

# A Cannibal's Love Story

Von abgemeldet

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## Prolog: ACT I – THE LIVER

Seven of them, all of the same brownish grey like the earth they were so violently wrested from; five of them were quite big and strong, looking rather healthy; then there was their younger brother, rather small compared to them but still fresh and youthful. And then there was the misfit, yes, he even was a little paler and more grey than brown, and his face that must once have been full and pretty was now all wrinkled up, deep furrows running through the dry skin.

Mrs. Crotchet screwed up her face at the sight of the bad potato which looked a bit lost between his younger brothers. She had no pity left for him, none at all, in fact she was quite irritated by that ugly potato being in her sack, even though she had wanted to buy the most prettiest potatoes of them all, and finally she had chosen this very family just to realize she had chosen one with a cripple. Her fingers, callous with gout, clutched the little bag in anger when she looked up and stared at the person facing her. "I bought the family with the cripple!" she gabbled in excitement, furious about her own stupidity.

There were only two people in the compartment, and still, the person she wanted to inform about this brash potato wasn't reacting. It was a young man, not older than twenty, eyes closed, the slightly ruffled hair hanging in wet wisps down to his shoulders, brown like a chestnut. Or a very dark potato.

"The cripple!" she repeated, now a little excited. "Can you see?"

Due to the loudness of Mrs. Crotchet's indignation the young man woke up, blinked once or twice and noticed a pair of watery eyes staring at him from a skeletal face, looking as if it was not skin but old leather covering the bones underneath. The old woman sat there like a toad focusing him like he was an insect, unlucky enough to be her next meal. He remembered having heard about that in his Biology classes ...

And Mrs. Crotchet's enthusiasm grew even stronger when she realized that he really intended to have a serious conversation with her. Quickly she raised the potato sack in front of his face and pointed at the malefactor. "See here, there's the Cripple! I didn't want any cripples, these potatoes are for my daughter, she is going to visit me this weekend, and, yes, she loves potatoes so much, and I thought of cooking her potato dish, I thought. She will like it, she likes potatoes. So do I, I and my daughter have so many things in common, we really have! I haven't seen her for so long, she hardly comes to visit me but now she really is going to. And I want to do something good for her, since I am her mother and she is my child. And I thought of potatoes." Then she smiled and nodded to confirm their obsession with potatoes.

Silence. Just the steady rumbling of the train. The young man tilted his head, taking a closer look at the little sack, his eyes as maroon as his hair. "If I may ..." he mumbled quietly after some moments of examination and took the sack from her, holding it like a newborn child in front of him. "I see your point", he continued with a mundane voice. "There really is a cripple in there."

Mrs. Crotchet embosomed the boy immediately; after all he had an eye for potatoes. He lowered the bag and looked at the old woman with a weak smile. "Though, it is very rude to call it a cripple when it can hear what you say, Madame. And maybe it is not a cripple at all, simply a potato that grew too old ..." Carefully he put a finger through the net and touched the little vegetable gently. "You know, I like potatoes, too." he said, giving another smile. But not for Mrs. Crotchet – it seemed to be for the

potato.

"Oh really? What a very nice young man you are, indeed! I am sure, you and my daughter ... you would go very well together."

A friendly chuckle, then he looked out of the window into the dawn. "I have already found the girl I love, sorry."

The goggle-eyes were still resting on him, twitching from his face to the potatoes on his lap and back. The fingers of his right hand played absently with the net of the sack and Mrs. Crotchet thought of her daughter again. She'd really be visiting ...

Suddenly, the young man moved again, giving back the precious potatoes and said quietly: "I am sure your daughter will enjoy them. Unfortunately my girlfriend doesn't fancy potatoes a lot, that's why I'm doing without them now."

But the old lady was occupied with the Cripple again, a peacefully senile expression on her face. Yes, there was no cripple; there was just a very old potato. He kept watching her for quite some time just until he felt a well known drowsiness coming over him. But as soon as he had closed his eyes once again, Mrs. Crotchet started to talk.

"When she was just a tiny tot" she continued, eyeing the raindrops on the pane "she used to jump into every puddle along the way."

