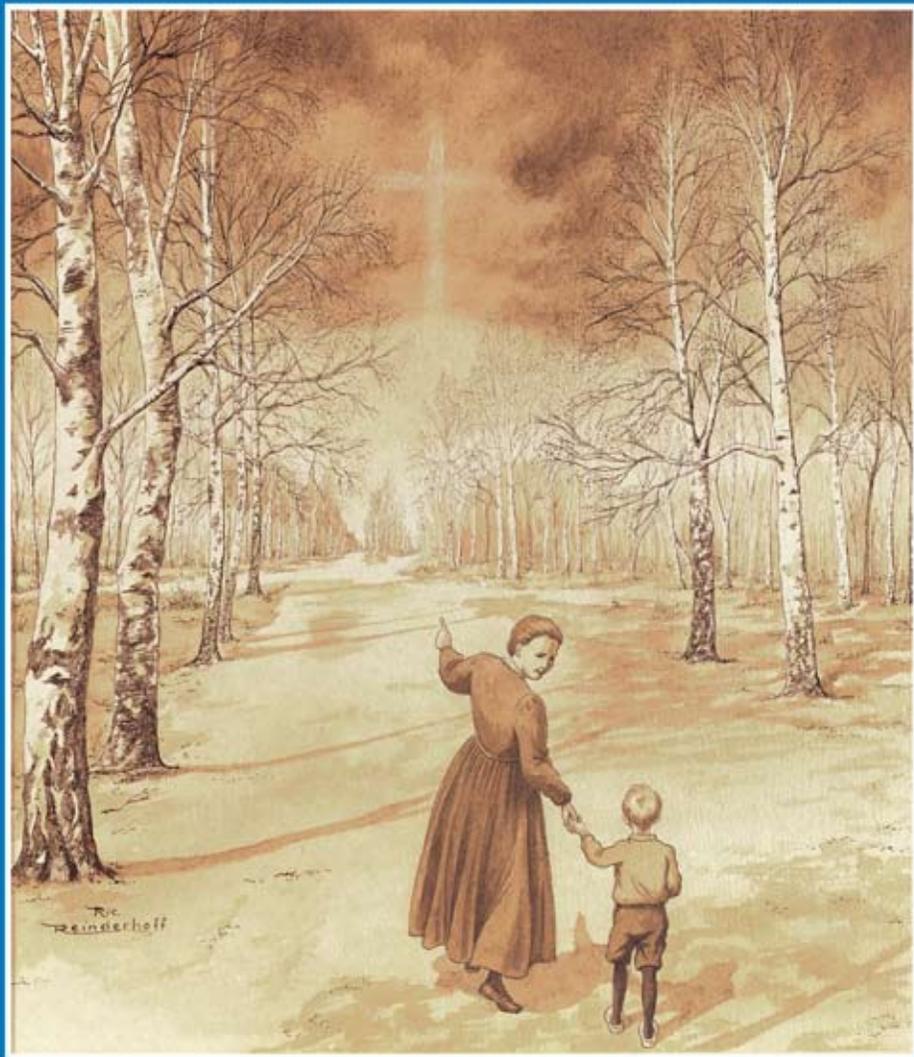


Jozef Rulof

Jeus of Mother Crisje

Part 1



The Age of Christ

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Jeus of Mother Crisje

Part 1: A life in two worlds



The Age of Christ

From the original in Dutch: 'Jeus van Moeder Crisje' (Part 1).
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Jeus of Mother Crisje Part 1, 2009

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Jeus' Life Harp, painted by Master Jongchi, a beautiful symbol of his life. The cross means: through Christ to the awakening, the victory of yourself. One of the many masterly spiritual paintings received by Jeus.

Jeus calls to you:

*Also make of your life a Harp,
which can be played by God.*

*I dedicate this trilogy to my dear Crisje, her Tall Hendrik,
my wife Anna, my brothers Johan, Bernard, Gerrit,
Hendrik, Teun and my sister Miets.*

‘Hendrik, you can say what you like,
I’m telling you, it’s a boy again!’

February 1898. People say that they have never known such a winter. This one wins from all the others, because not a day goes by without a bitter frost and unprecedented snow storms; you wouldn’t get a dog out in this weather.

For the men who work in Emmerik it is also really bad because yesterday the Zutphen-Emmerik steam tram did not make the trip, and got stuck on the way. The men then had to wade through the snow for an hour and a half. They arrived at work looking like Siberian icicles, but then only the strongest managed, because the weak ones lost heart. One of the strong-willed was Tall Hendrik, Crisje’s husband, who is not in the least frightened of such a winter. On the contrary, he was the one who talked the necessary nonsense and managed to drag along the rest of them. In this way these sturdy men overcame their awful journey. In the evening they had a stroke of luck: Zutphen-Emmerik brought them back to wife and children, which they of course really appreciated.

Tall Hendrik is already up. Crisje is still in bed, although it is not her habit, because she is otherwise always the first up. But this now has a very good reason. She is expecting her third child and this young life keeps her waiting continually. The difference with this and the arrival of her first two boys is very remarkable, you would almost start to believe that this child did not wish to be born. Crisje keeps thinking; it will happen now, but a while later the pains subside, and she has to wait once more. Mina, the midwife says:

‘Crisje, children who keep you waiting usually have a special nature, and if they are also born on Sunday, you will have nothing at all to complain about.’

They do not know whether this is actually an indisputable truth. They therefore leave it at that.

When Tall Hendrik asks between his hustle and bustle how Crisje is now, she answers:

‘I don’t really know, Hendrik. It is so different than with Johan and Bernard. Honestly, the pain won’t increase. I keep thinking that something is starting, but then it subsides again. It is not in my hands.’

Indeed, that is the case, Crisje. These are the laws of Our Lord. They are the laws, which are not in the hands of the people. Hendrik makes coffee and sings a song at the same time. He is a good singer. He is gifted with a beautiful tenor voice. People from the whole neighbourhood and the far surroundings know his voice. At six o'clock in the morning you can already hear his Ave Maria. But today it does not come from his heart. Hendrik is singing this morning because he is furious. The misery yesterday morning is still bothering him and he wants to keep this to himself. Maybe also for another reason. For that matter, not so long ago he had to make a very serious and difficult decision.

With the offer of singing on the stage after studying prior to this, he was faced with one of the most difficult moments of his life. He had to think long, very long, about this tempting offer. For months he considered the advantages against the disadvantages. With anxiety and fear Crisje observed the inner struggle, realizing that if he accepted the offer her happiness with him would also fly out the window. Until finally the decision was taken and Hendrik made her happy inside when he came home one evening with the announcement: 'Cris, I'm not going. I'm staying with you and the boys.' Crisje flung her arms round her 'love', the father of her children. In this way he gave her a beautiful present for life, for which she had reverence. Hendrik has also achieved a certain respect from his fellow villagers and a measure of authority. He plays the violin, sings in the choir and has composed his own quartet. He is very good friends with Father. This priest would not miss Tall Hendrik for the world. When the Reverend therefore heard that he had sacrificed honour and fame and was saved for his church, he expressed his feelings to the couple:

'Hendrik, Our Lord will bless you and Crisje, if you only knew! That is truly no small matter!'

The good priest knows what his Hendrik is like. He also knows the really beautiful character of Crisje. It almost rises above his church tower. He also knows: Crisje has contact with the 'heavens'! And that is the truth!

Don't bother Crisje with gossip about other people. Do not try to bring someone down in her presence. Everybody has his faults and Our Lord forgives everything! Why do people make each others' lives so difficult? Isn't this scandalous? Crisje values the life given by God

and she knows people. She also knows her Tall Hendrik and his soul and salvation. She also knows that Hendrik is now singing because he is faced with a superior power, which is now called 'winter'. He is now being bombarded from all sides. Of course he can stand it, but it is not easy, because it is not easy for Hendrik to bow his head. Crisje asks:

'What's the weather like this morning, Hendrik?'

He looks outside and gets a fright. Crisje hears him moaning:

'Good God, Cris, a horse wouldn't even get through this. The snow is up against the door.'

Crisje also gets a fright, but from something different to her husband. When he hears:

'Do you have to swear about that, Hendrik', he knows enough.

'You should be ashamed of yourself. Don't you know what we are waiting for?'

See, Tall Hendrik, that's Crisje for you. But he has his answer ready immediately:

'What's it got to do with this rotten winter, Cris. Don't make me laugh.'

Crisje is sensible enough to hold her tongue now. He always has to have the last word. But she hates swearing, it's almost even worse than a murder for her life, soul and personality. But, as usual, she has to laugh about the silly antics of Tall Hendrik. He is never at a loss for words.

The jokes and antics come by themselves. His spirit is inexhaustible and his judgements and remarks are always spot on. This is also the reason why Hendrik has so many friends. He is the uncrowned king of the village; the man of inspiration and inspired progress. He has a head which can think, never knows when to stop and he grabs at everything around him. He cannot slow down. Man must have a strong will; otherwise he has to accept his downfall. In addition, he also holds the belief: Life can 'drop dead'!

'Here's your coffee, Cris. But how are you now? Are you still in pain?'

'What can I say, Hendrik. The pain won't increase!' He ponders for a minute and then says:

'That's funny, isn't it? But we didn't have any trouble with the other two, Cris?'

‘No, Hendrik, everything was different with Johan and Bernard. With Johan I wasn’t even confined for a day and then he was screaming already. Do you still remember? Bernard was a bit later and he also gave me the most pain. I won’t forget it for the rest of my life. But now I don’t know any more, Hendrik.’

When Hendrik is sitting in the kitchen, with his coffee and sandwiches in front of him to start eating, he hears Crisje groaning and he rushes into the bedroom.

‘What is it, Crisje? Is it still going to come now? Would it be better if I stayed at home today?’

‘No’, Crisje says resolutely, ‘go to work, we can use the money. I’ll look after myself.’

See, Hendrik, that’s your Crisje again! She can manage alone; she doesn’t need you for this. Other women would be overjoyed to have their husbands at home, but not her. She thinks of everything. Your pennies are needed! Life demands too much. Of course he has to say something and adds:

‘Then please yourself. I only wanted to help you, or not!’

A blissful smile spreads across Crisje’s face; her feelings of warm appreciation and affection radiate towards him. They are the orchids of her beautiful loving heart, which she now offers her Tall Hendrik. And he seizes them and, full of gratitude, he presses his Crisje so firmly against his chest that she almost suffocates and miaows:

‘Are you trying to suffocate me, Hendrik, big idiot Go now, otherwise you will have to walk again and half the day will be gone.’

Crisje is the only person who is allowed to say ‘big idiot’, and then it seems to Hendrik as if Our Lord himself is saying it, by the way it lights up his life. It goes straight to his heart; he feels this for certain and consciously. Jokingly he still says:

‘You want me out the door, don’t you?’

‘You know better than that, Hendrik. But what do you want here? To sit here and stare?’

Now he laughs with merriment. That Cris. He sits down, gorges down his sandwich, drinks his coffee and meanwhile gets ready to go to work. But just when he bends over his angel and kisses her, Our Lord throws them a surprise, a stroke of luck, a strong hand also, because ‘Zutphen-Emmerik’ makes itself heard. ‘Goodness, that’s something, Cris. I will thank Our Lord for that. That He sympa-

thizes with us poor people. If you had heard the swearing of all those men, Cris, you would also understand. When it comes to it, it is still in HIS hands.'

Crisje tones down his talking as always and says in an admonishing tone: 'Have you gone completely crazy, Hendrik? See that you leave, or you can whistle for it and that's too much. You shouldn't involve Our Lord in everything.'

'If He hasn't to do with summer and winter, then who has, Cris?'

'Don't make a mockery of it, Hendrik, and see that you leave or you will have to walk.'

Now he races there and says to Crisje:

'See you this evening, Cris.'

'I just hope, Hendrik, that I can then place the child in your arms. Bye, Hendrik.'

'Bye, Cris.'

He is gone and Crisje lies thinking. Every morning she goes through a comedy theatre with Tall Hendrik. It is always the same; he is never in a bad mood. He never lets his head hang. He is always strong and aware and he knows what he wants. How can she ever thank Our Lord enough for all the beautiful things she was granted with. She knows she had to fight for them and didn't get her happiness for nothing. Her thoughts return to the past, when she did everything to get him. Her parents were dead against it, because they didn't like him. But Crisje loved his beautiful voice, his natural cordiality and cheerful nature, his daring and great willpower. Crisje's parents were well off. But Tall Hendrik's parents did not count for much, they were very simple people, on the breadline, according to Crisje's parents, and they really didn't like the idea of a relationship. Good heavens, how she laughed then. What a storm it was. Hendrik as well. The wonder happened at the fair. Crisje was under the supervision of her mother and father. They had forbidden her to even look at Hendrik, because this courtship was 'nothing'! But Crisje wanted no other and he felt exactly the same about it. For him as well there was no one else in the whole wide world. Crisje was everything to him. She was walking about the fair with father and mother. Suddenly Tall Hendrik was standing in front of her. First he looked in her eyes and then addressed her parents. As fast as lightening he had made his decision and snapped at her father and mother:

‘Try and drive us apart and you’ve got another thing coming!’

In front of the very eyes of parents and onlookers Hendrik kissed his angel and disappeared with her.

‘And now, Cris’, he had said, ‘we will enjoy the fair. Who can touch us?’

Crisje still remembered it well. She could have written a book about it, so poignant was Hendrik for her life and the happiness, which she received. The prince of her life had taken her in his strong arms and no parents, nobody, or anybody, or anything at all, were able to jolt her out of this bliss. When she came home late at night, my God, how she had to fight for her loved one. But then her parents saw another Crisje. Now she knew once and for all: Tall Hendrik was the one. He would get her and no other. Where she got the words from, she does not know any more. But the parents stood looking as if they had been struck by lightning, when Crisje said:

‘I’m taking my life into my own hands now, so now you know.

At that time Crisje’s eyes opened for the first time and she saw how gauche her parents really were. These people did not live. They were the living dead. They were fussy, small-minded and arrogant. And pride comes before a fall. Our Lord wants nothing to do with this. It is almost the worst thing that there is. The devil then lies in wait for you.

When Crisje got married she got a violent argument from her parents as a wedding present, but Tall Hendrik put an immediate stop to this with the words:

‘Come on, Crisje, there’s nothing for us here, they’re not human. The brave Crisje left her parents for what they were and followed him, for which he is still intensely grateful to her. Of course, she also knows that it is written ‘Honour thy father and mother.’ But if a father and mother go against everything that is good and always try to impose their own will, then it is a different story. Crisje talked about it to Father and knows that she got her Tall Hendrik because Father put in his word with her parents. To her the good shepherd said:

‘Crisje, you must follow your heart. For that matter, your parents have now nothing more to say, nothing at all.’

That decided it and their marriage was celebrated. Crisje didn’t doubt for a minute. Her happiness is complete. Since that time, in all those years she never saw her parents again. Of course, this also goes

against the commandments of love and justice, but Crisje also knows that her father and mother are so narrow-minded that they cannot be approached. In addition, what can they say about her Hendrik? Nothing! Her parents should have acted differently in this matter. She did not get a penny and he did not want anything from them for that matter. They could keep their happiness. 'He can keep his money', Hendrik said, 'then they can buy a nice coffin soon, the down-and-outs, the hypocritical buggers.'

Tall Hendrik was ranting and raving so much, that Crisje rebelled again and checked him a bit. At the end of the day they were still her parents and you didn't discard anybody. She knew for certain her parents had to make this up.

Now Crisje has time to think. She is bombarded with all these things. But she has reason to be thankful. There are so many beautiful things for which she can thank Our Lord. Imagine that her Hendrik had yielded to the temptation and joined the opera. He would then have gone into the world and she would have been left alone with the children. Then her great happiness would have disintegrated and have been destroyed beyond repair, because money couldn't buy such a thing. No, then better no money a thousand times over. Better to work to death to keep this blessing received from God. Her Hendrik is a good man. At the time when he saw himself on stage, he conjured up the most beautiful palaces for Crisje's eyes which, however, she was well aware of, had no value in life, because the turbulent content could not be understood by simple souls. The people around him talked about it every day and found the Tall Hendrik a fool. What did he earn now? A pittance, of course. But as an opera singer he could enjoy everything. My goodness, Paris, London, Berlin, Venice, New York. He threw this on the floor just like that and stamped it to smithereens. Was he raving mad? Kings and emperors would receive him. The doors of the rich would fly open for him. Did Hendrik not know that? Crisje knew better. These poor things had no understanding of their lives and they did not know their love. Those people only saw the money and the bragging but not the emptiness, which lay behind it. No, they didn't see that far. They were people without understanding. However, as a result of his refusal Hendrik received enormous respect. He dared to tell the world: 'I do not need your car and your palaces.' But he did dream about it now and again. Then

he was lying in a comfortable chair, smoking fine cigars of a quarter and... well, his thoughts were: 'Did you not see me? Didn't you hear me sing yet? You must come and listen some time. I have been all over the world. And I know my people.' What bliss. Crisje also had to hear how awesomely rich he saw life for himself and her. However, she was sensible enough to not go into it. And indeed, she had to admit honestly; it was not easy. And finally, people were only human. It was the only apple for Tall Hendrik from the true paradise and he left it on the tree. He accomplished this feat. Right in front of the eyes of all those poor souls he closed the gate, and tightly. Go away, fools. You do not know life. And when he came with his problems at home, Crisje shunned this paradise from her and back to her husband with the words:

'It's your own business, Hendrik. I'm telling you, what we have now cannot be bought with money.'

Tall Hendrik couldn't say anything to that. This cut through his throat and his thoughts completely. Now he was standing staring with not a thing to say. Crisje had the last word and he bowed his strong head.

When Tall Hendrik went to Hent Klink and drunk his bitters*) the garrulous lads always had something else to say about his and Crisje's life, and of course they knew everything much better. In an inn like this peoples' lives were mangled, deceived and ground to dust. If the world didn't know already, geniuses met here. And everyone knew better. But they knew nothing for themselves. The mice were lying dead in front of the cupboard; it was poor in their house. Crisje understood only too well. Those men! Those bitters give them all these inspirations. Only their own lives were not aware and remained living dead. They did not come out of their blue smocks.

What Tall Hendrik unfortunately couldn't achieve for himself, he now sees for his boys, because Johan and Bernard will sing. Crisje could cry about it. He has built up much happiness for her and the children and goes continually further. He doesn't give up. If life is difficult for him now and again, he thrashes himself against the surface of life and does not flinch. Hendrik is strong and stands on a pair of legs, which can bear his unstable life. And next to her and Hendrik are Our Lord, the church, the choir and the quartet. She sees him with his violin and his tremendous character, as a result of which she

experiences this loveliness, from which her life receives its resplendent shine.

‘No, Lord, I am not dissatisfied. I am happy. How can I thank You? You have kept my Hendrik at home; it is a miracle. Because it was You and no other person.’

Does Our Lord hear her thanksgiving prayer? Hendrik can go by tram, Crisje thinks. That is also a pleasant thought. Now Jeus to come and then she can start again. Because lying here waiting is nothing. Jeus... Jeus... it is like the child is talking to her. She knows for sure that it is a boy. When Hendrik did not want to believe her, she came with the persuasion which didn’t tolerate an answer back.

‘You can say what you like, Hendrik, I’m telling you, we are having a boy again.’

It is like the child already has something to say. It is different and so very new for her life. It is impossible for her to say what it actually is, but it’s there! She also knew beforehand with Bernard and Johan. Where does this certainty come from and give this truth to her life? It is strange. It lives in her being. The life says so itself! Crisje possesses this sensitivity. She does not know how other mothers experience the magnificent process. She can talk to the life. No, that’s not it. She feels it. This feeling is now eloquent and creeps on its own to the place where human thinking really begins. That’s probably the way it is, she also cannot say whether it is really so. She is too ordinary a mortal for this, a woman from the country, an illiterate being, but with a feeling inside which you seldom meet. Mina once said:

‘Feeling, Crisje, is everything! And you have feelings for these things. Other mothers are living dead.’

Mina was able to see and hear this truth, because Crisje already gave the good life to two boys. They were not girls... they were boys. Felt by her beforehand or received this knowledge from Our Lord.

But it is funny that the pains do not increase. Strange! But she can still expect life at any hour.

The boys are now up and Trui has come to help her. Trui, her sister, always does this. She is not the same as Crisje for the boys, and not so religious as Crisje would wish, but she cannot change that. There is help and a person must be grateful for it.

When Tall Hendrik comes home and meets Trui, there is immediately tension in the air. These two can barely tolerate each other.

He has fathomed her character and now knows exactly what he has in his sister-in-law. It demands Crisje's complete attention to prevent a violent argument, they are at each other's throats for no reason or harsh words fall. They do not give each other an inch and Trui also stands her ground. She has to serve constantly as a buffer and intercept these two personalities; otherwise there would not be a minute's peace in the house. Crisje knows that life has not given her sister what she had expected and that she had also really wanted children, but unfortunately, she was not yet given this privilege. Hendrik could often hurt her with this. Crisje found that hard, very hard and in addition not nice. You must have respect for another person's sorrow. Tall Hendrik once said: 'Trui, that dead sourpuss, is too stiff to have children.' Trui then stayed away for months, despite the fact that they lived right next door to each other. Another time it became so bad that uncle Gradus, Trui's husband, came on the scene and called Tall Hendrik to order, to the great surprise of all the family, since Gradus was a dope of a man who never interfered in anything. However, when Crisje is expecting a child, Trui sees beyond the pile of miseries and Crisje thinks this is wonderful. It is proof for Crisje that Trui learned to bow the human head. And Hendrik should be very grateful because her sister was then the worse party again. She considers this also a prayer to Our Lord.

These hours are wonderful for Crisje, to think over all these things.

When she saw her sister coming in again, she could have cried from happiness. And when Hendrik had something to add with his grumpy head, he got a licking from Crisje and could accept it for the rest. He knocked back a few bitters and came home a bit late and a bit unsteady on his feet. But what did Hendrik think? That he could steamroller over her life just like that? Trui had bowed her head and Crisje wanted that now from him as well. Hendrik was given the very serious warning:

'If you do that to me again, Hendrik, I'll tell you a different story and I will leave.'

Tall Hendrik was flabbergasted from shock; he had never heard such threats before from Crisje. He had to eat humble pie and Trui came to help. Trui definitely had her faults, but she was a human being. And neither was Hendrik infallible. He did not have to get that nonsense into his head; nobody would believe it anyway. Peace and

quiet in the house was everything; that's what you could build on. On the other hand, arguments and quarrels undermined everything and ruined happiness from the heart. And she did not like the idea at all. Crisje's path was not one with pits and falls, she wanted to see the powerful light shining in everything and saw this only through faith, love and trust. And everyone had to devote themselves to this completely. Anyone who couldn't or wouldn't accept this had to accept the 'muck' of it. Is that not the case?

When Tall Hendrik was once annoying Trui yet again, she flung this at him:

'What are you trying to start with your grating pig's tenor?'

Wham, that was it. However, Trui shouldn't have come away with that, Crisje thought, because Tall Hendrik could sing. But they were just two opposite characters. Crisje found that a very sorrowful business. Nevertheless, she fought for both lives. All people were equal for her, because they were all children of Our Lord!

Johan and Bernard now interrupt her thoughts and feelings, because they want to see mother. The boys want to tell her about the beautiful white snow, but they are chased away by aunt Trui. 'You're not allowed anything from her', Johan complains. They do not like their aunt. The difference with their mother is therefore too big. Trui asks her sister how she is feeling. But Crisje has to laugh to herself about that, because Trui takes the attitude that she knows everything about it. Crisje now gets good advice. The advice of the doctor is nothing compared to this. Trui lives now. The more she can talk about it, the more pleasure she has. The life of Trui is geared that much towards this wonderful event, which, however, she is no part of whatsoever, because she was not gifted with children. What Trui can now experience with Crisje is a ray of sunshine for her, which she warms herself with.

'Will the pain not come, Cris?'

'No Trui, it's taking a long time this time. I don't understand it anymore.' Does Trui enjoy it? Crisje really empathizes with her sister who is two years older and understands her completely. It is a sad loss. You would not even wish it on your worst enemy. Trui keeps saying pityingly:

'I'm too old to have children.' However, Crisje knows that this is nonsense, because Trui has not yet reached thirty. Crisje then talks

to her sister, as if she has had ten children and she rejoices inside. You must allow a person something, and if you always give a person what his life longs for, it will always go well.

Crisje always cautiously sails through the characters. She does not hit against obstacles, she is against this. People have to take care of these troublesome things themselves. But Trui doesn't do that. She makes a show exactly of these things and if she sees that her life is in shreds, it's: 'I'm too old to have children!' But take a good look at that human ship. It's wretched! Crisje knows very well that the wind is blowing the wrong way in the sails for Trui and her boat is sailing in the 'wrong' direction. It usually results in vexation and knocking the human head. When these things trouble Trui's heart, then there is the devil to pay. And Crisje knows that her husband has the awfully good knack of getting Trui worked up for him whenever he wants and without her even knowing it, so quick-witted can she be.

As soon as Crisje starts with her proverbs from the Bible, Trui can no longer follow her. She also really doesn't want to know. But Our Lord is still there and Trui must bow her head for Him, otherwise there will never be children.

When Crisje makes the biblical passage clear to her, she says: 'Praying and being simple, Trui, that is everything.' But Trui hates going down on her knees. Not Crisje, she would still be grateful if she had to crawl to the church and Father is well aware of this. Crisje goes to church every morning; she goes to confession and receives communion. Too much of a good thing is wrong according to Trui. You do not do Our Lord any pleasure with this. It is like saying: I want to be there with you. I want to be close to you. It is pride. These lives differ from each other so much that one does everything out of faith and the other out of simple human understanding, with the grimness and questions of 'why' and 'for what purpose' on the human chest. Did you really think you could force such a thing, Trui?

When Trui thinks that she does not have enough attention from Crisje, she starts talking about the coming event. Then the advice follows. 'Nice warm hot water bottles are also very good and 'changing positions'.' Crisje cannot fathom what Trui means exactly but they are good for contractions, according to Trui. 'Hot milk is also very good.' It is a mystery to Crisje where Trui gets all this wisdom but she just waits patiently until Mina comes. And because Mina laughs

at her inside, Trui doesn't like her either. Crisje knows this is how it happens that people come to be alone, because they are at a loss with themselves and this good life.

'Mina will be here shortly, Trui', and as if Crisje had felt it, Mina is standing in the kitchen and they hear her 'good morning'.

'Good day, Mina.'

'And Crisje, are they letting you pine away? How are you?'

'It won't come, Mina. Trui thought that I should change positions but I wanted to wait a while until you were here. Will that help me, Mina?'

The midwife understands already and knows where the shoe pinches. She also knows Trui.

'Well, Cris, we'll have a look.'

Mina sits down next to the bed, feels her pulse, taps her stomach, pinches here and there, has a think and then says:

'No, no, Crisje, no tricks, just lie down quietly, then everything will be all right and it will happen on its own.'

And Mina wouldn't be herself if she didn't know that she rapped Trui sensitively on the knuckles. But these things are too sacred for Mina and she cannot stand layman's talk about it. She now addresses Trui:

'And now you as well, Trui. It is time, you should know.'

Mina is enjoying this to the full. They hear the usual from Trui: 'I'm already too old', but her soul is beaming. Mina also knows that Trui is a beaten soul. The motherly heart wants to live and can't. Her nature is in bloom, but gets fruit nor flower and no prickles are to be seen. It remains a barren surface for her. She now receives not only a full load of goodwill from both, and a cartload of understanding, but also: 'what do you know about it', that 'changing positions' of yours is good for a doll of a child. You can read it on Trui's face for behind that radiation are the prickles. But Mina does not go into it, she is above this and Trui stands there 'staring'. The hour is ripe for Crisje to force the human soul to humiliation and she gives Trui her sermon:

'You are not the only one in the world, Trui. But faith is everything!'

For Trui faith means as much as a pound of beans for four cents a kilo. Prayers? Are of less use than the worst wallpaper. Did you not know that yet? And still contributing to 'the science of birth'? You

mustn't make play with it, Trui. Certainly not with Mina, because you will have a number of blows to accept. However, as soon as Trui feels that she is on the wrong side and people see through her, she sways to the other side. Then you will notice that Trui wishes to hide her life and put on a mask as she responds:

'I talked to Father, Mina, and I know that these are gifts from God. And I prayed!'

When Trui talks like this, just see through it, as Crisje and Mina do, because they know her so well. And express truths to her, such as: 'You must search for your happiness in the church! That's where it is! You must pray, that is the only thing! You must also bow your head.' Such truths shake someone's personality but are only considered by Trui as nonsense. Mina repeats it in a different way: 'Oh, what can I say, Trui. Say it yourself. I may say that I have experience, or not! But I tell you, there is something everywhere. In the Schroete family the children have that terrible TB. In the Janse family they have carbuncles which they will have for the rest of their lives. One person has this another person has that. If you don't have them, Trui, you're really better off. But you are either a mother or you are not. And you have it in a bad way.'

They hear one word, but will not say it aloud. But it is in the air. Mina is bitten for a moment and then you hear: 'She is in heat!'

Now, now, Mina! Trui is neither in heat nor aware of motherhood. She stands on a roof and plays the boaster. If it is true what the other women feel and see. Here is the doctor, Crisje. What does the learned man say?

'Good morning everyone.'

'Good day, Doctor.'

The learned man looks for a minute and then disappears just as quickly as he came.

'Do you understand people like that, Mina?'

'No, Cris, you can't understand it. What kind of strange people are they? He'll never be at home here, I tell you.'

Now Mina and Crisje do not understand why that man is so strange, Trui thinks she has to make a word of appreciation for him heard:

'They are learned people after all, are they not?'

She disappears after this; otherwise she would certainly have heard something. Mina now expresses her surprise to Crisje. What kind of

peculiar person is that? How is it possible, two sisters and then so different. Crisje tones it down. This is just the way Trui is. She has the 'yes' very bad. When Crisje feels a stab, Mina is there again.

She looks for a minute and then says:

'He will come, and he will stay at home. And we aren't any the wiser from the learned man. We don't need him either.'

Mina leaves. Trui is busy with the children and Crisje is lying thinking again. 'How does Trui intend to have children when she is so rebellious? You don't need to come to Our Lord with such a swollen face. Trui's prayers remain stuck somewhere, they are too heavy, too material. There is not a bit of liveliness about them. Our Lord is really not crazy.'

Exactly, Crisje, that's the way it is. Why Trui cannot have children is a great and powerful mystery to her, and many other women. But now 'a Jeus' is coming into the world, and he will explain it later. He will reveal the laws of Our Lord and analyze them for mankind. Do you hear this, Crisje? This is why you experience these wonderful feelings inside. The space in which you live now lies under your heart and wishes to be born in a few hours. Since this life passes the phenomena for this to your heart and inner life, you can accept this confidently, because it is something special. Do you feel this silence, Crisje? You had no words for it, but it is 'silence'! And this silence is also depth, it is feeling. You can float through it! You could cry about it. Wait, if you first have Jeus, then you will know, or later!

Johan and Bernard are sitting at the windows and looking at the terrible weather. However, for them it seems a paradise. They are looking at the boys and everything which has their attention. Johan, who understands a lot and teaches Bernard all kinds of things, says:

'When I grow up, Bernard, I'm going to throw snowballs... and skate! But what do I hear, has aunt Trui gone?'

'Yes, Johan, she is gone.'

Johan thinks about Crisje. He is crazy about his mother. So is Bernard, but Johan is more sensitive. When Johan sees that the snow is becoming thicker and it is still snowing, he asks:

'How will the stork get through this, Bernard? That's terrible and also impossible so to speak. And did you not hear mother scream?'

'What are you saying?', Bernard wants to know. 'Does mother have to scream?'

The four-year-old child gives his brother a lesson. Bernard wants to know more about it and asks:

‘Where did you hear that, Johan?’

‘That’s what people say, Bernard. Do you know what, Bernard? I’ll go and look on the roof. We might see the stork and we will see more there than here.’

Johan goes up the stairs. Bernard has to wait. In the attic there is a chest. Johan climbs onto it. No, he can’t see anything yet. He shouts to Bernard:

‘That beast will never get through this. My God, Bernard, what a snow! It won’t be able to find our house. Do you hear what I’m saying, Bernard?’

Johan doesn’t understand, why is Bernard not saying anything? However, the person saying something is aunt Trui.

‘What are you doing here, brat? Come on, get downstairs!’

Johan feels himself seized by the scruff of his neck and is downstairs again. He still tries to tell aunt Trui what he wanted to do but she has no time. She is not Crisje, Johan. She does not possess that sensitivity which lives in your mother! Now that the boys are downstairs again, Crisje asks:

‘What did the boys want, Trui?’

‘To see if the stork was there yet. That’s all!’

Crisje does not need to ask any more. She knows. The children have forgotten their aunt already. As far as they are concerned she can disappear from the face of the earth for that matter. Mother is their mother and not aunt Trui. You aren’t allowed anything from her! When father comes they will ask him. Father knows everything. But Bernard wants to know more. He thought of something but doesn’t know exactly what it was. Suddenly he remembers and asks Johan:

‘You told me, Johan, that the stork bit mother’s leg. Is that true?’

‘Then you should listen, Bernard. You will hear it soon enough.’

‘But how do you know that?’ Bernard wishes to be informed further.

‘I told you already, that’s what people say. When the child is brought, the stork bites mother’s leg and then she starts screaming.’

‘From who did you hear that, Johan?’

‘From... from... but you don’t know anything about it anyway’, Johan manages to get out of it.

The boys watch the snowball throwing. The hours pass. They wait for their father. They can't talk to mother, mother looks bad. 'There's something the matter with mother', exactly what, they don't know. But it has to do with the stork. Crisje already suspects that she will still not be able to place the child in the arms of Tall Hendrik later. It is so quiet inside. Mina also, who has just come in, is not sure. 'Only nature knows', says Mina and she is right. From the racket the boys are making, Crisje hears there is something going on. Johan dashes in. The child runs to his mother and shakes from nervousness because his father is home. Crisje can't believe it. It is only five o'clock and Tall Hendrik never comes home until nearly seven o'clock. Trui doesn't believe it either, but when the door opens and Hendrik appears in the doorway, Crisje is filled with happiness. Trui expresses herself with a somewhat grim face, and the feeling of 'what do you want?' Tall Hendrik has his tricks, but also has respect for people of good will. Of course 'that beanpole' can also tell stories, but he can also appreciate good things; he can also bow his head, but this doesn't happen immediately.

'Good day, Trui.'

A surly reply follows: 'Good day, Hendrik.'

Tall Hendrik is immediately beside his wife. 'Is there still nothing, Cris?'

'No, Hendrik, it's taking longer this time. But I can't do anything about it either.'

'God, is that not something, Cris?'

'Come on, Hendrik!'

'But that's not swearing, Cris.' 'Is that swearing, Trui?' She has no direct answer, but mumbles something, but which does not possess enough power and will to allow the feelings to pass her lips. Inside they are pressed black and heavy against each other and do not give an inch. Hendrik is not bothered by Trui. He fumbles with his long body and rearranges his clothes. Then he removes something from under his trousers and holds it up triumphantly.

'What do you say to this, Cris? I will help you work, all right? It's taking too long for me. I will pour you an expensive glass of wine.'

Tall Hendrik puts the bottle on the table. First a kiss for Crisje. Meanwhile Trui wants to uncork the bottle, but then he is back, and says, again without Crisje's approval:

‘Lay off, Trui, don’t take that away from me, I will do it myself!’

Trui controls herself and feels that she has nothing more to do here. Trui is great to Tall Hendrik when she leaves him alone, and says casually to her sister:

‘Cris, I’ll just go. If you need me, you know where I am. Do you need anything else?’

‘No, Trui, Hendrik will help me. Thank you.’

‘That’s okay, Cris. See you tomorrow morning, or, if something should still happen, call me then.’

Trui leaves and is let out by her brother-in-law. He is making up for something. Crisje thinks this is great, he has never behaved like this to Trui before. He follows his sister-in-law to the door. Then the door closes a bit too hard for Crisje’s feeling and the first thing she has to say to him when he returns is: ‘Now you are so nice to Trui, but why do you have to spoil it again by slamming the door behind her? Do you think she didn’t feel that? What a pity!’

Tall Hendrik is embarrassed for a moment. But he didn’t do it on purpose. The door flew out of his hands. It was the wind. However, Crisje knows better.

‘Who are you trying to fool, Hendrik. For other things you are different and the door doesn’t fly out of your hands.’ Now he notices that Crisje has seen through him and that the love and warmth displayed by him towards Trui were far from sincere. Meanwhile he has recovered from his moral depression and says:

‘Trui isn’t the queen, is she?’

‘Hendrik’, Crisje continues, ‘that has nothing to do with queens. Nothing! You do that out of politeness! Trui didn’t have to come here, she does that out of love.’

‘Cris’, Tall Hendrik now flies into a temper, ‘love and Trui, that’s a pair, isn’t it! And stop your preaching. Our Lord has beaten me enough today. Here, drink this, then you can work and it will come on its own.’

However, Crisje does not wish to drink the stolen goods and when she says this frankly, Tall Hendrik behaves indignantly and she receives as a reply:

‘What are you telling me now, Cris, that I stole this? Are you telling me that this whole world has to do with Our Lord? Are you telling me that if I have four thousand bottles in front of my nose I should leave

well alone, because I don't have the money to buy my own bottle? No, Cris, my boss said today: "Hendrik, you must treat your Cris, Cris likes a good wine. And good health, to the happiness of your son."

Crisje listens calmly; she knows that it is pointless to dispute this. But she strikes back:

'Yes, you can talk. And talk nonsense; you're good at that as well. But I will not drink stolen wine, as long as you know.' A while later they toast each other and drink to the health of Jeus, who really must come quickly now. Evening falls, the storm is raging outside. Crisje dozes and moans now and again. The boys are sleeping already. There is silence and peace and quiet. Tall Hendrik throws his legs under the stove and looks at the bed now and again. Although he is impatient by nature, he does not know how the evening will end. The desire to go to sleep finally overcomes him as well. A person gets tired from the cold. The winter, a source of trouble and misery for many, is still a mercy for the tired-out body when you can crawl next to the lovely burning stove and warm yourself. Now Hendrik can no longer resist sleep and lies down next to his dear Cris. They still talk for a while, but his eyes close and he loses all sense of feeling and thoughts. By the sound of the snoring Crisje hears that her tall beanpole is enjoying a blissful rest. She joins hands and prays silently to Our Lord to protect him for her. Yes, that her husband may always remain healthy in order to be able to look after her and the children.

Isn't life good, thinks Crisje. Isn't life great, her thoughts continue, but then she feels a stab inside, a warning, that she must also think of that and must pray and say thanks for it. She is blessed with her Tall Hendrik above thousands of people in this world. In a pure silence, and full of deep human gratitude, Crisje sends her prayers above. She knows they will rise up and be received by the angels, because she knows herself and realizes that she is a child of God, Who after all wants to be everything for His creatures, if you can bow your human head. A little while later Crisje falls into a healthy, refreshing sleep, so that in the coming hours she will be able to give everything for the birth of her Jeus, because it is a boy! An almost serene silence now reigns throughout the house, only broken by the regular ticking of the old Frisian clock, as a result, Crisje gradually goes from her slumber to sleep....Inside her there is a life ticking under her heart, which she now lives for, and would give everything for, yes for which she would die,

in order to make her Tall Hendrik happy again. 'In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.' Before she can say 'Amen' Crisje is sleeping or dreaming. She is resting. Her soul and bliss belong to Our Lord.

Would the angels not know that?

‘Cris, he has eyes in his head like the heavens’

The next morning Crisje wishes to know from her husband why he came home so early the day before. However, Hendrik does not answer. His thoughts dwell elsewhere. He is worried about his Crisje. It is taking far too long for him. But, as long as it doesn't bring any trouble. Crisje tries to reassure him and to convince him that he doesn't have to worry about it. Nature will take care of that.

‘Don't you feel anything at all, Cris?’, he still insists.

‘What are feelings, Hendrik? I feel so much, more than I want to know.’

When Hendrik sits next to her and they are drinking their coffee, they go from feeling to feeling to unity. Tall Hendrik laughs inside and Crisje feels that.

‘Why are you laughing, Hendrik?’ can be heard from the bed.

‘I was just thinking, Cris. When he comes, I want to welcome him with music. I will play the violin. We will sing as well. I will warn the quartet. Peter, Gerrit and Jan must come.’

‘You'd better not make a fuss about it, Hendrik. My God, you are different every minute. That would be quite something...’

‘Quite something? I will sing for him! And that's all. We will have fun. Especially if it is a boy.’

Suddenly Hendrik asks: ‘How are you so sure of that, Cris, that it is a boy again?’

‘That's a woman's matter, Hendrik. I don't know if other mothers also feel it, but I feel it. Didn't I say with Johan and Bernard that we would have boys? But every child is different. With Johan I couldn't work. I only wanted to sit and sat day and night dreaming. What is Johan like now? Exactly the same! When Bernard came I had no rest any more. That child was already wild inside me and is Bernard calm, Hendrik? That child can't sit still for a minute. He needs the whole house. But why do I know this? I think it's the child doing it. The child lies under the heart, the child can think, I believe. The child will talk to the mother now and again, I feel; of course I don't know whether it is really the case! ‘But now something different. Will you behave differently towards Trui? You would make me so happy then. Will you try it?’

Tall Hendrik gives her this pleasure. Now he suddenly starts moving, he doesn't know yet whether he will leave or not. This waiting makes him crazy and undecided. Today is Saturday, just a half day, and it can happen any moment.

'What will I do, Cris? Will I just stay at home?'

'You can go to work, Hendrik. I don't feel anything yet. Mina said, maybe tomorrow. We must wait and see whether it is the case. It could last a week.'

'That's all we need, Cris, then I'll have something to say to her!'

'So, you'll have something to say to her? And do you think, Hendrik, that you have something to say? This is in the hands of Our Lord and we people can leave well alone! What you can do is to make sure that there is money in the chest. That is everything, but it is enough.'

Tall Hendrik's thoughts race to a thousand things at the same time. When he had decided not to join the opera, there were immediately other plans in his head to increase his modest income.

Precisely during those days Hendrik met a man at Hent Klink who was occupied with enlarging portraits and he made Hendrik the offer of becoming a representative for him. In five minutes the business was settled. Crisje found that a relief, but soon noticed that her husband was out evening after evening and she had to be deprived of her lovely hours with him. Oh well, he had already earned thirty-six guilders and that was a very welcome supplement to the household. But inside she regretted the hours which they otherwise had together in the evening under the burning lamp. The hours of relaxing nicely and enjoying each other's company, which made life a heavenly paradise for her that could never be forgotten by Crisje. Of course, she can't complain, although she considers these evenings as a great loss in her life. She had to give up an awful lot of her happiness and your happiness is everything in life. But life is of course a bit easier as a result of these enlargements, but she has lost her unity, her peace and being one with the husband whom she loves with all her heart. Perhaps unconsciously their thoughts become one again. Is Hendrik also thinking of the portraits?

Crisje asks: 'Do you have to go out this evening, Hendrik?'

'Yes, Cris, I have two orders to take care of.'

'That's a pity, Hendrik.'

'Yes, that's true, but I might get both of them and I can make you

happy again.'

'Can't it wait until next week, Hendrik?'

'It's a lot to me, Cris. Eight guilders, I have to work hard for days for that, as you well know. And now I have earned it with an hour's talking. And you can put the money to good use!'

'I know, Hendrik, that's all very well. I understand you. But you are never home an evening anymore.'

'And if I tell you, Cris, that I will be back immediately?'

That's the way Tall Hendrik is. What must happen tonight is not put off.

He leaves. Crisje thinks. She will continue to think the whole day. It is as if the child is forcing her to follow her life and the things she feels inside now and again. There is silence within her again and it speaks to her life. She has nice thoughts from it and she could float as a result, it is so nice. Crisje would now be able to say how the angels fly. She also flies now and then as a result of the feelings of the child. It is almost unbelievable, but it is the case. She has not experienced something like this very often in her life. Once when she was still a child. She can still remember it well. Her father laughed at her and her mother also didn't understand. But she floated and walked through another world. It happened by itself. This is why each birth was also different. Men do not understand this and you cannot make them understand. Crisje thinks that it now has to do with Jeus. This event is heavenly for her. She can pray more deeply as a result, she knows for certain. It is as if you are floating and yet you are lying here in bed and waiting. It is also painful. But that does not compensate for the feeling that wishes to dominate everything in her life. She is very grateful for this.

It's the child doing it! It's life! If that is not the case, nature is lying. But is that possible, Our Lord? Is that possible, Hendrik? I wouldn't miss it for the world, Crisje sends upwards. 'It is so unbelievable what I now can experience.'

How different it was with the other boys. With Johan she couldn't hurry up. Life forced her to sit down. Bernard smashed everything to pieces inside and was a wild man. Now look at Bernard. Can nature talk to the mother? You do not have to listen to it; it speaks differently. It goes through your blood to your nerves, it rises up into your brain and then it happens. You want to talk, but you can't. Silence

is now the best thing; thinking, following the feeling. It is silence, it becomes very silent inside you and around you. All that is as a result of an unborn child?

Crisje does not understand this unborn child. It is there but it isn't there! It lives and it doesn't want to be born. She is long overdue, but is it possible? This child is close to her and, she doesn't wish to imagine anything, but Hendrik will see it, has everything from her character. And this is the inexplicable part and the closeness of mother and child. You can now already tell! If you have feeling for it, otherwise you won't notice anything.

It is extremely difficult to interpret these thoughts. Crisje knows that one evening she was just standing next to herself, outside her life. She was shocked, and Tall Hendrik just laughed. She good humorously sauntered back into her life again. She found it an experience which you do not have every day, and for which you can thank Our Lord. It is a blessed time, for every single day she experiences something new. Yes, it cannot be any different; it is 'Jeus'! Strange, again she feels one with her child. But what does this life want? Is it already demanding everything from this world? Yes, Crisje, it does, but it will also give everything of itself to the world. This child possesses another personality. It is different from both the others and it will soon provide the evidence.

The boys now jump out of bed. Johan helps his little brother Bernard for what it's worth. A while later Trui is in the kitchen.

'Good morning, Cris, is there still nothing?'

'No, Trui, it is taking a long time for this one. I don't know any more. I will just wait for Mina.'

Trui tidies up, makes fresh coffee and has forgotten Tall Hendrik. Trui also learns, Crisje sees, and that puts her in a happy mood. There's Mina again.

'And Crisje? Is there still nothing? Goodness me, this is something. I have never had this before. You probably made an honest mistake. Oh well, let's have a look.'

Mina follows the symptoms. But she does not know anything yet, she cannot change the process. It looks like everything is okay. The doctor is also on time.

'Good morning, everyone. How are you, Crisje?'

'Nothing, doctor, nothing! I feel that it won't persevere.'

‘Let’s just wait, there is nothing to be done about it.’

And gone is the gentleman. ‘What kind of a man is that, Crisje’, says Mina. ‘Mark my words, Cris, he will never survive here in the country. There must be something the matter with him, but I can’t fathom it out. I know my own folk quick enough, but I don’t know this one, I honestly admit.’

‘You are right, Mina’, Crisje agrees. ‘Well, now and again you can do more with one word than with a thousand guilders.’

When Mina has gone and Trui is discussing various things with Crisje, there is someone else in front of Crisje demanding something from her life. It is Mrs De Man, an unsightly little woman, who also lives next door to them.

‘Good day, Crisje.’

‘Good day, Mrs De Man. How are you?’ Crisje really wishes to have nothing to do with this woman, because at home they drink like fish. They live like swine, and every Saturday evening the red-hot stove flies through the kitchen. They rant and rave that much. Mrs De Man is missing an eye, which she has marked with a black patch. The children are afraid of her. Nobody wants to have anything to do with her. But what do you do when she comes into your house? Crisje always tries to get her on the right path, but she is not successful. She sees too little of her. Trui thinks that Mrs De Man is a shrew. Has she by any chance come to borrow money? She will get nothing from Crisje now. Trui keeps an eye on things. Hendrik said recently:

‘If there is something to be drunk, I can do that myself the best. I do not work for drunkards. Will you think of that, Cris?’ Hendrik then heard that she had given money. And he meant it! She shouldn’t try to do something like that again. How he let her have it then. Now she will be careful. Crisje already knows what the ‘drunkard’ has come for, but she will not get a cent! She will no longer be deceived.

‘And, how are you, Crisje?’

‘What can I say, Mrs De Man. It’s taking a long time this time. We can’t fathom it out!’

‘That’s understandable’, whines this human disaster and leers with her one eye at the tin with notes, which also contains the coins. Crisje thinks: ‘Of course she is thirsty again. She wants to have some snapps.’ The children ran out of the kitchen, so inhuman is this insignificant life for another person. She is just like an old man, thinks Crisje.

With what kinds of thoughts does a person like that walk round all day? What occupies such a soul? Crisje knows that it is not anything special. It stems from darkness and misery. My goodness how can people live like that. Is there nothing else in the world than longing for jenever? Do these people not have any other thoughts? Can they never even think of prayers to Our Lord? Have those souls never had any respect for this good life? Do those souls think that there is no purgatory?

Trui potters about in the kitchen and can't be got rid of now. Crisje already feels that she is being watched anxiously. Trui is now on Hendrik's side. That's the way Trui is, she knows what's nearest. And whether she is also right now? Crisje doesn't know. What is that woman doing here, thinks Trui? She would put her out, but she has nothing to say in this matter. However, immediately after the drunkard has gone Crisje will hear it. Trui makes sure she stays around. She knows her sister and knows that, as well as she does, that that woman needs money and only came for that reason. Trui accepts her informing how Crisje is as a beggar would accept a half-cent. The woman slurps the coffee given to her and is obviously considering how to proceed. But Crisje doesn't wait for this and will help her because she still hopes to be able to help this soul out of her misery.

'You certainly let rip again on Saturday, Mrs De Man. The chairs here were shaking from it. Why can't you leave that drinking alone? Start another life? Do you want to go to hell later? Do you want to burn for eternity? There is such a thing as purgatory. Don't you know?'

The woman lets her talk away and lets the holy sermon go in one ear and out the other. She says nothing, but is still thinking and waits for a suitable moment. She wants to change, but what can she do with those drunkards of men. Then she starts:

'I'm only a woman, Crisje.'

'What are you trying to tell me, Mrs De Man, that you have to drink? Are you trying to tell me that you have to drink because those men want that? Don't make me laugh. I'll tell you something else. You like a drink yourself! That's what it is! You can't leave the drink alone. You want to drink!'

Crisje sees a tear falling from her remaining eye. She sympathizes with the wreck. 'Are you trying to tell me that you're sorry?'

Now of course pitiful complaints will follow from her clenched, boozed lips, thinks Crisje. It is scandalous.

But the woman senses her chance and whines:

‘I haven’t had anything to eat for days, Crisje.’

‘That’s a good one. Should Theet see his shop ruined because of your drinking? Of course you don’t get any more credit. Do you want a sandwich?’

Oh, Crisje. Did you really think that this soul is hungry? Have you fallen into the trap yet again? What difference does a sandwich make to that woman. Listen, there it is again.

‘Can I lend a mark from you, Crisje?’

‘Do you want a mark? Do you think that we don’t have any worries? What do you need a mark for?’

‘For the rent, they’re trampling down the door.’

‘Then you better make sure you don’t drink your money.’

‘De Man, he keeps it for himself, Crisje. What can I start? What can I do? I’m only a woman. I do everything, but it doesn’t help. I have already started a new life!’

Trui follows the conversation, but has to go to the shed; the pigs are screaming. They must be fed. Crisje thinks it worthwhile to bring her neighbour to another life.

‘Do you hear that, Mrs De Man? You could have had that as well. Why do you not save a few cents every week, then you can buy pigs!’

‘They sold the pigs to buy drink.’

‘That’s all very well, but you drink just as much.’

‘Can I have the mark, Crisje? I’ll give it back as soon as I can!’

Crisje gives in. The woman gets her sixty cents. The money quickly disappears into her dirty pocket, because Trui is back. She doesn’t know that she is just too late and Crisje waits with telling her that that drunkard has wormed a mark out of her again.

‘Listen’, Trui bursts out, ‘have you nothing else to do? Cris has to rest.’ It couldn’t be better. Mrs De Man is leaving in a hurry. She is in a hurry now!

‘Bye, Crisje.’

‘Bye, Mrs De Man, all the best.’

The woman shuffles out the door. She can find her own way. Out the back, through the gate and she is home.

‘Did you give that woman money, Cris?’

Now Crisje has to lie and she hates doing this. You go to purgatory for this. Well, could she allow this woman to be put out of her house? She has no time to think. Trui asks again:

‘You surely didn’t give that drunkard money, Cris? That’s the worst thing you could do.’

There is no answer yet. Crisje has a think. ‘No’, comes emphatically from her lips, ‘I’m not as silly as that.’ But Trui knows her sister. She notices that Crisje hesitates with her words.

‘I don’t believe you, Cris. It is scandalous. Hendrik has to work far too hard. And now you go and help the bad.’

Crisje, it’s getting dangerous! Trui is taking Hendrik’s side. Now you have to be careful or you will have a house full of arguments today.

‘That’s true, Trui. With a feeling from the bottom of her heart, and yet a guilt that she has saddled herself with a terrible sin that creeps up from deep within her, Crisje confesses to her sister: you are right, that person won’t get another cent from me. I could be mad. Hendrik has to work much too hard for it. And you can’t encourage drinking, can you? What a poor soul she is.’

Trui is obviously in a milder mood, but she cannot leave without getting it off her chest as well.

‘They should lock people like that up. Those people don’t deserve to live. Then you might as well help every rogue. But that’s too much, that’s mocking Our Lord.’

Crisje feels the insincerity of Trui when she expresses herself in this way. After all, she knows only too well that her sister bothers very little about Our Lord. But what kind of trouble has she got herself into now. ‘My God’, she thinks, ‘I will have to confess an awful lot.’

Trui is busy and Crisje pretends to be sleeping because she wants to think. She wants to have a clear conscience when Hendrik comes home. She will confess everything to Father. What have I done wrong now, she thinks to herself. What should I have done or said? She has now weighed down her conscience with two lies and all because of that ugly drunkard. Yes, but is she so sure that the woman deceived her? Did Mrs De Man really tell lies again? Will they really use that mark for drink again? She has fallen for it badly again. No, I did do wrong, she decides at last. I shouldn’t have given her any money. And I’m making it worse all the time. Now I’m starting to lie from fear

that Trui will tell Tall Hendrik.

Crisje tries to consider who is worse, Trui or Mrs De Man? Trui isn't sincere either. She doesn't mean what she says. Now she has involved Our Lord, but He has no other meaning in her life other than the fear after death. You would like assurance with regard to the spiritual life of Trui, but this cannot be given. Of course, Trui goes to church, prays and does her duties, but Crisje knows that. I fell into the trap yet again, Crisje sighs.

'How can you forgive me, Lord?'

Hours pass. Trui thinks that Crisje is having a nice rest. She should have eaten long ago, but Trui lets her sleep. But Crisje hasn't closed an eye. Cold sweat breaks out on her; she is in such a bad state. And soon Hendrik will be home. He sees at once when there is something the matter with his wife. She must have worked it out for herself before she can look Hendrik in the eye and it is best to confess everything honestly, because it is becoming unbearable. What should she have done, and what should she not have done? One thing is for sure, she should not have given Mrs De Man a cent and she will not do it again for the rest of her life, or she must be able to justify it. But if Mrs De Man really did need the mark for the rent. Could she then have given the mark? Also wrong, thinks Crisje, because she must make sure herself that she makes ends meet. But the men drink it; she knows that as well. Mrs De Man therefore gets nothing; it is not her fault. Everything is okay! She only has to consider whether she may help these people. And a while later, she is jubilant, she knows now for certain. She shouldn't have done it; she is now helping these people to be bad. Then let them be broken, they don't want it any other way!

'Cris?'

Crisje is still sleeping. Trui lets her lie; she needs rest. Crisje is far from this world. She lives again in this nice world in which she can think. The things which she thinks about, come pure to her life. It is as if someone else is thinking for her. What she is feeling is sent to her. But she has always been a thinker. Her character is open to justice, open to religious feeling, open to happiness in the home and especially to making the best of it. Do not fly too high and do not imagine anything, there is always Our Lord, who knows everything about you.

Now she has thoughts about how she should have acted. During

this rest period she has reached the realization that she has made mistakes. Trui is playing a dangerous game, she is worse than Mrs De Man. Yes, she is bad, she drinks, is a crone, a drunkard, she is dirty, ugly, everything that is bad. But Trui? Ugh, Trui, I wouldn't have thought that about you. I didn't know you like that before. She is now making a parade of Our Lord and is on Hendrik's side, but what does Trui want? Betrayal lurks in her. You can look at Mrs De Man from inside and outside, she is naked before you. But Trui wears a terrible mask!

When it is already dark and Trui has to light the lamp, Crisje gets back the feeling in her limbs. She was far away from this world. She was somewhere and nowhere, but she knows how she must think and Trui must accept it. It is no wonder that she can't have children. She is playing with this holiness; she walks past Our Lord and doesn't see Him!

Now Tall Hendrik is suddenly back in the kitchen and the whole house is filled with his personality and everything runs again, because he has authority. The boys also know that father is not easy. The first thing he always asks Crisje:

'Complaints about the boys?' 'Are there any complaints, Cris?'

Crisje knows that she cannot fool her Hendrik about anything. He sees everything in one glance. He knows that Crisje cannot lie.

'No, Hendrik', there comes this evening, 'nothing to complain about the boys.'

There is something in that tone, something lives in it, which Tall Hendrik doesn't like. But he hesitates, Trui leaves. When he is there, Trui is a bag of nerves. She cannot stand it for a second in his company. Trui is gone; she will be back tomorrow.

'Is there anything else, Cris?'

'No Trui, Hendrik will take care of me. Thank you, everything will be fine.'

'That's okay; if you need me?'

Trui hasn't even gone out the door when Hendrik asks:

'Is there something, Cris?'

Crisje, who needs some time before starting the conversation with him, avoids his question and says:

'Aren't you going to ask how Jeus is, Hendrik?'

'I saw that already, Cris. I know that. But was something the matter

with Trui?’

‘No, Hendrik, there was nothing, nothing. Trui takes care of everything.’

‘But there’s something wrong with you, Cris. What is it, what’s the matter with you?’

Yes, now she has to speak. But where can she start? Hendrik is waiting; he is waiting on the edge of the bed. He looks straight into Crisje’s eyes and when that happens, when those sparkling, jet-black eyes are directed at her, Crisje can no longer think. Hendrik has eyes in his head like burning coals. ‘What’s the matter? What’s wrong with you?’ Now she has to come forward quickly with her small concerns, which are nevertheless formidable problems for her.

‘What can I say...’ she begins. ‘Well, what shall I say. It’s me, Hendrik.’

‘What is it, Cris?’

‘I have done some wrong, Hendrik. Won’t you be angry with me?’

‘What is it, Cris?’

‘That drunkard of a woman was here, Hendrik.’

‘Did you give her money, Cris?’

Now Tall Hendrik becomes really angry. He rages so loud that it can be heard outside. Just for a moment, then he goes back to the bed and asks:

‘Tell me then, Cris.’

‘It’s like this, Hendrik.’

She now confesses honestly. He looks at her and he knows already. He could have kissed her left and right, but he can’t do this, otherwise Crisje would give everything away and he can’t allow this. When Crisje asks:

‘Are you angry with me, Hendrik?’ Hendrik adjusts as quickly as lightening to the sensitivity of her heart.

‘Listen to me, Cris. I will say nothing more to you, it’s your own business what you have to do. I’m telling you, you mustn’t support evil. That is all. But don’t try it again, Cris, or I’ll throw the money on the street.’

Hendrik cuddles his angel, kisses her firmly and that is a great relief for Crisje. Now the priest, and then everything will be pure again. How is it possible, how she lied and how easily the devil can get you. It will not happen again, she promises Our Lord. I saw it. I saw that

wretch. I will be careful in future.

After the evening meal Tall Hendrik soon becomes bored and he suggests to Crisje that he play something for her.

‘Cris, I will play the Ave Maria for you. Do you want to hear me, Cris?’

‘You know that already, Hendrik.’

‘Then it will come, Cris. If it hears me playing, it will come quicker. It must hear our music, Cris.’

Hendrik grabs his violin from the cupboard. The Ave Maria is laid against the coffee-pot. The violin is tuned. The first tones can already be heard; he has started. Crisje listens, she enjoys her love. She is delighted, she is happy. What gifts her Hendrik has. He can sing, he is musical, his quartet, the boys, everything is great. It couldn’t be better. She follows the tones and she hums along with him. It is one and all happiness which she feels. Crisje can almost not take it; tears of happiness are streaming down her cheeks. But the last tones of the Ave Maria have not yet sounded when he jumps up.

‘Goodness, Cris, I have to go. I have to go out for the portraits.’

Crisje feels herself brought back to reality with a thump. How can Hendrik frighten a person like that? You really don’t know for a second what he is up to. Thousands of things bombard his head at the same time. And he has already gone, he throws her a kiss. He will be back in ten minutes. The door falls closed. Crisje is alone. She hears nothing more than a thud and creaking. It was as if the heavens opened up. She is shaking from it. Jeus beats as a result, he kicks as if the child heard that, with his terrible temper, Tall Hendrik had tied the peace and happiness to a dog’s tail and chased the animal onto the street. What a fright it was.

Crisje has time again to think. Jeus is carrying on. The child hasn’t got her in this way before. She becomes queasy from it. Jeus is pushing upwards that much. ‘What is it? Crisje asks aloud: What is it? Did you really hear him play?’ Crisje listens with all her attention on the child. It is as if it is already giving her an answer to her questions. No, that’s not it; the child also got a fright. It is telling her that she is carrying something sensitive, which she has not known before. This child reacts along with her to everything that she feels and hears. When she was quiet this afternoon, Jeus didn’t move either and kept quiet. Now that she thinks back and considers her pregnan-

cy of all those months, she discovers that Jeus has always reacted to her thoughts and feelings and that the child has taken over all those thoughts from her. But that is remarkable, she thinks. It is proof for her as a mother that the life in her is also very sensitive, just like her. The child continues to kick, it has become restless. An hour passes. Hendrik is not yet back. Jeus continues to kick and doesn't quieten down. Does he now wish to be born? No, that's not it, Crisje feels nothing. There are no symptoms which point to this. When the clock strikes ten, Tall Hendrik is standing in the kitchen again.

'Now you will be angry, Cris, but I'm telling you, I earned eight guilders. Isn't that something? And look what I have here? When it is born, we will drink one. Are you angry at me, Cris?'

'Why do you have to have jenever again, Hendrik?'

'Do you want to let this day pass just like that? My third boy, and no drink? I would never forgive myself. But don't you worry, everything will be fine.'

Crisje gives in. Hendrik does his best; you may not destroy good thoughts. When he asks her how she is, he hears about the episode.

'Well, Hendrik, I'm telling you, this child has something which Johan and Bernard haven't got. Heavens above, what a way it carried on. Just before you came home it went back to sleep. It is oversensitive, Hendrik. And now that I think, it has always got me and always let me feel that it understood what was happening.'

'It has certainly something of me, Cris', he assumes. However, Crisje answers him and he knows where he stands. A resolute reply follows:

'No, Hendrik, it has nothing from you, nothing!'

This has to be dealt with for a moment. The certainty of Crisje throws him.

'Why does it have nothing from me, Cris, how can you know that? You're behaving as if you are the only one who is right.'

'That's all very well, Hendrik, I know.'

'Can you look through your own stomach then?'

'That's got nothing to do with looking. This one has nothing from you, because it has everything from me.'

'God Almighty, that's professor's talk.'

'You can make of it what you like, you will have to admit it to me later, you will see!'

'It is the purest psychology, Cris. But I don't have any understand-

ing of it.'

Crisje has to laugh about the strange word from Hendrik but she has something else. 'I don't know what it's called, Hendrik. I don't know anything about it, but listen to what I'm telling you. This one takes after me, this one is just like me, this one has... well, what can I say?'

'What? Go on, Crisje. How do you know that?'

'I don't understand myself how I know, Hendrik, but I know.'

'But where from, Cris. There must be grounds?'

'No, I don't know, Hendrik, but you will see. This is another child; this child is different from the other two. I feel it.'

Tall Hendrik can't make any sense of it. But Crisje is thinking. She has become richer and wouldn't miss these hours for the world. The feeling lives in her being. It creeps through her blood, it rises to her head and it hammers under her heart. It is light. It is life! It is life and love. It is a blissful feeling, it is peace and quiet, yes, pure happiness.

The feeling can speak and it says nothing. Men, broods Crisje, know nothing about it and they will also never learn. It cannot be explained with words but it is still one world, one universe. It could be Our Lord, but that is too far away and cannot be followed by people. They immediately think of religious mania but that really isn't it! It speaks, feels Crisje, but it doesn't say a word. The lips remain sealed. Only the heart knows the magnitude of it and you can float because of it. You can fly into space. You are like a bird in flight, but at the same time human, and you are young, very young. You are wearing a nice garment, a very nice garment, nicer even than Crisje has ever worn. What is it then?

And would Hendrik possess some of this? No, he has nothing of it, nothing at all. Crisje will think about this.

Hendrik is dizzy from it. He wants to pick up the violin again, but Crisje thinks it is too late. She doesn't want to hear his scratching any more.

'You're nervous in your fingers. You shouldn't have had a drink!'

Hendrik can say nothing to this. Crisje is right, he has ruined the evening nicely. But he brought money into the house and that makes up for a lot. A moment later he puts out the petroleum lamp and stretches out beside his dear Cris. He touches her maternal body only for a moment; then, as if Tall Hendrik wishes to say good night to

'Jeus', Crisje hears him snoring, he is snoring away the whole night, in order to awake in the morning, as Crisje has experienced for years, like a cheerful spring day and put the flowers in water for her. Her Hendrik is such a good man. It was really lovely, that soft touch; Crisje knows exactly what goes on in his head. She knows him as herself and as the many people of Our Lord who make a mess of this sacred contact and send everything from Him to the devil. Mankind is often guilty of his unhappiness. If you have something and you are wrong, Crisje knows, then you must bow your human head. Then you can carry on and start again. Then you will receive flowers in every colour from Our Lord, put next to you just like that in a vase with warm-heartedness, understanding and acceptance of how life is now. It is bliss. But you have to pray for it. Without prayer you get nothing!

How nice life is. It is quiet in the house. Crisje is awake; she cannot sleep. She thinks of what she could feel and again experiences being one with her child. Johan is dreaming. He is talking about the snow and the stork that brings children. Johan also has a lot from her. Bernard is like his father. Johan is quiet, he will have a difficult time, because he is a mother's child and wants to cling to your skirt all day. Bernard doesn't need skirts anymore! He gets his fill from the daily pleasures, of which Johan is often the victim. And now Jeus is coming. Listen to Johan screaming, thinks Crisje. What a lot of things go on in that child's head. 'Go to sleep, Johan', Crisje calls to her eldest, and Johan, he is half-asleep and goes back to bed to rest. Johan is soon asleep. Another piece of Crisje's life, which she already knows about, is that this child will have difficulties in life. Johan is four years old, only four years. Who grants you all this assurance, Crisje? You could be a 'psychologist'!

Crisje hears the clock strike three and she is still awake, is still thinking and feeling. Hendrik is sleeping and dreaming aloud. Crisje could now repeat him word for word, he is dreaming so loud. The children also have that from him. Both dream aloud and they sometimes fly out of bed and want to play and do the things which gave them the most pleasure that day. What is dreaming actually, Crisje wonders? How strange people can behave in their sleep. Bernard is dreaming already. If he dreams he kicks Johan, who lies next to him, out of bed. Crisje often thinks about dreaming. Johan usually dreams quietly. Bernard dreams wildly, just like his character. Johan is dif-

ferent. Bernard is like her Hendrik! Sometimes Crisje has to waken Hendrik or she would have to move to a hospital from her bed in the middle of the night with a black eye, and broken arms and legs. But that only happens when her Hendrik has serious things to deal with. When he was to join the opera it was really bad. He then jumped up in the middle of the night; stood with his long legs straight up in bed and gave an aria as the best. People could hear him at the bottom of the Grintweg. The whole neighbourhood knew and came to tell Crisje the following day. Crisje heard another concert last night, didn't she? Crisje laughed then, but it was bad. You could not waken Hendrik, he was so caught up in his dream and he sung so loud that the walls shook. You had to laugh, but Crisje was anxious. Tall Hendrik couldn't be controlled anymore and she couldn't do a thing with that large body. He laughed about it himself for he knew nothing about it. And now, thank God, he was quiet and slept like a log. Only that snoring, that sawing noise was annoying. But she would sleep soon as well. Yet now, she wanted to think a bit. Thinking is so nice. Thinking is wonderful. Thinking is bliss.

Crisje knows that this deep thinking started during this pregnancy. She has never been able to think so well before. She longs to be alone for a while. During the day she doesn't get the chance and soon, when she is toeing the line again, there won't be a second to think, to feel and to follow what lives in her, because it is there that it comes from. And nowhere else. It lives in her and is a part of her heart. It speaks and it says nothing! It is just like it is not part of this world. Thinking is so nice.

Crisje is praying! She thanks Our Lord for the nice things of the day, the happiness which she was allowed to receive today again. The happiness of her husband, the children and Trui, who is so good for her. She also asks Our Lord to protect her from lies, because that won't happen again. Bad, it is really bad! She then dozes off and loses her sense of feeling. The human body has taken over her right to think and work. The inner being sinks deeply away. Where to...?

What is sleeping, Crisje? What happens when a person sleeps? My dear Crisje, this is a great problem for the whole world. This is just as big a mystery for the greatest scholar. But what is it? Jeus will explain it. Through his thinking he will solve this great problem and pass it on to mankind, as a gift, a flower from Our Lord! Jeus... Jeus...

Crisje, will do that for you and mankind! Do you feel the silence, Crisje? This thinking comes from this life to you. It is he. This life is thinking! This life is speaking to you. Even now that your eyes are closed, even now that you are sleeping, this child is awake. The soul, dear Crisje, never sleeps! It cannot sleep! It is always awake, because it is from God and God is always working, for eternity! He is continually busy thinking for HIS life! Isn't that strange? But it is the truth, Crisje. Jeus will grant you this wisdom. Just a while and you will have him. You can then hold him next to your heart. This one, ours. This soul, which has everything of you and nothing of Hendrik? This one, Crisje, has everything from you both! This one must possess everything from you and Tall Hendrik. Only now this one represents the strength, the inspiration and the great sensitivity of you. You see, Crisje, this is how Jeus is; this is how he will be, for you and for himself and for this world, for which he came! Jeus will teach you to think. You will receive a wonderful life, if you wish to understand! Sleep now, rest; Jeus will come soon. Not a second too early or too late, because this soul gives itself the light! Because there is someone else who enables him to do this.

Don't you see, Crisje, that there is a light which follows this life and has awakened it? This is how you fly! This is how you talk and think! This is how you go into space! It is this light, dear Crisje, which will follow Jeus during this earthly life. The soul is now awake; it was already awake when you felt life between the third and the fourth month. It's strange, isn't it? But necessary for Jeus! Sleep and rest now, this light will also take care of that, and you can feel and understand it as a 'feeling person', and it will not become materialistic. It is love! Happiness! Peace! A blessing, Crisje!

Mina said yesterday:

'Cris, keep yourself calm, it will come tomorrow. On a Sunday as well. And that's fortunate. You will say I was right!' Then Mina left. She will be right. Today the great wonder will take place. This evening, at seven minutes to ten, you will hear the first cries from Jeus. They know that in space, Crisje. People here know nothing about it. Only Mina, she feels it, because she opens her life and soul to the powers, which the scholars do not understand anything about yet, because they do not have the sixth sense, like she does. But she knows Crisje. Jeus will come, at seven minutes to ten, and it will be a Sunday's child.

A child, a life, Crisje, that will bring happiness and will have eyes like the heavens.

When morning dawns Hendrik wakes up.

‘And Cris, will something happen today?’ he asks his love, who has meanwhile also woken.

‘I think so, Hendrik. I believe so.’

‘Then we must have patience for a while, Cris. There is nothing else for it. I will make coffee and then go to church. I will sing this morning so that Father can preach as he has never preached in his life.’

After some cuddles he jumps out of bed, lights the stove, makes delicious coffee and the boys are also allowed to get up. Johan already wants to help. Bernard must stay away from everything, because otherwise he breaks things. Mother first cuddles the boys and then they may sit down at the table with father. They enjoy these delicious things completely, prepared for them by Tall Hendrik.

Johan is busy flattering his father: ‘Father, that is nice coffee you made.’

‘Listen to that, Cris, he is flattering me already.’

Johan looks up to his father, who towers above him. When Bernard now blames Johan that he doesn’t have to flatter, the Sunday peace is already disturbed again and the argument is in full swing. Hendrik listens and knows as well as Crisje that Bernard is after Johan again. The eldest has nothing more to say. Bernard is completely the boss over him. Hendrik cannot help adding to Crisje:

‘He is just like me, Cris. But what about the other one? He may be like you!’

Crisje knows that her husband is right. She therefore says nothing. But Tall Hendrik demands an answer and asks sarcastically: ‘And, Cris? Have you nothing to say?’

‘What can I say to that, Hendrik. It’s like you’re enjoying it!’

‘Shall I tell you something, Cris? Well? Now, we have divided it honestly. He has everything from you and he takes after me.’

‘Oh, Hendrik. They are only children!’

‘You as well, Cris, me as well, we are children and if I can’t be a child any more, I will cut my throat.’

That is going too far for Crisje again. How can Hendrik talk about such things so early in the morning? She does not know how to reply to this. To change the subject she therefore says:

‘You should prepare yourself for church, Hendrik.’

Tall Hendrik roars with laughter. Still laughing he lets rip:

‘Are you trying to tell me how I should think? That church takes long enough for me. Should I also make myself holy beforehand? No, Cris, I’m going to sing anyway. I will sing this morning so that it can be heard in Emmerik. I’m looking forward to it. I will get them. Father will enjoy it. And honestly, Cris, it is like something will happen today. What do you think?’

‘Very probably, Hendrik, I also felt that something will happen. But you can never tell!’

Tall Hendrik is ready. Trui has been to early mass and now comes in. Cris has been taken care of and the boys are playing. A few moments later Mina is in the kitchen.

‘Good morning, Hendrik.’

‘Good day, Mina.’

‘It doesn’t happen every day that I get to see you, does it?’

‘It’s the same for me, Mina. What’s the situation, aren’t you having any more of your own?’

Hendrik and Mina are well matched. They like each other. Both like a joke and are of one colour and one thought. Mina also likes to joke. She knows Hendrik and adores him. Crisje often hears from her literally:

‘Him, Crisje, if I could have had him, my God, Cris, what kind of man do you have? Look at the one I’ve got. My God, I’m only human myself.’

Crisje knows that and Tall Hendrik also knows that. She should have had a strong man. Mina is worth her weight in gold. However, she has a husband who follows her about and needs a nappy.

He still needs a skirt and Mina thinks that it is terrible. Oh well, he is a good person, a decent one, who never commits a sin, never gets angry and will never look to see if there is more in the world than himself. But Hendrik can’t help teasing Mina about him:

‘How’s your one getting on, Mina, are his canaries still singing? You should send him to the village fair with the flea circus, then they can bite him and you will hear something for a change.’

Mina laughs but doesn’t put up with it. If Tall Hendrik thinks that he can get away with pulling her leg, he has completely missed the boat.

‘You...’, Mina begins, ‘you always make a fuss about fleas and lice, you will have enough of them yourself.’

‘You got me, Mina, thank you very much. You really got me.’

What a shame that Hendrik has to go. He is already late.

Mina helps Cris. Trui tidies up and watches the boys. ‘That Hendrik’, says Mina. ‘I like him! You can have fun with him, Crisje!’

‘That’s true, Mina, you can have fun with him. But now and again he is too much for me. But I wouldn’t miss him for the world.’

‘That’s a bit much, Crisje. That’s a bit much, where would we find a man like Tall Hendrik? Nowhere, he is unique. He has the whole world in his head and you will never go hungry with him! Never, ever, Crisje.’

‘That is true, Mina. Sometimes I am afraid for all that happiness in my life. Now and again it goes for my throat, really, and then I am afraid. It can sometimes be too much.’

Crisje is already crying. Mina sees that and says: ‘Do you have to cry about that? You are the luckiest person in the world. Believe me, there are many unhappy people and yet there are those who know much happiness. Will you stop that, Crisje? Otherwise you will get me started.’

Mina looks! She looks for a long time and thoughtfully. Then she asks Crisje:

‘Did that person from the town come yesterday, Crisje?’

‘Yes, Mina, but that man is no good to you. He should have been a schoolmaster or he should have asked Our Lord for more feeling, he is worth nothing now.’

‘That’s true, Crisje. That man is no good to you. But we don’t need him either. Let’s have a look. I will be back this afternoon. And then I will leave again. But I will be back again. Maybe I will go away for a while, or I will stay here and talk to Hendrik. But I don’t know. That’s all.’

‘Today therefore, Mina?’

‘Today, Crisje! As true as my name is Mina!’

Mina leaves. Trui makes a delicious soup for Crisje; life is great again. Tall Hendrik is home, but his impatience has got him again. He reaches for his violin, later puts it back on the cupboard, flies out the door and makes his way to Hent Klink’s for bitters and a game of billiards, an opportunity that has been few and far between. Hendrik

is out of sorts; he doesn't know what to do with himself. This is a day never to be forgotten! When Crisje watches him and sees him running in and out, Tall Hendrik hears:

'What a buffoon you are. You're not able to sit still today, are you?'

'What are you saying to me, Cris? I'm a buffoon? Be careful, otherwise I'll have something else to tell you.'

'You're a big twit, you might as well know', Crisje adds and that sounds to Hendrik from her mouth as music to his ears. Crisje is playful, she feels good, because a wonderful feeling has inspired her conscious thinking and feeling. She believes for certain that something will happen today. It is so unnatural inside, so sublime, and so fine; it is as if a beautiful flower opens. She hears music, she is floating as well, she can pray and say thanks; it is wonderful what she has in her just now and was allowed to carry all that time.

Hendrik loves hearing Crisje say 'Big twit'. But nobody else should try it. One of the village boys found that out during a game of billiards, who warned Hendrik that it was his turn with a:

'Now you, Tall Hendrik!'

He looked at him and asked:

'Who's turn is it? Who?'

'You, Hendrik.'

'I thought so too!'

That young man had been put under the billiard table once before. Crisje was witness to that drama. That day and that evening there was no end to the misery. Crisje doesn't like arguments. And what does Hendrik want anyway. But is a big body something to be ashamed of? However, Hendrik often finds it an affliction, he looks above everything around and often curses his long stilts. Crisje made him understand that he had to accept his tall figure. When they came home Tall Hendrik received the warning:

'Try that again, Hendrik, knocking somebody off the chair just like that. Isn't it scandalous? Did you think I wanted to get a name here? Did you think I wanted to marry a troublemaker? That is once, but never again. I will not move from this house. Will you watch it, Hendrik?'

And now Tall Hendrik is so sensible. He does not go into such talk. He knows, Crisje will keep her word! She would leave him alone. This fine character is immediately closed to hardness and childish pranks.

A supernatural harmony for everything lives in Crisje. She is a lady, a 'Queen' of unprecedented beauty, even if she wears clogs! The beautiful peace which she emanates, surrounds everything which Our Lord has created. If she ever goes out with her Hendrik, which happens very seldom, she is given the best seat. The company considers it an honour to have her among them. They like Crisje that much. She was able to control Hendrik as a result of her great love. And anyone who knows this has sacred respect for the soul which always gives to each person, according to Crisje's belief, which is the most beautiful, because you can make Our Lord happy with this! When it becomes too improbable for Tall Hendrik, he gets to hear wisely from Crisje:

'That's in your own hands, Hendrik.'

'What own hands, Cris?'

'That's a good one; but you can make yourself liked among people?'

Hendrik has become more sensible. But he is strong, the boys know that as well. Crisje doesn't know how he will handle the boys later. As a result of her great love she gets everything done from him and so life is a blessing. Hendrik can bow his head and that is a gift for soul and spirit. Oh, she knows very well, the heavens open for all Divine life if the human personality joins in the great order of things, because there is then a question of unity! Many women would wish to possess her Hendrik, but he belongs to her and no other! And Crisje is everything to him, the heavenly paradise, such as Our Lord wanted it and for which He created His people! And now a nice cross and Crisje will have everything she desires. Why does Hendrik not buy her such a cross? But that will come as well; she can wait. He forgets these things, his mind isn't on it. But it is a blessing to be able to wear such a thing from your own husband. Crisje would be very happy with it, but what if it isn't possible? What if there is no money to buy such holy things? She finds a cross like that on her chest as a blessing for life. It gives you the feeling, that you are always one with Our Lord! But even if such a thing costs ten cents, it can't be missed today. She needs every cent. Crisje calculates and compares, she is never unprepared for life. She shies away from credit. Theet, the grocer, always says: 'Crisje, if you need something, you know.' But then worries will follow you and disturb your daily rest. They create trouble and misery and you feel that people are looking at you.

It is still deeply engrained in her memory when Hendrik bought

that beautiful, black shawl on the door to be paid in instalments. This was a misery which affected her happiness at home and soiled her sacred thinking and feeling. People liked her shawl but she found the thought that she was showing off an unpaid adoration a scandal for her life. And when the women in the village asked her where she had bought that nice wrap, she blushed from shame and desperation. It broke her soul life to pieces completely. She paid it off as quickly as she could, because she was capable of throwing that nice shawl in the stove. She would not have been able to bear the disharmony in her thinking and feeling for long. She knows that many people buy on credit and consider it very ordinary. But her soul is disturbed and burdened by it. In addition, the convenience of getting things just like that takes you so lightly to the abyss of life above your means. Buying on credit grabs her throat with anxiety and it makes her heart 'thump'. It disturbs her in prayer and she cannot experience a pure confession. Crisje would not be able to go to communion if the credit accompanied her to the Divine altar. Our Lord would say:

'You have come to confess and take of My flesh and blood, but when are you yourself pure? When will you stop with your credit? When will you make sure that you do not live above your means?'

Isn't it the case? It would be a torture for her. And Hendrik should thank his lucky stars that Crisje isn't like that, because it takes you to the abyss, from which there is no escape! Crisje has often told Theet that when his book is full and people do not pay:

'You are spoiling the people yourself, Theet. You are really making people bad yourself.'

Oh, you should hear her talk. Where she gets all that wisdom from, Hendrik doesn't know. Every word is natural and considered. Crisje never drivels! She has received this inborn psychology from Our Lord for her life, just like Tall Hendrik received his beautiful voice. They are gifts from God, which grant you colour, which allow you to live, if you know how to deal with them! And Crisje knows. She makes sure that she goes down on her knees purely and in honesty when Father serves her with 'Divine Life'! And Father knows this only too well. This is why Crisje is a blessed person! She thinks and she feels! She is in harmony with everything and consciously makes a paradise of life. But who can do this? She and her Hendrik float high above the brutality of this human society. They know how to take care. The one

guilder thirty rent, which they have to pay will give them possession of their own house in forty year's time. You have to calculate day and night and meanwhile improve your life, so that you can stand on your own piece of ground one day and then 'kiss' yourself and your life! Try a kiss like that some time! If you go on credit they will not taste nice anymore!

Here the sun shines every second, even if it is raining cats and dogs. Winter or summer, there is always sunshine in the house and in these hearts of good will. This is their place for which they dance and have their fun. They are the pearls of their lives and their 'orchids', of which Our Lord receives the most beautiful. It is bending and exploring, accepting and loving, being open to everything and bowing your head if the other person is right! Hendrik kisses these faithful working hands full of delight; he knows. It is worth more than a thousand houses and own stuff, from which you can't sleep, because they send a bailiff after you! Then no cross, no land, no own garden, none of that. But only some rabbits and something in the stable. That is everything, but it means happiness! And Hendrik has taken care of that. There was something in the stable, it grunted nicely, and soon it gave nice fat bacon for the boys. Lovely sausage as well, for which Crisje knows the secret recipe. She possesses an instinctive feeling for preparing tasty sausage. She didn't learn it; it is something instinctive. They would slaughter every year, for the children and themselves, because that saved a fortune.

Now and again Crisje earned a nice sum of money on top. She worked for farmer Hosman and made sausage for other people. In this way they will survive and be able to pay everyone.

Mina has been here again. She left and will return later. Crisje knows that today the wonder will happen. Now it is serious. Hendrik won't leave her side for a second. 'Here, Cris, drink this, it can help, that's for nerves!'

He is now watching out with all of his long body for his happiness and life space. He is sitting there and like it had to do with 'death', so serious is Hendrik. Even if they are not thinking about unpleasant things, you just never know. It is still always something you dread because it will cry or be silent. These accidents happen all the time; enough people are affected by it. Now you must think and forget yourself! You have life in your hands, or you just miss! You are faced

with it and it flies back where it came from and however much you talk, it does not help you. You must bow your head for it and say yes and amen. There is only one person who has something to say! That is Our Lord, Tall Hendrik and it is also He who will grant you this happiness again.

When Tall Hendrik once wanted to know from Crisje what all she could bear, he asked:

‘You can do much, Cris, I know that. But what would you have done if Bernard had now taken to his heels and he had gone to heaven?’

What was Hendrik saying? Crisje did not understand him properly. She had to think about it. Then her answer came:

‘I would say, Hendrik: Our Lord, Thy will be done! And you know that I am attached to my children, but we must surrender such things, Hendrik.’

He said: ‘I will take my hat off to this, Cris!’ And then Crisje got ten of them... Hendrik almost ate her up and almost flattened her, so that Crisje screamed:

‘You big idiot that you are, do you have to crush me to death?’

How merry that sounded and great from her lips. What bliss. Crisje usually lets him hear with every word the royal ‘Hendrik’. Now that ‘big idiot’ sounded as if it came from heaven. Hendrik was so in his element with it that he bit Crisje’s lips, but she thought that was too much of a good thing.

‘That’s too much, Hendrik, that’s going too far, isn’t it, you will have to be careful, we aren’t small children anymore?’ Crisje said, pushing him away from her with a reprimand.

Hendrik feels this restraint; the restraining power of her harmonic personality lies on everything.

‘Cris, Cris, what kind of a woman are you anyway!’

Now Tall Hendrik is standing by her life and watches. In a way he takes the pains away, he pierces the life with his strong gaze; he carries her to the wonderful hour of a birth! ‘Keep well, Cris!’ hears the mother of Johan, Bernard and next Jeus!

‘I’m here with you, Cris!’

