from Frederick? Fight a lot of campaigns, be persistent, and when you're in the darkest hour someone will die and the coalition against you will break up?

"And then Lessing saw the wreckage of Germany. The princes and kings broke up the land of Germany not yet a state. Then Lessing spoke greatly and Germany revived. Later with the aid of the Russian, Austrian and Prussian armies, Germany the idea was reborn. Would Lessing recognize that idea? Was that ever his idea? The lesson we draw is to write well, speak well, and have a good idea and the allied armies will appear, in both senses of the word, to support you.

"And then came Bismarck. I am going through the history of Germany quickly, but for a purpose. Bismarck invented a machine that allowed him to smoke four cigars at once, and he was bold. Bold against Denmark and Austria, and bold against France in 1871. He built the united Germany at last that Frederick hadn't even dreamt of and Lessing had. What we learn from Bismarck is that we should be bold. Germany should be bold. But would Bismarck have been bold in 1914? The Emperor William was bold then. If the boldness had paid off, the Emperor would have been regarded as the greatest German. But there was another lesson from history to which no one had paid any attention. After we beat the French armies in 1871 without much trouble, there followed a siege of Paris with

the workers fighting the army. That should have taught the world that if the French had something to fight for they would fight well. We did not examine the consequences of that. The Russians also fought well in the lost cause against Japan."

Then with a thrill that went through her body, she heard Thomas completely, unexpectedly, answer Heerlich. "And our great colleague Academician Heerlich was absolutely correct. I wrote a book, a mammoth book...I devoted myself to it...Observations...yes observations indeed. I came to the aid of the Emperor and justified every action and thought and word and every ambition of Germany. The Germany of then is still our past. We cannot cut ourselves off from it. Fate blunted our sword, but we shall prove greater than fate. We shall yet be stronger only when our cause is the cause of the future not that of the past. I speak in a proprietary tone of the future, you notice. Follies destroyed us. We shall yet prove greater than our follies.

"I speak of the lessons we learn or do not learn from the past, that repeated actions may not come to the same results. And what of the great men who taught us these lessons? What does the title of the talk, even the name of Goethe, have to do with all this? He fought no battle. He proposed no causes. He liked the French more often than he did not. He rather approved of Napoleon. He saw the greatness of the idea and did not see the smallness of the man. He himself was an official, an important one I grant you, but in a small and rather unimportant state, at Weimar, a small and rather unimportant city. He passed laws, wrote ordinances, promoted some good causes and wrote. Like ourselves, ladies and gentlemen. A fellow author, a fellow scientist..."

Thomas chose to forget that he had said he would not go into matters that all the others in the audience would know as well as he did or better. He spoke of Goethe's literary and scientific achievements, from geology and evolution to optics and light, from novels to plays to poetry, each a ringing triumph of man's intellect and creativity. Everything Goethe touched turned to gold like King Midas, but his gold—unlike that of poor Midas—lived and grew.

"Now we come back or rather come at last to our question..." Thomas looked benignly at his audience. "We speak of greatness over and over again. German greatness...Why then is Goethe accepted as great? His poetry, his prose, his plays, his geology, his optics, his theories of evolution, his laws and regulations, his diplomacy. There is much greatness in these things and indeed that is recognized. In truth he did much more than most, perhaps all. But is that sufficient? He is great, esteemed to be great, for one reason and only one reason. The German people recognize his greatness. He is great because Germany took him to its heart. Why? I can,

though unfortunately most often longwindedly, answer that question simply. Goethe is great because he wrote *Faust*. But this is not meant to be an astounding revelation. You know, I know, the German people know that. All the world knows that. Why then I do bring up that in front of such an august and noble body? Because...But let me digress..."

Katia watched Heerlich. Like everyone else he stopped breathing at those words about *Faust*. He started breathing again, but cautiously perhaps, expecting Thomas to pull some surprise.

"When we were in Stockholm..."

Thomas did not need to say why he had been in Stockholm. Everyone knew.