The young man straightened up and said good bye to an hour of dozing; as a grandson he knew very well of the loneliness of seniority. He nodded sympathetically and met her eyes as she searched for his attention. And with every story told Mrs. Crotchet's face appeared a little livelier, she seemed to be truly content to share her words with someone other than herself. It must have been a long time that someone really had listened to her; and it really was interesting from time to time. Her young listener learned that she was a child of the Second World War, that she became a mother very late and that her husband died of cancer when her daughter was just twelve. And even though he really cared about the life and the fate of Mrs. Crotchet, his thoughts kept drifting away from her monologue.

Every now and then the old lady's face changed into another one, a well known one that kept smiling at him. The time for losing his nerves was when it was night, not on a simple train ride.

"Have you heard of that girl gone missing?" the old lady asked suddenly, drawing all of his attention. "What was her name? Lily Evans?"

"Stevens. It is Lily Stevens. Lily Evans is from Harry Potter ..." He had never expected that senile old grandma to come up with something like that. Furthermore, he had no intention to speak about that topic; too often he face smiled from a newspaper, too often a reporter talked about the 'Mysterious Vanishing of Lily Stevens'. For days the statewide media had kept stripping the case of Lily Stevens down; and even in the international news it had already been mentioned. "How couldn't I have heard of it? Why are you asking?"

"I hope my daughter travels safely; God knows what can happen to little girls nowadays." Without a warning she took his hand and started patting it. "If every man was as friendly and nice as you, mothers like me wouldn't have to fear for their precious daughters."

Her skin was as scratchy as her voice, still he smiled at her. "Thank you very much. Unfortunately I have to get out at the next station, Madam."

"Is that so" she muttered silently, a shade of sadness in her voice, as much as in the last senile smile she gave him. "Very nice talking to you, nice young man. Godspeed!" And for the last time he smiled back, like he had done a hundred times during their

conversation. "Greet your daughter. And have a safe trip ..."

Mrs. Crotchet looked out of the window again and saw the platform, lightened weakly by two lanterns; the third one was broken. And then there was that young man stepping into the cone of light, into the rain. "What a very nice young man indeed" she told the pane and patted her potatoes absentmindedly.

## Kapitel 1: ACT II – THE LUNG

Allen Walker sat down and examined the little packages spread in front of him. The triangle had to be a sandwich, the orb an apple, but what was that cylinder? He sipped his already lukewarm coffee resolutely and pondered about that unknown shape that was part of his breakfast. Logically seen it could only be something like white bread. But he had unmasked the triangle as a sandwich, so with the utmost probability there wouldn't be another piece of bread. Getting snoopier, he took the cylinder carefully into his hands and started to unwrap it. Out came something very unexpected, out came something green. Wrapped in plastic. And enclosed was a little note: "Eat more vegetable." It really was half a cucumber.

He sighed and sipped his coffee once again. A cucumber. With a thin grin he shoved the cucumber away from the rest of his meal and started to eat the sandwich. Tuna and tomato, just the right combination for such a cold and rainy day. His chair creaked despicably as he leaned back and stretched, closed his eyes and listened to the raindrops shattering on the window board. Allen Walker loved days like this; he couldn't stand working when the sun was shining. It felt so wrong feeling the warmth of the sun in the room and hearing the birds chirp while sitting in his office. Yes, rain was really more preferable. In bad weather his office felt so much cozier; and it fitted so much better to his job.

A sudden knock on the door forced him back to his work. "C'min" he muttered, sandwich mash in his mouth.

And in came his colleague Rick Verrens, who was on his best way to become as fat as an alderman. "al" he said slowly; the tone of his voice and the expression on his face augured ill. Allen Walker hated the nickname Al, after all he didn't call him Ri either ... "What is it?" he answered without enthusiasm. No, no! No work right now, he was about to have his breakfast!

"It is about the Lily Stevens case." Rick nervously shuffled his feet on the parquet and avoided to look into Allen Walker's eyes. He really seemed quite nervous. And what did he say? Lily Stevens? Allen Walker sat upright and listened attentively.

"There's a guy who claims to know something about it ..."

Allen Walker rumped the packaging paper in his hand. "Come on Rick, spit it out!"

"He says he ate her."