A hand from Crisje slides out from under the blankets and searches for Hendrik’s hand. This pressure grants her a universal power. Hendrik feels that warm life of Crisje and kisses it! It is as if Mary, Joseph

and Our Lord are also there! God is good! God is always there! Anyone, who loves him, He will bless, and He has blessed her and him. There is now not a grain of fickleness in the long body of Hendrik. The beautiful and powerful event elevates him to sensible, respectful humiliation. He lives in the heart of Crisje and fills it with bliss; his strong will embraces her joyfully. It cannot be any different, the new life will feel this and understand and therefore soon let the first cry be heard. Hendrik has taken off his blue smock; he is dressed in his best clothes. If he knew what the universe knows he would bend down and thank God for this, which received a body due to him and Crisje!

Tall Hendrik bends over backwards, he is as fast and slippery as an eel, but Crisje follows him. The light of Crisje's faith lightens his human darkness, in which, like she can, he will soon be able to behold the light of Our Lord.

Crisje is sweating blood so to speak, it is that bad, but she doesn't give way to a tear. But there is still a scream, which even gives her a fright, because she feels that the children are in the house. And she can't have that, it won't happen. The boys must never hear it again!

When Mina comes in any more help from Hendrik is unnecessary. But before Mina is there, Crisje presses her Hendrik's hand so firmly that the imprints of her nails remain in his flesh. A kiss from Crisje for everything he has given her. They have had hours of happiness, hours of unprecedented bliss; this event is wonderful, if you can think and feel and the human heart is open to the colourful flowers of Our Lord.

'Good day, Mina.'

'Good day, Crisje. Do you see now that I am right again? Just a while and we will be able to say 'Thank You', because He doesn't want more than gratitude from us!'

Hendrik leaves the room. Mina says: 'Go and get the learned one, Hendrik.' Mina sees what is going to happen. It is half past nine; the minutes creep past; a quarter to ten, then the first symptoms appear and a short while later Mina is holding 'Jeus' in her hands.

Seven minutes to ten, Crisje, it is written in the stars, this child will have to be born and this has nothing to do with astrology! But we will talk about this later. Jeus will tell you that later!

Mina looks at the boy. Tall Hendrik comes back and she holds the child up to his face. He only looks for a short time. Then Mina's ad-

miration is heard.

‘Cris, my God, this one has eyes in his head like the heavens!’

When the doctor comes the child is already lying clean and well in the orange box, the cradle, which Hendrik made for Jeus. The learned man is now different than usual. He also looks at the boy and congratulates Crisje and her husband. The man is now very talkative, and talks about life, even has a drink with them and tells how difficult life is. They begin to understand that his life also does not only consist of bringing children into the world. The mighty life sometimes creates worries and troubles, which they have no idea of here in the country. And they also cannot believe it! In humiliation and full of politeness Tall Hendrik and Mina stand in front of the doctor and show him out.

‘How wrong you can be about people, Hendrik’, Mina observes. ‘Who would have thought that now!’

Crisje says: ‘I thought so, Mina, he has worries! He can hardly bear it. I didn’t think of that before!’

Tall Hendrik races out the door. He cannot stand it at home any more, he must tell of his happiness and that can only be done at Hent Klink. Mina shakes her head. Crisje, trying to make things better, explains: ‘Just let him get it out of his system, Mina, otherwise things might get broken in the house and we will be worse off than ever.’

‘That’s sensible, Crisje, you are a sensible one.’

Mina can appreciate such things. She realizes that happiness lives here. She also now sees how these people protect their happiness, but she also knows that everyone must pay for it, if his life wishes to have those wings, and that it can only get a spatial wing-beat by trial and error. But Hendrik doesn’t stay away for long. He is soon back in the kitchen. The village now knows that happiness reigns at Grintweg 318. Hendrik Rulof has had a son again! Jeus... this child is called!

‘What a nice boy he is’, says Mina to Hendrik. ‘It is a strange one. We will drink to this!’

Mina and Hendrik toast each other. Crisje nods and indicates that she is taking part in her thoughts. When Mina has gone, Tall Hendrik is beside Crisje and feels like a child and does not know what to say, but Crisje meets him halfway:

‘Thanks, Hendrik, thanks!’

What has not yet happened happens now. Tall Hendrik is crying.

He can no longer keep in his tears. Inside something snaps and breaks him in half. He is not able to hold his own against such goodness. Crisje's goodness is inexhaustible. Her thoughts and feelings cannot be fathomed. This life is so deep, so immense, as a result of faith, religion, charity, understanding, trust and respect for mankind, so full of authority for all life, that Hendrik could even build a university from it. Tall Hendrik is crying. He feels like a child, he, the big, robust and otherwise so independent Tall Hendrik, he doesn't understand it himself, but still, he is crying.

That Cris, she thanks you for everything. Because Hendrik thought of her and did not forget her through his happiness, he received thanks, which went straight to his heart and turned everything upside down. A thing like this overcomes you and grabs you by the heart. It is their great happiness, which this whole world can look at. And such happiness cannot be bought, ask Our Lord!

Tall Hendrik can't get over his happiness. He looks at Jeus now and again. Crisje is right again. Crisje has felt it properly again, that feeling of Crisje is something special. They have a boy again and what a boy. When Gerrit Noesthede, one of his best friends, the bass singer of the quartet, breezes in, there is immediately fun and mischief in the kitchen. Gerrit looks at Jeus and Crisje is congratulated. Gerrit looks for a long time and thoughtfully, too long and too thoughtfully, Tall Hendrik thinks.

'What do you see in Jeus, Gerrit?'

'That's a mystery, Hendrik. He has something which I don't have and which you know nothing about.'

Crisje is enjoying herself. Gerrit can often talk nonsense but at the bottom of his heart he is a sensible and sensitive person. In addition, he is a skilled sculptor. Gerrit transforms wood into beautiful statues, figures of women and religious images. Gerrit is a confirmed bachelor; Gerrit wants nothing to do with women. Gerrit has the craziest stories about his sister, Hanneke, who looks after him and which he therefore passes off as his wife. However, Hanneke is just like Gerrit. She doesn't want a man and you would say that Hanneke and Gerrit are becoming bit by bit too old for that. But they are just as old as Tall Hendrik and Crisje! But their blood hasn't boiled yet.

'Well', Gerrit says to Crisje... 'I only said this week to my one; children, I would love to have children. But she doesn't want to have

anything to do with it. And now I have difficulty keeping my body and soul together.'

Gerrit sometimes talks so that you would swear that you had a big woman chaser in front of you, but the good man nevertheless lives a pious life. He has his drink, earns good money and makes the most of it, but without a wife. Hendrik says of Gerrit that he has too much nonsense in his head and cannot think of serious things. If you discuss serious things with Gerrit, a joke rolls from his tongue now and again and only Gerrit is capable of this. No one else can do this. That is Gerrit Noesthede, a great friend for everyone who comes into contact with him. Rubbing his forehead, Gerrit goes back to Jeus again. Then he says: 'I believe that I was born too late or I have sand in my eyes. What does he have anyway, Hendrik?'

He can't give an answer to this. He keeps himself occupied with pouring a drink. Crisje's attention is with those two there in the kitchen. She is now having a good rest, but she doesn't want to miss any of the carry-on of that pair. On Sunday the whole group will meet again, and then it will be a bundle of laughs. They don't need a carnival for that. Only Peter Smadel has a somewhat serious nature. He has a beautiful baritone and Crisje is convinced that Peter and Hendrik could have earned a tidy sum of money on the stage. Then there is also Jan Maandag as well, but he doesn't really belong. According to Gerrit, his singing does about as much good as wallpaper edging. But goodness me, if the edging is gone, the whole wallpaper is down the drain. Then there are also a pair who complement the quartet. They are the first voices, which Tall Hendrik conducts. However, these man you never see here, they are only there when they are studying and that they do not here.

Gerrit continues to drink. Each drink slides down with a strange proverb and a word of appreciation.

The likeable fatso swallows and talks, sits gossiping and coming away with such nonsense that tears of pleasure are rolling down Tall Hendrik's cheeks and make the evening into a real celebration. But finally it comes to an end when Crisje, despite her good intentions still dozed off, wakes with a fright and asks:

'What time is it, Hendrik?'

Gerrit takes off. He will tell Hanneke everything. Hendrik lies down beside Crisje. It is night. Crisje and Tall Hendrik now rest after

the eventful day. Crisje and her Hendrik, both of them with their blessedness, which they can almost not grasp, and with what is now lying there sleeping peacefully in the orange box. He has something, the secret of which only Our Lord knows. But that will be revealed, Crisje, you don't have to do anything for it. 'Nothing, it will happen on its own!'

'Good night, Crisje! I'll go now, Jeus has arrived!'

‘Crisje, I was in a heaven’

Tall Hendrik is up early. His sparkling bliss makes Crisje very happy. Today is a busy day. Who cares about Emmerik? Crisje has a wreath placed on her head, which Tall Hendrik made for her. She looks at him gratefully. Hendrik can hardly wait until the birth of Jeus is registered. Of course he will also turn that into a big party. It will cost him a treat for his friends, because they like him and always hang about him. Trui has already come to tidy up. The boys are allowed to see Jeus now.

‘And Johan, what do you think of your little brother?’

Johan looks at Jeus, but doesn’t answer. However, he asks with interest whether the stork had bitten mother’s leg or not. Crisje reassures him and shakes her head. This time it didn’t have much time, because of course it had been delayed by the snow. Johan is thinking, apparently he thinks it’s great, and then he pats Crisje on the back.

‘It can bite other mothers, but not you, mother, will it? You didn’t do anything to it. You are far too good to be bitten.’

Johan keeps his opinion to himself that this new child is far too fat for his liking. When asked about his new brother, Bernard plucks a little at the beautiful earthly body. He thinks it is a strange child, and he doesn’t want much to do with Jeus.

When Mina comes the boys have to disappear. She organises everything in a short time and then leaves. She has more things to do. Mina has a pair of strong arms, and a good sensible mind. Like Crisje she is always busy. Now that Mina is finished and Jeus has also been taken care of, Crisje can think and pray once more, she thanks Our Lord for everything, and that it all went so well again. What a child it is! Mina couldn’t stop talking about it again. The whole village already knows that Crisje has had such a special child. People are talking about it and do not resent her happiness in the least, because everyone who comes into contact with her, learns to appreciate her and love her. Crisje closes her eyes. The eggs with cognac will strengthen her, and now her thoughts can return to a higher plain. She finds it strange that her thoughts are now different. Now that the child is here she feels very different inside. The things a tiny child like that can do. Crisje feels herself again, but she cannot reach into the depth

of the concentration of thought, which she desires and longs for. It isn't working! And however much she thinks about it, and however much effort she makes, this event has reached an end. It is now different inside. The life is born, and her powerful and lovely feelings have disappeared with this birth. It is definitely worthwhile thinking about it seriously and deeply, especially since she now has the time for it. She must also prepare herself, because Father will be coming, and then she must make a confession. She has lied and therefore tainted herself and this is a scandal for Our Lord, Who gives her nothing but happiness.

Gradually Crisje starts to feel and understand that her thinking is lying there in that little bed. Her flying-in-space is lying there in that improvised cradle. There lies the child of her life. That lovely silence has now also left her and more, much more, which she cannot put into words, but which possessed a certainty for her, which is not of this world, and which definitely belongs to the powers and laws of Our Lord. Crisje is missing something and that lack is awe-inspiring; it is more than a person can deal with. It is something, she thinks and suspects, which another person must probably work all his life for, if he wants to achieve this, which belongs to life. It is strength, personality and feeling; Crisje knows that this certainty has gone from her life. She follows herself and retreats into that feeling. She wants to know where it has gone. She is standing on it, but still has no certainty that it lives under her feet. Where have these foundations gone?

Jeus is sleeping. Jeus is resting and it is this peace, this silence with which Crisje was one for nine months. It was one circulation, one heartbeat, one breath, one tick; they were one in thoughts and feeling. When Trui looks at her, she asks:

‘What’s the matter now, Crisje? What is it?’

Crisje cannot answer. Trui is thinking again about Hendrik, but it's not him. ‘What’s the matter, Cris, is he at it again?’ Crisje waves to Trui that it isn't Tall Hendrik. She will tell her shortly. But that takes a little while. Trui can't understand and still thinks that Hendrik is behind it and has messed up his happiness. Trui can now see that children do not bring happiness. When Crisje hears that her sister thinks that, she feels that this must be the answer for Trui and that she can't understand anything about the real reason anyway. Finally she summons Trui.

‘Oh, Trui, what shall I say. It isn’t Hendrik, he is for me as Our Lord couldn’t wish for better. No, it’s something else. It’s the after-pains, I think.’

Trui can quite understand this. ‘That’s natural, natural, that’s very natural.’ She understands that immediately. All mothers have that, they have to recover first. But Tall Hendrik will still be behind it, Trui believes, and Crisje does not spoil her illusions.

Now Crisje has a little time again to think about what she has really lost and which made her so happy all that time. So intensely happy, that she now has to cry about it. But, after all she knows that she must be strong. She already sees what strange ideas she is creating; if she is not really careful, she will be talked about in the street, and Tall Hendrik will be in for it. Because her sister is a gossip. But those beautiful feelings are gone. She will tell her Hendrik herself, but will he understand her? It is so fragile, so rare, something so pure. You must go down on your knees for this, bow your head deeply, and go into nature and space, then your thoughts will have that sublime flight. Outside amongst the rye, when the sun is shining and the weather is lovely and just not too warm, and you then feel so fresh and glorious as you sit there like this, it can suddenly come to you. And then you may not say a word, talk any nonsense and joke about it, or throw each other in the rye, because then you won’t feel it. Then it’s not there and you cannot make that journey. Now you are occupied with yourself and you do not feel a shred of it, then you are standing with both feet on the ground in the poverty of this rotten society, this cold, horrible, wretched world, where there is nothing but hate, envy and gossip! You must be open to it. You must love it; yes, be willing to give everything of yourself, then it is there!

And now, it is no longer there! Now it is lying there and it is called ‘Jeus’! Crisje would be devastated if she wasn’t so strong inside. Moreover she could cry about it day and night but she refuses to do so. She can’t have that because that is petty and she doesn’t want anything to do with pettiness. But it has gone from her.

Precisely, Crisje, it is living there, it is lying there, it is sleeping there. Yesterday evening, at seven minutes to ten, it was torn away from your life by the process which people call ‘being born’. Not a second too early or too late, exactly on time and exactly in the right place. Crisje, if you only knew that you had bore a spiritual prince,

a prince of the Universe! You will probably only hear what it means from this child in forty years time, possibly a bit earlier. If I went into it and followed the event, I could tell you down to the last second, but that is not the intention. Why should I grant you this wisdom? It would only exhaust you. But how would you receive this life then? If Tall Hendrik had known this, Crisje, then he would not be a person anymore and he would have exploded. But we can't have that! The stars and planets, Crisje, know about this life. This life is 'WAYTI', Crisje! You will hear later what this word means! But I'm telling you, the suns, the stars and planets, this Universe shines from the eyes of Jeus. Honestly, that silly Gerrit saw and felt it. Many will still feel it. The first days after the birth, but then it will be gone and Jeus will be a perfectly ordinary child. But this life is in the hands of them, Crisje, who no longer belong to this life, but who once also knew a material life. You will not learn this through your pure, good, best friend, Father, he doesn't know the truth of the matter either. This lives somewhere else and no university has been built for it yet. Jeus will do that! You must feel it, Crisje. I am talking like a madman or as an omniscient person, but this omniscience lives in your Jeus! And that was the feeling, your floating, your being one with the child, this life, which you felt all that time and as a result of which you were so happy and exalted. Think about it, Crisje, it is good for later, when he awakens and wishes to talk to you! But you will walk away now and again, Crisje. Then you will be at a loss, because he will ask you questions, that will dazzle you and which no person can answer to a child, because it is not possible. Exactly, Crisje, you must think, observe everything, it is re-experience, which Jeus will also have to do some time, if he wishes to give shape to and deal with the laws of Our Lord, and give them a place in this, oh, so rotten society. Carry on, Crisje, we are keeping watch!

There is a visitor. Mrs De Man comes with soup for Crisje, but she doesn't like . It would make her sick and she can't have that. She must not upset herself, that is harmful for the child. Crisje gives her another wise lesson. With Mrs De Man the lie is standing in front of her mind and her heart. She solemnly resolves to tell Father everything. Crisje hammers away at the human soul, where so much evil lives. She can't help it, each time she meets bad people Crisje conjures up purgatory and stokes these fires in such a way that people will definitely be

frightened. Trui says:

‘That woman doesn’t pay any heed to purgatory anyway; you should throw her directly into hell. She is shrewd, she is...’ Trui has even more to add, which Crisje had to make do with, and Trui knows all about it. However Crisje never admits defeat and people know when you come to Crisje you will get worldly wisdom with a capital ‘w’ or a sermon which is not to be sneezed at, and which stands out a mile. Put that in your pipe and smoke it. This little apple comes straight from the Garden of Eden! Is it tasty? You have your pockets full and steal like ravens. You will, therefore go straight to purgatory or even worse, the hells are waiting for you. But Mrs De Man says:

‘I will take care of it, Crisje. I will better my life, but I must have time.’

This is just exactly something for Crisje. ‘What do you mean? Time? You have already wasted and drunk your time. It is terrible to have to say it, but it is true. You must start a better life now! You must bow your head for Our Lord. Have you understood, Mrs De Man? And what did you do with my mark? What? That’s the last time, as long as you know. It is scandalous, you drank that money anyway, didn’t you?’

Crisje takes that unsightly woman to task, such, as it has never happened to her before. But it is pretty dreadful. It is so terrible that Crisje can find no words for it. So bad! Mrs De Man is in purgatory again and Trui, who is following all of this attentively, even if Crisje is talking so quietly, leers at the new mother with eagle eyes. Be careful now that that cursed woman doesn’t get any more money. Because that is serving the devil! And Trui doesn’t want that, she is better off without him. But oh, this Trui is not open to Our Lord either. Crisje has noticed it thousands of times already. Trui is mean. Her heart refuses if she has to fork out money. She now makes things worse and wants that woman to go. She should slurp her soup herself. Trui says: ‘I saw you shuffling along three times to Hent Klink, Mrs De Man’, then Crisje knows that this person has taken outrageous advantage of her again. Three visits to Hent Klink and in times like this. Three measures of cheap gin is nothing, but these people drink it by the litre. But now the reproach is starting to make an impression on Mrs De Man and she becomes visibly anxious. Crisje starts to feel sorry for the wretch and changes the subject to her husband and son and

the ordinary everyday things. Trui is now ruled out, Crisje feels, she can get to a person and, oh, Crisje is really stupid, that she gave her the chance to completely destroy this life. She cannot forgive herself for this. But what kind of things has she landed herself in? What kind of terrible things do people bring with them, walk round with and get wrapped up in? Worries are horrible, are insufferable for heart and soul, and Crisje wants nothing to do with them. Now it is crystal clear that Trui sits behind her curtains and spies on people. She doesn't give up yet and wants to be right. Trui wants to give Crisje a slap in the face; otherwise she will have lost her status in this neighbourhood.

'And? Can't you answer me, Mrs De Man? Didn't you go and fetch jenever three times?'

Mrs De Man feels that the torture is starting all over again. When she is angry she can swear like a trooper and she becomes livid. Then her face becomes so hard, so beastly and demonic that it is frightening. There are people who avoid her because they think that she is the devil in person; such a demonic influence surrounds this woman.

The woman moves a little and then addresses Trui: 'Do you know what you can do, old sourpuss, poison ivy? What do you want from me, bitch?'

There will be an argument and a bust-up, Crisje thinks and she can't have that. She orders Trui to hold her tongue and says calmly to Mrs De Man that she needs rest and asks her to leave. And how polite the unsightly woman is now. She can do that for Crisje and knows now that she must not row. But the strength of her one eye floors Trui. Crisje is bid good day, Trui is invisible to her. With her skirts up and her head in her neck, this twenty-two high turf stack goes out the door. But Trui just catches up with her and orders her:

'Through the back, only people go through the front door.'

Mrs De Man spits on the ground. Crisje turns away. That one will not be back in the near future. It really is scandalous, thinks Crisje. And today of all days. 'If that isn't a nasty piece!'

They are busy talking. The sisters have something to say to each other. But Crisje retreats into herself and asks Trui to be quiet. In the past Trui was not able to do that, which is also why she stayed away so long. She cannot forget anything and always wants to have the last word. Trui refuses to accept anything. But now she holds her tongue and this is a gain for her character.

Crisje needs time to recover. This is really something. And all this on an empty stomach. Thank God that Hendrik wasn't home. Then there would have been the devil to pay. Through other people you always end up with misery and trouble. But what is that person doing here? Who wants to have anything to do with that woman? But can you keep the door closed for a person? Let's forget it, Trui thinks. But Crisje gets to hear that you don't have to look for lice, there's enough around. She needn't try knocking at Trui's door. But, Crisje knows, with the bad you get the good ones. Sometimes you can experience happiness through people but in that case you would have lost it. And Christ said: 'There are many dwellings in My Father's house.' Never close a door in the face of His children or He will keep the doors of His Kingdom closed for you! And that is something for which Crisje has sacred respect. They are the very roots of practising charity. But in spite of all that, Crisje feels that she has been had again in a bad way! Bad people have taken her for a ride in a bullying way and so badly that she doesn't even dare to tell Hendrik. And Trui knows all of that. She has already experienced this for years and moreover, she knows that it was she herself who ruined Hendrik completely during the first months of their marriage by telling him everything that Crisje did. But then it started! Then Hendrik was given what for and Crisje laid her own solid foundations for her happiness, peace and quiet. Their marriage is now on solid rocks. They are the foundations, which cannot be affected by anyone! However, what was Crisje's life like at the beginning of her marriage?

Horrible! Trui gossiped and came between her and Hendrik. Trui saw everything wrong. But still Crisje didn't mind her coming round. But Crisje had her plans and believed that she shouldn't do anything yet, then she would have a right to speak later and she could tell her Hendrik the truth, with all his wrong carrying-on and thoughts. It lasted one year. But then Tall Hendrik got what for and Trui got such a beating, which was in fact a great miracle, that even uncle Gradus became angry and had to protect his wife, or Hendrik would have killed her. She screamed like a pig being slaughtered; Hendrik had got hold of her mean person so tenaciously. Finally Crisje had to come to the aid of her sister. And how sorry Crisje was! But she had thought everything through from beginning to end. Crisje had had to tell her husband because the pile of complaints had become such a horrible

mountain that she almost collapsed under it. It was all Trui's fault, because she couldn't stand it that Crisje did good things, and was open to everyone and even gave things away from her modest possessions which she could do without. Trui thought that was a silly carry-on and couldn't stand it. It was very difficult for Tall Hendrik to be able to see through this. But not for Crisje, and when she saw through her sister completely, she knew how to sort that one out, if she didn't want to see her happiness and household go to pieces because of her sister's jealous talk. And when Hendrik finally understood that Trui defiled his Crisje, his happiness, his love in order to put herself in a good light, Hendrik floored Trui with one blow. Uncle Gradus, otherwise a wimp of a man, became angry, stood in front of Tall Hendrik and gave his side of the story. Hendrik should leave! And he did. There was friction for months, they did not talk or look at each other. Trui and Crisje lived in a state of war, but Crisje knew: she was right. She didn't have to feel ashamed. Father also knew all about it, and agreed with Crisje completely. Yes, Father was a party to all of it, because she had confessed all her sins, as a result of which her confessor understood everything about her life. When Hendrik believed that he had to give Crisje a good hiding, Father intervened and said to Tall Hendrik:

'Have you finally got your eyes open, Hendrik? Are you trying to tell me that it's your Crisje?'

Father was not allowed to give anything away from the confessional box. But to Hendrik, Father is not so high and mighty as you think, he doesn't know for himself beforehand what the situation was. Crisje analyzed everything and then confessed it honestly. As a result of this Father had respect for this pure life, this child of God, this unique soul. 'Don't touch Crisje', Father had said to Tall Hendrik, 'then you will have me to answer to! And if you lay your hands on Trui, you don't have to come back to me again, Hendrik. Because we are all sinners and children of one Father! But Crisje, you leave her alone! Crisje belongs to us all, Hendrik, because Crisje is a blessing for the church!'

Father made sure that Trui started talking again. Because that was certainly desirable. After all, they lived next to each other. If Crisje had to see to her pigs or chickens and Trui, like her, was also busy at the back of the house, Crisje felt as if she were being stabbed by knives. Many a night Crisje lay crying about it, for months on end and hour after hour she sent up her prayers. Finally her prayers were

heard. When Trui came round again the heavens opened for Crisje. Trui was still a difficult person with an annoying character, but you had to oblige just such a person and help her as much as possible. Trui had learned something, but for both Tall Hendrik and Crisje it was a difficult task to live in harmony with her. Hendrik did not pay much attention to his sister-in-law any more. Anybody should dare now to say anything against his wife. Hendrik thanked God on his bare knees that He had saved his Crisje for him. As a result of all that misery he had created a heaven with his Cris, which no one could take away from them again. If Trui wished, she could look in and mop the floors. But there wasn't any more for her to do there. Trui had no eyes and even less understanding for Crisje and Hendrik's happiness. This had become the life psychology of two people, which only came into existence through love and justice.

Now there was no other person in the world, no matter how knowledgeable, who could drive a wedge between Tall Hendrik and Crisje. Trui had come up against a brick wall. The whole neighbourhood and complete surroundings knew of the happiness and wisdom which reigned in this family. Even the boss in Emmerik came to hear about it and invited Crisje to visit. He also wanted to meet this wonder of wisdom and love some time, from whom there was so much to learn. And so Crisje put on her new dress and went with Hendrik to Emmerik to visit his lord and master, the wine merchant. It was a real feast for her. The boss quickly noticed that the wife of his employee was of better stock and when, during the conversation, she told about which families she used to have contact with, the boss and his wife sat there listening with their mouths wide open and with looks of astonishment. But Tall Hendrik had backed a winner, as long as he was aware of that. Crisje was a lady. They couldn't stop talking about it and later they asked her several times whether she would come again. But she didn't have time for that. After all she had her own life and household, and was far too busy to pay visits often.

Crisje now lets Trui think what she likes. She knows her sister and knows that the fire in her burns out very quickly. She would pile up trouble upon trouble if they got under each other's feet. Crisje possesses an infallible intuition to allow this life to muddle on until the moment of spiritual awakening. She sees that her sister is up to her neck among the weeds. Crisje now lets her sort it out herself, and,

sensible as always, she just agrees with Trui and follows the only path, shown by Our Lord: the path of 'love'. After all, because she is life, a woman and a human being, Trui also wants to have a taste of what makes those two so happy. For her it is one healthy boy after another. Crisje is probably right, maybe she is too rigid, too staid and too hard on herself. Who knows. Yet, Trui has learned something. She contains herself more easily, and doesn't open her mouth so quickly any more. She already prefers to leave the house than to start on Hendrik, and to challenge him to a duel as it were, as she used to. And Tall Hendrik? Oh, he generally doesn't see her any more. He is finished with Trui and if now and again she is within his sight, then he only sees a person, who is only here a while, but whom he wants as little as possible to do with. This is also why Trui had to leave that bottle of wine alone. He will not let it be sullied by her no matter what. Crisje got a fright of course, because she felt for Trui and understood Hendrik. Trui kept her lips tightly closed, but steered clear of her brother-in-law and did not stir up trouble. Silently, Crisje gave her a pat on the back. Her sister now really stood up to Hendrik. They were the signs of awakening and relaxing, although they didn't mean much to Our Lord yet. However, if Trui was faced with other people, she was immediately ready for attack. Despite all of this, she was still busy laying a foundation. Of course, it was clear that this was only for her own self and happiness, with the apparent intention of winning a place amongst all these people who, after all, had their own flaws. According to Trui everything stank! And if a person had no clothes on any more, he was nothing. Crisje found the expressions which her sister always used too cheap, too transparent and too poor in spirit. They were nothing more than trying to save her own self, which was, however, not acknowledged openly and consciously by a single person in the village. People found her just an ordinary person, a beanpole with a mouth and some hair on it. Uncle Gradus' Trui was a cold and impassive figure and definitely not a chaplet for Crisje. Her dress rehearsals for communion and other religious customs bounced off the walls of the church and people saw through them. People knew what a prayer from her was worth. No, if they needed help they asked Crisje to pray for their happiness and bliss, who was happy to do so. But there were so many. Therefore when she saw that they were not worth it and didn't do anything themselves for it, she stopped

with her prayers. After all, Our Lord was not a market vendor. Trui's prayers hung like wet washing in the garden when there is no dryness in the air and it is misty day and night. Everyone knew that and she herself did as well. Her mind would not crack and burst and her feeling couldn't develop. She missed the vital spark. Father also knew that, because he knew his flock. The maternal warm feeling, the urge to caress and soothe, to love everything that lives, did not reach any higher than the bench she was sitting on. People did not accept the humility which she displayed. No one took that seriously. Born and bred together in the same area, they were completely familiar with each other's characters. They knew what you were thinking about, what you felt and what was on your mind. Trui's prayers, said Tall Hendrik, were like a chicken which could cackle but which never laid an egg. Of course it went in the pot, because you have to slaughter greedy-guts!

Crisje sees today that Trui often falls back into her own hard world, but has learned something, and that is worth thanking Our Lord for. Crisje prays for the well-being of her family and for all her other fellow human beings; prayers which fly into the universe. Crisje must have had answers to her prayers at least fifty times. People came to tell her themselves that their troubles had disappeared. It was because of her, her prayer could work wonders. And Father also knew that, as a result of which no child of his parish could point a finger at her, or they would have to answer to him. She had acquired this wonderful respect and Tall Hendrik could make hay and allow himself to say: 'I am the happiest man in the world!' Trui has lost and no longer tries to upset this marriage, because she would break her neck on the foundations laid, which have been blessed by Our Lord himself.

And now: it's okay. Trui is searching for a path. Crisje lets her sister discover this path for herself. Help not asked for would work as an obstruction in the development of Trui's character. Of course Crisje is prepared to assist her and to take care of her day and night with her great love.

But Trui is there again and Crisje finds this a supernatural mercy. When she comes back, after she has let Mrs De Man out the door, Crisje says:

'You are right, Trui. Such people are the downfall of another.'

That is grist to Trui's mill. She has her answer already:

'I could have told you and taught you that before, but you think that I have no heart.'

Yes, Trui, now you are right. Giving money to Mrs De Man is serving the devil.

Trui throws the soup out for the pigs, which costs Crisje a quick prayer again, because there are so many poor people who could have benefited from it. This is a sin in Crisje's eyes and she resolves, when the first pig is slaughtered in the autumn, to give a portion of it to the first beggar who happens to come to her door. Mrs De Man won't be forgotten then either. Apart from that, what a day it has been, what a lot she has to think about again and to reflect on before she can do anything, at least if she doesn't want to mess things up and prevent Trui from gaining control.

The neighbours come, neither Crisje nor Trui are particularly keen on the visitors. After all, it is not sincere interest, but only to satisfy their curiosity in seeing how holy Crisje is doing now. Furthermore, there will just be a load of gossip about all the people in the neighbourhood.

'And Crisje, did you have much pain?'

'Oh, Mrs Ruikes, what can I say, it happened on its own.'

'And Crisje, was it very bad?' 'Oh, Mrs Kniep, what can I say? It had happened before I knew it.'

Crisje is getting fed up with the moaning. With a meaningful look at the clock Trui says that it's time for Crisje to rest.

But the women are not planning to move on immediately by the first warning. Such an afternoon must be exploited considerably. The titbit is too tasty to leave just like that. Luckily not too many 'interested people' have come. However there are some whom you almost never see and whom you only know very superficially. But these people also force themselves upon your life and it is very difficult to keep the door closed for them. Crisje could barely appreciate the eggs brought by the visitors. How many people are there who need them far more? Never before did Crisje heartily detest all this fuss so much, all that gossip and this morbid curiosity. How often had the women dragged each other through the mud with their gossip about each other? It was often that this talk also reached the bar of Hent Klink. That then sometimes caused more than flaming rows amongst the men. No, Crisje couldn't care less, what it's like in another person's house and

what another person does. In her house everything is simple and tidy. Trui can manage better because uncle Gradus earns more and there are no children in that household, although, as far as earnings are concerned, a change is starting to take place, because Tall Hendrik thinks of everything to increase his income. Trui really liked to let her sister feel that she was much better off and had a much better life. But Trui doesn't do that anymore. When she once more felt the need to comment on how her sister was less well-off in a condescending manner, Crisje slashed her happiness in one fell swoop.

'The pigs wouldn't eat those riches of yours, Trui. It would make them sick too.' Trui was shocked, became bright red, but was sensible enough to leave this subject alone from then on. No, Trui, that happiness of yours is not worth much. Very sensible of you, that you decided not to go into Crisje's opinion further and not to meddle with her happiness any more. That golden happiness of Crisje is sacrosanct. She won't let it be sullied by any person and therefore not by you either. Trui has made tasty soup. The mood is extraordinarily pleasant and their hearts beam with joy and happiness. When Johan and Bernard assure their mother that they are starving, they are sent to aunt Trui. Johan can sweet-talk so well that you become weak at the knees. But what is seen as sweet-talk often comes from the sensitive, golden heart of the child. That does not escape Trui either and the sincerity of this little character touches her time and again. She also knows very well that Bernard likes her much less and, as young as he is, he sees through her character and actions. She knows that Bernard is forced to put up with her presence, but would really rather not see his aunt.

Tall Hendrik comes in and with his arrival there is authority in the house again. It is now a case of watching out and being careful of your words, because Trui and her brother-in-law are still like fire and water. Only Hendrik doesn't pay much attention to his sister-in-law anymore and she just has to put up with it. He is not impolite to her, but that's about all.

'Good day, Trui.'

'Good day, Hendrik.'

'Good day, Cris. Who all came?'

Crisje greets her husband, but skims over his question.

'Oh, Hendrik, no one special. You know I don't like visitors.'

Did you go to Father?’

‘Naturally, Cris.’

‘And, Hendrik?’

‘We had a nice glass of wine and sat and had a nice chat. What a good person he is, Cris. He knows about everything.’

‘Yes, that’s true. Our priest is a good person. And we should jump for joy that we have got such a good one back. We can’t thank Our Lord enough for that.’

‘Stop it, Cris, he is not a saint either.’ Tall Hendrik restrains his wife a bit; otherwise her soul will take too high a flight with Father.

‘Is Father still coming, Hendrik?’

‘Yes, tomorrow, I think, Cris.’

‘Oh, that’s nice.’

Hendrik enjoys his dinner. He has also had a few drinks but he knows his limit. That is also a quality of his for which Crisje is grateful. He has a lot to do. He looks at Jeus and the boys, then flies out the door again for his portraits and does not come home until late. Of course, Crisje would rather have kept him at home, but she had to resign herself to it. After all, he had got another order again and the money is simply useful.

Late in the evening there is also a visitor, one of their best friends, who is now standing in front of them. Casje, the peddler. Casje is almost as big as Tall Hendrik, but he is an invalid, his forearms are missing. Like Gerrit Noesthede he is an extraordinary joker, but then in a different way. He travels and hikes everywhere and by sheer coincidence he happened to be in the village. He usually hangs out somewhere else. As has already been said, the vendor is a born comedian and Crisje usually has to laugh even when just looking at him. Tall Hendrik greets him with a:

‘The best people always come at night.’

‘Good evening, Crisje.’

Casje cannot shake hands and makes faces instead. He makes a comical face and then you have to laugh, and that is sometimes worth more than a handshake, which often just results in a clammy, horrible feeling. Casje has, also in common with Gerrit Noesthede, a good mind and a handwriting which they cannot improve upon at the town hall. When it is known that he is back in the village, people come to him with letters which contain one thing or another, which

they cannot explain. Casje is well-versed and writes with curls, which Tall Hendrik is jealous of. His deceased parents were well-off and gave him a decent education. It is his own free choice that he is now a peddler and hikes through the country with his wares. He probably won't marry either and will remain alone, although he also pretends that he has had plenty of women and that he has now had more than enough of them.

Casje and Crisje have known each other since they were children and have always got on well together. Tall Hendrik also likes him, because the peddler has become one of them, whom you can really talk to. It was Casje actually who put Hendrik in touch with the man with the portraits. There in Didam, where Casje traipsed about, he met the portrait painter.

'I'll only stay a while, Crisje. I know that I'm late but I heard about your Jeus and I thought I won't deny myself that, you would never be able to forgive me!'

Hendrik and Casje talk a bit about the run of things regarding the portraits. Casje claims that Hendrik can make a mint of money with them, if he goes out now and again. He himself cannot have this business on top of his own. Hendrik knows that he really doesn't need this whole business, because when it comes down to it, Casje has a nest egg. That nest egg is lying quietly somewhere amongst the people, and Casje knows for certain that no one is capable of swindling him out of this money. So sharp and quick-witted is Casje. Leave that to him. They have another drink. This day won't be forgotten in a hurry.

Casje's chest is standing in the corner of the kitchen. He can never come without bringing something for Crisje. He will also make her happy again this time with a present. He dives into his peddler's chest and rummages about. Then he finds what he is looking for and shows it to Tall Hendrik. The rover is a born diplomat and good judge of character, with a good heart and honest through and through. Casje shows Hendrik his present for Crisje and she can have no scruples about it. Because with this gift of his friendship Casje is clearly showing that he is not thinking of entering a territory where he doesn't belong. Certainly, Casje is only a simple person and a very ordinary peddler, but with a spiritual magnitude which prevents him from touching those sacred things and truths which a husband demands for himself. Nothing or no one can or may come between this. These

are sacred matters, which only the husband is entitled to take care of for his wife. Casje knows: the wife must have a cross and chain from her own husband and no other.

Hendrik is afraid that Casje doesn't know his Crisje. A pity, he thinks, because now he has to hurt his friend. How can he intervene so quickly that Crisje is not presented with something, which she cannot accept, and Casje is spared a painful refusal. Tall Hendrik is sitting there like a beaten dog, the personification of the worst disaster, because Crisje has been longing for a cross and chain for such a long time, he feels like a dirty old dog and a senseless nasty piece of work because he should have taken care of that long ago. Today of all days it would have been almost the height of bliss for her and, yet again, it goes through his head. It is as if it is not meant to be!

But Hendrik has been worried for nothing. After all, Casje's inner feeling has already warned him. It will remain a mystery for both of them how this is possible. From her box bed Crisje could follow those two there in the kitchen and saw what the visitor first wanted to take out of the chest. But she will never wear that! Never a cross and chain from a man who doesn't belong to you. That would be a snare for yourself with regard to Our Lord. A prayer which you would send up would always concern the man from whom you received the cross and chain. That touches the soul, the spirit, life and happiness. Crisje would only contaminate and defile herself with it. No, never, could she wear that thing, only Tall Hendrik can give it to her, and then it is a blessing!

Casje doesn't give Crisje a cross and chain. Hendrik should be pleased that he is so sensitive. He does exactly what the mother of Jeus wants him to do, takes a nice cloth and brings it to her. 'Look, Crisje, for Jeus.' And this is a beautiful gift. The silk shines towards her. 'Casje, thank you!' Also from the 'angels' here, Casje, whom you cannot see, but who granted you that sensitivity and which also means for you that there is more between heaven and earth which people know nothing about! But we assure you: Our Lord was pleased with your decision.

It is a strange sight to see Casje use a fork and knife with his wooden arms. If he wants to write he slides his wooden arms and hands onto his stumps, leans his elbows on the table and embellishes his writing with curls, which they could take as an example in the ministries

and other official offices. For that matter Casje had been a town clerk writer for a while in a town hall, but his love of nature was so strong that he gave up his job and one fine day he said:

‘You can find another for me, I’m not a person for sitting.’

This was the end of Casje’s career as a town clerk and his bartering along the road and his life in God’s free, wonderful nature started. As far afield as Zwolle people now know the travelling peddler with his antics and merriment, his human kindness and his magnitude of soul and spirit. Casje, who was still a gentleman and remained a gentleman, despite his occasional high-spirited moods, when he would jump about round his peddler’s chest like a complete madman, like a bull fighter in the arena around a wounded bull, because that brought him happiness. It brought him so much happiness that he sometimes didn’t know what to do with it. What did a person want with that cursed money? What did a person want with money, if he didn’t have normal arms and a normal body? So was he not a person? Well no, you don’t have to talk to Casje about Our Lord, who loves all His children. Not that. Crisje knows Casje and Casje knows Crisje. They have talked out their petty things more than once together, and still built up an enormous respect and reverence for each other. One of them knows that the great faith in her Lord cannot be affected or shattered by anything, while the other one knows that she has to leave this soul alone. She couldn’t help here. The deficient pair of arms comes between this and cannot be got rid of. But Casje is a good person and not a tramp.

They were good friends and remained so. Crisje never tried to serve the deformed person with the holy sacraments any more. She left that to Father.

In those days Hendrik had had some fun never to be forgotten. Both fought for one and the same law, one and the same Lord. The one a God-fearing woman, the other a man with arm stumps.

Casje was always welcome and Crisje was always there for him, made coffee and served him as she served Tall Hendrik. Not so long ago Casje came unexpectedly and knocked in his own fashion on the windows at half past three at night. Crisje, who was awake immediately, jumped out of her warm bed, stoked up the stove, fried eggs, gave the visitor a straw mattress and got back under the blankets. Hendrik wakened for a moment and said: ‘Good night Casje’

and went back to sleep. That's Crisje for you! She did that for him as well as for others. But this friend possessed her heart and affection, because he was a gentleman and was such a good influence on her Hendrik. But Crisje went through fire for all her friends; everyone could count on her help and assistance. Never ever did anyone knock on her heart or house for nothing.

Casje always knocked on the windows in a special way. Then Tall Hendrik mumbled in his sleep:

'Cris, Casje's here.'

Casje knew that his friends lived here. Crisje was like a mother to him. Both had a profound respect for each other, but they did not give each other an inch. However, these strong personalities understood the art of living, how to react in certain circumstances. Casje did a bunk now. He was still expected somewhere else. Hendrik now crawled into bed and promised Crisje that he would think about the cross and chain. Crisje knew her husband, but she would never ask for it. Never! Then there would be no bliss to be seen or felt on the cross and chain. So deep were Crisje's feelings for this gift, and so deep was its meaning for her spiritual life. She would not let this sully her, not even for a cross of diamonds. But she wanted a cross and chain from her Tall Hendrik! But who could let him know this, who could give him this feeling? You cannot force feelings. You saw that with Trui, with Mrs De Man and almost every person. It sometimes took a lifetime to acquire a bit of feeling. Time and again you had to be ready to be able to help a person and to want to understand, otherwise you were not as Our Lord wished you to be. Crisje is resting and Hendrik is already snoring. But, what a miracle, his snoring is much less piercing. He is now sleeping in a very civilized way with his trap shut. If that could be conquered as well, he will be her king with a cardboard crown, but still of real nobility!

Crisje has much to pray about tonight, a lot to give thanks for and to be happy about. Today she has dealt with quite a bit, and has made a clean sweep. As long as she doesn't get herself into any more new troubles, life will be wonderful again and the neighbours and everyone in the area will have her blessing. Jeus is having a nice sleep. The child is as sound as a bell. Everything is going very well and she already feels able to get up tomorrow if necessary. Hendrik kissed his wife three times and went back to work. An hour later Mina also

comes in. They are busy talking. Anxiously picking your words is not necessary now, because Mina absorbs everything and Crisje doesn't have to worry that Trui will do anything wrong again. The morning flies past and it is already afternoon when Crisje experiences her great joy. Father has come to visit her.

'Good day, Crisje, how are you?'

'Very well, Father, thank you.'

'And where is Jeus now? So, is that Jeus? My Crisje, what nice eyes he has.'

'From feeding, Father, because he has just been fed.'

'No, Crisje, none of that, he looks different from the other two boys. It is true. You can be grateful to Our Lord, Crisje!'

'I am grateful, Father, and Father knows that, don't you? But I have something to confess, Father.'

'Have you something to confess, Crisje? I will forgive you anyway!'

'No, Father, I'm serious.'

Crisje tells what is really wrong. She has been lying terribly and it burdens her. The child's feed has been spoiled because of it. That is too much for Father Luninkhof. That is very bad. He tells Crisje what she should have done.

'I would like to tell you something, Crisje, stay the way you are and I will forgive you everything through Our Lord. But now I want to look at Jeus.'

The good man looks at the child. Jeus has already closed his eyes, the young life is sleeping. The priest observes the young life and is now thinking and feeling. Crisje notices that something special is about to happen. Father is daydreaming. The silence has entered him, Crisje feels. Could that be the same, wonderful silence and peace which descended into her so often while carrying Jeus? Yes, Crisje, those same feelings have entered Father by looking at and fathoming of the child. Something is coming from this small being. It lifted up the spirit of the elderly priest and took him to another world. It is taking a long time. At least ten minutes have passed and Father is still sitting there without moving. He now possesses wings and is in another world, in that of the universe. He hears singing and sees flowers. He feels himself raised up and become one with God. Crisje waits respectfully. Then life returns to Father again. He rubs his eyes and then says:

'Well, Crisje, I was in a heaven! My child, how grateful you can be.'

And what a beautiful child it is. I will think of him and include him in my prayers!’

That is the nicest gift, which Crisje can receive. Father returns to his church and kneels at the altar. What was the full meaning of his vision? He thanked God for this glimpse of heaven. Through Jeus he was in contact with the heavens. A great and mighty wonder. This child of Crisje will make a name for himself one day. Jeus is a heavenly child and a power lives in that soul, which is not of this world. Everyone feels that. Tall Hendrik did not say too much, on the contrary. But what is it? What is it? Father can only thank God, he doesn’t see and feel more than that. But he was under the influence of the child, and he bowed his head. This priest got wings. He travelled in the same way as Crisje was able to do for nine months, but which gift she now no longer possesses. A great pity, but maybe there will be other times and other children. However, she is certain of one thing. She will not have two of these rays of light. She will talk to Hendrik about it sometime.

Father said exactly what she thought of it herself. You may not support drunkards and help to promote evil in a person. That is wrong. Trui is also right, Crisje, but of course that is a completely different matter.

When Tall Hendrik comes home, Crisje’s face is beaming with bliss and you can also see on Hendrik’s face that he is a happy person. Where there is so much blessing, where so much sympathy is experienced, the human eye receives a gleam and a shine, heart and mind become weak. It gives a new form to the spirit and personality, it casts a spell on the person, makes his footsteps lighter and turns him, even if he doesn’t believe it himself, completely upside down and makes him into a different person. How long such a thing lasts is not important. Every person gets to experience an hour or a day like that, because that’s why you are human after all.

‘Good day, Trui.’

‘Good day, Hendrik.’

Crisje listens, pleased. Does she hear a better and higher tuned tone, or what is it?’

‘Tell me quickly, Cris, what all happened to you today.’

She tells everything precisely with all the details and doesn’t forget anything, or that she confessed as well. Tall Hendrik has to laugh. It

comes bursting out. He has brought something nice again and this bottle must also be uncorked. Trui has to have a drink too, even if she claims not to like any wine now. Her protest is not accepted. She will drink a glass of wine to the health of mother and child. Good health, Cris, there you go.

‘Heavens above, Hendrik, that’s a good one.’

‘That will be right’, Hendrik screams, ‘I was allowed to pick mine. Here is one from the boss and one from his wife. Look, Cris? It’s this one.’

Crisje looks at the fine bottle of wine, pure blood, according to her husband, and for her alone. If she happens to feel like it. Trui is a bit more talkative, but goes home soon. Tall Hendrik actually asks whether Gradus is coming. She will pass on the request. There is unity again for them. The door of their temple is closed, they are alone again.

Hendrik knows that Crisje only discusses her most sacred problems with him if she feels that both Hendrik and herself are in the right spiritual harmony. Gradus is not coming, Trui drops in to tell them that he has gone to a meeting. Even better, thinks Tall Hendrik, then he can devote himself entirely to Cris and he will hear something for a change.

When Tall Hendrik stands in front of Jeus and it is taking too long for Crisje before he says anything, she is afraid that, like Father, he will lose his thoughts for this world and she therefore calls him back:

‘You are doing the same as Father, Hendrik. He also couldn’t get enough and thought that he was sitting in a heaven thinking!’

‘You can think what you like about me, Cris, but he has something! I don’t believe it myself, tomorrow I will have forgotten it again, now I can’t understand it.’

‘Shall I tell you something, Hendrik?’

‘What do you want to tell me?’

‘I had to cry about him. I had to cry because I am now alone, now I can’t fly or listen any more. Now I will probably no longer feel that silence, now I am as poor as a church mouse.’

But that is pretty crazy, thinks Hendrik. He has never heard Crisje like this before. ‘What are you saying?’, he asks. ‘What do you mean?’

‘Yes,’ Crisje continues, ‘Hendrik, what Father felt, I felt and carried for nine months.’

'I've been flying for so long! I have been in that silence for so long, in that heaven. I do not yet know what all this means, but it will be something! That is as certain as anything, Hendrik. And he has something to say.'

Yes, Hendrik, how must Crisje express this in words? She feels it. She has experienced it, it was part of her heart. Even though every mother experiences something similar, this is different! This has a universal meaning. It is pure spiritual gold, it connects you with all of God's life. When Tall Hendrik has listened to everything and he sees that Crisje is deadly serious, he follows the peaceful breathing of the child again. For a moment he tears himself loose, as if he is afraid of starting to float as well, and he doesn't want to lose himself!

The choir comes to sing

The days fly past. It is a real feast day after day. Crisje feels strong again, but Mina wants her to enjoy her rest up to the last day and the last hour. This evening the singers are coming and they will hear the skill of Tall Hendrik. Jeus is already seven days old now. He can cry well and Hendrik believes that he will be able to do something with this voice. But Crisje laughs at him. He mustn't exaggerate. She has lain down again; the men can come any minute. Gerrit is the first to arrive. He blows up the events of life like fairground balloons until they burst and whirl to the ground in pieces. And like the balloons the stories are also made available to the public in different bright colours. And the fun and the mirth of the onlookers are often not surpassed by the real cheering of a fairground. In addition, after his fifth or sixth drink, his mixture of French and Italian language becomes agitated, but it does not deter him from speaking. However, the friends, with just as little talent for languages as Gerrit himself, believe that he would manage fine if he was in the country concerned. Only Tall Hendrik knows better, but leaves it at that, of course. He finds Gerrit, as does Crisje, a fine person to associate with and he also knows that his bass singer also has his serious moments and can also say what he has to say in a proper manner.

As if he had just arrived, however he has been seated at the table for some time, he suddenly stands up and starts off again: 'First I say good day to you Crisje, and then to your body and soul, Hendrik. But at the end of the day you are the sculptor of that flesh and blood. True or not, Cris?'

What can she say to this now? Crisje chuckles a bit. However, Gerrit does not expect an answer and sits down at the table again. They are waiting for the others. 'Good gracious', he suddenly starts again, 'now I've forgotten Jeus as well.'

'How is he, Crisje?'

'Fine, Gerrit.'

'I will now let him hear how I can sing, Crisje. He wants to sleep, or not? But he can forget about that. I will let him hear how we can sing here. Or he had better go back where he came from. When he is big, Hendrik, he can ask me to sing the first tenor.'

Peter and Jan have arrived in the meantime. The other pair, who will sing bass, and the second tenor, Jantje van Stien, are still to come. Peter has received a request to come and sing in Wezel. And they are definitely going to. They know Wezel, they have had several successes there and they earned such fame in Meiderich that they have received invitations from deep within Germany. Peter and Hendrik are the stars of the choir.

Jan's voice is not one of the strongest, but on the other hand Gerrit's voice can surge so that he carries the whole bass part. Peter is from Saksen who will never learn to speak Dutch or talk the local dialect. That language, strung together of German and dialect, with which he tries to make himself understood, can be felt in your stomach, it tickles and, as with Gerrit's nonsense, you cannot resist laughing. However, Peter has a beautiful voice and the general opinion is that he could make good money with singing.

Finally the team is complete.

They start to get tuned in towards each other. Even this is nice for Crisje and it has its own charm for her. The men clear their throats. Crisje can distinguish every sound, the high voices, Gerrit's bass and her Hendrik's tenor.

All in all a noise to drive you crazy. In the street, people are already standing there in expectation of what they will get to hear. They like a free singing performance. And they will probably clap as well.

'Now we must start', the men hear from Peter, 'we can always chat later.'

Crisje smiles. 'Yes, Peter, They're good at chatting. Gerrit chats the whole evening, the whole week, well the whole year through.' The men take position. And didn't I know it? Crisje already suspected that Tall Hendrik had a plan in his head again. The Tall One enters the bedroom and gets Johan out of his bed. But Crisje does not appreciate this nonsense, and does not hesitate to respond. Now what has this child to do with their singing? However, Hendrik pretends to have heard nothing and goes and stands in front of Peter with his eldest son.

'Look, Peter, at this child. Johan can sing. This week I heard him sing. Come on, Johan; just let us hear your voice. Sing us Silent Night... Holy Night.'

Johan, taken out of his bed unexpectedly and probably not in the

gentlest of manners, stands quivering and quaking, his little legs wobbly from sleep. He squeals for a moment and then starts to weep. So Hendrik just puts the child back to bed. The men know that they can expect anything from him, but it is a relief for them when the child is back in its bed.

‘Now’, asks Peter, ‘are you ready? First bar. ‘Im schönen Wiesengrunde.’ This is always the first song, which the men sing. Now the voices are warming up and it becomes serious. Tall Hendrik is standing in front of his men. His arms go up. Nothing can shake their concentration now. The men are now deadly serious. Even Gerrit will not get it into his silly head to talk nonsense. Before that sometimes used to be the case, but Tall Hendrik forces them into line with his eyes. His eyes are now shooting fire. Due to his commanding presence and his beautiful voice there is contact and unity in the quartet and the general willingness to give the best of what they have. They have started!

That is beautiful. Crisje hums along with the men. But then she suddenly stops. She changes her mind. Tall Hendrik can’t stand it, and she has already had to hear a lot about it.

‘Then’, as he said, ‘you must just join in yourself.’ He knew he couldn’t keep any discipline then. And that humming along sounded like the squeaking of a mouse caught in a trap which also had its tail trapped. Crisje had to make do with that. ‘Im schönen Wiesengrunde.’ Listen to that sound. Gerrit’s deep voice sounds beautiful. If Crisje were to look at Jan Maandag she would have to laugh. Which is why she wisely doesn’t. Jan stretches up his gaunt body completely and is dancing like a chicken on stilts. He is then singing with his feet. He sings with his whole body and pulls a face like St. Nicholas who is about to hand out ginger nuts but notices that there isn’t a single ginger nut left in the sack.

Tall Hendrik also changes like a leaf of a tree. He becomes a different person, you would almost say, a more beautiful person. Peter expands his voice and Hendrik follows him. But these two voices really carry the whole choir, Crisje thinks. It could almost make you weep, it is so moving. But listen to that Hendrik. They have the voices of the gods in their throat and possess a thousand times as much talent as the others. If you hear these two, you definitely don’t need to go to the town to hear a nicer song. The song is finished. Now the discussion follows.

'You!', Peter already begins 'You let that bar disappear. That's 'Kugelhupf'.' Not a single person knows what this means. 'And you, Gerrit, your bass, your accompaniment was too deep. What do you think Hendrik?' Tall Hendrik also gives his opinion. Gerrit came forward too strongly with his bass tone, so that the others had to sing above it if they wished at the end to give that shine to the correct proportions and the whole character, which it deserves.

'Once more', Peter says, 'and now when you come in, feel where it's going. And also finish with feeling.'

Peter has this in hand. Of course, Tall Hendrik is the conductor and stands in front of the troop, but Peter sorts this out with Hendrik. However, if he feels that Peter is off the mark, but that is rarely the case, he gets to hear about it. Peter, who has had his own choir and has scored great triumphs with them in Germany, knows the voices and knows how the people have to give themselves. And again Crisje hears 'Im schönen Wiesengrunde'. But now someone else is singing the sixth tenor, without bothering about the beat or rhythm and even Tall Hendrik is powerless to enforce silence on this voice. Jeus has wakened and starts bawling. Crisje sends the child her thoughts and, as though it feels her and realizes that the singing is in his honour, it is silent, and lies quietly watching. Gerrit has to say quickly before they open their mouths again: 'He wouldn't dare, Cris!'

They are singing again. Jeus now remains quiet. However, Crisje has her heart in her mouth, because meanwhile Johan and Bernard have also wakened and look at their mother as if to say: 'What has father got into his head now and what does this mean, you haven't a minute's peace in this house. You can't even have a decent sleep.' It now seems like there is a whole opera singing, so powerful and full it sounds. Even Jan Maandag is different and isn't moving about so much. And from Tall Hendrik and his men a power flows towards Crisje, and moves through the whole house, which gives those lives inspiration and makes hearts beat faster and even forces the children to listen carefully. The ethereal sounds which are present in those powers, and the voices inside, make a hole in your life and burrow into your personality, yes, it gives you a lump in your throat, because they possess a clarity and vividness from which, even if you have very little feeling for music and are insensitive to the purity of this singing, you hear unconsciously that this is close to perfection.

There is admiration from the bedroom, and it comes from Johan: 'Goodness me, Father, that is so beautiful, isn't it?'

Hendrik races over to Crisje. 'That is some compliment, Cris'. 'Thank you, Johan, thank you.'

Now Johan is allowed to say something like that and the child also feels that. But he mustn't try this if his father is not in a good mood or playing the violin. Hendrik does not tolerate that children judge whether something is nice or not, that is only fitting for parents. Johan may count himself lucky, that father is in the mood for fun and pleasure and that the men are there and that his father is also fully aware that he himself wakened the children.

'How was it, Cris?' Hendrik asks.

'Beautiful, Hendrik, it was lovely.'

'Did you hear that, men? Now it was better.' Peter chortles and says: 'And now our new song for Crisje.'

Tall Hendrik races back to the bedroom. With a few steps he is at Crisje's side, because right next to the large kitchen, which is a living room, sitting room and everything else, is the small bedroom where they sleep.

'Now you will hear something, Cris. You must listen carefully and tell us what you think of it.'

'Well, Hendrik', says Crisje. 'I will listen well and tell you honestly what I think of it.'

What is the new song called? Peter is already putting the papers together. This still has to be done, but later they will sing it off by heart, of course.

It is called 'Zum stolzen Fels am Rhein'. It is a beautiful song. Crisje sees Tall Hendrik trembling. It is as if his long legs are greeting her from left and right, but that probably isn't the case, however it is a fact that Tall Hendrik, if it concerns something new, is always different. His nerves then get the better of him. His arms go up. The tap on the men's hearts has already been given. Invisible to outsiders, but, which can be felt clearly by those for whom it was intended. The first somewhat restrained timbres already sound throughout the house. Peter sings like an angel; whether there are such voices in the heavens Crisje doesn't know, but that is beautiful. Hendrik is really in his stride. His voice sounds beautiful. This song is wonderful. It causes Crisje's throat to tighten and she believes that even Jeus is listening.

Johan and Bernard are half hanging out of bed, afraid that they will miss any of the singing. They think their father is a great man, who can literally do anything that he wants. Crisje feels that the men will be successful with that nice song.

But it is not only inside the house that they are enjoying the concert, people are still standing outside listening. It is impossible for them to just walk past. Captivated, they continue to listen to the songs, and they are giving their best there in Hendrik's house. It is awfully good. This is art. This gives you a warmth in your heart, in which you can bask. You love this song, because you can understand it and feel it inside you. You hear that more is being given here than just amateurs singing. For that matter, Tall Hendrik and Peter have already long earned their tracks. The song is finished. The men look at each other. They do not know themselves how it went. But then outside they hear enthusiastic clapping. As a result of the thin, cold air it penetrates the walls almost unimpaired. They want to hear more there outside. When Hendrik peeps through the curtains, he sees a good twenty people standing there calling for more.

'Come on Hendrik, once more!'

'And Cris?'

'I have to say, Hendrik, I have never heard anything like it from you before. That is what I call singing, my compliments to all of you.'

Tall Hendrik can't help embracing Crisje for a minute. Then the men get to hear it. Gerrit can't believe his luck and has to say something about it, of course.

'Isn't that singing, Cris, which Our Lord can listen to? When I have to go to my coffin later, I will always have my voice with me and I can do what I like there.' Seems to me?

Crisje doesn't leave it at that. Gerrit must leave Our Lord out of it. Gerrit always crosses her with her Lord, and she has to just accept that from him, Gerrit believes. But Crisje will never ever do that.

'What has Our Lord got to do with your screaming, Gerrit?'

'What? What are you telling me now? Are you pulling our legs, Cris?'

Yes, Gerrit, you must leave Our Lord alone. He has nothing to do with your singing; that is sacred! Hendrik knows his Cris, but he also knows Gerrit, who is deliberately provoking his wife. Crisje falls for it again and again, because she is prepared to defend Our Lord day and

night. But that singing was nice.

‘Really, Hendrik, it was nice’, says Crisje.

‘Do you mean it, Cris?’

‘Really, Hendrik! That is real singing.’

Another few cuddles, because he knows that she has a feeling for music and singing, which only a few people can call their own. Hendrik also often discusses the different nuances of the voices with her. And you should hear her talking now. She gives Gerrit’s humming a thrashing and Jan also has to accept the necessary criticism, to such an extent that even Hendrik screams with laughter. But he knows that Crisje’s remarks are right and what else is wrong with them.

‘Why do you like this so much, Cris?’

‘Now the voices are one, Hendrik. One carries the other. You know what I mean. I can’t express myself that well at the moment, but I’ll tell you another time.’

This is the truth. Because Hendrik and Peter have kept harping on about exactly this. The voices must be one, completely one, one sound, only then can you talk of a harmonic whole, and only then is it a joy to listen to. The men in the street are clapping so loudly again that it is as like they are standing inside and they ask again if they can sing the song once more.

‘Well’, says Tall Hendrik, ‘you will get another blast, if you can just wait a minute.’

The chattering amongst each other, thinks Crisje, is already a pleasure and happiness. They are just like small children, she continues to think, in whose mouths you put a piece of liquorice for them to suck on. But she does not deny the men the appreciation for what they have achieved. At the end of the day it is not some old nonsense which she hears here, not the singing of herring on a cane, which squeal when they are being smoked, as that man said to me a short time ago, and thereby claimed that they were still good, because they still squealed and she could safely dish them up to the Tall Hendrik! All in all it was a pleasant get-together which didn’t give you lice. Several people now have their doors open in order to be able to hear and enjoy the singing as well. And this whole party is in her house, right under her eyes. A happiness which is certainly not put away for everyone. Just look at that. Peter is as red as a beetroot, Gerrit’s cheeks are ready to burst and Jan has become almost as big as Tall Hendrik.

There are even some who look as white as a corpse. They only need a sheet and they can go straight in the coffin. She doesn't know why that is. But everyone has something different. Johan, who knows that he can't do anything wrong in his mother's eyes, thinks that he must improve the party mood and starts whistling a tune in bed. But in doing this he has gone far too far. It is no longer the afternoon and at least a quarter past ten and then he has to keep his mouth closed, even if he wants to whistle. However, he thinks that he cannot leave out a word of appreciation. 'But what a voice, mother, our father has, hasn't he?' can be heard from that corner. But then he gets the broom or a whipping, even if it is metaphorical and it is made clear to him that it is not too late for a hiding with the real one, which is lying there under the clock in the corner A present from Tall Hendrik for which Johan has great respect. 'You can hold your tongue, Johan. You know, father won't have that, you have no understanding of that and I don't want to hear your whistling anymore.' They may listen, but not say a word, pretend they are enjoying it or go to sleep. Cleaning the world with shoe polish or, as Crisje calls it, sitting under a tree in the shadow of the summer sun of Our Lord and thanking Him for every single thing. However, she doesn't have much more time to grumble any more. The men are already on parade again and stretching their heads. Peter's left eye is running, which she notices every time, but she doesn't understand why. It is doing it over and again and it will probably be the stress. But when Peter's eye runs and weeps, the man has a voice which the angels would not be averse to. 'If Peter had to sing for Our Lord, he wouldn't walk away from Peter.' In her simplicity Crisje almost dares to doubt whether the angels in heaven have such a voice in their choir. Their veins swell, those of Hendrik have already reddened. You notice immediately that it is no trouble to either Peter or Hendrik to become inflated like a turkey and to get everything out of their vocal cords. You notice that it happens of its own accord. Again 'Stolzen Fels am Rhein' can be heard, which could even be sung in the church, so beautiful it is now. What would Father say if they sung this song for him. How happy she is again. And what kind of a week she has had.

While the singing is going on, the door opens and uncle Gradus comes into the kitchen. Completely unexpected, this one also pays a visit. He creeps over to Crisje, takes her hand, nods to her kindly

and gives her a look of understanding. He has also heard the new song and his visit is to say that the song is worthwhile. He takes the opportunity at the same time to have a look at the child and see how his sister-in-law is doing. The choir finishes, the bass sound of Gerrit can still be heard echoing in the distance and dies off with a sigh like a person who has breathed his last.

‘Good gracious me, that is what I call singing, Hendrik.’

The men are beaming. They are pleased with the compliment. Joy and satisfaction radiate from their eyes. Uncle Gradus is not the only one who has come to say thank you, another few listeners from the street knock on the door and they also express their thanks for the beautiful singing which they have enjoyed. It has gone down so well that even the people at Hent Klink walked out of the bar. That wasn't so nice for Hent, because of course there is no drinking. But Hent doesn't try to hold on to his people because he happens to know that when the quartet is singing everyone listens. Is there going to be more? No, they are stopping, but that is not yet acceptable. They want to hear more. They give another song. They hear a few short noises and you already have to laugh about the crazy way in which these noises come out of their mouths. Gerrit calls it sketches or excuses. A mishmash of sounds, which always make people laugh, because they are always playing the fool. You hear nothing else from Gerrit than bam... bam... bam... bam... He throws out these noises with an inflated face and a round mouth. Tall Hendrik and Peter follow the resulting reflex and absorb each other and allow the whole to flow into each other again. The clattering of the tongues between their lips makes such a funny noise that Crisje is lying in bed shaking with laughter. Gerrit is at his best with this song. Sometimes they are just like wind instruments, which are trying to drown each other out, but which are evenly matched to each other, and do not wish to give up. A while later they calm down and it appears as if they have gone to sleep and an almost deadly silence reigns, to then suddenly blaze up like a fierce fire and allow the party to start all over again. Crisje can't make head nor tail of it. Peter calls it 'Zusammenbruch von Notenspielerei', and Gerrit calls it the 'fairground in Stokkum.' Jan Maandag has no name for it, but gives it his laugh, his shaking shoulders and dancing around. Jan can never stand still, never mind sit still, he has thrush in his glands, Gerrit says, and has a part of his brain under the balls of

his feet, so that Jan is continually stimulated. He also has three lungs, two in order to breath and one in order to light his cigar, which he is always sucking at. Gerrit always has a few of the cheapest cigars in his pocket, which are especially for Jan. That is all he is worth. Jan always half eats his cigars. Three of these rockets of songs fly out of the men. They are popular songs, short, noisy, but not unknown pieces. Crisje holds her stomach, this song sets her off laughing so much, but she still prefers the quiet songs. She can listen to the Ave Maria again and again, even if Hendrik just plays it on his violin. It always moves her, and she falls under its charm again, and she always likes to hear Händel and his Largo as well, or whatever it is called. But holy music always holds the greatest charm for her. This Sunday evening there was another one which wouldn't be forgotten quickly. But now it is really finished. After all, there are also children in the house. Tall Hendrik looks at Crisje and she indicates to him with her eyes that it has been quite enough for today.

'Well, Cris', he says, 'we're stopping', and then the others also know that it is finished. The quartet separates. If they come again, they may continue to sing until four o'clock in the morning if necessary. However, it is enough for today. Tomorrow is another day and there is a seven-day-old child. It is amazing, that this child sleeps through everything. The boys have also fallen asleep, they have tired themselves out listening and Crisje feels that she can also no longer listen to anything. Good night Peter, good night Gerrit and Jan and greetings to the others as well. Thank you very much everyone. It was really worthwhile to stay awake and 'listen' to it.

As uncle Gradus also leaves, Crisje remarks: 'It was lovely that you came uncle Gradus.' Tall Hendrik now also feels tired. He longs for his sleep and his lie-down. Tomorrow will be another long day for Crisje and him. Tomorrow she wishes to assert her rights as usual and to take control. Then she will be standing at the helm again with the ship in the breakers and she will need her strength to steer the ship safely through.

But Tall Hendrik can't get to sleep immediately. He sits down at the edge of the bed and has a little chat with Crisje. Only now he hears properly what she thought of it, and how much she has enjoyed it. He likes this because this is their unity again. This gives them a strength a thousand fold again, which everything is smashed by and which also

gives a person the chance, if he wants to and he has the feelings for it, to create and bring forth art of the highest order. Hendrik imagines himself again in Wezel on the stage. He can't stop talking about it again. Crisje's feelings are expressed in a different way. She recalls what she felt and experienced all those months. Now a period has ended for her, so powerful that, even if she lived to be a hundred, she will never forget. When she is back on her feet again, she will lose all those beautiful feelings, because daily life will demand her full attention with all its worries. When she has been up for only one hour and has lit the stove, she will have lost them irrevocably. But nevertheless, in her thoughts it will live inside her heart, because it has become a part of her personality. It is such a powerful and awe-inspiring feeling, that she has to share it with her husband.

'You see, Hendrik, that is it! Now I'm myself again. But I will never forget this! And that is why I enjoyed it so much this evening, Hendrik. How beautiful the voices were. What a long way you have come. It is unbelievable.'

Hendrik is like a child again. The tall beanpole now looks at Crisje like a dove in flight to the blue universe. She is now his queen in a golden carriage. He is sitting there beside her, as if he has only known one hour of her life and now looks up to her as someone of nobility. Which she is in her character. This satisfaction is great, these moments are wonderful; click-click, Crisje, hear his taste, click-clack, take all these kisses, these kisses of love. But be careful that he doesn't give you any blue blisters because then the fun is over. Oh, that Tall Hendrik.

Hendrik pours himself another drink and is sitting there next to Crisje sipping away. However, he would really have wanted to fly out the door to hear what they thought of it at Hent. But he doesn't get round to it. This hour is one of awe-inspiring beauty for him. He will hear tomorrow. And he can be pleased with himself then.

Half an hour later he is lying next to his Cris. He snores a bit, but not for long. Then the dreams come and he is standing in front of his men again, he is lisping in his dream like Peter and is speaking German and dialect through each other. If Crisje hadn't been able to force herself to sleep, she would have experienced everything again. But luckily she falls asleep, because Jeus will soon get her up. With echoes that will shake her awake. That is also a song, and the song of

the universe. If you can listen, Cris, you will not only see yourself, but also Him who laid that song of the universe and the silence in you and gave you that other life, which lets its click be heard as well as Tall Hendrik. 'Drink a little more, my child, your mother has enough, which I am grateful to Our Lord for. As long as you know that.

In the name of the Father... the Son... forever and ever Amen!

I didn't see a speck on that white cloth, neither did the angels who had heard Tall Hendrik sing. Believe it, they also enjoyed the voices of Peter and Tall Hendrik!

But Our Lord knows exactly what He wants! Mrs De Man, but, Mrs De Man! Don't you see purgatory? Crisje prays in her sleep.

‘You won’t believe me, Hendrik, but I thought of witches’

People can say what they like, they can raise hell now and again, complain and moan about everything, put on sour faces of dissatisfaction about something that they cannot achieve, but one thing they do know and that is that all their complaining and moaning will still not be able to make time stand still, even for one second. Despite their dissatisfaction, time carries on undisturbed. Our Lord regulates that awe-inspiring clockwork and we cannot touch that, or even understand or conceive anything about it.

That which you do have control over is usually human awkwardness and petty carry-on. If you ever rise above it, an unknown person will call you to a halt and you can give in to it, or see that you get home. Everyone has experienced this at one time, Crisje knows. Hendrik and Gerrit know the most about it. Peter and Jan are following another path. But a person who is rebellious, wants to be or have more than Our Lord intends for him, is called to a halt and has to accept that his wishes and longings are unobtainable. There is something to be learned from the smallest experiences. However, the large ones only warn you, but then you are faced with a choice and you must bow your head.

Tall Hendrik and Crisje have already learned it and Trui also begins to feel something of it, but many other people around them are still resisting. But they have to learn, because there is only one path, everyone has to cross that one bridge and you can’t walk around that bridge and steer clear of the facts!

In this way they muddled through that severe winter. Everyone had to get through it and now the weather is so warm that everything is almost suffocating from the heat. Crisje is sitting enjoying herself at the window carrying out her chores. She has just peeled the potatoes and she is now mending Hendrik’s socks. It’s nice and peaceful in the shade of the kitchen, with the yellow curtain down a bit, and close by her, in the middle of the kitchen, is Jeus. The boys are playing outside. Everyone is hot. Jeus is sleeping. Everything is peaceful and the surroundings are filled with a wonderful, loving feeling. There is also a coolness but that comes from inside her life and goes straight

to the cradle of Jeus. Crisje anxiously keeps an eye on the cradle. Not so much because she is afraid that the flies will sting Jeus, nor from anxiety that the heat will have an unfavourable effect on her youngest child, no, that is all okay. But Crisje is thinking about yesterday. A strange thing happened; she really thought that her Jeus was bewitched. And however much Hendrik talked and shrugged his shoulders about the nonsense which Crisje had told him, it did not help at all. Almost as long as man has existed it has been known: the devil preys on nice and good children. And devils still exist. How many people, adults, sometimes men like giants, find themselves in the hands of Satan? And then there are the witches as well. She does not know exactly what these people in animal form are. But they exist! But when she said this, Tall Hendrik roared so much with laughter, that she became anxious because she thought that he would never stop.

‘You won’t believe me, Hendrik, but I thought of witches’, said Crisje. ‘And that really is something.’

You just try and convince Crisje otherwise. She was there herself, after all. She saw it. She had told her Hendrik and showed him the wreath which had been laid in the cradle without explanation. Can you believe in those things? We no longer live in an age where witches make wreaths and put them in cradles or murder children? It might have been the case in the past, but now it has become only superstition and banned from the church as such! But however much Hendrik talked she couldn’t get it out of her head. She could not get rid of her fear for the welfare of her child, that was put in danger in her opinion through that cursed thing, that very ordinary wreath from rye flowers and purple poppies. It is witchery and you have to be careful of that.

What had actually happened? Crisje was sitting at the window and was peeling the potatoes. Jeus was lying in the cradle. The child looked and laughed a bit, gurgled a bit and looked healthy and well. There was apparently nothing to be worried about. Suddenly, she saw a wreath lying above Jeus’ head. No one had been in the house. Goodness me, but surely she didn’t imagine anything? She thinks to herself, no, there was no one in the house. The boys were outside. She is positive: she was alone there with Jeus. And then suddenly that wreath of flowers was lying above the child’s head. Crisje was almost

scared out of her wits. The fright affected her legs and she stood shaking like a leaf.

She grabbed the child, kissed it passionately and looked at it, but, thank goodness, there was nothing in particular to be found.

She examines the wreath. And to her it looks like children have made it.

But where did that wreath suddenly come from? Hendrik will find it strange. But he wasn't surprised on the whole. He laughed about this silly nonsense and the superstition of Crisje. He does not accept those things, but keeps two healthy, strong and aware feet on the ground. No one can take that away from him. Not Crisje, or a sorcerer. Hendrik has no understanding of this and he thinks it's rubbish. 'No, Cris', says Hendrik, 'you can't make me believe that.' When he feels that Crisje is deadly serious he does everything to talk her out of it. He had no idea that Crisje was so superstitious. He can understand that Cris is afraid for her children and now more especially for Jeus, but all that does not take away the fact that the whole thing is nothing more than sheer nonsense. This is so ridiculous! It is mocking everything you possess. And if Crisje really believes that she must talk to Father about it, because she always tells him everything, then she had better do that. Then when he hears, Father is bound to say: 'This is going too far!' And now Crisje will get a black mark on her blameless record as a result of her anxiety and superstition which is not such a pleasant feeling.

'Stop it, Cris', Tall Hendrik flares up, 'you are behaving as if we see someone possessed by the devil. Don't make me laugh... You are now completely mad.

Hard, isn't it, Crisje? Yes, because who will believe you? Who? But you are right! Really, Crisje, you are right! That wreath wasn't there. No one from the material world put it there, despite the fact that it was made by material children. This is something different.

Do you wish to know, Crisje, what really happened? The girls are outside weaving. And we – who 'we' are you will only get to know after your death, but you will know one day – we picked up one of these little wreaths and laid it above the head of Jeus. There is no more to it! We thought that we should give something to Jeus. That alone has no meaning for us. This wreath was therefore made by the children here in the neighbourhood. We laid our hands on it and brought it

like that 'between life and death'. As a result of this it lost the material laws of gravity and became even lighter than a feather, which could have been picked up by a light summer wind. But it was not that soft summer wind which moved that wreath, but 'we' did it. It was picked up by us and laid down where you found it and which gave you such a fright when you discovered it. And we can do much more, Crisje, you will soon experience it and then Tall Hendrik will ask: 'Where does this come from now?' It is not witchcraft, Crisje, even if it appears so to your earthly understanding. But even if we explained these laws to you, you would still not understand them. But they are connected to Jeus.

We have now touched Jeus for a moment, but later, when he has grown into a personality, he will receive a new name from us and it will be declared to the world. So this was one of those wonderful foundations, which we have laid in order to build a temple upon this life. Because we will take his life in our hands, since this is possible through the powers which live in him and the feelings which he possesses. Through that feeling, as a result of which you could float in space while carrying the child, we have his life in our hands! Crisje, you do not need to be afraid of us, because we are angels and his protectors! We bring wisdom, happiness, peace and satisfaction to earth. We will later give humanity, through these things, which cannot yet be understood by you, the wisdom of the universe. The Wisdom of Our Lord, for which Jeus will later serve. This is only one little foundation, Crisje, many will follow and bring this life to thought and change, until it will be suitable to accept the task laid down for him by us. Because we will go much further. You will still experience a lot, an awful lot with Jeus. He will stand beside you, as none of your other boys will be able to do. You will feel a love and experience a sacredness, which you now know nothing about. You will have to trust it later and bow your head to it. Tall Hendrik will also look on in astonishment, if he discovers the real, pure, spiritual good, which is given to his life.

But do not be afraid, Crisje! Hendrik cannot understand these things. And the whole of this western world won't either. You must go to the East for that, to the temples of ancient Egypt, for example. One child possesses artistic talent. Another child can play a trumpet at an early age. However, Jeus has feeling and wisdom in him, and

these are also gifts from Our Lord, but which cannot be understood by anyone around you. Hendrik goes against it and he is also right in this. But watch out, Crisje. What would you think of this, for example? Wham! Is there something rattling there? Crisje hears a noise in the cradle. She races to her child and takes a very ordinary rattle out of the cradle, which wasn't there a minute ago. Crisje becomes frightened once again. What is this now? My child is being bewitched! Jeus is in the hands of witches! 'My God, what do I do now?'

But what does a person do if he is religious and experiences such a thing? Pray! Crisje will pray! She will show her Hendrik that she is not mad. It is an everyday thing. A rattle from Our Lord, she already hears Gerrit saying: 'It is not so silly. You can make very good use of it as well, you don't have to spend money to buy it!'

Crisje prays with Jeus in her arms. She doesn't dare to go to Trui, she will only give her what for and it will become even worse. The whole day passes like this. Praying and looking at the child, which is lying there peacefully in the cradle and is not bothered about anything. Then Tall Hendrik is in the kitchen. The first thing he asks is: 'Are there still witches here, Cris! Have they been visiting again? Do they have nice faces, are those women really as ugly as we think? Or...?'

When he sees that Crisje starts crying, he stops. He puts her on his knee. She has to confess what happened. But Tall Hendrik does not think of new witchcraft, he immediately thinks of Trui again. But that's not it, he ascertains between the crying. 'What is it, Cris?' Then Crisje shows her husband the rattle. He plays with the thing. It is wooden with curls round it. The children can make noises with it, an everyday piece of rubbish. He cannot laugh, the facts are too serious for that. But what can he do with Crisje's stories about that thing worth ten cents, after slogging away the whole day, tapping and corking a large number of bottles of wine, having to put up with the heat and sweating like a thousand others? He looks Crisje in the eye. He senses that kissing her and giving her a good cuddle won't help. But what can he do?

'I have prayed the whole day, Hendrik. I don't know, but it is so awful. My God, what can I do. If they wish to bewitch my Jeus?'

Tall Hendrik has a good idea. When you think about it, the matter is actually very simple. You must fight such people with their own

weapons. He points out to Crisje her enormous faith, her great love, her knowledge that her soul and happiness are in the hands of Our Lord. But what does she want then? She should be ashamed and not ask for the devil when she knows that Our Lord can do everything, is everything and does everything. If her trust and conviction in Our Lord is so small, her faith in Him is also no bigger than the familiar mustard seed. Then it is not worth anything. But is she Crisje or is she not? What does she want; to have her life and that of her children and of her Hendrik destroyed through her witches? Does Crisje want to ridicule him and herself and her faith? She should really be ashamed now. But who did it? 'I will kill that creature, Cris. This is not funny anymore. I will break that woman's or that man's neck.'

But then it is quite enough, thinks Crisje. She now has something to say as well and Hendrik must agree with her again and he has lost it.

'You...', she begins, 'want to return hatred with hatred, you want to murder? I don't want anything to do with a murderer, Hendrik. You are making it worse than it is! But you can't fool me that I really bought that thing and laid it in the cradle myself. It won't happen to me, you...!'

Hendrik lays his hand on her mouth and carefully stops the stream of words. He feels that intervention must be carried out here with authority.

But Crisje manages to add:

'You are right, Hendrik, Our Lord has everything in his hands.' All is very well, thinks Tall Hendrik, you can pray the whole day, but it is a matter here of using your head, and that has nothing to do with Our Lord. After all, you were also given a head to think with. And that thing worth ten cents can get lost, as far as he is concerned. He stamps his foot on it. 'Has it gone now?' Crisje looks at it, as if she expects the house to collapse at any minute. Tall Hendrik understands and says:

'They don't have that much power anyway, Cris! If I were you I would bury that incident. Forget it!'

What a pity, Tall Hendrik, that you stamped that nice thing to pieces. Why can't you see it as a present? Are our presents in this form not welcome? Does it have to be a heavenly thing in terms of light and colours? They will come as well, but they will only be visible to Jeus,

to him alone. You will then see him playing and will not know what he is enjoying himself with. You can then blow your nose or take a fresh plum and further bow to it and stay where you are. But Jeus will fly over you, and with him, Crisje!

What people cannot reason out is witchcraft! What they don't understand is 'devilish fun' and they put their feet on it. What a man you are, Tall Hendrik! What strength! How marvellous, to stamp that rattle to smithereens. And yet Crisje is right again. No human hands laid this toy in the cradle. We did it again! And we will be back, and again, and again and again, and we will go further each time and we will teach you as well to bow your head. You can't believe in the laws through which you were born and those which control the universe. You do not know anything about it yet and as a result, in your ignorance you see this innocent toy as a cannon ball or grenade, which could destroy everything or make everything fall apart. You have much to learn, Hendrik. So take your fill of it. You have more than earned your bread today. But we will be back.

It hasn't been discussed again. Crisje allows her common sense to work. Jeus is a healthy boy and is growing like the two others did. Not even a roof tile fell down today. Nor was there a white raven which landed on the chimney. You can therefore safely go to sleep, Crisje. But sleep is far from her. She lies thinking and looks at Jeus all night long. But the child is peaceful. She keeps thinking that she hears something, but they are only mice, which are crossing the room, playing and fighting over the crumbs. But that doesn't frighten her. However, in her thoughts she sees a horrible shrieking woman flying through the night on a broomstick with her Jeus behind her. Yuck, what kinds of dreams is she having now? What a horrible carry-on anyway. Her whole sober 'self' has been affected by it. But pure conscience finally wins from that devilish witch. Her enormous faith, her love for Our Lord, finally conquers hell and darkness and completely shut out that shrieking witch from her life. Towards morning she falls asleep and, despite the anxieties she went through, she feels rested and ready to help Hendrik get ready. Tall Hendrik adds a few more words of warning, kisses her, throws her in the air again, of course, and then disappears with a 'see you later, Cris, see you this evening!'

It is afternoon and Crisje is sitting at the window again. Mending stockings and clothes, she always has a lot to do. She defies the witch

as it were, because when it comes to it she is not afraid of anything or anyone, as long as they know. There is a peaceful atmosphere around her, which she hasn't felt for a long time. Luckily it is a bit cooler than it has been the last few days. She has a lovely satisfied feeling about her again. But subconsciously she still keeps an eye on the cradle. She looks up now and again and feels completely calm and continues with her work because the boys must look neat. She would like to see them wear better clothes but they simply cannot afford it. All of a sudden something else happens, which gives her a bad fright and which severely troubles her sensitive heart. What is it this time? Is she mistaken? It was just like the cradle was rocking. But that's not possible? Of course, the cradle can rock because it is standing on two pieces of wood from an old sledge. Tall Hendrik made it like this because, according to him, there wasn't any fun in a cradle which you cannot rock. But there has to be someone who is making that thing rock. She will have imagined it again. Jeus is sleeping and cannot be wakened. Once Crisje realizes without a doubt that the cradle is rocking back and forth strongly, she races over to it, looks to the side and under it, but discovers nothing that could have made it move. What another terrible thing it is, now she really starts to believe in witchcraft again. Crisje wails from nervousness and out of bewilderment does not know what to do. She races into the bedroom, comes back with a cloth and throws it over the cradle. However, what she hopes to achieve with this, she doesn't know herself. Then Crisje sits herself down in her chair and waits. I saw the cradle rock and they are busy bewitching my child. One Our Father after the other flies upwards to Our Lord. A quarter of an hour goes by. Nothing happens. She becomes calm again. Of course, she must have imagined it. It is the heat from the last while which has made her drowsy. That old wood of the cradle is now drying and you hear it creaking. But no, it's not possible, because it could perhaps creak, but it wouldn't start rocking. She is crazy today or soon will be. But that's out of the question. If these might be their plans, she can assure them that it will not work under any circumstances. Our Lord is there as well and no witches or whatever else can stand up to Him. Pray, thinks Crisje, pray! Neither a witch nor the devil can stand up to a prayer! Just pray, there is nothing the matter, nothing. Throw them to the ground and keep yourself standing. You are boss in your own house!

Crisje continues with her work again and after a while she sees the cradle rocking once more. She races over and looks at the child. Now Jeus wakes up, but is still lying as peacefully as possible. Crisje takes her child out of his bed and holds him fervently against her chest.

‘There is nothing the matter, is there, Jeus, they surely don’t want to bewitch you? They can’t do that, can they, Jeus?’ The child laughs at his mother. Crisje starts crying and Tall Hendrik can tell her later what he likes, this is the reality of her life. She prays and races out the door to Trui, praying all the time, because she doesn’t know any more what to do. When she comes in, with the child firmly held against her, she cannot utter a word. A minute ago she was peaceful. Now fear of witchcraft overcomes her again. She breaks out in a sweat, her whole body is trembling and her heart is pounding like a machine out of control. She wants to protect Jeus from these invisible powers and forces.

