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Story of a Child

Novel

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As an author, from time to time stories are gifted to me, stories that are more than stories, stories that carry worlds within them. This book is based upon one such gift, one could say: on true events, or: on the childhood of a human being. It is an incredibly valuable gift, one that deserves to be handled with responsibility and respect. I have tried to do it justice by presenting the past in an unaltered and unbeautified manner, even where vocabulary is concerned. Not to cause distress or hurt – the distress and hurt cannot, I know, be prevented – but in order to return to those who have already been distressed and hurt, their right to define their own pain. This pain, however, and it's important I emphasise this, is not a thing of the past. Even though we have done away with certain words and definitions, we haven't managed to separate ourselves from the ideas which form their insides, their core. As a consequence, when we pass on stories like this one, we catch a glimpse of the underbelly of language: its downside.

A.K.

In January 2013, shortly after Barack Obama's second term in office had begun, I travelled to the American Midwest, to Wisconsin. I had been invited by St. Julian College to spend the summer semester as writer-in-residence in Green Bay. My accommodation was in the university's guest apartment, located on the ground floor of the administration building in a 1970s concrete block; the furnishings were from the 80s, the air-conditioning unit from the 90s. Since the noughties, the windows could no longer be opened; lifting them off their hinges or tearing them out by force would have been the only way to escape the air which blew unceasingly through the railings, together with dust, rust and tiny fragments of rat excrement. Sometimes the sound of the air-conditioning unit was like a car alarm, very occasionally like the crash of waves, mostly its monotone *song* ate its way into my ear canal, before going on to attack my brain. Only in the bathroom was it quiet; here, of all places, the ventilation had packed up.

After a month, following the suggestion of a kindly colleague, I decided to get in touch with a certain J. Truttman, who, I was told, rented rooms – and exclusively on a weekly basis.

It had been snowing for days on end. It fell untiringly, mercilessly, blanketing and blotting out what had been constructed by human hand. The wide streets were deserted, the sporadic presence of life seemed accidental, and only once did a snowplough rumble past me.

I was on foot; I hadn't been able to bring myself to rent a car. As all the road markings had been swallowed by a dense white, I could choose where I wanted to walk, on the road or the pavement; I placed my footprints continually on untouched areas. Apart from the snowflakes that were drifting, gliding and fluttering from the sky, my trudging and breathing were the only audible sounds; there were no people, no animals, no cars, not even the wind stirred. The words of Bachelard came to my mind: *Of all the seasons, winter is the oldest*. I transformed it into: Of all the seasons, winter is the youngest. It reminds us of childhood, sets everything back to the beginning.

It took me a long while to find J. Truttman's house. Among the two-storey concrete buildings with flat roofs and large driveways that the wooden houses, farmhouses, had been forced to give way to in the 1950s – the *family homes* had been built especially for veterans coming home from war – it admittedly stood out with its light-blue painted wood panelling, the conservatory which had once been a veranda, and the attic room which sat enthroned on the roof like a crown. But the house number was concealed behind a maple tree, meaning that I had to walk up and down Woodlawn Avenue multiple times to be sure I had good reason to venture up the path. I felt under observation, convinced, even though I didn't catch anyone in the act, that I was being watched; in addition, the Truttman property was the only one that was enclosed, a wooden lattice fence and a sign marked its borders: *No Trespassing*.

I was late. As I rang the doorbell, I cursed the snow, all wintry romanticism had vanished. I was starting to think you weren't coming, said J. Truttman in place of a greeting, holding out her hand: *I'm Joan*; her tone felt formal. Me too, I muttered, introducing myself as Franziska.

Can I call you Fran? She looked at me questioningly. I nodded and peered past her into the living room, from where the scent of butter, vanilla and cinnamon wafted out. So you're the author from Austria, said Joan. I nodded again, still peering in. She grinned.

Then you'd best come in.

The heavenly scent turned out to be coffee cake, and it came with as many cups of hot coffee as I could drink. After the first, I could feel my hands again; after the second, my feet; for my toes, I needed to wait a little longer. At the end of the third cup, we agreed I would move in that same day, with Joan promising to chauffeur me back and forth. I signed the rental contract without having seen the room, without having read the small print. I was content with the knowledge that it was blessedly quiet in the *cuckoo's nest*.