"He what?" asked Allen Walker and stood up. Well, this claim could be right or wrong. Of course it was his job to be alarmed and stuff; but something peculiar like that mostly turned out to be a weird thought of some weirdo without a girlfriend, desperately looking for some kind of infamy or attention. And still, it was part of his job to find out. So he pushed Rick aside and hastened down the corridor to the interrogation room. Having arrived in front of the magical mirror, he was shocked to see Rick's friend David Lane having taken control of his very room. And what was he doing? Standing in front of the suspect, clenching his collar and giving him the third degree. Allen Walker couldn't believe this Punchy-and-Judy show going on. "What the hell is he doing!" he shouted in Rick's direction and flung the door to the examination room open. "David! Out! Now!"

Actually, disturbing a questioning like that was out of character for Allen Walker; but well, that guy was asking for it. And as David saw the gloomy expression on Allen Walker's face, he let the boy go and left without an argument.

Allen Walker wiped a sandwich crumb off his mouth, sat down on the metallic chair and watched the boy adjusting his pullover. He waited patiently until he had combed his raggy hair with his fingers, still pondering about the validity of his statement. Eaten the girlfriend ... Allen Walker had had some very messed up clients so far; but never had he come across anything like that. As he thought about it, eyeing the boy over and over again, he really felt something like excitement coming over him. And he really had to admit that he wished the confession was true. Not so fast, it is not a confession yet. It was him who would have to prove that. And he would.

They sat on their chairs and looked at each other in silence. As a psychologist Allen Walker was well grounded in reading people's expressions, so he was able to tell that his vis-à-vis was quite relaxed. He narrowed his eyes slightly and a little note formed in his mind.

"So, what is your name?" he asked. And he really didn't know it since he had missed checking the particulars ...

"Lawrence Hill. Haven't you checked my particulars?" asked the boy in a very clear voice and smiled weakly.

Allen Walker suppressed a sigh. They had presented him with an arrogant smart aleck, and there vanished all his hopes for an interesting case. But wait ... the name still sounded familiar.

"And you are Lily Stevens' boyfriend?" As his question was answered with a nod, he remembered having read his name in the Lily Stevens files. So it really must be him; Allen Walker cracked his knuckles preveniently. "Well, do I get it right? You claim to have eaten her?" The image of this calm, handsome teenager eating a corpse could hardly be brought to his mind; it felt like the perfect material for a horror movie: it was so abhorrent that it had a gigantic fascination. Oh yes, Allen Walker knew that people were attracted by human tragedies like moths to the flame. The more unimaginable, the more sanguinary – the better.

"Indeed, you got that right." Lawrence answered, emotionless. No excitement, no fear, just a mere fact. Allen Walker really dared to look forward to the challenge.

"But you were already interrogated, right? Why are you coming up with that now?"

And this was the first time Lawrence avoided eye contact with Allen Walker. Another little note took shape in his mind and stuck to the first one.

"You see", he began and leaned back. "The original plan was not to tell anybody. But ..." Lawrence made a little pause and caught Allen Walker's eye again. "I do not want the media to sell her."

Allen Walker's pinky finger twitched. More notes. "What do you mean?"

"Can't you see what they've been doing to her? There are pictures of her on TV, on the front pages of the newspapers, and every cheap lifestyle magazine makes a story out of her. I don't want that. Can you guess how many requests I've got for giving interviews? And the fact that she was visiting me before she vanished made me even more interesting. After all, I am a suspect."

Coming back to his finding that tragedies can be easily converted into money, yes. Another note. His heart beat a little faster as he felt the image that was about to form and the excitement going along with it every time. He had so many questions to ask ... but the most important one was to find out if Lawrence had really done what he claimed to have done.

"Well, Lawrence ... you will understand that I have a lot of people coming here, thinking of some horrid crimes they make up just to harass the police and gain popularity?"

His maroon eyes seemed unbelievably warm as he smiled. Allen Walker hadn't seen such an honest smile for years, at least not from an adult or half-adult or whatever Lawrence should be called; one could almost say he was quite taken aback. Even though his experience told him different things, this boy just couldn't be the culprit. It was simply unimaginable.

"And I already started wondering why you didn't come up with that earlier. Of course you want me to prove my statement. You know, your colleague from before had already asked me for proof but he didn't feel right."