‘How nervous you are’, Trui says in surprise. ‘You are behaving as if you are being chased. What’s the matter, Cris?’

Crisje tells Trui what happened to her and Trui lets her finish her story in peace, but then it comes.

‘You shouldn’t have contact with drunken women. Of course, they have bewitched your child.’

That is difficult for Crisje and she wants to defend herself by saying that she hasn’t seen or spoken to that woman for months now. But Trui is unmoved. It is that woman and it is all Crisje’s own fault. Even when Crisje talks about good, which always conquers hate and violence, Trui thinks it is ridiculous nonsense. It is the ‘drunkard’. But Crisje continues. A person has to be able to distinguish between good and evil, lack of faith or sending up prayers. Because it is not a circus with Our Lord, not a... not whatever else. But Trui is not as strong in these things as she thinks and she is already starting to stutter. Don’t you also see, Trui, that you are busy murdering Crisje? Do you not have any sympathy for your sister and her child? Jeus is lying comfortably in his mother’s arms. He is laughing and gurgling and doesn’t bother with anything. Jeus is a vigorous boy and when his aunt looks him in the eye she thinks that the whole affair is really ridiculous. But it is not easy for her to miss her chance to get even and to just let go of taking Crisje to the cleaners. But Trui isn’t that far yet and Crisje has to swallow again: ‘I’ve always told you, Cris, you go too far! but

you won't listen.'

Do I go too far, Crisje contemplates? But with what. What am I doing then? What kind of talk is this? Crisje deeply regrets that she was stupid enough to seek comfort from Trui. Because Trui is on her own with her poor 'self' from which she can't give away a flower because they cannot grow yet in her inner life. But Trui can tell her more; she begrudges her Jeus and that is all. Pity, but it's true. Trui now had the chance to give some of her feelings but, unfortunately, she has too little yet. And will she tell Crisje what she has to do exactly? Trui can't think for a moment about the good in people, everything, which is wrong or does wrong in her eyes just has to be destroyed and no one ever gets the chance from her to improve his or her life.

Crisje is still sitting and playing with Jeus. It is as if Trui has suddenly dissolved with her soul-destroying thoughts. Crisje is now in a world which Trui must stay out of. A high wall closes her off from this life, in which Crisje and Jeus now find themselves. Crisje is already trotting through the moorland again, and is picking flowers for her child, from which she can make wreaths if necessary in order to challenge those witches. What beautiful weather it is today, my sweet child. Look at that Jeus! See that child laughing now. Look at those shining eyes it has and those small hands. What can they do with such a mite? But it is becoming cold here Jeus, which is strange, For a minute ago we were lovely and warm and the two of us were so happy. But now winter is again between our lives. But it is strange. It is becoming so cold here now as on a freezing winter night.

'We have to go home now. Really, Jeus? Say, 'bye aunt', shake hands with aunt Trui.'

However Trui cannot bear to shake children's hands, she loathes it. She doesn't even see those hands, as it were, and doesn't want anything to do with them either and when she pretends, it is with a hypocrisy and inner spiritual poverty, which makes every child start to cry. But how strange, Trui, why do these small children always have to cry when they come into contact with you? Are those little people so sensitive that they are even afraid of you? But Trui!

Crisje is outside again, and is carrying her small life triumphantly back home, she lays it carefully on her knee and thinks: Jeus is okay, there is nothing wrong with the child.

Then the sensitive and immensely gratifying peace which was lack-

ing for so long descends upon her again, that peace which comes from the universe to her. She prays and murmurs sweet words to the child. Jeus experiences her great love, his eyes shut and open again. It is a revelation and a sacred occasion. A pity for Trui, who has to miss this, because Crisje wishes this for every woman, however ice-cold such a life may be. This is a gift from Our Lord. She sings Jeus to sleep and he is surrounded by her pure loving thoughts, her spiritual flowers.

And yet, people and disbelieving souls, the cradle was rocking!! Sure, it was rocking. When they will ask Crisje about this later, much much later, I think that she will then know for sure. But if Tall Hendrik still won't believe her and trust her, who can give her the assurance that it is the truth? Crisje does a few more things before Hendrik comes home. Of course, she will tell him. She doesn't really know why, but she feels that it is necessary, then immediately the knowledge descends deep into her spirit with that feeling which can't yet be explained, that this knowledge will soon have to make way again for an even deeper and greater knowledge. Crisje, some time you will see the heavens through that rocking, even if you can only think of witches and being bewitched for now. However, she already feels that nothing bad can happen. She knows that she and her child are being protected. There is nothing at all even far away which has to do with a witch or devil. Whatever it may be, it is certain for as long as she lives, no accidents will happen to her child. Jeus is as peaceful and healthy as can be, and bewitched children, whom she has heard enough about, cry and scream the whole place down. No, there is nothing special, she feels that. But it is still strange.

And now, Crisje, let's go and see what really happened to Jeus. We want to put you into his sleep for a while and there we will let you see what happened.

Look, Crisje, Jeus is sleeping. But do you notice how pale Jeus is becoming? See that pale colour about that nice little snub nose of Jeus. Crisje, you could call this a deep sleep. For that matter children have that quite often, but this is something very different. Just look for yourself! What do you see now? Jeus has crawled out of his little body and has what we call 'left his body'. He is now living between life and death and is now much older. Jeus feels at least seven years old and now, just look Crisje, Jeus sees a great light and in that light Jeus sees an apparition. This apparition is an angel, Crisje. And this angel

is connected to Jeus and says to him that he may safely try to let the cradle rock, it will give Crisje a fright, yet also at the same time start her thinking. And now you must take a look, Crisje. Jeus is standing here to the left of his cradle and sees that it is he. He has only crawled out of that little body, but through the powers and knowledge of his guardian angel, which Our Lord has given to each person. But because this guardian angel is of a special kind, Crisje, and has something to do with the life of Jeus, this rocking can take place. If this wasn't the case then nothing could happen, because you can accept that angels do not cast pearls before swine, do not squander or sully their own happiness, and do not waste time on stupid material people who are not yet open to their spiritual development, but you, Crisje, are already no longer a part of them. Now this rocking takes place because we have something in mind and whether you believe it or not, because Our Lord wishes it. And therefore, Crisje, it is Jeus who has frightened you. Jeus is now seven years old and has returned to a previous life. Now he is pushing against the cradle! He cannot do this alone, because the soul, the light, which has come to Jeus from the universe, does this for him and truly, the goal is achieved. The cradle is rocking and you get a fright. And that through your own child. Jeus sees that you get a fright, Crisje. He waits a moment. The angel thinks that he can try it again, because he wants the human heart to be reached with these things and that will therefore happen. The cradle rocks yet again. Now you race over to get that thin cloth. You throw it over the cradle. You look next to it and under it. You see it yourself, there is nothing unusual.

For the last time we let Jeus rock the cradle again and now your heart misses a beat and Jeus awakens. Jeus slowly returns to his own little body and now knows nothing about it anymore. This now all belongs to the past.

Now you can pray again, Crisje. But we have laid new foundations for the great building which Jeus' 'Angel' wishes to erect. You can now accept it from us that this took place at the order of the highest angels of Our Lord! This is no fooling and no nonsense. This is urgently needed for Jeus, because this life, Crisje, you will see later and have to accept, is the instrument of masters, of angels. This life was sent to earth to complete a powerful task! And we are already busy preparing him for it. I told you, Crisje, that when Jeus still lived

in you, we were already building the foundations. Then you dreamt as a result, you could float and feel the silence of the universe – the silence of these angels and of Jeus – in which this life lives! Isn't it simple Crisje? No, it isn't because people without these feelings can never understand this. They would wish to destroy it. They will call it demonic, because these people themselves still belong to the living dead and do not understand or know anything of these laws. But it is the truth. You will soon see it. Jeus knows nothing about all this, how could he, but what has happened, has given him sensitivity. And this is for us to do. This is how we open this spiritual life and bring it to awakening. I am telling you, Crisje, this only happens because Jeus is receiving a task to fulfil. The rocking of the cradle is a ray of light, is knowledge!

However, over the years this ray will become increasingly great and powerful, until it will have become a gleaming beam of light which will point the way for the life path of the millions of souls which are searching for the truth to a higher spiritual life. And then you will see Jeus differently. Watch out for his spiritual life, otherwise it will escape your life. This life is in harmony with your personality and feelings. You will see, Crisje, what will happen sometime. Jeus will learn nothing of this world, but he will possess divine gifts! And you can be thankful to Our Lord for this as well!

When Hendrik comes in his first question is:

'And Cris, what was the matter today again?'

Crisje looks at him, what can she say now? Then Tall Hendrik gets to hear the incredible story and also that she was at Trui's house. He has a think. Crisje waits patiently. Finally she hears his opinion.

'I want to tell you something, Cris. I am, you know, at home in a lot of things. In other words, I am completely mad sometimes. But what you are trying to tell me today, that is going too far, don't you think! That's going too far, Cris. Whatever you do, don't tell anyone.'

'And did you think, Hendrik, that I was that mad?'

'That is to be seen, Cris, Trui will take care of that.'

Crisje honestly admits defeat and tells her husband:

'And you are right about that, Hendrik. I can't forgive myself. I am already sorry. I can't put it in words, as long as you know that. But I already let Trui feel that she mustn't fool herself with anything.'

Hendrik sits behind the table in his corner and smokes his pipe,

deep in thought. He thinks the whole thing is childish. And who wouldn't. He suddenly has to laugh loudly about it. He grabs Crisje, pulls her onto his knees, presses his lips to her face, goes over her honest face like a madman and laughs so loudly, that they can hear it outside. Did you think, Hendrik, that you could charm Crisje like this? Did you really think that you could do any good with it and be generous? Did you really think that this was the solution, for this mad carry-on, that rocking of that cradle? Now, now, how ignorant you are!

For Tall Hendrik that is the end of it and Crisje is calm again. He will not say another harsh word, but he doesn't think for a moment, or even a second, of the consequences. But later you will be felled to the ground, Hendrik. You will be sorry some time for your disbelief in what Crisje experienced. And you may count yourself lucky that your Crisje can meet you halfway again, or you would have half lost her. However, there is one thing which you are now not a part of. And this will become a gap, Tall Hendrik, which you will never be able to bridge. You yourself are jumping into a terrible abyss and you don't even notice it. You will never be able to 'experience' in this life the depth of Crisje's soul. You closed yourself off completely from it, when you smashed her experiences under your feet as nonsense. That was also indeed the easiest. You are right about that. But you could also have raised your shoulders cautiously or have gone along with her gently. Then that soul wouldn't have closed itself off immediately. We are only giving you one picture of how it also could have been, but not the way you did it. This would have meant acceptance of the life, wishing to become one with another. For each human child this is marriage. The man descends into the woman and she in her creator. Now they are building a bridge of unprecedented beauty! They are one in everything and love rises above everything!

What does it matter, Hendrik, if you should take such a tumble with your Crisje some time? What it would have given you if you also believed in that so-called nonsense, if only you had been able to accept it. But you are standing still! You will never again come above this happiness. Hendrik, it is the human halt for you! But did you think that Our Lord did not possess any other heights for human love? We know human love. That love is material and you can accept it because your feeling is also material. But we have a spiritual,

a spatial and universal love, and it is this love which Our Lord also feels for Crisje and is willing to give His children. But you still don't believe it, do you! And herein lies your gap, your neck breaking, your end, Tall Hendrik!

You are now smothering your unity with Crisje. You are keeping yourself back! And because you let her stand alone, this life must close itself off. Because even if it is opened, you walk past this spiritual life and do not see it. Am I right, Tall Hendrik? In this way a person is shattering himself. He not only shatters his character and beats the other life to the ground, but he does not give love. Now go back with me to the event. Imagine that you accept that Our Lord had given these things and had laid that wreath and that rattle in the cradle? How would you have behaved then and how great your joint happiness would have been? Yes, now you scratch behind your ears and start to understand what I am getting at. You stamped those things to smithereens. But still, they came from Our Lord.

And I am hereby telling you again, Tall Hendrik, these things came from Our Lord to your Jeus! These things came from His world and through His working as a present for your child. That Crisje did not immediately feel and understand these truths, which she still doesn't, was not so bad. But you throw everything overboard without a thought, while Crisje still feels that it has something to do with her child. A while ago, Tall Hendrik, you saw that in the eyes of the child. It is still there, although you can no longer see it. It has now become a process. And Crisje has felt that process. And you now close yourself to this. But that laugh is like the scorn of the thousands of people who stood jeering when they nailed Christ to the cross. They couldn't believe either that it was Our Lord himself. Those people didn't realize that He possessed the powers to strike them all blind, although He didn't. You are laughing like that as well, but do not know why, and Crisje feels that.

Now you are faced with your spiritual awkwardness and remain who you are. It goes without saying that you are hereby restraining your upward journey. Through your ignorance. In not being able to understand what the rocking of the cradle means. In this way more things will come to you, but you keep yourself outside these lives and remain the same Tall Hendrik. You will still keep your lovely voice, but Crisje will possess more and will go further and higher. She will

experience more and more phenomena. Again you will not believe it and hurl these things away from you. You will be strong and will continue to stand on your two feet, but will never feel the pure clarity of Our Lord, you will never be able to float, ever, because you laugh at Crisje! We, Tall Hendrik, know the laws. We have experienced how you have to live in order to allow the human soul to experience its great love. It is unity, Tall Hendrik, the unity from feeling to feeling, which melts hearts into one and turns thoughts into words which receive meaning, and release man and woman from the material in which they live, which is the ultimate intention, after all. Or don't you believe in an afterlife? Crisje does! Crisje believes in a heaven after death! Every catholic also believes that, Tall Hendrik, otherwise this material world and religion would have no meaning. People go back to God!

I do not intend, Hendrik, to give you a sermon. I am only telling you what you should have done, in order to experience that powerful unity with your Crisje, to make it deeper and more beautiful, so that your spiritual heaven would be able to manifest itself. I predict to you that the time will come that you will be sorry because you will then have to accept me, because you will then know where you put the first foot wrong. At the end of your life I will tell you again, Tall Hendrik. I will then stand in front of you as the light for this world! 'I! And next to me Jeus! And you will then bow your head. For everything, for Crisje and Jeus! Do you understand me, Tall Hendrik? No, you don't, because you do not even feel me, although I am right beside you. There will come a time that you will wish to play ten violins to pieces for Crisje. But then she will no longer hear you. What you will then feel is awful. It is strange, Tall Hendrik, but I also see that! It lives in my hands. It is me, who can grant you mercy. See you later, Tall Hendrik. I really mean see you soon. You will be hearing from me!

A person says no, and then it is no and remains no... until he finally sees Our Lord and then first it becomes yes... yes... yes!

Then he moans: 'I will do my best and bow!'

But did you see those small blades? And they want to become grass-stalks? You could have possessed wings, Tall Hendrik, and with you all those others who feel like you feel.

Come on, Crisje, we are off! Good day, Hendrik!

‘Hendrik, how I look up to you now’

A person can sometimes feel so great and powerful that he gives another person the impression that he indeed possesses those inner powers. Usually people realize after a short time that this greatness was only pretence and they see the gent toppling from his pedestal.

However, some time a person must master that strength of mind and receives his first flower, intended for the other heart. You have then laid a foundation for yourself, not only for your social standing but above all for your personality. There are people who claim, I can do this, I can do that and it is absolutely no problem to me. I will, if it is necessary, stake my life and go through thick and thin for you. I am capable of this. Do not believe them too quickly, but wait until they have given proof of this. You meet these people all around your life. You come across that sort of boasting everywhere and it has already destroyed a lot of good things in life. Only bits and pieces would remain of such a personality, if it really came to it. The familiar consequence, a broken vase, fallen to pieces, knocked down by a mad dog. Then you discovered the decrepit spiritual poverty. You had not received an orchid but a bunch of flowers worth ten cents. And yet, they assured you, they gave you an orchid, and they probably believed that its natural life would never wither. Never, and ever. They were mighty strong at the moment of presentation in their faith.

Tall Hendrik also gave Crisje an orchid. And a white one at that, since he let his chance to be able to go and sing in the opera go by and remained with wife and children, chose peace and pure love above riches and admiration and a nice social life. But Crisje knew that her husband had not nearly defeated that little devil yet; it is true that the first attack was refused but was it so certain that a second one wouldn't follow? And then? Then that orchid would be a flower, cultivated on the manure heap. An evil-smelling thing, from which you turned your head as it gave out a smell which overcame you, and turned your stomach, and had only come to life through troubles. But Crisje didn't want a flower like that, it would destroy her life.

Why do people give each other orchids, Crisje wonders? But why should it be those expensive flowers, with which so much beauty is given? An orchid is a flower of your heart, which indicates love, re-

spect, trust, authority and truth. That is the flower for Crisje. An orchid represents Our Lord, heavens, light and justice, everything, which is beautiful, also marriage! An orchid cannot serve for lies, deception, destruction, contamination and defilement; this flower is too pure for that, too spiritual. Or, thinks Crisje, could I be wrong?

Crisje is an extraordinary character. Not only because she receives communion almost every morning and prays for everyone, but she also lives and acts according to her faith, yet she does not wish to be deceived by others, or under any circumstances by her Tall Hendrik. Father also knows that, people in the whole area know, even as far as the heavens.

But what does Tall Hendrik think about it? If Crisje knew for certain that her Hendrik could give her such an orchid, she would experience a happiness to which he, who already cannot cope with all her love, would succumb. However, Crisje feels she cannot be pleased before Tall Hendrik has proved that he has beaten the attack of the devil for his whole life. Only then will Crisje accept his orchid!

Crisje has a character with a psychological streak, although she is not conscious of it herself. It is so natural and strong that no science can compete with it. Her psychology, which emerged from respect and love, therefore gives her a correct insight into all the things which have to do with the soul and feeling. And Crisje does not allow that clear insight to become clouded.

She is very careful on this point!

Crisje does not let herself be cheated easily, not by Hendrik either. He can try and kid her as much as he wants, deep in her inner life there is a door, watched over by a few sentries, who watch closely that everything which tries to come in is pure truth and really meant, otherwise there will be troubles once more, and that must be prevented at all costs. Her psychology tells her: keep your happiness clean and pure and do not allow it to be contaminated. Your inner being belongs to Our Lord and anyone who wishes to be allowed in, must first be able to produce proof that they deserve to be there. Backbiting is not tolerated. Did Hendrik really think that he could pin a buttercup for an orchid on her breast? If he tried that, he would get what for. Those sentries are also there for him, yes precisely for him to whom she has connected herself, for whom she would live and die. But such a thing does have meaning, doesn't it? It is also unknown to Crisje

what townsfolk think of this, but for her the main thing is that an orchid offered is clean and pure and there is proof of it.

Crisje waits patiently. Tall Hendrik has told her that he has said goodbye to the prospect of becoming an opera singer. But she also knows that the orchid offered to her, as a gift, has not yet reached full bloom.

However, Crisje knows that Tall Hendrik has not recovered completely from his desire. When he came back from Wezel some time ago, where the quartet had achieved great success, Tall Hendrik saw himself on stage again, he had money once more and riches for his wife, and flowers which he could lay in her arms every evening. Crisje listened to him for only a moment. Then she knew enough. The orchid had been given, but before it could reach full growth, it had withered and died. However much Hendrik assured her emphatically that he couldn't care less about it, Crisje felt there was still a catch somewhere. His claim from last year that he had dealt with his longing for the opera was only show. He had not yet conquered it.

No, Tall Hendrik, Crisje laughed at you to herself. She did not believe you yet, could not believe you, because she knew, that same devil would return again. Did you really think that he would leave it at one attack? And did you think by conquering that one attack you had proven what you can and what you want? No, Tall Hendrik, you cannot fool Crisje.

Months go by. Crisje waits and every day they live in a paradise. She cannot get over her happiness. But she is on her guard and waits for the attack to come. If it is conquered, then she will receive a new orchid and will pin it on her coat. Then she will kiss him so that he feels her lifeblood. Just you give me your life, Tall Hendrik, with this we will give new life to a soul. But the proof from Tall Hendrik does not come. She has to wait and waiting takes a long time, although not for the concept of eternity. However, she hopes that her Hendrik will give her the proof, but then completely of his own accord, not forced by a plea, not that, but of his own free will and out of love.

Crisje looks at the clock, the dinner is being cooked to a pulp. Hendrik is not coming. Where could he be for such a long time? Johan and Bernard are pulling at her skirt. They are hungry and want to eat. But what is keeping Hendrik? Could something be the matter? She is not worried, on the contrary, a happy feeling enters her spirit. She

couldn't say where it came from, but it makes her heart joyful. She starts to hum because of it. The boys get something nice to eat. That is allowed today, because it will be a special day. Why, Crisje can't say, but she knows that it is connected with her Tall Hendrik. It is Hendrik. Her sensitivity and unity with this bubbling life, her husband and the father of her boys. They are her universal feelings. It comes to her straight from Emmerik. Crisje would give her life for it. So sure is she of her feelings and thoughts. And that, she also knows, is something everyone has. And everyone sometimes feels something of the being that they love. Something then enters you, which you can find no words for. But it's there! Yet, she does not pursue it immediately.

She wants certainty first. Well, that certainty approaches the house, she hears the gravel crunching. The boys race to the door and call:

'Father's here, mother, father's here.'

The boys hang on his coat and let themselves be dragged along. Then, they already know that it is mother's turn. Crisje is now lifted and floats between heaven and earth and is taken care of by Tall Hendrik. Johan and Bernard watch the scene, laughing.

'But how our father can kiss, or not, Bennad?', says Johan. Tall Hendrik laughs. He hears it and puts Crisje down. It brought him back to reality for a moment.

'Have you something to confess to me, Cris?'

'No, nothing, Hendrik, nothing.'

'And the boys?'

'Them, Hendrik... ' Johan and Bernard are already looking at their father and mother, Because they know that this is asked every night. And the answer can mean the order for a hiding. 'Mother, mother, make allowances. I will improve my life.' But Crisje cannot lie. But now there is really nothing. 'No, Hendrik, I have no complaints about them.'

Bernard and Johan are happy. They have been weighed and not considered too light today. Woe the boys, woe them, if they got up to mischief which will no longer do. Then they will get it from their father, who wants to make men of his children and foster respect for father and mother and the whole of humanity.

Tall Hendrik starts to play-fight with Crisje and pulls her onto his knees. She screams:

'Let go of me, fool, idiot that you are, do you have nothing to con-

fess yourself?’

Hendrik becomes silent. Crisje thinks, that’s it now. ‘What is it, Hendrik?’

However, he cannot speak yet. He now wants to tell of this happiness in nice, clear words. He wants to emphasise them and give this great happiness a nice shape, with which Crisje will be very happy. But although she has already felt it, she still wants to hear everything from his mouth. She will not take anything away from her Tall Hendrik. She is so generous. He will also get his orchid. ‘What is it, Hendrik?’

‘Just be quiet, Cris, I’m ready. Now listen carefully. Do you still remember that we went to Wezel to sing?’

‘Of course, Hendrik.’

‘Well, here’s the story, Cris. This afternoon there were two men at work. And these men asked me’... Crisje is already beaming and drinks in the light from his eyes. She is enjoying herself. The orchid is there... ‘whether I was sure I didn’t want to perform.’ It’s been said. Tall Hendrik smacks his lips and looks at her. Crisje waits, come on, tell her, Hendrik. She meets him halfway.

‘And, Hendrik?’

‘Cris... you will be pleased about it. I said: ‘Blow your stage. You can keep your money and rubbish. You can...’ My God, Cris... how angry I became.’

It’s been said. Tall Hendrik cuddles Crisje’s chest and face. Her apron flies over his head. She messes up his black hair, shakes him and presses him to her heart. There is no end to it.

They are not alone, the boys are there too. Hendrik, Hendrik, now, now.

‘Hendrik, how I look up to you now!’

‘I have refused everything, Cris. And now I am happy.’

Tall Hendrik lets out a sigh from it. Crisje is crying. What a day it is. How can she thank Our Lord for this? Life is a blessing, life is heaven on earth, if only you wish to see that heaven. Crisje shuffles over to Hent Klink’s. She wants three measures. She wants to treat her Hendrik. Then they have their meal. Later they are sitting at ease and start to discuss it. The boys have gone to bed. Hendrik grabs his violin, but he hardly has it in his hands when Gerrit comes in. ‘I’m lucky’, says Gerrit. ‘A person must have a good nose. And bitters as well. It is good for my stomach pain and I’ve been bothered with it for

the past few days, Cris.’

Crisje knows him and she also knows how troublesome it is. It will be another good evening.

Does Gerrit know already? No, he doesn’t, does he? Then she will tell him something. ‘To Hendrik’s health, Gerrit.’

Then Gerrit hears about the decision that Tall Hendrik has made. ‘That is truly worthwhile, Hendrik. But what a devil of a problem. Thank Goodness that there are such strong people in our family. What does money matter to us, what does a nice house, what does a million mean to us? Nothing! The world can disappear for all we care.

Cheers, Hendrik!’

The bitters are gone. Gerrit sighs, presses his stomach upwards and starts speaking Italian and French. Life is good like this. The boys are allowed to sing in bed. Johan is already whistling, they egg each other on and have to take part. That is allowed for now, life is for everybody, as is happiness. You do not have to share troubles with the children, they are too young for that. Cheers! Now Jan Maandag comes as well. Jan also thinks it is a fantastic achievement. Jan knows Tall Hendrik and thinks it is really something. And again, but now different, in their imagination, they are really flying over the stage, they are travelling through Italy and France and kiss the world as if it is nothing. They are in London and Paris, because Tall Hendrik also performs there. They also go to New York, look at the other people and come home with cart loads full of flowers for Crisje. Rooms full. Take them Crisje, nice presents for you and the children. Take them, this is from myself.

Fanny, Johan and Bernard’s dog, who received a place in their midst just after the birth of Jeus, sniffs Gerrit’s trousers and thinks that Gerrit has a dog smell about him. Gerrit never brings his dearest dog with him. He knows that there will be trouble. Fanny does not tolerate any other dog in the house. The animal is already great friends with Jeus, even if it’s Johan and Bernard who romp about with it outside.

‘Go away, Fanny’, Gerrit says to the dog, ‘you hate my Nico, you are not in my good books.’

Gerrit warms up, swallows a few times and licks with his tongue. That carries on for a while and is repeated with the necessary variations. Gerrit likes a good drink. He does it with a certain pose and everyone keeps looking when he places his glass to his mouth and

takes a sip. Johan, who saw that happening once, said to his mother: 'Mother, that is just as if the mayor is having his drink.' When Crisje didn't really understand what Johan meant, he continued: 'Now, you should see him, mother, later, when I am grown up I will take my drink like that.'

What is Johan funny. When Crisje told her Hendrik about it, he nearly died laughing. Johan and a drink made four together. Gerrit also knows that and laughed as well. He knows that all those things increase the excitement and his story is at its best.

'First, I will begin with you, Cris. I want to make you happy as well, don't I? I had this idea, let me make Cris happy. You are always sitting here drinking away. What do you think of Frances and Fassisi, Cris?'

You may not sully holy names from Crisje. She is immediately on top of it and corrects Gerrit.

'It is called Assisi, Gerrit.'

'I will tell you something, Cris. I know all those saints and they know me. Yesterday one of them said to me: 'Gerrit, you must please yourself more, you work much too hard.' Now Cris, you should have seen that holy child watching. But I already know that you want to have Our Lord on the cross. Am I right or not?'

Crisje is on cloud nine. This is a gift. 'Will you do that, Gerrit?'

'Of course, Cris, otherwise I wouldn't have started about it.'

Gerrit gossips a bit, but Gerrit always keeps his word. It takes a while but it comes. Some fine day Crisje will get her Lord carved in wood. But Gerrit hasn't finished yet. He is talking, the others are listening. Whatever will they hear next? Hendrik is already chuckling, of course there will be another tall story full of lies. Crisje has already received something. Now the rest will follow. Gerrit first looks at everybody in turn. He wants to wring the necks of Crisje's friends and starts to chuckle.

'Did you hear, Hendrik, what Casje has been up to again?' The eyes go to Crisje. Gerrit continues:

'I was told that by Hent.'

'From that cheating dog', Crisje reacts immediately. 'From him?'

'Now you must be patient, Cris. You don't know everything about your Casje. You believe people far too much. I must also warn you, Hendrik.'

'You are telling lies, Gerrit.'

‘None of it, Cris, now wait a minute. Casje was in the country last week. He wants to sell something to that rabbit poacher. You know who that is, that crook, who cannot leave anything, and who can use everything. At the binding factory he stole for thousands of guilders, you know as well, and it is him! That wife of his is at home, but doesn’t have a cent to buy anything. What happens now? It gets to Casje and he throws himself on the ground. You know as well as I do that it sometimes gets to him.’

This is going too far. Tall Hendrik has to silence Crisje, he wants to hear what kind of nonsense Gerrit will come out with next. But Crisje no longer wishes to listen.

‘That is taking away people’s dignity, Gerrit.’

‘You don’t know what’s coming, Cris. Wait a minute! You will say I was right as well.’

‘You would like that.’

‘And here it comes, Cris.’ Gerrit keeps them waiting again for a moment. First a sip, that takes forever. Crisje falls for it, she says:

‘And what happened, Gerrit?’

‘See, Cris, but now you are getting interested, aren’t you? And I want that, or there is no fun in it. Now Casje throws himself on the ground and screams at that woman... now look in my apple tree!’

‘Good grief’, Crisje shrieks with laughter, ‘but what a bunch of lies.’ Hendrik and Jan laugh themselves silly. Tall Hendrik can’t stop, Crisje doesn’t know what to say and Gerrit feels his success. He adds to the story.

‘And now Cris, the worst part.’

‘I don’t want to hear any more about it, Gerrit, nothing! They are lies!’

‘Lies? Hendrik, you ask Hent, then you will hear. At that moment the man comes home, Cris. Casje is lying on the ground and that woman is laughing herself silly. That crook looked for a minute, grasped Casje by his collar and threw him into the middle of the street. Casje is gone, he doesn’t know now where he should go so quickly and forgets his wares. Hent told me as well, and Hent thinks that’s the worst part, now that bandit is trying to flog Casje’s things. Hent said we must all stop him from doing that. He mustn’t be able to sell a thing. If he comes here, Cris, you’ve been warned. That’s all!’

‘You are madder than the worst madman in a lunatic asylum, Ger-

rit.'

'Is that not ungrateful, Hendrik? Would you have thought that? I'm telling you, keep an eye on that man!'

Tall Hendrik thinks it is a great joke and pours Gerrit another drink. But Crisje hasn't finished yet. Gerrit continues:

'See Cris, you just want to protect everything, but that's isn't possible. You must be able to tell right from wrong. And that isn't so easy. You want to protect everything, but the saint also told me, that's wrong! But now something else. My God, what a bother I had this week with Hanneke.'

They already make themselves comfortable, there will be another good story. Crisje is also listening, when Gerrit involves Hanneke it is a funfair.

'Cris, you know our Hanneke, don't you? She can't help being a bit dry. And that she doesn't have a husband yet, is exactly the same and she can't help that either, because Hanneke is not just anybody. You know that as well. True or not, Cris?'

Crisje doesn't say a word and waits, Gerrit continues:

'I am getting changed and had an appointment in Emmerik with an elder to change one thing and another about the ornament. But when I was sitting there looking at myself, Cris, I thought, Gerrit, Gerrit, my boy, you really are a handsome man. A damn shame, that you don't have a nice wife. I asked Hanneke, what do you think of me?'

'Do you want to get married, Gerrit', she asked. 'And I hadn't yet thought of that myself, Cris. And what do you think Hanneke asked me? Don't you know what? You can't guess either. Hanneke said to me: 'Gerrit, if you are in Italy again you must see if you can find a good husband for me.' And I am not a person, Cris, to just send other men, and strangers at that, to Hanneke. I thought there is still always Jan Maondag!'

Jan hadn't counted on this and blushes to behind his ears. Gerrit now starts on Jan and says to Tall Hendrik:

'Do you know, Hendrik, what that is? Why does Jan always get such red lugs on his head when we talk about women? Can Jan not handle it?'

Jan laughs as if he has toothache. He doesn't know which way to turn. His shyness sets Gerrit and Tall Hendrik off laughing. Crisje

also likes this joke. What kind of strange people live in this world, but this is quite normal, isn't it? Gerrit has finished his drink and wants another one. He already has some excuse for it. He looks at his glass and starts a new story.

'I had a dream during the week, Hendrik, that was not for the soft hearted. I took flight in my dream and landed at the feet of Saint Peter. Saint Peter keeps watch for Our Lord, Cris. And he must examine the people now and again, even while they are here on earth. He said to me: 'Gerrit, you are not looking very well. You must drink some good bitters now and again! That is good for everything!' I say to him: 'Goodness me, how you know what a person deserves.'

Hendrik almost falls off his chair laughing as he takes Gerrit's empty glass and refills it. Now, with his full glass of bitters, Gerrit continues without hesitation.

'Without this, Cris, you can't tell stories, can you? But now, goodness gracious, why didn't I think of that?' Gerrit joins in the laughter himself and they understand that there is more foolishness to follow.

'Listen to this, Hendrik, what a drama I had this week! Hanneke has had a toothache all this week. When I came home in the evening, she was sitting there with a cloth round her head and mewing. I couldn't stand it any longer. I asked her why don't you go to the dentist? But she is too cowardly for that. She doesn't dare, that dry Hanneke, she won't have any of it. I thought, please yourself then. But I had to get up every night. I gave her a dram, but I thought I could do with some myself. And when she had had three, Hendrik, she was as drunk as a lord. She then went to sleep but the next day the very same thing. Then I said: 'Go to Manus. You know Manus. Go to Manus, he can help you.' I thought, I will hear about that, Hanneke and Manus. She asked me: 'What does he do then, Gerrit?' I say: 'He can heal. He does it with his thumb.' So! I show her, because I know how he does it. I must say, that even if he drinks like a fish, Manus can heal. And what it is, Hendrik, you can laugh about it now, you can make fun of it, you can say nonsense, imagination, or whatever you like, Manus can heal. Gosh, when you think about it, Hendrik, it is a strange thing, don't you think?'

'And did she go, Gerrit?', Crisje asks tensely.

'You believe me Cris? Do you think that I am telling the truth now?'

'You already said a while ago that her teeth were bothering her, didn't you?'

'Thank God, Cris, that you remembered that. Yes, she went. But it certainly was a business, really! She went, but she had to come back in the afternoon, Manus had three horses to shoe. Hanneke goes back to Manus in the afternoon. People, I laughed myself sick. I can still see them in my mind's eye. Manus said: 'Just come and sit here.' Hanneke looks at Manus. Then he comes with his thumb on her face and makes the sign of the cross. He first asks: 'Can you pray, Hanneke?' She says: 'Of course. I go to church, don't I? I go to communion every week.' 'That's great', he said, 'because it will go away on its own.' Manus starts praying. Hanneke closes her eyes for a minute, in Hanneke's opinion, Manus is taking too long and she looks at him for a minute. She said to him: 'What a long time it's taking, Manus?' He said, as Hanneke told me, Cris: 'That is a bad one, Hanneke. It needs a lot.' Manus continues to pray, his thumb does the rest. But when Hanneke closes her eyes, Manus grabs her by her collar and touches her body. Hanneke throws Manus off her and flies out the door.

When I came home in the evening Hanneke is sitting crying. I'm hardly in the door when it started already. 'You're a fine one. How can you send me to such a dirty man.'

I asked: 'What's the matter?'

'That dirty man was touching my body. It is scandalous! I got the jitters. How can you do this to me, Gerrit?'

But now Hanneke, however strange it is, Hendrik, is rid of her toothache. Days afterwards she said: 'Is it possible that that man still helped me?'

'But I told you so', I said. The toothache was gone and you can think what you like, I've got my peace back at home. But you would be driven mad. I said to Hanneke as well: 'Manus always looks where the nerves are. And they are sometimes somewhere else, they are not always under the teeth, but sometimes on the stomach or anywhere for that matter.' And then Hanneke said: 'You and your Manus can take a running jump for all I care. You and your Manus are sozzled, are absolutely mad. You and your Manus...' But then, Cris, I just walked out, because no one could stand that.'

They let Gerrit calmly finish his story and are bent double again from laughter. Crisje thinks that it really did happen like that. Crisje

really thinks that it is the truth.

‘Did she really go to Manus, Gerrit?’

‘Yes, Cris, as sure as I’m alive, she was there.’

‘You mean it?’, asks Jan.

‘But I said that. You can think what you like, but Manus has something in his hands. Even if they are so black, he can cure a toothache! How many people has he helped already? They can’t be counted. And he has a good drink on them. Not even two minutes later you will find him at Hent Klink’s. But nonsense is nonsense, Hanneke is rid of her toothache. And that is already a few days ago. Is that maybe sorcery, Hendrik?’

They do not know. But Manus can certainly get rid of a toothache. Manus Reusel possesses something and there are more people like that who can heal. What it all is they couldn’t say, but they had a wonderful time anyway with the story told by Gerrit. What a pity that Peter isn’t here. They could have laughed about that funny language of Peter and he could have joined in himself. Such evenings are one of their few pleasures. Working every day until they are blue in the face and now and again some diversion from this earth.

Gerrit, Peter and Jan are Tall Hendrik’s best friends. Of course he has more, but the friendship of these four, for each other, is much greater and deeper. They form the ‘quartet’ and ensure that a week of hard drudgery doesn’t last too long.

Without Gerrit this life wouldn’t be worth very much anymore. Jan comes often. They play cards, they chew tobacco and smoke, make music, have a drink and know nothing about town life. They also do not want anything to do with it and are happy anyway. Tall Hendrik continually thinks of something new, works hard, continually invents something to earn more money. Crisje likes it when the men are together. She knows them and they are also her friends. If they didn’t have this, life, even though they have so much in each other, would be worth much less and that is not the intention of Our Lord.

Gerrit feels that they should leave. They say their farewells. When they are gone, Crisje says to her husband:

‘It’s really a pity, Hendrik, that Gerrit doesn’t have a good wife! I can understand it of Jan, he is as bashful as a child, but Gerrit?’

‘That’s up to them, Cris. They do not know what kissing is!’

Tall Hendrik cuddles his wife again, so that she gets short of breath.

But she is deliriously happy and proud of him and cannot say enough about it that Tall Hendrik has now conquered his devil and it no longer gets the chance to destroy their lives. What would have become of it and what could she have done? Go and live in the town or travel along? Flying around this horrible world? Crisje would never feel at home in the town and would die of homesickness. The living habits of these people are completely strange to her. They live aimlessly and do not pay any attention to Our Lord. No, that is nothing for Crisje. Tall Hendrik therefore knows, he would have consciously murdered this life!

Like this, Crisje, it is good. You do not have to talk about it anymore. This is it. Tall Hendrik doesn't need the stage. You cannot buy happiness with money and jewels, at least the happiness, which you now have. What makes people in the town happy is completely different from here in the country, even if the mice are lying dead in front of the cupboard. In addition, Crisje doesn't lack for anything. If you could look behind all those nice and beautiful things, the big houses, that busy carry-on and the so-called merriment of those town people, then you wouldn't see mice, but rats lying dead in front of the cupboard. Crisje has now received her 'orchid' from her Hendrik. It has become quiet in the house. They feel a peace coming over them and it is as if the heavens are smiling at them. Not a word is said. It has suddenly come to them and has carried them away from this world as it were. Hendrik and Crisje are in a paradise and are sitting there under a tree. Look, Crisje, a bird is flying over to us. I see that the creature has a piece of paper in its beak.

What message could it contain? It drops the note in front of Tall Hendrik. He picks it up and reads:

'I have no more worries about you two. But take care of yourself. Greetings from Our Lord!

Crisje now knows that the next boy will be called Gerrit. Not after this Gerrit, but after her own brother. 'Or', she says to her Hendrik, 'do you have another name for him?'

Where they look there are orchids growing! They do not touch them, they only look. Crisje looks into the universe. She takes flight, Tall Hendrik follows her, but now their eyes close, the gate to paradise is closed. Our Lord is watching. He is always watching, continually, day and night, over people of good will!

Gerrit and Jan have no understanding of this. They still have to be reborn!

‘But thank you, Our Lord, thank you very much. You did that! I know! I am grateful to You, as long as You know! I will continue to do my best, I promise You!’

In the whole of this area people do not understand what it is. It lives here! And everyone could give it to themselves as well... It costs nothing. You only have to do something for it. That is all!

‘And a dead sparrow has some of it too, and that is just a sparrow! And we are people! People! Men and women! Tall Hendrik is a king!’

‘If you don’t make a fool of me, Hendrik,
I will tell you about a wonder’

Jeus is growing nicely and is already beginning to talk about everything, which Crisje, as a mother, is very happy about. Her youngest is a special child. She feels that he has something unusual. He occupies her day and night, she follows and experiences everything with him. She concludes to herself: ‘Yes, Our Lord, I am grateful and happy. I do not need anything else.’ But she does sometimes wonder: ‘But what is it that Jeus has?’ The child can look at something now and again, of which Crisje cannot see the reality. It stares at something which Crisje cannot see. And yet there must be something, because the child looks and laughs and apparently feels happy. Jeus is indeed occupied with something, and that hangs in the air, but it has nothing to do with this world.

That makes Crisje a bit anxious. What will it result in? Jeus is starting to understand the material things which he sees. And also to use his hands and legs. He crawls through the kitchen, suddenly looks up and starts gurgling. Crisje has known for some time that she is not a part of this, But Jeus does possess something which she cannot comprehend. Tall Hendrik sees nothing and laughs at her. She can therefore not talk to him about it. She still hears Mina’s words. ‘Jeus is a special child, this child has eyes in his head like the heavens.’ And those eyes are beginning to look into a world, which neither Crisje or other people can perceive, but which must still be present there. She would like to know more about this, but she cannot get to the bottom of it.

This morning she got a great shock. Completely unexpectedly Jeus said: ‘Tall Hendrik, Crisje.’ She picked him up and pressed him against her heart. ‘My God, Jeus’, she called out, ‘how happy you make me.’ The child allows itself to be pampered for a moment, but if it goes on for too long, he wants to be put down again. He wants to crawl and look at those beautiful things which he observes. When Crisje tells Trui about this wonder, she thinks it is nothing special. However, Crisje knows, anyone who doesn’t have children cannot know these feelings! Of course Trui cannot understand what such a thing means to a mother. When the names of the parents pass those

thin lips of the children it is, after all, as if Our Lord is speaking to you. And, in addition, this was expressed in such an amazing way she thought she would go mad with happiness. However, when she tells Trui that this came from Our Lord, it causes Crisje complete disillusionment. She then just keeps quiet and does not talk further about her happiness.

‘You can say that’, said Trui, ‘but you can also fool yourself about it, it doesn’t always figure.’

How cold and hard that sounds. Trui can never be affectionate for a change. If she should ever have children, Crisje thinks, those poor things would still not be happy. Then a story follows from Trui that she has already had to listen to so many times, which boils down to the fact that having children is not everything.

‘Do you still remember that, Cris? That girl of Klink’s, she was so happy as well when the child had said the name, but what became of it? So don’t make me laugh.’

Crisje continues to follow what her child does. Sometimes he lies in the middle of the kitchen and then falls asleep in a special way. When she saw this for the first time, she thought: ‘Where have I seen that sleeping before?’ He sleeps with his eyes open! When Crisje wants to lift him up the child starts to scream and squeal so horrendously that she becomes afraid. Then she thinks to herself: ‘He already knows what he wants.’

That sleeping on the ground was not normal. This definitely had to mean something.

Hendrik laughed about it and said that she mustn’t tell him any nonsense, sleeping and sleeping was... sleeping. Only Tall Hendrik thought it was funny that she didn’t mind it. Whatever Crisje said, her Hendrik couldn’t understand it. ‘But why not lay him in bed then.’ But that wasn’t possible, Jeus wanted to lie on the ground. Now Tall Hendrik would like to see that some time. He lifted the small child, laid him on the ground and tried to force the child to sleep. Jeus screamed blue murder. Causing Tall Hendrik to react with:

‘See, Crisje, you can also go too far. No old wives tales, but keep both feet on the ground and be happy. No nonsense.’

With this Tall Hendrik distanced himself from it. Crisje continued to observe the child carefully and Tall Hendrik didn’t get to hear anything more about it. Crisje stood with both feet on the ground and

was not imagining anything. But Jeus had something, saw something, which was above her perception, which she didn't see and which Tall Hendrik could not believe in.

It is nice and warm in the kitchen. The winter has gone again and Jeus is already becoming a big boy. It is spring and the new summer is on its way. They had nothing to complain about last winter. It was a really fitful winter. There was much rain and wind, little snow and no ice, which the people were really pleased about. A severe winter brings so many troubles.

Today Jeus lay down on the ground again and wanted to go back to sleep. She lay a cushion under his head, but then the child started to cry again. She picked him up, but he found that even worse. He wanted to sleep, so Crisje had to leave him alone. Finally she just put him back down, but continued to watch him closely. 'What does he want?' she thought. 'What is he trying to do?'

Jeus fell asleep and lay there on the ground so peacefully, as if he was sleeping in his bed. Crisje could see that he was breathing normally, but the way he was sleeping was a bit strange. However, she couldn't explain it. She sits down next to the big stove and continues to look. Little by little she feels herself becoming sleepy, her eyes fall closed and in broad daylight she sinks away into a deep dream. It seems as though Jeus is making her dream. She follows the child, becomes free and floats into space. Jeus is also in that space. Good heavens, what will she experience now. Crisje feels the same sacred silence entering her which she had when she was still carrying Jeus, and which she will never forget. The earth sinks away under her. She is in another world and thinks immediately of the Parvis of Our Lord.

The silence which Crisje now feels is like that, dare she say it... that of the Tabernacle, when Father takes the Sacred Host in his hands. It's out and she is apparently still alive. She thinks to herself, I could have died. Jeus flies in front of her and pulls her with him. Suddenly she is startled because there is a knock at the door. It is a beggar. Crisje gets some money, puts it in the man's hand and sits down again in her corner. Immediately she is back in the same situation and continues her dream. She now sees beautiful trees and hundreds of different flowers in a radiant world, which can only be from Our Lord. Crisje looks round to see where Jeus is, because she cannot see him, yet she still feels he is close by. The further she wanders, the more beautiful

the nature with the flowers and the light become. All of a sudden she remembers her clogs and her apron and she realizes with a shock, that she cannot go any further like that. She comes to a brook with nice blue coloured water. That is also something so lovely that can definitely only be found in the Parvis of Our Lord. When Crisje looks into the water, she gets a fright. 'Is that me?' she thinks, when she sees what a beautiful garment she is wearing. She is completely shaken and can almost not deal with it. It is a beautiful blue garment; her feet are clad in nice silver shoes. Her hair is blonde and on her chest a cross of golden light is shining. A cross for which she has longed for such a long time, but which her Hendrik has still not given her. The cross appears to be of pure gold, it is a divine wonder, which she is experiencing. It also looks as if she is a bit bigger than usual! 'Yes', she rejoices, 'I am in the Parvis of Our Lord!' Father has told her so much about this and he also said that it is sometimes possible for people who still live on earth to be able to see there for a while, because everything is possible for Our Lord. He takes the people with good hearts, the virtuous and the humble people and lets them see the Parvis. It gives enormous happiness and shows great mercy, for one must live as a saint, to come there. Not everyone comes in there. Then you must live as a saint. That goes without saying, because Our Lord lives there. This is His world, His heaven and He sees every wrong thought and then you have to leave. Therefore there are only a few people who – when they still live on the earth – are allowed to admire his Parvis. People do not make any effort for it; they do not even want that mercy. But Crisje knows because Father has told her, if a person works on himself and loves the life of Our Lord, that wonder is laid aside for everyone. After all, he is a Father of love and likes to give His children something of what they have already earned.

What beautiful trees. They are much much nicer than on the earth. It is a wonder. She sees herself as a beautiful woman. Oh, Our Lord, if Hendrik could see her now and admire her. How fortunate that would be. What would her Hendrik look like? He wouldn't be able to get enough of it.

But Tall Hendrik doesn't want this, Crisje. The long beanpole laughs about it. He stands with both feet on the ground and thinks he is a real man! Or is that not laid aside for men? Of course, Crisje, but a man also has to do something for it. And a man usually doesn't

want that. A man is different from a woman. When Crisje thinks of her Hendrik, tears come into her eyes. She cannot give this to him! However, this would give him a course and a height. Then his voice would be even more beautiful, she feels. But what can she do? Nothing! She has a sacred contact with Jeus, it is Jeus. Jeus flees from this world! He can walk out of his body and go to the heavens! Isn't this something, Crisje? Jeus has wings. He can leave the world and be here; here, where life is divinely beautiful and with which he is in harmony. That means where his angels live, because it is them who allow him to float. And now, Crisje, the angel wanted you to go with him. Is this not a wonder and a mercy?

And now look at the cathedrals. Aren't they wonderful? Our Lord does not live here, but this is only one world of the millions which He has created for us people. It is truly the Parvis of paradise. Believe it, Crisje, it is the sacred truth, neither nonsense nor lies are told here anymore! And did you think that Jeus could do this on his own strength? Did you really think that not all people would wish to experience this? And did you also think that we do not know what we want and may and can do? This is also a part of that which you already experienced and of that which is still to come. What you now see of yourself, Crisje, is your spiritual possession, you will be like this when you leave the earth later for good and enter into eternity through 'death' and your coffin. This is your eternal body, but you will be even more beautiful. This garment, which is already so nice, will become even more beautiful. You will be like a queen in this paradise, it is so much, that you will beam and will not be able to contain your happiness. Do you hear the birds singing for you? This is all for you yourself. You deserve it, Crisje. And continue in this way, just follow Jeus and you will receive even more from Our Lord, more and more, because we know what we can give you. But be careful. Crisje is awakening. Jeus as well, the child is lying there on the ground and is looking up at her. She lifts him up and presses him against her heart.

'So there, my Jeus, can you look in the heavens? Can you release yourself from this rotten world? Do you have powers of Our Lord in your body? My God, how happy I am with you!'

She showers her child with kisses. Then she changes her mind. That is too much. I should not kiss the child like that. Crisje observes Jeus in wonder as she feeds him, she cannot believe it, but it is the holy

truth. He is such a special child. For he is able to look in the Parvis of Our Lord and play and walk there, talk to the birds and the flowers. And that is Jeus' playing! He lies down on the ground and plays. Never in her life has Crisje heard or seen such a thing. Crisje feels Jeus has earned his meal. She feeds him as she observes this wonder. She now talks inwardly, no one may hear it. People will just laugh at her, and this is too sacred for that. But Father must know. If only Hendrik could come home earlier. But she will tell him! Tall Hendrik can then say what he thinks about it, she will tell it to him. And if he laughs again, she will see how she will react. But it is a miracle! And no one can take this away from her. Not anyone in this world. It is a gift from Our Lord.

Crisje pulls up her apron and looks at the clogs and her clothes, which she is now wearing. 'My God, but how beautiful I was there', passes her lips and she already thinks this is wrong. Imagine if Trui had heard her. Then there would be fun and games and she would be gossiped about in the street. Trui would try to talk her out of it, would begrudge her it and would continue until Crisje would say: 'I really imagined it, didn't I, Trui?' Only then would Trui be satisfied. But she will have a hard job doing it. This time she will keep quiet. Crisje knows for herself, no mother from this whole area will experience something like that through her children. How beautiful that cross was. And then that beautiful blue garment. She lays Jeus in his little bed. He is already sleeping. That is also a wonder to her. This sleep and that other sleeping are different. You can see it just like that, thinks Crisje. If her Hendrik would only come. It is taking a long time, but then she hears his step. The door flies open and he has already got her. Crisje is once again floating between earth and heaven. And now as well, she thinks in a flash, this floating by her Hendrik is different to the floating she did this afternoon through Jeus. Tall Hendrik puts her on his knees and then the questions follow:

'How were the boys, Cris?'

'Nothing to complain about, Hendrik.'

'Anything else, Cris?'

Tall Hendrik looks into her eyes and sees something. Those eyes are sparkling from happiness, he thinks. There is something alive in those eyes. But what is the cause?

'Is there something, Cris?'

‘Yes, Hendrik, there is something.’

‘What is it, Cris?’

‘In the first place, Hendrik, you will be happy about it, Jeus said Crisje and Tall Hendrik today.’

‘Isn’t that something, Cris? Is that true? He has said my name now already? That’s quick, isn’t it, that is clever so to speak, Cris.’

‘Yes, Hendrik, and as clearly as you and I can say it. It sounded just like an adult. You can understand why I was happy. Trui laughed at me, of course, she didn’t think anything of it, but we know that.’

‘Why did you go there anyway, Cris?’

‘Oh, Hendrik, if you are happy, you want to make other people happy, but they don’t want to be happy. I went home again quickly. But now something else, Hendrik.’

‘Have you more Cris?’

‘The best part is still to come. If you don’t make fun of it, Hendrik, I will tell you a miracle.’

Tall Hendrik becomes curious. He already asks her to begin. Crisje first has to think, but then the story comes:

‘It started here in the kitchen, Hendrik. Jeus was lying here on the floor sleeping. And no matter what I tried, he wanted to sleep on the floor. I lifted him up and then he begins to scream. I thought, what does he want now? Then I sat down in this corner and I fell asleep, but I started to dream. Jeus was also sleeping. And then I flew with him out of this world. I swear to you, Hendrik, I cannot lie and I am not mad, but I saw the Parvis of Our Lord. We were where almost no one comes. And Jeus was near me, I felt him everywhere, Hendrik.’

Tall Hendrik has trouble not to laugh, but remains serious anyway. Could it be true?

‘You didn’t imagine any of this, did you, Cris?’

‘No, Hendrik, none of it, but oh, Hendrik, I was so beautiful there, really. You should have seen me, Hendrik.’

But Tall Hendrik thinks that this is going a bit too far. When he asks: ‘Have you still got your senses, Cris?’ Crisje immediately feels that Hendrik is making fun of her and that is a tremendous disappointment. Her heart is already crying and something breaks. Oh, if only her Hendrik was like her. If he, even for one minute, could only believe a little bit of it. ‘My God’, Crisje moans to herself, ‘if only, if only... if only he was like that, then what? Yes, then what? Then... yes

then... they would all float and the happiness would be even stronger, the love even deeper.' Now Tall Hendrik must remain behind. But she wouldn't be Crisje if she couldn't control herself. She says to him:

'Do you see, Hendrik, I was already afraid of this. You can think what you like. I'm telling you, I was there!'

Crisje has forgotten to say that she gave a beggar something, but she no longer thinks about it. However, later or tomorrow she will notice it in her purse, because she gave that man a mark and that is too much for such a vagabond. But Tall Hendrik does meet her half-way and asks:

'Did you feel that, Cris? Is that feeling? Can you look in the heaven by feeling?'

'Yes, Hendrik', she says, and to save what can be saved, 'yes, by feeling one gets everything.'

'Then I will fetch him, Cris.' And before Cris can do anything about it, he is already with the child and lifts that life out of his little bed. Tall Hendrik talks to Jeus. He likes that. He does not even cry, but is just laughing at his father.

'Will you let me feel something now, Jeus? Come on, look at your father. Come on now. I want to feel something as well.'

Jeus looks round and wants to take everything in his hands. His father waits, Crisje looks at him and the child. Suddenly Tall Hendrik begins to laugh so loudly that they can hear him outside. He can't stop laughing. Crisje doesn't know what the matter is, but she does feel a bit insulted. But why did she tell Tall Hendrik? She should have known this is nothing for him. Hendrik continues to laugh. Until she finally asks:

'But what are you laughing about, Hendrik? Is there so much to laugh about?'

'Cris ...', says Tall Hendrik, 'stop it now... I'm in stitches laughing. He let me feel something Cris! Just look for yourself, he has peed all over my trousers. Is that not enough Cris?'

Now that is something, which Crisje hadn't thought about either. This also grabs her heart. She also has to laugh about it and it eases her sorrow a little. She takes Jeus. He will get a dry nappy. Hendrik can take care of himself. He thinks of the dramas they have. There is something new every day. But he didn't anticipate the Parvis. But what did annoy Crisje were the words which he called to Jeus:

'You can feel what you like, be what you like, do what you want to do, but you can also pee, I just wanted... to tell you that!'

'That Tall Hendrik', thinks Crisje, you have to laugh as well, whether you want to or not, 'you can never be angry with him!'

The following morning Crisje is in church early. Now Father gets to hear her story. But he doesn't laugh. Father listens with his full attention and when she has told of her experience, the pastor says:

'Crisje, that is a mercy from Our Lord. Oh, Crisje, but how happy you make me, to know that I have a parishioner who has received this kind of mercy. Oh, Crisje, it is special. But for goodness sake don't tell anyone else. You will only have troubles because of it. And that is really too much, it is too sacred for that. What did Hendrik say, Crisje?'

'He laughed, Father.'

'I can imagine, but that's nothing for Hendrik. You can understand that, can't you, Crisje?'

'Yes, Father, of course!'

'See, Crisje, that is not really as self-evident as you think. Other people cannot do that and then there is nothing left of all this sacredness. Lock it up in your heart, do not talk about it anymore, Cris, and thank Our Lord for everything. I thought, Crisje when I first saw Jeus, I also felt something. I felt that silence, and you have now seen what that is. What else will we go through with that child? I will pray for him and dedicate him to the angels. They must protect him. Now say five Hail Mary's, and if you want to make more of it? I think it is good, Our Lord has blessed you!'

When Tall Hendrik hears that Crisje has told Father about it, he asks:

'What did he say to this, Cris?'

Now Hendrik had better listen. Crisje doesn't add anything; he will get the full and pure truth. Look how Tall Hendrik is listening now. Isn't that something, Cris?

'If he can understand it, Cris, I have nothing more to say. I cannot understand it, because I am still a long way from Our Lord. I am big, Cris, they call me Tall Hendrik, but this doesn't help you a bit. You see that now for yourself. But you've got it over and done with!'

A child of a mere few months looks... into paradise. If a child crawls to a toy-trumpet and can trumpet loudly, that can be heard and seen. You believe it! There were other children in this world who

saw something before they really began to look, but these children were apathetic. Usually they were put behind bars or they were bewitched. Crisje now knows that she must keep quiet, or her Jeus will go the same way. She will be silent! As silent as the grave!

But, she now knows, she could have given her Hendrik an orchid of unprecedented beauty. He could have been given a kiss of unprecedented purity! And he could have seen a queen. Now he sees and hears nothing. He has missed the mark completely! What a pity, thinks Crisje, it could have been so wonderful! No, Tall Hendrik will not get that kiss yet. However, that kiss still lives in her. She can give it to him just like that, but he does not yet feel it... Even if you hear the smack from outside in the street. He doesn't feel that kiss! And that can also be felt, be heard. But does that kiss exist? Tall Hendrik says: 'No, don't make me laugh'. What did I tell you, Tall Hendrik? Here you stand! You will get none of it! Nothing. Probably later, but that will take a while!

Crisje thinks about her cross... Will she?... Maybe... you never know.

She feels a tickle in her heart... And in the eyes of Jeus she sees the same tickle... One and one is now six. However, there are millions of eyes, eyes and kisses!!!

When the day is over another one comes! She wants to look in it and never go back! Never! We will continue! Even her step has now changed, even if she is walking in clogs!

‘Don ’t take that away from me, Hendrik,
otherwise I can no longer live’

Jeus now runs through the house, just like Johan and Bernard. He plays and romps with the family dog, Fanny. Life is starting to expand for him. It is becoming nicer. Every hour life changes for Jeus and Crisje. But once again Crisje witnesses to another strange event with regard to Jeus. He is following something that seems to be floating around in the kitchen, which he can see, but it is invisible to Crisje. Even Johan was aware of it and asked:

‘What’s he doing jumping about like a madman, Mother? But what is he looking for and what is he doing?’

‘Yes, Johan,’ thought Crisje, ‘if only we knew. Probably we would also start to skip through the house and would find things which we cannot buy here!’

Johan only listened for a minute. Bernard didn’t even go into it. Bernard thinks fast and is alert like his father. That’s something, if children can change something in the kitchen with their skipping, which an old woman then notices. But Crisje is not old. She has just turned thirty. The party was great. Crisje will never forget her birthday. How Gerrit let rip along with Hendrik; it was such good fun! They sang the whole evening until deep in the night, because it coincided nicely with a good wage earned by Tall Hendrik. It was a bundle of money, and pure profit. The portraits, and that money as well which he had earned with his singing and waiting tables at the Broezia. Waiting tables at the Broezia, in Emmerik, having a nice seat outside and enjoying their lemonades and drinks, is something for Tall Hendrik. The richest people, he said, come there. He had to think about it, as did Crisje, because you see, their Sunday, the only day of the week, which they could enjoy together, was lost completely to it. But what can you do? It has been a long winter. And another child is born to Crisje and Hendrik. Whose name is Gerrit. The boys are in need of essentials. Money disappears just like that. You don’t know where it got to. And things are expensive. Tall Hendrik did what he thought best, And he got a job as a waiter and earned some extra money. And when it was Crisje’s birthday once again, in the holy days of Our Lord, exactly on Christmas Day, there was a party in the house never to be forgotten.

Those days were special already. It was as if, Tall Hendrik readily admitted, Our Lord had granted Crisje the grace to be born on His day. Yes, that was really something special. Crisje brings honour to Our Lord. She lives according to his teachings and is happy with that. However, Hendrik knows that all this doesn't bring in a single cent. If you want to have money, you have to work for it yourself. You must think and not wait too long with a decision, because other people will beat you to it, and you will be left behind bars yawning. Crisje had been frugal. She had been saving money and they had promised themselves they would buy or rent themselves a piece of land with it. In any case, it lay there in the cupboard. It was not yet enough, but the rest would come soon. Because she did extra work at the other farms. And so the ship sailed on. Two strong and aware people beat each storm. Here the ship had never ended up in a situation where you could say: it is sailing towards destruction. It is heading straight for the rocks. That did not exist for Crisje and Hendrik. It was not possible! They had examples enough which told them: That's not the way... Like this, that is better and more careful!

When there was enough money Crisje could go to the land. Their own land at that. But it had to be ploughed first. And that required money as well. Gerrit van Hosman did this for her and didn't charge much. She jumped for joy about the land and sang her highest song to Our Lord, from gratitude for this unprecedented happiness. Crisje hauled along the manure and liquid manure for the potatoes herself. Yes, she wouldn't dare tell Tall Hendrik about it, because that was men's work. Such a barrel full of liquid manure was heavy. And she had to push it in a wheelbarrow for a long way. A horse and cart cost handfuls of money and there was no end to all that renting. Some fifteen barrels had to be put over the land, if she wanted to enjoy her own potatoes. And, if you wanted to eat tasty food, you had to make a sacrifice. And now? For now the cellar was full! When she went down only four or five steps, she was already standing on the potatoes. Crisje got such a lot out of her own ground. But what a job it was! She still didn't understand how her back wasn't broken. Even up to the last minute before Gerrit was born, Crisje was still on the land. People did not talk about it as a scandal, but they did consider it a bit too much. How Hendrik let 'his wife work! Crisje was a drudge!'

But Crisje has no time to think about it. She must prepare the land,

which consisted of hauling all the essentials. Back and forth with the wheelbarrow, half an hour with all those things. Then planting the potatoes one by one. Anyway, people knew what had to be done before they are boiled and are on the table. But if you had worked for them and grown them yourself, only then could you taste how good they were. Then they are your own potatoes. Johan and Bernard couldn't get enough of them. Johan and Bernard had to help as well. Crisje made the holes and Johan was allowed to throw a potato into it. Then came Bernard with the liquid manure. Sometimes the roles were reversed. She therefore had to give credit where it was due; the boys had done their best and earned their potato. And got as many as they wanted. Tall Hendrik sometimes asked: 'Is it not too much for you, Cris?' But then it was always: 'No, Hendrik, I really like doing it, you don't have to worry about me.'

Crisje had her own plans. Tall Hendrik didn't know everything about them. Each week beggars came to get their bite to eat and Crisje had potatoes for them. Of course, she knew she could have earned money by selling some potatoes but she didn't do that; those she had to spare were for the poor. These beggars told her that they had never eaten so well and that was the satisfaction in it for Crisje. These thanks were what she had drudged for the whole year.

All these things haunted Crisje, as she busily poked at the stove. Jeus was now crying as he had never cried before. What could Jeus see this time, Crisje thought? She followed her own heart and continued her work in the kitchen. What Jeus saw were lights, many coloured lights. He attempted to grasp at them but apparently they were out of reach. And those lights were invisible again to another. Only Jeus could see them. Just look at that child, thinks Crisje! You would swear that it is playing in the heavens. But what is Jeus following?

Jeus sees luminous balloons and children who are playing with him. These children are also invisible to Crisje. But you must hear and see it, she thinks, it is heavenly. Jeus laughed, and was having enormous fun. If Johan and Bernard ever stood there watching, Crisje only heard: he is completely mad... Too harsh from a child's mouth, but they heard that from the big ones. Only Jeus lived in this world! And that world was for him alone! He climbs onto the chairs and tries to catch the balls of light, Crisje notices that they move on again. Yes, if you see all that, you forget to watch the stove and you can start all

over again.

Jeus doesn't look at toys. Those wooden things don't mean anything to him. He must have living toys. Fanny has therefore become a friend of Jeus, you can't keep the dog away from him. Which Johan and Bernard are jealous of. It doesn't help, you must conquer hearts and Jeus had won Fanny's heart long ago. The dog is so fond of him, that Crisje enjoys it herself because she sees that pure love always conquers all. Because Jeus is also fond of Fanny, he shares his food with him, so that Crisje has to watch, or the child will eat nothing more himself and give the dog everything. Johan and Bernard are already furious because they cannot get Fanny out the door. And when the dog ever wants to go out into the fresh air, romps with Bernard who has the greatest fun, the animal has already disappeared five minutes later and Bernard finds it back with Jeus. Crisje once asked Bernard:

'What do you want here, Bennad?'

'It's that cursed dog, mother! You can't keep it outside for a minute. But I have something to say as well!'

This is how Bernard is, thinks Crisje. She also knows that Fanny has found his master in Jeus. That does Crisje good, because she wants a good mate for Jeus.

Jeus sees the balloons of light flying through the kitchen. He calls: 'Balloons, balloons, mama.'

And that is also something else new. Usually Jeus says mother like the other boys. But now he is playing with the universe, to call it that, he says 'mama', which sounds like really High Dutch. Here no child says that. In the corner of the kitchen Jeus sees a beautiful man. However, he is likewise invisible to Crisje. This man is very friendly to Jeus. He laughs at Jeus and he talks to him. Jeus calls the man the 'Tall One' because he is just as big as father. And this man has exactly the same goatee beard under his chin. Just like father. This Tall One brings these balls to Jeus and also the children with whom he can play. And this man only visible to Jeus nods to him. He is the one who brought in the so-called cursed wreath from outside. And also gave Jeus the rattle and made Crisje go through all this. She is not sorry about it, because this man took Jeus and her to the Parvis of Our Lord. If this man, dear Crisje, is able to release you and Jeus from this so solid world and put a garment on you of heavenly blue, and can show you how beautiful you are in reality; just imagine what

you will get to see when he can work with his own powers. If they are ever steaming ahead at full power, only then will you fully experience miracles. All this is only child's play, compared with what lies ahead of you.

Jeus claps his hands from happiness. Crisje cannot get enough of it. She hears him say 'Tall One'. Jeus looks in a corner of the kitchen where that nice man is standing and claps his hands again. What is that? Nice birds come flying. Into the kitchen. Jeus dances with pleasure. Crisje burns her fingers on the stove. Today it is like the angels are visiting. It is heavenly. But who will believe it? No one, but that doesn't matter, if only you see it and Jeus experiences it. The rest of the world has nothing to do with it! But it comes from Our Lord!

Suddenly Jeus goes away. The child runs to the back and messes about with something. Crisje wants to know what the child is up to. When she comes near him, Jeus pulls her to the rabbit hutches. He must have a rabbit. Finally Crisje understands what the child wants. She takes two rabbits and gives them to him. Jeus now races as fast as he can back to the kitchen. What does he want now? Crisje sees that Jeus wants to throw the rabbits in the air. That is strange, she thinks, but she continues to watch the child quietly.

The friends of Jeus have brought living toys for him, and he wants to do the same for them. They must just admire his little rabbits sometime. What now happens is so heavenly and so beautiful, if you could see that, Crisje, you would cry. The Tall One also has to admire the rabbits and the invisible children enjoy themselves, but not in the way they enjoyed the balls. Yes, they know those animals well, but it is so long ago and already so far away. A few of the children still know these animals, there they also call them rabbits. But what is an earthly rabbit compared to one of these glittering balls from Our Lord. Nothing! Crisje sees that Jeus is starting to look disappointed. You felt that well, Crisje, because rabbits do not give light. The rabbits, however much Jeus throws them in the air, fall back to earth again where they belong. Rabbits are impeded by their flesh and blood and those heavenly balloons, Crisje, are of a thinner material, even your fair-ground balloons cannot compete. Because they are coarse. In those other ones you could see your reflection as in the crystal clear water of Our Lord in the Parvis.

Crisje tries to lift Jeus up and press him to her heart, because she

feels this is an unequal 'game'. But she is brought down to earth with a shock. Jeus cannot be approached.

'Strange', she thinks, 'He doesn't want to be pitied either! He is just like me!' If it is not possible, then it's just a case of waiting, or nothing at all. Good, Jeus, never say die. That is quite something, you are a plucky boy!

But she has to give him a kiss. Jeus first looks at Crisje, then at that tall man. And now she experiences what she could never have dreamed of. Jeus looks at the tall man and then back at Crisje again. Crisje has to have a big kiss. The tall man sees it and nods to say another one! Give Crisje one from him as well. Jeus looks again and when Crisje sees that, she falls onto the chair with heart palpitations and cries from a happiness, which she will never be able to explain to another person. Not even to Hendrik! And that is bad! But what do you want, Tall Hendrik? To get kisses from the heavens? Crisje, you got an Angel-kiss!! What did you think of that?

When Jeus sees that his rabbits do not remain floating in the air, the man comes to his aid. Jeus hears him saying:

'Listen, you must not think, Jeus, that the children do not understand you. They understand you, but they cannot do anything else, Jeus. Don't you see that?'

Yes, Jeus saw that. But he still has Fanny. What will they say about that?

The children, Jeus sees, are looking at Fanny. Crisje hears Jeus saying:

'Hold him for a minute. He doesn't bite anyway, when I am there, he doesn't do anything.'

And Jeus now sees that the children are stroking Fanny's back but, Jeus also notices, it doesn't even feel it and doesn't pay any attention to all these children. But, Jeus knows that Fanny has good eyes in his head. The animal now looks round and starts to bark. When Jeus is holding Fanny it sees what his master can perceive and is now bothered by the children. And so the afternoon passes, until Jeus can no longer see out of his eyes and falls asleep. Crisje sees that the child is tired out. As it has been a lot for him too, she thinks. Even an adult cannot deal with it. Jeus is sleeping; the other boys are romping about outside, but for Crisje a new door has opened of Our Lord's Paradise, in which you can live and die and from which you can receive kisses

from the angels, who want the best for you!

‘But where will it end’, Crisje wonders, ‘I don’t know... but I am afraid of nothing!’

Jeus is dreaming. He could hit himself on the head. As small as he is, the boy can already think, Crisje feels, when he is sleeping. However, Jeus is already wide-awake. ‘Why didn’t I show the children to Gerrit?’

He thinks that would be a good idea if they ever come back again.

Crisje has already gone through some fairly remarkable things with him. When the child could hardly say a word, Jeus suddenly asked her:

‘Do you have a sore stomach, mother?’

Jeus looks at Crisje and the child looks at her belly. She cannot believe it, because it seems impossible to her. Even Johan and Bernard didn’t see it, but this child of forty-two centimetres high, looks through your coloured apron and says something which you have to think about as a mother, and which almost makes you blush. One thing Crisje knows and she is sure about this: she and Jeus have one thought, one feeling, are really the same in everything. It is through this that Crisje understands her child, this life; and that Tall Hendrik cannot feel it. And is not a part of these lives. When she was carrying Gerrit, and she was felled by the pains, she didn’t know any more how to deal with everyday life, Jeus was closer to her than Tall Hendrik with all his talk and good care. The child held her hand and anyone who wants to laugh about it can go ahead, but Crisje felt the pain in her stomach disappear. And she said to herself: ‘He did that!’ And Jeus doesn’t know, but it is that Tall One, who brought Crisje back to material reality through Jeus. Also when Tall Hendrik was worried, Crisje could tell him: ‘But don’t worry, Hendrik, in a few days time I will be myself again.’ Gerrit had drained away a chunk of her life, about which Mina said: ‘If you have another two of them, they can lay you in the coffin.’ But Crisje was already building herself up on Jeus. He gave her life and feeling, and from this powerful and beautiful universe, in which the Tall One of Jeus lived, the powers reached her life and Crisje absorbed them into her. Crisje also knew: Our Lord did not play with His powers. You must first exhaust your own powers if you want to receive new powers from Our Lord. Who had told her that she did not know. For her it was a law. And so it was the

case with everything. Our Lord was not crazy, He was love, but for everything: ‘Do good with the things I gave you. Use your powers, work and serve. If you don’t have enough then I will help you. I have my envoys for that. My angels.’ And those angels looked at Fanny, played with Jeus, kissed and walked with her in the kitchen. ‘Yes, my Dear Lord, I am almost bursting with happiness and I swear to You, I will continue to do my best!’

In those days, as Tall Hendrik sits with Crisje and spoils her, and Jeus observes his parents, he hears the child speak:

‘Father, you must buy a cross and chain for mother!’ That is too much for Crisje. She sobs and now she can tell her Tall Hendrik about the nice cross and chain that she wore in the Parvis of Our Lord, and her longing to be able to own one! Because she still does not have it! And is that now really so difficult? She doesn’t know either, but it is strange. You cannot have everything.

When Tall Hendrik hears in the evening what has happened, and he has to take Bernard to task, he confronts him in front of the dark cellar to show him what is waiting for him if he isn’t careful, then when he hears that his child plays with heavenly balloons and Crisje was kissed by a guardian angel through Jeus, because Crisje cannot keep quiet about that anyway, then Tall Hendrik needs some bitters and strong ones at that! He cannot deal with this immediately, then he will also begin to dream and then no one will do any more work! But that is a lie, Tall Hendrik, Crisje even works too hard! But you will hear about that!

Tall Hendrik is at Hent Klink in ten steps and orders a strong bitter. Hent asks him:

‘Have you stomach ache, Hendrik, that you want such a strong one?’

‘Not exactly that, Hent, but sometimes you can have too much of a good thing.’

Hent looks at Hendrik. They know each other really well; they grew up together as it were.

‘How can you have too much of a good thing, Hendrik?’

Tall Hendrik always lets Hent have it, because Hent is one who understands everything and more. But Tall Hendrik knows that. For it is innkeeper’s nonsense. And those people want to know everything. That is how they attract their customers. However, it is an authority,

which doesn't mean a thing to Tall Hendrik. What Hent gets up to with his customers and tries on with them, he doesn't need to attempt with Tall Hendrik. Hent knows, Tall Hendrik is not everyone. Hent therefore gets to hear:

'You don't understand anyway what is occupying me, Hent.'

Now just look at the way Hent is. His fat head is angry. 'Hent... Hent...', thinks Tall Hendrik, 'how strange, to me they say Hendrik and to him Hent, and that's exactly the same. It's strange, why do people call him Hendrik?' But that sounds better, Tall Hendrik thinks. What is Hent really? Nothing! But that Hent cannot be fooled easily, Hendrik. Especially, now that you are annoying him, he knows what's up. Day in day out people come here and Hent has his own records of all these people and there is a lot in there. Hent begins already:

'You must know, Hendrik, a lot of people come here. You learn about everything really.'

'But about this, I know, Hent, you know nothing!'

'What is it then, Hendrik?'

'Yes, if only you really knew? It can't be said in a few words, Hent.'

Tall Hendrik wants to make a drama of it and puts up Hent's blood pressure. Hent will get him. But Tall Hendrik continues:

'There are people, Hent, who understand nothing about it all their lives, even if they have dealt with thousands of people, they still don't understand.'

'You are strange this evening, Hendrik, as long as you know that.'

'Strange? Me strange? That's a cheek! I have never been so close to home as I am now, Hent!'

'You will probably know best yourself, Hendrik, that is true, but you can also listen to other people sometimes! But, what did I hear, is Gerrit going back to Italy?'

Tall Hendrik has to laugh. Gerrit has got them again. Tall Hendrik gets Hent immediately:

'I thought, Hent, that you were such a good judge of character.'

'I certainly am, but I always have trouble with Gerrit, don't I? Gerrit is too slippery for me.'

'You are right about that, Hent, but he is as fat as a pig, you must be able to hold him in your hands.'

Hent doesn't know any more. Tall Hendrik is too slippery for him now; Hent cannot get a grip on him and now changes the subject.

What a laugh Tall Hendrik will have. Hendrik has another drink. Hent is busy choosing his words and wants to make his move. It eats away at his fat head that Tall Hendrik is now boss over him and now Hent becomes mean.

‘Do you want another one, Hendrik? Bitters always do me good as well. Alie’s the same, but she can’t touch them, she is always bothered with her stomach, and that is going to be a problem until the end of her life!’

Tall Hendrik lets the innkeeper chatter away, Hendrik will go back to Crisje and Jeus, who have brought him to another world. But Hent also comes back; he very carefully turns things around and attacks. Carefully, like a snake, this man crawls towards Tall Hendrik and bites him, which he is not aware of. He may know his people, and can be on the alert for everything, but Hent attacks and hits him; he will even poison Tall Hendrik.

‘How is your Jeus, Hendrik?’

Now who wouldn’t fall for this? Now it is time to go to Crisje. Which is exactly what Tall Hendrik needs. This is what he is pre-occupied with. Whoever touches him now will get a drink as well. Hent continues:

‘Is it all true, Hendrik, what Mina said about your Jeus? When you have brought up the boys, Hendrik, you can rest on your laurels. And Crisje as well, because Crisje works far too hard anyway.’

Tall Hendrik pricks up his ears. The first word has already fallen, which has got to him. Someone is making comments about his Cris. What does he want from Crisje? Hent continues:

‘You already have four, don’t you? If they all go out and earn money, Hendrik... Cris is busy and works for four at the same time, that last one, Hendrik, wasn’t good, she shouldn’t have done it!’

Now you have it! Tall Hendrik thinks and then he reacts. He is furious, and has suddenly become a different person. What did Hent just say there? What does that Hent want, what is he getting at? What does he want from his Cris? What kind of curiosity is that and what does it mean? Does he know something about his Cris? Does a stranger know more than he does? Tall Hendrik must know what is going on. Hent has hit the mark. This snake crawls over and bites him, right in his pounding heart, as blood rushes to his head. Tall Hendrik must be careful now. He must not let it show that he doesn’t

know anything about it, because that makes him seem ridiculous. Other men never know what their wives are up to. Tall Hendrik does know and that is a well-known fact. If he doesn't know what Hent means, Hent will hit him right in his face and this false dog will laugh as well. What shouldn't Crisje have done? What? What? Yes, what? Tall Hendrik must try to get there in a roundabout way.

'Yes, Hent, when they are big, I know what will happen', Hendrik begins. 'Then I will play my violin the whole day and then I will buy one which will make you cry so that you don't know what to do with yourself anymore.'

Hent holds on, he bites back:

'Yes, Hendrik, when they are big, then you'll know what to do, won't you? Then Crisje can have a rest! Cris works too much, but what can you do? But she doesn't need to, does she? You take care of everything and more. There are not many like you!'

'But what a mean dog Hent is,' thinks Tall Hendrik. 'He can flatter!' All those innkeepers can flatter, do well from another person, eat and drink from people and then drag them through the muck. Now Hendrik is still in the dark. And almost suffocates from it. What has he to do with Crisje's work? Tall Hendrik looks at Hent and would loved to have hauled him over the bar counter and have given him a hiding such as he hasn't had in years. Hent leans over the counter and lays his trap!

'But it is also true, Hendrik: we didn't make ourselves, did we! But we must still deal with ourselves! There are gluttons enough on the street! Last week Bad van Gelder was here with his cart. Bad asked one of those skunks to watch his horse for a minute. And you know Bad, he doesn't want anything for nothing, but that tramp wouldn't have any of it. Now you, Hendrik!'

Tall Hendrik almost burst. Does he wish to compare Crisje with vagrants? Does Hent want to involve Crisje with tramps? What do those gluttons have to do with Crisje? But what is Hent getting at? And what mustn't Crisje do? Hent follows Tall Hendrik and senses something.

'You've got it bad, Hendrik. You must have another one, then you will get rid of the cold from your ribs.'

Hendrik grins at him, but it isn't a genuine grin. Tall Hendrik says that he also thinks that he has a cold between his ribs and that Hent

could be right. He takes another drink and asks Hent:

‘You just told me there that Bad has something to do with vagrants, but what I really want to ask, Hent, is this, are there so many vagrants walking around in this dump?’

Tall Hendrik thinks that Hent will now begin and he will now get to hear the truth, but that will still take a while, Tall Hendrik

‘Didn’t you even know that, Hendrik? But I understand you are always in Emmerik and you don’t know everything that happens here every day. That is understandable, Hendrik. But I, Hendrik, I am here every day behind the bar. I have to do with that lot. I see something every day. Far too many come to Crisje as well, but of course that is up to you and has nothing to do with anyone else. But it is too much, Hendrik, and I don’t understand, that you don’t put a stop to it!’

Isn’t that something? Wouldn’t you do something to that man? Wouldn’t you break his neck? Hendrik also hangs over the bar and clenches his fists, how he would like to show Hent how strong he is. What kind of piece of rubbish is that Hent anyway. But he still doesn’t know anything.

‘What is he talking about, damn it’, thinks Hendrik. ‘What does that brute want from me and Cris?’

The door opens. Jan the watchmaker appears in the doorway. Jan is a great man, works hard and struggles with his family. Jan’s wife is not strong. But Jan is a good professional and deals in everything, has a nice shop; otherwise Jan could also have to go to the brush factory or to Emmerik to earn some extra money, because he has a house full of children to take care of.

‘Good evening everyone. Evening, Hendrik?’

‘Evening, Jan, how are you?’

‘Let’s say, Hendrik, getting by, getting by. For me the clocks work for too long, Hendrik. I make them too good, they should break sooner, shouldn’t they, then I could live in a castle and I could do something else as well, than sitting all day fiddling with those small screws and hands! Hent, some bitters for me as well.’

Now Tall Hendrik has to be patient for a bit longer. Jan knocks back his bitters in one gulp and wants another one. Tall Hendrik thinks! ‘Even if it is getting late he wants to know what Hent knows about Crisje.’ Jan has done a repair job for Hent and the discussion is about this.

'Damn it Hent, what a long time I spent working on that piece of junk. If I had known that, I would have advised you to get a new one. The whole lot is worn inside!'

Tall Hendrik just thought of something. Jan sells crosses. Why he only thinks of this now for the first time, he doesn't know. He cannot think of such things. He forgets continually. It is crazy, but Tall Hendrik cannot help it either. But does Crisje actually deserve her cross? He hears such strange stories about Crisje, that he has to think about it first. But now it won't let go of him anymore, the man who sells crosses is standing next to him. Hendrik thinks about it and then it comes:

'You sell crosses, Jan?'

'Yes, Hendrik. Today I got some really nice ones. Did you want one? Just come with me, then you can pick one for Crisje.'

No, Tall Hendrik doesn't want that. He has something to discuss with Hent. So, Jan fetches the crosses as Tall Hendrik waits. Jan is already flying. And now, according to Hent, there is something wrong with Jan, he has something to say about him as well. In this way, Hendrik knows, everyone is 'talked about'. And then to think that that cursed innkeeper lives off them as well. Tall Hendrik has a feeling of hate when he hears: 'He never has enough! Never! He is bursting with greed and always has some excuse. I shouldn't have started about it. But that is one to sell. Is that not obvious, Hendrik?'

'But don't you want to sell anything then, Hent? Is that the way to talk about your people?'

Hent is now bursting with poison. He feels that he has made a blunder and he hadn't wanted that. Hent thought that he was on the same wavelength as Tall Hendrik and could say something about another person. This, he knows, is innkeeper's friendship. Putting one person on a pedestal and trampling another into the ground. It is a dirty mean streak, thinks Tall Hendrik. He doesn't have to come to him with these stories. As Hent continues his venomous talk:

'Haggle a bit off, Hendrik, he charges far too much anyway', the blood flows to Tall Hendrik's head. And when he continues with: 'But you can handle that yourself and you are man enough for it.' Hendrik senses the dirty nature of Hent even stronger. And as if that wasn't enough, he feels that Hent doesn't like the man, Hent continues:

'And he can drink as well and keep his wife short, which, Hendrik,

I always try to stop him from doing, because I don't want that. My father was just like that; you know that as well. And then eight children. I can't understand it.'

Hendrik now understands for the first time what a sneaky serpent that Hent is. And to think he has known that monster for so long. It is scandalous, rotten, and terrible. 'He lives off his people, eats from them and then drags them through the muck as well. That is evil so to speak!'

Hent returns to Tall Hendrik. 'Finally', he thinks, 'now I will learn about it.'

'If I tell you, Hendrik, that there are so many vagrants roaming about here, you can believe me. And they like to knock at Crisje's door. Even if I say so myself, they always get something from me as well, because I know my customers. But there are also rats amongst them and you must keep an eye on them. And most people don't know that.'

Tall Hendrik now heads straight for his target and wants a battle on an open plain. This is too dangerous for him and is also taking too long. 'Are you trying to tell me, Hent, that Crisje does too much for drunks?'

Hent looks at Tall Hendrik, who waits and asks:

'Now, Hent?'

'If I tell you things in your own interest, Hendrik, you shouldn't get angry with me. Cris does too much for those drunks and tramps, Hendrik. Too much! Crisje does the work herself. There aren't many of her in a pound, but that she bakes cellars full of potatoes for those skunks and then gives them marks as well, that is too much, isn't it, Hendrik. That is too much for a person like Cris, then the children will go short. Is that true or not, say it yourself?'

It's been said! Hent has fired a shot at Hendrik. He is lying there wounded. And is losing blood. Just as long as it doesn't become a hospital case. Because the snakes are biting Tall Hendrik And they are poisonous bites, from which he sweats blood. The Grintweg comes crashing down. The world prattles on and turns. People are bad, rotten! His legs are shaking; Tall Hendrik sees everything double. He is already moaning. It is a direct hit. He hadn't counted on this. A dirty, mean snake is talking about his Crisje! A rotten person, who stinks of misery, takes away Crisje's glory. Tall Hendrik, don't upset

yourself about that dirty animal. Just leave that man and never come back! Do not dirty your hands, don't break his neck. That animal isn't worth it. What Crisje does is good, you know that, Crisje doesn't keep anything from you! Tall Hendrik is saved by Jan. He returns with the crosses. Will Tall Hendrik take one for Crisje? But who is on a higher plain, Cris or Hent? This foul innkeeper or her sacredness? Tall Hendrik's fists immediately relax, for Jan is his saviour, even if Tall Hendrik didn't realize it. But Crisje will have her cross and chain now!