"...I made a linguistic discovery. Nothing that a real linguist wouldn't know, or any traveler for that matter. We stayed in a part of Stockholm called Gamblestan...Old Town. I never found out why *gammele* means 'old' in Swedish...It is nothing like the German word...but Stan certainly could be town in English. We know of course English, Swedish, and German are all related...And there is a street in Gamblestan named Koopman Gatan. Someone told me *Koopman* means merchant in Swedish. Feeling I made a great discovery, I said, That's Kaufmann in German...No no, they said. *Koopman* is pronounced in Swedish as *shopman*, and that I felt I been witness to an exquisite connection between Sweden, Germany, and England. The word *Koopman* came from Sweden to both German and English. In German they took the spelling and in English the sound. I now saw that Sweden is our older brother, and that England and Germany are cousins if I stretch the genealogy a bit. But then what does *Gatan* mean to England and Germany? Not street or strasse or avenue. Then a Swedish friend told me that I was pronouncing Gatan incorrectly, it is not ga-TAN'...It is GO'-den. Ah, another revelation! GO'-den. *Going* in English and *gehen* in German and then Strasses and Streets are mere different choices for the same concept. We are cousins. Everyone had known but I now understood. We and the English are cousins, twice removed. Once removed by the distance of some hundreds of miles and borders and events, twice removed by time, a thousand, two thousand years removed. But it is certain then in the War we were brought together, at the Meuse, at the Somme, at Amiens, at a hundred other battlefields in Northern France and elsewhere. Truly now we are blood brothers in the most literal sense of the word, we have mingled our blood on all those battlefields, with the French the British, the Belgians, the Italians, the Russians, the French Senegalese troops...yes and with the Austrians and Serbs and Rumanians. We are brothers to all humanity. Can we deny that?"

The silence in the room was profound.

"Does that bear on our question, on Goethe and the source of his

greatness? I think that does bring us closer to an answer. In England, now our true cousin, someone also wrote a *Faust*. A great playwright, a poet, Christopher Marlowe, wrote very much the same story with certainly the same material. Even the tale comes from Germany, from Nuremberg. Quite possibly Goethe made use of this earlier version. But the fate of that play and playwright in England was quite different. Marlowe had his day, the play had its moment on the stage, and it and its author were forgotten except for scholars, historians, antiquarians, theater people. Yet in Germany it lives.

"Goethe lives! Why? The topic the same, even the treatment. Then why? The bargain Faust made with the Devil was a fairy tale in England. In Germany it was...it *is* real. In Italy Boito made it a philosophical debate on Good and Evil. In France Gounod made it ..a love story...the greatest of all perhaps. We treat it as a matter-of-fact transaction. Goethe knew that. How could he not? He is German, proved himself to be German, and his countrymen admitted him into their hearts."

And Thomas thought, *A novel...A man, an artist, makes the deal with the Devil for genius. The country makes a deal with the Devil for something unspeakable. Payment for the man, tragedy for the country, apocalypse.*

Without any change in his expression, Thomas shuddered. What could that apocalypse be?"

In his dry, monotonous voice, Thomas went on. He was capable of putting to sleep one who did not listen with the mind instead of only the ear. He discussed the Goethe play, discussed the nature of the poetry, the question of the daemonic which Goethe had rejected for himself, the uniqueness of German culture and its greatness, the other European cultures and their greatness, and the question of international culture. Finally he stopped. As usual his stopping seemed abrupt unless one realized that Thomas finished precisely when he had said what he wanted to say.

The applause was loud, perhaps from relief, and grew louder at Heerlich rising to join Thomas at the podium to lead it. Katia saw Heerlich look at Thomas coldly and she understood that the friendship between Heerlich and Thomas was dead. With all Thomas's cleverness he didn't understand that in today's Germany he could not be even a slightly critical outsider, he could only be an enthusiast as mad as the others. And with a cold curiosity, and with all her fear now vanquished, Katia calmly wondered if she and Thomas would be allowed to leave Berlin alive. Would it be a tree falling? A car crash? A Communist bomb? Or perhaps she and Thomas would just disappear into the fog and night. Under the gaze of the two hundred or so Academicians robed in scarlet, though without the armbands found on those outside, Katia understood. Though both sets

of grandparents had converted, though her parents were both practicing Lutherans, though Katia was a devout Christian, she was born, had lived, and would die a Jew.

The questions from the audience came thick and furious, and their sharp statements ranged from clever to profound. Thomas gave his answers. Then the meeting was over and all made their way through the door to the hall and from there to the banquet hall.