"He didn't feel right? What does that mean?" Allen Walker asked with interest.

"It's just that he didn't feel like the right person to be told my story." Lawrence said and shrugged as if it was the most trivial thing in the world. "And I told him that. Then he got angry and said something about boldness and police and wasting his time, I didn't really get it all since he had started to shake me."

"Well, Lawrence, he wasn't quite wrong. Even if I disapprove of his behaviour, you cannot simply come here and expect some kind of special treatment." Notes over notes ...

"Of course I can't; but I might just have found the right person. May I ask for your name?"

They found a red chest in Lawrence's room, just exactly where he had instructed them to search. And inside that chest were bones, a whole skeleton in its single parts. And the DNA analysis proved what no one dared to think about. And Lawrence Hill was arrested right on the spot. And Allen Walker felt ashamed for having longed for a challenge like Lawrence had embodied.

They couldn't resume their conversation until evening; but this time Lawrence was handcuffed.

"You didn't believe it, did you?" he asked and sounded a little tired. Still, the strange warmth was still there, eerie, so improper.

Allen Walker shook his head. "I have to admit it, yes." He made a little pause. "But after all, we are not here to speak about me."

Lawrence tilted his head slightly and raised his eyebrows. "No, I guess not." The handcuffs clinked as he leaned back in his chair. "Well, since my fate is sealed, I am willing to answer all of your questions truthfully. But don't blame me if you do not understand the answers, okay?"

"Your fate is sealed, you say. What do you expect from your fate now?"

"I will be locked away for the rest of my life. What else should I expect?"

"So you are absolutely conscious of what you did? Of what happened?" Allen Walker had looked it up. This boy was nineteen, the same age his girlfriend had been, and still he seemed so much older. Though, he was sure that he was hiding behind that mask of transcendence and he made it his very own task to bring the real Lawrence Hill to light.

And the boy simply nodded. "Your girlfriend is dead.", continued Allen Walker. "And you are aware of the fact that she is dead because of you." Another nod. "If you had the choice ..." Allen Walker started to roll his ball-pen around on the desk top. "You are nineteen. That's like no age. You just finished school. Your real life has just started. Now, you are facing a lifelong detention in prison. So, I wonder, if you had the choice, Lawrence, would you put the clock back?"

He didn't answer immediately. Instead of words a smile came over his lips, one of the

true kind that wouldn't surprise Allen Walker for the last time. The ball-pen in his brain showed intense activity, hundreds of little notes were created, stuck to each other and were slowly developing into something palpable. Yes, maybe palpable, but not understandable. Not yet.

"No. No, I wouldn't." he said resolutely. This didn't surprise Allen Walker much; he had expected something like that.

"And why is that so?" he followed up immediately.

The maroon eyes wandered to the ceiling lamp and rested there. It was clear that Lawrence would have his problems with the answer. It took some moments until he simply said: "Because she wanted me to."

Allen Walker stared at him. Now that was almost too much for him. Almost. Did the boy really believe in what he just said? "Lawrence, remember your promise to answer my questions truthfully."

He chuckled weakly. "I saw that coming. That is what I meant with not understanding my answers. But you wanted to know ..."

"So ..." Allen Walker tried not to be put off his stroke. "Why do you think she wanted to be ... eaten?"

"Well, because she said it. Her words were 'Lawrence, please eat me.'" And how calm he stayed ...

This was like a bad movie. "And you took that at face value?! Don't you know what ... err ... 'eat me' means from the lips of a woman?" What an inconvenient situation, he had no intention at all to speak about stuff like that. No intention at all.

Lawrence leaned forward and raised an eyebrow. "Do you honestly believe that I wouldn't know the meaning of that? But then she told me to take it literally."

"Okay ... and then you ate her? Just because she told you?"

"Of course not immediately. We talked about it, for about two nights, and then I agreed."

Allen Walker chewed on his lip absentmindedly. It was very likely that the girl had never asked Lawrence to eat her; it was very likely that this boy just created a construction of illusion and imagination around him to explain what has happened. Did he kill her in the heat of the moment and created this fantasy afterwards? Or had it been more like a plan? Whatever had happened, Allen Walker was pretty sure that Lawrence Hill was mentally ill, to some degree. To understand and to be able to relate to his train of thoughts it would be necessary to dig deeper. And therefore it was necessary to start right from the beginning. "So why don't you tell me about your relationship?"