'Have you got the crosses, Jan? I must have a nice one! It doesn't matter to me how much it costs, a really nice one for Cris.'

Tall Hendrik looks sideways at Hent. He must hear it. Jan unpacks, the Tall One looks at the crosses. Jan praises his wares. Hendrik looks.

'Now, Hendrik? Aren't they nice? See the light, which shines from this one. This one, Hendrik, is made from the wood on which they nailed Our Lord. You don't believe me, do you, Hendrik, but the traveller told me that himself. And you know, Hendrik, I do not mock holy things. Just the thing for Crisje, Hendrik.'

'I don't want a wooden one, Jan. I want a gold one. Cris must have one of them, such as no one else wears.'

Hent now knows that his dirty talk has not got to Hendrik. His snake poison works for him exactly in the other direction. Tall Hendrik kills it by understanding, by self-control, by friendship, trust and love! Otherwise he wasn't worth a thing, he feels for himself and he accepts it, otherwise he wouldn't ever be able to forgive himself. Jan continues his talking, which also has an effect on Tall Hendrik. But now Hent is not a part of it at all. He can go and take a running jump as far as Hendrik is concerned; no one pays attention to him now. Hent Klink get lost, go to hell, go to the devil! He can drop dead. Hendrik knows enough now!

Jan asks: 'This one then, Hendrik? This one has the light of Saint Veronica and you can see it shining from a distance of a hundred metres. Let's see, Hendrik, how much it is.'

Jan gets out the papers. And they look at the prices. Causing Jan to react in a startled manner.

'That's surely too much, Hendrik? This one costs seven guilders and thirty cents. But it is also one which will give you pleasure. Too much, is it? Just say so, Hendrik. I have them in all types of prices. And if you can't pay it at once, you know me anyway! I will wait. I

don't begrudge Crisje anything! If I could manage it, Hendrik, I assure you, Crisje would have had one from us long ago! But, it is true; the woman must get such things from her own husband. These are sacred thoughts, and you mustn't let anyone else meddle in it. And that is understandable as well. Honestly, Hendrik, I wouldn't let Crisje wander round with a cheap thing like that. Crisje is too good for that! What do you think, Hendrik?'

Tall Hendrik looks at the crosses. He doesn't know.

'Do you know what, Jan, we'll go together to Cris! Let Cris choose one herself, that's safer, isn't it?'

Hendrik pays, and Hent is bid 'good evening'. Then he disappears with Jan. And moments later they are at his front door, which he opens too loudly. Shocking Crisje. What is the matter with Hendrik? 'I'm back, Cris. And now, Cris, I want to make you very happy. Jan has brought nice crosses. Choose one for yourself. You may have the nicest one.'

'Good heavens, Hendrik, that is a surprise... Honestly, I hadn't thought of this.'

Jan lays his treasures on the table. Crisje is already looking, nothing can keep her away. Now she will finally be able to wear a cross and chain from her own mighty Hendrik.

'Look, Crisje', says Jan, 'aren't they nice?'

Crisje throws up her hands. She can't believe it! She looks at Tall Hendrik with pride. But he is very sullen. It is not shyness. There is something the matter with Tall Hendrik! Is he so impressed? Crisje doesn't know. But Hendrik isn't himself. There is something! Crisje asks after Jan's wife and children.

'How is Mieneke, Jan?'

'A bit better, Crisje, but it is otherwise a struggle. She is always complaining about her stomach. No Crisje, there is something wrong with that lower abdomen. Mieneke's intestines can't take anything.'

'I will make up some herbs for Mieneke, Jan.'

'If you could do that, Crisje? I will send Kaatje, Crisje. I know, you can do that.'

Crisje chooses a cross and chain. Is that not too much for her? Hendrik says no. She may take whichever one she wants and which she likes the best. Then Crisje has made her choice. It is one that you cannot see shining from a distance, It is one that almost looks like the

other cross and chain, which Crisje wore in the Parvis of Our Lord. It is this one and no other!

Jan has gone. Tall Hendrik is sitting at the table and doesn't say a thing. There is something the matter with him. Is this now sullyng a present? Does dirt have to be thrown over it? Isn't that something? Could she ever have thought this? Is this a mercy or is this a slap in her face? But what's the matter?

'What are you thinking about, Hendrik, is there something the matter with you?'

He looks up. 'Yes, Cris, there is something the matter. Just come over beside me! Just come here and tell me what you have done all year.'

Crisje sits on his knee and now Tall Hendrik must know about it.

'Will you tell me, Cris, why do you always have to have drunks in our house when I'm not here to give them food? I know that you have always given poor people something, but so much. Do you want to give drunks marks so that they can drink, Cris?'

Crisje already notices there is something going on, and speaks her mind.

'You got that from Hent. He always has something to gossip about. He always has to rake people through the mud. But he should look after his own properly first. Hent is a false beast, Hendrik, don't you know that? He sets the customers against each other and that is dangerous! We shouldn't really go to him anymore! No, don't speak. Let me finish, Hendrik. You don't know everything, but now you will hear everything!'

A hand is put in front of Tall Hendrik's mouth and he has to keep quiet. 'I am everything for you, Hendrik, and you for me. Nothing can come between us! You have your own life, and I have mine. And now if I want to give poor people something, Hendrik, for which I have worked myself and which nobody has helped me with, then that is my own business! We must understand each other, Hendrik. Then no one will go short. Neither you nor the boys! And if he thinks that I will collapse, it will have nothing to do with him. What you and I and all people do out of love, Hendrik, you cannot collapse from that! And that I gave a beggar a mark in my emotion, which I only discovered the next day or I would have pulled him by his coat, is an entirely different matter, Hendrik, and has nothing to do with Hent.

You believed that fat pig in the way he talked about you? Well then, you let yourself be fooled!

Now it is Tall Hendrik's turn. He also has something to say.

'That is all very well, Cris. I will say nothing about it. But why do you want to work until you drop for drunks?'

'So, is that what you think, Hendrik. But they are not all drunks. There are also poor people amongst them. It is God's lamentation. That man drunk my mark at Hent's, of course, and got to gossiping. What a stupid man that is, Hendrik. Because he won't get any more from me. As long as I live. Even if I see that man perish! I do not intend, Hendrik, to let myself be taken in. I still have my own eyes in my head. But that was just at the moment when I was sitting dreaming and was in the Parvis of Our Lord with Jeus. I gave him something and later I saw that my mark was gone. And he was stupid enough to gossip about it? He is digging his own grave, Hendrik. And I am telling you now, that will never happen again, never again! But if you want to forbid me to cook food for the poor, I ask you, don't take that away from me, because I will have no life any more. Then I can no longer live! And now you can say something to me.'

Hendrik can say little. Crisje continues. 'Hendrik, if I want to fry potatoes which grow for nothing and I have my cellar full of them, that is really cheap and it has nothing to do with anyone!'

Tall Hendrik could hit himself on the head. He could bite his lips until they bleed, because this is a lesson, such as he hasn't had in a long time. Through that skunk Hent, he feels cheated, bitten, contaminated. Everything which is rotten! And when Crisje sees how it is eating at her husband, he continues to listen and bursts from warmth and happiness, making his knees glow, because Crisje is sitting on them, giving him a heavenly feeling. It is as if an angel is kissing him, but Tall Hendrik has already known this for such a long time. Now and again Hendrik forgets it, but that is habit and he doesn't see it any more.

'And now, Hendrik', he hears, 'because I know you, you would want to fetch him from behind the counter, wouldn't you? But I have something else to say, Hendrik. If you do that, then you will be washing your dirty linen in public. And he will get just what he wants! Believe me, Hendrik, you must treat such people differently. You mustn't give people like that the chance to look through your curtains, you must

treat people like that with contempt and that always hits the mark and you are the better person!

Are you angry with me now, Hendrik? And can you forgive me all of this, Hendrik?

Tall Hendrik wants to hold Crisje, but she has more to say:

‘One thing, Hendrik, you have to learn from me. Never listen again to gossip, don’t do it again, because whoever gossips about another is evil. That is the devil, Hendrik, and not the person you are gossiping about and raking through the mud. Did he not have something to say about Jan? I know Hent better than you know him, Hendrik. And that can be said in a few words, he stinks from all sides! And you must watch out for that!’

Now Tall Hendrik may kiss Crisje. And after his strong show of affection he quietens down. You don’t have to crush Crisje to death, if there is no harmony and you feel it! You do not need to fool yourself. There is something between you and that love. Something isn’t working inside! Isn’t a person a strange thing? But the material body is good; Tall Hendrik feels that as well. And now that kiss doesn’t taste as wonderful as that of the other day, now it is only a lick from a dog, Fanny does it better!

This, Tall Hendrik feels, must die a natural death! This must, he knows, be forgotten and forgiven, if he doesn’t wish to sully this wonderful happiness and take away its dignity with his own hands. While Hendrik sits and thinks, Crisje makes another nice cup of coffee. When Crisje looks at the cross and chain she could weep. She then looks at her Hendrik. Just sitting there. Now look at the same Tall Hendrik. She thinks: ‘You could catch him in your hat, he is just like a small child!’

Tall Hendrik reaches for his red handkerchief. Crisje cannot have that and races over to him. Then Hendrik hears:

‘My Hendrik! What a good man you are. My God, how grateful I am to you.’

And now Tall Hendrik is kissed back. These kisses taste like they were given by angels. And blessed by Our Lord! Hendrik sobs. Crisje now sees something which has never happened before. You would want to have such troubles every evening, but that is dangerous! You would want to hear such conversations every day, but then you are standing still! And you don’t want that! It can be a feast every day, but

that is sometimes too much! And that is nonsense, Crisje re-establishes. It is not true; a person can have a lot, but, be careful! Watch out for yourself; watch out for that dangerous beast with twenty heads. Watch out for 'habit' because that is the devil himself. It is the Satan! Crisje knows, that the world has been destroyed through this. Tall Hendrik also knows! And now he continues to Crisje:

'No, Cris, I will never take that away from you, never, as long as you know that!' And Crisje has to get this off her chest:

'I, Hendrik, got strength from Our Lord, as long as you never forget that. And the rest, Hendrik? You can now kiss that away!'

Crisje is dreaming. She goes back to the Parvis with Jeus... An awe-inspiring happiness now lives in her heart. She makes a new journey with Jeus. Crisje experiences everything again which Our Lord has given her this day. Again she feels the kiss of the angels, of Jeus. She sends an ardent pure prayer into the universe. No one can stop her thoughts, no one! She includes the whole of this world in her prayer. Also the poor, and that God may give her strength to do much more for them. She sees the balloons of Jeus and the rabbits. She now hears fine, gossamer voices singing. She smells something; it is as if she is outside there again. But what a smell! It was a beautiful day, with many gifts! And finally that weeping of her Hendrik as well! They were flowers, they were 'orchids'! They are all for Our Lord. They go straight to the altar...! How wonderful life is! She is already sleeping, nothing disturbs her, nothing. The angels are keeping guard!

‘Jeus is with the doves, Mother!’

When you are big and you want to expand your life and the everyday things give you a chance to spread your wings, you think that is why I am a person, an adult. But if you think back to your childhood years, then you will feel that you already started there. And a child spreading its wings is more beautiful than when an adult does it. The child does it with ease, it wanders by itself to all those new things! It happens of its own accord. The things speak, they have something to say, which that child has to dream about and, if it is really sensitive, even starts sleepwalking from it as well, which a grown up person is anxious for, but cannot interfere because then you make a mess of things. Just spread your wings, Jeus, thinks Crisje, take a good look at the world, we also did that.

And truly, Jeus has not only discovered himself, but also his surroundings. He has already met the hens and rabbits. They are very nice animals, but why they are animals he doesn't know. It goes through his mind now and again and then the questions come. They are things which he doesn't understand and which Crisje will later get to hear about. Fanny, their dog, is next to him. He knows Fanny like himself and Fanny knows Jeus. A while ago life was different for Jeus. And whatever that means, it spins through his whole body, his nimble legs sway as a result and his snub nose receives an elegance, because then Jeus is thinking, and thoughts pull a person's head apart at the seams, you see stripes, 'thinking about things' as his mother calls it and his father says: 'you should do that when you are lying in your coffin.' They haven't any time for that kind of thinking now!

'Why has the world changed?' Jeus wants to know from Bernard. Bernard looks at his brother to see if he is going to pull a fast one on him. But when Bernard notices that it is sheer curiosity, he says:

'That is a good one, Jeus, winter is behind us.' 'Oh', Jeus lets slip, 'is that the reason? But what is a winter, Bennad?'

Yes, that is also a point. 'What is a winter?' Bernard has to chuckle about it.

'That is also natural... Jeus, a winter has snow, doesn't it, and a summer has nice days, then the sun shines.'

'But why can't that sun shine in the winter?' 'That is a bit too much,'

thinks Bernard. He is not a town hall clerk. Bernard looks round, then looks at Jeus and now sees that he is only being kept from his work. He rids himself of all that questioning. And he does it effectively. That was good thinking.

‘There is Johan, and he is older than I am, just ask him. I have other things to do.’

Johan is already coming. Jeus looks at Johan, but then he has an idea of his own, he takes off now, wanders off with Fanny behind the gardens into the courtyard, but then Bernard screams:

‘Just stay out of there, will you, otherwise you will have mother to face.’

It is jealousy, Jeus feels. Bernard is only furious that Fanny is following him. Jeus looks round; he discovers a new paradise. And he is in the middle of it. Where are the birds now and those beautiful trees? There is no water. First think about it. That other country was nicer. This leaf is hard. That other leaf, which they call a vegetable here and eat, is used there for decoration. He looks at the heads of lettuce, at the string beans, at everything that lives here and is planted in the ground. Jeus looks at the stalks and wants to know everything about it. There is Crisje, she always follows him, more than the other two boys, who know their domain and are already lord and master. Jeus crawls through greenery and cabbage and wants to know why this was planted here. When Crisje calls:

‘Why are you crawling over the ground and not using your legs’, Jeus doesn’t even hear her. These things make such a deep impression on his life; they grip his soul as it were, which now also has an impact on his life. Jeus looks in the hearts of the flowers, kisses them and picks a few nice ones for mother. And when Crisje comes into the garden, he helps her, but it is more of a hindrance than a help and he pulls the good things out of the ground, so that Crisje has to keep grumbling at her Jeus. Crisje continues to follow him. She ascertains that Jeus doesn’t have enough eyes to take everything in. What a love of nature that child has, she thinks, hopefully he will not become a farmer, that is no life, that is suffering poverty! Jeus keeps hearing: ‘You mustn’t do that, Jeus, otherwise Our Lord will be angry! He can’t stand that you pull His things out of the ground, that is a sin!’

But, Crisje, he doesn’t understand that concept yet, but it will come. ‘What is he up to’, thinks Crisje. Jeus is taking things out of

the ground and throwing them up in the air. Crisje knows that. For she has seen that before. Jeus wants to make balloons. What a child he is. Everything that is round is pulled out of the ground and thrown in the air. But because it lands on the ground again so quickly, he gets bored with it and stops of his own accord. When the child also goes up in the air, he knows that Crisje has got him by the scruff of his neck and a slap will follow, but it does not hurt. It is only annoying and you must then think of something else to do.

Crisje pulls the weeds out of the ground and is very busy. Jeus wanders round and is looking for something else, there is so much here which is new and interesting to him. But he goes back to the gardens. Not to Crisje's garden but to aunt Trui's garden, then he knows Crisje won't be able to find him. And then he lies down and falls asleep. It isn't long before his little friend is there, the oldest one of those other children with whom he sometimes plays. But what is his name, Jeus wants to know. When that child is standing in front of him, Jeus asks:

'What is your name?'

'I'm called José.'

'It's a nice name.'

When Jeus is outside of his body through sleep, he is older and he can ask what he wants and he can think better as well. He understands everything. Jeus doesn't know that the Tall One is behind this and he gives him exactly as much to think about as he can cope with and deal with. It is precisely calculated, so to speak, and is for later. The Tall One knows that Crisje will also feel the misery of it one day. But that will also be avoided. There is one thing which demands all the attention of the Tall One, Jeus has to learn to think. And the nerves have to deal with that thinking, so that they can tolerate, being able to cope later with everything that goes through a person's head.

José said to Jeus that he must lie on his back. Then he can see where José lives. And now that Jeus has gone to sleep and lives in the world of José, he also sees the Tall One who looks at him in a friendly way and just like his father can, speaks in a dialect as if he has done so all his life. This is why that man is so familiar to Jeus. That man understands the child and climbs into that little heart of his completely and Jeus loves him just as much as he loves Fanny and Crisje. He knows exactly how much he already loves his father, but that does not come up to what he feels for Crisje and the Tall One, who is even more than

a father to him. It has never occurred to Tall Hendrik to bring balls for him. And then those lights! Now that Jeus enters the world of his little friend he runs to meet José and throws his arms around his neck. How fast Jeus can run; he is almost flying. And José says to Jeus that he can also fly here, but he must not try it there, otherwise he will fall to the ground and there will be accidents. Will Jeus never forget that?

‘No, of course not, I understand’, José is told and they know there that Jeus will not get it into his head to jump from the roof because he thinks that he can fly. The Tall One must prevent that from happening. And that is placed very strongly in the life of Jeus, it is actually already burned into him. Because he doesn’t want any trouble, certainly not for Crisje, for that is not the intention. Jeus is in the hands of the angels and angels do not bring trouble, they know exactly what they are doing!

‘Where do you actually live, José? Is that heaven?’

‘No, Jeus, that really has nothing to do with heaven, but it is a part of it, which your mother is always talking about.’

‘And is Our Lord there?’

‘No, not there, He is somewhere else.’

‘Can I not see Him?’

‘Maybe later, but I don’t really know, Jeus, if you do your best.’

‘Can that drunken woman get to heaven, but that’s not possible, is it?’ ‘She can also go to heaven, Jeus, but she must better her life.’

‘That is exactly what mother says, José.’

‘Your mother knows, Jeus.’

‘And Gerrit Noesthede, who does nothing but act the fool?’

‘He can also go to heaven, Jeus, all people can enter heaven if only they want to live a good life.’

Jeus stops his friend and asks:

‘Where is the Tall One now, José, who is just like father?’

‘He has something else to do just now, Jeus, but he will come back shortly.’

Every step in this world gives him something to think about. Jeus sees something and cries out:

‘Take a look, José, those are nice ones.’

Jeus looks at the beautiful birds which live here, he calls them and, sure enough, they come and sit on his hand. This is an experience for him which he can’t help but enjoy. When he asks José whether he may

take a few with him, José has to disappoint him, because that isn't possible and is not allowed, they have already had their lives there and now belong to Our Lord. 'You can tell Crisje all about it', José says. 'Then your mother will be happy. Crisje will not wish to possess more than this, if you tell her everything about it.' And Jeus understands that the apparently so unnatural is as plain as the nose on your face. He understands immediately and Bernard doesn't know a thing about it. But José has something completely different for Jeus. Look?

What Jeus sees are beautiful pears, peaches, plums, such as they don't have on earth. He eats one and says:

'Goodness me, how tasty they are. You don't need to eat anything else here, do you? That's a good one. What I have to eat there is sometimes as greasy as anything is, and I choke on it. But aunt Trui and mother say that I need it for my body, otherwise I will be sick and then they will be worse off than ever. But you don't need anything, José? And that is understandable as well. Do people know this life, José?'

'No, Jeus, few do. But you will tell them about it.'

'I promise you, José, I will tell them, father and mother, Trui, the whole neighbourhood, Bernard, Johan and Gerrit, they will hear it from me. And is there singing here as well? Can they sing here like father can and Peter and Gerrit Noesthede and Jan Maandag?'

'I know, Jeus, that they are good singers but they sing better here. You must not forget, here they sing for Our Lord and that is a different matter entirely.'

'That is true, José, I can understand that. I will tell father.'

'But now you must go home again, Jeus.'

Jeus sees the Tall One coming. The friends throw their arms around each other and embrace. Saying goodbye is difficult, but if Jeus is careful, he hears, José will really come back to him. But then the Tall One takes Jeus in his arms and brings him back to aunt Trui's garden. Jeus looks into his friend's lovely eyes and kisses the Tall One. Jeus hears:

'You are my boy, Jeus', which Jeus can still hear when he awakens. He rubs his eyes and jumps up. They are already looking for him, mother cannot find him and Johan is shouting: 'J..e..u..s, J..e..u..s, where are you?' They run into the house. Father is already home. Where did that child go? Jeus has to go to his father. For Crisje is

busy with dinner.

‘Where have you been all that time, tell me quickly?’

Johan tells that he found Jeus lying in aunt Trui’s garden. ‘He was having a snooze there, father.’ Tall Hendrik looks at his child. His reception is not friendly, all eyes are focused on Jeus, Crisje doesn’t know what she should make of it.

‘Come over to me.’ Tall Hendrik puts him on his knee and asks again:

‘Where were you, why did mother have to look for you?’

Jeus looks his father straight in the eye. The child doesn’t move a muscle; something impresses Tall Hendrik about this and he cannot understand whether it is childlike or even human behaviour. He must understand this child as a father, as an adult, and that is not so easy, Tall Hendrik. More is required for this than a strict word, unity is required, descending into the soul, following those thoughts, and otherwise you will be completely off the mark. And Crisje already knows that her Hendrik is off the mark, in this way he will not get a word out of the child. Jeus is silent! Tall Hendrik calls the child to order, it is him and no one else. His children will give an answer to every question and a proper one at that. Young or old, Johan or Bernard, it doesn’t matter, if father has something to ask, they have to realize, they can give in to it and that’s all there is to it. Crisje now already finds that this discipline is too rigid, they are still children!

‘Where were you, what were you doing there amongst the plants, I want to know’, Tall Hendrik repeats. But not a word passes the child’s little lips. It looks at Crisje, Johan and Bernard. And look, his eyes are gleaming with... ‘mother, why do I have to talk? Why is father so harsh to me? Why is he so cruel? But I didn’t do anything, did I, mother?’

It is as if the child feels what Crisje wants. Jeus just looks at his father. There is a world going on here, which Tall Hendrik does not know, feel, or see. Thoughts fly invisibly to the other heart. They nestle there, are felt, dealt with and sent out again. This sensing, adjusting and understanding are infallible. You do not have to find any words for it. You do not need to move your lips, it all happens on its own; it costs no effort. You do not have to be a scholar for it, it lives in nature. Crisje knows it is also a quality, it lives in each person if you are sensitive to it, and are graced with that sending out and receiving

of thoughts from Our Lord. But Tall Hendrik has none of it! Nothing! Crisje knows that! And now a smile appears on that little face, the feeling of 'what do you really want from me'! When Tall Hendrik asks again: 'Where were you', this life bursts out resolutely at his father, who is at an utter loss:

'I was in heaven, father!'

'What?...?' You see, Tall Hendrik, you weren't expecting that. Crisje is beaming! She finds this questioning a torture for herself and for Jeus. Johan and Bernard start to laugh. But they quickly change their minds, these two get to hear:

'Shut your gobs... understood? It is no laughing matter.'

What now? Tall Hendrik doesn't know what to say. This is something new to him. A child of two and a half years tells him that he has been in heaven. Tall Hendrik quickly adds:

'So, you were in heaven?' Johan and Bernard have to laugh and are given a clip round the ears. Jeus also looks. He sends out the thought to the boys that they mustn't pay any attention to it. And now as well, because Johan is sensitive to it, it is as if his oldest brother senses Jeus and receives his sympathetic thoughts. Johan changes immediately, it can be felt and seen, but Tall Hendrik doesn't notice a thing. Crisje, yes, Crisje, she has sensed it and understood. Crisje thinks: 'How is it possible?'

'And what did you do there, if I may ask, Jeus?'

You see, Tall Hendrik, there is now life in the child. This is another tone, which touches this life and tells something to the soul. Jeus looks, beaming with happiness, at Tall Hendrik and says:

'I was eating apples and pears there, and plums, and apricots!'

Bernard splits his sides laughing, but Bernard is knocked off his chair by a slap. 'One more time and you will go to the cellar, won't you, am I the boss here or is it you!'

'But Hendrik', says Crisje. But Hendrik says to Crisje:

'When I am talking they have to listen, Cris.'

So this is now the problem. Eating apples and pears in a heaven? That is too far away for Tall Hendrik and he doesn't understand it either. He continues to ask:

'And what else, Jeus?'

'I've forgotten', Jeus says quickly. Hendrik asks Crisje:

'Since when does he have the gift of the gab, Cris?'

‘He talks all day, Hendrik. Where he gets it from I don’t know but he already bombards you with questions.’

‘So, you want to be a scholar, because if you are already starting to talk now, I can see it happening as well. But I’m here as well. I will decide for you, won’t I? And what did you do there, Jeus?’

‘I’ve forgotten...!’

Tall Hendrik can’t make any sense of it. But what he does know about is, that dinner is ready, and now they will eat. Crisje gives Jeus his dinner. It is food! Jeus says:

‘I don’t want any dinner, mother!’

‘What?’ says Tall Hendrik, ‘you don’t want any dinner? Have we not anything to say here? Come on and eat! You have nothing to say about this yet and mother’s food is so tasty as well!’ And to Crisje:

‘Where were you with him, Cris?’

‘At the back in the garden, Hendrik, but he pulled everything out of the ground on me. And then he was suddenly gone and I didn’t see him anymore. He must have gone to play in Trui’s garden. He throws everything in the air which is coloured.’

‘He will be an artist, Cris, believe me, they start early. But there are no artists in my family. Then he can suffer poverty! I have something else in my head than painting with brushes and splurging with paint. Making good portraits is well paid. But he will sing. He will sing and nothing else.’ ‘And what about you, Johan?’

Father involves Johan in the conversation and he replies very politely: ‘Yes father!’ Nothing more and just enough, that is good of you, Johan, that’s the way it should be! Tall Hendrik is starting to enjoy it, he has to laugh about himself, and it will turn into a little party. Bernard seizes this chance and fools about; he doesn’t know how to behave out of high spirits, but, that bit too far and Tall Hendrik reacts. He first puts Bernard straight in his chair. He is sitting again, a bit too harsh for Crisje, but what can she do? And now eat your dinner!

‘And you, stubborn mule, eat... eat I tell you and I have nothing to do with your talk!’

Tall Hendrik forces his little lips open, yet the child refuses to eat. But that is not so difficult, father can do anything. And Crisje sees that her husband lays Jeus across his knee and gives the child a hiding, which is his lot. Jeus is now sitting next to Tall Hendrik, meanwhile Bernard’s food goes down the wrong way and he almost chokes on a

potato, which is hanging in his throat. Bernard also goes across his father's knee. In a flash the piece of potato flies to the ground and Bernard can continue to eat. Crisje thinks it is like a fairground. Is that peace for you? Is that eating for you? Did she slave away for this? Crisje mustn't say anything just now, because she will only make it worse. She buries her feelings, not a word passes her lips. Now and again she says something to remind Tall Hendrik that they are eating. He does everything at the same time; he talks and has his hands full with the boys. One is sitting on his knee, moves to a chair, is picked up again and put on his knee. A short while later the child is back on the chair. There is talking, actions are taken and there is hitting. This is not enjoyable, Crisje feels. This is not eating, this is a fairground. But Hendrik will get to hear it later; now Crisje will say nothing, because the children are present and then she would undermine the authority of Tall Hendrik.

Now it is Jeus' turn. 'Eat', Tall Hendrik orders, 'you will eat!' Crisje mashes up some food, it is tasty! But Jeus has forgotten Crisje, the recent bond has been broken, the contact of feeling to feeling has gone! Jeus ignores Crisje. Mother can achieve nothing, even though mother begs Jeus to eat. Everything has gone, what now? Tall Hendrik cannot stomach it. No respect for your mother either? Now that Tall Hendrik tries to force the child to eat using violence, the child blurts out:

'I don't want any food, this food makes me feel sick!'

'God damn it', Crisje hears, 'that is too much.'

Tall Hendrik grabs the plate with food, and puts a mouthful on a fork and aims it at the child, but his little mouth remains closed. Hendrik wrenches his little mouth open and puts the food inside. Jeus refuses, but Tall Hendrik manages and laughs triumphantly at the child. 'That is one and now all the others. And you can get into bed as quick as lightning.'

Did you think that, Tall Hendrik? Wait a minute, then you will see. Jeus spews out the food. The child has to vomit. Tall Hendrik gets a fright. Crisje races to the child and grabs it out her husband's hands.

'You and your nonsense, can't you see that the child cannot eat?'

Hendrik recovers. 'Is there something wrong with him, Cris?'

'But you can see that yourself, Hendrik.'

'I actually think, Cris, that he has eaten apples and pears, he can't

eat any more, can he?’

Crisje lays Jeus in his bed. A while later Hendrik hears Jeus saying, ‘Tall One’... But, if he wishes to know, it has nothing to do with him. Jeus sees the Tall One and he is completely different to this one, his father. Because he doesn’t understand him. Hendrik hears the child dreaming. He hears a name, it is José!

‘What is that, Cris?’

‘I don’t know, Hendrik, but he keeps mentioning that name.’

‘My God, Cris, he is talking early, isn’t he?’

‘Hendrik, he thinks more than Johan and Bernard and you and I put together. You will live to see it! But now there is something else. If I were you, I would deal with the children differently. You are enforcing authority with physical punishment, that isn’t bringing up children any more, Hendrik!’

Crisje gets to hear that Tall Hendrik certainly does know how he has to teach the children. If those brats learn now, they won’t need to learn any more when they are bigger. And Tall Hendrik doesn’t intend to make them into gluttons. They will listen.

But Crisje says:

‘This was a complete circus; I’m telling you. There is no beginning and no end to it, to all that upbringing of yours, Hendrik.’

Tall Hendrik has to be content with this. But Crisje is right, Tall Hendrik feels. There was no peace any more or order. He was really being laughed at, even if he is throwing pots and pans about. They are silent for a moment, they think about it and they both know: bringing up children is not so easy. ‘It is the worst thing that there is, but I can do it’, Crisje hears, ‘I’m there myself!’

‘And I know that’, Crisje also utters, ‘I know that!’

‘What do you know, Cris?’ Hendrik just wants to know.

Crisje has to think. And Crisje needs time for it. But then she answers:

‘I will tell you something, Hendrik. If you continue like that you will destroy the best in him! I’m telling you! And you will be sorry yet! Didn’t you see, Hendrik, that Jeus was not himself?’

‘But do I have to’, Tall Hendrik flares up, ‘now already look and see whether my children have everything to their taste? Good gracious, that is something! Are you mad, Cris? Just leave that to me. I know what I can do and they have to listen. That is all! And now I don’t

want to hear any more!’

And now that is the end of it! Now I don’t want to hear any more. But if only you could understand this, Tall Hendrik. This is the downfall of the world! It is nonsense! Is this contact with the children? Nonsense, Tall Hendrik! You know! Crisje is completely off the mark. You know your children! You are a born psychologist. You know everything and that is why you are Tall Hendrik, you are a wizard. But the beautiful part has gone! However, imagine, Tall Hendrik, that you could have accepted this? What beautiful things Jeus could have told you. Don’t you hear something, Tall Hendrik? But listen, Jeus is dreaming! The words fly from those little lips. They can sing better in the heavens than his father. Peter, who has such a great voice, Tall Hendrik, is nothing in comparison. In the heavens they can sing and what you make such a fuss about here is just pig squealing in comparison. Or do you not believe, Tall Hendrik, that the angels can sing? If only you had listened, Hendrik. But wait a while, we haven’t finished yet. I can tell you one thing; you have none of this! Nothing, you do not know your child! But Crisje does!

‘Listen to that, Cris!’

Crisje doesn’t answer him. She knows; she had heard, but Hendrik doesn’t give any credence to it. Again Hendrik hears the child saying ‘Tall One’. Now the Tall Hendrik is melting, his soul becomes tender. It is a nice feeling! Now he hears it again! It sounds lovely, ‘Tall One’. Nicer even than ‘father’, that is nothing. But the children may not say Tall Hendrik! Never! But still? It sounds so soft, so understandable, so near.

The following morning Jeus will not leave Crisje’s side. He hangs on her skirt. Where she is, there is Jeus. Crisje talks to him and she knows, Jeus is listening, he is dealing with everything, every word. ‘Do you have to hold on to my skirt today, Jeus? That’s bad, isn’t it, if you can look in heaven and we cannot understand you? Yes, that is bad, Jeus! But I am here as well!’

Crisje feels what is occupying her child. The greatest problems are now being dealt with in that little head. They are problems, which the parents don’t know the slightest thing about. Older people make fun of it, twaddling, childish nonsense. A decent and hard-working person, a person who stands firmly on both feet, is not a life to go into this at length... But God preserve me, we have other things to

do. But Crisje knows her Jeus; she starts to understand that Our Lord is speaking here, from which she can learn. How clear the thoughts were when Jeus looked up at her yesterday evening at dinner. She heard it inside! There was a voice within which asked: 'Mother, you must help me!' But what a beautiful world it is. It was peace, oh, that silence. But what a difficult time Jeus will have. My dear Lord, if it is starting already.

Jeus is back in the garden. He follows his path. He follows what he experienced yesterday, but sees that this is not the garden such as the garden which he was able to see at José's. This is poverty, this is nothing, everything is dead, and there is no life in it. Where José is apples and pears grow, you don't see them here. And the colours here make you sick. How much he has to tell Crisje. But that is not possible, he cannot think yet, but his little head wants to, inside him as well. There is something through which he sees himself as poor. What is it, Jeus? There you are older; here you are like other children. But you can think. You just need the words to come and you can start. But we will help you a bit, Jeus. We will help you as a child prodigy is helped who crawls to a piano and plays it. What you have is different, this is more difficult, but, Jeus, shall we try? Will we place our words in you? Will you receive them? Will you experience them? Yes, oh, it is working! What another child like that can do, you can also do. Now they are only thoughts and you need words for them. You must make sentences. Then we will raise your life to that other life. And now, Jeus, you are learning every day, you are different every day and you will outgrow Bernard and Johan. Soon, Jeus, Crisje will see that and Tall Hendrik can give in to it, whether he wants to or not. That will come now! Now it will begin, and that is only possible, because you were in the world of José!

And Jeus knows. It is strange, but when he is there, talking comes so easily to him. There that happens naturally, here it is more difficult. What does Crisje see now? Jeus has found a stick and hits himself on the head. Crisje calls out:

'Have you gone mad, Jeus?' Jeus says that he has to think! Do you feel it Crisje?

But Jeus is not mad, Crisje. Jeus want to let his head think better. His head gets a beating. But do you feel, Crisje, how terrible it is? Jeus could give himself a thrashing. That head is slow in the uptake and he

hits it towards himself. He is further than his head can deal with. His brains will not behave as he wants them to. Crisje has to laugh. But Jeus is not laughing. What a happiness Crisje is living in and what is life beautiful! But that, Crisje, only lasts a few moments as well. Do you not hear and sense anything?

Trui is standing in front of Crisje and scolds. They have destroyed her whole garden! Isn't that scandalous? 'The boys have done that,' Trui says. And now she can start all over again. It is scandalous. Everything has been pulled out of the ground.

'Why don't you pay more attention to your rascals,' she adds to Crisje. 'Nothing will become of them, nothing, they are villains of the first order, just as long as you know.'

How can Crisje make Trui understand that, as mother of her children, she can't follow them around the whole day? Trui doesn't understand that anyway. Of course, it is terrible and Crisje will take care of it and Trui is right, but villains, no. 'That's nonsense. My children are not that, Trui, that's saying too much!'

Trui still thinks that it is not enough. 'What now, Cris?' 'Nothing Trui, we will make sure that it doesn't happen again, that is all!' Trui is powerless for she cannot do anything to Crisje, and she has said all she can say about the matter, and after all they are still children. Trui is furious, but the best she can do is to leave. Crisje was just having such a nice time with Jeus and now everything has disappeared at once. But Jeus didn't pull that much out of the ground? Trui is making a mountain out of a molehill. She knows Trui. She sees everything seriously and pretentiously. Really you should laugh about it. Jeus couldn't care less about aunt Trui, he is already asking if she wants to leave, because he cannot think. Aunt Trui shifts one foot in front of the other and disappears from Crisje's property. She shuffles through her gate and can no longer be seen. But Crisje can still hear her. Trui's thoughts reach her and they are even worse, much much worse, than the earthly talk of her sister, when Crisje is right there undergoing such verbal abuse.

'Are you a villain, Jeus?' Crisje is not talking so loudly now, imagine if Trui could hear her. But villains are completely different. They steal what they can get. Not Crisje's children! 'Villain', what a terrible word that is. It is because Trui doesn't have any children herself! 'A villain??' Crisje cannot escape it, the word cuts through her life and her heart.

It is bad! Bernard yes, Crisje is afraid for Bernard, because he is into everything. But Crisje therefore keeps an eye on him, otherwise he will have to go to the cellar and that is really bad! She would much rather go to the cellar herself, but Tall Hendrik is serious. Tall Hendrik has the upbringing of the children in his hands. And try lying, Crisje? You can't. But it is for Crisje as if her heart is breaking when she has to tell Tall Hendrik that Bernard has got up to mischief. Then she has a symptom, a strange pain in her and she could cry. Crisje is worried about this, because Bernard does not know about Crisje's worries. Bernard follows his own life and lives in his own world. Bernard is the fiercest, the fastest and the wildest! Bernard is into everything and thinks, 'what is yours is mine'. Especially apples and pears, Crisje knows. Where will that ship run aground? Crisje also knows that she will have trouble with Bernard, and have unpleasant things with Hendrik. The older Bernard becomes the more that child will explore his neighbourhood and will start to control things. And she prays continually to keep Bernard under control. It doesn't help, but Crisje doesn't give up. But her prayer will be answered some day. And a firm character kicks right and left, feels the prayers; she knows that as well, she has her proof of it. And then life is not so good. Now life is difficult, especially when Trui interferes. But villains, no, that is too much!

'Did you go to her garden, Jeus? And did you pull everything out of the ground?' The child looks Crisje in the eye. He thinks about it, but he will also say something:

'Is that not allowed then, mother? I was playing.'

'Do you not feel, Jeus, that you are causing your mother grief?'

'Yes, mother', Crisje gets to hear. She can already carry out a conversation with Jeus. She gets the promise from Jeus:

'I won't do it again, mother!'

Crisje is happy, how is it that that child immediately understands what she wants. And she knows how she must approach him.

'That is clever of you, Jeus, how happy you make me. But don't you want any food? You must be starving, aren't you? Yesterday evening you didn't have any food!'

That is true, Crisje, Jeus is hungry, give him something nice, a bacon sandwich, this body needs good food, it thinks far too much. Crisje makes something for him to eat. Jeus, she sees, is enjoying his

sandwich and playing at the same time. It seems as if Crisje has eyes at the back of her head. She sees everything. And Jeus wants none of it. He is already off exploring. He needs something new. He thinks those hens are cacklers and wonders why does a dog bark, and why do they bark so much? But most of all he doesn't know how to explain it. These thoughts live in the child, but his head is not yet ready. The rabbits, they are nice animals. But Jeus cannot get hold of them anymore; Tall Hendrik has put a lock on the hutches. Crisje had no choice but to catch the rabbits which were enjoying the plentiful food in the garden, as Jeus watched. She chased after the rabbits to the back of the garden. Johan and Bernard had to help her. They could not find one rabbit, but Johan didn't give up. However, the rabbit was in aunt Trui's garden and came out with a satisfied stomach. And Trui also had something to say about that. 'It will not happen again, Trui,' were Crisje's last words. But Trui had one problem after another, as a result of Crisje's boys and she had had more than she could take. What would become of this, she didn't dare think. They would end up in prison; For Trui that was already written in history. You could count on it too. She knew her kids, but she certainly didn't want any. 'Children? Bah...they only give you trouble. She felt happy. Trui was pleased that Our Lord had not given her any children. You saw nothing but misery as a result of them. They were into everything and they did not leave a 'chicken' alone. Pestering pigs, so that the animals became nervous. She had a lot to complain about. And then that shitting on her roof from all those doves. You simply lived behind the neighbourhood, where that lower lot of people lived. There was nothing left any more of a tidy Grintweg. Thank God, they did not have the nerve to come into her house just like that. Trui kept Cris' little men at a distance. They had respect for her. They could not bring up children there, Tall Hendrik had bother enough, but that? Anyhow, he could only make a fuss. Singing. Yes, but that would become flawed as well!

Children made Trui sick. If only she could get another house, then she would be off. It is stupid that her husband, Gradus, had let himself be deceived, otherwise she would have had a nice life on the hill. Lovely and free, alone, but that also escaped her. Crisje knows that Trui sat alone at home, grouching the whole day, and if she ever went outside and worked for a while in the garden she immediately got into

an argument with Crisje about the boys. Trui laughed at Crisje fairly and squarely. That distasteful carry-on with those poor people of Crisje, meant nothing to Trui, it was simple, utter crap! If she didn't go to heaven in her way, then Trui would just stay out. At the end of the day you could live as you wanted. If you only had money and she did have, fortunately! Gradus earned a good wage!

When Trui saw that Crisje spoke to Mrs De Man, the woman lived next to Crisje and you couldn't walk past her and ignore her forever, because that is the worst thing that there was on this earth and which hurt people the most, she showed her displeasure as she spat out her poison toward Crisje with a look that would kill. And however crazy it was, the drunkard saw and felt Trui's hate. That drunkard wasn't so insensitive after all. To add to this, this same drunkard could say harsh, apt words, which came out as if a judge spoke them, and Trui usually had to make do with it. Even if Trui always had her words ready, she couldn't compete with the drunkard. She was too smooth and too sharp for her. When Trui once thought she could outwit that woman, she got to hear:

'We will build a world for you alone, then you can wring everyone's necks and you will have the place to yourself.'

That was followed by something else and Trui heard:

'They should scrape you out!!...'. And anyone who understood that got a shock because it had to do with having children!

Trui called out: 'Go to blazes for all I care, you can drop dead, filthy woman!'

If Trui didn't leave, Mrs De Man would have sent her black dog after her, which the whole neighbourhood was afraid of. Hector was not to be sneezed at. The dog was always chained up, because he bit everything in sight. Many human calves had had to suffer for it and always required a doctor's care. It was so savage that even Bernard had respect for it. But the most surprising thing was, Jeus could romp with Hector as much as he wanted. The dog didn't do anything to him, on the contrary! Hector already howled when Jeus came outside in the morning. And the first thing that Jeus did was say good morning to Hector. Mrs De Man kept an eye on Hector and Jeus, because she did not trust her dog. Today he was sweet, tomorrow you would be bitten and she would also be in trouble. Mrs De Man wanted nothing to do with anybody; the only person was Crisje. Now and

again they had a conversation together. But Crisje didn't understand where she got those words. Never in her life, for all her years, had Crisje heard of scraping out. What that person didn't think of? Trui was full of poison, it had such an effect on her that she sat crying for days on end and Gradus had to beat his fists on the table to calm Trui. But Gradus did not get to hear what was really the matter with her. Trui was sensible enough to say nothing and Gradus understood that Mrs De Man had probably touched a sensitive spot.

However, Hector continued to wag his tail and Mrs De Man continued to watch. From then onwards Trui lived on a war footing with the drunkard! Crisje thought, 'give me that drunkard any day'. Trui has no life. She is never satisfied with anything. Trui is at odds with everyone. Also Crisje, and now the villains as well, which you saw no end to, and it could last a lifetime. Life was a big mess, and life was horrible. There was nothing nice about it, nothing. Trui didn't care about life. She had had her fill of it! Fed up! It made her sick!

Jeus has discovered something new. Why didn't Crisje tell him that before? How come, he didn't think of that. He sees doves flying around. They are sitting on the roof, but that is too high and he has been warned about it. But there is a ladder. If you climb carefully, you will go higher and higher and your snub nose will soon be sticking out above the attic, where these doves live and flutter about in their own world. Where they coo and mate, lay eggs and breed young! Jeus climbs up the rungs. He finds the dovecote, looks at that world, messes about with the door to open it and now sits in a world of Our Lord. He immediately manages to catch a few young doves and kisses them. What beautiful creatures they are. He saw them in that other world. Why do these doves not fly away? Why do they not go and sit in the trees? He will not chase them away; he wants to play with the doves. If only José and the children were here now. Now Jeus has something to show them. Now he has something as well, and is not empty handed. And as if it was meant to be, he sees his friend a little while later. José admires the doves. Jeus has long conversations with his friend.

'Now? What do you think of my doves, José? Aren't they nice? Do these doves not have what they have where you come from? Look at this neck. And these wings, these eyes! And this beak. See this blue thing around its neck? Won't you take a few with you to let them fly

around there?’

Jeus becomes tired. He lies down and falls asleep. Now he flies into universe and follows the doves in their flight. What kind of world is this? You cannot get enough of it. José has disappeared. He is suddenly gone. But the doves are still there and call to him to follow them and that is only possible when he is sleeping. Jeus wants to go high, up into the blue. He tumbles. Just like the doves, those over there, with their crests in their necks. They are beautiful creatures. And that one there with its nice tail, it looks just like a ‘hawk up’. An animal that he has seen and heard of, there at the farmer’s, where they have two of them. Johan gave them a name. Jeus no longer remembers what they are called. But then suddenly the word comes back to him. Someone says it. ‘They are turkeys, Jeus... turkeys... turkeys’ That’s it, now he will never forget it again. And this evening Jeus will be talking about turkeys... Tall Hendrik will like that. If he remembers, otherwise he will probably remember later, tomorrow, and then it’s a story for Crisje.

Jeus is flying in the universe and sleeping at the same time. Flying in the universe is a matter of course, natural... Jeus lies down, goes to sleep and... whoops, there he goes already. He is eating the food from the land with the doves, picks up something nice, he feels how they mastered the art. Everything is different. Hens are exactly the same, but cannot fly. Rabbits eat differently. And so do dogs, including Fanny. Fanny is howling while looking everywhere for Jeus, and finally finds him upstairs. But that doesn’t waken him. The last few days, Crisje notices, he has been ignoring the dog. The child now has so much in his head and that must be dealt with first. But Fanny keeps an anxious eye on his boss. However, Bernard wants Fanny for himself, because he thinks that it is him who creates and makes the games, and Johan is letting things slide. Bernard has already said: ‘Jeus can do what he likes with Fanny.’ However, he has something else on his mind. And there is more to see than just dogs. You can move an inch without tripping over them. What Crisje notices is that Fanny doesn’t lie in front of the cradle now any more. Gerrit means nothing to Fanny. How strange that is. Everything is different, the children, the dog, their doings, everything. But they are growing up and life goes on!

Crisje doesn’t know how long Jeus has been sleeping in the dove-

cote, but now Tall Hendrik is back again and demands the children's attention. The roll call is sounded. There is one missing. The captain goes mad. Roll call has to be sounded again; Jeus still isn't there. Where is Jeus, Crisje? Crisje has to think. Yes, she was busy. She cannot keep track of Jeus all day. She has her hands full. For goodness sake, not another drama like yesterday evening, Hendrik, it keeps Crisje awake. They are now in search of Jeus. Wait a minute, Johan saw him wandering about. When Johan was here, about that time, Jeus was sitting here on the floor... And where else? Neither Crisje nor Johan saw him outside. Suddenly Johan remembers! 'Just come with me, mother, I know!' And there was Jeus lying, sleeping in the middle of the dovecote. Only now do they understand Fanny. Fanny ran back and forth and from back to front. They thought that Fanny wanted to help search but the animal only wanted to send the family upstairs, but they did not understand the dog. That is not so easy either. You have to have dog brains for that, or be able to feel exactly what a dog like Fanny wants. Jeus can already do that, which is why he can also talk to Fanny.

Crisje lifts the child up, startling him. Isn't that a fright, Hendrik? 'He is sleeping with his eyes open', utters Tall Hendrik. And Johan has never seen anything like it in his life. It is a wonder to him. Confused, Jeus looks around him and starts to cry. He doesn't want to leave the doves. It is better here than anywhere else. Jeus kicks right and left, he feels himself being torn away from his beautiful world, but cannot resist the force of Tall Hendrik.

'How did he get here, Crisje?'

'This afternoon I think, Hendrik. I haven't seen him there before!'

Jeus screams: 'Let go of me, for goodness sake. Let me go, turkeys... turkeys... let go of me!'

Tall Hendrik splits his sides laughing, Crisje doesn't understand where Jeus got that word 'turkey'. But then they hear from Johan that he saw Hakfoort's turkeys. But that was a long time ago, certainly four days ago...! The child eats well. Crisje is happy, as long as they want food everything is okay. The rest will follow by itself. And they can do that, only she is sometimes worried about Jeus, he dreams and thinks too much. When Tall Hendrik hears that Jeus was hitting himself on the head, because he couldn't think, Tall Hendrik has to smile in spite of himself. That is something to think about. But what

kind of child is it? What does a child like that want? Have you ever seen that in your life? No, never, but it certainly isn't stupidity, Tall Hendrik senses that, and Crisje knows. He has too much feeling, can think too powerfully, what he has too much of, thousands of children have too little of. You either have it or you don't. Jeus has it!

Jeus is lying in his bed thinking. It is nice to be alone. What they have to say there in the kitchen doesn't matter to him. Hendrik says to Crisje:

'Is he not becoming too old, Cris? Should we not let him sleep somewhere else? To me he is too bright, Cris!'

'We will wait a while with that, Hendrik.' And when they had been sitting there chatting for less than half an hour, they became aware that they were once again faced with a new problem, and Crisje knew that he could not sleep alone yet, because he got out of bed in his sleep, crept out the kitchen door and headed straight for the attic.

Tall Hendrik says: 'Cris, I believe Jeus is sleepwalking. He is walking towards the attic with his eyes open. Isn't that something?'

Tall Hendrik tried to grasp the child, but Crisje stopped him. 'Stay away, Hendrik, that can frighten them to death. You must let him go his own way for a while. If you pick up sleepwalkers, Hendrik, it locks their nerves and they can get all kinds of things from it, my mother told me that and I have already heard so much about it.'

Crisje and Tall Hendrik follow the child. Up the stairs, stepping carefully. Calmly, higher and higher. Jeus is at the top of the stairs. The child doesn't see anybody. He doesn't even see Tall Hendrik. He brushes past him... and opens the dovecote and lies down. The child is sleeping! They look for a moment and follow the child in this strange sleep. The child mumbles something, he is talking to the animals. They hear: 'José, Tall One...!' Suddenly Crisje says:

'Now you can lift him up, Hendrik.'

'How are you so sure about that, Cris...' asks Tall Hendrik. 'I don't know, but I sense it.'

Tall Hendrik lifts Jeus up, the child continues to sleep peacefully. He lays him in his little bed. The little soul continues to sleep. Tall Hendrik doesn't understand anything about it. He says to Crisje:

'He has got that from me, hasn't he, Cris?'

'From you? Good heavens, Hendrik, if you started sleepwalking as well.'

It is too much for Crisje, but they laugh about it heartily. Not that, no, not that. Tall Hendrik would possess too many gifts then and there would be no end to it. Crisje adds:

‘If you started sleepwalking as well, Hendrik, I might as well set fire to the house, because there wouldn’t be anything left of it anyway.’

It is bliss, Crisje. Tall Hendrik laughs. He hasn’t been able to laugh like that for ages. That Cris! Gerrit’s everyday nonsense is nothing compared to it. This lives and comes straight from that little bed. ‘No, he has nothing from me’, Tall Hendrik thinks, ‘nothing, but perhaps he can sing!’

Crisje, who has now also succumbed to rest, thinks over what she has been allowed to receive today. Tall Hendrik is already sleeping. Gerrit and Jeus are sleeping exactly opposite her, both the others are lying in the box bed in the other room. The best room, where no one ever comes and where the statues are, of Mary, Our Lord and Joseph. The Holy Family, a beautiful set, for which she paid a lot. But who doesn’t have the Holy Family in their home? If they do not have them, they aren’t people, they are not religious, they have nothing. They may not leave Jeus on his own yet. But when it is necessary, Hendrik will just have to build a little bedroom in the attic. Then Johan and Bernard can go upstairs soon. There is no room anywhere else. But it is becoming dangerous, Crisje senses. Jeus is already looking at Crisje, as if the child sees more than adults. And that is frightening! That is bad! But what does she want? From the animals the child comes to people, Crisje senses. If the animals have told him everything about themselves, people will follow, and then? Yes, then what, Crisje? It is ingrained in Crisje’s head that Jeus will then have to leave the room. As quickly as possible! He can already ask her things which Johan doesn’t even think of himself. Bernard is different, he sees a lot but he asks nothing, he has his own world, he helps himself. Crisje thinks that it is better if they can ask everything. Then they do not wander around so alone and you can help them a bit. So the boys are growing up! They are becoming older and more mobile, they are on the spree from one thing to another, look at everything and more and get up to mischief. Bernard has already stood in front of the cellar three times. But nothing has become of it yet. The fear is there, but the boys are getting older and the mischief is getting worse. Those little minds are toiling to learn everything there is to know about life. This life, of

which Trui no longer sees the colours, with which it is packed, but which according to Trui is not worth a cent any more.

But that is tempting God! This is going too far! Life is wonderful, if only you can make that of it, if only you want to see the nice things, otherwise you are a plucked chicken yourself. One which doesn't want to lay eggs, which can't lay eggs! Which is finished and goes in the pot. It is true as well, she suddenly remembers, that white one only eats, but you don't get any more eggs from it. That one is for Sunday. I must remember tomorrow, then Hendrik can just pluck it. That is true, and I don't need to buy meat for the soup, I will have everything then!

Now Crisje will not be able to take flight, the chicken is keeping her on earth; earthly affairs demand her full attention. But a healthy sleep is also a grace and she gets one! Outside something is whistling, but it is far away. It is as if the pigsty is open, but that is impossible, she closed it herself. Otherwise there will be nothing more.

The doves are still cooing; that is a strange world. They never get enough of mating. That is the world of Jeus! But for how long? Then it is Crisje! And then what? Good gracious, she already sees and hears the child. Mother, mother, mother... what is that? And why do you have...!!

'In the name of the angels, help, help. I can't take this', Crisje prays, 'but I will get help then as well!'

It is Thursday today... it works out exactly... on Sunday we will have chicken soup.

‘Is it true that you steal?’

Once a week on a certain day, the beggars come to Crisje’s house and pick up their lunch, which Crisje cooks for the poor and dishes up in a festive way. Tall Hendrik knows! Everyone sees it, many consider it a strange carry-on, but, after all, it is up to her. There is no one else in the neighbourhood who is prepared to do it, even if they fool others into thinking that they dig deep into their pockets to help and support the world of beggars. But on the other side of the road, where a rich farmer lives, they never get anything, not one cent. For that matter, Crisje has already known for a long time, he is the stingiest person she has ever met. And he could really do more than she can for those misfortunate people, who didn’t ask to have to tramp along the roads. Always outside in wind and rain, winter and summer. They are there and they are sitting with Crisje at the table. But, they are honest people, she doesn’t concern herself with bums, that is supporting the devil!! Then she could confess day and night and Father would say: ‘Crisje, you must prevent those sins, that is going too far! You know your people after all.’

Very little is done for the poor, Crisje thinks. Of course there are also skunks amongst those people who fool you and only do it for the tasty food. For the rest, you can drop dead. She has shown the door to a few of those men, however much it hurt her, and they will no longer be welcome. The people, who now come are good people, they have adapted and know exactly how Crisje wants it. Praying before the meal, eating with proper table manners and thanking Our Lord for everything. If they do not want that, they can do a turnabout and get out. ‘There is the doorway... understood?’

She no longer sees the man who got hold of her mark. A few days ago, when she had to go to Theet to get some groceries, she saw that man, but he made off. Crisje had to laugh at what a scaredy-cat he is. Never ever again would he get another cent! But what are they? Cockroaches! You could make a fool of Crisje once, and then that was it. Never come back again. She did not have any sympathy for them; she thinks deception is terrible and stealing even worse. After all, they knew that they took things which belonged to another person. They should just lock them up, for they are no more than prison rabble.

Trui was right about that!

People in this neighbourhood gave very little. You didn't have to look far. The people who lived here went to the brush factory or to Emmerik and the ones who were rich were the worse. All those shopkeepers, who earned a lot from the poor, the factory workers, gave nothing! But they ate well from it themselves. Also from the factory workers. Those people lived in beautiful houses, had this, that and the other for themselves, and went to the Montferland restaurant on Sundays to drink and eat. From what? From the poor! You shouldn't let them earn another cent! After all, you were dragged through the mud behind your back. When you were out their door, you could die, and not one of those people would you see behind your coffin, they couldn't, they had no time and no feeling for it. They had nothing, only their earthly possessions. And still they sat at the front of the church!

Yes, that was something, but it was not her business. You see, this is what Crisje wonders about. The rich people sat with their nose right next to Our Lord. The poor people could take a place behind one of those thick pillars. It didn't cost much. However, for Crisje Our Lord was everywhere, but many other people didn't understand that and they blamed the church. And that was not true, what could the church do about it, that one person was rich and the other person had nothing? People had to sort that out themselves. They should make sure that they earned more and were not so lazy and...learn to think better. And then there was something else which wasn't good; not everyone could own an inn? Then there would be more inns than houses and it would all be a horrible mess.

You should be content with what you have. If you could do that, then life would be a joy. Every day, every hour, whether it was night or day, there would be no change. Because you would be lying on top of it, and you would be it yourself! It lived inside you and not outside you. It was not for sale and such a nice rich place in the church had nothing to do with it, nothing. That is just illusion and you didn't have to look at Father with a sour face because of it.

The stubble beards and bent backs have taken their places at Crisje's table. She has filled their plates; dinner has started. It is cold outside, because it is autumn once again. Jeus looks at the men, at their pimples, those stubble beards and those hanging lips. They are not wear-

ing any shoes, or decent clogs. The mice are lying dead in front of the cupboard. But they can also smack their lips. And dribble. Just take a good look at those greasy faces.

Crisje is running back and forth. She is dishing out fatty bacon. The home-grown potatoes are a huge success. Do those men not see, thinks Jeus, that today they are eating the best sort of potato there is? He has heard, these are pinks, but he doesn't find out what this means and he therefore asks Crisje:

'What kind of potatoes are these?'

'What do you want to know?'

'What kind of potatoes are they, mother?'

Jeus looks at everyone in turn. Crisje doesn't answer him. She doesn't boast about things, which you give for nothing. She is too grateful that these people come and eat with her.

'Oh', Jeus suddenly utters: 'I know already. Today you are eating Zeeland potatoes.' The men have to laugh and look at Jeus in a friendly way. One of the men gives Jeus a good look and then says to Crisje's great delight:

'What beautiful eyes he has in his head, Crisje!'

'Yes', says Crisje, 'that is true, our Jeus has lovely eyes.'

But the men will also have fun with those nice eyes. Jeus looks at the whole bunch in turn. He follows them one by one. It is as if this boy looks through the walls of a body and sees what is going on inside, and whether there is something hidden away in a corner by the owner which cannot bare the light of day! Jeus likes to swing, but this swinging back and forth into people is something strange. He can do that with mother, even if Crisje has not yet experienced it, or spoken to him openly about it. Jeus sees all sorts of things in Crisje. He can do that with everyone, including his father, Johan, Bernard and his aunt Trui. No matter who it is. Recently he has learned to take a jump and then land in the middle of that human shop. What you then see is enormous. Because you cannot reflect upon it so quickly. First you have to know everything about it. You cannot give these things a name. But Jeus knows what pinching is. And one of those men, he pinches... That is exactly the same, according to Crisje, as taking things from another person, which doesn't belong to you. That is pinching!

Jeus strokes Fanny's back and looks. He is leaning against the door-

post. He watches the men eat. He goes out of them, as if they were shops. These doors are no bother to you. No door of such a shop is locked. Why do these people do that, it seems very dangerous, because mother locks all the doors in the evening. Even the pigsty and the chicken run get their turn and that is also because of pinching; for people who cannot keep their hands to themselves. That is stealing!

People now have their doors wide open. And there is no darkness either. A light is always burning, sometimes very faintly, but not one is sitting in the dark. The men continue to eat. Crisje sits and watches contentedly. It is a pleasure to her that the men can enjoy their meal so much. When Bernard comes home he walks round grumbling. Bernard cannot stand those tramps. If that boy got his way he would kick all that scum out the door. But Bernard is not old enough to change anything about this. These are matters for father and mother. But wouldn't you just want to throw them out! It doesn't bother Johan, but neither of the two are at home when this moment approaches and mother Crisje's kitchen is a flea circus like no other. Which is what Trui calls it and perhaps she is quite right about it as well. The oldest boys come and go. Usually don't make themselves seen. Jeus is sitting there and thinks it is a real feast, because he can intertwine with their hearts, see the light within them and do so unknowingly. Because the owner is extremely blind!

Jeus sees that a person is like a house, similar to a mole under the ground, those nice black animals, one of which Bernard caught by sticking a spade in the ground and stopping the animal in this way. But it was almost dead immediately.

Bernard said to Jeus: 'If you just get them by the nose, they are already half dead. Just take a look, it is almost dead as well!'

Jeus thought it was terrible. He felt the warmth of the animal, laid it lovingly against his cheek. You still felt the ticking inside... tick... tick... Then it stopped. Then that lovely woolly thing became ice-cold. No, not that, it wasn't like ice, that skin stayed warm. 'It was worth fifteen cents', said Bernard, and an hour later he was chewing boiled sweeties. He didn't get fifteen cents for it, but seven and a half. And boiled sweeties were nice, you could have a good suck, or peanuts. two for a cent, baked nicely in white crystal sugar, With peanuts inside, you could never get enough of them. Bernard certainly knew a lot about life. Jeus stood there staring! However, he had learned

everything about moles, everything! Why did those animals live underground? People were like that as well. They also lived in darkness. These people here did not see that he entered their house with a spade and could do what he liked. Didn't they know that?

Then this thinking and eating was rudely interrupted. Suddenly that man heard:

'You must not steal anymore!'

The men stop eating. They all look at Jeus at the same time. 'It is him, mother, this one, who thought that I have such nice eyes!'

Crisje does not doubt the truth of it for a second. Crisje is trembling. She would never have believed Johan and Bernard, but this is something else, it is Jeus! The old man becomes pale. He almost chokes on his potatoes and refuses to eat any more. Something snaps inside him and now things fall down. It becomes noisy, the inner house of man is in an uproar. Crisje asks him straight:

'Is it true? Do you steal? If that is the case you can get out of here! We don't want anything to do with crooks.'

Is it the case that the man suddenly wants to better his life or that he feels the end approaching? It could be that this is a judgement for Our Lord, because there is a child involved. It could also be that the same man, if he is caught, has the feeling and the good sense to admit to it, because he feels that otherwise it will be even worse, and now wishes to save what can be saved. The man says honestly:

'Yes, aunt Crisje, but I will not do it again, never again!'

Crisje has sacred respect for this. This is so powerful for her and Our Lord, the church and her personality, that she can forgive that same man everything and more. He therefore hears it immediately, there follows:

'God will bless you, if you tell the truth honestly and you mean what you say. I tell you, our door is not open to liars and drunkards and crooks, because my husband will give me an earful, and he would be right about that. But I'm still here myself! And to add to it, you can go to prison and there is also a purgatory. Where you will burn for eternity. Shouldn't you be thinking of that?'

'Yes, aunt Crisje... yes and yes...', Crisje hears. The man confesses everything... gives into it, because he is in a bad position. He feels boxed in. It is warm and sweat pours from his head.

'You should be ashamed! Did you also steal the apples and the eggs,

which I got from you when I was confined with Gerrit? Did you let me eat stolen goods? Tell me now. I would think that was scandalous! Now? Say something.'

The man cannot say a word, Crisje.

'I should have known it, but thank God. I gave those eggs to another poor person. We have our own chickens. If you pull that off on me again, you cannot come back here anymore. Have you understood?'

'Yes, aunt Crisje, of course!'

What a cursed urchin that man is. Jeus follows another person and asks why this man doesn't bring his dog sometime, and then it can play with Fanny. Crisje senses that Jeus has got hold of another victim. Jeus looks through these people, he knows how they think and feel, for he knows them.

'Do you have a dog?', Crisje asks curious.

'Yes, aunt Crisje, a nice one as well.'

'It is true then, isn't it? Will you bring it here?'

'Yes, aunt Crisje, I'd like to if that is allowed?'

Jeus sees that when the man laughs it takes ages before his face returns to normal. Jeus likes him a lot, because he is much the same as himself. Crisje likes him as well; he is a good person, But there are rogues amongst those other seven. They gobble up their food and do not dare to look at Crisje or Jeus. They have something on their conscience. Jeus asks one of the men if he has been beaten and whether his wife drinks like a fish. When Crisje asks the man whether that is the case, the soul confesses that he isn't doing so well and that he just walked out the door. Because there are always arguments, always misery. He cannot live there any longer, which is why this man roams about. And then Crisje hears:

'Yes, aunt Crisje, I ran away!'

'From your own wife?'

'Yes, aunt Crisje.'

'Was it that bad?'

'Yes, I couldn't stand it any longer.'

'And are you never going back home again?'

'No, aunt Crisje, I don't dare go back there again. She will throw me out the door and everything at my head. I have no life there anymore.'

'That is bad, just terrible, especially at your age. Can you pray?'

‘No, I didn’t learn to.’

‘But you must still pray, without prayer you will never make it, the heavens will remain closed to you.’

‘How do I do that?’

‘You can pray like you are talking to me now, then it happens on its own. Our Lord will hear you, and that is a prayer and it will always be heard. But I will help you, we will start straight away.’

The vagabonds have to follow Crisje, they do not like it much, and it is so long ago since they joined hands to give thanks. The wild life has beaten it out of them. And what does that woman want with their souls? The food here is tasty, it doesn’t cost a cent, but to pray as well? One looks at the ground, another one wonders how long it will take and plays with his fingers. Crisje looks at the men. ‘It isn’t possible like this. On your knees, on your knees and quickly. Do you want to thank Our Lord like that? He doesn’t accept this. Where is your reverence? How He suffered for us! People nailed him to a cross, which is why there is such misery in this world, those stupid people!’

Crisje precedes the men in prayer. She prays, she begs for that one man, that he may come home again and his wife may repent. Crisje thinks of everything, it is a very simple prayer, but it comes from deep in her heart. It is also pure, Father could not improve on it; her confessor has known this for a very long time. Crisje also prays that she will not cast any pearls before swine, that she will always be able to help the really poor people, as that has now happened through Jeus, and that she will not get any thieves, drunkards and scoundrels in her house. She doesn’t want to help any devil, any Satan, even if she is visited by such ‘lice kings’, it does not matter to her... as long as they are well behaved and honest. She doesn’t want anything to do with prison villains! This man suffers from epilepsy and that is terrible, ‘Our Lord, that is terrible! If it is possible, You can take that away from him, for You everything is possible!’ And then it is amen and the men are allowed to stand up. They are allowed to breathe again, they may come back again if they do not try to pull a fast one on themselves and this world. Otherwise they can just clear off. Crisje does not cook for an underworld.

The men leave one by one, they thank Crisje kindly. Crisje clears up the mess. So when Tall Hendrik comes home everything is in tip-top condition again. He never hears anything about this, because it

belongs to her own life, her soul and her world! He may sing and play the violin, Crisje cooks for the poor and that is everything which she has in her life, nothing else, nothing. But this is her great happiness. Happiness shines from her eyes. She gives Jeus a nice cuddle. He gives her life. He lives under her heart. Where Crisje is she finds her Jeus. When the boy follows her sometimes, these lips say:

‘Are you happy mother?’, as if it is Our Lord himself, who sees how she can be pleased that other people may forget their misery for a moment through her doing!

‘But you saw that, didn’t you, Jeus?’

‘Yes, mother’, he doesn’t say more than that. The child is not aware of what it is; the child does not feel that this is something special. It is all so very ordinary, but Crisje knows better. It is gold, it is light, it is more than a thousand guilders. You cannot buy this, you cannot learn this, this is from Our Lord and a great mercy. For this one, Crisje knows, she doesn’t need to have any worries in this life. She sees an open path for this one. It is certainty. No darkness will lay this life low or crush it! This is light. It is life, peace, love and it is in no way secretive. If only you want to be good yourself! And Crisje felt that in her. Then, when she experienced that unity, they could speak to each other heart to heart; she could float, experience the silence, pray and give thanks at the same time, so that life could be called good. There was no question of hardness, not understanding, thinking badly about a person. She felt only an all-empowering love!

When Bernard and Johan come storming in, the whole mess has been cleared away. Bernard is already squabbling, but when Crisje looks at him and the child says something, Bernard also bows his head and says: ‘Yes mother... I will be careful.’

Crisje sees that Bernard can quickly accept. Johan, who cannot give an opinion, feels this differently. Crisje compares the children through each action. The boys are getting their own opinion, they open and bare themselves, so that Crisje sees that their life is speaking.

‘You see, Bernard, those people are poor.’

‘Yes, mother!’

‘Can you understand, Bernard, if you are old and you have nothing to eat, that you will also be happy if there are people who will feed you?’

‘Of course, mother!’

'And especially, Bernard, if they throw you out, if they cheat you under your very nose, if they pester you that you must move on, you will be grateful to Our Lord, if you get a spoonful of food from another person.'

'Yes, mother, that is terrible, isn't it?'

'Yes, it is, Bernard! And that's the way people should always think. Did you think, Bernard, that we were so sure of ourselves?'

'Of course not, mother!'

'Did you think, Bernard, that we could live without prayers?'

'No mother, that is bloody wrong, isn't it! That is altogether wrong, mother!'

Crisje had wanted to say to Bernard, for goodness sake, not to use such words in Jeus' presence, but Bernard has already forgotten, besides, Jeus didn't hear anything. Crisje leaves it; Bernard is a good talker. Between him and Crisje is the cellar, and Bernard wants none of that, 'nothing, mother Crisje, nothing!'

'What did you do all day, Bernard?'

'I was playing, mother.'

'What, Bernard?'

'Everything, mother. I can't just say. I played marbles. And I won as well, mother! Nothing else!'

Nothing else, nothing else, Crisje. Bernard is playing nicely, Johan as well. But you never know what they have done. You do know from Johan because he gives himself away. It is not bad, it is going well, you can't complain. But they are becoming older by the day. They are learning a lot of things from other people, they see nice things, which you cannot give them, but which they long for. They do not steal, only get up to mischief, nothing else, nothing else!

When Tall Hendrik comes they are all together. The food tastes good, they do well with it. He must go to his quartet. Crisje has the whole of this evening to have a lovely think. One thing she doesn't know yet, that she can give all those tasty potatoes to the pigs the following week. Because most of the men will no longer come. What you must pray and give thanks for, their stomach refuses. Everything! That is too difficult for the majority.

Two men will come and later another one again. The rest of them have succumbed!

And now the angels are also watching that Crisje is not deceived

with her eyes open. Jeus looked through the eyes of another and that other person had the same goatee beard as Tall Hendrik... Only this one had nice long hair and they called him a different name, then at least a different name when he was still a real person. Where he now lives there are no people, at least not like people imagine and know, that a triangle became square, or round. But who understands the dimensional laws here? Jeus will explain this to Crisje one day and even then it is the wisdom of another, of this one. 'He... who is only light and wants the best for you all.' The man with the nice goatee beard and nice long curls!

The doves also know... because they fly, and everything that can fly, comes close by... Go higher, and look out. Every step costs an effort, Crisje. But it is worthwhile! Have the courage to go further... Jeus is always there, always. You will never be alone again, never! You will see for yourself!

‘Oh, Bernard, how grateful I am to you’

When Tall Hendrik and Crisje are discussing a few things in the morning before Hendrik leaves, Jeus always looks from his corner of the bedroom at those two there in the kitchen, it is a real feast for him, because there is always something extra to see and hear. What nonsense his father can tell. He has never directly seen his father serious, but when father is ready and about to leave, Jeus already knows that mother will be thrown in the air and will get three kisses. That is always the case! Every morning, father will never forget that. And then Jeus hears Crisje squeaking, it is just like giggling... Of course, it does mother good and he will try it as well later, when he is bigger and stronger. It appears worthwhile to him and he will do that as well when he is married with his own wife, because he thinks all of it is great. When Jeus talked to Bernard about it, he said that he thought this was so wonderful and nice, he was under the impression that Bernard didn't see or know anything about it, it surprised him when it appeared that Bernard knew and even understood it better. Bernard continued to tell Jeus:

‘I've looked at that all my life and have forgotten already...’ that struck a large hole in Jeus' world of thoughts and he had to think about it for a moment. He didn't need to ask Johan a thing about it, because he always laughed. But Bernard went into everything, for him Bernard was the big man who knew everything and who could give you a clear answer to whatever you asked. Look at that father of theirs now, Jeus thinks. Father is in a very good mood this morning, father probably won't mind if he comes and joins them. Gerrit, who is sleeping next to him, is cantankerous, because Jeus has pulled all his blankets off and the warmth with it with that hanging out of bed, the perky and fast reacting fellow sees no reason for this. Gerrit also hits out immediately, regardless of as small as he is, Gerrit won't have it. Crisje already knows about Gerrit that he stands up for himself, Gerrit is immediately prepared and kicks and hits wherever he can strike his opponent.

Jeus takes no notice of a lot of what Gerrit does, because what does that mite want? Jeus is a good friend of Bernard, naturally you have Johan, you always have him, he is a bit like mother. You can do every-

thing with Johan, if you put Johan day and night in darkness, in the cellar, for example, the child will sit down quietly and wait. Crisje, who certainly doesn't want to see the children angry, once asked Johan:

'Do you never get angry, Johan?'

'No, mother...' passes his lips, 'why should I get angry?'

That was the situation for Crisje. That child is too good, she thought, and will have a difficult time in this life. This child is peace, a still water; you never hear a harsh word from him. He never blows his top; he and Bernard are like chalk and cheese. Tall Hendrik knows that too, he knows that too well and that maddens him, Johan is nothing like Tall Hendrik, and if you want to sing, you must also have something else in you or they will crush you to pieces at the stage.

A while ago Crisje already made it clear to her Hendrik: 'Just get that out of your head, Johan can only hold on to my skirt. Even though this is one of the best we have!'

Hendrik couldn't add anything to this, because Crisje always told the sacred truth. There was neither anything to add or change about it. It was as if the inner life side was asleep and would never waken. Tall Hendrik also teased that child too much, in Crisje's opinion, but even that didn't help. Johan remained calm and was always himself. And didn't react to anything. He was their eldest? There were also two others and one on the way again, Crisje knew, because of the feelings she got, which never failed before, that it would be a boy again, a type like Hendrik. Yes, exactly the same!

'We will just leave it at that', Tall Hendrik resigned himself.

'There has got to be one opera singer amongst them, Cris? What do you think?'

Crisje didn't care about those singers of Hendrik. A good trade was better. However, she knew that what her Hendrik had not been able to realize for himself, is what he saw in his boys, and he tried to make something out of them, you could trust him with that he thought. 'Singers? They are on the breadline', said Crisje, 'today they have something to scream about, tomorrow they can get lost!' And wasn't that the case, Tall Hendrik? What Jeus had, what lived in Jeus, that was something! But that was not for sale, and only a few children possessed it. It was the greatest thing that a person could have. It was strange, but Hendrik couldn't see that, he wasn't in the least interested

either. He did not notice because it hung between heaven and earth and that was too difficult for him and too far removed from his life. It was not in his hands so that he could look at it. For Crisje this was the very highest that a person could receive from Our Lord! And to add to this, there was the sweet nature of the child; that lovely softness, the pleasant feeling, the pure thinking like an adult and the contact with you, which came straight into your life, which all escaped Tall Hendrik! He was blind to this, completely blind!

Hendrik was fooling about with Crisje this morning, they were like two doves in the dovecote, which sat cooing day and night! Tall Hendrik is laughing! Crisje is tittering. Jeus thinks, it can happen now. He would like to sit with his father for a while. A nice cup of coffee from mother, sitting in between them and absorbing the nice things about adults, just like father, who is bothered by his big moustache.

'May I come through beside you, father? Then I will sit very quietly. It is so cosy beside you, isn't it?'

'Did you hear that, Crisje? Since when is he so big?'

'You will see some things yet from him, Hendrik. If I were you, I would look inside him more, that listening to voices, that is something completely different!'

'Isn't that something, Cris?'

'He already understands everything, Hendrik. You can talk to him like a grown-up.'

Jeus is already sitting at the table beside father. He is drinking a nice cup of coffee. Crisje makes him a sandwich. He feels old, in harmony with his parents, he thinks of the time that he will also have to go to work. The child descends deep into that life and sits there, sees Tall Hendrik, as if heaven and earth are resting on him. Hendrik follows the child, but there is not much time, he must leave soon. Jeus only wants to know what it is like to sit with his parents at the table so early. He wants to know what his father feels, when he is about to leave. As head of this household, with all those boys as well, a wife who makes nice coffee and talks to you; it all feels so great, that nice chicken soup from his mother cannot even compete with it. He feels and sees all kinds of things in it. Tall Hendrik takes pleasure in his coffee, points his moustache upwards, and doesn't want to make his goatee beard dirty. Jeus sees this and he imitates that for a moment, by putting his hands on his lips and holding his chin, but he doesn't

manage this without burning himself. The coffee flows over the table and Crisje already jumps up to catch the mess.

‘Good God...’, Jeus comes out with, ‘what a bloody idiot I am...!’

Tall Hendrik almost splits his sides laughing. He does not jump out of his chair, but has something nice for Crisje. When he can laugh no more, Crisje hears:

‘Now I believe, Cris, that he is a special one. He can already swear like me. I have to say he has learned praying!’

Tall Hendrik allows Jeus to stay. Crisje looks at Jeus, as if she has to haul him out of the mud, as if he is up to his ears in mud in the pigsty behind the house, and she has to haul him out. It is a blow for Crisje, and much more! Where did Jeus learn all this so quickly? Crisje sees red, it is a blow, and feels it is a hole that she almost drowns in. But Jeus is already asking for another coffee. He has not yet taken in everything from this morning. Father is, thank God, not angry. He doesn’t know what this means. Because father laughed about it, therefore, it is not so bad either! However, Jeus has spoiled it for Crisje. To save, what can be saved, and in order not to give the child any illusions, she gives Jeus another half cup and then he can enjoy it again. Gulp by gulp; drop by drop, the child drinks his coffee. However Hendrik is ready to go. And Jeus watches with his eyes over the rim of the cup as his mother is swung in the air. Crisje is now hanging between heaven and earth. She gets her kisses from father and that is so great, something so different, that Jeus can’t get enough of it. Tall Hendrik has gone!

Now that they are alone, Jeus hears: ‘Why do you use such dirty words, Jeus?’

The child thinks, looks at his mother and asks:

‘Are they dirty words, mother?’

‘Yes, of course, Jeus, that is wrong.’

‘Oh’, he says, ‘is that wrong.’ However, Jeus has learned a whole bunch of words like that. You should hear Bernard, Crisje, he teaches his little brother all kinds of things. It is quiet for a moment, but then it happens.

‘How father can kiss, mother!’

Crisje could kick herself. For what has she started, allowing the child to be with them in the kitchen so early in the morning. Jeus thinks and Crisje also contemplates further until she is disturbed by

Jeus.

‘Mother, may I ask you something?’

‘Of course, what do you want to know?’

‘Why do people say ‘damn’?’

Crisje almost keels over from shock; in her mind she crosses herself ten times and doesn’t know what to say.

‘Oh, that is an ugly word, Jeus, and you mustn’t say it anymore, because then the devils are happy and you will go straight to hell later.’

‘What is a hell, mother?’

‘Hell, yes, that is where all naughty children go, that is just like the cellar!’

Jeus thinks about it, Crisje does too. It is something else, at half past six in the morning there is already someone who wants to know what a hell is. Then that swearing as well, it is terrible. Jeus understands, it is dark in hell, as dark as anything. Now more follows about which Crisje doesn’t need to have any sacred thoughts or illusions. She also knows that children learn precisely those words which they shouldn’t know at all. Nevertheless this has been happening as long as the world has existed and you cannot change anything about it anyway. Only she has never been able to do it, even if you have to use a harsh word occasionally, but that is not swearing, that is the way the dialect is.

‘Why do people say, mother, you can ‘drop dead’?’

Good gracious, what now? That is really bad. Crisje is outraged, where did the child learn all this?

‘But my Jeus, that is swearing! That is the worst thing there is!’ In addition as if Jeus senses that it will now come to an abrupt end and he will not be able to ask any more, he comes out with:

‘And why do people say ‘piss off’, mother?’

Crisje doesn’t know any more. She will have to confess ten times to rectify this again.

‘Stop that now, chatterbox. I have other things to do.’

How strange, Jeus thinks, that adults can never take time to talk to you in peace. You are laughed at or they haven’t any time. Bernard has already told him: ‘Those are excuses, aren’t they, then they suspect that you already know all about it and then they are dumbfounded.’ And mother is now dumbfounded. What an awful lot Bernard already knows about this life. Bernard knows even more than Crisje, even more than father does as well, more than everyone. Jeus also

knows this now, he doesn't need to come to Crisje, and mother won't give him an answer. Bernard had also said:

'You must be careful, Jeus. If you ask them something, which they don't want to tell you, why I don't know... I must try and find out, they stand there not knowing what to say or they walk away!'

And Crisje walked away. Mother has no time for him now, Crisje has a lot to do, but that is rubbish and a big lie! Now Johan and Bernard appear, and the three of them are together, which is nice, and they can have a chat again. Crisje hears that those other two know a lot more, and have mastered more than swearing, she must admit that she cannot change anything about it anymore. However this world is rotten, more rotten than stinking manure, and whoever brought these words into the world is a bad person. That is a customer for hell!

'So', Bernard says to Jeus, 'do you want to know everything? Then I will take you through the town today.'

Isn't that something? 'Do you mean that, Bernard?' 'Of course, when I say something, you can count on it as well!'

See, that is Bernard. Jeus is ready, and they will leave soon. First Bernard must do a few things for himself. Bernard has left, as Johan gets his things together and goes to school. By ten o'clock Bernard is ready for Jeus and they leave on the sly, because mother will not approve of course, they must stay in the neighbourhood. Bernard begins to explain the surroundings to Jeus. Now they are in the middle of the Grintweg. Also worthwhile, Bernard thinks.

'This road, Jeus, runs from here all the way to Zeddum and even further. If you walk this way, you will arrive in Arnhem and that is a big town. At least a thousand people live there. It is completely different there from here.'

'How do you know all that, Bernard?' Jeus asks.

'That is a good one, but I'm years older than you.'

'That is true. And did they tell you that in the way you will tell me?'

'That is very simple, isn't it, people learn from each other.'

'That is understandable.'

'Now, there is really nothing to see here. That is Hosman's house. They have cows and horses there. All kinds, he is a farmer. They also have chickens and a dog that you can ride on, but a dangerous one. And I don't want anything to do with him. Those people, Jeus, are as mean as anything. They eat the tastiest cheese themselves.'

‘How do you know all this, Bernard?’

‘You will soon see, when you, like I and Johan have to fetch milk. If they can cheat you with the milk, they will do it! But they won’t get me. They manage to get Johan, he is always cheated on.’

Hand in hand, they stroll along the Grintweg. Bernard has something in mind and he will show it to Jeus. It is a bit away from home, but definitely worthwhile. Bernard expects respectful admiration for everything which he already knows, and he doesn’t want any more than that.

‘Tell me, Jeus, have you heard of the ‘Hut of Sint van Tien before?’

‘What is that, Bernard?’

‘It is more than your search for Our Lord, even more than all your playing with the balls, but which I don’t believe for a second.’

Jeus looks up at his brother. Therefore, a conflict, Bernard has got him. Bernard follows Jeus and hasn’t forgotten it. He hears and sees everything and knows very well that his mother is religious and Jeus has stolen her heart, even if he knows that mother doesn’t make any differences between her boys. But Jeus has to swallow this.

‘Where is Fanny?’

Jeus gets a fright. ‘We didn’t take him with us, Bernard.’

‘Never mind...’ Bernard throws at him, ‘he must stand on his own feet. We are absolutely crazy about that dog, it doesn’t have to be in on everything!’

Jeus thinks it is a shame. He thinks of Fanny. He could also have experienced a nice trip. He does nothing without his friend! Fanny should be part of everything. The animal is his life, his thoughts, and his love. However, when Bernard tries to explain to Jeus what he knows about this hut, Fanny meets him wagging his tail and Jeus is happy. Not Bernard, he already has something to say about it:

‘If you aren’t listening anymore and looking at that dog, I’m going home.’

Jeus lets Fanny go, and he realizes that he has to listen. The boys are now on the Zwartekolkseweg. They are already in the middle of the woods, there are beautiful trees everywhere, and the natural beauty is wonderful. Over there is a hut and Bernard wants to tell him all about it. Jeus now feels like he felt in paradise. These are trees. Just like yonder where José lives. How is it possible! Jeus feels the thick bark. Bernard follows him. When Jeus remarks:

‘What a thick skin they are wearing,’ Bernard has to laugh in spite of himself. ‘Skin? Do you call that a skin? People and animals have skins, trees don’t.

That is wood, and not skin!’

‘But...’, Jeus utters...‘no but’s, will you listen to me or do you know better? Otherwise I’m going home!’

Jeus now understands that Bernard is not to be sneezed at. He has to follow his brother or he will make off and leave him behind and alone. He concentrates on Bernard. However, Jeus would like to sit down for a moment. It is so nice and soft here, he has never seen any of it before. However, Bernard doesn’t like the idea. It means nothing to him. Later, Bernard promises him, he can go and sit in the woods as much as he likes!

‘Look, Jeus, that is the hut of Sint van Tien.’

Jeus sees a hut, which is surrounded by a fence. That hut is protected. But why? Bernard is now whispering. ‘In here, Jeus, lies a man, they say, who killed himself. The man is said to have hung himself. And people who hang themselves, you can ask mother that, may not be buried in the other graveyard or they will infect the other people.’

Jeus is dumbfounded by all that wisdom. The things that Bernard knows. But what does all this mean?

‘What is hanging, Bernard?’

Bernard has to laugh about this. ‘That’s something’, he roars with laughter overconfidently, ‘that’s something... don’t you know what hanging is?’

Jeus has to admit that he doesn’t know or understand the least thing about it and Bernard can laugh as loudly as he likes. He has to be honest, he doesn’t know. Now Bernard feels important. He knows, because he has hung at least ten mice, to find out what hanging meant.

‘Hanging, Jeus.’ Now the momentous explanation follows. ‘Is destroying something. Like if a person does that, and puts a piece of rope around his own neck, then that is hanging himself. Of course, he destroys himself, doesn’t he! And then you can’t be buried in the other graveyard.’