The quiet was, as I noted soon after moving in, the design principle of the house: nothing could be loud, let alone shrill, nothing could stand out. The radio in the kitchen remained silent during the week; it was permitted to speak only at the weekend. The device was the same age as me, yet in spite of everything it functioned perfectly, if you overlooked the fact that the music sounded muffled. The record player in the living room was missing its needle, and the cassette deck the cassettes, Joan thought she had thrown them away, but could no longer remember. The only sounds that were audible in the house came from outside: the twitter of the birds living in the garden's bushes and trees, the hum of car engines, the neighbours' animated chatter (Ada Berkins' untiring soprano in particular pierced the silence).

The acoustic wasteland was reflected in the colour scheme of the rooms. The furnishings were green, brown and beige; more precisely, the carpets were green, the furniture brown (either by nature, or varnished brown) and all the textiles and rugs were beige. The tables, chairs and shelves seemed ageless, because they had no embellishment, they were knocked together planks of wood. The carpets and curtains had no patterning either, they strove to be pure expanses. The couch imitated the table in its formlessness, trying to be a brown bench. The rug had darkened over the years, I presumed from polar white via natural white to beige. My landlady, too, restricted herself to the house colour scheme, I searched her attire in vain for vibrant colours or unusual designs. She evidently owned nothing but plain trousers and skirts, which she always combined with the same blouses and vests.

At first, I thought the building had infected its inhabitant, that Joan had submitted to the dictate of silence. But with time I began to realise it was the exact opposite: Joan was the one who had imposed her understanding of order upon the house. Her fragile frame, her thin neck, her lean arms and legs, the fine silver-white hair and her delicate pale skin contrasted with her dark, powerful voice, which was immune to any kind of contradiction and became even more steadfast while she was talking; her eyes, however, held an uncertainty that both surprised and moved me.

In the beginning, I enjoyed the quiet. I discovered that it consists of sounds and tones, of notes that merge into melodies and which are governed by a rhythm; I discovered that predictability is essential for their genesis and that it's possible to listen to the Something related to the Nothing. That it's somewhere the fleeting can cling to, for more than just a moment.

I felt free, freed, as soon as I stepped inside the cuckoo's nest and climbed the stairs to the first floor. I enjoyed turning my back on the world, shutting it out, and decided not to go to my office at the institute any more, it seemed absurd to cast a gift like this into the wind. Three hours a week, every Tuesday from five until eight in the evening, I spent at the university, the rest of the time I was in the convent, as I began to call Joan's house; admittedly I didn't hear the nun's presence, but I felt her. I should have known that this special kind of happiness wouldn't last. It wasn't long before I felt I was being stifled by stagnation. Moving freely in the house didn't just feel improper, but forbidden, *No Trespassing*, the words had burnt themselves onto my brain. I felt that the walls were creeping closer and closer, that my room was a tower and the window the only exit; the existence of the door slipped my mind. Now whenever I watched the activity around the bare apple tree in the garden, it wasn't to watch the crow fly from one branch to the next, but because I was convinced the tree was a bridge to the outside world.

Perhaps Joan had been concerned about me, for she later confided that a distant cousin suffered from schizophrenia, that hallucinations were part of her eighty-year-old aunt's day-to-day life; or perhaps it was simply a friendly gesture when she knocked at my door on that February afternoon in order to hand me a present, *Welcome Home* was written on the accompanying card. For you, she said, stepping restlessly from one foot to the other. Normally I take my time opening gifts, shake the packaging, study at length the pattern on the paper. For me, the timespan before unwrapping, even if it's brief, is a tiny snippet of the world of miracles, where everything seems possible; but Joan made me so nervous I felt it necessary to tear open the packaging.

It was a framed picture: two goldfish (koi) in a pond beneath the hanging boughs of a cherry blossom tree. The artist is a Chinese-American woman, a former bacteriologist, said Joan. Miss

Wang had studied in California at an Ivy League university, but decided at the age of fifty to pursue an artistic career. Chinese brush painting and 3D pictures have given her life new meaning. 3D? I asked in confusion. Joan smiled. I didn't need special glasses to look at it. She pointed at the fish, whose bodies weren't painted, but modelled out of paper and stuck on. *It reminds me of origami, doesn't it you?*

It reminded me of greeting cards, but I nodded and put the picture on the chest of drawers; the egg yolk yellow and fire engine red stood out from the surroundings. It should fit in your suitcase, said Joan, sitting down, to my annoyance, on the bench at the foot of the bed. Even framed it's not that big; she studied me as though I too were a picture, a picture without koi, yet no less curious.

I didn't know what I was supposed to answer, so I held on tightly to my smile.