"Sure. Where shall I begin? When we first met? Don't romantic movies start there so often, too?" He tried to make himself comfortable in his little chair, which was not the easiest thing to do when having your hands cuffed. Allen Walker had once tried it out to get an impression of body language with handcuffs.

"Yes, why not?" he encouraged Lawrence and was a tiny bit amazed by that warm, melancholic expression on the boy's face. While looking at him, the dreamy, maroon eyes, the weak smile hardly noticeable, the cold grey room seemed to get blurry. Allen Walker just saw Lawrence; and when he started to speak he could feel the words prickling on his skin.

"I remember it very well. It was seven years ago, in autumn, both of us were twelve years old and at the stage when you think of girls as giggling nags who are afraid of everything and just like sissy stuff like dolls and horses. Well, it was on a sunny Tuesday when she threw a chestnut at my head." He made a little pause and smiled;

and seemed to gaze back into that Tuesday seven years ago. "I was alone in the street, raking the dry foliage to little piles when I suddenly felt something hitting the back of my head. It was hard and painful and of course I was agry; but when I turned around, thinking of all kinds of swearwords, I saw her standing in the sunshine, in the middle of the road. She wore a pair of black tights, an orange, sleeveless dress and a T-shirt underneath. I will never forget how clumsy she looked in that winter boots with the artificial fur." He chuckled quietly. "To put the matter in a nutshell: She took my breath away. Her dark hair was shining so reddish in the sunlight, I knew right away that she was special. Basically because I didn't regard her like the other giels, she didn't seem to be like a giggling nag.

'Did you throw the chestnut?' I asked after having stared at her like an idiot for some moments. She approached me, crossed her arms, nodded defiantly, curled her lips to a pout and looked extremely cute."

Even Allen Walker saw the girl with the orange dress in front of him now. Lawrence's soft voice created a very tangible atmosphere and Allen Walker had to take care not to be seduced with words too much. Still, it was so easy to listen to him. There was so much emotion in his voice and Allen Walker wondered if Lawrence had trained thatbefore coming here. Oh, what a leery guy that boy was, he thought and smiled to himself.

"And I asked her why she had done this, and I told her that it had hurt. But guess what, she didn't care at all. 'You must not pile up the leafage!' and stuck her pointy finger into my chest. You can imagine how puzzled I was ... but then she kneeled down and examined the foliage carefully. And as she reached out, there was a little daddy longlegs sitting on her hand. Have you ever seen a twelve year old girl playing with spiders? 'You're hurting and confusing them!' she accused me angrily and I really felt ashamed for having piled up the foliage. Can you imagine? Feeling ashamed for raking the pavement.

Well, from that day on we ment every afternoon in the street. And as you can guess our friendship grew in time, and so did our affection for each other. Interestingly the place of our first kiss was the same as that of our first meeting. Sounds quite clichéd, I guess; but in fact we were on our way home from the cinema. That was three years later, likewise in autumn. It was dark and I wanted to bring her home when she grabbed my hand and pulled me off the pavement, to a pile of dry leaves ... 'Remember when I threw the chestnut to your head?' she asked while examining the pile. Well, how couldn't I? And then she did the same thing as three years ago: she reached into the pile and gathered another daddy longlegs. With a triumphant grin she looked at me, and I couldn't do anything else but to kiss this wonderful girl. The little daddy longlegs crawled over my hand while we kissed and I was unable to tell if that prickle spreading through my body was caused by the spider or by her, though I have my suspicions. She really has a hand for spiders, you know."

It had to be said: the story was sloppy, Allen Walker has never thought much of stuff like that but when he saw Lawrence's longing expression, he had to admit that he was somehow touched. Imagining Lawrence and Lily Stevens – he had seen some photographys of her – standing in the autumn mist, kissing ... Now don't get too sentimental, he chided himself angrily. Back to work – there were hundreds of little notes to sort.

"I gave her a chestnut that night and that became my nickname. She really uses to call me Chestnut." He shook his head and smiled to himself. Then he yawned. Yes, it was late. And Allen Walker had to sort his thoughts. "Let's leave it for tonight, shall we?"