‘Do a lot of people do that, Bernard?’

‘No, of course not. Who wants to destroy himself?’

‘I can clearly understand that. I won’t do that either. What about you, Bernard?’

‘Of course not. I like my life far too much. I would be mad!’

‘But why do they call it the hut of Sint van Tien, Bernard?’

‘I don’t know, and no one knows, do they.’

‘And why did they bury him here, Bernard?’

‘I already told you. Mother said they may not lie in sacred ground.’

Jeus looks at the hut. ‘Why have they locked the door, Bernard?’
Are they afraid that he will walk out?’

Bernard carries on; he doesn’t answer Jeus anymore. There is too much to see.

‘Look here, Jeus, that is the Jewish graveyard!’

‘The Jewish graveyard, Bernard? What is a Jewish graveyard?’

‘You should have asked, what is a Jew, shouldn’t you! But you cannot think yet.’

He got you, Jeus! Bernard is the boss over you, you know nothing about this. But he will ask José; he knows everything. On the other hand maybe the Tall One!

‘Come on, Jeus’, Bernard continues on his way, ‘we’re going to the Mill, that is nice as well, really!’

They walk through the woods dragging their feet and come to a mill. Jeus has never seen such a thing. The mill is turning, the arms are flying round, and it is a strange thing. ‘Why, but why, does that thing have to turn, and why here in the middle of the woods, and at such a height?’ Bernard doesn’t know. Jeus now knows that Bernard doesn’t know everything either. He thought he would hear more from his brother. Bernard has already gone down in his estimation; the enormous hulk is becoming smaller for Jeus. He already knows, in a few weeks time Bernard can tell him another one, then he will teach Bernard something, and he can explain things. He now has to accept that Bernard always says: ‘I don’t know, but it will come.’ It is a lack of common sense. Bernard doesn’t think. Bernard can only chatter!

When Bernard feels that Jeus is standing looking at him in disbelief, he continues:

‘Here they grind bread, so they do. Here they make flour and that is why the arms turn!’

‘That is something different, Bernard.’

‘What is something different, what are you talking about now?’

‘Now I know why those things turn.’

‘Oh, but of course you can understand that’, Jeus hears, and it is

Bernard's way of saying that he has to think. Jeus already senses that he had mistaken himself. Bernard knows much more than he thought.

'Come on, we are going to the Wetering*), that is a big stretch of water.'

'Where is that, Bernard?'

'That is on the border, I will show you water such as you have never seen before in your life!'

Bernard pulls Jeus through the alley to the border. When he sees the mighty monastery where the fathers live, he can't get enough.

'What kind of big house is that, Bernard?'

'That is the monastery. The fathers live here. You know, those men who always shuffle along the Grintweg and go to the woods, with those black outfits.'

Jeus understands, because he has seen these men often. 'Oh, is that the monastery? What do those men do, Bernard?'

'That's a good one, they are all priests... or they will become priests!'

'Just like our priest, mother's priest?'

'That's the same thing and these ones are no different!'

How wonderful that is and what a nice house, Jeus thinks.

'And do they have to have such a big house, Bernard?'

'I suppose so!' Bernard utters in a dry tone. 'I suppose so!'

Jeus lets it sink in. But... Bernard?

'They must be rich, Bernard?'

'They are extremely rich, can't you see that from the house?'

'Of course, I can understand. And did they make that themselves, Bernard?'

'I suppose so... I don't know, but that is understandable.'

A bit further and they are standing in front of the Zutphen-Emmerik station. Jeus stares his eyes out and already asks:

'What is this, Bernard?'

'That's the tram!'

'The tram? Tram...?' And then he bubbles over with excitement and asks:

'Is that the tram which father takes?'

'That's exactly the same one, father comes here when he has to go to Emmerik every day.'

'And is that true, Bernard?'

'Is it true? But there are the wagons?'

‘You are right, Bernard.’

However, Bernard sees more. He points out to Jeus where the watchman is. But that doesn’t interest Bernard himself and he shuffles on. Now they are reaching the border, the Wetering. They stand on the bridge and watch the flowing water. As far as Jeus can see, he sees water. My God, what a lot of water.

‘You can drown in here, Bernard!’

‘That is pretty obvious, just be careful. Remember that I can’t swim.’

‘Swim, Bernard? What is swimming?’

‘There are people, boys can do it as well, and I want to learn later, who do not let themselves drown. They stay floating on the water. And that is swimming!’

Jeus understands that immediately. ‘And here’, Bernard continues, ‘here you already have the border. If you stand with your foot there, you will be in Germany. And over there, it is a long way to walk, is Emmerik and father has gone to work there!’

Jeus looks, and everything is wonderful. Jeus has a think and has something to ask. What did the adults say again?

‘Do you know what those people are called, Bernard?’

‘What those people are called? Which people?’

‘These ones, who live here!’

Bernard looks at him. Yes, he already knows what Jeus means, he has a think for a minute He has got it. A ray of happiness spreads across his little face, because he can tell Jeus what he feels and knows:

‘I already know what you are thinking and what you want to know, Jeus. They call those people ‘krauts’!’

‘That’s it! Gerrit Noesthede, and Jan Maandag and father as well, talk about it.’

But what are krauts, Bernard?’

‘Krauts, krauts... yes, what are krauts? I don’t know either, Jeus. You should just ask mother, or father, they know!’

Knowing he has had enough! Bernard strolls back. Now they are standing in front of the police station, which they had passed earlier on.

‘Do you see that, Jeus?’

‘Yes, Bernard.’

‘Now that is the house of the constabulary. Here is the prison. They put drunks here, people who cause arguments, knife stabbers. You

know the constabulary, they always go along the Grintweg with their horses.

Yes, Jeus understands that. What a lot he is learning today, how can he deal with all that? 'Are the drunks here?', Bernard hears him asking himself.

Then why haven't they put Mrs de Man in prison, Bernard? She drinks like a fish!

Bernard has to smile. Jeus is still too much of a whippersnapper to know that Mrs de Man does not stab with knives, because only the knife stabbers and the thieves are put in the 'can'. And when Bernard makes that clear to him, Jeus is very grateful, because it is clear and understandable. They are now standing in front of a school and listening to the chatter from inside. Bernard continues to explain to his brother:

'Here, Jeus, this is the school. Johan is here already, and he has a lot to learn, later we will also have to go to school. This is where the teachers are!'

Jeus would like to call to Johan. However, Bernard says he mustn't do that, because the masters will not tolerate it, and then, when they are sitting on those benches, they'll be in trouble.

'Listen to them singing, Jeus. The teachers tell them to...'

'Are those masters good people, Bernard?'

'Jan says that the school mistress is a cat. She is from the town and is a tough customer. And they don't want anything to do with her.'

'Do they give punishments, Bernard?'

'Johan told me, 'too right they do', they let you stand in a corner and if you carry on a lot you go to the shed.'

Jeus doesn't want to stay here for long, he wants to go further along, this place stinks. What a lot there is to see in the world. Bernard now moves him along through the small town.

'Here', says Bernard, 'is Café Ernst, the footballers come here. And here is Jaspese the bicycle repairer. He has bicycles enough, just look for yourself. And you can hire these bikes. The big boys hire bikes.'

'We will do that as well, won't we?'

'Of course, and then we will be able to cycle on the quay.'

'Is that dangerous, Bernard?'

'Nothing to it, that happens on its own.'

'And you can't break your neck?'

‘You have to watch out for that yourself.’

That is the truth, thinks Jeus, that makes sense. Bernard is no slouch, because he knows everything, Jeus hadn’t thought about that and could never have dreamt it.

‘And here, Jeus, lives Anneke Klaredaal, where mother always gets that tasty meat.’

Jeus looks right inside a beautiful shop. There are masses of meat hanging up. So, is that their own butcher? Bernard replies: ‘They are all butchers who live here, Jeus. And all these people walk about with a long knife in their pockets, with which they slaughter the pigs, the cattle and the sheep, just like Gradus Derksche does, and you know him!’

Jeus pulls Bernard away from this place. He doesn’t like it, all that blood bothers him and goes for his throat. When Bernard sees that, he says triumphantly:

‘Are you afraid of these butchers, Jeus?’

‘Aren’t you then, Bernard?’

‘No, I’m not, because they don’t harm people, after all?’

‘That is true, I hadn’t actually thought of that. It is stupid of me.’

When they walk on a bit further they are standing in front of a big house. ‘What kind of big house is that, Bernard?’

‘That’s not a house, it’s the church.’

‘The church, Bernard? Does mother always come here to pray?’

‘You guessed right. Yes, mother always comes here to pray.’

‘But do they have to build such a big house to pray in?’

‘Yes, of course, at least a thousand people have to fit in.’

‘Is a thousand so much, Bernard?’

‘If you have a thousand marbles, you can play for the rest of your life, a thousand is that much.’

Jeus nods, he understands Bernard. Then he looks up. That tower impresses him. ‘Are there people in there as well, Bernard?’

‘I believe so, just ask mother about that. She knows everything about the church.’

‘Have you ever been there, Bernard?’

‘Yes, with mother, there is a lot to see there and it is completely different than from outside.’

‘And is Our Lord here, Bernard?’

‘Yes, He is here.’

‘And can you also see Him?’

‘Just ask mother. I can’t tell you that.’ Bernard thinks this is too much. His stomach starts to rumble; that is just ample for today. However, he also takes Jeus to the town hall, where he gets to hear something as well. Behind the town hall Bernard continues to explain ‘there is the district reservoir and they go skating there. And over there lives the Baron of Hugeloot. Mother knows all of that and father as well. The mayor lives over there, near Jaspese, but he comes here to help people. And that is the town hall. Do you know now?’

‘I know, Bernard.’

Bernard drags him onwards, hand in hand they continue. ‘The doctor lives here, Jeus, if you are sick, they must fetch him from here.’

‘Oh’, he utters, that is clear, Jeus doesn’t want to know any more about it. Only the church is still occupying him and he would like to know more about it, but that will surely come.

‘And here, Jeus, lives Hanne Schuurman, the big boys go cycling here. They do that in the big hall, Johan said, and there are those small, but strong bikes, which never break, because Johan saw that six people were standing on top of them at the same time.’

‘Can you go in there, Bernard?’

‘Of course not, that is a good one, they don’t need us for that. And here, Bernard continues: ‘here is the club-house. Here they have fairs, they shoot here too and that is for the adults. They shoot the hen from the pole and get a prize and in the evening they dance and drink jenever!’

Jeus lets it sink in; his head is almost bursting. He has now really had enough. The child is exhausted, and Bernard is also almost on his last legs. Yet he still continues.

‘This is Jan Hieltjes, Jeus. Here the men sit and drink and play billiards, I saw that at Hent Klink, really. Father can do it as well. That’s... that’s a... board... no, that’s not it either, it’s a long table, with balls. And those balls have to do it and they have a long stick for it. I would like to try it as well.’

They head for home now. Bernard walks past the brush factory and that information can also just be passed on and then Jeus knows all of ’s-Heerenberg; The whole of this area, everything about his own town.

‘Yes’, says Bernard, when Jeus wants to know whether many men

work at the factory.

‘But why doesn’t father go and work here? Because this is close to mother? If anything happens, they can just call father, then he is right near home?’

Bernard chuckles at Jeus: ‘Father would be mad to go and work in this stinking place? In the pitch perhaps? That’s not for father. They are all people who can’t do anything else!’

Now it is clear to Jeus. That he doesn’t want to work there either. He wants nothing to do with it. The stench meets you. However, Jeus, who can take it away from you? How can you be so sure that you will not end up in this terrible stinking place? Don’t worry about it now! Bernard is already back on the Grintweg again and explains a few more things. Jeus sees where Manus Reuzel lives and studies the fence where they harness the horses to give them new horseshoes. He hears that the Fox lives there; that is an insulting nickname for a man. He sees another butcher and he is called Hendriks. They are coming closer to home and suddenly Jeus says:

‘Bernard, how grateful I am to you.’ And Bernard believes it. Jeus says it with all his love. Bernard can be content. Jeus has learned an enormous amount today. The child has become ten years older. The boys are exhausted. The first thing that Crisje hears is:

‘Mother, why have they put such a big thing on the church? Is that to crawl into heaven, mother?’

Crisje laughs. It is difficult to give an answer to that. She says: ‘No, but it is in honour of Our Lord.’

That is possible, Jeus thinks, the higher the closer to Our Lord. So big is Our Lord, of course. But he has something else:

‘Why do you have to pray there, mother?’

‘That’s a good one, Jeus, because Our Lord is there.’

‘And he is nowhere else, mother?’

What can Crisje say now? Jeus is making it difficult for her. Then she says: ‘Our Lord is everywhere, but Our Lord is always in the church, you can pray there as in no other place.’ That is acceptable. But when Jeus wants to know more, he hears Crisje say that he must wait a moment. Later, he will have to experience that himself and he will suddenly know. Then his head was bursting and Jeus went for a nice nap. Crisje hears him asking questions in his sleep to Bernard. The hut of Sint van Tien is also included. What will he have to ask her

later? Jeus is dreaming during the day and that is also something different, because this has to do with his own life. This is very ordinary. All people dream sometimes during the day and see high towers and butchers with long knives, but then they jump out of bed nearly crazy from fear because life is so good! However, if you can see the good side of it, there is nothing the matter and you have the nice life again of Jeus and yourself!

He doesn't sleep for long and he jumps out of bed. Where is mother? Mother is at the back in the garden. No, mother was there just a moment ago. Mother is at Theet's. She is fetching her groceries. Jeus cannot stand it and runs to the other side of the street. Is mother here? Yes, there is Crisje. And she is finished shopping. Fanny is there as well. Jeus could hit himself on the head. Because he had forgotten Fanny all this time. 'Fanny, come here, I have an awful lot to tell you.' In the street Crisje already hears:

'Mother, why do people hang themselves? Why do they do that?'

'Who made you think that?'

'Made me think that, mother? I saw that with my own eyes.'

Crisje stops on the street, in the middle of the Grintweg she looks at Jeus and asks the child anxiously:

'Did you see a person hanging himself, Jeus?'

But doesn't mother understand that then? It was the hut of Sint van Tien, Crisje. When Jeus says to her:

'I was at the hut of Sint van Tien with Bernard, mother', Crisje changes her step and shuffles into the house. Isn't that a shock? Good gracious, what a shock she got there. Those boys too. Now what?

'Don't you know enough for today yet?'

'I want to know that, mother.'

'So, is there nothing else?'

'Yes, mother, why are there Jews in the world?'

'What?'

'Jews, mother.'

Crisje thinks, Jews? Does the child already have to know now what Jews are? That is something for Hendrik. However, she can't let it go so far. Hendrik will laugh himself silly and the child will get a wrong answer. Crisje thinks and then she knows.

'Yes, Jeus, that goes without saying, they are people of a different faith and these people have their own graveyard, you surely saw it,

didn't you?'

'Yes, mother.'

'And if you hang yourself, mother, will you be buried there, or not?'

'Yes, Jeus, because then you cannot lie in consecrated ground. You may not take your own life, you surely understand that, don't you?'

'Yes, mother.'

Now see that you get away, Crisje thinks, this is going too far. That is not something for a child. When she makes it clear to Jeus that she is busy, he is able to say again:

'That's a lie, mother. That's nonsense, you don't know what to say.'

Crisje looks at the child and asks:

'Does that also come from Bernard, Jeus?'

'Yes, mother! Bernard said if I want to ask you something and it has nothing to do with me, then you no longer have time.'

Now she has to laugh. Crisje lifts him up and kisses him. 'Just come over here, Jeus. Look. Is that nice, Jeus?'

Jeus nibbles at his biscuit, and Crisje has got him. 'Now go and play outside for a while, Jeus, then I can work. Father will be coming soon.'

One thing Jeus now knows, Bernard is right. If you ask something and they do not wish to give you an answer, they have no time for you. And this biscuit is, as dry as anything and of the cheapest kind. He doesn't like it. And so the day drags on for Jeus.

Tall Hendrik is at home and Jeus is lying in bed. He doesn't lie awake for long, but he immediately falls into a dreamless sleep. His body and his legs are exhausted. But tomorrow, soon, then he will continue into life, into everything he has received.

Bernard got half of the biscuit, but not satisfied he went and got another one for himself as well. That is nearly two. For Bernard the safest way, in this way you will never lack anything and life is great. It is good. Very good, then you see towers!

And the older a person becomes, the more sense he gets, that's what they say, and Jeus will find out whether it is true! Now they will not cheat him either!

Then he will talk to those Jews. José knows all about it! High above his head a mosquito is flying, if the creature goes higher, it will become a fly and even higher that creature will be everything, because now it sees Our Lord and it can be what it likes. He wants to know

that as well! And a night is nothing. Nothing. You are wakened in no time and you continue!

And he will also get to know the Zwartekolkseweg! Those trees as well. Along with that soft grass. Everything!

‘Deut, you will get a cent from me on Sunday
if you just play with Jeus now’

Bernard and Jeus have become friends. Bernard senses that he now means something to his little brother. His life is open to many things and he can then pass this on to Jeus. He now has respect! Some of what father possesses and it is just as strong, you now have darkness and light in your own hands, however, that means being sent to the cellar for Bernard.

Bernard loves Jeus because he is friendly and grateful. He knows, you can treat Jeus a lot and his happiness then does you good. It is the happiness which mother feels when she cooks for those lousy men, those tramps who always come to mother, week in week out. This happiness, Bernard now understands, comes into your heart, and then it starts. The things that impress your life are, of course, something completely different, but it is there.

They go off every morning. Crisje thinks it is bliss, she can now do her work and is free from all that questioning. Bernard now teaches Jeus all kinds of things. Each thing gets a meaning for Jeus and he wants to know one thing and another about everything. Yesterday they were at the other graveyard. And looked at the graves and their head stones. Which was a feast for Jeus. Although, it still haunts him, because last night he dreamt about it. But it will certainly be okay, sooner or later he will ask his questions and then Crisje will learn what he heard during all those days. When Bernard asked him how he felt now that he had given him his wisdom, he was answered:

‘I have to think about this, Bernard. It’s a lot for me.’

That is true, Bernard thought, but he felt as proud as a peacock, stuck out his chest and felt wonderful. He let Jeus experience something for a moment and that was no small thing. But the graveyard warden chased them away, they had no reason to be in this holy place. However, the man did not know what it was about, otherwise he wouldn’t have chased the pair away. Then they looked through the hedge, at all those Our Lords and Mary’s and at the angels on the stone statues above a grave, which Jeus wanted to know everything about. Why don’t those angels fly away? Bernard said that stone angels cannot fly. Bernard thought the world of himself. He was not a

scaredy cat. Johan was. He didn't want anything to do with those dead people. That made you dream and then there were ghosts and Johan wanted nothing to do with ghosts.

'But', Jeus now asked Bernard, 'what are ghosts?'

'Yes, what are ghosts? Ghosts are ghosts.'

'You don't know?'

Bernard had to come out with it, but indeed he didn't know. He came across as strange. But what are ghosts? What does Jeus want to know about ghosts? Do ghosts mean something? Bernard started to think, he had to think, otherwise his little brother would realize that he didn't know and his respect would be lost. Jeus knew it was a word to remember. And a word his mother would know. But why did people want angels in their churchyard? Churchyard. A nice word, it has something of the church and the yard. The church and the Parvis were things of Our Lord. Did Bernard know that as well? Jeus feels that he does know. He is close by. Bernard doesn't feel it.

Then they went to the Wal*) and after the Wal to the Vissche Wei, a rough piece of land with ditches running through it, where the boys and girls skated and hung about in the winter. And behind this was the Plantage*). Where you could play a good game of hide and seek. Because there no one can find you. When Bernard wanted to just show it to Jeus, and then later realized he couldn't find the way anymore, Bernard had to admit that he was lost in the Plantation. If there had been no other people in the Plantation, then they would have had to sleep outside that night. At home there was a good hiding waiting for them, of course, and Bernard shrunk back from this. The cellar at home, that was the worst thing there was! From Crisje he got a scolding and she promised him, if it didn't happen again she wouldn't tell father anything about it, but for worse matters she couldn't lie. Crisje believed the boys. That it had nothing to do with mischief.

Today Bernard has something nice in mind. And Jeus will be surprised. He wants to introduce him to Deut Messing. Who is a madman that you can laugh about. Deut is about thirty-four years old and a giant of a man, But simple. Deut usually sits and thinks on the big stone in the corner of the Dassenstraatje near the Klink café, at least if you can call that thinking. He dribbles and then the saliva runs out of his mouth. However, then Deut is dangerous. And Deut, who otherwise wouldn't harm a fly, lashes out. He bites and hits, and then

everyone knows, including the children, that you have to be careful of Deut. This usually happens when Deut is angry with his paralyzed father, but not from inside; from inside Deut can curse and lash out at his father like a wild animal. What Deut misses in his head for whatever reason, which makes him like this, his father misses in his legs. He is paralysed. Deut's fault has not yet been given a name, even the doctor doesn't know! They call it: simple, but would you say that Deut was mad? Then you are not much wiser yourself. Deut is not mad! He thinks like a child and is as such a life feels. This is why the children want to play with Deut. It is true; both have their faults and need other people's help, but old Messing will not tolerate anyone in his vicinity. What is it like there? It doesn't bear thinking about it.

These two people have nothing in their lives, nothing! No one knows what they live for. Deut is sitting on his stone again. There is something to experience for the children. And Bernard also likes it and he wants to show it to Jeus, because it will be something special. Is Deut ordinary? Yes... you can see that immediately. Now Deut also knows how far he may go with the children whom he has to tickle. But if you try it when he is dribbling? You will be crushed to death. If Deut is sitting quietly, there is no danger for the children. The parents first look anxiously for a moment, because they know all about it. The simple man can work like a horse when he is good. People also wondered what these two invalids were up to on the land. When they went to find out they saw that old Messing ordered his Deut to follow him. Then the simple man picked up the potatoes and threw them in a basket; it was just like for real! They worked well together the whole day. Until they suddenly had a fall-out which could make one laugh. However, anyone who thought about it properly, could cry until their tears ran dry, the father's shouting at his backward son was so pitiful, this sickly nature of Deut. Now and again it was a drama. Old Messing lashed out, and Deut, who was forced to go to his father, then was given a thrashing, until old Messing touched his inner life and Deut would run off. It goes without saying that the paralysed old Messing sat outside in the rain and wind more than once, because no one knew that Deut had ran away. The people do not understand why old Messing is still alive. A strong man would already have succumbed long ago, but not old Messing, because he was as strong as an ox and just as harsh on Deut. You shook and trembled when you heard and

saw that, then you could give old Messing, even though he was lame, a hiding and a good one at that, because he could bait so well! He was a bloodsucking. A dirty scoundrel!

Because the old man always shouts at Deut and he doesn't feel that shouting is no good for Deut, he immediately lashes out and it is strange but the simple man does not forget that. People have also noticed that. It is something completely different, not normal, because they have noticed that old Messing can continue to hit and bait for a time. However, suddenly, something rebels in Deut and things go wrong then. It is now that old Messing can prepare himself to receive a beating. Deut does this in his own way, as a result of his thinking, and then old Messing falls off his wheelbarrow where he rolls three or four metres off the Grintweg in grave danger of breaking his neck. Yet old Messing has still not broken his neck. It is as if Our Lord thinks: it is not time yet, let's allow these two to just pester each other for a while, then 'I' here will not have such trouble with those lives. They do not know any more where Mrs Messing has gone. In any case Deut used to have a mother, people suspect that she has died. Only the old people here could know that, the young people only know Deut and the old man, the simple one and the lame one. It is a madhouse! And now just look. A girl of four is asking Deut whether he will tickle Anneke. 'Deut, tickle Anneke, and then you will get a cent later.' For that money earned Deut will buy his cigar, he likes smoking. Deut can smoke and not one man can better him. Jeus will also learn that.

Deut's friend is Duumke, they are almost inseparable. You can see them together almost every day, but sometimes Duumke runs away from Deut and looks for his fun elsewhere. The people and the children know that as well, because Duumke now looks after himself. He does shopping for people and gets something to eat for it. People say: Duumke has a tapeworm. No one knows whether that is the case, however, it is true that Duumke remains gaunt, small and puny, he doesn't grow, even if he eats more than ten pigs together. He is the smallest and the puniest out of a nest, but if you see his brothers, you wonder how it is possible. One has everything; the other has nothing, not even a healthy body, because such a tapeworm is not a nice thing to have. Is Duumke here as well? Yes, now you can have a laugh. Bernard and Jeus check things out. And observe that Duumke has just been given a nice bite to eat. If you see Duumke and feel his inner

life, you will naturally arrive at Deut. But they are both different, Duumke is childishly naïve, Deut inhumanly simple. The adults wonder whether these symptoms have something to do with each other. Bernard already sees that they are having fun with Deut, and Duumke who is standing next to his great friend. They are having fun with Deut's talking, if you hear that garbled flow of words, you tremble and shake from pleasure, because what is a person who cannot talk. Deut's words don't get as far as his throat, there they refuse to follow human thinking. As a dog can growl, Deut barks out his words through his throat and the children can't help laughing about that. But they know exactly what he is saying. Children are like that, the older person now asks: 'What did Deut say? What does Deut want? Did Deut say something to me?'

Bernard points to Deut. He has known him for quite a while and has talked to him a lot. Along with being tickled several times by him. Jeus now gets to hear:

'Do you want to be tickled by Deut, Jeus?'

He wants to explore the area first. Isn't that something? He has lived here all his life but he still didn't know anything about a Deut. How is that possible? The greatest wonders are to be found close to home. Why didn't Bernard tell him this before? Deut smokes his cigar and Jeus sees that. Deut can smoke. And father cannot better him. Jeus says, and that makes Bernard happy:

'He can smoke, Bernard!' Bernard doesn't even hear him, but tries to get Deut's attention:

'Deut...??? Deut...???' You have to do that a few times, otherwise Deut doesn't hear you, but finally he reacts and looks Bernard in the eye.

'What is it, Bernard?'

'Deut, on Sunday you will get a cent from me if you just play with Jeus now.'

Now the questions follow and Deut already begins:

'Where is your Jeus, Bernard?'

'Here, Deut, here by me, this is Jeus.'

And now Jeus becomes acquainted with Deut Messing. Deut is already preparing himself to tickle Jeus. Who is standing between his legs; the giant can now crush him to death. But nothing happens! Deut is not dangerous now. Isn't that something? The children

are already giggling and Jeus is also laughing. It is a strange feeling; all the children are already dancing for joy. They know exactly what Jeus is feeling. But when Deut tickles him too hard, Jeus darts away from him. For he has had enough. Now another child follows. Deut continues to tickle until he gets bored with it himself. He also still possesses that sense. The simple one has become playful, his human feeling still works, but if you come to Deut when old Messing has beaten him? A part of him refuses and he rebels and can kill you as well! Every normal human feeling, which means something for normal consciousness, has now been beaten out of him. The children look for another victim. Duumke laughs as he continually surprises Deut with something else. He holds a piece of sausage in front of his nose, which the simple one likes. They are like a pair, this midget and the giant Deut. Jeus asks:

‘Is that Duumke, Bernard?’

‘Yes, that is Duumke.’

‘Why is he called Duumke? What is: Duumke?’

‘That’s something...’ Bernard utters, he doesn’t know... ‘Duumke is Duumke. You can see that with your own eyes.’ And now Bernard is right, you can see, Duumke is like a thin midget and but then again not a midget. It is difficult, because a midget is different.

Bernard continues: ‘That is a mite.’ But what is a mite, Bernard? Duumke is really bigger than a midget. Duumke receives just as much attention as Deut. They are a wonderful pair. One is mad and the other one is always hungry. Duumke is eighteen years old and looks like a shrivelled human child. He also smokes like a chimney if there is something to smoke. You cannot make these two people happier, a cigar is everything! A cigarette is nothing, you blow a thing like that away just like that and then they have nothing again. They know that such a cigar takes longer. ‘Do you want to smoke, Duumke?’ And then you hear why the children do everything and pinch cigars from father for Duumke who replies:

‘Yes please, really.’

You see, that sounds good, if you hear that, you would steal everything for Duumke. Duumke is now smoking and Deut has nothing to suck on. That is bad for the simple one, he is quiet because of it. And now the children cannot get him to respond, because Deut now feels pain inside. Duumke is smoking and he has nothing. Deut

lunges at Duumke and the children leer at it, suddenly, so mad is Deut that he tears the cigar end out of Duumke's fingers, draws and sucks in such a way that there is little left of it. Is Deut not allowed a draw, Duumke? The children ask for Deut. 'Come on, Duumke, give Deut a draw now.' And you see, you have to experience it, you could die laughing, but it's not like that either, you stand there watching and it does you good. You find it pathetic and awkward, it is so nice. What do you think of it, Jeus? Everyone is now trying to influence Duumke. He is now alone faced with ten children. Children of three and three and a half years old ask Duumke to let Deut just have a draw. But he is not mad, he would rather give away his life than that cigar stump, because he likes to smoke. And smoking means so much to this soul. But Duumke says: No! Because Deut doesn't ever give him anything either. He saw that Deut was smoking yesterday and did Deut think of him then? The children now experience this. Jeus is just about crazy from the tension and Bernard sees it, and is also enjoying himself through Jeus. A mite of three years old runs home to ask mother for a cigar for Deut. The children cannot stand it any longer, Deut is starting to dribble and then it is bad. Anneke Knie's, also a mite of three years old, says that she will also fetch something for Deut. But Duumke not crazy, he says to the little girl:

'You already told me that but there is nothing coming!' Duumke is not that crazy. The children have already had a beating at home because the fathers are missing their cigars. This is all for Deut, Duumke will say 'yes please' to anything and everything, and that's why it is like this. Deut is still looking at everyone's hands to see if there is anything in them. He is on the scrounge and everyone knows, it is about a cigar, a piece of sausage and watching people. What does Deut see? Duumke is obstreperous, the children say, they don't know what that is, but it makes you laugh. Yes, then they have fun and then Duumke's tapeworm talks out loud! And that is also the craziest thing of all. When Duumke is obstreperous the children ask him questions and then you hear:

'Have you got brothers as well, Duumke?'

'Yes, three.'

'And are they just like you are, Duumke?'

'No, I am the only one', is the answer to a question by a mite of three years old to a boy who is sixteen; the older child will give an-

swers until the inner life thinks, damn, or, you can drop dead.

‘Do you know, Duumke, that you have a tapeworm?’

‘Yes, I know.’

‘What is that, Duumke?’

Is there still not a cigar yet? No? Then they can get the canary-roup. For a half cigar you may ask Duumke anything and you will get an answer. If you don't have anything to contribute, you can drop dead. Which he will immediately put into words. But now Deut has to smoke. Finally the children have got it that far. Deut did not succeed, for Duumke is cautious as he voluntarily gives Deut a draw. He holds onto the end himself, because he doesn't trust his friend one little bit, and an end like that is worth a thousand. Deut wants another draw, but Duumke flatly refuses. A boy sees that, and points to Duumke's coat, when he looks down, in a flash, Duumke has lost his cigar. Just look at that pitiful sight now. Tears come to his eyes, you sympathize with Duumke, but Deut draws on the cigar end and almost sucks it away in one draw. Now it goes back and forth, the children follow Deut and they now do everything for Duumke, because Deut doesn't realize that the end belongs to Duumke. What can you do now, boys? Jeus looks, he can understand the fun of the children. The whole of the Grintweg is full of children. The parents also come to watch, and you can hear their shouting at the bottom of the Grintweg. Now a wonder happens for Deut. He gets a fresh cigar and gives Duumke his petty end back, covered in Deut's spit. Duumke is already taking a draw, they are satisfied, and a while later Duumke wants to take a draw from Deut and the fun begins all over again.

‘Who did you get that cigar from, Duumke?’ the children want to know. Duumke now tells them everything. The children listen to him and immediately realize what Duumke is being used for. Sometimes adults come there and they hear: leave Duumke alone. Duumke tells everything, he doesn't know the difference between good and evil, from father and mother. He tells what they got up to at home; the children get to hear everything that they do. And his healthy and strong brothers wanted to prevent that. Then there were victims, and blood flowed as well, because this went too far. But children are children, and a tapeworm remains a tapeworm, you will do anything for a piece of sausage. Many adults got a beating from Duumke's brothers and they were right about that, why did the adults interfere in this?

For a sausage sandwich they squeeze Duumke empty and if you follow that, you have to admit that a boy like that can do a lot of work. They called that light jobs, but sometimes Duumke did the work of a strong man and that was abusing this life.

Jeus is enjoying himself today. He thanks Bernard from the bottom of his heart. Each moment Bernard gets to hear how wonderful he thinks it is. He understands this game with Deut and Duumke. And when Duumke suddenly surprised Deut and tore the cigar from his fingers, you could hear the screaming in Emmerik. What fun the children have, but Deut is dribbling now, and that is bad. Jeus has lain down next to Mrs Peters gate and is following everything. He wants to know how Deut feels, that has significance for him now. He wants to know why Deut is crazy. What is that? He wants to feel Deut, but understands that it is not so easy. Duumke has still got the cigar and Deut is almost crying. Bad Klink, who was watching the doings of the children from a distance, now approaches and gives Deut another cigar.

‘And now no more arguments, understood, Duumke?’

‘No, Bad.’

‘Do you want one as well, Duumke?’

‘Yes please, Bad.’

Duumke also gets another cigar. It is true, young and old yearn to hear Duumke say that, it sounds so nice and polite in your ears. That does a person good. The danger is over, they are now smoking and have forgotten their conflict. Look at that Deut smoking, Jeus thinks. Father can't do it like that. And the people, the men know, Deut smokes like a mayor. Who did the simple one get that from? Innerward Deut is now rich you can see that. Sometimes men come to give Deut a smoke, only just to see him smoke, that is so nice, but also so rich. Now and again they come and call him and then Deut smokes his cigar, you have to see it for yourself or you won't believe it. Bad Klink has spoilt the day for the children. Now they have no fun anymore with Deut. When he smokes he isn't there anymore, then he is another person! Then the rest of the world can drop dead. Deut is so crazy, no one actually knows what it is! That smoking of Deut doesn't give you a moment's peace; you have to dream about it! It follows you, it creeps into your head, whether you want that or not, you feel this human appeal. It is like a baron! Was Deut once a baron?

‘No’, Jeus utters to Bernard, ‘father can’t do it like that! I should have known that before.’

Bernard feels what he means. But then Jeus first has to know that he has seen the outside world today, and that was through him. At the end of the day, Jeus is still a mite in Bernard’s eyes. And then harsh words fall, when Bernard does not understand his brother because Jeus feels too big and too old. Now they are thrown apart again and feel strange, especially when Bernard says that he is completely off the mark and does not understand the slightest thing about Deut and Duumke. But what does Bernard hear now?

‘Shall I tell you something, Bernard? You just keep your rotten world, I’ll keep mine!’ and that is a slap right in Bernard’s face. Jeus is now an ungrateful swine. Did that brat say rotten world? Is this a rotten world? Are Deut, Duumke and everything, which can be experienced here rotten? You see Bernard cannot understand this. Jeus thinks and Bernard has already forgotten it, but it is Bernard’s own fault, why did he have to get himself so worked up? Has Bernard ever been to heaven? No, he doesn’t know what it looks like there. Jeus does and that is something completely different to the fuss of Deut and Duumke, that laughter of the children, even Fanny understands that, but not Bernard.

Jeus has learned to think today. What his brother finds so marvelous, is like nothing... and nothing is nothing! You have to discover it for yourself and Jeus has, but Bernard doesn’t know that. Jeus follows Deut in a different way. He wonders why Deut sits exactly on that stone. There are no longer any children for Duumke, who is sitting on the ground next to Deut smoking. He does something. Jeus follows these two friends, he descends into Deut’s body, because it lives there and he can talk with it. Now he is inside, he feels and knows that silence. There is another silence, which he sometimes experiences, which is not the same. When the children come to him to play, there is that silence, which is different from Deut’s. Deut has nothing to do with that. It is Deut himself. Jeus feels and sees it. He can communicate with it, and Bernard cannot. And that is a rotten world! His world is another world, and no child nor anyone here are a part of it! The rotten world of Deut is everything they possess. Everything!

Jeus pierces into Deut’s eyes. Then he descends into Deut’s inner life, he continually tries the same, to feel and to look into that life.

Now he starts to feel the real Deut, he can talk to him. He calls to the simple one: 'Deut???' Can you hear me? Deut???' Try again. 'Deut???' Do you hear me, Deut???' And see, Deut is looking at Jeus. Isn't that something? Bernard cannot do that. But it is very simple. Everyone can do that, if you only want to feel and think, then it works. And Jeus now feels that Deut also has some of it. Deut is crazy, people say, but that is not true. What is inside Deut is still sleeping and that is all. Deut, Jeus feels, is only three years old. Now he can feel Deut, Jeus has also become older. As a result of this feeling his inner life changes.

He descends into Deut again and for Jeus these are the first foundations in order to learn and to think in a human and spiritual-scientific way. No, Deut is not crazy, but Deut is not awake either. But what does that mean for this world? Why, Jeus, does Our Lord give you this feeling and Deut nothing? Why did Our Lord allow Duumke a tapeworm and another child happiness? Why did Our Lord give you everything, all these nice things? Our Lord knows everything about it, Jeus, everything! And He doesn't press one child to 'His' heart in order to crush another to death, but that is all by the people themselves, Jeus. And you will learn that also in this life. Bernard doesn't understand that and no one else either. Talk a bit with Deut and you will hear him talking in yourself.

Jeus is now talking to Deut at a distance, and No one can hear it, not a word passes his lips, but still he is speaking to him. Deut is laughing and crying inside at the same time. It is like the howling of a beaten animal. The howling of a soul, a tortured being. That life within is now howling. That life wants to live and it cannot, that life is weeping. It lives under a heavy weight, at least a thousand kilos weighs on that life, it is as if it is beaten to death, but through what? Jeus sees that Deut cannot remove himself on his own strength. Where Deut is living in, is a great mess.

Later, Jeus, much later, you will learn to know the laws of Deut's condition and you will write books. You will tell people in what condition Deut now lives and in what condition all those other people live, who have lost themselves like Deut, as it will appear, but that is not correct either. Deut is truly awake, but does not live in day consciousness, but precisely below the normal social feelings and thoughts of a normal person. Now that Jeus is looking at the other children and is also following Bernard, he knows that all these children possess none

of it. But a sun also shines in Deut and there is life to be seen, but that needs some time to break through and then Deut can also talk. With Duumke it is raining, with Deut warmth can be felt. Deut is a real person! Now that he has experienced this, he jumps up and runs to Deut and asks the simple life:

‘Deut, shall we become friends?’

The children think that is crazy. But all the children ask if they can ensure his friendship, then they will no longer be crushed to death and nothing else can happen to them. For Jeus this friendship is something completely different, he can help Deut with it. He knows Deut Messing as no one knows him.

The children shout:

‘Jeus has become a friend of Deut.’

It is a feast, real fun. Deut has another friend, everyone in the Grintweg knows that. All the children lie in wait for it; they want to possess Deut’s friendship, because Deut is powerful. Such a giant is not to be taken lightly; friendship with Deut is like drawing a lucky number, and yet it is more than that. And Deut, no matter how crazy he is, does not accept every friendship. Some children have to beg for it and no one knows why Deut is like that. He flatly refuses to accept a few children and this is not only a mystery to the children, but also to the parents.

Anyone who knows all that and has followed it, shakes his head, but wonders in addition: but what lives in such a simple head? It is a psychology, which no one sees a basis for no city dweller knows about it. Jeus now knows the secret of Deut, he has Deut where he wants him, he can do what he likes with him. Bernard will soon have to agree with that and look on with big eyes.

‘Yes’, the giant utters, ‘I want to be friends with you.’ And Deut promptly lays his huge hand on Jeus’ little hand, which disappears completely, but which he is not afraid of. They are completely one for a moment, the children are already jealous and Bernard is also in a bad way now. Jeus hears:

‘Goodness, isn’t that something?’ Jeus knows that he has diddled Bernard out of the nicest day of his life. Bernard has had his eye on this for so long, but he has had to swallow the fact that Deut likes him today and will have nothing to do with him tomorrow. Then Bernard can drop dead again, but what is the matter with Deut? Why have

these two suddenly become good friends? Bernard thinks that Jeus only managed this through his flattery. 'That is flattery, he throws in Jeus' face. He should have known, then Jeus would not have got this chance. Jeus is standing there next to Deut and is still holding his huge hand and the simple one seems to like it. From left and right resounds:

'Dirty flatterer! You can flatter, can't you? You pulled a fast one on Deut!'

Jeus doesn't like it any more, he looks Deut in the eye and the simple one looks him in the eye.

'Aren't they just vicious dogs, Deut?'

'Yes', he hears back. 'Yes!' And that's the way it is, Bernard. Bernard carries on the most and almost jumps out of his skin from envy. He cannot bear that; what a world, and the scolding starts all over again.

'Wait, ugly dope, I will get you yet.' And to Deut:

'Deut, will you tickle him now to death? Will you crush him to bits, Deut? Will you just let him die for a while? He is pulling a fast one on you under your very nose and he can flatter like anything. Deut, there is the end of the road! Deut, he has had the measles and scarlet fever. Deut, he is crawling with lice. Deut...' there is no end to Bernard's scolding, but Deut hears nothing and Jeus knows that this friendship cannot be destroyed. Deut has felt him inside, no one can take that away from him. Now that Bernard tries to tear Jeus out of Deut's hands, Deut reaches for Bernard and would have crushed him to death. Now there is no stopping it, Bernard is in a bad way.

'You will hear nothing more from me. Ugly two-faced rat! Did I bend over backwards every day for that? Ungrateful dog! Lice head! Bed wetter!'

That is mean, Bernard. Now the children know that your little brother pees in bed now and again. But you do that as well yourself, Bernard. And it is so strange, the children do not react, they do not have to laugh about it, they know, they are all a bit loose underneath when they sleep, that is nothing new. They look at Bernard, as if to say: 'You do that yourself as well!' No, you won't succeed, Bernard, you will not get Jeus away from these hands, but here is someone else who can. Suddenly, and that is also a miracle and a great mystery, Tall Hendrik is standing in front of Jeus.

'Come here.'

Deut lets him go. 'What do you want with that madman?'

'Deut is not mad, father!'

'So, Deut is not mad. But that is dangerous, isn't it?'

'That is not dangerous, father!'

'What did you say to me? Will you hold your tongue?'

Bernard explodes from pleasure, now Jeus will get a hiding, but Tall Hendrik heads for home. Hardly a minute later Deut disappears and, really and truly, he also waves good day to Jeus as well. Duumke follows Deut, the fun is over for today. But he has got Deut as a friend. Tall Hendrik asks him:

'How are you so sure that Deut is not mad?'

'I know, father!'

'But you can't know anything, can you?'

'Yes, father.'

Tall Hendrik, that is a shame. In this way you will never have contact with your children. You will not get to know him now, and it would be worthwhile, Hendrik. Jeus thinks, it is a pity, that he cannot talk to his father about Deut. Why not? Father knows nothing about Deut either, nothing! Deut is not mad! Deut is not mad! No one can take that away from him, no father and no mother. But Tall Hendrik has to laugh at the wisdom of the children. Those mites, he thinks. What adults do not understand, children think they know all about it. Children's brains behave as if there is no science.

Standing in the kitchen, Tall Hendrik says to Jeus: 'Good heavens, what an insight into human nature you have achieved.' Tall Hendrik tells Crisje briefly what happened, then Crisje wants to know why he came home so early.

'Is there something the matter, Hendrik?'

'No, Cris, there is nothing. There is nothing! I had to bring wine to the baron. And I had done that quickly, really. I thought then I would have a nice bit of time to myself. And now I am here, Cris.'

'For whom was that wine, Hendrik, did you say?'

'I already said, for the baron. He drinks the best wine, Cris. But look what I have here.'

Tall Hendrik produces a bottle of wine of the very best kind.

'And the baron said to me, Cris, you must give that to your Crisje.'

'Did he say that, Hendrik?'

'As true as I am alive, Cris.'

‘That is a complement for you then, Hendrik. How happy I am for you.’

‘And the baron said ‘Tall Hendrik’ to me, Cris.’

‘That is also a complement for you, Hendrik, if people like that say it.’

‘And when we were in his cellar, Cris, he also said to me, just pick one for yourself, Tall Hendrik, and for Crisje.’

‘And when I had done that, Cris, I started to sing. And when he heard me, Cris, he said that I should study. ‘Tall Hendrik’, he said, ‘that is a good voice. That’s a pity, that you keep your voice for yourself, you should show it to the world.’

‘Did he say that, Hendrik?’

‘Yes, but I had to laugh about it, Cris.’

Crisje devours her Hendrik, he has definitely earned that now. And she knows that it doesn’t hurt him anymore, he has conquered this. And that is a gift to her life.

‘I believe’, says Hendrik, ‘that I sung like I have never sung before. One aria after the other, Cris. I gave it all I had. I thought, what do you think you’re telling me? Do I have to study as well? I had to laugh about it, didn’t I? I knew then, Cris, that he has no understanding of voices. But then he should have heard that immediately.’

‘Yes, Hendrik, that is true, of course’, but no one has to tell Tall Hendrik that he still needs lessons, so sure of himself is he, he knows exactly what he can and what he wants.

‘They all stood listening, Cris. And when I was finished singing, he said again that I should study and then I really had enough of it. And if he hadn’t been a baron, then I would have told him a completely different story, you surely believe that, don’t you? But come on, we will have a drink for ourselves.’

Hendrik pours, smacks his lips for a moment and then says to Crisje:

‘That’s a really good one, Cris! Good gracious, that’s a good one. It comes from France. We have this kind ourselves as well and only the rich people buy it. It is good stuff and it is good for lice. Cheers, Cris!’

The boys appear. Caps off! Yes, the caps are already flying off, Tall Hendrik. The boys shouldn’t try to keep on their caps. That is respect for father and mother. It is respect for Tall Hendrik! Johan immediately throws his cap in a corner, but Bernard sometimes forgets it. But

Bernard cannot remember it. Hendrik sees now as well that Bernard keeps his cap on his head for too long and then it is:

‘Come over to me, Bernard.’ Jeus is already looking; he knows what is coming. But then Bernard shouldn’t have pestered him. But he can’t have it that Bernard gets a hiding, he looks his brother in the eye and gives him his sympathy; but the feeling that Bernard throws back at him means: ‘I don’t need you! Bernard is not afraid of father.

‘Why did you not remember that, Bernard?’

‘I didn’t think about it, father.’

‘And, Bernard, I want you to think of that always, understood?!’

‘Yes, father.’

‘And this is the last time, Bernard, or I will lash out and throw you in the cellar. Is there anything else, Bernard?’

‘No, father, nothing!’

‘Are you sure of that, Bernard?’

‘Yes, father, I haven’t done anything.’

‘Let me have a look.’ Hendrik looks the child in the eye. But Bernard looks back; he does not bat an eyelid or blush for Tall Hendrik. Now Crisje as well.

‘Cris, come here. Did he do anything to you today?’

‘No, Hendrik, I have had no complaints.’

‘And Johan?’

‘He doesn’t even know what mischief is.’

‘And Jeus.’

‘He neither.’

‘And Gerrit?’

‘Stop that now. Or do the other boys who have still to be born have to take off their caps?’

Crisje is right, Tall Hendrik feels, but order is order. Bernard gets off with a scolding, but Bernard knows that if he forgets again he will get a beating. Now, now, Johan, now, now, Bernard, all the boys, if they don’t want to listen to what father says, they will be sorry. He looks them in the eye one by one. Then dinner is served. Which is always a feast for Tall Hendrik. Then he enjoys his boys and feels as happy as Larry. They are growing really well, they are becoming strapping lads, and are learning well. Now that the boys are in bed and he thinks that they are sleeping, he asks Crisje:

‘Since when does Jeus know about adults, Cris? He said to me that

Deut Messing is not mad. But that is dangerous.’

‘You do not need to worry about him, Hendrik. He already knows Deut. I already heard everything from Johan.’

The violin is now fetched from the cupboard for a moment, Hendrik plays and Crisje enjoys herself. And there is another one who is enjoying himself, but not through Hendrik’s playing, but through the friendship of Deut. Is there anything else? Yes, there will be another child here. Mother has become fatter. He doesn’t know yet how that is, but he can see it! The children were talking about it. He heard it while playing with Deut. Duumke said it as well! But you wouldn’t be any the wiser from Duumke. The children saw a woman with a big stomach and then they said...? What did they say again? And then Deut started dribbling, but he will ask Bernard tomorrow, he knows everything. What a pity that Bernard is now angry with him.

‘Deut? Deut...?we have become friends.’ Jeus knows the simple one from inside and outside. Father can sing and make music, but he can think. He has to laugh about that incident with the caps. But it must be part of father. Deut? Duumke? Are you already asleep? Where are you now? How are you sleeping? Are you also lying with your little brother and your father and mother in the bedroom?

When Crisje and Hendrik lie down, he is still awake. The child pretends that it is asleep, but Jeus observes those two there, they are sleeping just two metres away from him. And wondering why is mother so fat. His brains become exhausted from thinking, his life also needs sleep. But does Crisje know that? It is now as if feelings enter Crisje, they are thoughts, which stimulate her soul, and she absorbs, there is nothing to it. Jeus sends these thoughts and feelings to his mother. Even if the personality is not aware and day consciousness is disengaged, such spiritual contact still works, and cannot be broken by anything, even animals have it! One life can now warn the other. And whoever possesses these feelings now experiences this inner unity! Which is something wonderful. Whether it is also wonderful for Crisje, she still has to experience. Then Jeus has to leave their room. It is terrible, Jeus, even if you love being with father and mother, you have kicked yourself out. See and know. Crisje is already thinking in her sleep, that is dreaming, but she is getting those thoughts from Jeus. Making Crisje realize that Jeus must move to another room to avoid any incidents.

Johan and Bernard will go upstairs, he and Gerrit will get the box bed and then they can manage for the time being. Tomorrow Hendrik will get to hear about it. Our Lord also knows! Having children is a mercy. But why does one mother have so many and another one doesn't have any? Isn't that strange? Having children is a blessing, isn't it, Crisje? But why Crisje? Jeus will give you an answer to all these questions one day. And that answer is then for all people of this world. Especially for people who want to know why they live on earth and why they are 'mother'! But that is something special, Crisje, true or not? Tall Hendrik is not open to it, but he will also come to ask these questions. Where he then lives is not important, it will come sometime, Crisje. But there is much more. Why does Our Lord not give children to mothers who long for them? How many mothers aren't there, Crisje, who want to be mothers, but there is something which denies them this mercy. And why are there mothers, Crisje, who crush their own children to death, because they have become mothers and didn't want that? Jeus will also answer these questions one day! Through me and through another being, Crisje, I, whom he has got to know as José! I am a friend of Jeus, Crisje, but an invisible one, later the world will also get to know us.

I am old and young, Crisje. Jeus sees me as José, for you I am very old and I understand everything. I live in that sacred silence and I know the Parvis of Our Lord very well. But I am waiting for the moment when I may start. Actually, Crisje, we have already started, that with Deut was also something, through which we play his life. Just look at his 'Harp', then you will know what we are capable of, and what he has to do later for Our Lord.

Now remove him from your room, Crisje, that sleepwalking now belongs to the past, we took care of that as well! Now go to sleep! Tomorrow will be an early day again... and you will need all your strength. But you are right, it is now also a boy again, but you will also have a girl and that child will then be called: Maria... after your grandmother, isn't that the case?

Good night, Crisje. Life will go on! Tomorrow you will see Jeus differently again. In a week, Crisje, he learns enough for years, and nothing happens!

‘Will you let yourself be healed by Manus, Jeus?’

The cockerel at the back of the shed wakens Jeus and he immediately begins with the previous day and takes to task the things and matters he has learned. Until there is nothing else left of them. He always does this and he has learned a lot as a result. He may not forget anything, because if you do that, you will get nowhere. If you do not think, then you will achieve nothing in the world, which he has already worked out for himself. He doesn't want that, that is a fate worse than death!

‘May I get out of bed, mother? And may I ask you something?’

Crisje gets a fright. Every morning there is something else. What will she be put through now? And then Jeus asks:

‘Mother, why do people think that Deut is mad? Deut isn't mad.’

‘That's a good one, Jeus, he is mad.’

‘That's a big lie, mother. Deut is not mad. Only Deut cannot think. It is in his throat, mother.’

‘So, did you discover that?’

‘Yes, mother.’

‘That's clever, but I do not understand it.’

Jeus thinks. Suddenly a question comes which shocks Crisje to death.

‘Mother?’

‘What is it?’

‘Why are you so fat?’

‘Didn't I know’, Crisje thinks. ‘Isn't that something? Good gracious! Our Lord, help, but help me...!’

This is a dangerous moment, Crisje knows. What can she say now? And now in a very sober fashion, Crisje tells that she is enjoying her food and that she has been able to eat well recently. But then Jeus says:

‘But I like my food as well, mother. And I am still as thin as a rake!’

Crisje makes it clear to him that one person grows in height and another person grows outwards from food. He can understand that. But, he continues to brood. Bernard will probably know.

‘Mother?’

‘What do you want to know from me now?’

‘Why... why, mother... do they put angels on the graves who can-

not fly anyway?’

Thank God, she feels, he has forgotten it. She can give an answer to this:

‘That’s a good one, Jeus. They do that to bring the angels to the people. That is, so to speak, contact with the heavens.’ But he doesn’t accept that.

‘Did you think then, mother, that I don’t know, that you can’t understand me?’

‘I understand you, but that is something completely different.’

‘What is something completely different, mother?’

Crisje is talking nonsense, he thinks. Mother is saying any old thing and wants him to forget that other matter. And Crisje thinks, he mustn’t talk about his personal things, otherwise he will be talked about in the street and that mustn’t happen, then the children will pester him. And then he will have no life any more.

‘Mother?’

‘But what do you want?’

‘Are you really afraid of me? Bernard fell out with me. Bernard wants to show off with his own rotten world. And I told him the truth, mother.’

So, Crisje thinks, it has reached this point. She now feels he gives an answer to exactly what she is thinking about. And Jeus takes care of himself, because she understands him, but that world of Bernard is a rotten world in comparison to the things, which he has been able to experience continuously. And it is true; it is something completely different. She feels that she does not need to have any worries about that. When Bernard and Johan come in, the questioning stops and she gets peace for a moment. When they have had breakfast, they get their space. Johan has to go to school, Jeus and Bernard start behind the house, but Bernard cannot be approached. He already asks:

‘What did I do to you, Bernard?’

‘You can drop dead’, Bernard utters harshly.

‘That’s bad, Bernard. But I didn’t do anything to you? Can I help it that Deut likes me?’

‘That’s because of your cursed flattering. Or do you think I don’t know.’

‘That’s nonsense, Bernard. That’s a lie, you know that as well as I do.’

Bernard wants nothing to do with him. But he feels that what he said is rubbish. Bernard 'is sulking', but he doesn't want to lose Bernard. He makes it up by saying:

'Oh, my Bernard, but how grateful I am to you for everything.'

'Pull the other one, it's got bells on, I don't believe you anyway.'

'Bernard, may I ask you something?'

'What do you want to know from me?' And now it comes:

'Bernard, do you know why mother is so fat?'

Bernard looks at him and laughs in his face.

'Stupid whippersnapper that you are, you can wait with that, can't you?'

Bernard feels this is his power over Jeus. Even if Jeus now tells him what Crisje said, he has to laugh about it, but keeps nice and quiet. Bernard leaves, he has something else to do. He takes off to the moorland, to the woodpiles of the bakers, where they play and romp. He has to stand on his own two feet today, Bernard thinks. When Crisje comes out the back, she sees Jeus, leaning his head on his hands, sitting watching the chickens.

'Where is Bernard?'

'He took off, mother. I think he has gone to the moorland.'

'So', is all Crisje says. Suddenly she feels that he is following her, that he is looking at her from inside and outside. How can she deny him that? She disappears to have a serious think. He wanders about behind the house, but nothing can be seen of Deut and Duumke. Was he ungrateful? For he had got to know Deut and it was an extra treat for him of the best kind. If only Bernard was here. If only he could make up for that again. Bernard is also to blame. When this is sorted, he will think differently. He continues to think about Bernard and an hour later, he pops up again. Did he call him?

'What are you doing, Bernard?'

'Nothing!' He continues to sit with his head leaning on his hands and looks at Bernard. Is something the matter with him, Bernard thinks?

'What's the matter with you? Have you got toothache?'

'I think so, Bernard.'

'Did you know that Manus Runsel can cure toothache?'

'What's that, Bernard?'

'Manus does that with his thumb, and then the toothache disap-

pears.'

'Does he do that with his thumb?'

'Yes, but it costs money.'

'How much, Bernard?'

'At least five cents.'

'Can't we get that money? I do have a toothache.'

Not even five minutes later they are sitting on the horse fence at Manus' house. Bernard tells him:

'The horses are shod in here, you surely know that.'

'Yes, I know that.'

They look at Manus trudging at the big fires inside and then Bernard has something in mind.

'Come, let's go and see if aunt Trui has something for us to do.'

A while later they are standing in front of aunt Trui. 'Aunt Trui, can we do anything for you?'

And yes, they may do some shopping. When they come back they get one cent each. What happens now? Well, Bernard likes sweets, but there is still the toothache. He says to Jeus:

'If I get my cent back from you later, I will now give you my cent to have your tooth cured. But if you cheat me, I will beat your brains out.'

That is agreed. And now back to Manus. It is strange, but he now has a real toothache. First they have to have a piece of cloth and that is quickly found. They are back at Manus' again, sparks fly about their ears, but Manus doesn't bother about the boys. Bernard has another bright idea.

'That's true too, Jeus. For healing we have to use the bell at the back of the house.'

They run round the brush factory and now enter the back garden of Manus. Bernard looks at the nice trees for a moment, prompting Jeus to comment:

'Do trees have to do with that healing, Bernard?'

Bernard has to laugh out loud, but he doesn't let it show why he is laughing, he is still too much of a whippersnapper for that. A while ago there were tasty pears on these same trees and they were for Bernard. Manus should know about that sometime. But he knows nothing. But he doesn't understand that Jeus cannot see this. Jeus asks him:

‘Can’t I ask anything else, Bernard?...’

‘And can’t I look at anything else...’ flies back and forth, and gets nowhere. Finally Bernard thinks and feels that Jeus is right.

‘That’s true, you are right, Jeus, but now I will ring the bell.’

Manus appears. ‘What’s the matter, boys?’

‘Manus, Jeus has a toothache. He had to cry the whole night, we couldn’t get a wink’s sleep, Manus.’

‘Then we’ll just have a look, Bernard. You’re from Tall Hendrik, aren’t you?’

‘Yes, Manus, that’s our father.’ Jeus now moans: ‘Will you help me, Manus?’

‘Of course, but that costs money, doesn’t it? How much money have you got on you?’

‘Two cents, Manus’, Bernard replies.

‘That’s little, Bernard, that’s precious little. Did your mother send you?’

‘Yes, Manus, but mother didn’t have any more.’

‘So, your mother didn’t have any more? But it is little.’ Jeus is crying and that helps. Manus will do his healing.

‘Is it that bad, my boy?’

‘Yes, Manus, it’s killing me.’

‘That’s a harsh word, but I can understand that.’ Bernard also promises Manus: ‘When we come back, Manus, then we will make sure that we have more money, you have to live as well, after all.’

‘Good thinking, Bernard.’ Manus puts the two cents in his pocket and asks Jeus:

‘Can you pray?’

‘Yes, Manus.’

‘Then you must start now. You must say three Our Father’s.’

Jeus feels that Manus is stroking his cheek with his thumb. He now hears: ‘I can see it already, there’s that pest. Of course, you must have a toothache there.’

Manus also prays, one Our Father after another flies into the universe and to Our Lord. The angels are laughing there, but Manus has nothing to do with it, he heals, and Manus can heal. He is a wonderful man, Jeus sees and feels that, because the toothache is disappearing. A while later it is completely gone. He has to say one more Our Father, also another one before he goes to sleep tonight. And then

they can leave. but Manus manages another three cents on top and shuffles along to Hendriks on the other side and has his drink. That tastes good, after work like that a drink gives you strength. What a laugh the boys have. Jeus does not have to fool Bernard that he really had toothache, Bernard is not that silly. But now that they are coming from Manus' house, Jeus suddenly has a real toothache and moans like a beaten dog. Now Bernard laughs even louder. That is enough to drive you mad, if you don't mind yourself, but of course you mind, after all.

'Good gracious, that is a real toothache, Bernard.'

'That's a good one', he says, 'that is because you wanted to cheat Manus. That's the punishment!'

'Do you mean that, Bernard?'

'Of course, I mean that. Did you think that Manus could not heal? Manus can cure a toothache, as long as you know.'

And Jeus knows that already, he has learned a lot, it is a miracle. The toothache became so bad that Crisje had to look in his mouth, but she saw nothing special and a half an hour later he felt nothing more and could forget his toothache. But Manus can heal!

You can believe it or not, Manus can heal. There are more people who possess something special and then they have got that from Our Lord. Manus first received this gift from his father and he from his father in turn, but the first father received this gift from above. Manus is already thinking, when he kicks the bucket later, who will receive this gift from him. He will decide that himself, because that is a great responsibility. You cannot give it to anyone just like that. You have to answer for it later to Our Lord. But still that doesn't sound so bad. From far and near people come to Manus. He has been able to cure howling people in five minutes. Things which a doctor didn't have a clue about, could be cured by Manus! And would people laugh about it now and again and consider it nonsense, if they knew how serious it all was? There are people who can see into the future and forecast things but they do not know where they receive this knowledge. That is going too far and is beyond them, but they are capable of it. With Manus it is in his organism, in his thumb! And whether that thumb also smells of horse sweat has nothing to do with it, the toothache disappears! Manus is as round as a barrel. And likes a drink, but he is deadly serious. And Manus is a good person; otherwise he wouldn't

have received this gift from his father. Then Our Lord would get on to his father again and you can prevent that.

Is there anything else, Jeus? So he has learned all that from Bernard. Bernard has something else to tell Jeus: it will soon be Mardi Gras where they will dress up. Then you can have fun, Jeus, as you have never experienced before. But the worst thing of all is that Jeus is now in debt to Bernard and that is really bad. But it will soon be Mardi Gras and then they can earn money. And Our Lord has also been good in this, for young and old, all love Mardi Gras! Crisje as well, because there is always something to laugh about.

‘Bad, have you got a bladder for us?’

Why does aunt Trui no longer take part in loving kindness, Bernard wonders, now that it is nearly Mardi Gras. They can tell aunt Trui more. But they have spoiled it there again and Trui is not silly. Then Bernard must not cheat aunt Trui so openly, because cheating is cheating. And they need not go to their mother either, she has no money to spare. Manus fell for it, but not aunt Trui. But they need money to dress up, otherwise it is no fun at all. Because Mardi Gras requires a nice devil’s outfit or a witch’s outfit, it doesn’t really matter what it is, as long as it is scary. Only then does it put money in your pockets and that money is then for the fair. Bernard took him to task and said that what he had learned from Deut Messing and Duumke is nothing compared to that other thing, which he will now experience, Mardi Gras. That is something so great, that no one would believe it if you hadn’t seen it for yourself. If you knew, Jeus, what will now happen, you would jump from the roof; Mardi Gras would tickle between your ribs. So much you can’t get enough of it, but it only lasts three days and three nights. There is really nothing in the world to compete with Mardi Gras, nothing! Now Bernard feels that he has something to tell again and Jeus can listen and be very polite to Bernard. Or... he will leave him alone and celebrate Mardi Gras with other people. What do you want now, Jeus?

‘Of course, Bernard, I am very grateful to you.’

See, Bernard likes that. He forces respect from Jeus and Tall Hendrik can learn from it. But in order to celebrate Mardi Gras, you have to learn the song. They are sitting at the back of the house, but because it is too chilly there, they climb up to the attic. Where Jeus will learn the song of Mardi Gras. Bernard will sing it for him, because by singing this song for people, they will give you money.

‘And now listen, then I will sing it for you.’

Bernard begins:

‘Money is better than a sausage

La, la, la, what a lot

Money is better than a sausage

La, la, la, what a lot

Gloria Victoria, just mess up the lot

Gloria Victoria, la, la, la, what a lot sasa...

Gloria Victoria, la, la, la what a lot

'What do you think of that, Jeus?'

'That's a real miracle, Bernard. Do you know more of these songs?'

'Yes, there is another one, just listen.' Bernard begins and continues with:

'Rumbling pot, rumbling pot

Give me a cent, and I will go on my way

I have walked with my rumbling pot for so long

But I am too poor to buy food

Rumbling pot, rumbling pot, give me a cent and I will be on my way.'

And they sing that ten times after each other, they dance and jump and try to make people laugh. Jeus is studying it, he is quite good already, but when that takes too long Bernard has something else. They must make sure they have 'fancy dress outfits'. There is something to be found here and there. Bernard looks between the old discarded aprons and red and green cloths of Crisje, but aunt Trui also has something old and discarded in her wardrobe. An hour later the boys can say, we will not look bad tomorrow. It takes the whole afternoon, but they have a 'fancy dress outfit', Crisje. Tomorrow he will earn money enough and he can pay Bernard his cent. Crisje puts her hand on her heart. They each get five cents for a mask and you can buy such a thing at Hanne Schuurman. A short while later they run into her shop.

'Hanne, what does this one cost?'

'Five cents, Bernard.'

'That's an ugly one, a right evil looking mask, and I want that one. Here's your money, Hanne.'

Now Jeus. 'What does this one cost, Hanne?'

'Exactly the same, Jeus.'

'Then I want one at four cents, Hanne.'

'That's possible, Jeus. Here, this is an ugly one.'

Jeus puts on a witch's mask. 'Are you afraid of me, Bernard?' He pays Hanne and when they are standing outside, Bernard hears:

'Here, Bernard, your cent.'

'God, damn, he is a piece of business', Bernard says aloud.

He could have done that as well, but Bernard doesn't think. And he

must admit, he can learn something from Jeus. Isn't that something, Bernard? And now homewards, to make mother afraid and to see how that thing looks on you. But Bernard has to admire Jeus. And wonders why he didn't think of that, and actually, Jeus' mask is uglier than his. Bernard could hit himself on the head, but it is too late. And now they are back in the attic, are rummaging about with the old clothes, trying them on and changing one thing and another, until Bernard thinks of something else, which he had completely forgotten.

'Damn it, Jeus, where are my brains today.'

'What is it now, Bernard?'

'Now, we forgot the rumbling pot.'

'What kind of thing is that?'

'Just come with me, then I will explain that on the way. We have to go to Bad Klink immediately.'

Now they are at Bad's house, Bernard asks:

'Bad, have you still got a bladder for us?'

'No, Bernard, all the bladders are gone.'

'Are you sure of that, Bad?'

'Yes, Bernard, I haven't got any more.'

'Where did they get to then, Bad?'

Big Bad Klink now has to laugh and he really finds it a pity but he hasn't got any left.

'They were ahead of you, Bernard. You should have ordered a bladder like that from me last week.'

Yes, but what now? They're left like that, but Bernard doesn't have to think for long, the boys were ahead of him, he wants to make up for that. Now to Theet Hendriks first.

'Have you still got a bladder for us, Theet?'

'No, Bernard, they are completely gone.'

Now to Straus'. None there either, Bernard. Then to Mienke Klendaal, He will surely get one from Mienke. But nothing, the pig's bladders are sold out, Bernard. What a pity, but nothing can be done about it, the boys were ahead of you, and you are too late. Then to Cohen's. And they have none left either, Bernard, the pigs' bladders are gone. Then to Zwaap's, but Jeus already knows. Bernard has now let himself be cheated and he thinks that it is a pity, even if he doesn't know what Bernard actually wants with such a pig's bladder. But now that they come across a boy with such a thing who pulls on

the rumbling pot and Jeus hears that rumbling, he has to say that it is a damn shame. And Bernard agrees with him, because it is exactly the rumbling pot which gets money. Just try Mozes, but the goat butcher doesn't have any pig's bladders either. What to do now? But Bernard has a good head on his shoulders. Then just some old pots and pans, a lot of noise is also worth something. These pots and pans are soon found. There are plenty of them on the moorland. When he thinks he has everything for Mardi Gras, he remembers something else, how can it be, Bernard forgets nearly everything today.

'We do not have a hat yet, Jeus. And we can't use our caps, They will recognize us immediately.'

The money is gone, they just do not know how to get a proper hat. They look shabby and people do not give their money to half-dressed jokers. But something else will probably happen today. They will just hope for it, you can never know beforehand. Now, half frozen, they come downstairs from the attic, however, Crisje cannot afford to pay for hats. Crisje is missing Jeus, she misses his questioning and that chatting about the heavens, but José and his Tall One can tell him more. Yet, in this stage in his life Jeus has told them:

'Get lost!' And they did just that, for they see that Jeus has his own life to live and Bernard's life is also really pleasant. The oldest children are now looking for their own way and even if the smallest children are still hanging on her skirt, she knows that they will also leave the nest, And later? And that's life. She misses the nice little things and those things of Jeus brought her real happiness. It was divine!

Last year Bernard celebrated Mardi Gras with Johan, now he is doing that with Jeus. Crisje follows the boys. Because she cannot stand that they come home with harsh and rude words. Jeus sleeps with Gerrit in the box bed, Johan has moved to the attic with Bernard. Tall Hendrik built a nice cosy bedroom there and they can lie there very comfortably. What Crisje sometimes hears from them is terrible. But that is the fault of the older children, they talk away and the younger children learn from them. She gets a fright if the boys give each other a good shouting, she hears all kinds of things. But where did they learn that? She feels that Jeus no longer thinks about her happily expecting a baby. Now he has Mardi Gras on his mind and that is better as well. She even talked to Father about it. He said, just give in to it, Crisje, you can't prevent that anyway. But it is terrible.

You get a fright now and again; it sounds so harsh, that your heart does a somersault when you hear it. And you keep hearing something new. Tall Hendrik laughs. Because he understands it well. 'They have to learn to talk anyway, Crisje. What do you want? Do you want to make us into Hollanders? Do you want to protect your children from rude words?' Tall Hendrik doesn't go into it, try telling him that he is wrong. But Crisje does not dirty her mouth if it is not necessary and when you can say something else for it. Children are children, Cris. Just try it, Tall Hendrik, if your children are sitting at the table. Then Crisje always has something to say about it, but Tall Hendrik doesn't bother about anything and talks as it suits him.

Crisje is now outside of Jeus' life. She hears nothing more about the Tall One. One evening Crisje said to her Hendrik: 'If one of our boys ever wishes to become an altar boy, Father would not even be able to use him.' And then Hendrik said:

'If one of mine wants to become an altar boy, then I will wring his neck first. Not one of my children will be an altar boy, Cris. I have something else in mind for my boys, and you know that. What I threw away for myself, I don't need to throw away for my boys.'

But then Crisje just quickly held her tongue. She knows that Tall Hendrik offered everything and the boys have good voices, they will be singers. He is not bringing up the boys to be altar boys. Father has enough of those swearing troopers already, or did you think, Crisje, that they do not swear until they are blue in the face? Now, would these lads never get angry? Then they are not boys, then they are old wives and Tall Hendrik wants nothing to do with it.

'Those ones there who read mass for Father', Crisje also had to swallow, 'are just such villains as my own boys.' And a short while later he also utters:

'They do not need any angels for that, that's child labour, Cris.'

Even if Tall Hendrik sings in the choir and is a good friend of Father, he has his own life and own opinion and does not let himself be influenced. Yes, Crisje, it is becoming difficult. I would just give in to it, the world is big and a child becomes older, later they will find even more harsh words, they know that themselves. You have got it or you haven't got it, Crisje, and you cannot stop anybody if the life doesn't possess that feeling. And you cannot change the life either. Something else always happens, Crisje. You saw that in the past as

well. Alie van den Zoepert was always afraid that her husband would murder her. And what happened? He misses his footing and breaks his neck. Did you expect that? That is what I mean and that it is not in people's hands. And as far as your own dialect is concerned, Crisje, you should know how sweet your rough dialect sounds in the ears of people, who have nothing else to listen to but that nice carry-on, which they are sick to death of. Do not be ashamed of anything, Crisje. When the book about your life is written later, I will throw everything in to it which you know here and which belongs to you, or the life's work of you and Jeus would be as dry as old cake and we will prevent that from happening. Believe me, everything the boys say and think of, Crisje, I will write down, I was already advised now to remember everything. I was told, do not forget a word and learn the dialect, so that you will later be ready to describe the life of Crisje and her Jeus. What do you say to that, Crisje? The world will also get to know you, your dear Tall Hendrik, Jeus and the other boys as well.

The children are lying in bed and sleeping like babies. They were exhausted. But by eight o'clock two strange men come to the house and make an awful lot of fuss. They are lodging with Trui for a while. They are Italians. When Trui thought that she could behave importantly by telling the Italians about her sister and Tall Hendrik and they heard that Tall Hendrik played the violin along with being a good singer, they went to have a look. Trui was annoyed, but, if you know Chang and Carlo?

Less than five minutes later Crisje's whole house was in an uproar. The boys had to make an appearance one by one. Chang and Carlo told that they were roofers and needed months to fix up the church again, with which they earned good money. Then Tall Hendrik introduced his family.

'That is Johan. That is Bernard. That is Jeus. That is Gerrit and the other one, you can see for yourself, I cannot introduce to you yet, can I, but it will also come soon and I can introduce you then to the child.'

Chang is immediately crazy about Jeus. Why? Chang has just lost a boy like him and the doctor told him that his wife cannot have any more children, her organism is disturbed. Jeus looks just like his little Chang, true or not, Carlo, but, as Chang is quickly told, they cannot have Jeus for all the money in the world, even if Chang would want

to do everything for Jeus and be able to do it. Chang says that he wants to give Jeus a wonderful education, he has money and his own vineyard, what do you want, Crisje? But when Jeus appears not to be for sale, they have fun. Tall Hendrik plays the violin, and Carlo plays the guitar really well. Now Gerrit Noesthede as well and everything will be complete. And talk of the devil, Gerrit crosses the threshold. It can start. Gerrit was in Italy, he always boasts about it, now he can prove whether he really can speak Italian.

But Carlo and Chang already soon heard that Gerrit talks nonsense and now they can laugh, little Gerrit has lost his crown and has gone down in esteem, but there is fun. A miracle has happened for the boys, they get money from Chang. The hat is there, Crisje! Now they can pray, now they may thank Our Lord after all, true or not, Bernard? Chang remains in love with Jeus, he is crazy about him, he suddenly said to Tall Hendrik, that Jeus can think. Did Tall Hendrik not know that? Crisje is enjoying how Chang, with his German he picked up and dialect, makes it clear to Tall Hendrik, and Gerrit also has to agree, it is the case, he can think. But Rome became Napolitano... and Napolitano changed into Lafresco and la Ssssst, Gerrit could only make hissing noises, for the rest Gerrit Noesthede knew nothing, absolutely nothing. Gerrit has just fooled them all those years, as if Tall Hendrik didn't know who little Gerrit was. You had to laugh about it, then you forget everything, but the Sistine chapel is somewhere between Rome and Francisca. Gerrit doesn't know what kind of thing that is and Carlo and Chang had to laugh about it so much, that they drunk five full bottles of good wine, one after each other, they were having such fun! A while later of course the 'Ave Maria could be heard from Tall Hendrik, just like that, in between times and, fair's fair, it didn't sound bad, even Crisje thought that Tall Hendrik hadn't played so well in months. Chang and Carlo therefore had no more time for Gerrit. Tall Hendrik and Crisje have their attention. 'Can I get Jeus, Crisje? Come on, give me Jeus, Tall Hendrik. I will take good care of him, you have enough children.' How is it possible, tears came into Chang's eyes and that was not only from the wine, but it also came from the true longing and the soul of Jeus, 'because that child has something inside', said Chang. What do you think of that, Crisje? But Crisje doesn't need to think about that. No one will get Jeus from her! Until late into the night there is a party and then they

go to sleep, but good gracious, wasn't that a lucky shot, Cris? How good Our Lord is for a poor person. Did you see Gerrit?

'My God, Cris, how he was hemmed in.'

And Tall Hendrik also fell asleep and a while later he awoke to have his coffee, and make sure that he was on time in Emmerik. The boys are now also awake, it is Mardi Gras, Bernard! And now, get ready and be off. By ten o'clock they are on their way. The hat is there and they look good. And now they scream: 'Rumbling pot, give me a cent and I will be on my way...', but people do not give so quickly. Aunt Trui has also left them standing in the cold. Because she gives them another dry piece of sausage when they were really wanting money. Others close the door in their faces.

'So, did you have to walk so fast? That is not rumbling pot anyway.'

Then Bernard comes forward. He has his word ready and his excuse, the rumbling pot fell under a cart between the stones and now? Look for yourself, is this not great music? Do we get a cent? Just one cent?

Of course, the best people are visited first. Jeus screams himself silly and Bernard is just as bad; he knows the songs. They compete with each other. But there are a lot of boys walking about. From Bad Klink they get two cents of course. From Mienieke Klarendaal, you won't believe it, five cents. But at Hosman's house they close the door in their faces and start to scold them, And when Bernard wanted to talk back to them Jeus pulled him away, because if you let your own voice be heard then people will recognize you. And Bernard had to agree with him, because the Hosman's are misery guts who never give anything. But they did not recognize them, otherwise they would have said so a long time ago. They are already full to the brim with sweets and nice liquorice. Here and there they get sausage, that is also a part of it, because they sing: 'Money is better than a sausage!' You can always eat that sausage. But adults are mean and all the same, yet by about five o'clock Bernard and Jeus have almost got a quarter each. Exhausted and half-frozen they come home; they are starving to death. What did you think of it, Jeus? He has to think about it first, Bernard. And tomorrow then? That lasts three days, Jeus.

Crisje hears everything, they eat tasty soup and then they may go to bed. Now it is 'fancy dress night' for the adults. And really, now you can see Crisje dancing with her Tall Hendrik, such a lovely waltz.

Who doesn't like that? They go out with Chang and Carlo for a while, Johan looks after the children, he can be trusted with that, but it mustn't take too long, Crisje knows.

You see all kinds of things in such a hall. Carlo and Chang didn't think that the Hollanders could have such fun. You see all kinds of things, Crisje thinks. Princes and kings, dwarfs and a strange mish-mash. Even barons and counts. The thieves and murderers have also had an outfit made for themselves and play the rich customer for three days. And they know very well, amongst this royalty there are real thieves and knife stabbers. Every year you see something else here. Now and again five or six people are stabbed and have to go to hospital. And then the fun is usually suddenly over. If that lot from Die'm come, just go into hiding. They are poachers and thieves and those poachers and thieves are now walking around dressed as barons and counts, kings and emperors. 'Just look at those domonos, Hendrik.'

'They are called... dominos, Cris.'

Green, yellow, red, black and snow-white domonos, no, that's not it... they are called dominos. Crisje is enjoying it. Crooks and all the worst scum of Our Lord are having the greatest fun. A workman cannot afford those expensive things. But heaven is dancing, you won't believe it, there are even angels under the masks. Just look at that piece of dirt? That is that slut from the hills, true or not? Isn't that something, Cris? And red Dien there! Has she put something on? That is Jan. You can see that from his footsteps, he doesn't walk any differently. That domino is Gerrit. You recognize him by the way he drinks his glass of beer. You know exactly how he picks up that beer. They have already given themselves away, they will not get any prize, because that's what it is about. Anyone who is not recognized gets a prize. Of at least two hundred guilders. But one person after the other is unmasked, even if they have put on the strangest get-up. Just dance with that princess and you will recognize her from that hopping about which she can't help doing. And yes, there is Anneke van de Zoepert.*) That one there is Mieneke. That is Alie and that is... goodness, but that one bothers me, no, I must be mistaken. And so you hear all kinds of things, Crisje thinks, but she must go to the children, Tall Hendrik stays a while to look, with Chang and Carlo. He also soon has enough of it. Carlo and Chang still want to talk for a bit, but tomorrow? Do you hear that? There is already someone in the

hospital. The constabularies have their hands full with work and that is a pity, always through those troublemakers from Die'm! You could give them what for, but their quarrels are fought out on Mardi Gras. Nothing till now stops them, that's the way it is, and say it yourself, otherwise those people do not get their satisfaction, now they do.

A few days later, Bernard and Jeus are lying sick in bed. No, that is nothing, Jeus knows, no, you have to slave far too hard for it and then you are sick in bed; it is not worth the trouble. Give me the fair instead! From the fun they end up in misery and have to swallow these troubles, Crisje is also faced with an awful lot of complaining, but it was good, Bernard thinks.

Then Bernard heard: 'You keep your rotten world and I'll keep mine. I don't want anything more to do with it.'

That is once and never again, Bernard thought! Now a bit of skating, but that fun is also over quickly. The winter flies past, spring is already approaching. They were sent a delicious bottle of wine from Chang and Carlo, they kept their word, but the mayor is seriously considering forbidding the Mardi Gras, there were too many victims. Why do those big men always have to spoil such fun again? That is also food for thought. Those kings and counts fought like wild animals. And one of those lads had also earned the prize, now he has nothing. And now that the money is still there, the mayor cannot forbid Mardi Gras, Our Lord, say it now yourself, that cannot be allowed, can it? It is all too much.

You could find the rags again on the street the next day. And people knew exactly who had worn them. How they had let themselves go. According to Crisje Mardi Gras is only to make people bad. That is playing into the hands of the devil, whom Our Lord has fought against for years. Father thinks the same about it. They have already been talking for years about scrapping Mardi Gras for good from the annual festivities, but it doesn't happen, it is far too nice, it is something different, so to speak. For a few days you can feel rich for a change, the whole year long they suck your blood and sweat. And there are too many here who have to sweat and therefore, next year there will be Mardi Gras again. What does Jeus think about it then?

Bernard will have to go to school soon, but then there is still Gerrit, but Jeus has no contact with him. Then he will have to go in search himself, Crisje, now his other friends will probably get the chance

to play with him and talk to him again. You don't see Deut either, Duumke runs through the neighbourhood like a wild, hungry dog. Life really stands still, he determines for himself, now that Bernard is preparing himself to look elsewhere.

That's the way it is, Crisje, children become older and you become a bit stiff? No, you are expanding again, another child, Crisje? Or what is it? The fun is forgotten, daily life demands everything from you, but one thing is for sure, and all have to accept, you know what you live for and whoever doesn't know that, has to still master it; but once you know, Crisje says, you will have something new to experience every day, the children as well; Jeus knows all about it.

Well, what is to happen now? Wait a bit and you will know! But then Bernard had on his new clogs and he was also faced with something else! There you go, and close the door behind you!

‘Jeus, go and look at Deut, he is in a bad way’

Deut has been sitting on his stone for two days now and it is apparently looking bad for him. Adults are powerless in the face of it and cannot help him. It is a horrible sight to see him sitting like that. The giant has collapsed like a wreck and his life, his soul and his spirit have been broken. Even Duumke cannot get him off his stone. The story is going round that old Messing gave his son a terrible hiding. Duumke stumbles back and forth a bit to his friend but he doesn't know any more either. If he is asked: ‘Can you do anything for Deut?’ he answers:

‘I have enough on myself.’

Deut's condition can last for weeks, he looks so beaten and senseless. It is not a good sight there on the Grintweg. Day and night people pass by there, not a cigar or a piece of sausage helps; his life refuses absolutely, it is dead! Deut's inner life looks sorrowful, inside him there is no light to be seen any more. It is cold there, unmannerly and inhuman. There is a deep darkness in the simple one. Where does Deut live? People talk about it, of course. But no one is able to pull the simple one out of his distressful situation; there is not a doctor who knows how to approach this human wreck to give it some new and different powers, to get Deut back into daily goings-on. Tall Hendrik also talks to Crisje about Deut, they cannot understand it either. You do nothing with violence, because then the inner life of Deut reacts immediately and he hits and kicks around him like a wild animal. It only becomes worse. Deut must therefore stay sitting there calmly and no one can remove him from his stone. Tall Hendrik said:

‘There are things, after all, Crisje, which we as people cannot understand and which we must leave alone, true or not?’ With this Tall Hendrik readily admitted that he also didn't know anything for it. Crisje replied:

‘There is help for everything, Hendrik. For everything! If people only want to pray.’

Then Hendrik said: ‘Now, why don't you start praying, Crisje, you are so good at it?’

Sarcasm and a bit of laughter will not help either, Tall Hendrik

feels this well, but that madman has to decide for himself. Hendrik thought the whole incident was a poor show. Crisje also got to hear:

‘If That One up there can do everything, Cris, why doesn’t He help to get Deut from his stone?’ Indignant, Crisje answered:

‘But Hendrik, you surely don’t want to mock it?’

‘Is that mocking then, Cris? May I not have any thoughts of my own anymore?’

You could go on like that, Crisje thought, but you come no further, but one thing she does know, matters which concern Our Lord, people have to leave alone, after all. But Tall Hendrik doesn’t give up yet and Crisje heard an awful lot more, but she didn’t have an answer either. Despite everything, she continued to pray for Deut, and Father prayed as well for that simple one. Many a Hail Mary went upwards, but would it help?

Many people including Tall Hendrik wonder: why does He send so many mad people to the earth. There are enough of them in this world. Even more than people who have spiritual awareness, if you can call every normal person spiritually aware. Again that’s something for which they have no base. Also, why does Our Lord send so many sick people to the earth? At the end of the day, Deut has a rotten life. Is that not a real injustice, Crisje. Why does ‘He’ send people to this world with a sick head? But then Tall Hendrik hears that he must lay off the affairs of Our Lord and that all those things do not concern him; Our Lord knows very well why some lives are like this. Tall Hendrik finds Crisje’s answer to this not enough. In this way you can make everything good, but you don’t find the answers. Can you accept that as a person? No, that is impossible! All that talk only makes you sick. But they had tried to pull Deut from his stone by force, but goodness gracious me, how he lashed out. Now he had really become mad. The doctor said that they should leave him alone, that whole affair would have to undergo a change eventually, and after all, there was still Mother Nature. Yes, of course, the doctor can tell so much, but just look at Deut now. Deut didn’t bother about anything, for weeks he remained miserable and then one fine morning he had disappeared. Whether they had put Deut in a mental home, they didn’t know, but he was gone and after a few months he came back. Just like before Deut was like a child, and what do you want with children in a real mental home? Nothing, isn’t it the case? They say that he has

come back with a note which said: 'Leave him alone, if he collapses again, then leave him alone, his inner life will recover on its own!' But that can take a while and look for yourself, it is a sight for sore eyes; the foreigners walk out of the village, or town if you like, because of it, afraid that they will be infected by this big strong child; but you have to laugh at that. Are they now town dwellers? But you would think that these people were not afraid of mad people. You saw some ladies simply shaking when they looked at Deut for a moment; they didn't leave Montferland anymore. There in the village of 's-Heerenberg it was a sight in the middle of the street, it was scandalous. Now who would let a person like that sit there dribbling? Was there nothing then to give that life social feeling back? No, lady, there is nothing, we know that very well, but what do you want? Leave Deut alone, lady!