Joan relaxed her gaze. She said she couldn't help but think of me when she saw it. And, after a pause (which she used as a run-up): *I imagine it must be lonely.*

She knew I was working on a novel, she had fetched a desk lamp for me from the loft, so I replied that writing was lonely, but – I hastened to add – perhaps it's those who are searching for loneliness who find writing.

She looked at me in surprise, then laughed and said that wasn't what she'd meant. She meant it must be difficult to be the only Asian around these parts. In Green Bay, she said, most people were originally from Europe – Germany, Belgium, Poland and Ireland. Her grandparents, for example, had come to America from the east of Ireland. She'd always dreamt of visiting the *Emerald Isle* too someday, she'd heard that the songs of the Irish Sea were unforgettable. She fell silent, and I was just thinking that we had ticked off this topic of conversation when she added: presumably there weren't that many Asians in Austria either. I answered that I was born in Vienna, so felt about as Asian as her.

She studied me distrustfully. She couldn't believe that, she cried eventually, a person couldn't escape their roots – I was mixed, wasn't I? She looked at me again, more swiftly this time, and came to the conclusion that my *high cheekbones*, the shape of my eyes (the so-called *almond shape*) and my nose betrayed my ethnic origin, or at least the dominant part. Of course, she continued, my hair was slightly wavy and mid-brown, not that thick or strong, but its length, or rather its shortness, made it difficult to determine precisely, plus, she murmured, I was taller and long-limbed, but she was seldom mistaken; Japanese she would rule out, ditto Chinese, she squinted her eyes, was I Korean? The Koreans look the most similar to Europeans, she said. She summarised (without waiting for my answer): I looked like a European painted as a Korean. Or perhaps, I asked, like a Korean painted as European?

She laughed.

Exactly.

Her laughter provoked me. My father, I said, letting myself be pulled to an explanation that felt like a justification, was from Austria, my mother from South Korea.

Joan lifted her hands in an appealing gesture. I wasn't to misunderstand her, she wasn't by any means speaking naively, but as someone in the know: her husband Danny was in the same situation as me. He was the only African-American in Green Bay, or at least that's how it felt.

Once again, she gave me a probing look – or was she searching for help, because I remained stubbornly silent? I didn't know in what way I was supposed to participate in this exchange; I felt as though my role was that of the audience and, as such, that I was uninvolved.

When she picked up the thread again, her voice was quiet. She said it was important for a person to have a group to belong to, to feel a sense of belonging. *Don't you agree?*

I objected that origin wasn't the sole prerequisite for belonging. She shook her head; Danny had always struggled with being the only one. He had been the only black man in kindergarten, the only black man at his school, the only one at work, and he'd had many jobs, so many. Now he was the only black man in the care home. Oh, no, she corrected herself, there was a second, a really young guy, Jonah, who'd had to relearn everything from scratch after a car accident; how to eat, how to walk, how to talk. Jonah and Danny had a similar therapy plan, she said, but Danny would probably be discharged sooner, that's why she only rented this room by the week. As soon as he came home, she wouldn't need the company any more. A melancholy smile settled on her face. It was lonely without him, she said.

Only the light makes a house human. A delicate beam of light fell through the dust-blind glass, cutting its way to the centre of the room. Joan stood up slowly. At first she avoided my gaze, then she changed her mind and caught it. She said, I wonder whether I wasn't perhaps lonely before his illness too, lonely with him.

His loneliness was contagious.

From the Social Services file of the Diocese of Green Bay

13.07.1953

Telephone call with Sr. Aurelia: on Sunday, 12. July, at around 10 PM, a young woman came into the emergency room with strong contractions. Shortly after midnight, she gave birth to a child weighing 3.2 kg. She named him Daniel. The doctor who delivered the baby was Dr. Karl Schreiber. Mother and child are healthy. Miss M. Winkler (MW) was assigned to the case.

14.07.1953

Visit/St. Mary's Hospital: The child's mother is named Carol Anne Truttman. She was polite, but brusque. She explained that she wanted to give up the little boy for adoption and that he should be transferred to the children's ward as soon as the doctors allow it.

Miss Truttman currently lives at Kellogg Street 223 in Green Bay, Wisconsin. She was born on 11. February 1933 in Green Bay, is 20 years of age and unmarried. She regularly attends mass at St. Mary's Church in Green Bay. Her father, Joseph Truttman, died five years ago of bowel cancer. Her mother, Anne Bellin (married to Mr. Nicholas Bellin since 1949), also lives in Green Bay (St. Baird Street 1556). The family originates from Austria and Germany.