You must be tired ... I guess it has been a stressful day for you."

The next session was four days later. Allen Walker was highly motivated and in his best mood, Lawrence looked, on the other hand, not quite fresh. Dark circles around the eyes told of the lack of a quiet sleep which was unachievable for those who had spent their nights in a cell. Besides, as far as Allen Walker knew, Lawrence had been transferred to a state prison lately. In some weeks he would look even worse.

"Good morning, Mr. Walker" he yawned politely.

"Good morning, Lawrence!" Allen Walker replied joyfully, enjoying Lawrence's loss of his perfect image a lot. "You look tired."

"Oh really?" He smirked. "I wouldn't have noticed."

Darn boy. The prison was there to cow down, to make people easier to handle. And that hadn't affected him yet. "Where did we stop last time?"

Lawrence raised his eyebrows suspiciously. "I told you about our first meeting and how we became a couple. But you know that very well, so just ask your next question."

Now it was Allen Walker's time to smirk. Oh yes, the special circumstances had affected him; there was a slight trace of aggression in his words. "Well then, let's get started. I want you to describe and reconstruct the development of your relationship to Lily Stevens."

"Sure", he suppressed another yawn, leaned back like he did the last time and rubbed his eyes. "We spent a lot of time together, every afternoon in the beginning, then later, as we were growing older, every evening. And we never got bored with each other, like it often happens when you spend a lot of time with one person. I think the transition from friendship to a relationship didn't change a lot. In fact I knew on the day I saw her the first time that I would kiss her sooner or later. So, it was quite the same except for the increased physical contact. You could say I loved her from the very first moment." He shrugged.

Without even having realized it, Allen Walker had started to chew on his ball-pen. Angrily he wiped the spittle off and tried to find the right question in his mess of notes.

But before he could settle for a question, Lawrence just went on: "Like every other couple we had some quarrels and made up again. You know, some people define a perfect relationship as a very harmonious one, without any disputes or bad blood. But I tell you that things like that are essential, because the moment directly after the argument, when you stomp off in anger, makes you feel sorry right away. And then you realize how stupid you were to hurt the person you want to spend every second with." His fingers constantly drummed on the table nervously. "Some people asked me if we were soul mates. I was never able to answer. We had so many things in common; but then, there were so many things different. And I think this difference was the salient point, since I could learn so many things from her just like she could learn so many things from me. It is hard to describe if you haven't experienced that yourself. Are you married, Mr. Walker?"

"Huh?" he startled, not having expected a question directly addressed to him. In fact he wasn't very keen on talking about his marriage and to be absolutely honest, he didn't even want to think about that now. "Yes, I am." Why had he answered now?

"Then you will maybe have an idea of what I am talking about ..., have you?"

Allen Walker nodded, without knowing the answer.

Lawrence eyed him suspiciously for some moments, and then went on. "Well, our relationship developed with us growing older, it gained depth and complexity. We were able to communicate without words; we were able to feel each other when separated. And without doubt that is something special; and we know that."

Lawrence talked about this as if it was the most natural thing in the whole world ...

For Allen Walker it was simply the worldly innocent, romantic gibberish of a teenager. However, he had to salvage that and allocate it on one of the patterns in his brain. But as hard as he had tried so far, there was no pattern that even fitted a little bit. Still some work to do, though he felt like he was approaching the core.

"Okay, Lawrence, then we arrive at the point where you have to explain to me why she wanted to be eaten when your relationship was that special."

He smiled his addictive smile Allen Walker couldn't escape this time and was forced to smile back, and began to report:

"I already told you that she came up with that idea out of the blue and that I didn't know what she meant right away. Until we talked about it.

She lay in my arms, it was 2 am and we had just had sex. I had closed my eyes, her fingers played with some strands of my hair when she suddenly said: 'Lawrence, please eat me.' I was a bit puzzled and asked, eyes still closed: 'What, now?' and she giggled quietly. 'No, silly.' Then her voice turned serious and calm. 'I want you to take it literally. I want you to eat me. Eat my body. And my soul.'" He made a little pause and stared at the table as if he saw this very moment reflected on the steel plate.