If these people are calm you must let them get on with it and if they are in a bad way, leave them alone, and let them stew in it, you just behave as if it is not a human being any more. After all, for a dog with scurvy you do everything, then why not for Deut?

Is Deut now really mad? It is a poor man, broken by life and it's much worse than anything else. This is really bad, it's much worse than being blind, worse than some kind of deformity. If you are like Deut is, you have nothing any more, nothing!

What illness is it? They do not know. But buckets full of slime run over Deut's lips and from his human heart, for that's what it really is. Your nonsense no longer helps now. Not even a nice fifty cent cigar. His soul and happiness no longer react, Deut is now dead or deaf and dumb, but he would be a thousand times better off experiencing death, but the Grim Reaper doesn't yet feel like playing him away from this world, because after all it is only a game to the Grim Reaper. He thinks: leave it... Deut, a healthy person is worth more to me. A seven year old child, or a thirty or forty year old man, in the prime of his life, I would fell him down with one blow! But what do I want with such a crazy person? The Grim Reaper says or thinks that, Crisje... Tall Hendrik? So it seems. Since there is no change. Deut remains alive, people with a healthy body and mind disappear, as is often the case. Households are torn apart by the Grim Reaper, but Deut remains alive! Is it because Our Lord does not wish to know anything about this, and has 'He' entered into a contract with the Grim Reaper? This one and that one first.

And then, of course, you wonder, why does a person live? What is now from Our Lord himself and what belongs to the Grim Reaper? Does HE take pleasure in giving such cursed things, human ingenuity? It is very obvious, there is misery attached to it, there is something in this which does not really belong to Our Lord, but who knows, Tall Hendrik, Crisje? No one knows these laws, but they exist, at least the symptoms, of which Deut is one!

What is inside Deut is now dead! There is no life and no feeling any more, no hearing and he sees nothing! The life has become silent; from inside some part of the human machine has broken. But what has broken?

If you are standing in front of Deut and you feel his soul a little, or the life, as you wish to feel it yourself, then a misery meets you, which makes you shake and tremble. Then you are immediately faced with all your questions, of which the most inhuman is: why does Our Lord send such people to this world? Deut, another person says, has nailed his doors shut from inside; but does a human being have doors? It is awfully dark, they say, inside Deut, and it is as if he is weeping himself completely and humanly empty and that is the most rotten part of all. Do you no longer have any feeling as a human being? Can you look at that with dry eyes? Or did you think that all these men and women, who go to church one for one, Protestant or Catholic, it doesn't matter, did not wonder: how can Our Lord approve of this? Did you think that they swallowed everything from Father and the minister? None of it, they think, because they are involved, your own child can experience the same thing later. Is Our Lord really satanic? Good heavens, Crisje, did Tall Hendrik ask that? And what did you say?

If Deut could only have a good weep, people say, that is a relief. He does weep, but not outwards. And if that could happen, we would be a good deal further. That would be the natural relaxation for Deut. Who is capable of getting the madman to weep? Are there no medicines, have those things not been invented yet, through which you can get a person to weep naturally? They think that that is the only thing for Deut! But he only dribbles; there is that, no more. And the strangest part is that they saw, after all, you cannot die from it. It is so bad, that you do not even go under from it. Hard? Is that hard? Then you are faced with the Grim Reaper and Our Lord, for these two

powers and strengths. Which of these two is right or takes pleasure in breaking and abusing this poor conscious of Deut in such a way? Who is it? Is it not true then that people of good will keep getting blows and are torn apart? People who are urgently needed, get an unexpected dirty blow in the middle of the human heart. Then the Grim Reaper is standing in front of them! Did you think that all that calling for help and begging him helped in any way? Women and children now have to just try and stay alive. You see the most terrible situations, only through that cursed Grim Reaper and Our Lord, Who does nothing, does not lift a hand. HE lets his children drop dead! These words are uttered and there is talk, not behind the bar, after ten drinks, no, but in the middle of the day, with your wits about you, these thoughts are not only with regard to Deut, but also with regard to yourself, your love, your earnings, your wife and children! What are you saying? What did you think about it? Just nonsense? And see, he who laughed suddenly went. And the Grim Reaper got him as well. Gone, your wife and ten children have to manage on their own! Is this also Our Lord's doing? I will tell you something. Life is a big mess, a dirty mess, but up here there is something wrong! Is this man and are all those women wrong? May they not ask these questions? Not for Crisje, no, you leave well alone what belongs to Our Lord, because then there would be nothing left! Do you not agree with Crisje?

Crisje and Father pray until they drop, but it still hasn't helped. But still, Crisje says, help will come, if you only keep on going! And Crisje keeps on going, Tall Hendrik!

When Hendrik comes home in the evening and clammers up the Grintweg from work, the first thing he does is look and see whether Deut is still sitting there. That is the thing which interests him the most. And yes, he is still there, Tall Hendrik. It is scandalous. And this scandal goes straight to Our Lord! That is pestering a person! That is working someone into the ground, hitting him left and right, as if you had not been hit enough by life. What do the angels say, Crisje? Nothing? Have all those powers and strengths lost their space and their security? It's certainly going in that direction. But how can Our Lord approve of this? There are no words for it; it is so rotten!

Isn't it the case, after all? A crook, a poacher, a scoundrel and a murderer, they remain alive and have their health. It is hard, yes of

course and it shouldn't be allowed, but sometimes people here send up: the 'droedels'! And that is then for Our Lord and His staff. The 'droedels'*)! And did you think that they reacted to that? The silence, because that is the case, after all, which is sent to the earth from the heavens, is called, just get lost! Of course, you mustn't say that to Crisje, or Father, then you are a heretic. But what do you want? In addition, it is not a good idea to let yourself go so far, because it means cursing yourself and that is bad as well. From one thing you come to another and there is no answer anyway to all these questions. When Tall Hendrik let Crisje know his opinion that there was something terrible up there, he got as an answer:

'But Hendrik, that is mean, don't you know that?'

'What is meaner, Cris? Did Deut just get half a soul, Cris?'

What can you say to this, Crisje? Do you continue to insist that something must happen to Deut? Don't you know, Crisje, that the Grim Reaper butchers healthy children every day? Why does Our Lord send children to the earth, when HE will just call them back in a few days time? May you not ask that, Crisje? People do it anyway! And the excuse 'Our Lord knows' is no longer accepted. Those tears, the suffering and sorrow of all those millions of mothers, Crisje, who have to lose their children, should have darkened the light of the universe, where our Lord lives, for a long time. But that changes nothing. They carry on with their nice life there, and on Sundays they get their fresh cream cakes, eat from gold dishes with gold spoons, the men smoke their cigars worth a guilder, but no one thinks of those mothers, human sorrow means nothing, Crisje. Nothing! Is there not an angel, Crisje, who can be reached through human tears and sorrow?

Lawless people, thieves and dirty scoundrels remain alive and have everything; they do not know what being sick is. The best people are beaten and trampled to death. Is that worthy of Our Lord, Crisje? People can bow their heads, but that makes them sick, that is, old and shrivelled, now and again you want to know something more and say your opinion for once, why are you a person, otherwise? Sometimes you just want to have a cry, but it doesn't help you a bit. Even if you let rip that much, you will only make it worse. Whether you are on the street tomorrow, doesn't mean anything, you may be content that you are a human being. How is it possible, these gifts from Our Lord are wonderful, even the swine don't want to receive them. We are people!

In the eyes of Our Lord you are nothing! Did you not know? Praying? You will laugh yourself silly about these people, they no longer have any sense, and they are not people with free will. You can tell me more, but did you think that I could forget my good Nico? And what was Nico like? Did he not pray every week? Did he not always go to the church? Have you ever seen him do a dirty trick? He wasn't capable of it. And what happened? In one blow my Nico ended up in his coffin. Standing at the grave, you heard laughter. I cried until there were no tears left, but there was one who laughed at me and my whole family and that was that dirty rotten Grim Reaper! Have you never heard that monster laughing? Then follow some funerals and listen, then you will hear it as well.

What goes on inside Deut when he is like this? They say, Deut has wheeled old Messing off the Grintweg again and threw him eight metres down. This is where old Messing ended up. He should have broken his neck, but they got him out of there and there was nothing wrong with him. Deut, who remained standing there, wheeled his old father to the land, then it happened. And that is strange as well, if you wish to think about it as a human being. Deut is no longer aware of anything. However, old Messing has a piece of wood in his hands and calls Deut over to him. Try doing that with your children as a father. What do your healthy and sensible offspring do now, even if they are only three years old? If they are older, of course they will behave with more awareness... that child of yours feels what you are intending to do and is now anxious, your child sees that it will get a beating and reacts. It is as true as anything is. But not for Deut. He goes to his father. He does not see that his father has a club in his hands to give him a good beating, this poor human wreck does exactly what the old one wants. The old one says to him: 'Bend down, on your knees, Deut', because the old one is lame and Deut obeys. He does not know what is going to happen. If old Messing hadn't snapped at Deut in such a way, because apparently he cannot stand snapping and shouting, then Deut would not have thrown him off the Grintweg either. When Deut bends and is kneeling, old Messing hits this life anywhere he can hit it, until he wakens something inside, which Deut finally reacts to and takes off. That is all, but because of this Deut has been sitting for days now on his stone. What are they doing with the old man? What must they do? They do not know.

Within Deut there is therefore still something which brings him to his own decision. We have to accept irrevocably that this life neither possesses nor knows badness. This life is not aware of danger. But still, if you give it a good shaking, it reaches its own reaction. The old one awakened the deaf and dumb child in Deut with his hitting. How deep is Deut's life and consciousness? What can a psychologist tell you about it? Nothing! They have already withdrawn themselves from Deut long ago; they do not know! Of course, it would be the best thing for Deut, to remove him from that environment, but then they could fill up all the homes for this sort of sick people, the whole of society is sick! This whole society is completely crazy! In other words: you are powerless. Deut must have lain for his father as a fly at the feet of an elephant. Other people know that the old man first asked him to look for a stick for him and that Deut handed his father the object himself in order to give him a beating. You can't get more decent and more obedient than that! But what do you want?

Now Jeus has to go there. Do people not find that strange? Jeus knows that his friend is in trouble, but still he lets Deut sit there. That is nothing for Jeus, Crisje knows that. When Crisje therefore asked him:

'Shouldn't you go and take a look at Deut...' she got the reply:
'I will have to think about it first, mother.'

Does that sound wise, Tall Hendrik? After a few hours Jeus got to hear again from Crisje:

'Jeus, go and have a look at Deut, he is in a very bad way...' then he started to think, but nothing happened, he went to have a nice sleep and left his friend alone with his dreadful misery. Crisje doesn't understand it, but Crisje continues to pray and trust Deut will get better! Even if Tall Hendrik laughs himself silly, because this is work with no end to it. Crisje continues to have faith. She prays and thinks about her side of things. Just a moment ago Jeus wandered out the door with Fanny to go and look at Deut. From a distance he looks at the freak there on that stone, which he knows all about. In Jeus, Crisje, you will maybe not believe it, although you can understand it, a feeling has come, a pure human and well-thought out feeling, that only now can he help Deut. Yesterday it was not yet possible, only today is it at that stage. Now he is able to do something for his big friend. Something else again for a child, you will say, Tall Hendrik, but this has a

deep, human, yes, supernatural significance, and Jeus will learn that later, which he will describe in his books. Wouldn't you want to laugh about this as well, Hendrik? I will never utter these words when you are present, then it is like casting pearls before swine. Oh, Tall Hendrik, that is past history, that is old, that casting pearls before swine no longer has any significance now, I have a more simple feeling, and it is much more human if you say: you are now talking to deaf and dumb people and that's also the case!

Jeus immediately walks to Deut and that is extremely dangerous, but he doesn't want to know anything about danger. Talking doesn't help; he does it in a very different way. Adults have already talked until they had nothing more to say. Jeus touches Deut for a moment, then turns around, and leans against Mrs Peters' fence and retreats into himself, then into deep thought. The first thing what occurs to people is: we have got another psychopath as well. But Jeus doesn't know that, those are your own thoughts. This child does something, which you know nothing about as an old person; just keep quiet for now. It is just as well, Crisje, that Tall Hendrik is not in the neighbourhood, because what would have happened then? Tall Hendrik would have got hold of Jeus by the scruff of his neck and removed him from Deut. But then Deut would still have been sitting there a fortnight later. Now Jeus will get his friend out of trouble. Inside Deut, Jeus sees, his windows have been closed. It would make you cry out: 'Deut, come outside', but Deut cannot find a way out now. Jeus' face is rigid. The children are looking at him. There are those who think that he is also in a bad way. See, Deut can infect you, mother. Now that Jeus is standing there, help arrives for him, Fanny is already wagging its tail, it sees José!

Now Jeus reaches a universal talk. The Tall One is also there and says to him:

'You must first look at him inwardly, Jeus.'

'Yes', answers Jeus his Tall One, 'I have already started that.'

Jeus descends into Deut. He does that in his thoughts and it happens naturally when you know the way, otherwise you will lose your way. And you are not familiar with a maze like that. The human world from inside is a world of unknown depth, as long as you know. You will probably think differently about Deut's case and descending into his house, his personality. He does it as he is used to with Crisje

and from which Crisje can always receive feelings. He now also becomes one with Deut. Deut no longer lives alone in his own house. Deut has had a visit from Jeus and it is he who will now open the doors of his soul, so that Deut will soon be able to see again that the big door is open. And if Jeus can now achieve that, Deut will begin to cry from happiness and complete human bliss. If that now starts to happen, that is his healing. Deut is already beginning to think inside and feels that there is someone there. He is no longer alone. Now Jeus says to make Deut aware that he is definitely there:

‘Deut, don’t you know that I am here? Did you think, Deut, that I had forgotten you?’

You see that now happens from there, from that resting point, there from Mrs. Peters’ fence to Deut’s inner life. Soon the material broom will be used and only then will Jeus hit and kick the doors open with force and Deut will get the lights back in his eyes. Is there something else?

‘Of course, Deut, I am here!’... and again... ‘I am here, Deut!’

And then there follows: ‘Deut, we are here in this world to help each other. But you know that, Deut?’

The children are standing there, are booing at Jeus because he is doing nothing for Deut, he hears that they think it is a friendship good for nothing, but he lets them scold. He is massaging Deut’s soul as it were and when he feels that he can now try it out for real, therefore the material touch must follow, Jeus steps away from there, goes straight over to Deut and resolutely takes his hand between his and rubs over this callous, unfeeling human. That talk from a moment ago took place in darkness, which was for the soul and the life, now it takes place for the material system. From inside the life has awakened. The children already feel that this is deadly serious. Jeus hears them say:

‘Good gracious, that is dangerous what he is doing.’

But he knows no danger. He doesn’t pay any attention to those whippersnappers; there are even some amongst them that are fifteen and twenty years old. The Tall One and José help him. Without that Tall One and without his José, Jeus couldn’t achieve anything. All those whippersnappers there, still need dry trousers. They stare their eyes out; there is really something to see today. Jeus continues:

‘Deut, do you hear me? Do you hear me, Deut?’ That questioning

is now becoming more serious and more urgent! It becomes demanding for Deut. Jeus continues to stroke Deut's hands. Fanny also helps him. Deut gets a nice lick from Fanny and that is now helping enormously. Deut feels a delicious warmth entering him. The life returns, he chases after it. Deut can almost no longer be stopped, so strong is the power which touches his inner and material life from Jeus. The children think: 'This is something which looks like a miracle.' 'Come, Deut, we are not staying here sitting like idiots. That is not possible...' Deut gets to hear.

'Deut, do you want a glass marble from me? Look. Is that one for you?'

Does Deut not hear that? Jeus will soon get proof and then all this humanity will then understand that Deut, even though it doesn't seem so, can think, after all! But his life cannot deal with it yet, because his human will still refuses. Jeus continues to stroke his hands and wipes buckets full of slime from them. He feels that something bursts inside Deut, something jumps, and something tears loose. And how is it possible, Deut suddenly starts crying. The children are already shouting:

'Come on, Jeus, give him what for, he is awakening!'

Jeus continues. 'Just look, Deut. There is Graatje of Dien Piss in the Gutter. Don't you know her? She always pees where she feels like it herself. But now she is off, Deut. That one there, that is Anneke Knie's, you know, Deut, the sister of Mathie, Pukky and Hendrik, who can play football so well. That one there is Hanne Poop, don't you have to laugh yet, Deut? They are all scaredy cats. They want to be tickled, Deut... but they have nothing at all to spare for it. True or not, Deut. And that one there is a sister of the Madman, who lives Achter de Kom, you can drown there if you don't know the way, but you know that anyway, Deut?'

Deut does not say anything yet, but that will happen quickly now. His head is still hanging between his heavy shoulders, but he will soon lift it and then Deut will be back with the people again.

'Just look at that one, Deut, they have stuff on credit for at least a thousand guilders... but Theet Egging is not completely mad, he will show them. Theet has to work far too hard for it, Deut, you can understand that, after all? And that one there, Deut, that one's father has been in jail four times already for stealing rabbits. Now, don't you

have to laugh about that, Deut?’

And really and truly, Deut moves slightly, his lips move, and he wants to say something. And then the children shout:

‘Come on, Jeus, you have got him. Deut is crying.’

The children run to their mothers to say that Deut is crying. They know that Jeus is getting Deut out of his distressful situation. The children encourage him; today they give him everything he is worth. The tears now really begin to flow and that is the natural cure for Deut. Now Jeus grabs him by the scruff of his neck and pulls him upwards. But when Deut doesn’t want to yet, he gets to hear:

‘If you don’t want to come with me, Deut, you can get lost! Come on, we’re going to look at my doves, Deut.’

Fanny pulls at Deut’s rags, and yes, they get him off his piece of stone. The adults are watching and have respect for such a great piece of work. Deut stands up, he forces himself through his weak knees, he is now standing on his legs and at the same time Jeus turns into Das-senstraatje, straight to his doves. Fanny is already running to Crisje.

When Crisje sees that it is her Jeus, who is walking towards her with Deut, ten Our Father’s immediately fly to Our Lord to thank Him because HE has heard the prayers. She knew that help would come. However, she did not know it would be her Jeus, Crisje was not able to think about that either. But now she sees it, Our Lord’s Tall One is there as well! Prayers help! Whoever cannot pray is a lost person. Whining and shouting, that’s not it! How pleased Father will be, Crisje thinks. For her it is a great mercy. And that is the case, Crisje, but with the help of Jeus’ Tall One and José, otherwise Deut would still be sitting there! They are the ones, Crisje, who got Deut out of that darkness. But through Jeus! The angels of Our Lord have now accomplished this, Crisje. And believe it now as well, Our Lord knows nothing about Deut’s situation, otherwise Our Lord would have nothing else to do. Then Our Lord would have to be in ten million places at the same time at this moment, and is that possible, Crisje? For you it is, we know that, Crisje, this is also the truth! I can therefore assure you, cross my heart: that all these horrible matters of the human being, all these why’s and how’s which bother people and which they complain about to death, have nothing to do with Our Lord! Nothing, Crisje! They have created those rotten things and misery themselves. And you know that! That is nothing new for you,

but people are full of them and they are destroyed by them! Now the Grim Reaper will be in trouble, but does he also have something to do with it? No, I tell you, nothing!

A while later Jeus is sitting with Deut by the doves.

‘Aren’t they just nice creatures, Deut? Would you want to hold one in your hands, Deut?’

‘Yes, please, Jeus.’

‘When they are big, Deut, I will keep one for you.’

They babble away to each other for hours. Deut has already held ten doves, he doesn’t squash a single one. He carefully holds the creatures in his large strong hands and mumbles something, the poor soul is like a small child. It is a moment to cry until there are no more tears, when you see that, it is so beautiful and supernatural. The giant with a child, the giant is a child, but the child is old. Well, well, that is something! But Crisje sees that it is going well. She has made sandwiches for Deut and when Deut sees that, he makes a grab for the thickly spread sandwiches with both hands and eats his fill. Deut is so hungry, that Crisje can’t bring enough sandwiches. He hasn’t eaten anything for days. But when he has had his fill Jeus prepares to take him home, and the simple one asks:

‘Where is my marble, Jeus?’

Did you think that Deut was crazy? Did you think that he did not hear anything? Deut is not so crazy that he doesn’t realize that such a glass marble is something wonderful to possess. He puts the marble in his pocket. Now he goes down the stairs and homewards. Arriving at the door of old Messing, Jeus sees that the door opens. The old man has surely changed. Jeus nudges Deut inside. He listens for a little while and hears some cups rattling. There is food and drink ready for Deut. How odd people are, they are strange creatures, Jeus has learned that and he will never ever forget it as long as he lives.

Then he leaves. They are smiling at him from the universe. He sees that his Tall One and José have disappeared. They are going to tell Our Lord. And perhaps, Tall Hendrik, now that they have experienced it themselves, that Our Lord will think about it, and then there will probably be no mad people on earth later. Or ‘He’ will send some more, because he now knows how they can be cured. When a child can already do that, why do adults not wish to possess these powers? For adults it is called: nonsense! Do you see, Tall Hendrik? Is it non-

sense, after all? But love heals, Tall Hendrik! Human powers can heal! And this is exactly the same as Manus does, because the will of life and the life aura of a person can bring it about. But you will hear that later, but something must first happen to you, Tall Hendrik. You will stand behind your coffin for these wonders! But how wonderful and nice life is. Yes, Tall Hendrik, if you see it the way it is!

Through Jeus' thinking Deut changed. Since Jeus helped him to think, Deut came back to everyday consciousness. It isn't any more than that, Tall Hendrik! Did Christ not say: 'If your faith was like a mustard seed, then...' And Crisje's faith is as strong and as high as your Hunzeleberg mountain, from where you can see the Stolzen Fels Am Rhein, Tall Hendrik, through which these wonders take place with Deut. Jeus looks Crisje in the eye and they know. When he now tells her that his Tall One and José did it, Crisje is filled with emotion and she presses her big Jeus to her heart. 'You see, the angels can do that, isn't that so, Jeus?'

'Yes, mother!'

Tall Hendrik looks, really, Deut is off his stone. Who did that? And when he now hears from Crisje that his Jeus did that, Tall Hendrik will give him a great pat on the back. Hendrik storms inside and asks:

'Do you know, Crisje, who managed that?'

'Yes, Hendrik, I know.'

'Now, tell me. The doctor?'

'The doctor, you ask, does he understand divine matters?'

'Did something happen again, Cris?'

'Yes, Hendrik.'

Crisje gives him a good teasing, he doesn't have to know everything at once, and then it will also penetrate his life all the more. But Tall Hendrik also says:

'Whoever did that, Cris, I will take my hat off to them.'

And now something comes, which will give Tall Hendrik a fright. Crisje laughs, her husband sees it and asks:

'Why are laughing to yourself, Cris?'

'That's a good one, Hendrik. Then today you can take your hat off for your Jeus.'

'What are you saying, Cris?'

'Yes, Hendrik, just take your hat off for Jeus, he made Deut better and pulled him off his stone.'

Jeus has to come to father, Tall Hendrik wants to play the violin and sing for him alone. Then Tall Hendrik asks:

‘How did you manage that, Jeus?’

He thinks about it. And however it was possible, suddenly he knew, the words were simply put in his mouth and the Tall Hendrik heard:

‘I played a bit on my own violin, father, for Deut.’

‘Good grief...’ Tall Hendrik comes away with and thinks to himself... an adult should try telling him that, then he would have given that same person a slap right in the face. He is completely shaken by it. Crisje smiled to herself, she says nothing, but she is enjoying it and she knows, Our Lord as well! But, after all, that is good for Tall Hendrik.

Fair’s fair, just after the shock, Tall Hendrik nearly split his sides laughing. And Crisje thought that was too cheap again, you do not laugh about serious matters. Jeus had wanted to tell father more, but his Tall One found it just enough, his Tall One did not talk to jokers and deaf and dumb people! Jeus did not say another thing; his life closed itself off for his own father. That is a pity, Tall Hendrik. And so we carry on, we are continually faced with this, what a pity... what a real pity, but you cannot be reached, you just laugh. When will you finally be serious for Crisje and your boys for a change? Have you forgotten what Chang said about Jeus? You will do it, but what do you have in mind, Tall Hendrik, is that true knowledge? There are some who now laugh, but you do not even hear that. However, you will hear it someday!

You will achieve nothing through prayer, Tall Hendrik, but through prayer you will be tuned to higher places, you cannot be tuned to pride then, because prayer takes you to human simplicity. In order to be able to explain all of this to you, we will write a thick book for you later, Tall Hendrik. And Jeus will do that! Is there anything else, Tall Hendrik?

And that will take place through the same angels who now brought Deut back to everyday consciousness. But after all, you don’t know what everyday consciousness is. Jeus does know! He pulled Deut back to his own consciousness and then Deut was among people again. That Deut doesn’t have that for eternity, do you believe that? I am telling you, Deut attracted this misery to himself. But that was somewhere else, Tall Hendrik. And now he is faced with his own misery,

but he will also get over it. Deut is recovering, Tall Hendrik, and one human life has no significance for these matters. You need several lives for it! Do you understand that, Tall Hendrik? No, of course not! Our Lord, works through HIS angels, Tall Hendrik. Now it is the Tall One of Jeus and it is me, there are also others who are people, Tall Hendrik, and they all lived on the earth, and now represent a Kingdom of heaven, because there is no death! Do you still not feel anything? Do you not have to laugh yet? Has your laughter not yet reached its daily strength? If you only knew that we closed ourselves off to your life; we could have told you something completely different at that time. But you, however good you are, because we have no complaints about you, and neither has Our Lord, but that you laugh about His things and affairs, that's up to you. After all, some day deadly seriousness will still arise in you. And only then will you be capable of listening, of following and accepting your Crisje and your Jeus. Now all that is being lost for your life, again, Tall Hendrik, you are not evil, but you are as dry as a cork and deaf and dumb to these and other sacred matters!

You don't feel and see anything. On the contrary, you only want to play the violin. But Jeus was right. His Tall One thought, if I let Jeus talk about matters which interest the mortal Tall Hendrik, I will probably shake him awake. But it didn't succeed, you had a nice laugh and then he just went away. Jeus hit you in a sensitive place as a father, isn't that the case? His life, Tall Hendrik, is like a harp and the angels of Our Lord strum that harp! Isn't it nice? Is it so difficult to understand? We haven't finished yet, we will continue. You will hear from us again. Does your fifteen mark box have just as much value as the violin which is Jeus? Don't make Our Lord laugh now. Farmer, stay with your cows. Tall Hendrik, you are capable of a lot, but ask yourself now, how long still? Or will you be eighty years old? Then you still have time; at around about sixty years old people usually start to think in the direction of Our Lord. We, Tall Hendrik, are now talking from another world, which you see as unreal, and in which you cannot believe. We are talking to your life and your being, but it doesn't sink into you. And like you are, Tall Hendrik, there are millions more. But all these people have to go back to Our Lord! Did you never ever think about that? But life is good, life is wonderful, why would you bother yourself with the Grim Reaper?

Crisje and the Tall Hendrik talk until deep in the night. They are talking about Deut and Jeus and about the unprecedented laws of Our Lord. Tall Hendrik sighs, 'how difficult life sometimes is.' But it is odd, what doctors cannot do, is within the reach of a child. Crisje said to Tall Hendrik that, of course, he could buy a cigar for Deut, then Jeus could give this token of love to his friend. However, Tall Hendrik thought this was childish and didn't go into it either. He is not crazy. He does not dig another person's grave, if it isn't a part of his life. He knows for sure what his Crisje is like and he gives her everything. But, in order to take that inner spiritual path together, he doesn't long for that at all, that also has to awaken for Hendrik and will take him, if he can listen for a moment, to Deut! Even if he has everything so well organized, he lives precisely above the consciousness of Deut, Crisje and Jeus know, this is how the rest of the wide world is! If you hear a person talking about himself and then hear them having a good laugh about supernatural things, and when you sometimes have to experience that a person laughs right in your face, just don't pay any attention to these people, because they are the mad people, the absolutely crazy people. Deut and his kind are the living on this earth and the spiritually conscious. For whom, someone once said, this humanity has built a cathedral, and that is the case! The really mad person cries for and by means of reality. The normal person cannot cry, because he thinks he is too sensible, but just look at his shoes. He lives, a great person once said, in his own poverty! And he does not see or hear anything! And that world will visit this evening! It will run into your best room, sit itself down and talk as well! Tall Hendrik, I could beat you to death with words and proof, but you cannot be reached! We will wait a while! But then? Then you will break an awful lot of violins! What for and why? Work it out for yourself, a child at school is helped, but you will have to learn the rest of it yourself, Tall Hendrik, that is the sacred truth.

Crisje gave him her opinion:

'Hendrik, people are up to their ankles in their own mud, and then still have something to say about other people, they do not smell their own muck...', that was what she, Tall Hendrik, got out of this world, which I talked about and that means: 'Be open to it... If that love is in you, you will speak all the languages in the world!'

Tall Hendrik knows, he is not able to take Crisje's faith away from

her. Her faith is extremely strong! They actually tread one world, have one faith, but Tall Hendrik does it differently and in his own way of thinking and feeling. Our Lord is in between them. Indeed, if it has to be, Crisje knows that as well, Tall Hendrik will throw himself on the grave of Our Lord like a faithful dog to watch over life, but he hasn't been given that yet. And Crisje also knows, everything will come eventually and in its own time! For today an awful lot of 'Our Fathers' go upwards, from Crisje. And also Jeus. He has earned them because of Deut. One does it with some flowers and loving kindness, some love as well, of course, all this is possible; another one does it by practising justice and yet other people do it through their deeds. As a result of mortal and material deeds you cultivate the purest 'orchids' for yourself!

When they are brought to their own life through love, believe it, there is proof, you can place them on 'Golgotha', and they are keenly accepted by Our Lord, He loves that the most. HE also loves them sincerely and as a result everything becomes different. Cultivate one through soul, life and spirit, and you can be sure, you will get on better and it will always go well in your life, you know then, you are carried by those strengths.

There is someone dreaming in the box bed in deep rest. Jeus is now walking in a garden where only those 'orchids' grow and blossom. And Crisje is following him. Their hearts have opened and reached universal unity. Yonder a great light can be seen and they go there, hand in hand. Their hearts are filled with happiness. Tall Hendrik could not go with them because he laughed too much. There is also laughter in this world, but only then if you also carry the deadly seriousness of it and for it in you, before that you do not have the right to laugh. If you laugh before you have that certainty, then you are a madman! And they do not want to see madmen there. Human mad people disturb the peace and quiet there! Because here, believe it, Our Lord has everything to say, Tall Hendrik!

Learn to think Hendrik. We lay stone upon stone, for Jeus, and we are building towards a 'University'! And it makes absolute sense, Tall Hendrik, the world now sees through your way of dealing with things: that is how it should be done and exactly how it shouldn't be done, as a result of which the lifework will soon receive value, and, of course, is now read by those people who are open to life and death

and are not afraid of the Grim Reaper, and have therefore got to know him.

Why must you die, Tall Hendrik? It is because you have to go further. You cannot achieve everything in one life!

What is madness? That is unconsciousness, Tall Hendrik. You have beaten yourself out of Divine Harmony.

How do you cultivate Divine 'orchids', Tall Hendrik? By putting in all your love for the life of God! Do that with joy in your heart, Tall Hendrik, and you will have the right to call yourself a person! That's it for today. Tomorrow we will continue again. And give our regards to Fanny, Tall Hendrik, because Fanny also earned its 'orchid' today. How is it possible, a dog has more sense than a healthy, strong, gifted and inspired person of the earth does. Because a dog is just a dog, a person is a completely different story... Tall Hendrik! But a person cannot reach out a hand. Fanny the dog thought, I got my tongue from Our Lord, and gave his own love in vain but consciously. To Deut! This is also a real kiss, Tall Hendrik. If you can kiss like that, you will also cultivate these living things in white, purple and pale blue, all those heavenly colours, or do you not like those flowers, Tall Hendrik?

I'm just starting to bore you, you are sleepy. Good night, Tall Hendrik. I do not need to wish that to Crisje, Because she is yonder, with her Jeus, Our Lord said to them: you will sleep nice and softly tonight. And then, Tall Hendrik, they got wings. And you will be able to get a taste of that as well some time!

But what a doggy heart! That Fanny!

Not even a cigar could be missed for Deut and that is also a pity as well.

‘Yes, Mother, I have exactly the same’

Crisje sees that Jeus is not okay, he is quiet and withdrawn, and it is as if he is carrying the whole world. She has spoken to Tall Hendrik about it, but he says: ‘You cannot rely on children, Cris. Children constantly have something different, today they are healthy and tomorrow they are sick, however, a while later you have to accept that they are laughing behind your back. No, that is nonsense. Of course, they have had far too many sweets, however they do not get so many sweets from Crisje that they spoil their stomachs, this is something completely different, Hendrik,’ but Hendrik doesn’t want to hear anything about it and falls out at Crisje:

‘You are behaving as if we have no other children, Cris.’

This is no answer, Crisje thinks, Tall Hendrik doesn’t want to understand her and that is wrong. His talk has no meaning, you are now talking on different levels and in the end you will face everything alone. Is that not a pity? Even if Tall Hendrik is completely open to household troubles, do not come with any nonsense to his personality, because he will not go into it. Men really are strange creatures, Crisje thinks. Precisely when it concerns the most sacred matters, they react in the opposite way. Tall Hendrik also possesses this quality, however good and concerned he is, for that matter. That often causes Crisje sorrow.

One morning, when Tall Hendrik was sitting at the table and eating his breakfast, Jeus stepped into the kitchen, took a chair, went and sat beside father at the table, with a face, according to Tall Hendrik, like a dirty vest. Crisje almost fainted when she looked the child in the eye. The boys mustn’t try to disturb this precious half an hour for him and his Cris; when he is gone they may get out of their little beds, not before, in the morning they have all kinds of things to talk about, which do not concern the children. Does father not see then that there is something wrong? Jeus sees nothing; he is hanging in his chair, his mother’s nice coffee also remains unstirred and that is a bad sign. However, that is nothing for Tall Hendrik, and Jeus was immediately snapped at:

‘Say, do you come here to be miserable?’

‘No, father’, sadly passed Jeus’ lips.

‘But what are you doing here so early then? I don’t want anything to do with it.’

‘I don’t want to be miserable, father. I don’t want anything to do with it.’

Tall Hendrik has to laugh to himself. The boy is using his words. However that doesn’t work. Again he comes away with:

‘So, you don’t want anything to do with being miserable? But just look at your long face? It shows more misery than I want to see.’

‘But Hendrik’, Crisje tries to soothe things. But Tall Hendrik won’t have it; the children mustn’t play-act with him. Or otherwise, to bed. This is none of their business. ‘Since when have the children had the right to climb out of bed in the morning without being asked, Cris? Where does that boy get the nerve?’ Crisje asks him what the matter is and then there follows unexpectedly, which also shocks Tall Hendrik:

‘That we are now having a girl, mother.’

Tall Hendrik almost falls off his chair. What did that boy say there? ‘What do we hear now?’ Tall Hendrik thinks. He flashes a look at the child, it takes a little while before he can say anything, but he then screams furiously:

‘These are matters which concern me and your mother, whipper-snapper!’

‘Yes, father’, Jeus lisps. And then Tall Hendrik orders:

‘And now get off to bed as quick as you can, understood? Do you want to go in the cellar?’

Jeus is gone. Crisje shakes, this is no approach, it is hitting your child in the wrong way, but oh well, it’s a lot for me. But Tall Hendrik is not content with that, he calls the child back to him. ‘What do you want with that, what do you want?’

Jeus looks his strict father in the eye. The child says nothing, because his soul is thinking, Tall Hendrik sees; how remarkable, but yet frightening it is. That is not like Tall Hendrik. He doesn’t know how he should approach this child. He has already heard many strange things from him, which he constantly has to accept, and there you are, how should you now behave, as a father? He goes away, thinking and questioning. He is worrying. The child suddenly confronts you with riddles, with something which has nothing to do with everyday life, nothing to do with his thoughts and feelings, but whether you like it or not, you have to think about it and it tickles you inside. But

no foolishness or beating about the bush with him, life already gives you enough to think about.

Crisje has a different view on these matters from him, if Hendrik behaves like this, she is sorrowful. He behaves without thinking and the children complain that father is so strict and they can never ever talk to him. Tall Hendrik then thinks: 'what do those mites want?' Still, Tall Hendrik, just a moment ago you destroyed the most beautiful 'orchids'. Just like that, without thinking, you reduced the most sacred thoughts, which have to do with God and Our Lord, to powder. You stepped consciously over the life of your flesh and blood and you beat the soul and the spirit. Now that heart is closed to your life and personality. Isn't it a pity? No, for you there are no pities. But we haven't finished yet. No sensible father does that. Jeus touched a world here of you and your Crisje, that is true, but does it not mean anything to you? Should you not just think then: how is that possible? Where does the child get such thoughts and predictions? Because this is a prediction, Tall Hendrik. Those thoughts don't mean anything to you, but they come from somewhere and what now, when your Jeus is right again?

Crisje has a pain inside because of it. Hendrik should clap his hands for joy, but he doesn't realize that yet. It lives in her heart and it is meaningful, it is a delicate string which is now being vibrated, and of which Hendrik doesn't hear any timbre, because he is not open to it. But that is a real shame! And a great lack. You turn your back to it, but then you also stand-alone. Suddenly there is misunderstanding in your life and that at six o'clock in the morning. It is wrong for each thought. Still she can rely on her Tall Hendrik for thousands of things. By his character, he carries her through life, now this as well and then. Yes, then life and her happiness can be called perfect.

Crisje is alone with him and asks:

'Do you want coffee now, Jeus?'

'Yes, mother.'

She follows him, it is her own blood, but the soul and spirit of this life speak more and deeper to her. But what is the matter? She must try and get him to talk, that is always a relief and then she can help him bear it. There is something, you see and feel it. Jeus is not a wimp or a troublesome child, he is always cheerful, has a strong character, this is something else. It is as if he is carrying thousands of kilos and

he has closed himself off to everything. It is ten o'clock, and he still is sitting there thinking. But about what and why?

'Don't you have to go to the doves, Jeus?'

'No, mother!'

'Don't you have to go to the rabbits, Jeus?'

'No, mother!'

'Do the doves mean nothing to you anymore, Jeus?'

'No, mother!'

Isn't that something, Crisje thinks. She starts to tell him lovely stories, he is always interested in the bible, and he is open to the angels and Our Lord. She begins, but is he really listening?

'Yes, Jeus, it is beautiful in heaven. The angels sing sweet songs there... and they can sing, even better than your own father can.' Jeus admits:

'That's true!'

She is surprised and continues. 'They also have beautiful trees there, Jeus. And nice flowers. And you can walk there for hours and there is no one to harm you.'

'That's true!' he utters dryly.

'And before you want to go there, Jeus, you must first die.'

'That's nonsense!'

'What is that?', Crisje asks. 'I don't want to talk nonsense?'

'I know, mother, but that is nonsense!'

But what a boy. She looks at him somewhat puzzled, and doesn't know how to think. Yes, Crisje, as far as he is concerned you are telling lies. He has already been there so often. He knows everything about it and you know that yourself as well. And has he died then? Isn't he alive? Is he dead? If you think about it, Crisje, then you will know. It is not so simple, but it is possible for you to know. She continues:

'But surely you're not trying to say, Jeus, that people go directly to heaven? A lot must happen for that and an awful lot at that. But it is nice there and the birds sing and they eat just like that out of your hands. And you must eat with golden spoons, Jeus. Do you think that they don't have to eat there?'

And again Jeus comes away with: 'That is also nonsense, mother.'

'But, Jeus?'

'Our food makes them sick there! And they do not want anything

to do with gold spoons and forks, nothing at all!’

Crisje is up against a brick wall; she would rather start about something else. In this way she will not discover his worries.

‘Do you know, Jeus, that Our Lord is everywhere and that HE can show Himself to all people? And all the saints are with Him and watch out for Our Lord and must keep everything beautiful in heaven, Jeus, just like I have to do for our own family.’

He thinks, and has to laugh about it. As if life there is exactly the same as this mess. He looks at his mother and is sorry for her. Yet, when Crisje talks to him about these matters, his life flies open and he gets wings. Then he is like a wise person. However, he was there with José. And doesn’t Crisje see that José and his Tall One are present now? The Tall One listens and winks at him, he gives back his feeling and thinking. Crisje says:

‘Do you want another cup of coffee, Jeus?’

‘No, mother.’ Now he has something to ask. He asks Crisje, and he checkmates her as a result:

‘Are angels like small children, mother?’ He immediately looks José in the eye, as if he wishes to say: now listen then you will hear something. Crisje doesn’t know that he communicates with angels like children and says:

‘No, Jeus, angels are adults, just like me, they are grown-ups, do you understand that?’

Jeus had wanted to say that that was nonsense again, don’t you see then that there is a child-angel here? Do you not see and hear that I am talking to such an angel, that I play with these angels? Crisje hears:

‘But then you don’t know anything about it, mother. Nothing!’

Isn’t that difficult, Crisje? Jeus is telling you the complete truth. Tall Hendrik wouldn’t have heard this, because Jeus closes himself off completely to your Tall Hendrik. He laughs too much and then he doesn’t give himself. How could he talk to his father, Crisje. Hendrik thinks: ‘I will not let myself be fooled by my children’, he thinks that he is sensible, but that is not true, he is now standing next to his boy. You must try to open his inner self, only then will you hear what is occupying him and then you will be surprised, Crisje. Jeus falls back into his silence and Crisje wants to prevent that at all costs. She continues and comes a bit closer to the problem, which is occupying him.

‘I know even more, Jeus, and something completely different. Our Lord lived in this world a long time ago. Then Our Lord brought his Holy Gospel to the people. And then the people nailed Him to the cross, they crucified Him.’

That is now something, Crisje, which he has already thought about for a long time. He immediately follows with:

‘But then shouldn’t they have buried him in the Jewish graveyard?’

What is he saying now? She thinks about it and then says:

‘You are confused, Jeus. Certainly not, but Our Lord wasn’t a Jew, was he? They laid Our Lord in the Holy Grave. And there is always a light burning there now, that is the eternal flame. That is where Gethsemane is too! And all the other holy places are there as well, because Our Lord walked there day and night. But people are bad, Jeus, and then people nailed Our Lord to the cross, crucified Him.’

She feels, no more now, otherwise it will be too much for him. Jeus looks like a corpse and runs away, she gets neither a yes, nor a no. Should she not have given him this story? Then what should she do? A child like him is hard to deal with. He is now everywhere, he must think, that story of mother is strange, and not true either, because if you are hung you must be buried with Sint van Tien. Nothing can help him; his life is dead, but through what? Jokes do not interest him now. Deut and Duumke have become less important problems for him, he doesn’t want anything to do with that slaver now. The holy places are squashing him to death. His eyes are at the back of his head, but he thinks; his life is leaden, the stench is in it, but where did this pressure and misery come to him from? Crisje thinks: ‘Could Deut perhaps have poisoned his life? Would Deut? But that isn’t possible.’ When Jeus comes back, she takes him with her to do the shopping. He is now hanging on to her skirt again, just like he used to, and he hasn’t done that for a very long time. He is now too big for that and too sensible, but still, you have to watch him. ‘A biscuit, Jeus?’ ‘No!’ ‘What did you say?’ ‘No!’ ‘What is the matter with him, Cris’, Theet Egging asks? ‘Is there something the matter, Cris?’ ‘Something else, Jeus?’ ‘No! I don’t want anything nice to eat!’ ‘Do you understand that? I don’t. That has never happened to me before, Crisje. A child that doesn’t want sweets.’

‘Don’t you want to go to Anneke, Jeus?’ ‘No! I don’t want anything to do with Anneke’, Crisje hears him saying. ‘Won’t you go to Theet

and Mathie, your little friends?’ ‘No! I don’t want to see any friends!’ She tries all kinds of things. Could he be coming down with an illness? ‘Don’t you want to go to the mill, Jeus?’ ‘No.’ ‘Not to the Jewish graveyard?’ ‘No, I don’t want anything to do with the Jewish graveyard today.’ Jeus is sick, Crisje feels and she doesn’t know what it is. He slouches beside her, but says nothing. No mill, or anything else, manages to touch him yet. The life is beaten to death, but by what? This has never happened before, Crisje takes Jeus for a walk, she is taking time out and leaving her work unfinished. Maybe it will help. You will do everything for your child, at any rate for this life. And now she is walking with him in the Montferlandseweg and tells him things. However, he doesn’t say a thing.

‘But just take a look, Jeus. Isn’t it beautiful here where we live? How many town people don’t come to look at Montferland? Bernard should go out with you, he can tell you all kinds of things. The rich people stay in Montferland, Jeus. And those people rest from hard labour. And later they go home and then they have to go to work hard again, of course. Why don’t you say anything? Can’t you say something to me?’

He doesn’t say a word to her, But Crisje continues.

‘Just look at this nice moss, Jeus. Isn’t it soft? You can’t even feel your own feet now. It is as if we are now walking in heaven. Don’t you think so as well? And so Our Lord has something different for all of us.’ She looks, he shuffles along beside her but still doesn’t say anything.

‘Do you see that woman there, Jeus? That is Mrs Garridse. She is almost eighty years old and still works as if she is twenty. That is a good person, Jeus. If she ever dies, she will not have to worry about herself. She will go to heaven just like that. And that is something, don’t you think?’ Deep silence from Jeus.

‘Shall I show you our own land now, Jeus? Do you know that we are getting another piece of land? Then we can plant potatoes for ourselves and for the poor people, you know, who always come to us and whom you liked so much, true or not?’

Still no answer. But carry on, Crisje. ‘Over there is the Hunzeleberg, Jeus. From there you can see Emmerik. When you are there, you can also see the Eltersche Berg, where I went with your father. We danced there, Jeus, and then I only just knew your father, but what

fun we had there.' Can you still not say anything? Is there not even a smile left? No? 'And over there lives the baron. You know, him from the castle, my God, Jeus, what a lot of money those people must have. Father had to bring his wine there. Have you forgotten that already? No, you haven't, have you? But why can't you say anything anymore to me? Why don't you want to answer me, Jeus? Are you sick inside?'

Now for the first time she sees that she has touched the life and a weak little smile appears on his face. Should she follow the inner life? She cannot reach that, anyway. Let's just go back then, Jeus, I have so much to do. The children need her and she must be mad. People will wonder what she is up to. He looks her in the eye but says nothing. Crisje feels deep sorrow, misery reaches her being from those eyes. Tall Hendrik can tell her more. This is deadly serious. He is not enjoying his food, nice things aren't touched, sweets belong to the past, there is something the matter, but she doesn't know what. Love doesn't help; you don't do anything here with love, do you? Little acts of kindness mean nothing. Nothing! It is enough to drive you mad.

When Tall Hendrik comes home, he hears how Crisje has bent over backwards to get Jeus to talk. He now also hears that Jeus' stomach is fine and that childish moaning is not the reason for this peculiar attitude and silent behaviour. He finally understands that his child has a great problem to deal with inwardly and now starts to look at this life through different eyes. He now has respect for this problem and for the life of his son. He now wants to try and come closer to this soul and also wants to give something. He asks cheerfully:

'Shall I play for you then, Jeus?' If he really believes that this life will accept his gift with both hands, a great disappointment awaits him because Jeus answers tersely:

'No, father.'

Isn't that something, Cris? Then the child hears: 'Do you know what you are saying? Do you know that the whole neighbourhood would go down on their knees to hear me play? Will I sing for you then?'

'No, father, I'd rather you didn't just now!'

'Damn it, what do you want from me, nothing?'

Unfortunately, Tall Hendrik doesn't have the patience of Crisje. Crisje thinks, 'damn it' does not help matters at all. That is too harsh once more, with no thought behind it and too rough. Then Jeus hears

again:

‘It is that you are sick, because otherwise I would have something else to say to you. Then you would have been in the cellar long ago. This is just a bother to us. We already have worries enough. And as long as you understand that. And it is stopping Mother and me from sleeping. Will you stop your whining? I’m sick to death of it. You look like our house is falling down. Can’t you smile at us at all? I’m being driven mad by it, as long as you know.’

Tall Hendrik achieves nothing. Then the doctor will just have to come. This is not going well. But Crisje gives Jeus other medicines. The doctor also says: ‘There is nothing, Tall Hendrik, nothing. It is growing up!’ But growing up or not, this has to stop. However, Tall Hendrik knows, he doesn’t need to mock it now, it is really serious. But what is it actually? ‘Have you ever heard of this illness, doctor?’ ‘No, Hendrik, children are the most difficult thing there is.’ Crisje prays and carries on. When she thinks about him, she feels that something else comes out of his life, a feeling that means he has something terrible to bear. And she wants to help him in this. She surrounds him with her love, not from the outside, but from the inside, then something opens in him, then she feels again that when she gives him her feelings, the worrying changes and he becomes a bit lighter, she can clearly feel the heaviness of his life. But it is also something strange, something new for her and for Jeus, and probably for this entire world.

She has never experienced anything like it with her other children. Can’t Our Lord help her? She continues to monitor and follow his life.

She now feels that this is the only thing with which she can help him. And from Jeus those same thoughts reach her. He looks her in the eye now and again and then it is as if she is looking into the heavens, and a ray of real light reaches her. She thinks: Golgotha cannot be as bad as these feelings of hers now. And now that her thoughts go there, she also gets these feelings back from him, which give her a fright and at the same time she undergoes the effect and the heaviness. Is that all coming from Jeus? Is he experiencing the most serious problems of all? However, this just isn’t possible. And yet, when she thinks about it, light comes into her child, her Jeus, and it is as if he is asking: but help me, but help me, mother.

The pure feeling, as a question it comes to her life: don't just leave me alone, mother. I cannot bear this alone.

One afternoon, when they are sitting together again in the kitchen and the child doesn't want to go outside, Crisje gets a vision. That is my imagination, she thinks, because this is impossible. She sees a crowd of people going by and all those people are climbing a high mountain. And she knows that mountain as well, she knows exactly where those people are going. She and Jeus are also there, they follow the people as they climb the mountain. All those people, Crisje sees, are crying in sorrow. Does Jeus know that? Does he know that she and he together are following all those people? Would he feel something of the great sorrow, the sorrow of all those people? However, that isn't possible, is it? If that is the case, then she can help him bear it. Why and for what purpose he has to live in this, she doesn't want to ask yet, even if that is a great problem, all that matters is to help Jeus. Now she suddenly knows how she can reach him. Crisje now begins:

'It is strange, Jeus, but I have been so silent as well recently, haven't I? And it is inside me. And if I start to look, Jeus, then there are at least a thousand people with me and all those people are in just as bad a way as I am. Do you feel like that too, Jeus?'

Crisje gets to hear:

'Yes, mother! I have exactly the same feelings!'

Thank God, Crisje thinks, it is there; she can carry on now. Do you see, Tall Hendrik? Jeus has something terrible to bear. He is carrying the suffering of this world. Jeus is experiencing the sorrow of this world. They are huge heaps of misery! It is unbelievable, but it is true! I saw it myself, Hendrik. Now she gets contact with her child. She also sees that he looked for a moment and the lights came back to his eyes. For a long time they say nothing. She has to think seriously now. She feels a pain inside, that Jeus has felt for days. The feeling cuts through your soul. She thinks it is much worse than having children.

'Do you feel that pain too, Jeus?'

'Yes, mother!'

'It really hurts, doesn't it, Jeus?'

'Yes, mother, it is suffocating me.'

'And that is just under your heart, isn't it, Jeus?'

'Yes, mother, it is there.'

My God, that is not possible!... Crisje sends into the universe and

to Our Lord, that is not possible!

‘And did you also see all those people, Jeus?’

‘Yes, mother.’

‘Really?’

‘Yes, mother, and they are convulsed with pain.’

You see, Crisje thinks, what she saw comes from his life and takes her to Jerusalem, to what she told him about. How is it possible, Our Lord, but what is the purpose of this? Crisje presses him to her heart, but she also does this inside, he doesn't need to know everything about her. She will cheer him up, give him everything from inside which he needs and try to step out of here, without tearing her and his clothes. That is not so simple. Nothing lives on the surface of his soul and only that suffering can be felt, but there in that depth a person is crying, a child at that, and that life is carrying this world. But why? How can Our Lord approve of this? She has to have an answer to this.

‘But is there nothing else the matter, Jeus?’

‘No, mother. There is nothing else the matter with me!’

That is just more than enough, she thinks. ‘It only hurts so much’, she also hears.

‘I understand, Jeus, I know, of course, and I will help you to bear it.’ When she follows him, she drowns in a pool of misery. What does Father think of it? How does he see this problem? ‘We have never seen anything like it before, Crisje. I don't understand. I do not understand that Our Lord will allow a child to bear that, but yes, Crisje, it is possible. But then your Jeus will become a martyr.’ ‘No, no, Father, don't make any martyrs of my children, for goodness sake, no, we don't want to talk about that. But can the church not do anything then?’ What does Father say? I have been praying for so long already, I always pray, but Father knows that, doesn't he? Has Father forgotten, that he looked in Jeus' eyes when he was born and he experienced that same silence? I haven't forgotten. We haven't forgotten, Father. Of course, Crisje, children like that lived on the earth, of course, but what do you want? Later they ran wild. Didn't you know that, Crisje?

Weeks pass. Jeus remains quiet, but his mother is helping him to bear it. Tall Hendrik also recognises that it is deadly serious, now that he knows everything. The doctor doesn't come back and they don't talk about it to anyone, not Anneke, not Theet of Mrs De Man, get to see him. Good Friday is approaching. Jeus is quieter than ever. It is

bad in bed, that heat is killing him. He is already so warm inside, now that as well. The child crawls out of bed at night, and lies down on the ground in front of the box bed. It is strange, they never find him there, he doesn't say anything to Gerrit and when it is time for father to get up, he climbs back into bed. It is a huge drama, Crisje! But Tall Hendrik doesn't realise it, even if he keeps quiet, he lets Crisje and his son get on with it, he follows those lives, but not more than that. And yet? Tall Hendrik also has a heart and thinks.

When he says: 'It seems, Crisje, as if we will all be buried', Crisje knows what he experiences from it, but she already feels happy that she no longer hears those harsh words 'damn it'. But still, when Jeus wants to warm himself up a bit in the kitchen with father and mother, because he is now one with mother, he has to swallow from Tall Hendrik:

'Just go away with your long face, I cannot even eat my sandwich.' Then Crisje gets a shock inside and she thinks that is terrible, and when he also utters: 'You look like you have a runny nose', she rattles Tall Hendrik between his ribs and he knows that this doesn't cost anything and only creates more misery. He smothers everything! He refuses every childish approach when it concerns pettiness, childish nonsense. He wants to make men of his boys and you do not achieve this with this pitiful pettiness. That is the one thing that removes him from those lives time and again, because Tall Hendrik has no feeling for that and this continually places him outside these supernatural problems. But what strange creatures men are, Crisje thinks, with their childish illusions. But Tall Hendrik doesn't care about that madness. He has enough on his mind. He has to laugh now about Father. Now how can you talk to a man like that about such matters? Tall Hendrik knows better, for himself then, he has his bitters, not two, but five at least, then he can face it again for the time being. A decent person would go completely mad with that moaning at home. They don't need any more mad people, he is already mad enough himself. Then something else reaches him, something that makes him think, and he says to Crisje:

'He is moaning, Crisje, he is moaning inside.'

'Have you got your eyes closed, Hendrik? Are you only there to make sure there is food and drink? Have you no sense anymore?'

Tall Hendrik can make do with this for the time being. Is there

anything else, Hendrik? What do you think of it now? Tall Hendrik thinks that it is high time that the fair comes, this just won't do. A change will have to come about in this, otherwise there will be accidents.

He grasps Jeus and puts the child on his knee.

'Jeus, look at me, look me in the eye.'

Tall Hendrik looks the child in the eye, but he doesn't see anything special. Jeus pierces his father, he descends into him, pretends he is looking into the eyes of the nice doves and the rabbits; he looks through Tall Hendrik. Then Tall Hendrik says something strange again, at least for Crisje.

'He is looking at the Hunzeleberg, Cris. He can no longer look people in the face.' And to Jeus: 'Do you want to tell me off?'

Now an answer comes which Tall Hendrik couldn't have accepted from any adult and certainly not from a child:

'Yes, father!'

'Do you know what you are saying to me?'

'Yes, father!'

'That is...', would come now, 'good gracious', but Crisje wants to be one step ahead and get him away from the child. However, Tall Hendrik doesn't let it go.

'None of it Cris, we are talking to each other. What do you say, Jeus? True or not?'

Crisje has to laugh, Tall Hendrik shakes him back and forth and tries it in his way. Jeus is horse riding, but doesn't want anything to do with this nonsense and wriggles himself free. Before he has done this, Tall Hendrik asks again, but do not think that he will get an answer:

'Will you forgive your father, Jeus?'

'Yes, father.'

'And will you talk to us again?'

'Yes, father.'

'Cris, do you hear that? He will talk again.' 'Do you really mean that, Jeus?'

'Yes, father, I mean it.'

Now Tall Hendrik is happy. You see, Crisje, you have to do it like that. Tall Hendrik leaves, they are slowly stumbling towards Good Friday. There is silence on the day that Christ was nailed to the cross, along with silence in the human heart, Crisje knows that Jeus has

been fretting about it for four weeks and perhaps then there will be an end to this misery. However when it is Good Friday, then you will see that the world becomes dark. Jeus sees that adults do not notice anything, yet the world is becoming dark. He has seen that for such a long time. However, the people do not see it. Only mother does, but she doesn't know everything either. Not one person is thinking about the Man in Jerusalem, even if those people think they are experiencing some of it, they do not see that the sun is becoming dark. What Jeus sees and experiences of it, Crisje, is that the world is becoming dark and as a result of this he got those pains in his heart.

It is good like this, Jeus. We are almost there. Even if Father finds it strange and many people will find it just as unlikely, this was necessary! This would happen! This had to happen for your further life. Because you will receive an extraordinary task to fulfil for this world, your own 'Tall One', therefore your guardian angel, has linked your life to Golgotha. And this, Crisje, had to happen in order to expand, strengthen and influence the nervous system and to advance the inner life to the personality and prepare it for the task for which his Tall One and Jeus serve! Really, your Jeus has experienced a path of suffering up until now, but we haven't finished yet. In a few days this will also be part of the past and then Jeus will have his own life in his hands again. Then he will get everything back for himself, but now, dear Crisje, he lives through other strengths and powers, but there is no danger!

The sun shines for people, for him no longer. For Jeus the sun has disappeared and a deep darkness has come over the earth and the people. Only people of good will come to this unity, but then according to the laws of the universe and not as people think it happened. Everything will be different, Crisje, if you wish to follow and accept the inner part of it. On the other hand, would Jeus be able to imply all of this? Can a child convince himself of it all? Can a child experience Golgotha and attract it to himself? That is now impossible, Crisje, but what it is about is sacred: what Jeus experiences is universally true, only the people on earth experience their past through it, nothing, but then nothing else. They do not adjust to this part, just look at Tall Hendrik.

Jeus has already been walking round in a dark world for weeks. The sun shines but doesn't give any light any more. He hits his head

against everything. Aunt Trui makes him anxious now. Mrs. De Man, but you can see that, gives him peace. Isn't that strange? Follow this for a moment, Crisje. He is attracted to the miserable people, he is open and conscious to misery, the unfortunate people can help him bear it, but no one knows that. What has 'He' done in 'His' time, Crisje? If you want to experience these things, then you will go naturally into 'His' life. Then you will run away from Trui, and 'Tall Hendriks' will mean nothing to your life; now you are faced with deadly seriousness! Children come to no good, but not Jeus! Children have seen sacred things but were still bad; not Jeus, Crisje, he has been born for his task, but that will become clear to you later. However we are nearly there.

The savage dog of Mrs. De Man licks him, is mad with joy when he comes to him, because the big animal feels his love. When you see that you have to cry. The savage animal also feels something. Tall Hendrik doesn't. An animal knows what is the matter. Fanny knows as well. You should follow Fanny for a while. The one who gets an answer is Fanny. However, Fanny has had to accept that it must now not ask questions all the time. Jeus has said that clearly to Fanny. This life is now not able to jump at him and beg him urgently: aren't we going yet, are you going to be sorrowful for even longer than today? Fanny follows him and its tail, but you can see that, is hanging between its legs. Fanny's head is also hanging. If there is one who helps him bear it, then it is Fanny. It does not bark, and if that still happens now and again the dog looks at him, as if to say: I really had to bark or those whippersnapper dogs would think that we are no longer here. Jeus sees it and drinks in this love. 'Thanks, Fanny, I will never forget this, as long as you know that.

But, Fanny, I have to think. You must wait a while yet, but then we will romp with each other again.'

Fanny is already howling. Crisje hears it. Fanny also gets to hear a lot from her. The animal is like a person. She can talk to Fanny, Fanny sits there and listens, it is number one, as it were. Jeus feels himself becoming calmer as Good Friday approaches. When he will later enter Golgotha with his 'angel', as the instrument of the master, believe it, then he will look back on this time and he will know what its purpose was then.

Tall Hendrik must work on Good Friday. Jeus has lain on the floor

again last night, and when it is morning, he stumbles in the direction of the kitchen. He looks at Crisje and then at Tall Hendrik, remains standing by the door, until his father says: 'Come in.' He immediately sits down at the table. Tall Hendrik now thinks that he feels something different. He asks:

'You promised me that you would talk again, but will that take even longer than today?'

There now follows: 'No, father.'

'Do you wish to say by that, that you will start talking again today?'

'Yes, father.'

'Do you really mean that?'

'Yes, father.'

'Cris, do you hear that?' They look at each other with relief. However Tall Hendrik is still not so sure about it and asks again:

'Are you sure about what I just asked you, Jeus?'

'Yes, father, I know.'

'What would you think of that, Cris. Now there will be an end to the carry-on.' And to Jeus:

'When I come home this evening, will you be talking again?'

'Yes, father.'

'And will you come and collect me with your mother?'

'Yes please, father.'

Jeus looks at Crisje. Crisje nods, they will do that.

'And do you now want something nice to eat from me?'

'Yes, please, father.'

He eats something and drinks a bowl of coffee. Tall Hendrik is puzzled. Gracious me, that's something, Tall Hendrik thinks to himself. Nevertheless he has learned something. However he also sees that Jeus looks like a thin dog. Tall Hendrik leaves, Crisje doesn't say anything, she knows that it will happen today, she prays, hour after hour, Our Lord is certainly not alone. Millions of people on earth will be praying today, there is no one who will do it and experience it like them, Crisje knows. And that through her Jeus. It is now quiet, and remains so, even if the other children are raising hell. You can feel this silence through everything else. By eleven o'clock Jeus gathers some crusts of bread, puts them in his pocket and drinks a lot of water. Then runs out of the house. Crisje does not get a fright, but her heart is bursting with pain. Her thoughts go far from home.

She... how is it possible, follows another Mother and now she can understand the awe-inspiring sorrows of that Mother. And what just ran out of the house, she knows as well! It is unbelievable. That is also so sacred and true, that she would give her life for it immediately, if they wanted to accept it from her. Oh, Tall One, Hendrik, but how much you are missing. But how indifferent you are, however she can also understand that, he is not yet at that stage and you cannot force it either, you need an enormous amount of time for it. Crisje continues to follow him, she knows, he has run into the woods, there the drama will take place today and he will experience the consequences of Golgotha! That is it! But my God, no, I will no longer complain, everything is okay!

Fanny and he are deep in the woods. Jeus sees the world is now becoming pitch black. He throws himself between the bushes and puts his head into the ground, he is crying as he has never cried before. He is bursting inside. There is no longer any flesh on his little legs, and he is crying himself silly. Why are they leaving him alone now for so long? Where are José and his Tall One? Have they forgotten him? Are they really angels? The questioning has started, he has now felt the first touch of his Tall One.

He looks through the bushes into the universe and believes that there is a bit more light coming. Has the worst passed? Yes, Jeus, just a moment ago over there, but then two thousand years ago, yet at this moment, Christ died. Did you see, Jeus, that the Universe really became dark? No person can take it away from you again, and this, Jeus, will be your great inspiration for eternity and which you also received in order to complete your supernatural task in this life. Even if this powerful world runs into you, day in day out, you will keep yourself standing! Whatever happens later, Jeus, this now, this misery, this Divine touch, will keep you in balance, it will ensure that no one can compete with you, even if they stab your heart from all sides; you will then be able to help bear HIM.

Suddenly the Tall One's face appears. He flies into the arms of his guardian angel; it takes a long time, before he is able to stand on his own two feet again. Then he sees José as well. Now everything is forgotten, And he does not ask why he experienced this misery, that is not necessary, he knows now. It is a part of him. Mount Calvary dissolves before his eyes, the Tall One takes care of his needs and puts

him back on the firm ground of the earth. He knows that he has been able to lay a powerful foundation for later. Jeus did not work against him. On the contrary, he has accepted everything!

‘Did it hurt much, Jeus?’

‘Yes, of course, but I am still here, true or not.’

‘Yes, Jeus, we are here. Shall we now see who can run the fastest?’

‘Yes, I’d like to know.’ His Tall One wins. And now Jeus gets to hear that he will be able to do that as well later, He also teaches Jeus to float in air. Jeus is now floating, he continues to follow his Tall One, then if it is ever necessary, he can show what he has learned. And for what you have gone through you have been rewarded. Yes, he says, he understands it all. He has now forgotten his misery. They go back to Crisje. No one sees that Jeus is now walking between two beings, and only Fanny can see it. The dog doesn’t know where it can walk now. The animal barks right in Jeus’ face, also in Tall One’s face. Then they say goodbye to Jeus and he runs back to Crisje. He can now say:

‘Here, mother, I’m back.’

Crisje takes him in her arms. She kisses her Jeus and then he has to eat. He devours the food like a hungry wolf. Crisje has thought of everything. Yes, she was right in trusting the guardian angels and they, Crisje, will sit at one table with you sometime and follow everything from beginning to end, to see what went well and what went wrong. The Tall One knows that he doesn’t make any mistakes, but we eat and drink through the grace of Our Lord, we sit with HIM at the table, but it is different to how people today imagine that, but it will come! Jeus is in perfect health! He was not sick! He experienced Golgotha! He felt for a moment how heavy the cross of Christ is. There wasn’t any more to it!

‘Good day, José, do not leave me alone for so long any more...’, is the last thing which he feels and then they are ready to fetch the Tall One. Crisje is thankful inside. Jeus feels nothing. The other children haven’t noticed anything about it either. Yes, Bernard thought, he was short-tempered and Johan had to laugh about it as well, that moaning would have to stop for a change. It is strange and remarkable, what a person cannot feel and experience, does not penetrate his inner life either, and that will be simple again now if you follow Tall Hendrik. Hendrik knew that there was something, but he didn’t understand the least thing about it, received none of it, he and all the others were

completely outside of it. Jeus and Crisje know this is for their lives and no one understands it. When the boys are grown-up and they read and reread the story of their lives, only then will they wonder: what do I know about it? Then there will come from the heavens: nothing! Nothing, Johan! Nothing, Bernard! Nothing, you ran past it! You could not experience it, because this was not intended for your lives. Even your healthy and strong father was absolutely outside it! From the symptoms, you will later get to know the inner life of Jeus. Then you will wonder: why does he have those things and why not me? Just you try and imitate Jeus, try to write books as well, also give lectures to people, because that will happen, paint and write, also make one of these 'Harps'... You cannot. Neither can Jeus, that all belongs to his angels, the masters, whom Jeus has to serve! Sometime, my dear Crisje, know this world will carry you and Jeus. Humanity will wash and kiss your feet some day, because only then will these millions of children of Our Lord know what the purpose of both of you was. That will also happen, Crisje!

When it is time, Zutphen-Emmerik train comes steaming in, this little thing struggles over the Wetering and Tall Hendrik steps out. Jeus races to meet his father, he is already hanging in his strong arms. Tall Hendrik doesn't show it, they would like that, but Crisje can see it, he is crying inside, And that is now also an 'orchid' for her life. That good, great clever Tall One! 'Now let me look at you, Jeus. Yes, I believe you, you are one of us again.

In the middle of the street, which is not like Tall Hendrik, he presses Crisje to his heart; he lifts Jeus above his head and gives in to this happiness for a moment. And then back home. Jeus has received something nice from Tall Hendrik. It is a surprise for him; the other boys will also get something nice to eat today. When the boys are lying in bed, Jeus is now also sleeping like a baby, Tall Hendrik asks:

'And, Cris, what was that all about?'

Tall Hendrik has to wait a moment, but now, Crisje feels, it must not take too long, but she wants to prepare his life for something.

'Yes, Hendrik this was sacred and this will be difficult.'

Tall Hendrik gets a fright from that. He reacts immediately and asks:

'You're not trying to say, Cris, that you hold secrets from me?'

'You know better than that, Hendrik, but it is difficult.'

Now Tall Hendrik already has to keep on at it, in order to be able to share the life of his great Crisje. Crisje thinks. Now she has to teach him something. For what he has been doing all those weeks, it was hurtful and must not happen again. She wants to give him something, but feels, she cannot give away everything from herself and from Jeus. That is also the boundary of human love. Because a snarl from a man destroys love. Such a snarl and such a growl kills the foundations of love. You are now powerless and cannot go on. Even if your heart is breaking, exactly that which you want to give so much, you cannot give now. Suddenly she knows that millions of people consciously trample their happiness! Yes, she has consequently learned this. Jeus taught her to see it and let her experience it. Now the big strong and self-aware Tall Hendrik can already beg for alms. If you don't want that, you can get round it, but she does not want to cheat herself and her God, so, you are now just faced with the silly carry-ons of that other person and that is your love, your happiness and your life, which does not want to go higher and further. Again Tall Hendrik asks:

'Do you hold secrets from me, Cris? Then I will end my life, keep that in mind.'

Crisje gets a fright. You see, one thing leads to another. People will not bow! They turn up their coats! They get on with it! They do not want to admit that they are the problem themselves, no, now they will put an end to it as well. They are big children! Then Tall Hendrik finally gets to hear the big story for his life. 'So, was that it? I didn't know that, Cris.' No, of course not. Crisje didn't know either, but she was searching for it, Hendrik, and she found it! However wouldn't you now want to say an extra Hail Mary for Our Lord? That you show your gratitude, because you were able to experience this. 'Yes, of course', says Tall Hendrik, 'not aloud, Cris!' Crisje doesn't become angry. She throws her arms around the neck of her tall beanpole, and kisses him in such a way that he almost suffocates. You can simply never follow him, he will still be laughing in his coffin, and she has to be thankful for that again as well. Hendrik is and will remain a treasure for his Crisje!

They go to bed. Crisje takes his hand in hers. As they fall asleep. It is as if she is floating through space, but Tall Hendrik is also there, thank God, and Jeus looks, follows them and waves good day to fa-

ther and mother from a distance. He doesn't grudge them a trip like that to Our Lord, he knows all about it. How was it, father? By twelve o'clock Jeus and Fanny wake up. For they have slept a good part of the day and Crisje understands. That of yesterday is now in the past. However it is here and now as well. When Jeus trod on the earthly ground again, he got a fright for a moment, because he had not felt the earth for a long time. That also passed, Crisje. His life is now open to something else, but other experiences are necessary to make him completely free. But the Tall One will take care of that. See you soon, Jeus!

Fair's fair, the sun is back and life goes on! There is no decline, there never has been, for that matter! Crisje, was Tall Hendrik not awfully small? That is also happiness, which is why you could give him a kiss from your heart again, true or not? Nevertheless these 'orchids', Crisje, are on Our Lord's table. Believe it, that if you look behind the Grim Reaper, you will see them. Even the Grim One thinks they have a remarkable beauty, striking, rather.

‘Come on, girls and boys, we will now go and play on the ‘clouds’”

Crisje thinks, strong personalities will always succeed, because they are the ones who prove what they can in dealing with and forgetting the things which hit a person. Jeus has now proved that to her again, he is no weakling and no complainer, he has never been one. She sees that he now wishes to make up for the lost time. She can understand that as well and it makes her happy again. He is now at Hosman’s day and night, he helps Piet the servant, and the animals, they have his full attention as well. Crisje doesn’t get to see him for a second now. Crisje sees what Jeus experienced is now ancient history to him and belongs to the past, his soul and spirit, and are now open again to other things.

The children are lying on the moorland, they are tired from playing. Now there is nothing to be had from Bernard, he is at school, he has his own little friends. He roams the whole neighbourhood with Anneke, Theet of Mrs De Man, Mathie and a few other children of his age. On the moorland, where the bakers have stored their firewood, they can have a lovely romp. They can play hide and seek there, have the space and aren’t disturbed by anything. When they are tired out from all that running about, the childish mind looks for something else and the teasing begins and trying to hurt the other person. That is simply what the girls and boys are good at, just like adults, they cannot help it. Anneke asks Jeus:

‘Were you sick, Jeus?’

‘No’, he says. ‘Who wants to be sick anyway?’

‘That’s natural’, the quick Anneke Hosman goes on. ‘I can understand that, but where were you all that time?’

You see, Jeus, they missed you after all. Anneke asks again:

‘But a person can become sick, Jeus?’

‘Not me’, Jeus assures her, however she won’t accept that.

‘Good gracious, that’s something. Haven’t you had measles then? So you’re trying to tell me that you have never been ill? Haven’t you had the measles then? Haven’t you had whooping cough, scarlet fever?’

‘No’, he says, ‘even if you stand on your head, I have nothing to do

with scarlet fever and measles. I do not want that illness!

How Jeus can lie. They have all had measles, even whooping cough, but not scarlet fever yet. Now that he sees that Anneke is really angry and is calling him a liar, he changes his mind and just admits to her, because he knows for sure that every child will be sick or has been sick and they will not believe him anyway.

‘Well, yes’, he says hesitantly, ‘of course, but scarlet fever, no’, they know nothing about it at home and mother doesn’t want anything to do with it either. But what is that anyway, scarlet fever? They have all had a cough, of course, Anneke. But she has already thought of something else in the meantime. She asks Mathie:

‘What do you want to do, Mathie, when you are grown-up?’

Mathie doesn’t know yet. He will have to grow a bit first in order to be able to answer that, it is not so simple.

‘And you, Theet?’

‘Me? I will go to the town. I want to be a train driver. You know, just like our steam tram, but then a big one.’

‘But you have to study a lot for that, Theet.’

‘Of course, but I can manage that.’

‘And you, Jeus?’

Jeus has to think about it. Yes, what will he do when he is grown up? Suddenly he knows, and he is as sure as when he was standing in front of Deut and knew at the same time that he wasn’t mad. As sure as he knows that he can talk to José and an ‘angel’ now and again, as sure also, that there is a Lord. However Anneke already calls out:

‘Do you have to think about that for so long, Jeus?’

‘Of course, it is quite something’, she first gets to hear and then his answer comes: ‘I will write books later!’

They are surprised at this. Anneke screams at him:

‘What do you want, Jeus? Are you trying to tell me that you want to write books? That’s quite something, you have to learn a lot for that, did you know that? And it costs a lot of money as well.’

‘I don’t care, but I will write books!’

Jeus doesn’t see any difficulties, because he knows. These thoughts suddenly came to his life again and his personality. A farmer’s daughter like that, he feels, doesn’t understand it anyway. That Anneke always has to get him, which makes her very annoying. She just wants to show off with her cows and horses and let him feel that her parents

are rich and his parents are as poor as church mice, they are always at loggerheads with each other because of this. And yet, he really loves Anneke. She is quick, always talking and can say things, which are on the mark. Anneke is not stupid. They are always in each other's hair but still, if the others should try and attack her, then he will certainly still be on Anneke's side to help her. That Anneke with her possessions always zeros in on his poverty, and gives him the inspiration to give her a hiding again and again, this causes rifts between them of course and often spoils the nice sensitive world of the child. Sometimes they fight and he hits out, then the clogs are used, but Anneke is not to be taken lightly either. She fights back at the boys and does not let herself be given a licking just like that. And this is for him the only thing and the beautiful part, the inspiring part, through which he feels attracted to this young life. He often thinks, like this moment, I will get you yet, he doesn't forget anything, he comes back in his own time and then Anneke will feel it. Is he still not reacting? No, not yet, Anneke, but he will.

'Write books', Anneke mumbles sarcastically, 'that would drive you mad.'

He hears it but doesn't react. It is part of the world, he knows that, Anneke, where all those nice flowers live. Where all those beautiful birds are and that it is the Parvis of Our Lord, but you don't know the slightest thing about it, nothing! That belongs to his friends, which you do not know anyway and that is a lot nicer than pigs, chickens, horses, cows, filthy and dirty stinking manure, if you wish to know. When Anneke categorically goes on and on and wants to deny him that book writing, she gets:

'You don't understand anything about it anyway, you are too much of a whippersnapper for that!' Then she gets sick of it and throws her riches at him:

'As long as you realise that you have to have money for that and you are as poor as a church mouse, your father has nothing.'

Didn't he think it? She always has to brag about her riches. His parents don't have a cent, and yet they have everything. It is true, but he will write books! However Anneke hasn't finished yet, she continues:

'Do you know what you can do, imitate your mother. Those are the words of your mother.'

'So', Jeus returns, 'how did you learn to talk?'

The children laugh. And of course, they learned from father and mother. The argument continues. Anneke defends herself and Jeus hits where he can, until that gets boring as well and quick Anneke asks:

‘What will we play now, Jeus? And don’t you know anything, Mathie?’

Mathie doesn’t know of anything. Neither does Theet and you don’t even have to ask Alie and Mieneke. When Anneke behaves again as if she knows everything, Jeus still has a bone to pick with her.

‘Shall I tell you something, Anneke?’

‘Do you know of something, Jeus?’

‘Yes, I know of something, the only thing you understand about is horse manure!’

He has got her there. It is a slap right in her little face. But they will not make it like this. Jeus thinks about it because nothing special can be expected from Anneke or the others. Suddenly a thought occurs to him, and he knows what they can play. Isn’t that good? He jumps up and says:

‘Come on, children, we will go and play on the clouds.’

‘What do you want, Jeus?’, Anneke asks.

‘Didn’t you hear what I just said there? We will go and play on the clouds.’ He points to the clouds. ‘We will go there. To that one there, that nice thick white cloud.’

‘Do you want to play on the clouds, Jeus?’, the other children also ask in surprise.

‘Yes, we will go and play on the clouds. You must lie down here. And you must do what I say. Now lie down! You here, Anneke. Theet there. Mathie here, and Alie there and you Mieneke here, and I myself will go and lie here. Now go to sleep! Just go to sleep! With your legs against each other and go to sleep! Sleep, Theet! Sleep, Mathie! Sleep Anneke! Come on, with your eyes closed!’

He sees that the children are already sleeping. He lies down, holds hands with Anneke and Theet and goes to sleep. It all happens naturally, there is nothing to it, but anyone who saw that would wonder, what are those children doing anyway? What kind of a game is this? Are they mad? Are they sick? They are such funny children. However Jeus knows! He got those feelings naturally. They came from the source which said that he will start to write books, the source which

linked him to Golgotha and where he knows everything from. How pale the children look. It is a strange sight, but not for the children. Indeed, Jeus knows what he wants. The children see themselves outside their bodies. Now Jeus knows what must happen.

‘Hold hands. And now we are going to fly!’

Hey presto... he feels... he makes good speed and at the same moment they are already sitting between the clouds. And now everything happens naturally. He knows, now they have to decide who must look. There is the counting spot. Theet is it, he has to look for the others. ‘You just go with me, Anneke, then I will teach you something.’ Theet counts down, the others and Jeus and Anneke hide themselves. Then Theet hears: ‘You can come noooooow! Theet, come and find us!’

They see that Theet is wandering about in their vicinity. He comes closer by and now he must act.

‘Now we must be off, Anneke. Just give me your hand.’

He has learned this flying. Like a whirlwind, he whizzes past Theet with Anneke. Theet looks at these two disappearing, it happened as fast as lighting. Anneke is amazed.

‘Good gracious, Jeus, that is not walking any more, that is flying.’

He only smiles. He can do that now, Anneke. Theet can’t understand it either. Theet has to look again. They are sitting in a nice fat white cloud. He can see Theet, he is also able to follow the shadow. Suddenly he has to act, since Theet has seen them. He is already running. Jeus throws Anneke off him and flies through the universe so that Theet can whistle for him.

‘Good gracious me, that is quite something, Jeus. Now who can run as fast as that? How did you learn that? Why can’t we do that, Jeus?’ This is how the questions sound.

They hide again. Meanwhile Jeus sees that it is becoming dark here. A grey cloud is drifting into their space, it appears as if it is becoming night. Now they cannot see him either. Mathie is looking, he and Anneke look where Mathie is and, really and truly, Mathie is already running. Again he flies past them, and they cannot follow him. Jeus is enjoying himself, the children do not understand it. This is his universe, Anneke. And you will get to hear that yet. Over there, but Jeus doesn’t see that either, are two beings who are following everything. His Tall One and Jose are there too. What a pity that Fanny isn’t here.

Fanny didn't want to go to sleep, and is sitting there below keeping an eye on things. But Jeus knows, if he had wanted that, then Fanny would have slept as well, and the dog would have also been able to experience this miracle. Now that Anneke wants to know everything about it, Jeus gets his chance and adds, not without pride:

'Now that is mine! And that is worth more than cows and horses. Even more than a whole farm.' She and the others have to agree with him there. However, he doesn't understand that the children do not think and are not afraid. However he knows if he told them that they could fall down like a ton of bricks if he didn't watch out for them, then they would wet their trousers out of fear. There below lies the earth. He feels that the children know it but still do not realise it. It does not get through to them. But they know that they have played on the clouds. It all happens naturally, there is no reason to be afraid. It is you who is playing there, and knowing that something is waiting there below which has to do with you. Because it has become so dark, they have to go back. It is already raining. Jeus orders:

'Hold hands.'

The children do that and hey presto, they go back to the moorland. They look at their own bodies. Jeus says:

'Just crawl back into them.' And they crawl in there and waken at the same time. The journey, the wonderful event is past, but they are lying up to their necks in water. A downpour has caused the problem.

'Good gracious, Jeus, we are soaking wet.'

Jeus is also soaked, but now they run home as fast as they can. Isn't that just a miracle? On the other hand is it a miracle? They have played on the clouds. They all return home soaking wet.

'Where did you get to? Couldn't you have come home before the shower? Where were you?'

'We were playing with Jeus on the clouds, mother.'

'What did you do? What did you say?'

'We were playing on the clouds with Jeus, mother.'

It is beyond the minds of the older ones. 'Did you hear that, Crisje? My daughter came home soaking wet, and said that she had been playing with Jeus on the clouds. Did you hear that, Crisje? Alie said that she had been on the clouds with Jeus.'

'Oh well, Mrs Hosman, children always have something different. Surely you know that?'

Crisje also wondered, what is true about it and what part is childish fantasy? Jeus got other clothes to wear, and knew that this was an enormous gift. 'Thanks, Tall One! You really have my thanks!'

Children will be children. Jeus gets to hear that he could fly for the children, but the adults didn't believe it. They shrugged their shoulders, Tall Hendrik also dismissed it as rubbish. Yet, Tall Hendrik, this is also very simple too. Jeus really put the children under human hypnosis through his Tall One! But now by means of the 'Tall One'! His Tall One thought, Jeus needs something through which that 'Golgotha' will completely disappear. Did he not run a race with his Tall One? That was flying, Hendrik. That was also concentration... concentrating on moving forward; the will power of a person can do anything when you are free from earthly bodies. Jeus will also describe these great and yet so simple laws in his books, and he will later experience them again, because then he will get to experience great journeys with his master which will go straight to Our Lord.

The children had no significance in this, Tall Hendrik. But because a child can give itself up completely and does not possess its own thoughts and feelings with regard to something new, such as this playing on the clouds, such a life can be freed from the earthly body. Do you not feel, Tall Hendrik, that this is exactly the same as when Jeus leaves his body and he makes such a heavenly journey with his Tall One, which you know nothing about? The children were allowed to go with him, because they are children. Become such a child, Tall Hendrik, and Our Lord will also take you and everyone who can feel like a child up from the earth. He will then give you the ability to fly in order to look at HIS life, from which you also received your body and soul, and which can fly. They can be freed from their earthly organism, Tall Hendrik, and then these miracles happen. No, not miracles of course, they are properties, which belong to the inner life of the person.

Now, however, Jeus has had his fill of those mites. And Anneke, that stupid girl, he knows beforehand, will still cling to her cows and horses. However, that is up to her. Yet Anneke knows, and the other children as well: they were there, they played on the clouds! In thirty years time, and probably even more, they will still remember it. Nobody can take that away from the children and then Anneke will say to Jeus:

'Do you still remember that, Jeus?'

'Of course, Anneke.'

'Now I have five children, after all, Jeus, but will you believe me when I tell you that I have never forgotten that. My God, Jeus, but how happily we used to play. I cannot give that to my own children.'

Then Anneke will read Jeus' books. What she couldn't believe as a child has now become reality, Jeus is a writer!

‘So was that our Lord, Mother?’

Guardian angels know all about people, especially when they have to deal with the same people day in day out. However, Crisje knows that when you do the right thing, you will also receive the harmonic feeling of it; of course, whoever digs a hole for another may fall into it himself, meaning, ‘do to others as you would be done to,’ and Our Lord knows all about that. HE says in his turn to the angels: ‘go and take a look, get a good feel, but be extremely careful, and judge whether there is something that disturbs the life of ME or something which keeps the soul awake.’ If that is the case, then try to materialize those feelings and thoughts, so that the person benefits from them. Tall Hendrik would say: ‘I will sort that out for myself, I don’t need any angels for that. I will grab my violin or I will sing an aria, and if that still doesn’t help, I will drink a few nice bitters, then good or evil, unpleasant or supernatural thoughts will dissolve naturally!’ Then Crisje cannot say what she thinks, but it means: you are now standing on your own two feet and there is no question of that flying in the universe either.

Angels are able to weigh the human soul on the scales, the ones which belong to Our Lord, in order to see whether one thing is dominating another, that is to say: whether the inner life is superior to the material life, that mustn’t happen, because then the insides of it start to decompose, since that shuffling in the material is completely wrong for the nerves. The soul cannot enjoy its rest now, which is what it is really about, if a person wants to be able to say: there is nothing wrong with me!

The Tall One of Jeus saw that... Our Lord said to HIS angel: ‘Go and have a look. If it is necessary, now listen well, just pretend it is ‘I myself Who is there, represent me well and do not forget anything, because ‘I’ know for sure that mother Crisje’s Jeus wants to serve ME!’

When that order came, Jeus already started to worry, the first rays of that message had already reached his soul and the box bed, it started from that moment. And Crisje asked again:

‘What are you talking about now, Jeus?’ It is happiness, Crisje, he has something, but he doesn’t know yet. She heard from him:

‘I have to think, mother.’