She has three siblings; two brothers and one sister; she is the second oldest. Max is 21 years old and works at the Wood Preserving Company. Walter is 19 years old and a student at St. Julian College in Green Bay. Olivia is 13 years old and attends St. Mary's Junior High in Green Bay. Max and Walter are bachelors.

Miss Truttman completed high school at St Mary's in Green Bay. Since then, she has been working as a switchboard operator at Bell Telephone Company in Green Bay. As soon as she's discharged from hospital, she would like to resume this work. However, as she neglected to provide a doctor's note in her absence, she hopes that the position has not been given to someone else in the meantime.

Carol Truttman is around 1.60 m tall and weighs between 70 and 75 kg. She is fair-skinned and has a slender, rounded face with a pointed chin. Her forehead is receding and short. Her nose is on the wider side, her upper nose slightly flat; it looks like a button nose. Her mouth is large, her lips are full. She has shoulder length, wavy brown hair. Her eye sockets are deep-set, her eyes small, round and light brown, her eyelashes short.

She doesn't know the full name of her child's father. She only knows that his first name is George. He is allegedly 23 or 24 years old and unmarried. She presumes that he lives in Chicago. She doesn't know anything about his family. They have no plans to marry, and only went out with one another "a few times". (Miss Truttman didn't say how many times specifically.) Their first meeting was through acquaintances. She initially said "friends", then corrected herself.

At this moment, her mother came into the room. Anne Bellin is an attractive woman with a youthful appearance; an older, slimmer version of the daughter. She was tastefully clothed and incredibly polite. She expressed her thanks for our helping her daughter. Mrs Bellin reinforced that the baby should be given up for adoption. She is also in agreement that he be transferred to the children's ward as soon as possible.

Mrs Bellin and her daughter were informed of the costs involved and of the process of surrendering parentage. It was suggested that this process be initiated as soon as possible – in approximately two months. Neither Mrs Bellin nor Miss Truttman raised any objections to this.

There was neither time, nor necessity, for the child to be examined.

(MW/JE)

(Handwritten observation by JT: the social service workers dictated their reports to the stenographers June Everson/JE and Betty Young/BY.)

03. 08. 1953

Telephone call with Sr. Aurelia: According to Sister Aurelia, the Truttman baby possesses physical characteristics which could indicate American Indian heritage. It is, however, too early to judge this. The child is only three weeks old.

Sister Aurelia confirmed that she would keep a close eye on the child's development.

31. 08. 1953

Telephone call with Sr. Aurelia: The sister was so agitated that it was difficult to understand what she was saying. It seems that Sisters Aurelia and Geneviève have been observing the child closely over the last few weeks, and have thoroughly examined him more than once. Together, they have reached the conclusion that his physical characteristics conform more to those of a negro than those of an American Indian. The child, Sister Aurelia emphasised, "most definitely" exhibits abnormal features.

MW attempted to placate the sister. She said that Dr. Denys would examine Daniel as soon as possible, and suggested waiting for the psychiatrist's report. In addition, she promised to take a look at the boy herself.

Sister Aurelia agreed to this approach. She did, however, warn MW that under these circumstances the search for suitable adoptive parents would prove more difficult. People here were not accustomed to half-caste children, there had never been one: according to her knowledge, Daniel Truttman was the first mulatto to be born in Green Bay.

(MW/JE)

01. 09. 1953

Examination of D. Truttman, St. Mary's Hospital: The child is seven weeks and two days old. His general state of health and nutritional condition can be classified as very good. So far, he has not been ill. (It is common knowledge that the American negro is only affected by a mild form of measles and diphtheria, if at all. Incidents of scarlet fever and chickenpox also progress in a relatively harmless fashion. However, negroes apparently suffer more than the whites from diseases of the respiratory organs.)

Nose shape: the child's nose width lies between the measurements of the largest (Negroid) and smallest (Europoid) and is therefore medium-sized. The nasal index is known to reduce significantly with increasing age, which can be attributed to the much more extensive growth of the absolute nose height in comparison with the width. The American negro is not only as medium-sized nasally as the average European during childhood years, but also as an adult.

Skin colour: At the crook of the left upper arm, which is least exposed to environmental influences (such as the sun), the child appears fair-skinned. His eyelids, nipples and armpits, however, are more strongly pigmented than the torso. This is darker than the limbs (on the inner side). At the temples as well as around the nape of the neck, there are accumulations of pigment.