"I sat upright and looked at her. I didn't have to ask for an explanation. 'Since the age of twelve I experience the happiest time of my life.' That was nothing new to me. 'And I don't want it to pass. I want time to freeze, Lawrence, to freeze both of us. And even now at this moment, while I am resting in your arms, I cannot be as near to you as I desire.'" He looked up and smiled sadly. God, Allen Walker didn't dare move. Then Lawrence leaned back and closed his eyes. "I remember every single word. 'I want to be entirely one with you', she said. And the alarming thing was that I knew exactly what she meant. But there still was a constraint within me; but as I told you, we talked about it for two nights. And when the sun rose at the end of the second night, I was completely confident and did fully agree with her. And I still do."

Allen Walker needed some time to recover. Yes, he was taken aback, completely lost his poise. There was something he couldn't really identify, some kind of feeling spreading to his fingertips, causing a shiver. He stared at Lawrence, mouth half open and didn't quite know what to say. "So ... you two ... you think you are united? Two souls in one body or what?"

"If you want to call it like that", he said neutrally and plucked his cuticle.

Allen Walker stood up. "That's enough for today", and left the room, Lawrence still sitting at the table.

This very night he had a dream. He found himself standing on a street in autumn that was lined with small town houses and chestnut trees. The pavement was covered with dry leaves, brown, yellow and claret. The air was filled with a dismal silence, just the rustling and swishing of the foliage made it seem a bit alive. He picked up a chestnut and walked down the street, absolutely not surprised that he found Lawrence. It was the scene he had described: the twelve year old raking leaves to a pile.

Immediately Allen Walker turned around and saw what he had expected: a little girl in an orange dress and clumsy boots running down the street, coming his direction. And

the sun really made her hair look reddish. Lily Stevens stopped right in front of him and tucked Allen Walker's sleeve. As he looked right into her face, he recognized the defiant expression on her face and smiled. She didn't smile back, like Lawrence would have – who was still taking reaves quite unimpressed – she just held out her hand demandingly. He looked at the little chestnut once again before he put it into Lily's palm. She didn't say thanks; she didn't interact with him in any way. She just turned to Lawrence and threw the chestnut.

Allen Walker approached Lawrence, right behind Lily; the boy didn't even seem to see him. But Allen Walker saw his face and understood.

## Epilog: ACT III – THE HEART

His spirits were as good as never before when he sat at his desk, the packaged parts of his breakfast spread in front of him. Sandwich, apple or orange, cucumber or banana and something unknown. It was a rectangle of maybe seven centimeters, and Allen Walker had no idea what it could be. He scratched his chin, smiled a self-satisfied smile and ripped off the brown wrapping paper. He chuckled, yoghurt appeared. And oh God, it was the best meal he had ever eaten – at least it seemed like that.

And as he finally was eyeball to eyeball with Lawrence, he felt more confident than ever. Oh yes, Allen Walker has found the boy's weak point and he would enjoy stabbing him right there and twisting the knife in the wound until he would go down. The fact that Lawrence's condition hadn't improved quickened him even more. And to make his performance more dramatic, he prowled around Lawrence like the fox around his prey.

"You don't look good", he started and before the boy could say something witty, he continued with a smirk. "Is something wrong? You don't seem as confident as some days before."

"I have no reason to be less confident, Mr Walker", his voice still firm.

But for how long?

"Do you know what I think, Lawrence?"

"Well, you are the psychologist." Allen Walker stood behind him now, his hands resting on his shoulders. Coming so near to people you hardly know usually makes them feel uncomfortable.

"No, you cannot read people's minds. No one can do that. You couldn't read Lily's mind, and Lily could not read yours."

"I couldn't, now I can." He protested calmly.

"And can she read yours? Does she feel how much you miss her? How much you miss stroking her cheek, kissing her lips, holding her in your arms, Lawrence? Even though you are united in one body now, closer than ever before, you aren't quite happy with the situation." He felt the muscles underneath his hands harden slightly. Allen Walker smiled.

But Lawrence stayed quiet.