Crisje is already praying. God save me, she thinks, when that one begins to think you are faced with happiness or with a lot of misery. She also asks:

‘What, in heaven’s name, do you have to think about now?’

‘I don’t know yet, mother.’

‘But if you don’t know what you have to think about, then you don’t have to start on it’, Crisje believes, because she feels that it is placing her again in front of things that are impossible to understand. And when he doesn’t make a sound then, she says without meaning to:

‘But surely you don’t have to think with your hands under your head? Is that not too heavy for you?’

‘Of course not, mother, but surely I can support myself?’

Let me just leave it alone, she thinks, I am powerless anyway. In any case this is a thousand times better than getting up to all that mischief. In what is mother interfering? Is a person no longer allowed to think? Is he not allowed to think properly? However he is occupied with something. He is expecting something. What it actually is, he doesn’t know yet. In any case, it keeps sending him with his thoughts to the Hunzeleberg. He sees hills and climbs up them. Gerrit has already given him a kick. While fast asleep he got up and wanted to climb that hill, but he kicked Gerrit right in his face and then of course they started fighting. And that’s it! There is not a night that goes by that he wasn’t climbing hills. Which is now the only thing that remained of his great journey to Jerusalem. He therefore didn’t get off scot-free, after all, there is now a tender scratch in his soul, that spiritual scar has to go, it must be cured by a salve from Our Lord or it will eat away at him, and that is very dangerous

Once more, something suddenly came and that also released him from his worrying for a moment. Now he can brood on something else, the neighbourhood is already worrying about it; many people will help him. Tall Hendrik, and Crisje as well, are worried because she has got that nasty felon. Inside the tissue of her right thumb is being eaten away, and that hurts like mad.

Tall Hendrik doesn’t know what to do any more. He has asked people if anyone knew of a cure. And yes, everyone knows something for it, everyone has had felon once, but if you ask them, what can Crisje do about it, they stand there staring and it was all just people talking

nonsense. However much he brooded on it, it didn't help him, Crisje continued to feel the pain in her thumb, nothing helped, and if that went on for a long time, Tall Hendrik saw, nothing would remain of the thumb. And that with a household full of boys, your right hand gone, that is bad. At the end of his tether, Tall Hendrik asked Crisje:

'You are so good at praying, Cris, can't you ask Our Lord then?'

Fair enough, Tall Hendrik, you now meant something completely different. You want to test her faith, her great trust in Our Lord as well, because that is it. Crisje moaned from the pain, but she felt what her Hendrik meant, she didn't need him for that. From the start she had already known that it would be that terrible felon. Now Our Lord has to help her, people have no understanding of these things. A doctor cannot help you; his salves do not help. And then, it happened one night, while she was sleeping, Crisje heard Our Lord say:

'You called me, Crisje, is there something the matter?'

'Yes, Our Lord, I am convulsed with pain. I have felon, Our Lord, and I cannot lift a hand anymore.'

'I can see that', Our Lord then said to Crisje, 'I can already see it, Crisje, it is bad, but I have something for you. Now you must listen carefully, Crisje.'

'Yes, Our Lord, of course.'

'Here, at Hosman's, Crisje, they have cows, don't they?'

'Yes, Our Lord.'

'If you make sure, Crisje, that you get fresh cow dung every morning, then not only will the pain disappear, but your thumb will get better.'

'Oh, I can get that, Our Lord. Thank You.'

'It's my pleasure, Crisje.'

'Thanks a million, Our Lord.'

'But you know, Crisje, that I am always here?'

'Yes, Our Lord, You know I will never doubt that.'

'Of course, Crisje. And now I have to go.'

That same morning Johan shuffled along to Hosman's to collect fresh cow dung. Johan needed a spade for this and when one of the cows carried out its bodily functions, Johan raced over to the cow in order to catch that medicine red-hot, wrap it in a cloth and bring it to Crisje. He was not allowed to touch the cow dung, the medicine mustn't come into contact with anything, because the power would

be lost, Our Lord had said. Every morning it is a feast there at Hosman's. Of course, they find it extraordinary. Johan almost broke his neck, because he fell backwards due to the slipperiness of the desired medicine. Then Crisje had to scrape her medicine from his coat. You couldn't trust him to do anything! When he arrived at school, Johan had to explain why he was so late. And when he told them that Crisje had felon and that he had to collect cow dung, the whole class laughed heartily at Johan. Now everyone is talking about Crisje's felon and the medicine, but they do not know that Crisje got her prescription from Our Lord Himself. Even Tall Hendrik doesn't know yet, but he will get to hear about it.

Now Bernard and Jeus are standing behind the cows. They have taken over Johan's task and now Crisje can count on her cow dung. Bernard almost knows beforehand which cow feels like helping Crisje. Bernard is so sure of his task that they are already laying bets on it. Jeus has already lost ten marbles. Bernard is usually on the mark, he is so finely attuned to the cow dung.

A moment ago Bernard said to Jeus: 'I think, Jeus, that black and white one will be the first.'

There are about ten cows in a row, one refuses or has spoilt everything precisely before they came, because that is what happened, but another one is being monitored and they now keep an eye on it. The first few mornings they were continually off the mark. Some cows, Bernard noticed, do it suddenly and then you are just too late. Others do it, by giving something now and again, but then it becomes dangerous. Bernard calls that the sprayers, because that one black and white cow sprayed him right in his face and that was something to have respect for. Bernard no longer even looks at those cows any more. Sprayers are no good and that must also mean something, after all, you get better medicine from one cow than another, even if they all eat the same thing, at the end of the day. Bernard says it is the finishing touch, because why are there cows which spray and then others which drop the healing material for you in a lovely calm way, full of understanding? Bernard has already thought that through and Jeus readily admits, Bernard can think.

Johan now has a difficult time at school, the children call him: cow poo. Bernard immediately hits out; they should just try it with him. And, it helped. from the first moment that Crisje pressed her thumb

into the cow dung there was an improvement, the severe pains lessened and she could say to Tall Hendrik: 'We're there, Hendrik!'

The whole neighbourhood laughs and talks about the cow dung, the animal healers of Hosman, those cows are worth their weight in gold. Jeus has already to hear about it. Anneke said:

'Now, Jeus? What do you have to say about our cows? If our cows weren't there, then your mother soon wouldn't have a thumb anymore.'

Jeus could now bow his head to Anneke, which he therefore did immediately with a:

'Of course, Anneke, you are right.'

Jeus only agreed with her because Crisje needed her cow dung; Jeus did not yet want to talk about how the lot stank and how unsure you were of your own life behind those cows, but it did take a lot away from all that greatness. On the other hand didn't Anneke know that? The boys are standing to the left and to the right of the row of cows. Jeus is standing on the right-hand side, Bernard on the left, so that they can immediately race towards a cow from both sides and not get in each other's way. They have divided their work and task for mother fairly, and Crisje can count on the boys. People do not know, but now Crisje does, that you can achieve a great deal more with cow dung and that it is the only cure for a number of illnesses in this world. Crisje says: people look for medicines in places where they aren't found. The medicines of Our Lord are close to home and sometimes they are under your nose, but people do not see it. You have to have inner eyes for that and Crisje has them.

Three weeks later Crisje's thumb was cured. Then Tall Hendrik asked:

'Tell me now, Crisje, how did you get the idea to use cow dung.'

'That's a good one, Hendrik.'

'That's a good one, you tell me? But I don't know.'

'But you said to me, can your Lord not help then. And then Our Lord came to me Himself.'

'Are you trying to tell me, Cris, that He is concerned with cow dung?'

'Yes, Hendrik, that was Our Lord Himself. If you dare to look Him honestly in the face, then He will not leave you alone. And you should know that, anyway.'

But Tall Hendrik didn't know. This was also above him. Imagine, the 'Saviour' bothering about cow dung, and yet? Crisje is cured by it. What is the truth now? Was that Our Lord Himself? Whatever the case, Tall Hendrik, the thumb is better and the terrible felon has gone. Crisje dreamt it and during her dream, Our Lord Himself spoke to Crisje! Is that not enough for you? Do you no longer understand plain dialect, Tall Hendrik? What Tall Hendrik thought about it was: that Cris! However, deep within himself, and that is the truth, Tall Hendrik takes his hat off to his Cris, but he should have known, Crisje can do so much. She has already proved before that she can make medicines with some vegetables and some herbs. She has that gift, and where it comes from is not important, she could have been a herbalist but doesn't want that. She did not yet know of a cure for felon, but that was also given to her life and she is grateful to Our Lord for that.

When Tall Hendrik wanted to know, why cow dung and why specifically fresh cow dung possessed healing properties, Crisje said dryly:

'If you think about it, Hendrik, then you will know.'

Tall Hendrik starts to think, but he does not get through it and he will not find out. But still? Crisje continued:

'Everything, Hendrik, which an animal has digested inside, but not a dog or a cat, cows are the best, that has gone through a factory. And a factory like that, Hendrik, all the properties are in there and those properties are as pure as anything and have everything in them to heal.'

Tall Hendrik couldn't get his head around it, he still didn't know anything. A cow is a factory? And this factory has healing powers? Crisje saw it and she also knew, when Our Lord gave it to her she saw that factory in the cow, and she could understand. Moreover, such a chemical factory, Tall Hendrik, is open and prepared to kill every bacteria and to inspire that material, exactly through that which Our Lord has given growth and bloom to all that life. If we followed this process, Tall Hendrik, we would write a big book about it, but then you are not there yet, it is so complicated, but moreover also so natural, that a louse can understand it, because it means the natural evolution. Did you know, Tall Hendrik, that all that green which such a cow eats, possesses universal power and strength? What Crisje received is

indeed not so strange. But we will also experience that later if you are then open to it and are still here, you will experience such a natural wonder again and you will understand that cows are useful animals. Of course, they give you milk and you can make cheese from this, but especially, what now concerns us: these medicines come from the natural source and people still know nothing about that either! It is strange, but cow dung cures human felon! Remember that!

When Father got to hear it from Crisje, because he knows everything about her life, he said consciously and resolutely to Crisje:

‘I believe that immediately, Crisje. Of course, you are a saint. And you can truly pray for that.’

Don’t you believe it? Father kissed Crisje’s thumb, precisely the sick thumb, which had been covered in cow dung for weeks on end, because this great and good man felt and understood, in that thumb lived the will and the love, the wisdom and the power of Our Lord, and he wanted to drink in this sweetness through his kiss. Crisje put out her thumb and hand to Father with a calm conscience and then Father put his stamp on it, otherwise, Crisje knew, she would have been damned for eternity. Wasn’t this true? If Our Lord hadn’t spoken to her life and to her herself, it goes without saying, then Crisje would have been caught up in a dirty rotten lie and fallen into purgatory. God save me, you should try saying that when Tall Hendrik is present. This is a miracle! Father knows, Crisje is able to talk to Our Lord day and night, but he also knows, Crisje doesn’t do that. Both know, you have to first experience yourself a thousand times and only then, if you have nothing more and you have used up all your powers completely, Our Lord will appear! You cannot fool HIM. You can cry as loud as you like, if He sees, and He sees that, that you haven’t applied your own powers yet, HE doesn’t even come to look, then you can cry as loud as you like, your soul and happiness are involved and that is the point!

However, all of this, that is understandable anyway, got Jeus away from his thinking for a while. Immediately, when the thumb had recovered and also this misery was past, Crisje found Jeus at the back of the house again. He is sitting looking at the chickens and she asks him:

‘What are you thinking about, Jeus?’

‘That’s a good one, mother. Have I had five minutes to myself to

think?’

She already thought, thank God, he has left his worries behind again, but now he continues, the material miseries dominated him for a while, now those hills are returning and he will analyze that, or something will happen. This morning he has his dream in him, it is alive and conscious, which he experienced last night. For weeks it bothered him, now it is here, he knows, today he will experience it, it is not a hill, it is Our Lord Himself!

He is lying on the edge of the moorland with Fanny, near the mill, and is waiting. The tension inside him is enormous. However, he knows that Our Lord will come. He doesn't know that Crisje is connected, in her own way, to the most sacred matters for people, animals and nature, he lives for himself and Crisje follows her own path. That of Crisje has nothing to do with his feelings and thoughts, he already lived in these feelings when the felon got him out of it, but he did not feel for a moment that it had left him. Now he is lying here waiting. Fanny next to him, they divide the bread fairly and wait patiently. However, the tension is becoming terrible. It is just like it was then, but this is something different. This brings you happiness, that other brought you sorrow. Now he feels no pain, but happiness. It must come to him from the hills. It comes straight from Zeddum, he knows. What it has to do there first, he doesn't know, but it will come. Hours and hours pass. He could have worked it out for himself completely, but you feel reverence for such a thing. You have hours to spare for it, and you wait; now you can talk of receiving. The children are already looking for him, but he isn't there, he is lying hidden between the bushes. When it gets to four o'clock, he crawls a bit closer to the Grintweg. He feels that he is becoming tired, but that is from the excitement, of course. How heavy those legs are, he has a nice rest. He doesn't know that he has already gone to sleep, he awakens and Fanny is there as well, Fanny is also having a nice rest next to him and will wait.

Suddenly it becomes lighter there above the Grintweg. Now you will see it. And yes, a shining apparition comes towards him. He is not afraid. The apparition asks him:

‘Did you have to wait long, Jeus?’

‘No, I've just arrived.’

‘But I'm here now, Myself. Are you not afraid of Me?’

‘No, of course not. No, Our Lord, I am not afraid of You.’

‘Now let’s see, Jeus, where are all Our children.’

He now walks down the Grintweg, holding hands with Our Lord. When they come close to home, Our Lord says: ‘Here is your house, Jeus.’

‘Yes, mother is at home.’

‘I know that, Jeus. And she has got rid of the felon hasn’t she?’ ‘Yes, mother is rid of it.’

Yes, Our Lord.’

‘It helped a lot, didn’t it, Jeus?’

‘Yes, that’s good stuff, Our Lord.’

‘I know that, Jeus, that is a good one.’

He plods along, holding Our Lord’s hand, past door after door, but he sees none of the people.

‘They have become afraid of You?’

‘I see that, Jeus. They are afraid of Me. That is because they do not know Me. But may I ask you something, Jeus?’

‘Of course, that is why I came, after all.’

‘You see it now, of course. What can we do with those children? They do not know what I am like. And they must know that, Jeus. What I wanted to ask you is, will you help Me?’

‘Of course, just tell me what I have to do. You can count on me.’

‘I know that. When you are grown up, then we will start, Jeus. And only then will we tell them what we know.’

‘Of course.’

‘Did it hurt a lot, Jeus? You know what I mean.’

‘Yes, of course, I was in a terrible way. But I have already forgotten it.’

‘I know that, Jeus.’

‘May I tell mother that I talked to You?’

‘Of course, you can tell mother everything.’

They walk through the village, come past the Grintweg again and when they come to the moorland, they say goodbye to each other. Jeus thinks that Our Lord looks a bit like his own Tall One, but that isn’t possible, or perhaps it is possible, sometime people will all look like Our Lord.

‘You can count on me’, Our Lord gets to hear again from him, and then this beautiful and great apparition dissolves for his life. Suddenly

he jumps out of the wood.

‘Good gracious me, Fanny, but where were you? Were you asleep? Now that you could have seen Our Lord you go to sleep? Have you gone absolutely crazy? Do I have to take you to task now, Fanny? Goodness me, that’s something. You should be ashamed of yourself.’

A while later Fanny hears: ‘But I can imagine that, Fanny. However you have nothing to do with this Lord. No, that isn’t true. I mean, your one is different, but now I am contradicting myself. But we have to go home, mother hasn’t seen us the whole day.’

At home he throws his arms around Crisje’s neck again. She looks: what’s the matter? Has that worrying passed again? This didn’t last so long and that is just as well. He tells her what he saw.

‘So, Jeus, you walked with Our Lord through the town?’

‘Yes, mother. And did you think that those scaredy cats dared to come out?’

‘No, of course not, you can count that on your own fingers, they shy away from Him.’

‘Was that Our Lord Himself, mother?’

‘Yes, that was Our Lord, Jeus.’

‘He knew all about the cow dung, mother.’

‘I imagine so.’

‘He also knew where we lived, mother. If he hadn’t had so much to do, then He would have come to visit you for a moment. But He didn’t have time, mother.’

‘I can understand that, Jeus.’

Crisje has to think, but he soon gets to hear from her:

‘And now you must listen to me, Jeus.’

‘Yes, mother, of course.’

‘Will you not talk to anyone about it?’

‘No, mother, I’m not completely mad, am I?’

‘I don’t think that either. They do not understand, Jeus. No one may know of it.’

‘But should I not tell father about it?’

‘I will take care of that. If you just keep your mouth shut. Because people, Jeus, will laugh at you, and that mustn’t happen.’

‘I know that, mother. I will not tell a soul!’

Tonight he will no longer dream about or climb hills. Jeus’ Tall One knows that has now sunk away deeper. So deep, to where eve-

rything lives from yesterday, from last week and that from years ago, yes, even that which people no longer have in them, and which is there anyway. That is called, for a scholar that is, the sub-conscious, but you will not understand that anyway and that is not necessary now either. However, I tell you, sometime every person will get to know this great thing, because you will stand behind and in your own coffin, but the nicest part of all is, you will be alive!

It is nine o'clock, the children are in bed, Tall Hendrik and Crisje tell each other difficult things. Now Tall Hendrik hears what happened. And then he gets to hear from Crisje:

'Hendrik, we are blessed people. We cannot thank Our Lord enough for our children.'

Tall Hendrik fell off his chair for a moment. And then there came as well:

'Will I tell you something, Hendrik?'

'What is it, Cris?'

'Our Jeus, he will do work for Our Lord in the future. He will never be a singer, Hendrik, and you can get that out of your head.'

Now Tall Hendrik has to think.

'I don't know, Hendrik, but Jeus saw HIM. He talked to HIM and he went to the people holding his hand. Don't you know anything, Hendrik? Can't you understand it? This goes without saying, of course. This means something, Hendrik!'

Tall Hendrik is silent and that is the best thing. Not a sigh passes his lips, but it is bad, he is starting to understand that there is more than he knows, but it hasn't got to that stage yet. He means honestly, Crisje, that he is still here, that he has something to say here in any case. The children have beautiful voices, don't they? Well, when it gets to that stage, we will talk more. Tall Hendrik asks:

'Will you tell Father about that, Cris?'

'I don't know yet, Hendrik.'

'Will I tell you something, Cris?'

'What is it?'

'If I were you, I wouldn't say anything either. I don't know why, but I think, Crisje, that he will think that we have gone crazy.'

Crisje laughs. Hendrik is thinking of himself. But it is okay. They go to sleep.

Jeus is up early, he may sit with father at the table and Tall Hendrik

determines for himself, it is a completely ordinary child.

‘Do you want some coffee from me, Jeus?’

‘Yes, father, please, father.’

You see, Tall Hendrik thinks, that is politeness. He has no complaints, it is going well, life is great.

An hour later Jeus is already running up the street. There is something in him which reminds him of something but that can also be thoughts, that could also have come from the nice stories which he heard from mother. However he must earn money now. The fair is coming and he has wasted all his money. But what can he do? How will he get money? Wouldn't aunt Trui have any more shopping to do?

Cow dung heals! Felon and cow dung give you worldly wisdom. If you can look behind your own world, you will also see Our Lord as well. But he knows Crisje and Jeus very well. He sits in the kitchen almost every day and talks in dialect. He is called Tall One, Crisje, and you may also be pleased with him. You experienced it; he gave you infallible medicine for that cursed felon.

He would be open to all life, if people could only accept him. Believe it, Our Lord has at least a hundred thousand like him. But not even ten in this world, Crisje, like your Jeus is. Truly, Crisje, he will work for Our Lord. And that has started already. All those supernatural events, Crisje, will get a place in your own book and that of Jeus.

Is it not becoming simple?

This is the truth and you already have the proof, but there will be much more, dear Crisje.

‘Angels are sacred, angels never steal’

What Jeus is thinking about now is how to get hold of some money! He could tear his hair out, because he has spent all of his money at Mardi Gras and now it is nearly time for the fair. The money he earned is gone. He thought, I will manage with my marbles, but they took him to the cleaners, because he has now lost all his marbles as well. Which was something he hadn't counted on. The good time they had at Mardi Gras, came at a high price, not only was their hard earned money gone, but as a result, they were sick for days and were bent double with a cough, he and Bernard lost their voices from singing 'rumbling pot', he doesn't bear thinking about. Nothing like that has ever happened to him before.

But what do you do if you have no money and you know that the fair is coming? You can try all kinds of things to earn some money. But they were unlucky, and Bernard is also as poor as a church mouse. Jeus doesn't need to go to Crisje, she has nothing herself. And aunt Trui just gives them a piece of sausage. You should hear Bernard calling her names now. Bernard said to Jeus:

'I will tell her something else.'

Jeus doesn't know what he will say to aunt Trui, because he knows Bernard well, he does what he says. And that is all very well, Bernard, but how do we get that money? He is now doing all he can to earn something, but that is not so easy. He does not understand why those adults cannot realize that. It is such a simple matter, isn't it; a child wants to go to the fair, were they never young themselves? Is that so wrong? Do all those adults have no feeling anymore? He racks his brains to think of something, he is shaking from the effort of it, and people do not understand you. But, good gracious, why didn't he think of that before? It is stupid; the money is there for the picking. And you don't really have to do anything for it. With politeness, you will achieve everything in life. Can you get money for doves? He has also followed these thoughts, but only for a moment, but he doesn't dare, the doves belong to all of them and there is something attached to that, then he can go to the cellar.

However, he does have an idea. He will work for mother for credit. Mother can safely be in debt to him. He can trust her; mother will

not cheat him.

‘Is there nothing I can do for you, mother?’

‘What do you want?’

‘Is there anything I can do for you, mother?’

‘Yes, of course. You can fetch some coffee from Theet. Theet knows which brand we drink.’

‘Then I will just take care of that, mother.’

‘But don’t you have anything to play, Jeus?’

‘I can always play another time, mother.’

Crisje knows very well what he wants. She feigns ignorance, but she thinks: that Jeus of mine. She realizes it is great that he has forgotten his dramas and is now an ordinary child again, but giving money is an entirely different matter. You can spoil them so easily. Jeus is gone. And along the way he studies the people, by looking them in the eye and in their souls, but they do not react. Can they really not miss one single cent? Is there nothing to be earned here? He cannot use his powers at Theet Egging’s either.

‘There you are, mother.’

‘Thank you, Jeus.’

‘My pleasure, mother.’

‘I know, Jeus.’

‘I’m only too happy to do it for you, mother.’

‘I’ve known that for such a long time, Jeus.’

Then it is okay, he thinks, but this is credit for one cent. He will write it down. Mother will be entered in his credit book. This is an honest debt. Bernard would say, dirty flatterer, but Bernard can tell him more. And it is good, he can give all his time to this work. Bernard can only start after school, for Bernard is also racking his brains to try to get money for the fair. The fair will also come for him. It is a nice day. Rich people come from Montferland along the Grintweg to look. These people go for nice walks here, they go to the Plantation, and they seem not to know what to do with their money. ‘Hurrah... Fanny, I am here! Good gracious, Fanny, but how stupid we are. Good heavens, what a lot of money we will earn today. Now you must listen to me carefully, Fanny. You must help me. When I look people in the eye, then you must also keep an eye on them. Fanny, I will teach you that. They say that father has fire in his eyes, but we can do that as well. People are afraid of father, Fanny, but we mustn’t

frighten them, none of that, we will do something entirely different.'

Now he looks Fanny in the eye. Sharply and consciously, he descends into Fanny's life.

'Did you feel me, Fanny? That was good, wasn't it? You cannot resist my eyes, And I can understand that. Now, you surely know that, we look people in the eye. And they are those rich people, Fanny, who live on Montferland and will soon stride down the Grintweg. I promise you, Fanny, if we get sausage again from aunt Trui, then you can have all of it. And when the fair comes, you can sit on the merry-go-round with me. Does that make you happy, Fanny?'

Fanny barks, he understands his boss. But Jeus feels, he has already wasted a lot of money. Because he could have started yesterday or last week, but they will make up for lost time today. They are now waiting at the front door of Crisje's house. Over there two ladies are walking in their direction. He will look them straight in the eye and then they will ask something. There they are. Jeus remains standing while he prepares to give the ladies a piercing look.

'There they are, Fanny, and now look.'

Jeus sees that the two ladies have walking sticks with them. Which the women here do not have. That is nothing for mother. Because she always wears clogs. However, there they come. Here they will stand still, in front of them. There it is.

'Good day, lad.'

'Good day, lady.'

'So, are you playing so nicely? What's your name?'

'Jeus, lady.'

'Jeus, that is a nice name.'

'Yes, lady.'

'And what's your dog's name?'

'Fanny, lady.'

'Also a nice name.'

'Yes, lady.'

'What a polite little boy that is, Mary, entirely different from the children in the town.' And to Jeus:

'Where do you live, Jeus?'

'Here, lady, I am right in front of our own house.' Are we still not getting anything?

'Would you like to have some sweets?'

‘Of course, lady, that’s a good one.’

The lady has to laugh. He does not understand why, as long as she gives some cents she can laugh as much as she likes for all he cares. Of course, lady, I am standing here with Fanny to get a few cents, aren’t we getting anything yet? He holds out his hand, five cents roll onto his fingers, but at the same time, Crisje is right under his nose.

‘Is Jeus begging, lady? Because he isn’t allowed to.’

‘No, madam, he is not begging, but he is allowed to have sweets, isn’t he?’

‘Of course, lady, but we do not want them to beg.’

‘I understand that, madam.’

‘Yes, because we aren’t tramps.’

Crisje takes his money, he may keep one cent, but if he should try doing that again. She will tell father and he will regret it. Jeus thinks: We have to do that differently, Fanny. Tomorrow we will lie there in front of aunt Trui’s fence and then mother will not be able to see us. Yes, this is the way to do it! Looking at people and forcing them to give you a few cents. There is one cent in the safe, and a moment ago they had nothing, he is making progress. By three o’clock, he is in position. A man and a woman are walking in his direction. He cannot reach the man, but that woman is sensitive. Last night he saw how you can reach people even better.

Do not stand there gossiping away, come to us, we need you.

The woman doesn’t get away from him, the man really dangles beside her, that man is like a miser inside. He is not interested in children, he only thinks of himself. There it is. Again Jeus hears:

‘Good day, lad.’

‘Good day, lady.’

‘What is your name?’

‘Jeus, lady. And that is Fanny.’

‘What beautiful eyes you have, Jeus.’

‘Yes, lady, exactly the same as my father.’

‘So, is it true that your father also has such lovely eyes?’

‘Yes, lady, people are afraid of them.’

‘Oh.’

‘Yes, lady.’

‘What a nice little fellow this is, husband. And how polite. You don’t see that very often.’ ‘Is your mother at home, lad?’

‘Yes, lady.’

‘Would you like something?’

‘Yes please, lady.’

The lady opens her purse and lays ten cents in his hand, but suddenly his Tall One is right beside him and he says:

‘Jeus, what are you doing now, that is begging.’

He looks into space, throws the lady’s ten cents at her feet and runs away. ‘Can you understand that? That will never happen to me again. Farmers remain farmers. It is incomprehensible. How strange. Did you see how strangely that child behaved? It was an insult.’ Jeus disappears. And is now sitting with Fanny at the back of the garden and is calling life everything under the sun. He doesn’t know what he should make of it, but the Tall One came between things. If you look people in the eye, is that begging? Now the Tall One is back and Jeus gets to hear:

‘That is begging, Jeus. And I don’t want them to call you names for begging. Can you understand me?’

‘Yes, of course, you are right. Otherwise, I will go to the cellar. I will be careful.’

‘I wouldn’t want you to go begging, for all the money in the world.’

‘I understand that, I already told you.’

The Tall One has gone again. Jeus hangs around here and there; he doesn’t dare to think of money any more. Life is rotten, life is wretched, and they don’t want you to have anything. The spell is broken as the first of the fair wagons come down the street. Jeus runs after them. His mouth is watering; this will be a really good fair. The days to come will be a real feast, and he wants to see all of it. But he cannot get any money on his own. Anneke can celebrate the fair now, he has nothing. The days pass. It is Sunday and the tents will open at eleven o’clock. After High Mass they will get their money from Crisje.

‘Johan? Here, you will get ten cents for today. Bernard, seven cents. And Jeus, five cents. Now off with you.’

There it is. ‘Come, Fanny, but we will have to be careful, you surely understand that.’

First a little scout-around. He is standing looking at the merry-go-round, but first wants to know how it all works. They are beautiful horses; Hosman’s horses are pathetic in comparison. Just look at those angels and those landscapes on the merry-go-round. And all that

shining stuff. He just can't get enough of it. Jeus is so taken up with it all, that he is unaware that Fanny has got lost in the crowd. That is a pity, but he will just have to be careful. Jeus is bursting from excitement. And yet he wants to wait a while, otherwise all his money will be spent too soon, and consequently all that will be left to do is look on for the rest of the day. However, there is five cents in his pocket, and that is a lot. Suddenly someone grabs and lifts him onto a white horse, such a beautiful animal, and now he is sitting there. Can't you see me? Where are Bernard and Johan? He looks across at the people, it is crowded; they can now see that he is sitting on a horse. Now when the bell sounds, Jeus is flying round. Heavens, Crisje, Tall One, why are they not here? José, don't you see what he will experience? He can't get enough of it. However, his Tall One and José just don't seem to matter just now. These moments are for him. And they will get none of this pleasure. It is going well, he has already spent one cent, but that doesn't mean anything, he is flying over the fields; drains and holes are not important. Now he is going across the plain, straight to Montferland and then, it goes quickly, back. At which time he has to slow the horse and yes, now they are standing still. Now what? Do I have to get off my horse? We've only just met. Think for a minute. But they will not get his grey, he will have another ride like that, but he will fly in another direction, he will now go through the Plantage. What a pity that mother cannot see him, what a pity that Anneke and the others are not there, riding is such fun. And there it goes again. No one can really go as fast as this. Those who are riding next to him have nothing to say. He is alone here; the universe belongs to him. Mother Crisje's Jeus is enjoying himself! Now he has to go back again, he is already braking and his horse listens. Those horses of Hosman are just old nags. Now what? Another ride, good heavens, then he will be nearly broke. But he continues. This ride also comes to an end, and then he suddenly feels that they have thrown him out. 'Good gracious, dirty mess', they have diddled him out of three cents. 'You can drop dead.' But you should see those poor souls laughing. They are rotten people. Fanny? Fanny is not there anymore. There is not much going for him, almost all his cents are gone, and the day, the long feast still has to begin. It is too terrible. It is poverty, why did he let himself be cheated by the marble games? Did Mathie cheat him? Not Theet, he also lost his marbles. They can drop dead, a fair like that is a dirty

mess, just look at those crazy men and women. What do those louts want with a merry-go-round? A merry-go-round is for children and not for big good-for-nothings. He doesn't care a hoot for it; he will make off, but still fancies a nice sweet. Life is rotten, life is wretched, and life isn't worth a thing. Good gracious, there you have those high swings as well. Swinging is great, but for big boys again. There is the try-your-strength machine. Look at those silly boys. Where is Bernard and where is Johan? He doesn't see a single person. It is gradually getting near to dinnertime. Crisje said they must be home by one o'clock. He carefully shuffles along the Grintweg, and he can still hear the shouting from the fair, along with the bells tinkling in his ears, but they can drop dead as well... get the 'droedels'. If only Gerrit Noesthede and Jan Maandag were here now. But you don't see those men when you need them. There is Bernard.

'Have you still got anything, Bernard?'

'Yes, of course, the day is still long. I still have five cents.'

'I've got nothing left, Bernard, but what fun I had.'

Bernard can see by his face that he is crying inside, but then he shouldn't spend everything in one go. Johan? Johan still has all his money. Didn't he know?

'Do you not want to buy a marble from me, Johan?'

'Marbles? Who would want marbles at the fair.'

'Just get stuffed, Johan.'

'Don't you have anything left for yourself?'

The dinner doesn't taste good today, although Crisje has made nice, fatty chicken soup. Which they are generally all mad about, but today it doesn't taste good at all. A while later Bernard and Johan have already disappeared, But not Jeus, for him the fun is really over. Crisje won't give him anymore money. Tomorrow there is one more day. Now what? Jeus is standing there leaning on the doorway and he just doesn't know any more. However there is always aunt Trui. Now he must try everything, he will go for her heart. Crisje has already seen it.

'What a long face you have, and that with the fair on?'

That is the sign, he feels it is the moment to settle the debt between himself and Crisje. Then he hears:

'What are you saying to me, Jeus? I am in debt to you?'

'But wasn't that honest credit, mother?'

Good heavens, Crisje has to laugh heartily while thinking. What a cunning scoundrel he is. But tells him:

‘Just be careful, or I will tell your father. He will get you. He doesn’t want anything to do with credit.’

Jeus makes off quickly, but he feels that he has made a bad mistake. Then he had better nip round to aunt Trui’s.

‘Don’t you have to go to the fair, Jeus?’

‘I’ve already been, aunt Trui.’

‘There’s a lot to see there?’

‘Yes, aunt Trui.’

‘Don’t you have to go back, Jeus?’

‘My money’s gone, aunt Trui, I have nothing left.’

You would have thought that it was clear enough, but aunt Trui is deaf and insensitive, she doesn’t understand him. Yet he, the stupid fool that he is, says as well:

‘They are now drinking from my money, aunt Trui.’ It’s been said, but he could hit himself on the head, now he is completely destroying everything for himself. There we go:

‘That’s true, Jeus. They just drink it.’

Damn it! Jeus says to himself, you can never just have a proper conversation with that woman. And of course, not a cent from her. She can get lost. What would Bernard do? He said, I will get her yet. But what will he do to her? Nothing. He wonders what he can do. He had better just go back to Crisje.

‘Have you anything for me to do, mother?’

‘Of course, you can fetch a bucket of water.’

‘Of course, mother.’

‘But as long as you know, you will not get a cent from me today.’

He fetches a bucket of water, he loses more than he brings home, life is rotten, it is cunning, and it is no life, if only he could sell himself. If only Chang was here. He could have him for ten cents. No, that is not enough, forty cents. But Chang is in Italy. Jeus is suffocating inside. Crisje feels very clearly what he is going through, what is inside that heart, but she cannot spare any more, there are worries enough and tomorrow and the day after there will also be the fair. Jeus lies down on the bench in front of the house, under the elderberry tree. So he can have a good look at heaven, but now that is not worth anything either. Jeus doesn’t know that a great wonder will now take place.

He looks, he sees straight into heaven, he experiences that wonderful blue, those clouds as well, and he thinks playing there is nothing, and today money is everything. But what is that? He sees a silvery white cord falling from heaven and that cord attaches itself to his head. Now it is there in the centre of his head. One end of the cord flows out of the garden, up the Grintweg. With Jeus close behind. Now it goes off the Zwartekolkseweg, right through the woods, in the direction of Hunzeleberg. He runs after it and this cord which fell out of a heaven shows him the way. But where does it lead to? Close to Hunzeleberg the cord turns left. My God, good heavens, how is it possible, there is money lying in the woods just like that. He counts it; he can understand everything now. It is fourteen guilders and sixteen cents. He wants to pick up the money, but his hands go through it. Of course, he needs his body for this but it is lying sleeping in the garden. Then he will be able to pick up the money. Jeus is back; he is there in a flash, crawls into his body and now back to Hunzeleberg. But that does not happen so quickly now. He cannot fly now, the body has to run, and fast too, because just imagine if other people came and found that money. He runs himself silly; it is a one and half hour walk. Sweating and panting he arrives at the spot, and yes, the money is still there. Now when he picks it up, the Tall One appears. Jeus looks him in the eye and hears:

‘That is money, Jeus.’

‘Yes, of course, did you think of me?’

‘Of course, Jeus. Did you think I would leave you to pine away?’

‘Good gracious, now that is friendship for you. I must say.’

‘Now you must listen carefully, Jeus.’

‘That is fourteen guilders and sixteen cents, isn’t it?’

‘Yes, I know that.’

‘Now you may keep twenty-five cents for yourself for the fair. In addition another twenty-five cents to buy a cake for your mother. You know one of those with that nice sugar on top. And you must give the rest to mother.’

‘Thank you, my God, how grateful I am to you. I won’t forget it either. Did you know that there was money here?’

‘Of course, Jeus, otherwise I couldn’t have helped you, could I?’

‘But how did you know that then? Are you always in the woods?’

‘Of course.’

‘And do you know the way here?’

‘Yes, I know that as well. Now put the cents, ten cent pieces, twenty-five cent pieces and the guilders in the pocket.’

Jeus has the money. He thinks and then asks:

‘May I have another few from the sixteen cents?’ He looks the Tall One in the eye and he already senses that it is okay.

‘Yes, but not all that change, Jeus. Let’s say, seven cents and now you can enjoy the fair, all right?’

‘I could burst from happiness, you just believe it.’

‘I do believe that, Jeus. And now go to your mother.’

‘Yes, I’m on my way.’

The money rattles in his pocket, he goes to Crisje, hopping and jumping. He is almost exploding from happiness. And then he is standing in front of his mother and says:

‘Mother, mother, I have found money.’

‘What have you got?’

‘I found money, mother.’

‘Where then?’

‘In the woods, mother.’

‘Did you find money in the woods? I thought you were lying there having a nice sleep.’

‘Yes, but then I went away, mother.’

Crisje cannot understand it. Of course, this is something special again. However he didn’t steal it from somewhere, did he? No, Jeus does not steal. Although it is strange. That money must go to Bolder the policeman. Because a poor person may have lost that money. Of course, we must take it to Bolder. Crisje does not want any money found. Nevertheless it is strange. What is a boy like that doing in the woods? She truly thought that he was sleeping there. Now this. Once again Crisje gives Jeus another three cents. Nothing can happen to him anymore and he doesn’t say anything about mother getting a nice cake later, but he doesn’t sense either that he is creating an uproar with this. He does not think about that and has disappeared from her sight. Now he has to watch out for Bernard because, of course, he will want to know how he got that money. Jeus goes around the entire fair with Fanny. Fanny will first get his well-earned sausage, but the dog doesn’t get to hear that, suppose he will let his tongue run away with one, and that must not happen. Now let’s just have a look. Those her-

ring rollmops are tasty. No, first a nice piece of nougat. It is long time since he tasted nougat. That is tasty; and now another saunter round. Jeus is again standing in front of the merry-go-round. He is now sitting with Fanny in a lovely boat, rowing happens of its own accord. Three times, one after the other, they let themselves be carried across the ditch, which becomes a lovely big lake, and that makes his insides tickle. After this Fanny gets a fatty smoked herring, he gets a nice eel for himself, the fat is dripping from his face, meanwhile he looks to see whether Bernard is there. No, he isn't, and now he carries on.

'Fanny, how would you like such a nice hard gingerbread?' Fanny enjoys eating it, but doesn't like it that much, there are still all kinds of things. Now he sucks a piece of nougat on a stick, and views the goings-on of the fair through different eyes. Life is wonderful again; life is great and how happy people are, after all. He and Fanny are also happy and he could thank Our Lord a thousand times today. Now the great moment has arrived to buy a cake like that for mother.

'Yes, just wrap it up.

'And now to mother. You will see a sight there for a change, Fanny.' Jeus doesn't sense that he will land in trouble through this. But the Tall One actually wants to get him into trouble, he must be up to his neck in it. They race into the house. Gerrit Noesthede and father are there as well. As happy as Larry, he lays the cake on the table and says:

'Here, mother, this is for yourself.' Immediately there is the devil to pay. Crisje almost falls off her chair.

'A cake for me, did you say? Where did you get that money? Did you keep some of that money back, Jeus?'

Tall Hendrik and Gerrit look and understand it. Crisje moans:

'That's bad, Jeus. That's worse than felon. My God, how bad that is. I wouldn't have thought it of you. You cheated me. Didn't you?'

They know how the felon was for Crisje, but this is worse. Much worse, and he cannot understand it.

'I was allowed to keep twenty five cents, mother, and I was to buy a cake for you with it.'

'Who let you buy a cake?' his father asks severely. Now he can tell Tall Hendrik who his Tall One is, but his father doesn't understand any of it. It is enough to drive you crazy. He is up to his neck in it; his Tall One has brought him a lot of misery. That is a terrible pity. Jeus does not see that his Tall One is there and that he is following this

amazing event and wants to know exactly how Tall Hendrik will react to all this, and little Gerrit Noesthede as well. The Tall One knew that Crisje would take the money to Bolder the policeman, because he knows Crisje. Now what? This will become a drama yet. Tall Hendrik asks him:

‘Tell me where you got that money.’

‘I was lying sleeping, father, in front of the house.’

‘Is that true, Crisje?’

‘Yes, Hendrik, he had fallen asleep there.’

‘And then what?’

‘Then I saw... I saw, father, a long rope falling from heaven and I went after it and that went into the woods, father.’

‘And then you found that money?’

‘Yes, father.’

‘Are you sure that you didn’t steal that money from somewhere?’

‘Of course not, father, I don’t steal.’

Tall Hendrik feels that that will be a complicated problem. ‘Gerrit, I will borrow your bike and I will be back in a minute.’

‘Do you still remember where that money was?’

‘Yes, father, right near Hunzeleberg.’

‘What did you say?’

‘Near the Hunzeleberg, father, I found it there.’

‘But that is an hour and a half’s walk.’

‘Yes, father, but that is where it was.’

Jeus sits at the front of the bike with Tall Hendrik and now he has to tell his father where they are going.

‘Turn left, father.’

They go left for a while and then: ‘Right, father, and now to Hunzeleberg.’

A while later: ‘Right, father, and to the end of this road and then left again and then we just have to go around that wood and we will be there soon.’

Tall Hendrik doesn’t know, he cannot think, he can only follow Jeus’ directions, because this is a miracle. What a pity that Crisje took that money to Bolder, he and Crisje could have enjoyed the fair for a change, but he knows his Crisje. So that chance is lost. Now they are almost at the place where the money lay. Yes, Tall Hendrik can see that guilders and two and a half guilder pieces have lain there.

Truly, it would frighten you to death. And yet? Yet indeed, Jeus found money in the woods. He no longer needs to ask him about that cord, Tall Hendrik wouldn't understand anything about it anyway and you no longer need to think of these things either.

'It is strange, Crisje, but he did find it in the woods.'

Now the worrying starts. But only lasts a moment. because Gerrit already knows something else. Crisje hears:

'If I let my brains work, Cris, then we will be eating angels' cake today, because it has to do with that, anyway. True or not, Hendrik? And we do not get angels' cake every day. Come on, Hendrik, we'll have to drink to that, just take a walk, go and get three measures for us.'

Tall Hendrik has already gone. The thoughts of Gerrit and Tall Hendrik become muddled through a brandy. Crisje experiences the wonder. And feels that the money must go back to those poor people. Tall Hendrik and Gerrit make fun of it. This day is an unusual one in their lives and with the fair on. Which they are making a funfair of it. Not a thing remains of the wonder. And Jeus thinks, that's your business, I'm going to enjoy the fair. He cannot get over his luck, he also gets twelve cents from Gerrit. Now they can tell him more. However, there is something the matter. Crisje says:

'Did you not keep anything for yourself, Jeus?'

'No, mother.'

He looks Crisje straight in the face. Crisje looks back. He will now be careful to let mother feel that he has money enough in his pocket, yet she won't get to hear any of it. But then there follows:

'Yes, because you understand, Jeus, otherwise it is stealing, after all.'

'What did you say, mother?' 'Don't you understand that, Jeus? But that's stealing?'

'Yes, mother, I already understand you.'

He must see that he gets away. However, it is strange. So is he now a thief? At the fair, he has already forgotten all those serious thoughts. He is now having a nice go in a swing-boat with another boy. When it becomes evening, he has to go home, but he still has plenty of money for tomorrow and the day after. He starts to think in his box bed. Crisje tucks him in. She kisses him. He now asks:

'Mother, may I ask you something?'

'Of course, what is it?'

‘Can angels steal?’

‘No, really and truly, angels are sacred, Jeus. Angels never steal.’

‘Oh, then I know, mother.’

‘What do you know?’

‘Nothing, mother.’

Yes, Crisje, if you only knew. He has worked it out! What he has been given came straight from heaven. And now they can call him a thief, then his angel will also be stealing and you say yourself, angels are sacred, angels do not steal. What kind of fairness is this? Good heavens, Crisje, the whole world will know one day and we will make sure of that. He also gets to hear from Crisje, but his eyes are already closing:

‘I am proud of you, as long as you know that...’ and she sees, her Jeus is safely tucked in bed, he is having a nice sleep. Crisje knows, she has received a miracle of a child from Our Lord.

But they had put him in a difficult situation, is the first thought he has when he wakens in the morning. Yet he has money. All in all, he has the profit in his own pocket. And this evening he will go to the pictures. They are giving a performance there lasting an hour for fifteen cents, a play, or something; he can well afford it. A big steam machine is standing there puffing and he wants to know all about it. Now he must make up an excuse, because he will be late. Is that thing open this afternoon? Let’s see. Yes, really, he is going to the cinema. He is bursting inside, is cross-eyed from the flickering, but thrilled to bits that no one has seen him, that evening he climbs into his box bed and dreams, he is flying in the universe, and goes back at least twenty times by that same road to the money, and talks for hours to his Tall One.

‘You will never desert me, will you?’

‘Of course not, Jeus.’

‘You can count on me as well.’

‘I know, Jeus.’

‘And I am not a thief, am I?’

‘No, of course not, then I would be one as well.’

‘Then they can tell me more.’

Angels do not steal! But Tall Hendrik will sweep the mighty happenings under the carpet. Do you never ever have the feeling, Tall Hendrik, that Jeus gets to experience supernatural phenomena? You

say it, but it doesn't get through to you. This should have changed the whole world, but the way you feel and think is also the way this big world thinks, Tall Hendrik. The 'droedels' from Our Lord. Yet, the Tall One of Our Lord has linked you to this wonder. You even cycled after it to see for yourself if it is reality. And that, Tall Hendrik, will be proof for this humanity. Now think of the facts for a moment, Tall Hendrik. Jeus is lying there on his back and looking up at heaven. From heaven comes a cord which can think and knows exactly where the money is, far away in the woods and far from home. Does it not mean anything to you, Tall Hendrik? Is that not something to think about day and night? Would you not want to tell everyone about it? And did you think, Tall Hendrik, that people would not want to know? Of course, there will be many who will laugh like you do, but there will also be people who think that it is a miracle! And did you think, Tall Hendrik, that such things do not happen for a reason? You and Crisje know, and that is enough. Yet, even Gerrit Noesthede will never forget this either, however, what concerns Our Lord and HIS Tall One is: that you can forget it for now, Tall Hendrik, however you must know, one day the whole of humanity will get to know about this and thousands of people will then realize that there is no Grim Reaper!

What do you think of such a Tall One? How that man can think. And what kind of eyes did he receive in his head anyway from Our Lord? Does none of this mean anything to you? You received sparkling eyes, Tall Hendrik, but you do not use them, you are and will remain completely blind! Crisje knows it, for her it is a great miracle and it will remain so! Soon you can endorse all of this with your life, Tall Hendrik. And that is the immediate stamp of Our Lord. We will see and speak to each other again. However, you must know, a sea of happiness is waiting for you. You can grasp it just like that, but you do not see it. Wake up for a change!

One day you will be confronted with your sea of life, Tall Hendrik. I hope for you that there will then be a silvery white cord to bring you to the ultimate. I think that you will have to sail your mighty sea of life on your own. Then you can row until you drop. You will also scream at the top of your lungs, but then there will not be any one who will show you such a cord, you have never looked for it and never wanted it. Crisje will receive many cords at the end of her life,

and sometimes also in this, her human existence, as well, which will then show her the way, and give her the wisdom to know how to act. You will then be completely off the mark. And along with you the rest of the world, the millions who want to experience their own lives, which they have a right to, but Our Lord has something else as well. You will only get that, Tall Hendrik, by seeing and experiencing such cords, and you can bow your head for them. Laugh, laugh all you want, you're a fine chap but you do not understand any of these great revelations yet, not a single bit!

Three months later Crisje got the money back from Bolder. Of course, people came, and claimed they had lost money, but Bolder was not stupid either. They could get out of there. Jeus, Miets, Bernard and Gerrit are now wearing new Sunday smocks. You should see how those things gleam. They gleam with real heavenly light. Crisje never has to wash these smocks, they never get dirty. For they are from Our Lord. For Tall Hendrik only one thing exists: the boys have good voices, he will definitely prepare them for the opera house! Whether that will happen is an entirely different matter. In any case, he still has his say! He then fights against the Tall One and against Our Lord, and we already know: Tall Hendrik will lose.

Or have you had other feelings, after all, Tall Hendrik? We hope so for your sake. This was a great fair! Even the angels sat next to Jeus on the merry-go-round. There was real human enjoyment in the heavens. And Our Lord saw that it was going well. HE also had a good time, Tall Hendrik!

The brandy is in your head, Our Lord can also understand that very well, now another spark of the other one, and we have arrived.

That is your own business! No one is forcing you!

‘Mother, I must have young’

It is true, aunt Trui owns the nicest cockerel in the neighbourhood. It is one, which is prominent and has a voice, which even Tall Hendrik is jealous of. It is a man, strong and aware of its power, as splendid as a king is. Aunt Trui’s cockerel drowns out all the others in the neighbourhood; it is such a humdinger. Every morning Trui listens to her living alarm clock, and no morning has she ever been mistaken, the creature is so accurate. But this morning she hears nothing, is there something the matter with the cockerel? She continues to listen, now Gradus is also awake, they have slept in, and were not awakened by their living alarm clock. When Trui comes behind, she sees a drama.

‘Gradus, but Gradus, come quickly and look.’

They are now both standing looking at the cockerel. Her king does not have a feather on its body; it looks like it has been shaved bare. Last night there was a rotter who stole the cockerel’s royal robes, and in a way like this, it is enough to drive you mad from anger. It is a great scandal! Is it a wonder that Trui is poisonous? That she is biting her lips? This is bad, it is terrible. In fact, demonic. The cockerel is just sitting there vexed. And above all, extremely sad. The animal has been undressed, the beautiful voice has broken, and the kingly form has been left a pauper. The cockerel leers at her and doesn’t say a thing. It is horrible.

‘That brat of Crisje’s did that, Gradus.’

Do you hear that, Crisje? They want to give your Bernard the blame. These thoughts occurred to Trui just like that, it is Bernard, and he is the rotter. The neighbourhood is in uproar, within an hour everyone knows. It causes devilish laughter; but who did it? It is a dirty trick, some people say, others think it is incredibly ridiculous, but still something to make you jump out of your skin. Not even five minutes later Trui and Gradus are standing in front of Crisje. ‘Don’t you know anything, Crisje? Bernard did it. I’m going to the constabulary,’ Trui screams. Doesn’t Johan know anything? Where is Bernard? Bernard has to come. He looks Crisje in the eye and has nothing to do with it, look for yourself, Trui. If Bernard did it, then you would imagine that he would give himself away, wouldn’t he, Trui? Don’t you agree, Gradus. But who thinks of the constabulary immediately? No, the

boys know nothing. Crisje asks Bernard:

‘Did you really have nothing to do with it, Bernard?’

‘How could I possibly have pulled out the cockerel’s feathers, mother? I was having a nice sleep.’

‘Is that true, Johan?’

‘Yes, mother, he wasn’t out of his bed for a minute, mother. I would have seen that, wouldn’t I?’

Bernard is standing there with his nose in it and he thinks, Johan will get something nice from me sometime. Bernard has nothing to do with it, Jeus, nothing!

‘If I find out, Cris, that Bernard did it, I will have him locked up. And you can count on that as well, as long as you understand that.’

‘That’s a good one, Trui. Well, that is terrible. That’s a rogue’s trick. That cannot be excused, Trui, of course not. It’s scandalous. I have never seen such a thing in my life, Trui, as long as you know that.’

Gerrit Noesthede happens to be there as well, he needed to borrow some music from Tall Hendrik. He looks at the cockerel, Gerrit laughs, and it is a great trick.

‘Just look, Gerrit, isn’t that scandalous? It was such a beautiful cockerel. I could cry about it.’

Gerrit takes a good look; the animal looks pathetic. He also has something to say:

‘It is really and truly walking about in its bare bottom, Trui. They have removed his Sunday suit.’ Trui flies into a temper and moans at Gerrit:

‘Do you want to make fun of it as well, Gerrit?’

‘I will get that out of my head, Trui, it is a real business, but may I still say something?’ Trui thinks that it is a murder trial. Gerrit disappears.

‘Does Hendrik know as well, Crisje?’

‘No, Gerrit, he had already gone, but he will hear about it this evening, and then there will be the devil to pay.’

‘For what, Crisje?’

‘That’s a good one, but I don’t know either.’

‘Did you think that one of the boys did it, Cris?’

‘I don’t know, Gerrit. Trui thinks that Bernard did it, but Johan said that Bernard slept all night, he didn’t get out of bed, Gerrit.’

‘Then what have you to complain about, Crisje?’

‘But what is such a crook doing at Trui’s house, Gerrit?’

‘Look here, Crisje, there are people in the world who take pleasure in things like that. I do not believe that Bernard did it.’

And they pull that on Trui in the middle of her sleep. She definitely thinks that Bernard did it. Moreover, Jeus believes so as well. Did Bernard not say that he was going to get his own back on her? This is inhuman, this is daring, and this is pure cheek. However, Gerrit Noesthede is laughing until he cries. Crisje sees it and says accusingly:

‘Do you wish to make excuses for such lousy tricks, Gerrit? Do you have to laugh about it as well?’

But Gerrit answers with a gleam in his eye: ‘If I find out, Cris, who did it, he will get a mark from me as well.’

There is Bernard. ‘Do you know anything about it, Bernard?’

Bernard looks Gerrit in the eye and says: ‘No, I had nothing to do with it.’ Gerrit tries:

‘If you did it, Bernard, you will get a mark from me.’

‘I had nothing to do with it, Gerrit.’

Gerrit doesn’t believe Bernard. Still, you wonder, is a child capable of plucking such a cockerel, yet, while it’s alive? You need strength for that. Besides, a cockerel like that does not just allow such a thing. Did Trui not hear any screams then? Gerrit goes back to Trui. She says no, she heard nothing, and that is the worst part of all, they could murder you in your sleep, and you wouldn’t hear or see anything. Is Bernard capable of it? But that is not possible. This is men’s work, Trui. You need strength for this. I will prove that to you. With Gradus and Trui standing by, Gerrit gets hold of a chicken. The animal screams blue murder. Crisje thinks that another one is being plucked. Jeus and Johan are already running to see as well.

‘Well, Trui? Can a child like Bernard manage that? I cannot even throttle it without it screaming. And this is just a chicken, Trui, that cockerel of yours has got a lot more guts.’

Gradus says: ‘No Trui, Bernard didn’t do it.’ However, Trui insists, it is Bernard. Bernard is the bandit.

‘Don’t you know, Jeus?’ ,Trui asks.

‘No, aunt Trui, how should I know.’

‘Did Bernard not say anything to you?’

‘What would Bernard tell me. But, good gracious, that is something. Really, that is a pity, aunt Trui, it was such a beautiful cockerel.’

Jeus has gone, he has to find Bernard. There is his little brother.

‘Can I tell you something, Bernard?’

‘I don’t want to hear anything from you.’

‘But I’m telling you, good gracious, that is dangerous work. You haven’t heard the last of that. You took off all of his trousers. Good gracious me, Bernard, how courageous you are.’

‘Will you shut your mouth, otherwise I’ll shut it for you.’

‘You didn’t even leave it its shirt, Bernard’, Jeus pesters, ‘but I have to laugh about it, really. How did you pull that off? Gerrit Noesthede cannot understand it, and uncle Gradus, also said that you couldn’t have done it, you need manpower for that, Bernard.’

‘Shut your mouth, otherwise I’ll shut it for you, as long as you know.’

‘But shouldn’t you go and have a quick look?’

‘No, I have better things to do with my time. I have to go to school soon.’

‘But I’m not afraid of you, Bernard.’

Bernard is not surprised that they suspect him, but he is so calm and sure of himself that even Jeus starts to doubt whether he did it. When Bernard comes out of school, they start again and a while later, Crisje sees, they are fighting and annoying each other.

‘Just come with me. Just take this stuff to Willemse.’

Jeus and Bernard go off to take flour to Willemse. They bake nice bread from it and the boys like that. On the way, Jeus gets him again and Bernard has the greatest fun, who will do anything to him? Bernard is whistling to his heart’s content, and aunt Trui can tell him another one. Then they arrive at Willemse, the baker. Jeus sees that they are taking Willemse’s bull outside along with a cow.

‘What is that, Bernard?’

‘That’s a good one, Hans has to cover.’

‘What’s covering, Bernard?’

‘Just take a look for yourself.’

Hans the bull, that takes place in that corner just like that, has to cover a cow. Big people and small people are standing there watching, which is very ordinary. No one has anything to say about it, or thinks anything of it, but for children it is something great. Jeus also can’t get enough of it. Isn’t that something? Aunt Trui’s cockerel is now forgotten.

‘What is it doing, Bernard?’

‘It does nothing but jump.’

‘Is that jumping?’

Jeus looks, but while watching, something happens. He sees inside the cow. He sees that something wonderful is going to happen inside there. In the cow, he sees a big egg, which opens. And now that Hans is covering, he sees that this egg receives everything and closes. Inside that egg, he sees the following happen, which gives him food for thought: The egg expands, it becomes bigger, and bigger, he sees that it is developing into a calf! Sighing, he watches this wonderful process in the cow; he doesn’t see anything of what Hans is doing. Now something else comes into the cow. There is the calf already. How is it possible? Bernard hears him saying:

‘My God, how wonderful that is.’

Ha, Bernard thinks, now I’ve got you. He has the same rotten thoughts as all the other children and I have. He already reacts:

‘So, now I know what kind of rotter you are. Do you like what Hans is doing?’

‘Not that, Bernard, it is that other part, but you don’t understand anything about that anyway’, he retorts and immediately takes off. He has to think about this. It is a great miracle. He saw the calf growing in the cow, and then the calf was born. Did the people also see that? No, but the adults know how that will take place, they know all about it, Jeus, but they have never been able to follow it from inside. A quarter of an hour later he is lying with Fanny in the woods to think about what he saw there. Good heavens, what a miracle that was. And he has to work on that now, he must try to find out what all that means. Does Bernard also think? No, differently, he knows that already. Bernard thinks that he admires Hans’ work, but it’s not that. What did that Hans do there? He feels beaten from inside. His head is churning, and almost bursting from all his thoughts. He can still see how Hans pushed his big head against the cow, and then it started. What does all this mean? Isn’t it wonderful, Crisje? Through Hans a calf is born, this is clear to him. Through Hans the cow got a little one. He also wants to have young. A big hole has been beaten into his soul, Crisje. Now he must think how to close this awesome hole and who can help him in this? If he does not manage this then he will never have any peace again.

Fanny must help him. Jeus is faced with the greatest of problems, created by Our Lord, through which people possess so much power, but still do not realize it. He is faced with the universe of Our Lord and he wants to experience this and fight it out for himself, but mother can probably help him as well. He feels that everything lies in this! And he already feels that she will be able to help him. He will solve this, which will also come, because his life is open to life. The first few days pass with exploring this territory. Crisje already notices that he has something again. However, what is it this time? She will not have to wait long for the answer, and then he starts asking her questions. She sees him back at the chicken run, his head leaning on his hands, thinking; no one can disturb him. When that soul is sitting down like that, Crisje thinks, then something will follow again.

‘What are you doing this time, Jeus?’, she asks curiously.

‘I have to think, mother.’

‘So, you have to think.’

‘Yes, mother.’

‘What do you have to think about, Jeus?’

‘Mother, I need to have young.’

‘What do you want?’

‘Can’t you understand that then, mother?’

Crisje is already shocked. She has to think about that for a moment. What is occupying him now? A while later he gets to hear:

‘Will you make sure that you get away from here?’

‘Am I not allowed to watch the chickens then, mother?’

‘Go and play on the moorland.’

That is suspicious, he thinks. The rabbits will probably have something to tell him, but he is chased away from there as well. Mother is after him, but why, really? Can’t he do anything? Then he had better go to Hosman’s. Gerrit, the oldest farm hand, likes him, and he will probably help him. Rabbits, pigs, chickens and the doves now occupy him. And in between that there are people, but he leaves them alone for now. He doesn’t notice Fanny either, but that will come as well. Rabbits and doves all get young. How are they born? Just like with Hans and the cow? He knows that already. If the animals do what Hans does, then there will be young. But that is not everything either, there is much more which he has to know.

‘Good day, Gerrit.’

‘Good day, Jeus. Did you come to see me for a minute? Don’t you want Anneke?’

‘No, I don’t want anything to do with Anneke just now.’

‘Is it over between you and Anneke, Jeus?’

‘Not that, Gerrit, but you don’t need the women for everything, after all, Gerrit?’

‘That’s true, Jeus, of course, that is not possible.’

Gerrit likes him, because Jeus talks like a sensible person. That child will go far in the world, Gerrit feels, further than him. That child has a good head on his shoulders. The older children are just whipper-snappers in comparison. Jeus has to think for a minute, comes to the point and then Gerrit hears:

‘Gerrit, may I ask you something?’

‘Of course, Jeus, what do you want to know from me?’

‘Gerrit, there are cows in this world, aren’t there, and there are cows who have to do quite a different matter than eat their fill and give milk.’

Gerrit wonders what he is getting at this time, but he already feels what he is trying to say. ‘Yes, Jeus, they are bulls!’

‘That’s what I wanted to know, Gerrit. Does Hosman also have bulls, Gerrit?’

‘Yes, but our one is still a young one.’

‘It will have to work soon, Gerrit, won’t it?’

‘To work, did you say?’ Gerrit already understands where he has been and says:

‘Were you at Willemse’s, Jeus?’

‘Yes, Gerrit, I saw Hans working.’

‘And then you were certainly surprised, weren’t you?’

‘Yes, of course, but I saw something entirely different, Gerrit. Does Hosman also have a horse like Hans?’

‘What did you say?’

‘Whether Hosman has a horse which has to work like Hans?’

And that on top of everything. Gerrit suddenly no longer has the time; he’d better ask his father.

‘I have to work, Jeus, and I have to go to the pasture land immediately, you can surely understand that.’

‘Pull the other one, it’s got bells on’, Jeus thinks, then with resignation he says:

'I will be off then, Gerrit, I can put my time to better use too', by which Gerrit understood that this boy takes everything in and later deals with it as well.

'Come on, Fanny, there is nothing more for us to do here, we aren't any the wiser, you noticed too, didn't you, Fanny. We will go to the garden. We first have to find out what the adults don't want to tell us. They pretend to know nothing, but they know everything.'

There you go, Gerrit, he knows. They are having a nice lie-down in the garden, lovely and near to each other, and they are thinking.

'Come closer to me, Fanny, then I can think even better.'

He pulls Fanny towards him. The dog rolls upside down and he suddenly sees what Fanny really is. It is as if a light falls from the heavens.

'Good gracious me, Fanny, you are like Hans, I never knew that. Don't you have to make sure that young come into the world for you? Are you only in the world to bark and eat your fill? But you are exactly the same as I am, do you know that? You are like a cropper-pigeon, Fanny.'

No, that is no comparison, a cropper is something completely different. But, a cropper is like Hans and like Fanny. Maybe it is not so bad after all. A cropper is like aunt Trui's cockerel and our own cockerel.

'Come on, Fanny, we have to go to the chickens.'

Fanny shuffles along behind him, he cannot rest for a second, and the boss doesn't allow him any time for a snooze. Hans is bigger than Fanny and the cropper, but still...? But there is mother.

'Mother, may I ask you something?'

'What do you want to know from me now?'

He has to think, he will tell her as clearly as possible: 'Mother, when children come along...' Good grief, Crisje thinks, whoops, there you have it. Crisje hisses, but she can't get a word out and has already gone. That's the way it always goes, he thinks. If you ask people something, they have no time or they run away. You never get a proper answer. But, there is always Bernard.

'Bernard, may I ask you something?'

'Of course, what do you want to know from me?' Bernard looks at him, as long as it's not about aunt Trui's cockerel; he wants nothing to do with that.

‘Bernard, what was that again that Hans did there, Bernard?’

‘Do you want to know that?’

‘Yes, is that so bad then, Bernard?’

‘I wouldn’t have thought that you wanted anything to do with those horrible things. But now I know, you are a sly one. You have the same rotten thoughts as me.’

‘Then get lost for all I care, Bernard.’

‘So, is that all?’

Bernard follows him, that drivelling about Our Lord has gone. That really has to stop, he knows now, Jeus has the same rotten thoughts as all the other children, and his world is also rotten. Bernard hasn’t forgotten that yet. However, Crisje is upset. Where is mother? In the garden. Then he can help mother there and then they can have a nice chat together. That’s not such a bad idea, after all. Bernard hasn’t forgotten anything. Because Tall Hendrik has taken him to task. He looked Bernard in the eye himself and went to tell Trui later, that she must stop with her talk about Bernard. A child cannot pluck a cockerel like that. Gradus agreed with Tall Hendrik, however, how is it possible, Trui continues to insist that Bernard did it. Tall Hendrik nearly died laughing. He would give anything to know, but Bernard says no; he does not shake, he doesn’t get frightened, he really stood in judgement, but no Tall Hendrik could gauge him and determine that he was the guilty party. You cannot lie like that, especially in front of Tall Hendrik. No, Crisje said, Bernard didn’t do it. But who did do it? Who knew so exactly, where the cockerel was? Who knew the airs of the cockerel? Not a living soul. Except Bernard, aunt Trui says, and in her opinion, he looked at the cockerel too much during the past few days. Well Trui, what do you want? There was no constabulary! Crisje didn’t trust Trui in the slightest, but she has no proof. Moreover, Jeus has been walking around with his own problems for days. Bernard pretends that aunt Trui’s cockerel has never existed, and life goes on, but there is Crisje over there.

‘Mother, can I help you?’

‘There is no help needed here.’

‘But can’t I just help you to get those things out of the ground, mother? Then we can have a nice little chat at the same time.’

Oh, is that the reason, Crisje thinks, she can’t get away from him.

‘Mother.’

‘What is it?’

‘I want to know, mother, if you marry father, really, whether father is then Hans and you are the cow.’

‘What do you want to know?’... Jesus, Mary and Joseph, help me! How do I get away from this child? Does mother not hear him? Then he will just ask again.

‘I want to know, mother, whether you are like Willemse’s Hans... No, I don’t mean that, mother. I want to know if, when Willemse’s Hans has to jump, you are then the cow, mother? Don’t you have to give milk, anyway, mother? No, I want to know, whether you have nothing else to do but give milk. That is all, mother, that’s all I want to know.’

‘What have I started now’, Crisje thinks. I should have taken off immediately. He has now seen something at Willemse’s. She knows what it is about now. He doesn’t wait any longer and continues to ask:

‘Do you know, mother? May I know, mother?’

Crisje thinks for a moment and gets out of it by saying:

‘Just ask your father that, Jeus.’

That is a pity, Crisje. You know very well that he cannot go to his father with such questions; he will beat him to the ground. And Jeus’ soul is not open to father. Now you have knocked him down yourself, and you will lose the child. Do you want that, Crisje? How many millions of mothers have lost their children, only because they do not know how to take care of them when these situations arise? In addition, this child goes further anyway, Crisje. Jeus must know. This is a great problem. And how did you experience these problems, Crisje? Do you not think? Did you think that this was the best thing? To walk away and release yourself from his life? Anyhow, you cannot know everything, you cannot have an overview of it all, you think that these problems are sacred, but they are also sacred for him as well. Jeus already feels it and says with a sigh:

‘I know, mother. That is all nonsense. I will help myself.’

But you know, Crisje? The most beautiful thing in your life is the contact with your child. You are now throwing that away from your life yourself. This is the most beautiful moment, Crisje; if you think about it for a moment, then you must really feel that, that a child looks at creation and then starts asking questions about the things of Our Lord. This is of such great significance! After all, these little souls

now think day and night. Whether they are asleep or wide awake during the day, Crisje. They can no longer eat because of it; this goes before everything! And that is very natural. As a result of this they learn to speak and to think, as a result of this they get to know you and the Divine universe, as a result of this, Crisje, you have your child or you lose it. And do not forget you are now hindering his development. However, don't worry, Crisje, millions of people in the town follow the same path, but it is a dead end, and of course extremely wrong, you are now sending Jeus to the rabble! He will get there, of course, because we will make sure of that, he has to get there, because it is something completely different for him than for thousands of other children, he experiences the universal part of it. Now what do Mary, Joseph or Jesus have to do with this? Do you find it so inhuman, Crisje?

Crisje also says to him: 'I will have to look after father', then he is alone again.

He thinks: at Hakfoort's they had a bear, and that bear was like Hans, it did not do anything different to what Hans had to do, and that is exactly the same for the cockerel, even if it is something else. However, that bear is dead now, they slaughtered that animal. It is a pity, but now he must continue.

Jeus admires Bernard, but he cannot help him now. That is also a pity, he feels, Bernard knows all about it. Johan does too, but Johan starts laughing, and then you cannot ask him anymore, he doesn't sense how serious his problems are. However, aunt Trui's cockerel has been cooked. The cockerel went on the stove for a while, Trui has let the soup simmer first, and then they had a nice dinner. Is aunt Trui still angry? They mustn't come near her yet; the fence is closed tightly. Trui has closed the paradise for Crisje's boys. Bernard says: 'It's her business; there is nothing for me there, anyway.' However, he knows for himself, he has got out of it wonderfully well. Even father didn't realise anything. Was that so clever now, thinks Bernard. Of course, it was a bit difficult at one point to squeeze the cockerel's throat closed, so that it couldn't scream. But did you really think, Trui, that Bernard was mad? Trui, that is the best part of all, you did not find a single feather. She only realized that days later. No one had noticed until Gradus suddenly asked: 'Where did the feathers get to, Trui?' 'A very good point, Gradus. There are no feathers.' 'Where did

they pluck the cockerel then?' Trui is not a clairvoyant. Jeus found the feathers at the back of the garden and he immediately knew everything. When he told Bernard that he knew where the cockerel had been plucked, he said threateningly:

'As long as you know that I will pluck you as well if you say anything about it. But it is nothing to do with me, nothing!'

Bernard does not forget that he must not be indebted to Jeus, because then he will no longer have a life. Jeus knows, and he doesn't know! Bernard does not intend to give away his secret; sooner or later, Jeus will demand to have his apples and pears, and then he will be stuck with Jeus. This is how Bernard thinks about it and no one can prove it to him.

Crisje is happy that Bernard didn't do it. For her it is the meanest trick which children can think of. Then the crooks must have done it, and Crisje can rid herself of the whole drama. Now she is faced with much greater dramas, which Hendrik must become involved in, but Tall Hendrik says: 'Let Jeus find out for himself.' Fortunately, he is lying in the box bed, and can no longer follow his parents. Wrong, Tall Hendrik! That is also wrong again, Hendrik. You are now just like Crisje, afraid of the sacred truth. Is that bringing up your child, Tall Hendrik? What are you actually here for then? Why are there parents in the world, Tall Hendrik? Have you nothing else to do but make sure there is food and drink? Is that smoothing the path for the child? You beat him? You not only make it a thousand times worse than it already is, but you also haul that child away from your life. You are now hitting away all respect. For Jeus you no longer mean anything, anything at all! You are not worth a thing in the child's eyes, Tall Hendrik. However, you just carry on, he will get there okay. But how would it be if you took him on a nice walk, and then told him everything about life. The most sacred thing which exists for a father and mother, you do not understand anything about it, and neither does Crisje. For Crisje it is her pure faith, she doesn't want to give her child everything too soon, but you could have done it, Tall Hendrik, this mighty task was laid on your shoulders, but you are a father who is good for nothing! In the eyes of Jeus that is! Do you understand it, Tall Hendrik?

'Come on, Fanny, we must work today', is the first thing which Fanny gets to hear when they waken in the morning. The thinking

has already started again. And his father could have explained the problem of his thoughts in a few hours. That would have been a paradise for Jeus and for Tall Hendrik, but he is completely blind. He only thinks about singing and playing the violin, about fun and poverty-stricken joy, and nothing else.

Jeus picks flowers, he first thoroughly mixes them up and then they go into the ground. He must have young from all forms of life. The lettuce also follows and the beans, everything which slightly qualifies for giving young, according to Jeus, goes into the ground and will also have to give him those young. The children are not out of his mind for a second. Jeus feels, all life on earth is to have children. And that is the most beautiful thing that there is. He drags along buckets of water, waters the lot in the ground and tomorrow he will see if young have grown. That water is the milk; the young flowers have to drink from it, and then they will grow, to have children of their own in the future. This is good. You could fall asleep doing it, but that mustn't happen, but he is crazy from thinking. He gives the flowers a good scolding, they must not think that life passes by in sleeping or being put in a vase sometime, there is more to do, something else to experience, as long as they are well-aware of that! And beans need not get ideas above their station; you already get two kilos for five cents. A young dove means more, and they should be pleased that he is interested in their lives. When he takes them out of the ground a while later, to see if they happen to have fallen asleep, and when he sees that those cursed flowers do not feel like bringing forth young, he mixes them up again and puts them back in the ground. They shall give young! You should hear him moaning, Crisje and Tall Hendrik. You are missing all of this now. You could have told him that in the evening at the table, and could even have enjoyed it, you would have changed your minds, my God, he must not go to the opera house, and certainly not to a factory, but we should send him to a University. Nevertheless, the matter is buried. Jeus will not be granted this honour anyway, and you, Tall Hendrik, you just laugh, just drink your bitters; he will certainly make it.

He cannot get these great problems out of his mind for a second. His little friends no longer exist. He has forgotten Anneke. But he wants nothing to do with those dirty berries, they prick you, and they cost nothing. Of course, those children also mean nothing. Fanny

helps him. Fanny lifts his leg and waters the lettuce. For Jeus, this is Fanny's understanding and cooperation.

'Good gracious me, this is something, Fanny. You have sense, and you let your mind work. Mother should see that, and father should know, Fanny. But goodness, we are both like Hans, we are men, Fanny!'

Today he cannot get enough of it, but they are making progress. But that has taken weeks. Still, it happens of its own accord. You just have to want to think for yourself. He is building a firm foundation. In this ground, he will no longer sink away. His foundation is like a rock. He can put a world on it. He lays stone after stone and thinks. That is also a thought, Hendrik is now being breast-fed by mother. The piglets also get mother's breast, the dogs, cats, and rabbits as well. With a dove that happens in a completely different way, and also with chickens. He is really making a bit of progress now, isn't he? Another boulder added for his foundation. Hans and the chickens are different; there is something wrong here. Chickens lay eggs. And the young come from those eggs. That is something strange. The chicken sits on the eggs, and stays sitting until the young come. That is strange. Now why must a chicken like that sit for such a long time? It isn't easy, but he must continue. He gets no support from Bernard or Johan. He can drop dead as far as they are concerned. Fanny, we will continue, sparks are flying, but that doesn't matter.

He hikes from shed to shed. From stable to stable, from space to space. They lie with the chickens for hours on end. The cockerel and Hans play one role, but the cockerel does it in a different way; that monster bites the chickens. Those chickens don't like that, but they have no say in it. 'Goodness, Fanny, I know.' A while later they are standing at the top of the Grintweg. At the West's house, they have had pups. He wants to go there with Fanny.

'Hendrik, may we see the pups?'

'Just go to Alfred, Jeus, I have to go.'

Alfred doesn't mind. 'But watch out for Fanny, Jeus, make sure they do not start to fight.'

'Fanny has nothing to fight about, Alfred. Is your one vicious?'

'No, my dog does nothing, but when they have young, then you will know all about it.'

He goes inside. They haven't even reached the door when Fanny is

already bitten away, and then he can leave. That is something. A while later Fanny is chasing a cat and has forgotten his boss and the young. Then he will just have to carry on.

‘Isn’t that just a scaredy cat, Fanny? That female is afraid that we want to steal her young. But I know something else. I believe, Mrs Ruikes has kittens.’

He knocks on Mrs Ruikes’ door. Mrs Ruikes opens and asks him:

‘Good day, Jeus, what do you want from me?’

‘Does Mientje not have young ones, Mrs Ruikes?’

‘Yes, Jeus.’

‘May we just have a look at the young, Mrs Ruikes?’

‘Just come in, Jeus. Do you like cats that much, Jeus?’

‘Of course, Mrs Ruikes, I like animals a lot.’

When the woman sees that he is holding Fanny firmly, she says:

‘Just don’t worry about Fanny, Jeus, it has known Mientje for such a long time, haven’t you, Fanny?’

‘You are right, Mrs Ruikes. But it was just chasing a cat.’

‘That is possible, Jeus, but that is a strange cat. Fanny knows very well what it can put up with.’

‘That’s true, they have known each other for such a long time. And where are the kittens now, Mrs Ruikes?’

‘Here, Jeus, here is Mieneke with the young.’ He holds one of these sweet little animals in his hands, he is allowed to touch them one by one. What soft little bodies they have. Young animals are beautiful and much sweeter than people are.

‘Can they already drink, Mrs Ruikes?’

‘Yes, Jeus, that already happens on the very day that they are born.’

‘I can understand that. How old are they now?’

‘Let’s see, they are now about a fortnight old, Jeus.’

‘But what nice animals they are. They get milk from Mientje anyway, Mrs Ruikes, don’t they?’

‘Yes, of course, Jeus, or did you think that I would give them the breast?’

He really has to laugh at that. However, Mrs Ruikes is no Crisje, she laughs as well, what lovely questions this young boy can ask. You have more with a child like that than with a big man. Jeus gets biscuits and Fanny isn’t forgotten; he is really a visitor. Nevertheless, he wants to know more.

'Is Mientje's husband not here, Mrs Ruikes?'

'No, Jeus, my husband is not here.'

'I don't mean your husband, Mrs Ruikes, I mean Mientje's husband.'

'Oh, did you mean that, Jeus. No, he isn't at home.'

What a boy. Jeus continues and asks:

'Has he abandoned Mientje then, Mrs Ruikes?'

'Yes, Jeus.'

'Goodness me, that's bad, Mrs Ruikes. You can't trust those ugly males in the slightest, can you?'

'No, Jeus, you can't trust them.'

'Or was it Mientje's own fault, Mrs Ruikes?'

'What did you say, Jeus?'

'I said, Mrs Ruikes, maybe Mientje cheated on him.'

Mrs Ruikes has to laugh, she doesn't know what to say. When he follows with:

'I think she must have', then he asks again:

'But did you not keep an eye on Mientje, Mrs Ruikes?'

'Do I have to follow Mientje day and night, Jeus?'

'No, that is not possible either, is it, those cats are on the chase day and night. I can understand that, Mrs Ruikes. But males, Mrs Ruikes? Males, they are strange ones. As long as they have something to drink.' The elderly woman laughs, And thinks Jeus is a sacred wonder. Crisje is blessed with this one, she knows. And it is no wonder that she wouldn't miss him for the world. He asks again:

'Are these all female cats, Mrs Ruikes?'

'We can only see that later, Jeus.'

'Why not now, Mrs Ruikes?'

'You must wait, Jeus. You can't know that beforehand with the doves' either.'

'That's true.' Mrs Ruikes has some things to do as well. When he is back on the street, he still doesn't know anything. Then he will just have to go back to the chicken run. The cockerel there, is a man. And those over there are his wives. Look, the cockerel has to work; he has waited so long for this already. A whole lot of females are walking round here. Why does a cockerel have so many females around him? He will just go to mother.

'Mother, why does a cockerel have so many wives?'

Crisje is too busy again. You cannot talk to mother. And his flowers and plants are not having children, they have died. Fanny gets a kick; things are not working out. He still hasn't got to the bottom of it. It is not possible, he has been occupied with it for months, and he is racking his brains and isn't making much progress. Suddenly, how is that possible, he has worked it out. Why didn't he think of it before. He should have thought of Anneke, but he didn't know what Anneke was like. They swim in the Wetering. And there is also Betje from Achter de Kom. Betje is naked and is a pretty girl. Betje doesn't even know that she is a girl, and that there are boys, which even if she did know, Betje swims like a fish and boys do not exist for her. But Jeus looks at her little mound. Suddenly Jeus feels it. Hurrah, Fanny, I've worked it out! He races out of the water. He looks at Betje and now he knows. He is almost mad, but contains himself, he must now think about it calmly. Betje is mother. When Betje is bigger, she will become like mother, and the boys will become men. He is also completely naked, they swim there and have a lovely romp, but the great story of 'Adam and Eve' haunts him, and he has finally thought it out for himself. Yes, Crisje, this is how Our Lord meant it. Paradise now still exists! Adults sullied paradise. Do you still believe it, Tall Hendrik? No, they do not need to come to you with it. But here children are in the middle of paradise and do not know any better. Jeus is now really like the serpent, but it concerns something else completely. After all, Jeus thinks, if there were no fathers and mothers then there wouldn't be any children either. Oh dear, Father, if you have something to say about paradise to this one later, then there will be blows.

Tall Hendrik, your child has tramped down Divine paradise. That happened through thinking. How many millions of people are there with these thoughts? How many people do not believe that Adam and Eve sinned? However, what would have become of Divine procreation, Tall Hendrik, if this was and would mean a sin? You had better throw all that nonsense overboard. Jeus will soon tell you a different story. Betje, this Betje is sacred! There are more Betjes in the world, but this one is still sacred, Tall Hendrik! Moreover, your Jeus is not rotten, not bad; he has sacred thoughts. And now he no longer needs you; he knows it! He has become a professor, the lectures can begin, Tall Hendrik. And what will Jeus be like when he is grown-up and starts to write?

He continues. Now the chickens and rabbits as well. Then afterwards the doves. Again, Crisje sees him in the attic and with the chickens and rabbits. He has already seen it from a rabbit. And the doves as well; they do nothing else all day. However, what happens inside mother, a dove broods that out and a chicken as well. And all that can only be the case, because of what must happen inside. Also with the turkeys and the horses, but that is the world of Hans again. There are different sorts of animals. A chicken is different from a dog. Fanny is like father, but Fanny is afraid of female dogs, and that is just as well, otherwise he wouldn't want anything more to do with Fanny. Now he will look at Anneke with different eyes. She can tell him more, so can mother. If father weren't there, mother wouldn't have any children, And that is why father is father. There is no more to it, he is also a man, and when he gets married, then he must have a wife like mother. Anneke is snappy, no, Anneke is nothing for him. Betje is sweet. Yes, Betje is sweet. Betje is completely different, even if Betje just lives behind the Kom. Everything revolves around this; no one has to tell him anymore. Because he knows more than Bernard. Mothers are like cows, but mothers are people and cows are animals. Nevertheless, they have only one job; and milk is milk. It couldn't be better. This is everything. Or is there something else to think about? He will certainly not choose a cow for himself, but a person. Storks have nothing to do with it. If a mother screams it comes, because she is so small-minded. You do not hear any dog, cat, rabbit, or dove screaming when children are coming. People are more pathetic than animals. People make a fuss, an animal doesn't. Yet, he can understand that giving birth to children is painful.

Is there anything else? If mother and father want to have a child, father has to work for it, otherwise there will be no children. He hammers that into his head. A dove coos. A horse neighs. A pig snorts. Chickens cackle, sparrows' chirp, that is really bad. A cockerel crows and a turkey chatters, snakes and rats can drop dead! People kiss each other. He will not let his wife down later. She must be faithful and sweet, and she must be able to cook well, but he will be the boss, just like father, and he will also be nice to his wife. She will get everything from him. But now he must go to mother.

'I've got it, mother', Crisje gets to hear.

'So, did you get it, Jeus?'

‘Yes, mother, now you do not need to tell me anymore. I now know everything. When Miets is born, you do not need to fool me with anything else.’

‘In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit’, Crisje prays and asks:

‘You must be hungry from all that thinking, Jeus?’

‘Yes, mother, I am starving.’

Crisje thinks. The child feels relieved. However she now knows, those who are yet to be born she will teach the truth. Father can tell her more, but he is too careful. When it is there, you will see it for yourself. Sooner or later you will get to hear it anyway, but then you are there yourself, or you are completely off the mark, and another one takes away your fun and sucks the child away from you. Never again, Crisje decides!

Now he can play again. He has been occupied for nine months. For all those months daily life has escaped him. He didn’t care about it. He has experienced something else. Crisje now feels, to give a child life, it happens by itself, but to take care of it and guide it, that is something which people cannot always do. She also had to learn that. Although she wanted to give her children everything, she has missed this, it has escaped her. A child has to know everything. And especially that which it is asking about. And now life is good, it is great, because you have become a child again yourself, but with that great realization in your own heart. Is there anything else, Tall Hendrik?

Having children, Jeus knows, is the greatest thing there is. However, you have to do everything yourself for it. Mothers give you your milk. And later when you are big yourself, you will take over that of your mother and father, and you will then serve and work for Our Lord. Fanny, now we will go back to the moorland and to the woods. In a few months time, he can go to school as well. No, it will still be a while, Fanny, we can still have a lot of adventures together.

Jeus, now just go and play. You deserve it. Your soul is now open to many things. Follow the laws of Our Lord, you are safe in that!

This year, Crisje, he laid the foundations for the whole of his life and now he is centuries ahead of Johan and Bernard in these things. No one will catch up with him, but you will only understand that later. Jeus as well, but then the Tall One will have started!

‘Crisje, I will give you a thousand guilders
for your secret’

For Crisje’s boys and for hundreds of people there is now the chance to earn money. They can go into the woods to pick bilberries, a job for young and old and, above all, a good wage given by Our Lord to them, which comes back each year. In addition, it is for many people the only possibility of escaping their miseries for a change. Mother Nature is good, kind, and loving and considerate conscious, but you have to pick the berries yourself from the bushes, and the boys can do that. Bernard has worked out that they will certainly manage three guilders today and by the end of the week that will be an extra week’s wages and father doesn’t have to do anything for it. Now that they have holidays, they go to the woods as early as six o’clock in the morning. They are ready to leave. Bernard has a look outside to see what the weather is like. And is startled by what he sees.

‘Mother, come and look, there is a dirty man walking in our garden.’

Crisje looks. Is that not Jan Kniep? Bernard thinks that he looks like one of the black bandits. Just look at that black hat, then you will immediately know. Crisje looks, and yes, it is Jan, but wasn’t he in the Dutch East Indies? ‘Good grief, Jan, do come in.’ Bernard cannot understand it, what does this mean? Jeus doesn’t know what is the matter. ‘It is a pity Hendrik has just left. Just come in, Jan.’ And do the boys not wish to say good morning to Jan? That is not so easy; they first want to take a look at the brown peril. Bernard wants nothing to do with him. Is that a friend of mother’s? No strangers must come into this house. However, wasting time costs money, the boys leave. ‘What does that brown monster want in our house, Johan?