Please note that the palms and soles of the hands and feet are fair.

Eye colour: the child has a brown iris pigment. Overall, the iris appears to be of shining clarity and depth. There is also a marked bluish outer ring. A negro crease on the eyelid was not (yet) present. Most American negroes originate from West Africa; on them, the negro crease is apparently strongly defined.

Hair colour: the hair colour classification is brown, the hair structure (insofar as it is present) wiry.

Lip shape: the lips are (quite) fleshy.

Deformities: as the literature repeatedly expresses the assumption that more disharmonies are to be expected with racial mixing, particular attention was paid to this: no deformities could be established.

Conclusion: neither Negroid nor American Indian influences can be ruled out. It is a known fact that the American negro cannot be equated to the native African negro. He displays an interbreeding whose basic components have remained Negroid, but in which Europoid and a few American Indian influences have also manifested. 22% of American negroes are unmixed, around 51% exhibit a Europoid element and 27% both a Europoid and American Indian element.

Before any further steps can be taken, the psychiatrist's test must be awaited.

14. 09. 1953

Telephone call w. Dr. Denys: the child's intelligence quotient has been measured. The psychiatrist came to the conclusion that his IQ, at 120, is above average. For a definitive result, the doctor advised waiting for the second test.

He was unwilling to comment on the child's race. Establishing this is often problematic with mixed race children, he said. Afterwards, Miss Truttman was telephoned and asked to come into the office on Monday, 21 September at 9AM.

Table:

<60: mentally retarded

70-79: borderline deficient

80-89: below average

90-109: average

110-119: high average

120-139: above-average intelligence

>140: genius

(MW/JE)

21. 09. 1953

Meeting/Miss Truttman and Mrs Bellin, 9 AM: Miss Truttman came to today's meeting accompanied by her mother. Both women were told that we are having difficulties establishing the infant's

race, but that he seems to be a mulatto child, and that Dr. Denys is in agreement with this assumption.

Contrary to expectation, there was no indignation or protest: Miss Truttman's reaction was non-committal, as was her mother's. Mrs Bellin explained that the child's father had been visiting Green Bay, but that she has acquaintances who know him. She can find out his surname and background through them. Miss Truttman was silent while this was being discussed. She has lost weight, yet is still plump. All of a sudden, she blurted out that the child's father is Polish, and that his surname "definitely" ends with "-ski". She also said that his facial features are "rough", his lips "thick", his skin "brownier than ours" and his eyes and hair "dark brown, almost black". According to her, he is also tall (around 1.80m), lean, but strong (between 90 and 100 kilograms), and already has a receding hairline. She swore that he is originally from Poland.

This gave us the opportunity to enquire more about the background of the Truttman family. Mrs Bellin, née Burkard, claims to be of German origin on both her mother and father's side. Mr Truttman is apparently from Austria on his mother and father's side. Both families, Burkard (Burkhardt?) and Truttman (Trauttmann?) emigrated to Wisconsin in the 19th century. On closer inspection, it seems possible that Carol possesses Slavic facial features.

It was explained, with the greatest possible emphasis, that we require more information about the father before we can start the search for suitable adoptive parents. Our aim is to bring together parents and children who match one another both inwardly and outwardly. In the best case, there will be no noticeable physical difference between the adoptive parents and the children: we create families who look natural; in other words, as intended by God. Only in this way can we guarantee these children's happiness.

Mrs Bellin responded reasonably and promised to supply the missing information soon.

22. 09. 1953

Telephone call with Sr. Aurelia: She is now once again convinced that there is "at least one Indian from the Winnebago tribe" among the Truttmann family's descendants. She asserted that Carol is half Indian; but that the boy is another matter. She considers his facial features too rough for an American Indian. It's entirely possible, she claims, that the child looks colored because his father possesses rough Slavic facial features.

MW promised to pass on this observation to Miss Murphy. In the meantime, the sister is to request a detailed examination of the child from Dr. Merline. He is to pay particular attention to the race. Sister Aurelia promised to arrange this immediately.

(Note by JT: Miss Margaret Murphy was the head of Social Services for the Diocese of Green Bay, Dr. Charles Merline the paediatric doctor in St Mary's Hospital.)

28. 09. 1953

Telephone call with Mrs Bellin: Shortly before the office closed for the day, Mrs Bellin called; she was in a hurry and said she couldn't speak for long. (Her husband has not been informed about the existence of the grandchild.)