Allen Walker tightened his grip and leaned down, his lips quite next to Lawrence's ear. He could hear him breathing. "She was a very beautiful girl. Big eyes, soft hair – I bet you've told her so many times." His fingertips gently ran along Lawrence's neck. "You miss her touch, you miss feeling her warm breath on your skin, her bright and sweet voice, you miss holding her in your arms, you miss resting your head on her lap." As he went on, he became louder and louder, realizing how hard it was for Lawrence to stay calm.

"Stop it", he whispered, hardly intelligible. "Stop it", he repeated.

Suddenly there was a thorn between Allen Walker's ribs, growing bigger by the minute. He had no time for that now.

"You will never be able to see her growing old; you can never start a family with her; you can never watch your children doing their first steps. An indescribable experience that you will always be missing. You had everything and you threw it away. And I am

very sure, Lawrence, that you know that. That you know that very well, you just don't want to realize it."

Lawrence's breathing was heavy, he tried to stand up, to get away from him. But Allen Walker pinned him mercilessly to his chair. "Oh no, my dear boy, you cannot run from it. Maybe you manage to be happy with what you got now, this unification, but the bitter aftertaste of never being able to experience what sharing your life means will never go away."

During the trial, Allen Walker was asked about his opinion by his "friend" Rick Verrens. "To me, he gives the impression as if he were some kind of a bum-boy ..." Rick said quietly.

Allen Walker looked at Lawrence, having regained his confidence, being on the dock and looking like the incarnation of calmness. Involuntarily he smiled. "You're an idiot, Rick", was all he had to say.

"But do you honestly believe that fairy tale of her wish to be eaten?"

Again Allen Walker looked at Lawrence. "No. No, not at all."

It felt strange to walk along the sterile white corridor, desperately trying to look friendly through mandalas handmade by the inmates. Allen Walker shuddered, then chuckled to himself. A psychologist feeling uncomfortable in a psychiatry. He was guided to a room with a giant, abstract mural and a lot of tables. He spotted him immediately, surrounded by his very own warm aura – as always. Allen Walker was incredibly relieved to find the boy in the same state as he got to know him.

During the last months he had started to feel more and more uneasy whenever he has thought of Lawrence. It had been hard to admit; but the boy really was dear to his heart, even though he couldn't quite name the reason.

"Mr. Walker!" he looked up and smiled, looking rather surprised. "I never would have expected you!"

The psychologist smiled back and this time quite voluntarily. "Hello, Lawrence. How are you?"

"Oh, I'm fine, thanks", he said quietly and examined the wooden pattern of the table. Then he caught Allen Walker's eye again and tilted his head. "Life is easy here. What is the reason for your visit?"

"Oh, of course you realize immediately that I came because of a particular reason." The Longer he looked at Lawrence sitting here, the more surreal it felt. "Your story left me no rest. Now, that the trial is over, I want to know if it really was as you told me. If Lily Stevens really asked you to."

And he laughed heartily. "But Mr. Walker, can't you solve the case on your own?"

"I Have to admit that I can't. I need your help. As I said, it leaves me no rest."

The maroon eyes seemed to look straight into his brain. Or maybe his heart. "You got caught in a web of questions, didn't you? Your brain says no; your heart says yes, am I right? As I told you, she really has a hand for spiders."

Allen Walker closed his eyes and nodded slowly. "Yes. You are right."

"And why does it bother you so much?"

"I ... don't know. You seemed to have opened a window."

"Yes, I thought so." Allen Walker tried to find an expression of self-satisfaction on Lawrence's face but he searched in vain. "In the end, the question is easily answered. But I cannot give you the answer Something in you says yes, something says no. It is

your heart speaking to your brain and the other way around. Mr. Walker, I think you haven't had such a conflict for a very long time. You have to choose which one tells the truth. You re-discovered emotions or your sense, on which you were able to rely on so often."

Then a long silence followed. They just sat there, looking at each other.

"It seems so wrong to see you in here", Allen Walker finally said.

And Lawrence smiled his very own smile and stood up. "Thank you for your visit, Mr. Walker. See you next week!"

On his way home to his wife, Allen Walker threw away all the little notes still gathered in his mind. After all, the days he had spent with the Lily Stevens case seemed incredibly short now. And still, this short period had left its mark on Allen Walker. He remembered Lawrence's words: "You got caught in a web of questions." Indeed.