She declared that the child's father is definitely Polish, that he lives in Chicago and his name is Sebinski (or Sobinski/Sobieski?). She has been unable to find out any more than this.

29. 09. 1953

Meeting with Dr. Merline, Dr. Schreiber, Dr. Denys, St. Mary's Hospital, 9:00 AM: Dr. Merline, Dr. Schreiber and Dr. Denys have thoroughly examined the child. They suspect that he has negro blood in his veins. The skin tone on the buttocks varies between olive and light brown, which is an indication of mixed parentage.

In their opinion, it is not yet possible to say any more – generally speaking, children are less racially differentiated than adults – but Dr. Denys will carry out another IQ test in a week's time.

(MW/JE)

06. 10. 1953

Meeting/Dr. Denys, St. Mary's Hospital: The second test revealed that Daniel Truttman's IQ is 118. It has fallen since the last test. Dr. Denys concluded that the boy will at some point be capable of completing a college education.

On average, he said, the intelligence of negro children is two percentage points lower than that of white children.

07. 10. 1953

House call/C. Truttman: MW called on Carol at home in order to confront her with the doctors' suspicion. This approach was agreed with Miss Murphy. Carol rents a room with Mrs Trude Rentmeester. Mrs Rentmeester is around sixty years of age, a tall and slim woman with very fair, almost white skin, and narrow, pale blue eyes. She wears her long white hair in a bun. Mrs. Rentmeester supplements her widow's pension by renting out the three bedrooms she doesn't use to unmarried, working women. The income she receives from this isn't high, she says, but adequate. As she says, she can't ask much from the young women.

As Carol hadn't yet returned from work, Mrs. Rentmeester offered MW a cup of coffee in the living room. The room looked incredibly neat and well looked-after: a bouquet of fresh flowers from the garden stood on the sideboard, the cushions and upholstery smelled fresh, not a speck of dust could be seen on the bookshelves. Mrs. Druwiski, a Polish woman, comes every day to cook, clean, iron and do laundry, she said. This was unsurprising; Kellogg Street is in a good neighbourhood. To accompany the coffee, Mrs. Rentmeester offered spiced cookies, a specialty from her homeland, Belgium.

She has known the girl for many years, she said, and to her, Carol is still the gap-toothed, seven-year-old child who ran crying from the stage at the music school's piano recital. "Such a sweet girl," she said, "kind-hearted and gentle. But shy, my God, so shy!" She is shocked that Carol has brought an illegitimate child into the world; she would have thought many young women capable of this, but not Carol. On the other hand, she added, a kind of "epidemic" has been spreading around the country for a long time now. Since the end of the war, more illegitimate children than ever are coming into the world. In towns both big and small, houses are being established for unmarried women, where the women can give birth under medical supervision and undisturbed.

Mrs. Rentmeester repeated with a pointed look: "Undisturbed". At that moment, Carol came into the living room. She was surprised and not at all pleased to see MW – she summoned her immediately to her room, ignoring Trude's friendly invitation to have a cup of coffee with her.

Her room was in a state of disarray. On the wooden chair next to the door lay a pile of unwashed clothes. The wardrobe was half open, and stockings, bras, blouses and tips of skirts juttred out from the gap. Instead of apologising for the chaos, she accused MW of having forced her way into her home without permission. The social worker had no right, she said, to seek information from her landlady about her. MW defended herself and assured her that she hadn't done this, which seem to reassure Carol. MW used this pause to tell her about the doctors' suspicion, upon which Carol sat down on her bed sheepishly; she didn't offer MW a seat. She had never had intercourse with a negro, she protested with reddened cheeks, people had to believe her. But she had gone out "for a year" with a certain Maynard Helnore. Maynard had quite a dark skin tone. She hadn't known this Gerald (not George!) Sebinski, who she had originally named as the father, for long. She rejected our offer to contact Mr. Helnore. She didn't want a social service worker to surprise him with this news. After MW appealed to her conscience and explained why it was so important to establish the paternity unequivocally, she said that she would think about it and come to the office on Monday, 12. October at 9AM.

When asked about her relationship to Austria and Germany, Carol reacted with surprise, but willingly volunteered that she didn't know much about these countries, that her parents had barely spoken about their homelands. She answered the question as to whether she had learnt and spoken German as a child in the negative. She knows the language only from films.

No further enquiries were made. The young woman is suffering from a tangible rootlessness. Possibly this is the catalyst for the illegitimate pregnancy.