If he hasn’t left by this evening, I will throw him out.’ Johan asks: ‘Are you the boss at home then, Bernard?’

‘Of course not, but I don’t want any strangers in our house.’

So Bernard has his own thoughts and Johan doesn’t understand him. He already feels that now, if strangers come into the house, he will have lost his freedom. He will think about it. They go into the woods, dragging their feet. They know exactly where the biggest bilberries can be found. And it is a long way from home, in the vicinity

of the Hunzeleberg. It is true, last year Johan and Bernard earned a tidy sum. Jeus didn't really try, but he now also knows all about it. They are now enjoying themselves. They pull the berries from the bushes, you have to see for yourself to understand how quickly they can do it. Then the wonderful moment arrives, the quarter of an hour rest for sandwiches and coffee. It is so lovely to lie on your back in the middle of the woods even for just a while, it is as if you have wings and the chirping of the birds gives you a feeling of well-being. But come on, boys, the bucket must be full; a day is nothing. You can really thank Our Lord for this, Crisje feels, the boys think differently about it, you have to slave hard enough for it.

'How did you get here so suddenly, Jan?'

Crisje now hears the story of her childhood friend, Jan Kniep. He came straight to Holland, because he was extremely homesick. Jan really came back here to die. He cannot speak any dialect anymore, Crisje notices, but he still understands it. Jan went to the Dutch East Indies as a colonial, married there and had children, but now that they are grown-up they no longer need him. Then, one night, he was told:

'Just go back, Jan. Go back, don't stay here any longer.'

So then, he left. The first thing which he asked when he arrived was if Crisje was still alive. 'Yes, she lives over there.' Crisje knows Jan's family. She says already:

'If they do not want to have you, Jan, you come back, then Hendrik and you can make a bed in the attic.'

'And the children, Crisje?'

'Do the children have any say in it then, Jan?'

'I will do my best not to put you to too much trouble, Crisje.'

'We must help each other, Jan.'

Crisje loves this life; she was a good friend of Jan. Tall Hendrik will be surprised. They used to live near each other and Jan was a good person. Hendrik also liked him a lot. He has been away for some thirty years, and yet, did not know any wealth there. He was a hard worker. They talk to each other the whole day. The few guilders which Jan brought do not mean much. His family there will be strangely surprised. Crisje sees something on Jan's neck, which doesn't look good at all. A swelling with a dirty red edge, which tells her everything, and of which she envisages what troubles she could be

faced with. But that doesn't matter to her. Around twelve noon Jan goes to visit his family. When he puts out his hands in a pleased and happy way, they know a while later that he cuts a figure just like aunt Trui's cockerel, and in addition even thinner than a rake, it is jokingly suggested that he is not even good enough to make soup from. They therefore get rid of him quickly. The good Jan feels rotten, but there is still a Crisje along with her Hendrik, his friends will not let him down. An hour later, Jan is back sitting in the kitchen with Crisje.

'I thought so, Jan. They don't want you there, but that isn't so bad, as long as you know. Will you stop that crying now, Jan?'

'Yes, Crisje, but it is so awful, it gave me such a shock. I hadn't expected that from my brothers.'

'That is as simple as anything, Jan. They want money. And, understand me properly, they have worries enough. But they are in and out of the church constantly.'

Jan knows that as well now, but it was a dirty blow to his life. Father and mother would never have been able to imagine that, would they? They would turn in their graves. Crisje knows they were good people. Jan is crying, he doesn't stop, and he has been paralysed. He didn't think that the people, his own family at that, could be so cruel. He has devoted his life to so many people, and now this. Now your own family kicks you out the door, he can't fathom it and continues to cry; it has hurt him so much. No, Jan, they do not need you there, especially not when they saw that you had such a dirty thing on your neck. Goodbye, Jan. We will see you sometime. Crisje understands everything, but there they don't want to understand anything and that is also very human, but she will not leave her friend alone.

'If you hadn't been such a good person, Jan, then I wouldn't have known you either. Now could you stop that crying? Our Lord knows very well what you did for HIM. And you were always ready to help people, weren't you?'

'Yes, Crisje!'

The boys come home with a bucket full of berries. Is that man still there? Really and truly, father will soon come, Bernard thinks, and then that man will leave. Aren't they big boys, Jan? Crisje throws her arms around the boys, they have done their best. Then the first thing they ask is:

'Is he staying here, mother?'

‘I will first have to talk to father about it, Bernard.’

‘Where will he sleep, mother?’

‘If it is necessary, Bernard, we will fix something.’

Bernard does not accept that lying down. Having strange men in the house is nothing. They will keep too close a watch on him and he will lose his freedom. Johan and Jeus want to have a talk with the man. Jan tells about the Dutch East Indies, about the jungle and Batavia, according to Johan he is right. He has learned a lot about it at school. But do they have to work for such an odd person? Would they have to work for such an ape? Because he is certainly that! Why does that man not go to his own family, Bernard thinks. Is mother completely mad?

Jeus joins in the conversation by asking Jan: ‘Where are the Dutch East Indies?’

‘Then you first go by boat, Jeus, and that takes weeks before you get there. It is that far away.’

‘With one of those really big ships, Jan?’

‘Yes, Jeus.’

‘Are there many people on it, Jan?’

‘Certainly, at least a thousand.’

‘Where did you learn to talk like that? That isn’t dialect, is it, Jan?’

‘No, Jeus, that is High Dutch.’

‘Can you no longer speak the dialect then?’

‘I have forgotten it a bit, Jeus, but it will come back.’

‘It had better’, Bernard interrupts, and Jan can make do with that. Jan has to laugh about it. He already knows that Bernard has his own character and he knows what to do with it. Jan has seen and learned an awful lot in the world. Jeus asks again:

‘Do they not have a winter there, Jan?’

‘No, Jeus.’

‘Then I wouldn’t like to be there either. I want to skate. But did you have fun there, Jan?’

‘Now, I have to say, Jeus, life is hard there. You do not get anything as a gift.’

‘What is that, ‘gift’, Jan?’

‘That means, Jeus, that you have to work hard for everything there.’

Bernard retorts ‘Don’t we have to work hard here then?’ this makes Jan laugh again, he rather likes Bernard. Crisje smiles and winks at

Bernard. Jeus and Johan want to know all about Jan. Which brings about Bernard's warning:

'Why do you want to know all about that guy, soon we won't be able to get rid of him.'

Jan has to laugh at the apt words of Bernard. That child is fighting for the household. Then suddenly Tall Hendrik is standing in the kitchen. Bernard wants to see what father thinks about it. But Hendrik screams even louder than Crisje did, Bernard hears and he cannot understand it.

'What are you telling me now. Are you back, Jan?'

'Yes, Hendrik.'

Now Tall Hendrik gets to hear his story.

Afterwards he says: 'Come, Jan, we will fix up something upstairs.'

The boys know now. They look and see how father and Jan do that and they know that a lodger has been added, an old baboon at that. A while later they see father, mother and Jan having a drink together, now nothing more can be changed. They see a big person crying like a small child, and that means something to them. After dinner they have a lovely seat together in the front garden and Jan tells his stories. The boys wander about here and there. Jan is speaking.

'I swear to you, Hendrik, I will not put a foot over that threshold again. I would rather die.' When Jan is talking, Crisje sees that that tumour on his neck is talking as well. That thing already has something to say. Now that Tall Hendrik wants to know what it is, Crisje takes over and her Hendrik understands that he must now be quiet about it. But when they are all asleep, Tall Hendrik gets to hear it from her. Yes, Hendrik, that is a dirty tumour. That will lead us to terrible cancer.

'But, Crisje, you know, I like Jan a lot. What do you think about the children? Is that not dangerous?'

'That is not something dangerous, Hendrik. And it is not at that stage yet.'

'But if that thing bursts, then what, Cris?'

'Then we will see, Hendrik. And everything, Hendrik, which we do out of love, you cannot get any misery from that.'

'That's true, Crisje.'

Tall Hendrik resigns himself to it, he takes Crisje's lead. Friendship exists for them. They haven't forgotten their friend yet. Jan is here and

will stay here. Jan is willing and able to work. The following morning Jan is in the woods with the boys. The whole neighbourhood now knows the story of Jan Kniep. There is gossiping, it is talked about as a passing scandal, but then this is also part of everyday life, and it is soon forgotten. Jan's way of ignoring the gossip is by silence. As a result of his warm personality, he wins the boys over. They get to know him one by one. Within three weeks, Jan is already indispensable. The boys notice that Jan is a Jack of all trades. He makes sure there is firewood, has become Crisje's first aid and the boys all like him. Now the children of Jan's family hear from Bernard:

'You would want to have him back now, wouldn't you? But you cannot buy him from us for all the money in the world, as long as you know that.'

Now listen, it is Bernard saying this. He teases these children, they don't understand, Bernard feels it now, what a gem of a person their family has thrown out onto the street, Jan is so good and what a friend he is for Crisje's boys. They have never had it so good. The brown monster is no longer a monster, Jan has become part of the Grintweg. The boys hold him in high respect. Bernard now says:

'If we didn't have him, nothing would become of us, what would we do then?'

Slowly but surely, Jan grows towards the white race again. He has captured all these hearts. He has become their eldest brother. And they learn many things from him. You should see Jan eating and drinking. He always enjoys it, even if you are not hungry and you see Jan eating, you get an appetite just like that. Bernard knows Jan has no money, but that doesn't mean anything. Jan is never tired, nothing is too much for him, he says that every day he feels as happy as a king, but then one who lives in paradise, because kings often have worries. Here people have reached unity through a sacred friendship. However, when that existed, friendship became universal love, because you can see and experience that. According to Bernard, the ground on which Jan walks is now too hard for him. You should hear Bernard when he discusses daily matters with Jan. Good heavens, Crisje thinks, Bernard is such a good boy and a good thinker. Indeed, in a different way from Jesus, but Bernard knows life and Jan eats tasty apples and delicious apricots from Bernard, and with the feeling that they are from Our Lord! Because Jan is so good and so sensitive,

he can understand everything just like that. And then Jan is crying. Surprised, Bernard asked:

‘Do you have to cry about that now, Jan?’

‘You are so good to me, Bernard, may I not have a little cry about that?’

This is said to a boy of almost ten years old. Jan is well into his fifties, but he feels like a child here and this is why they understand each other so well. They live in a paradise with Jan, but it is Jan who has opened the big gate and knows places there which Bernard didn’t know of yet, and they discuss those lovely things together. Bernard sees that the swelling on Jan’s neck is increasing and becoming dangerous. Tall Hendrik and Crisje prepare themselves, because today or tomorrow they will be faced with a lot of misery. One morning the swelling burst open and then Crisje heard the boys screaming:

‘Mother, come and look quickly, Jan is bleeding like a pig.’

Crisje gets a fright. Jan is bandaged up and they call a doctor. Who determines that Jan’s tumour could be dangerous for the boys. Jan has to go to Arnhem, they can probably operate on him there, ‘perhaps he will never come back, boys.’ ‘But that can’t be true, anyway, mother? They will not keep Jan there forever?’ Jan leaves for Arnhem, but he comes back, an operation is not possible. Crisje doesn’t want to miss Jan for the world, she orders large quantities of bandages, and Crisje will help him. The doctor cannot do anything else about it either. However, not one of them wants to miss Jan the colonial! Once more he is sleeping in the attic. Crisje takes care of him, because no one will get Jan away from this place. The doctor, who comes to have a look now and again, does not wish to dirty his hands, because that tumour is a stinking swamp to him, and you can get all sorts of things from it, the learned man does not feel like treating it. Crisje sees that the doctor is disgusted by this illness. But things will be fine. With Jan she discusses the personality of the doctor and they both know how much feeling is present in that life for the work of Our Lord. That man doesn’t understand any of it! He has no love for it. The question is whether these people are open to suffering humanity?

Crisje says: ‘No, Jan. They are chatterboxes.’

And she gives Jan the assurance:

‘I will get back at him yet.’

One morning the doctor comes to have a look. He is curious to

know how Jan is getting on. Crisje happens to be occupied with Jan and last night she spoke to Our Lord, but Jan doesn't know that. Crisje is as strong as an ox, she carries a knowledge within her which would make the learned man and Jan shake and tremble if they knew about it, but that will soon come. The doctor is wearing a lovely grey pin-striped suit and Crisje wants to spoil that same suit, she will show the man something which will surprise him as if has been hit by lightning. When she suddenly takes out the wad of cotton wool, the blood splashes all over the place.

Does the Doctor wish to take a look? Crisje invites him to come a bit closer, so that he can see better. The good man falls for it, he comes closer, but at the same time she pulls the wad of cotton wool out of the hole, the life blood of a person splashes straight over Doctor's nice pin-striped suit.

'That's a pity, Doctor, that is really a pity, but I didn't know that there would be so much force behind it this morning.'

The man wishes to say something, he is furious, but thinks it over and reaches a decision. Crisje and Jan see that his head is a fiery red and they know what this means, they are not that stupid.

'Don't worry about it, Crisje, don't bother about me, it is bad enough. I understand, Crisje.'

So that is just enough, Crisje, he has learned his lesson. Crisje thinks: 'He can quickly bow his head', but that nice suit isn't worth anything anymore. Now they talk, the man gains understanding, and you are right on top of it. Without realising it, the doctor has become a part of Jan and Crisje, but it is much simpler, he can no longer withdraw from it, because that cursed hole in Jan's throat also has something to say to him. Then it is Crisje who confronts him with the facts and offers his life something.

'Shall I tell you something, Doctor?'

'What is it, Crisje?'

'You think that this can no longer be cured, don't you?'

'No, Crisje, we are powerless.'

'Then you must listen to me carefully now, Doctor. In three months time I will have that hole closed.'

'What are you telling me, Crisje?'

'Did Doctor not understand me? Then I will tell you again: In three months time I will have that hole closed.'

‘That is not possible, Crisje. I would like to see that.’

The man shrugs his shoulders. Jan asks Crisje:

‘Did you mean that, Crisje?’

‘Yes, Jan, did you think that I was telling lies?’

‘Really, I didn’t, Crisje, but still?’

‘I understand that, Jan. I can imagine that. But in three months’ time this hole will be closed.’

Jan feels happy and he gives himself completely over to Crisje. Last night Crisje had another dream. Our Lord came to her and said:

‘Crisje, you have worries. You are worrying about Jan. I have heard your prayers. And I am here now. Let the boys fetch the same medicine from Hosman’s, they will cure Jan’s neck for a while. However, it is only for a while, Crisje. You know that, then nothing more can be done, nothing!’

Then Crisje still said to Our Lord:

‘You know Jan, Our Lord?’

‘Of course, Crisje, did you think that I didn’t know him?’

‘How happy You make me, Our Lord.’

‘I know that, Crisje, but Jan deserves it.’

Jan asks again:

‘Do you mean that, Crisje?’

‘Listen, Jan. Our Lord gave me this knowledge. Now you mustn’t make too much fuss about it. I can get this hole closed, but if it starts bleeding again, Jan, then I cannot do any more. However, you have a few years to live. And then you must die because of this same hole, Jan.’

Jan can deal with all of that. He is not a pathetic soul. If he still has a few years to live, then they will have a good time. And he tells Crisje that.

‘I can talk to you, Jan, you are not a coward.’

‘I never have been, Crisje, you know that.’

From that moment onwards, Crisje’s boys are back behind Hosman’s cows. To catch the fresh cow dung again. They lay the medicines in a cloth and then it is laid on Jan’s sick neck.

They all fight against the cancer and, it goes without saying, against the Grim Reaper! Bernard says:

‘For him you would give your own blood.’ Jeus kisses Bernard, he loves that life. Bernard is fighting like mad for Jan’s life.

‘That’s natural, Bernard, do you love Jan so much as well?’

Crisje tells her boys: ‘Dirty cow dung does not heal, those medicines must not touch any ground, because then you will get infections, boys, will you remember that?’

‘Yes, mother.’

On the Grintweg they are fighting against the Grim Reaper! Even if you are sometimes covered in cow dung, a bath in the Wetering, and they are clean again, and they are very happy to make that sacrifice. Tall Hendrik also fights with Crisje and the boys for Jan’s life. They have the highest respect for Hosman’s cows. Which cow gives the most medicine, Bernard? Then we will frame it, that animal should be in a museum. They must never forget that animal again, give that animal everything. Actually, the whole neighbourhood is fighting for Jan’s life, all of them understand, it is a fight against the Grim Reaper, because that skunk is already sitting behind the stove and looking at him, while sapping the life out of Jan’s body. That brute is eating Jan’s life away. That miracle is sucking it away. When he comes to visit, you had better make your will. However, Jan has nothing to bequeath. He still possesses some life, but with that dirty hole in his neck the Grim Reaper is leering after his last strength. Would you not wring the neck of that monster? They understand here, this is the best fight that was ever given. There is nothing better to experience, there is pleasure in this, the reality of it gives you another way of thinking, and now you are really inspired for the first time. What can you buy for money? Nothing! Our Lord is paid here with the purest love. Our Lord also knows, there is not a bit of dirt attached to it, this love appears from the blood circulation, and has purified all the impurities of mankind. It is a case here of all or nothing, and the cow dung again takes care of everything, which, despite the beauty and the sublime of this will only last a while. Because what are a few years now in comparison with a human eternity? Our Lord follows all of this because, but the people do not know it yet, Grim Reaper has bothered HIM for centuries, that dirty animal has taken the work of Our Lord into his own hands and must now let go! What does such a bare death want, Bernard thinks, with Hosman’s cows? Nothing! He can leave his scythe alone for a while.

The hole in Jan’s throat is becoming smaller. The hole and that red colour looks better. And the boys follow Crisje’s orders! A drop

from the black and white cow is worth a thousand guilders and even more. For Crisje and the boys know there are plenty of rich people who would give everything they owned for five minutes of life, but the Grim Reaper is unrelenting towards his victims. But here these things are happening for nothing. Crisje knows, Our Lord is not with the rich people, they would like that, and Tall Hendrik says: 'If they could buy that as well, then they would eat up our lives, but that is not possible!'

Then they would buy up all those lights from human eyes with their money, new stomachs and new hearts, another pair of legs, but that is not possible! Thank God! Otherwise, Jan would no longer be with them! They would murder him consciously, but that is not possible now, because Our Lord is there too. The doctor is once more standing in front of their noses and says:

'Crisje, it is a miracle. It is unbelievable, but I can see it. It is urgently necessary, Crisje, that mankind knows of this, we can cure thousands of people with this.'

Could the doctor accept cow dung? He will not get to hear about that. That is Crisje's secret. She does not sell any sacred matters of Our Lord. And then, what the doctor says you won't believe.

'Crisje, I will give you a thousand guilders for your secret.'

Crisje and Jan have to laugh heartily about that. But how stupid learned people are. Crisje says resolutely:

'No!'

'Why not, Crisje?'

'No, doctor!'

'But, Crisje, you cannot refuse. You can help thousands of people. Just think how many people there are who suffer from cancer?'

The man continues to go on about it. Crisje asks him:

'Can you pray, doctor?'

'I don't know, Crisje, but I will do my best.'

'Now then, doctor. Do you not understand then that, if you have prayed all your life for a person, for one person, Doctor, that another person has nothing to do with it? Can you understand that?'

The man does not understand. So Crisje continues:

'Then I will tell you something else, Doctor. Does Our Lord have to hear a prayer, from you then, from you yourself, Doctor, for another person, but for which you have prayed all your life, and who is

your own child?’

‘What does all this mean, Crisje? I will think about it. However, this is for science! You cannot hide your secret any longer, we have a right to it. We can cure thousands of people. Tell me how you healed Jan’s wound.’

Jan now knows that Crisje has prayed all her life for him. Jan is already crying, but Crisje wants none of that. And the doctor can keep his thousand guilders, the man doesn’t understand anything. However, it will not leave him alone, he follows this great problem day and night and does not understand the simple mentality of Crisje. Jan is running again as he used to, he feels fine, there is no longer anything the matter with him. They have shut the door on the Grim Reaper, and he walked away in anger. He got a terrible hiding from the boys, Crisje, and Tall Hendrik. The Grim Reaper is now watching over Jan, but Jan laughs right in his face. The Grim Reaper gets... the ‘droedels’ in this place! See that you leave, dirty scoundrel, for you have crossed people long enough. But the ‘Grim one’, says Bernard, was behind the stove. He was sitting right there in Jan’s place and you could not move him by any means. He just sat there sucking away Jan’s life. That brute didn’t want coffee, he threw Tall Hendrik’s bitters in the ashtray. You could really see it, he ate away at your life and you could smell his dirty stench. You lived together for all these months in a tomb.

And then, only Bernard saw, what no one else had seen, the Grim Reaper took away someone else out of jealousy and that was little Gerit van de Bulten, a long way from this neighbourhood. Everything out of jealousy, and his terrible anger, however the Grim Reaper can drop dead! Bernard said much more and they had to laugh about that: ‘I threw cow dung in his face, mother, he walked away completely blind, and now he has the wrong one.’

You see, the Grim Reaper has now, at least for Jan, been completely blinded and that through Hosman’s very best cows. And that scoundrel didn’t count on that. He could not compete with Crisje and the children. He can now take away people from the town. They are rid of him for a while. In the Achterhoek of Gelderland they know how to fight against the Grim Reaper. They also heard that. Our Lord kept saying:

‘Bite off his throat, boys. Cut his throat, that scoundrel has turned

pure love and eternal reunion into dirty damnation and I want nothing to do with that. That beast has changed eternal life into temporary life, he stands above a grave and has put on MY crown! Get that thing off his head, mother Crisje's boys. Just cheat him, pull out his eyes. I will give you the wisdom and the powers to do so, destroy that dirty dog!

That is how angry Our Lord is at the Grim Reaper.

Months later Crisje and Jan meet the learned man. Jan is wheeling the wheelbarrow and they are having a nice chat. Jan says:

'Crisje, just look over there. Just look who we are meeting today?'

Of course, the doctor has something to say to Jan and Crisje. There you have it:

'How are you, Jan?'

'Look for yourself, Doctor.'

'My God, how is it possible. Crisje, can you still not understand that mankind must learn your secret? I think about it day and night and I can no longer sleep, Crisje.'

'Then Doctor, you should have come to have a look.'

'May I know, Crisje?'

'Of course. Do you not understand then, Doctor, that Our Lord does not answer bandits' prayers?'

'What do you mean, Crisje?'

'That's a good one, Doctor. These powers do not work for arsonists, cheats, and bandits. But you can't understand that, can you? There are also good people in the world. But I already told you that, these making the Stations of the Cross were only for Jan. I prayed for him a thousand times. That is also for all those other people, if they wish to pray, Doctor, then Our Lord can help them as well and, then cow dung also has powers.'

'Are you trying to tell me, Crisje, that you cured Jan with cow dung?'

'Yes, doctor, but along with that other thing, only then will it work.'

'And that it is, Crisje?'

'That it is 'not', doctor, but that means, Our Lord does not let himself be cheated by another. If people condemn themselves, doctor, Our Lord can no longer help them. And this is why cow dung is also no use to you. Is that hard, Doctor?'

'Crisje, how can I thank you for this lesson', this person utters, but

Jan and Crisje no longer hear it. He will better his life, he knows, through prayer and universal trust, Our Lord will speak to and enhance your life and being. He will purify the time you still get to live, or a learned man will spoil the very time and then you will go to your coffin too soon. And the Grim Reaper also knows that! A foot was put in his way here. You have to bow to Our Lord and if you can't do that, then nothing will help! However, no drunkards and crooks will get to experience this examination. And for them there is no cure, the cow dung will not work now, because the inner life lives in disharmony with regard to these pure life juices, the blood pressure of the black and white cows of Hosman. Is all this so crazy, Doctor? You cannot help any drunkard with your prayers. And whoever is sick with cancer or something else, must pray and only then, says Crisje, will you be sent your own medicines, and they are then for yourself! What form these medicines will take, she doesn't know either, but you will get them! Purify yourselves, sick people! And then you will usually not need a doctor! If you need such a man, Our Lord will send him to you. The rest of them are blind and insensitive and have nothing to do with this; they must experience their own world.

Yes, doctor, Jan was prayed for, for thirty years. Cow dung does not work for everyone! However, in the 'Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit', everything can cure! When you have to die, doctor, they know that here, you are powerless. But despite this, new life has come and you now enjoy every second. If that thing opens again, they will give in to it completely and they will no longer need Hosman's cows either. A thousand Our Fathers, Doctor, and that ten thousand times upwards, that hammering will resound in the ears of Our Lord and His angels and they will give everything for that. Jeus will tell that to the people, but we already know that they will also throw him off the stage. People do not wish to pray, people are now loosened from Divine anchors, they have lost their ability to surrender themselves in a pure paradisiacal way!

However, the Montferlandseweg, also the Zwartekolkseweg, are life paths where you can think of these things and receive them from Our Lord. Crisje knows, if only people could love, then everything would be different. The ladies in Montferland can talk, they have everything, but what does that mean if you begin to feel what they experience and possess here? That peace from there is not worth a

thing. If you do not have peace in yourself, you will not get that from Montferland either. Therefore, see the way you want to, and if you think that you need peace for your health, take it, Crisje knows, if it is not okay inside, you will still return untouched, because the Grim Reaper knows exactly where you are, and you now miss the feeling to cheat him. Bernard can spray the Grim Reaper right in his eyes, but that requires skill. And you can only learn that skill if you love Jan, or your Frans, lady, perhaps your Raimond or your Peter, it doesn't matter as long as you love. They could do it, but a person does not snort enough, he is disgusted by everything!

But how beautiful and wonderful this life is. Yes, certainly, if you understand it, otherwise it is nothing!

Tall Hendrik even asked Crisje: 'Now did you really talk to Our Lord again, Cris?'

'Yes, Hendrik, did you ever hear me telling a lie?'

'No, of course not. But it's a lot for me, Cris.'

'That is not so dangerous, Hendrik. You can do that as well. But because you cannot do it yet, Hendrik, I really feel what you want to know, those thousand guilders would mean nothing to me, would they, Hendrik?'

Tall Hendrik knows, cow dung will not be of help for him either, and that is something for Tall Hendrik, but he readily admits it. And then he said:

'I would also like to look him in the eye, Cris!'

Then Crisje had to laugh. That Tall Hendrik.

'But that will still be a while, Hendrik', she answers him and he understands. At coffee time, they tell each other the most difficult problems, and they are explained as well. However, Trui thought that with a piece of liquorice you could easily have cured Jan. She hasn't thought about it, but the liver of a cockerel, plucked alive that is, helps even more, but she will only use that medicine for herself. You get your fill of that twaddling. She has warned Crisje. It will become a complete hospital, and they will not see her there anymore. And Jan and Crisje, Tall Hendrik and the boys have already long understood that. Aunt Trui is afraid of Jan Kniep, who should have stayed in the Dutch East Indies. It is God's lamentation. They should remove that man from the village. That man is infecting whole neighbourhoods and spoiling the atmosphere here. People are stubborn, but Trui only

sees that in other people, she herself is wearing her crown. Still elderberry pudding can also cure you, and almost everything which has once grown and blossomed and is a part of mother nature, everything can cure you! For every illness, there is an herb to cure it! Crisje knows that! She sees it and no one can take that away from her, but she also looks with her inner eyes at the life in the material, and that is exactly the same as Jeus can do. This is why they can understand each other so well.

They know, the Grim Reaper will be back later to fetch Jan. Jan is not afraid, and is now enjoying every second! He can say: are you there, dear? I am ready! Good day, beautiful death! Nevertheless your crown falls from your head. You hypocritical pig! Have you not had enough then? Crisje and Jeus pull away his pearls, the nicest part of his cap, and will soon make it a beautiful chain for Miets, she must have something as well, something of significance and the pearls of the Grim Reaper are for this purpose! Miets can now come, her little bed is ready, there are now already four living in the attic and they are Johan, Bernard, Jeus and Jan, the two who follow have got the box bed, and Miets and the other who is still to come, will sleep with father and mother.

Our Lord sees it, everything has been worked out here, they will not be overcome by anything and all HIS children have to learn that!

Good day, Our Lord! No one is complaining here!

‘Gerrit, now come and look,
I have got my little sister’

Jeus has become a big boy, the time has finally come; he must go to school as well. His clogs are next to Johan’s and Bernard’s, because Crisje does not feel like breaking her neck, in addition, it is a part of the orderliness of Tall Hendrik.

Fanny sees off Jeus to school. Aren’t the adults looking yet? Inside he is calm, he has nice things to eat from mother in his pocket, and he can cope with it, and will give himself over completely to the teacher. Crisje is expecting an awful lot from him, he is quick and has a good mind, and he is open to life. Tall Hendrik also thinks that he will fly past all of them. The bell goes, in his excitement he forgets to say goodbye to Fanny. Less than ten minutes later he hears the animal howling, which is beginning to bother his teacher. Which prompts her to ask:

‘Who does that dog outside belong to?’

‘That is my dog Fanny, Miss.’

‘I see, will you just take your dog home, Jeus?’

‘Of course, Miss.’

He goes outside. ‘Fanny, you are right, but why can’t you understand yet that I have to learn? However, I could have wished you good day this afternoon? Now you must listen carefully. We have to learn, and everything I learn, I will teach you. You haven’t lost your senses, have you, Fanny? Come on, and now you are going to mother.’

Three minutes later, he is back in the classroom. The teacher thinks, that is impossible, but he is sitting down again.

‘But you live on the Grintweg, Jeus, don’t you?’

‘Yes, Miss.’

‘But then you can’t be back in three minutes?’

‘Yes, Miss, Fanny has already gone home. I had forgotten to say goodbye to Fanny.’

Without thinking, he has already made his bed for the teacher. Jeus also says:

‘Just ask Theet, Anneke and Mathie, Miss, they know that as well, my Fanny has the sense of a human being.’

‘Right, is that so, Jeus.’

That is the first contact of his life, and that doesn't look bad, Crisje. The teacher feels that this child has something special. It is a completely different child and she will follow him. By about twelve o'clock Fanny is sitting waiting for him. Now the mistress can see for herself, Fanny is almost mad. It is a remarkable contact, she thinks, something special. That animal howls like a human being cries. Jeus has completely forgotten his Tall One and José, and they will not find him there, he thinks. The mistress follows him for a moment. Yes, Miss, you only need to tell Fanny something once and it knows it. Soon you will begin to understand that Fanny has more sense than Jeus. Fanny understands social matters, Jeus doesn't. Fanny can think about normal things. Jeus is not open to that and you will soon find that out. However, ask him something about Our Lord, then there will be ten beings living in him, which you will enjoy, because the beautiful life means everything to him. But what is life?

Three weeks later Tall Hendrik is called to the school. With the teacher and the Head, Mr Hornstra. The Tall One knows him really well, they want to have a chat with him. Tall Hendrik listened to the stories and went back to Crisje.

'Yes, Cris, Jeus cannot learn. You will not want to understand, I don't either, but it is the case. He is dozy, Cris. He is not with it. He is somewhere else, Chris. He cannot keep his mind on things Cris.'

'Is that so bad, Hendrik?'

'Could you have thought that of our Jeus, Cris?'

'No, of course not!'

Now that is not so bad, because what does that first class mean, but the Head of the school thought he should tell Tall Hendrik. He thinks the child might be backward. And that is a terrible word, Crisje. Hendrik and Crisje talk to Jeus.

'Why do you not wish to learn, Jeus? Do you know that we have to pay for that? It costs money, Jeus.'

'Yes, mother, I know that. But I am doing my best.'

'That's true, so to speak. But you sit there sleeping. And you can sleep at night.'

'Yes, father!'

Tall Hendrik doesn't understand. But Jeus doesn't have his mind on it; he races about everywhere, and is in the woods more than at school. He looks as if he is no longer a person. Nothing is successful.

He is not even trying, and is apparently the most stupid of all. That is a great disappointment for Crisje. Jeus, who always had the most feeling, is now the poorest in the class and the poorest in spirit. He already gets a hiding from Bernard, but that doesn't help either, he remains stupid. However, later it will go higher up and then they will experience something else, Tall Hendrik thinks, this doesn't really mean anything. The months pass and Jeus remains stupid, he cannot learn. He cribs. Gerrit of the baker thinks up things for him and Gerrit doesn't mind. Now and again, Gerrit gets an apple from Jeus, or something else nice for Jeus' copying. Yet, the teacher thinks he is a special child. She does not know what lives in that child. Sometimes you are faced with an adult and then again with a psychopathic institution where Jeus then belongs. She has established that he occasionally knows what she will say beforehand and that is also remarkable for her life and personality. If that were not the case, Jeus would have to go to another school, but these feelings will undoubtedly pull him through. One afternoon the teacher was walking up the Grintweg with him. She was keen to get to know Jeus' mother.

'But how polite he is, madam.'

'Yes, Miss, Jeus is polite. Is he doing a bit better, Miss?'

'We will get there. What do you think, Jeus?'

'Yes, Miss.'

The visitor is allowed to take a look at the doves, but she has no time for the pigs. She now knows that Jeus has a good mother. He struggles on in this way, and see, he still goes to the next class. However, the trouble begins in the second class. Because he cannot cope with that learning material. What they give him to learn there does not penetrate his life. But Gerrit of the baker is sitting next to him again, he can copy and Gerrit doesn't mind, but he is not yet at the stage that he feels that his wisdom has any value. That will also awaken in Gerrit and then Jeus will be sorry. Anneke is way ahead of him. She is almost the best. Mathie and Theet are ordinary pupils. He now hears that Bernard is a good learner. Johan is average, he struggles along, and does not care to be the best. However Johan does something different. Tall Hendrik has discovered something, which brings in money. Crisje is dead against it, but Hendrik gets his way. After school, Johan now goes to Emmerik and fetches newspapers there. He has to put them into letterboxes here and there and that brings Crisje three

whole marks a week. When they are grown up, Tall Hendrik says, they will know how to get on with things, and he does not intend to make a bunch of wimps out of them; his children have to put their backs into things. And that in rain or shine. When other children are longing to play for a while, that old Johan first has to walk for an hour and a half over the bare Emmerikseweg; even if it is freezing cold or it is pouring with rain. Johan has to deliver papers and earn money. Fair's fair, but Crisje cannot cope with it, she never wanted that, but Tall Hendrik demands it and his word is law!

Soon Bernard will have to go with Johan, and Jeus of course, when he is old enough! They have to deliver papers as far away as 's- Heerenberg. Tall Hendrik is proud of his boys, the paper which you are reading there was put in your letterbox by my boys and of course, my boys are already earning money. He makes the most of them! Whether that is good or bad is not important, Crisje, soft parents make weak characters. Johan has already come home with a big hole in his calf, a dirty dog has got hold of him and all that while Johan is now serving Our Lord. Crisje complains, she moans day and night, but it doesn't help, Johan will earn money! I have something to say here or I won't have anything to do with anything, what do you want, Crisje?

Johan does not complain. Now and again he has his distractions. Bernard really cannot wait, because Johan can tell him everything about Emmerik. Do you see, Crisje? Your boys are learning something. So it was not such a bad idea of Tall Hendrik after all. The boys now realise that they mean something, and after all, that is significant. Crisje is worried, but life goes on and you get used to everything. After four weeks, it is a part of life. Bernard also runs with Johan to Emmerik after school, they now take it in shifts, Tall Hendrik approved of this, and made sure that there was a raise of thirty cents, and that is an enormous amount for a child. However, that money is hard earned. You should see the boys when it is pouring with rain, now that can be put up with, but soon, when it is freezing cold? They sometimes come home soaking wet, but still, what does Johan say:

'Just don't worry, mother, I really enjoy it.' And Bernard is also of the same opinion; they experience all kinds of things.

Jeus has been put back along with Gerrit of the baker; they have to repeat the second class. Gerrit is now at the stage in life that he has started to understand that looking of Jeus over his back and along

him. At the end of the day he will get something out of it because it is he who works things out. However, despite all the help of Gerrit, Jeus is back in the second class with him. Do they not understand that those two boys are cheating themselves? No, they do not realise that. Jeus must now make sure that there is always something nice to eat for Gerrit. Bernard's pears are good for that, but Bernard is unaware of it. Crisje cannot spend a fortune on fruit, but Bernard does not need his mother, but he can watch out if Tall Hendrik finds out. There is not a garden either or Bernard would know every tree in it. He makes the trees lighter. If they catch him, then he can expect a lot of trouble and he will go to the cellar. He has hidden his harvest well, but not so that Jeus doesn't know how to open the entrance. Under the straw there are all kinds of things. There you can find the tastiest apricots and the best pears, everything that mother nature has given life to each year. Mantraps and clamps mean nothing to Bernard. Those things are good for dopes and Bernard is no dope. But for a nice pear like that Jeus is allowed to copy from Gerrit for weeks on end. Now and again he descends into Bernard's paradise and he can pay his debts, because Gerrit is continually demanding again, nothing in this world is for free.

In this way Jeus muddles along. However, it is the time of year when there is still no fruit to be stolen and Gerrit continues to demand rewards. Now he has something after all for which he can certainly copy for six months, it is such great happiness. Jeus has got his little sister. Isn't that something, Tall Hendrik? Have you perhaps forgotten his prediction? Now there has been a girl added to the family. Jeus is crazy about her. Miets is born. They really have a sister, only having those boys is nothing, now their joy is complete. Mina is a regular visitor again, she can have a nice chat with Crisje, and of course she hears how Jeus is getting on. However, Mina says:

'Cris, the great people were always stupid. The great people, who did something for the world, they were always as stupid as a pig's backside.'

But Mina cannot fool Crisje with this now. Jeus has already been put back a class and that means something, after all, but she doesn't want to hear anything about it. Gerrit has to know all about Miets. He agrees with him that he will copy for six months for being allowed to see his little sister. Gerrit is allowed to see Miets. But Gerrit is not

one for hasty decisions, he must first look for himself, only then will a decision be made. Jeus praises Miets to the skies, Gerrit has never seen a child like her.

‘But if you see those little eyes, Gerrit, then you are looking in heaven.’

That is all very well, but he wants to look for himself first. Jeus is praising Miets:

‘You should see that little head, Gerrit. And then that little mouth and those sweet little hands of Miets. My God, Gerrit, you have never seen a child like it in your life.’

‘I know that, but children are angels for all people’, Gerrit remarks soberly, ‘for all people little children are like sugar and spice, but I do not care for that yet.’

Gerrit still wants to know something about it and asks:

‘Does your Miets look like the Bonges’ child?’

Now that he understands that Gerrit doesn’t have a clue, he answers immediately:

‘Are you trying to compare our Miets to that redheaded brat of Bonges?’

‘And are you trying to say that Bonges’ child is a redheaded brat? Now I know already, you have not seen that child. That is an angel. That is a blond child and not a redhead.’

‘That is all very well, our Miets is completely different. Don’t you want to see Miets then?’

They arrange that Gerrit will come and have a look on Wednesday afternoon. Gerrit wants to have his own ideas and Jeus doesn’t mind. Miets is a gift from Our Lord and he will not let Miets be put down. The redheaded Gerrit comes and makes his demands. However, Jeus knows that through Miets he will certainly be able to copy for six months and then there will immediately be no more worries. Jeus continues to brag.

‘You should hear Miets laugh, Gerrit.’

‘What are you trying to fool me with? Are you trying to fool me into thinking that Miets can already laugh? Good grief, that is boasting about nothing.’

‘You will see for yourself, Gerrit.’

There he is. ‘Mother, may Gerrit see our Miets?’

‘Of course.’

Jeus goes over to the cradle with Gerrit and he begins. 'Aren't they wonderful little eyes, Gerrit? What a little mouth? Are they fingers or not? I told you, didn't I, our Miets is like an angel. We have got a little girl like no one has, and did I say too much? There is no child like Miets, is there? Can you agree to let me copy for six months, Gerrit?'

Gerrit looks and smells something. It doesn't take long and then Jeus hears: 'You can say now that Miets is an angel, but she also smells of shit.'

He has hit him in the right place. That is terrible, but that dirty redheaded baker. It wouldn't take much or he would have lashed out. His whole plan is ruined. His excuse:

'Gerrit, come and look now, I have got my little sister', means absolutely nothing. Gerrit cannot be reached. Miets is lying there and has spoilt everything for him. He hadn't counted on this, and Crisje, who has watched his moves, understands. 'Just you come here.'

Now I know why you were put back. But we will put a stop to this.'

'What is the matter, mother?'

'There is nothing, nothing.'

Tall Hendrik now goes to have a chat with his teacher. He is feeling that he has been stupid, and has fallen for it, making a fool of himself. There is no longer any point in getting mad at Miets. He is now sitting next to another boy. Jeus, this is the way it should be. Now come on, you must do it yourself or you will learn absolutely nothing. And he does his best, the teacher keeps an eye on him, he learns, but inside he works differently. He can now use something and that gets him through life. He can think and he now uses that thinking for what he doesn't know and will never learn either. He gears himself towards his teacher and now he suddenly knows. The funniest thing of all is, he can now also wander through the woods with Fanny as well. The teacher tells him what he must learn and he always has the answer ready, but that is from another person. He is learning nothing!

Due to telepathic transfer, Jeus drags himself higher up. And the rest, for his feeling and thinking, does not mean anything to him, and if they lay his personality on the annual weighing scales, it can just pass. There is not a gram more consciousness, but also not one less, so that he continues to just make it, he will conquer the school in his way. Yes, certainly, Sir, he listens, but he is not open to your dry material, nothing can be changed about it, nothing! Others have laid

their foundations, his soul and happiness will get to experience supernatural wisdom, you would now smother that, and they do not want that. Your this way and that way, that reading-lark and everything that goes over the border, does not interest him. He will learn German because that happens of its own accord and the things he picks up here and there, for the rest his life refuses to accept your dry carry-on. Everything which you give him to learn, teacher, is of a secondary nature to his personality, Jeus has an inner truth which has taken possession of his being, and will later take him away from home to society, however, that is all for later. Crisje thinks, when he later goes into apprenticeship, he will be faced with Divine problems, then they will experience something completely different. But then, dear Crisje, he will not do his best either, because just at this time he will have those other powers to deal with, which Father and his helper do not know what to do about. Only then will you get to know your Jeus.

At school, Crisje, he is only half there. He has now learned how to split himself, and this is how he experiences those hours. He will sense infallibly when the teacher has something to ask him, he uses the rest of his time for his flights with Fanny, the something that lives within him tells him: 'do not make a fuss, Jeus, you will get a completely different task for mankind and society, and then from Our Lord. But you will not be a minister or priest, you will be a cosmically aware person and that is something entirely different, but they do not understand that here.' Teacher, Jeus will be a 'Socrates'! He will later surpass even Socrates, he will analyse your Plato, he will bring ancient Egypt to the dry and sober West, and he will experience and go through Golgotha in a different way and write his books as a result. Now you will say, but that is precisely the reason why he should learn, but leave that in their hands, his Tall One... and his friend José, and the many others who follow him, for whom Jeus serves and his life will awaken! That will all come!

The worries with Gerrit have disappeared. And Jeus readily admits, he was horribly under the power of that redhead. He is now there for himself and the good life and he will make of it what can be made of it, Tall Hendrik, in as far as he can absorb. You can be satisfied with him, Crisje, there is no more to it than that! Jeus now gears himself towards his teacher and he knows it. Isn't that something, Fanny? Your boss is not away from you for a second, after all. Come on now,

life is actually good, there are no eclipses of the sun for Jeus yet, he has found it, and he will carry on, a social conscience also exists for him.

Once more there were pears and apples enough under the straw. Oh, Bernard, if you ever are caught, the cellar will be open for you. However, Bernard, what you now have in mind, that is dangerous, that is the limit, that is pure cheek!

A few days later there was already the devil to pay!

‘Mrs Aanse, my Bernard did it’

Our Lord is good and omniscient, Bernard thinks, especially if He also ensures a small paradise near home, which you can climb into just like that, and of which no one is aware, that is if you are at least earlier than that sheep which lives there, and hopefully cannot manage to eat all those delicious things.

One morning Mrs Aanse’s grapes are gone. Hundreds of precious grapes are spread all over the ground, it looks as if a hurricane has knocked them off the branches, and they have been taken down in such a rough and meaningless way. It is bad, it is terrible! And Mrs Aanse doesn’t even know.

Crisje sees Bernard lying on his back sucking at grapes. She gets a terrible fright, are they not Mrs Aanse’s grapes, Bernard? He feels nabbed; they have finally caught him. Crisje does not tolerate any theft.

‘What are you eating there, Bernard? Grapes?’

As quick as a flash Bernard tries to hide his grapes, but he is just too late.

‘Now, can you not answer me?’

Bernard does not cry, but he quickly takes off. However, Crisje calls after him:

‘Bring back those grapes, Bernard. Those are Mrs Aanse’s grapes. I know.’

But that is nothing for Bernard. Mrs Aanse would skin him alive, that woman, who weighs two hundred and eighty pounds, is not to be taken lightly, he knows that very well and Bernard does not feel like taking them back. However, it is a pity, now Crisje will have to tell Tall Hendrik and then he will be sorry. Bernard comes back. But doesn’t show himself all day. Soon Tall Hendrik will come home and Bernard is still not there. It is a scandal. Mrs Aanse lives two houses away. What can Crisje do? Bernard went too far, he thought about it for long enough, but oh well, you saw them growing and becoming bigger under your very nose, and then he yielded to the temptation. Bernard thought, nothing can happen to me anyway, even though Crisje has caught him. Bernard is a great boy, but he likes to steal, it is a good sport for him. The nicest thing to do, but Crisje and her

husband will have none of it, they do not want their boys to grow up to be villains.

Crisje now goes to Mrs Aanse, she will tell her herself. Mrs Aanse is sitting in her corner and doesn't know yet that the grapes have been stolen from the back of her little house. Crisje knows that, because otherwise Mrs Aanse would already have created an uproar long ago.

'So, Crisje, did you come to pay me a visit? We live so close to each other and yet we see so little of one another. We never have time to talk and of course, you don't have time with your boys. How are the boys? Are the children well? Have a seat, Crisje.'

Isn't that something, Crisje thinks, that good person still doesn't know anything about it. Just stop it, Mrs Aanse, she thinks, soon you will have something different to say about my boys. Crisje doesn't want to first dish up a long story, she tells Mrs Aanse what she has to say.

'Yes, Mrs Aanse, everything is fine, but I do not have good news for you. Do you not know yet that your grapes have been stolen?'

'What are you saying there, Crisje? My grapes have been stolen? And you have to come and tell me that, and I myself know nothing about it? That has never happened to me before. My precious grapes stolen? That is too much for me, Crisje.'

Mrs Aanse now wants to see for herself, but her legs are not so good and she falls back into her chair.

'It is bad, Crisje, my legs won't work anymore, they are swollen.'

'Wet bandages, Mrs Aanse, that always helps.'

'That is true, Crisje, I should have thought of that myself. My knees are also swollen.'

Mrs Aanse bends her knees, and looks at the havoc and complains:

'Good gracious, Crisje, but my poor grapes. But, God Almighty, that is terrible. If I get hold of that person, I will wring his neck. I will break his neck. And do you know who did it, Crisje?'

'Yes, Mrs Aanse, I know, my Bernard did it. You must just tell me what they cost, then I will pay for them.'

'What are you telling me there? your Bernard stole my grapes? Then I will go to the constabulary. He must be put in jail Crisje, he must be sent to a house of correction. Do you and your Hendrik have nothing more to say then?'

Mrs Aanse now gives Crisje a good scolding, and she accepts eve-

rything.

‘I can say nothing about it, Crisje. This must be put to a stop. Those boys of yours will grow up wild. Trui said that, but now I can believe it. My Theet would never do a thing like that.’

‘Can it not be put right then, Mrs Aanse? You have only one child, I have five of them. But it can still be put right, can’t it?’

‘Shall I tell you something, Crisje? You are too fond of your boys, but you can spoil them as a result. Don’t you know what your own grapes mean for yourself? I worry myself day and night to give them what they need and now they are gone. Those grapes are mine and not your Bernard’s.’

Mrs Aanse walks away. Crisje can get lost, and her sorrow is terrible. But where is Bernard? Jan Kniep will look for him.

‘Where were you, Jeus?’

‘I was at Hosman’s, mother.’

‘Don’t you know where Bernard is? Did you hear what he did? He stole the grapes from Mrs Aanse.’

That is dreadful, Jeus thinks, now Bernard will get a hiding. They have finally caught him. Tall Hendrik is already home. ‘What happened here, Crisje?’ He senses that there is something the matter. And then Crisje confesses everything honestly.

‘Where is Bernard?’

‘Hendrik, steady on, you do not beat your child to death because of a few grapes.’

But Hendrik is beside himself. Crisje thinks, if only this was over. If Hendrik lashes out, there will not be much left of Bernard. But where did Bernard get to? ‘Hendrik, I’m warning you, do not forget yourself.’ ‘Where is Bernard, Jan?’ ‘I don’t know, Hendrik.’ ‘Johan, have you seen Bernard?’ ‘You neither, Jeus?’ Has no one seen Bernard? Tall Hendrik is sitting at the table and is seething with anger, he is thumping with poison. Suddenly he thinks he knows where Bernard is. He runs into the hallway, opens the cellar door and calls:

‘Bernard are you there?’

Out of the darkness something peeps. Bernard thought: I will go there for now, I have to go there anyway. The boy climbs up the stairs. When he is within reach of his father, he grabs him and now Bernard is hanging in space like a pike which has just been taken out of the water. Hendrik appears with Bernard like this in front of Crisje. Crisje

is already moaning, but Bernard is now standing between Hendrik's legs and cannot go anywhere any more. The whole house is in an uproar. Jan and the boys are sitting there in a corner, Crisje is standing in front of her husband and is begging: 'Do not forget yourself, Hendrik.' He does not pay any attention to anything. When Jan tries to say: Hendrik, remember, he is only a child yet, he answers that he has everything to say here, and Jan can hold his tongue. Jeus is trembling and shaking, Johan is also crying, because now it is going to happen.

'That is now our snatcher, isn't it', Tall Hendrik begins. 'He cannot listen. He resists mother and me. He doesn't bother about anything. Look at me, Bernard?'

Bernard looks his father in the eye and says: 'Just beat me to death.'

But Tall Hendrik does not hit yet, but Bernard hears: 'If there must be a beating, Bernard, then that will take place in my own time.'

Crisje hopes it will still be all right, but that hope is not fulfilled.

'Have you stolen more already, Bernard?'

'No, father.'

'Are you certain of that, Bernard?'

'Yes, father.'

'Why won't you listen, Bernard?'

'I won't do it again, father.'

'If you have the heart to steal again, Bernard, then I will really beat you to death.'

Crisje thinks, he will get off with a good telling-off, but that is not the case yet, after all, Crisje. Tall Hendrik lays Bernard across his knee and lets rip so much that Crisje collapses from sorrow. 'Hendrik, stop it, you will beat your child to death.' Hendrik gives him such a beating that there is not much left of Bernard's bottom.

'So, and now to bed without any dinner.'

Bernard can leave. The child can hardly walk anymore. Crisje will not have that. In front of all of them, she says:

'You should try that again, Hendrik. If that happens again, I will leave with the children, that is no longer a punishment, that is scandalous.'

But Tall Hendrik says to Crisje that they will talk later again. Hendrik sees that Crisje is rummaging about with food.

'Cris, I said, to bed without any dinner.'

'That is a double punishment, Hendrik. You can do what you like,

but you will not find me letting children go to sleep without any dinner.'

'I said, to bed without any dinner, Cris.'

Bernard is lying sucking on a nice pear. Johan sees it.

'You have something to eat, after all, Bernard?'

'Have you got your eyes closed then?'

'Did that hurt, Bernard?'

'I don't want anything to do with pain.'

Johan gains respect for Bernard. What a man he is. He hadn't thought that. Bernard is strong! No, Johan would not have dared to do that, and he does not steal either, he thinks that stealing is just frightening. Downstairs there is another battle going on. Tall Hendrik says:

'Do you want to encourage that stealing then, Cris?'

'You know better than that, Hendrik, but this is no punishment. You didn't know any more what you were doing. You were possessed.'

'I am the father and I will decide how my children must be punished, Cris.'

'So, that's what you thought. And did you think that I would continue to approve? And that I would let you do what you liked with the children? I will tell you something, if that happens again, believe me, Hendrik, I will leave! That is no punishment, I tell you. You beat the respect out of them. The children are becoming afraid of you.'

'So, that's what you thought, Cris. Did you see then that he was afraid of me?'

'Have you not understood then, Hendrik? Do you not understand that Bernard is completely against you? With a soft approach we will achieve more.'

'I am a father or I am not, Cris.'

'You are the father of the boys, of course, but I am here as well. And if you want to punish like that again, then we will see, Hendrik.'

There you are, Tall Hendrik, you can take it or leave it. Crisje is crying, that was too much. She goes upstairs and looks at Bernard's bottom. 'My God, he has beaten your bottom away.'

'I don't feel anything, mother', Bernard says.

When she comes downstairs, Tall Hendrik says: 'Don't you feel that then, Cris, that the children have now come between us?'

Crisje has a think and then she agrees with her husband. But, go

and see for yourself what you have done. He believes it. They still talk for a long time, Crisje has to agree with him, and Hendrik agrees with her. They can carry on again. In future, Tall Hendrik will punish in a different way. And Crisje will keep quiet if father takes the boys to task. Our Lord said:

‘Well done, Crisje and Hendrik, it is going well like that, understand each other, or the boys will surpass you and that mustn’t happen. But Tall Hendrik, this was a bit too much.’

Johan sees that Bernard is rummaging under the straw and wants to know all about it. Jan Kniep is enjoying himself in his little corner, he understands and thinks Bernard is a great lad. Johan gets to hear from Bernard:

‘Just shut your gob, with your screaming, otherwise I will shut it for you. I have food enough.’

A while later they are eating tasty pears and apples together. Jeus also thinks Bernard is a wonder, and a while later all those eyes close and the day-consciousness is sleeping in order to forget the everyday things, but tomorrow is another day. Right after Tall Hendrik has left, Crisje is standing in front of the little beds.

‘Let me take a look at your bottom, Bernard.’

‘My God, you have no bottom left now. Is it sore, Bernard?’

‘No, mother, I don’t feel anything.’

‘Just you stay in bed today.’

‘I don’t feel anything, mother.’

Johan also has to look. He also thinks that Bernard’s bottom is no longer there. He goes downstairs. Bernard is now standing in the front room on a chair in front of the mirror and is looking at himself. He must admit, that is not a bottom any more, his father has beaten him black and blue. But what does it matter? It doesn’t matter at all, no! Crisje now hears from him that he will go to Mrs Aanse to make it up to her.

‘Do you dare to do that, Bernard?’

‘Of course, mother.’

‘And will you not steal again, Bernard?’

‘Of course not, mother.’

‘Do you promise me that, Bernard?’

‘Yes, mother.’

It is almost unbelievable, how plucky that child is, it is a pity that

Bernard steals. Bernard dares anything and goes consciously to Mrs Aanse. Now you will have it, Crisje thinks. She hears horses rolling, and it is the constabulary. No, they also go past her door.

‘Mrs Aanse?’ Bernard is standing in front of the fat woman, and confesses everything to her.

‘Mrs Aanse... I’ve come to confess. I stole your grapes, but I will never do it again. I ask your forgiveness. And my father nearly beat me to death, Mrs Aanse. Just take a look.’

Bernard pulls down his trousers and shows Mrs Aanse his bottom, beaten black and blue. Mrs Aanse looks and knows she wouldn’t have given Bernard such a beating. The child looks her in the eye and waits.

‘God Almighty, Bernard, what a good hiding you got. I have to say, your father can do it.’

‘Yes, Mrs Aanse, father has understanding of that.’

‘But tie your trousers again. I have seen it already.’

‘Do you not want to give it a beating, Mrs Aanse?’

Mrs Aanse has to laugh about this. That Bernard. No, Bernard, you have had enough of a hiding already and I think you are plucky as well. She now hears nothing else but: ‘Yes, Mrs Aanse, of course, Mrs Aanse, you are right, Mrs Aanse. I will not do it again, Mrs Aanse. I will watch out, Mrs Aanse! No, Mrs Aanse, your Theet wouldn’t do that, I know that, Mrs Aanse, your Theet is far too good for that.’

And what does Mrs Aanse do? She thinks Bernard is the best of them all. Would Bernard not like a glass of lemonade? Isn’t that something, Bernard? Look for yourself, Crisje, or you will soon not believe it, Bernard is having a glass of lemonade with Mrs Aanse. Mrs Aanse will not go to the constabulary, she has forgiven Bernard. And Crisje, they have become friends. How pleased Our Lord will be about that. When Crisje hears about it, she cannot believe it. How was that whip-persnapper able to influence Mrs Aanse? Tall Hendrik also admits, Bernard is good at telling stories, but the stealing must stop. Four weeks later Bernard asks Jeus if he wants to look and see how many pears are on that little tree at Hosman’s. Jeus is shocked to death, has Bernard gone mad? No, Bernard is not mad, he knows what he wants. Now take a good look, he wants to have the big whoppers. Every year Hosman’s children have teased him. This year those whoppers are for him. Those pears are the biggest in the whole neighbourhood. The sport of getting them is food and drink for Bernard; only when he has

them will he stop stealing. Jeus senses that this is foolhardy. Hosman's Hector is a dirty bloodhound. Bernard already has his plan together: every morning he will fetch the milk and then have a chat with Mieneke and Gerrit, he will want to see Hector for a moment. The plan is successful. Hector gets tasty sausage, but Crisje, who sees that the supply above the stove is shrinking, wonders: did I cut off that sausage yesterday? Now there is only a small chunk left. It is suspect, but the children eat a lot and they eat well. Bernard already knows how many pears are hanging on that little tree. That is worthwhile. It is sport which you do not experience every day. Tall Hendrik has to go to Germany soon to sing, it couldn't be better.

On the evening that Bernard wants to take his chance, it is raining. He has his things ready. Hector will enjoy it and he will get whoppers of pears. You will see them pulling faces there for some time. Just off the Stokkumseweg, then into the garden, each footstep has been calculated.

'Hector?.....Hector... here is something for you.'

The dog sniffs at the tasty sausage; the animal senses someone familiar. He has been getting Hector used to him for weeks beforehand. Meanwhile Bernard dashes into the little tree and fills his pockets and the little basket. They may keep the four which are still on the tree. He hadn't thought that it would be so easy. He is back within less than half an hour.

'Have you got them, Bernard?'

'Sshh... keep quiet. But I've got them.'

Bernard sleeps well, he has nothing to do with it; and those dopes will have no pears of their own this year. Early in the morning, Bernard and Jeus are already looking through the attic window across the road.

'They are sitting at the window, Bernard, they are thinking that we did that. Look, there are Anneke and Mieneke.'

And yes, the family is leering: one of those across the road did that. Crisje knows nothing about it. Who will fetch the milk?

'I will, mother.'

Bernard leaves. The whole family, even Hosman, receives him there.

'Do you know, Bernard, who stole our pears last night?'

'Have your pears been stolen, Hosman? Those big pears? But my God, Hosman, is that not scandalous?'

The farmer looks him in the eye, but Bernard looks back. No, a boy cannot lie like that. However, they still don't believe Bernard. He will now have to prove what he can, and give them that assurance. The whole neighbourhood already knows about it. Isn't that scandalous? The Grintweg is in an uproar. No, I didn't do it, Mrs Hosman, I wouldn't even dream of it.

'Mother, those big pears were stolen last night from Hosman's.'

'What did you say, Bernard?'

'Yes, mother, they asked me if I had anything to do with it.'

'Good heavens and they were those big pears.'

'Yes, mother, they only have one little tree like that and Hector did not bite their legs.'

'Was that bloodhound asleep then, Bernard?'

'I don't know, mother.'

Bernard is calm. Jeus doesn't say anything. He has the greatest respect for Bernard. Those across the road have made them green with envy every year and that has now been put to a stop. Those skinflints and show-offs of children now know. Jeus saunters over to Gerrit, he wants to hear what they have to say there.

'Don't you know anything about it, Jeus?', asks Gerrit.

'How would I know, Gerrit. But I think it is scandalous.'

Gerrit also leers, Anneke gives him a good scolding, but he won't accept that.

'Do you know, Anneke, that you will have to confess that?'

That gives her food for thought. You cannot suspect a person just like that. 'No', he utters:

'We have nothing to do with it, Anneke.' 'No, Hosman, of course not, but was Hector asleep then?'

Tall Hendrik comes home. Bernard is under the thumbscrews of his father again. 'Look me in the eye, Bernard.'

Tall Hendrik looks, but Bernard looks back.

'Did you really not do it, Bernard?'

'No, father, I have nothing to do with it. I don't want to steal any more, father.'

Tall Hendrik discusses the situation with Gerrit Noesthede. It is a trick which you must have respect for. Jeus is no longer accepted at Hosman's, but that only lasts a while, Crisje needs straw two days later. And that is lying above the pigsty, she pulls at the straw now and

again and throws it down for the pigs. This morning there is more than straw to be seen for Crisje, a pile of fruit flows towards her.

‘Good heavens above, what is that?’ Down rolls pears and plums, apples and carrots, all kinds of things. Bernard is in trouble once more, now he can open his trousers again this evening, and Crisje thinks that it is bad. But Hosman’s big pears are not there, they are somewhere else.

‘Bernard what a grief you cause me’, Crisje moans, she knows what is waiting for him, she cannot keep quiet about this. Hendrik is right, the child will grow up wild. Bernard knows and cannot say anything. Jeus and Jan profoundly sympathise with him. Tall Hendrik will beat him to death. That doesn’t look too good now for Bernard. There is father. What is it, Cris? Tall Hendrik hears about the drama.

‘What have you to say to me now, Bernard? Nothing?’

‘No, father, just beat me to death now, I earned it, father, just lash out.’

But what a boy, Tall Hendrik thinks. However, Hendrik has learned something from Crisje. His mind is clearer than it has ever been before. Is it because he was so successful on stage? Peter, Gerrit and the boys from Smadel arrive, they step inside and see Tall Hendrik occupied with Bernard.

‘What is the matter, Gerrit? He has stolen a paradise for himself, all in all, that is all.’

Crisje is standing beside her husband and doesn’t say anything, but she looks. What will Hendrik do? Will he murder Bernard? She prays, she thinks, she is crying inside. Tall Hendrik smiles. The court which Bernard is standing in front of will decide. Then Tall Hendrik asks:

‘I could beat you to death, Bernard. Of course, I can do that. But I want to tell you something completely different.’ And then he says to Crisje:

‘Cris, the boys must leave.’

The boys leave the kitchen, Then Tall Hendrik continues: ‘Bernard, if you confess everything honestly to me, I will make allowances for it. But I want to know everything. And I will also tell you, if I hear again that you have been stealing, I will take you to the constabulary myself! Mother knows. We are poor people, Bernard, but we are not thieves! Understood? We are not tramps. We have to make sure that we can look Our Lord in the eye every day. Do you believe that,

Bernard?’

‘Yes, father.’

The adults look, they now know, Crisje also, that Tall Hendrik is really and truly giving it one more try. Hendrik gets Crisje’s understanding, pure love shines out of her eyes towards him and the realization that this is better; Our Lord is satisfied. Now the children will gain respect again, Hendrik, they will feel that you are a father, and that you have the sense to act like a father and know how to deal with things. Certainly, Crisje feels this is an honest chance! And Bernard confesses to his father.

‘Is there anything else, Bernard?’

‘Yes, father.’

‘Do you know even more, Bernard? Do not be ashamed.’

And now Tall Hendrik gets to hear that he stole the whoppers of pears from Hosman. He is shocked. Gerrit Noesthede feels a tickle inside, Peter and the others understand how aware Bernard is and how infallible he is in stealing. Is that not some lad, Gerrit thinks. You must have respect for such a boy. Tall Hendrik continues.

‘So, Bernard, you took those big pears away from there.’

‘Yes, father.’

‘Why did you do it, Bernard?’

‘Because they flaunt them in front of my eyes every year, father.’

‘So, and you can’t stand that, can you?’

‘No, father.’

‘But there is so much, Bernard, which we have to look at, but which we must leave well alone. Just look at me, Bernard. What haven’t I done for you? Let the men just tell you. What would you say if I was no longer here?’

Bernard senses what Tall Hendrik is trying to say and is ready for it, he tells his father:

‘I will not do without you for the world.’

‘Do you mean that, Bernard?’

‘Of course, father.’

‘Look, Bernard. That is the last time. If I am faced with you again, then something completely different will happen. If you wish to promise me that you will keep your hands to yourself, away from another person’s things, I will promise you that I will not give you a hiding and you don’t have to go to the cellar either. But if you think

you can cheat me, then I will do something completely different.'

'I will not cheat you, father.'

'Your hand on it, Bernard?'

'You can count on me, father!'

Tall Hendrik lays his hand in Bernard's. Crisje is happy. 'And now to bed. But first dinner, Bernard.'

'Yes, father!'

'Cris', Gerrit says to her, 'Cris, he will get ten marks from me, for his stealing. Hendrik, I mean it.'

They laugh. Everything is being discussed upstairs. Jeus asks: 'Will you stop that stealing now, Bernard?'

'Of course, but I'm going to sleep.'

Tall Hendrik knows, he has not had an adventure like that in his youth. Bernard got off with it ridiculously well. Crisje thinks that she must make up for it. She will confess, she will work for it. She reaches a human discussion at Mrs Hosman's home. Mrs Hosman is not so insensitive that she doesn't understand this. Crisje also confesses everything honestly to her. Mrs Hosman now knows that Bernard did it. What does Mrs Hosman do? Since she also has the same Lord. When Crisje comes home exhausted weeks later, her back is bent double from working on Hosman's land, Bernard asks why mother is home so late, and why mother is making herself so tired with working, father earns money, after all, and he will do a good job with the newspapers, then Crisje tells him:

'Just come over to me, Bernard. Now you must listen carefully. But you know that I have to confess everything?'

'Yes, mother, of course.'

'Now, Bernard, when I confessed that, Our Lord himself said to me, Crisje, you have to make up for that again. Now Bernard, I have to work for what you stole there. Father gave me that, Bernard. I did not want a cent for all that work.'

'Do they know there that it was me who did it, mother?'

'No, Bernard, but I can tell Mrs Hosman.'

'And will you do that, mother?'

'If you never steal again, Bernard, no, then I do not need to discuss it. What would you say, Bernard, if they shouted at you for a thief for the rest of your life, what would you think of that, Bernard?'

'That is bad, mother.'

‘Now you see that yourself, Bernard.’

‘I will not steal any more, mother.’

Then Bernard also crumpled, he could not compete with his mother, and he promised her that the stealing was over. There is peace, quiet and happiness, this is sacred respect! Crisje feels that because of this there will be a new life, and Tall Hendrik has learned an awful lot! But Crisje wonders where Bernard’s life will end up. Can these bubbling feelings ever be tamed?

Just have patience for a while, Crisje, and you will know!

‘That’s a ‘lie’, Father’

If Crisje is sure of one thing, then that is with regard to Jeus going to religious instruction, which she longs for and looks forward to, and which will mean a heaven on earth for Father. His life is open to that, and she knows all about it, Tall Hendrik is also convinced of it that he will surpass all of them, they will enjoy that.

Jeus is going to catechism. He has high hopes for it, and talks to Crisje about it day in day out. Now he will be able to learn all about Our Lord.

‘Good day, Jeus.’

‘Good day, Father.’

‘Children, this is mother Crisje’s Jeus.’

Do the children not know that? Why is Father making such a fuss of Jeus? Is he perhaps different to us? But Father’s thoughts go back in time now, to when Jeus was born, and which Crisje told him so much about. He again experiences that unprecedented silence of that moment, sitting next to Jeus’ cradle, the flight he was able to experience, and afterwards the beautiful moments in the church when he kneeled down, thanking Our Lord for this universal contact, Father thinks about so many things and now that life has come to him, and he will teach it. Jeus is enjoying himself; it is going well, the first mornings for him were to get to know things. Father is talking this morning about damnation and eternal burning. There is a reaction inside the child. And he is no longer himself. Something happens, it is as if he leaves his body and José is with him flying through that universe, and he has a feeling of becoming older, but still remains himself. Now and again he feels that he only possesses a tiny part of himself, the rest has dissolved; but how? Suddenly he puts up his finger and calls to Father.

‘That is a lie, Father!’

The children get a shock, Father thinks that the world is collapsing, but nothing happens, only there is tension. There will be the devil to pay, spiritually. Father will not have that and asks:

‘Why is that a lie, Jeus?’

‘That’s a good one, Father. Our Lord cannot destroy His children, after all?’

The children are shaking. Father is suddenly talking about some-

thing else; he must talk to Tall Hendrik about this. Now Tall Hendrik is in the presbytery and he is talking to his friend about Jeus.

‘What is the matter, Father?’

‘Hendrik, I called for you because I have serious matters to tell you. We know each other. I know all about Jeus, but Jeus is messing things up for me. I cannot approve of that, Hendrik. It is bad! It is really bad, Hendrik. Jeus is getting under my wings.’

Tall Hendrik listens. He really has to laugh about it. Does Father believe himself that Our Lord damns people?’

‘You can laugh, Hendrik, but you would be better to cry about it. I’m telling you, it is bad! What must the children think of me, Hendrik? That will go round the whole town. That will be a revolt. Did you not think of that?’

‘Is that so bad then, Father?’

‘It’s a lot to me.’

‘Do you believe yourself then, Father, that Our Lord will let us burn forever? My own Crisje cannot believe that either, and you know what my Cris is like, after all, don’t you, father? I can’t understand that either. Who can understand that now, Father? That is frightening people. We feel a lot for you, Father, but that? No...’, Hendrik lets him know, ‘we do not believe in that.’

‘So, then I know, Hendrik.’

Crisje hears about it. But Crisje won’t accept it either. Our Lord cannot destroy His children, but you do not need to throw everything overboard because of it. Crisje is liberal and deep, but people do not understand that. Crisje confesses and she now talks about Jeus for a moment. Does Father no longer know that Jeus is a different child? Father is not stupid, he does not blame Crisje and Tall Hendrik, but he must think about it.

‘You do not have to pay so much attention to it, Crisje, but they are worries for me and you. I must think of my children.’

Crisje does not believe in damnation but she is still such a faithful child. However, the teachings continue. The chaplain will get his own back on him, And he is a different personality. Father hopes that Jeus will change. Crisje also hears more from Father.

‘My concern, Crisje, is where did he get that from? That could be the devil. Isn’t it the case, Crisje, you know yourself which dangers we are exposed to.’

That is true, but do not doubt Jeus. Because he is right! Crisje does not need to take him to task. Jeus shuffles off to the religious instruction, is there something the matter with the chaplain? How short-spoken he is to him. Is the chaplain leering at him? What did he do to the chaplain? Did they warn him? The children sense something, what has Jeus been up to? He is sitting there listening, and not aware of anything. However, the chaplain is giving him a severe look, and Jeus feels, and he cannot understand that. When the chaplain is also talking about how you have to go to purgatory for eternity for a sin, and nothing remains of you, he suddenly jumps up from his seat and says:

‘That’s not true, Mr. chaplain, that is also a lie.’

The children look at Jeus with their mouths wide open. What does that little lad want? Am I telling lies? Is that child possessed by the devil? The class becomes noisy, and the children are upset; Jeus has got a real nerve. It is between Jeus and Mr. chaplain. That child is a heretic! He drags mother Crisje’s Jeus from his bench and places him in a corner. He can listen there now, it is really bad and a good punishment. Then Mr. chaplain goes back and prays. He prays with the children for Jeus, that Our Lord will be able to protect that life for all the wrong, and that HE will banish the devil in that life for church and salvation. It is a terrible scandal for Jeus. The children will make sure that everyone hears about this, and then he will be branded as a heretic. There is something wrong here. Mr. chaplain continues, he prays again, then Jeus suddenly jumps onto a bench and says:

‘Is that love?’ In real, pure High Dutch, the chaplain gets to hear from Jeus:

‘Is that love, I ask you? How did Christ receive the children? You have none of that. You should have stayed with your cows!’

There is dead silence. The man runs to Jeus and gives him a hiding.

‘That on top of everything’, the priest hears him say, ‘that as well: Let the children come unto Me, but what do you do?’

Do you hear that? That is a heretic! A child is talking like an adult. That is heresy! He will put an end to it, but Jeus must remain standing there. Half an hour passes. Jeus does not even know what he has told that man. The moment he opened his mouth, he became sleepy. He could no longer even feel his feet and legs. That is something, he thinks for a moment, like then, on the clouds, or like he cried in the

woods for Our Lord. From then, from here, and there, it is exactly the same thing, but it does not penetrate his life, he must now be careful or they will kick him into hell. An hour has already passed and he still does not get his freedom. But he feels that he is being watched. It is just as if thousands of people are watching him. They are leering at him and they want to know what he is doing. Now be very careful, Jeus thinks, or I will no longer come away from here. And then Mr. chaplain comes back.

‘Look at me, lad!’

He looks into the chaplain’s eyes. Is something the matter? But what did I do then? Why did you hit me? Why did you bite me like that inside? Can you not act differently then? Can you not explain those great things to me then?

‘Go away and come back with different thoughts, or leave the religious instruction.’

‘Yes, chaplain, I will make sure of that.’

He leaves and now goes to school. They already know there that he has been punished. The master knows Tall Hendrik well. ‘Now tell me, Jeus, what happened there?’

‘I don’t know, master.’

‘Is that so?’

‘I had to stay behind, master.’

‘What for, Jeus?’

‘I don’t know, master.’

The man cannot find out. The children would have him believe that Jeus said that Our Lord does not let people burn. And that is all! There is no more to it! The master will talk to Tall Hendrik. Hendrik and Crisje hear that Jeus was beaten from the bench because he will never be able to believe that Our Lord destroys people. Crisje will hear more about it. That evening Crisje goes to the presbytery. Now that she knows everything, she says to her good Father:

‘Are you trying to tell me, Father, that Jeus is possessed? Then you are as well, Father.’

‘But Crisje?’

‘No Crisje’s, Father. Jeus is different and you know just as well as I do. But it’s true, isn’t it, Father? Can Our Lord now damn people? Say it now yourself. That is not possible? Would Our Lord let His children burn if I could never do that? Is that not strange, Father? Shall I tell

you something? If people reach a certain point, they will leave the church. And that is your own fault. You must change that, Father.'

'But Crisje?'

'No, Father, that's a lie! I cannot find myself in that, as long as you know. Would Our Lord damn me myself?'

'But I didn't say that, anyway, Crisje, that you are bad?'

'But that is unbelievable, Father. Do you know everything about my Jeus? Then I will just tell you.'

Now Father gets to hear all about Jeus. What does Father say now? Would you now still say that Jeus is possessed? Jeus has been in the heavens. I was with him, Father. Jeus stood before Golgotha, he has seen and spoken to the angels, and he has seen Our Lord Himself. And can he now be possessed? You must take that damnation out of the church, Father, people are becoming afraid of Our Lord. Is that not probably the case? Father will do what he can. He will take it higher up, he is also convinced that God cannot damn for eternity, he is not so stupid, so poor. He will go to Rome, Crisje knows, but they will stay away from Jeus! They have agreed they will approach Jeus differently. How is it possible, it is going well. Suddenly there is understanding and Jeus gives sharp answers and asks sharp questions, but those questions are now answered according to the rules and laws, such as Christ did. However, teachings remain teachings, the church remains the church... and Jeus remains open for himself and the heavens. Crisje knows they will not rule him with an iron rod. He will also kick damnation out of the church one day, and will get help from many people who, along with him, do not believe in a God who loves HIS children and still damns them! For her also there is not a God Who destroys life for eternity! That does not exist for Crisje, they will never get Tall Hendrik that far either!

It is true, Crisje. When people come close to God, they lose their Father of Love again as well. And is that now possible? Jeus will fight against it later, Crisje. From the stage he will say it to the people, but then he will also analyse the laws for all of life. And they do that, those who also spoke through his life to Father, but then they come with heavy artillery, then the universal Paul of this century is standing in front of their noses. No, Crisje, there is no damnation! Our Lord is and will remain love! Eternal love! Jeus does not believe in that riding crop, Tall Hendrik. Our Lord forgives everything! You have

also started with it, and it is just as well! There is no end to Crisje's prayers. Well, if there is no longer damnation, then Crisje can say, now everything is okay, and we have our real Lord and who doesn't want that?

‘But Crisje, they have run over both your Bernard’s legs’

A person is sometimes a finely tuned and sensitive being, if he is open to the higher life. If he is faced with spiritual and social feelings, enforced upon him by life, which sometimes cause chaos as a result of one’s own actions and thoughts, then it is always the personality which has felt some of it, beforehand or a while later, to an extent that he feels and possesses enough sensitivity to be able to cope with these thoughts and feelings and to analyse them for himself.

There are not great deals of people in this wide world who are capable of infallibly checking and accepting the spiritual train of thought. The majority of the millions of children of Our Lord pay little attention to what the inner side has to tell the day-consciousness. But that psychology is open to thousands of worlds of feelings, for which he lives and is a part of, and is of course his space! On the other hand it is certain that everybody finds harmony with those powers and strengths, after all, because the God of all life has wanted it like that.

It has been proved scientifically that the stronger, more aware intellectual lives in a more material and social way, one has now split himself for the natural properties, and also for inner experiences, and now lives outside those universal touches or feelings. One cannot be reached now. A person shuts himself off completely from the spiritual inner self! It is the social task with all its rigmarole, that life has had to split itself, and it brought the lack of that sensitivity, through which the inner life usually speaks to the day-consciousness. It is true, the town dweller now misses that feeling, he suffers from spiritual anaemia, and that places him for a number of events, of which he has felt nothing, absolutely nothing, but which can suddenly overcome him and knock him down. Then you hear: ‘I should not have done that. I could have known after all, but I did not realise it enough. I would have acted differently then. I therefore knew it, but I lacked something.’ That is the spiritual sensitivity for each person, for thousands of problems and events, which you have to deal with.

But Crisje is not like that! She feels happy and it is not her. Because there is something which is draining her. When those feelings begin to speak to her life, and she follows them, they take her straight

to Jan Kniep, then both are faced with the Grim Reaper. The most wonderful thing of all now is, Crisje feels, that that power or feelings, or whatever it is, say that when Jan dies they will still be there! It is funny and strange, but she has her full senses and an extremely finely tuned inner life, as a result of which she can follow and experience her own spirit. Crisje certainly knows, if those feelings were not there she could say: 'my life is complete.' She wouldn't be able to believe her luck then. But they are there now, and that is a pity. Because those feelings disturb the peace and quiet inside, and also the blissful scientific existence of it, if she goes even deeper, then she is faced with something completely different, then human love speaks to her being and her life, which she is then involved with. However, a while later it is different again, now it is... anxiety! Anxiety, which speaks to her day-consciousness and she has to deal with as a person. Johan and Bernard are already working in Emmerik. Jeus has taken over delivering the newspapers and he has also come home several times with his legs covered in blood. Due to the same dog, which also bit the calves of Johan and Bernard. Only then did those people understand that you could not live with wild dogs; they hung the animal. That calf was drowned ten times, so to speak, only then did that humane feeling reach a good decision, even if the act was inhuman, but no one spoke about that. And all that because of the 'Niederländische Zeitung', the rise for Tall Hendrik, for the boys the first foundation for their own personality, as a result of which you can safely say that those lives have already started. The boys have learned from it, Jeus has become older because of it and Tall Hendrik and Crisje can be satisfied. That was also a sport for Bernard, Crisje could accept, and because of it he forgot the other thing.

A while ago, the boys came home with a cake weighing twenty pounds. The whole neighbourhood ate from it. Which they earned honestly. By their singing. Tall Hendrik was proud. The boys had already performed on stage; their success was enormous. Bernard was first for a job at the brush factory, he worked there for a while, and when he saw no future there, he went to work at a machine factory in Breitenstein, in order to bring in money for himself and Crisje. Tall Hendrik has already drawn up his plans; the way it now looks, things are going well. He cannot and may not expect more, it will go left, or right, but in one direction, consciously further and higher! And Tall

Hendrik can be trusted with that, he can make a calculation; he can think! Who can stop him? No one can! Life neither, according to Tall Hendrik, he is there himself and they know that very well! Hendrik's quartet is doing well now that the boys of Peter Smadel are ready. You should now hear those four voices sometime. He can beat everyone with his quartet. Ernst and Willy Smadel, Johan and Bernard have received beautiful voices from Our Lord. Bernard is the chosen one, his voice is enormous and goes into the air, when Bernard gives his voice the space through his head, you can hear a boyish nightingale with the soprano of a sweet girl in it, and after all, that means something. They were given that cake weighing twenty pounds for their nice singing. Which was something wonderful for Crisje, an experience of which she sees and feels the space, it is the future! However, throughout all of this she feels rotten; anxiety lives in her. Tall Hendrik doesn't go into it, he cannot understand that Crisje now wants to accept those things. After all, is everything not going well? Have we anything to complain about, Cris? There is nothing wrong. The children are healthy, Little Teun is the new addition to the family, they now have six strapping boys and a girl, what else does Crisje want? Crisje doesn't want anything else, nothing, but inside she feels sad, always that anxiety. Something will happen through which she will lose her enormous happiness! Just shake it off you; is it that simple? Can you shake yourself off? It is inside, Hendrik. And that thing inside talks to me and now raises its dirty dominating head!

Last Sunday Hendrik sung with the quartet at the Plantage. Germans came to listen to see whether it would be suitable for the stage, it is already at that stage. At the end Crisje flung her arms around her husband from happiness and kissed him in front of all those people, which is not something Crisje would normally do. But the singing was so wonderful, So nice, and the echo at the Plantage sent the voices across the people, yes, they could almost hear them in Montferland. After this feast Hendrik got new contracts, and that also meant money coming in. However, Crisje remained sorrowful, continued to have those horrible feelings, not even bitters washed away that urge or power from her life, it remained!

Crisje is not worried about social things. She looks that life right in the eye, she and her Tall Hendrik are economical, therefore, not a single cent is spent without some thought. There will be a nice piece

of ground and just look what's there at the back of the shed? Soon there will be a slaughtering again, the children are growing up. Life is wonderful, except for this one thing to be gone and we will be there. Is that perhaps a warning received by life? Can life talk to your day-conscious 'self'? That appears to be the case. Crisje is experiencing it! The children look well, they wear nice smocks, shoes as well, and Hendrik wears a nice black suit, she wears nice things, but what is it anyway, Crisje?

It was then that she felt ready to think of that inner self. She could not avoid it and therefore started on it, otherwise she would not be able to look it in the eye. Jeus is in the highest class, he is learning something, but not too much. Do not ask him to calculate a sum, he is not capable of it. However, he regularly transferred to the next class, due to the knowledge he acquired of the masters with his inner life, which then allowed him to give the answers. Crisje says: 'After Teun we will not have any more children, Hendrik.' She knows this is her last one. Hendrik thinks so as well, but he will wait patiently.

When they sit together in the evening, and talk about everything, there is always that anxiety as well. Then Tall Hendrik hears:

'What shall I tell you, Hendrik. It is there and it isn't there.'

And that means you have it and can do nothing, nothing! You cannot get rid of it. 'Even if I resist it, it doesn't help. It is stronger than I am, Hendrik.' It follows you, when you are having a nice sleep, it wakens you, and then it lies under and in your heart. Now it gives you a lump in your throat, so you think perhaps you will suffocate, it is so bad, but above all so conscious. You cannot free yourself from it. But you are still as right as rain and as fit as a fiddle. Prayers do not help! 'I pray day and night, you know that, Father also knows nothing for it. Is that life by any chance, Hendrik?' What is life, actually? Life is good, but life can also break you and then you are faced with the Grim Reaper, for that matter. Is it perhaps that?'

If Crisje looks at Jan, then it is as if the feeling inside says: 'It has to do with that, and it has received its own attunement with that life.' However, Jan is alive and kicking, he looks really well, and his neck gives no reason to be worried. What do you want, Crisje? What does all this mean? 'Have you perhaps worked too hard, Crisje?' 'No', Tall Hendrik gets to hear, 'it isn't that now, Hendrik, it is something completely different!' Were we born for worries then, Hendrik wonders.

And it isn't that either, Our Lord has nothing to do with it, for Crisje then, it is life! That is really not part of Our Lord. Not that either, but what is it then?

One morning Jan felt that his neck was tight. He rubbed his collar... Crisje saw it, and then some of the anxiety dissolved, because she now knows a bit more about it. Jan is now walking with the collar of the Grim Reaper, like a dog fastened to a rope. Because that's it! It is not any different. Jan is attached to the Grim Reaper and he says: 'Come on, Jan, come on! I will go left, you have to follow me from this moment!' Isn't that the case? Or is it different? A week later that tight band around Jan's neck was a bit more swollen. Hendrik, look. We are losing Jan, the first symptoms are there now. Tall Hendrik could then also accept the inner anxiety of Crisje. The fight with the Grim Reaper is nearby, he is now consciously behind the stove. You will not get rid of him, he will not release Jan for all the world!

The neighbourhood sees that Jan has a bandage around his neck again. Oh, my Lord, I see it. I do not need to pray now! Good Jan's time has passed; he can now prepare himself. Jan now consciously walks tied to the collar of the Grim Reaper. The boys know that. They do not need to fetch any cow dung from Hosman's, the black and white cow no longer has any power, the universal willpower of the Grim Reaper dominates. They all hear it really well; he is now whistling his tune. But how sarcastic that man is, they may not complain and moan, the time has been divided honestly. Jan is prepared. Jan does not need to bark, he is a human being after all, but you would think it!

Blood is flowing. The doctor does not need to come and look. They do not need him now! Nothing else will help. They know that! No one can take this away from them and no one can fool them either, this is the end for Jan. 'Jan will soon kick the bucket', Bernard said, and Jeus felt it. Jan is capable for it, he knows it, he himself says it: 'I am satisfied and I will now give in to it.' But that big Jan Kniep, the boys think, and Hendrik and Crisje know; but no one amongst all those people is aware of it, they get this space as a gift because Crisje and Hendrik accepted their friend. Much blood flows. But how much blood does a person have? Litres of it flow out of that hole in Jan's throat. And it flows like mad, day in day out and it stinks, so that you can smell it over the border. Crisje therefore bandages Jan in the attic.

When Jan comes downstairs, well wrapped up, he wanders straight to his chair behind the stove and starts his supernatural-universal conversation with Crisje. They now talk about the Grim Reaper all day, who is sitting there and is sometimes gone for a moment, because he has something to fetch here and there. Jan can no longer avoid him. For he is tied to his collar, it is a chain of flesh and blood, and because the flesh and blood is rotting away, it has become like a dead strand. And fair's fair, the Grim Reaper does not take any chances now, he knows what he wants!

How is it possible, Crisje thinks, however Jan is rotting away, he has almost no flesh any more, all that flesh, that human appearance, which has such a lot of significance, because it can be so lovely and warm giving external pleasure, but has nothing to do with the inner life, the flesh is rotting away before your eyes, and it now stinks like a corpse which is decomposing. They know here that the inside of you still shines despite all this rottenness, and it makes you cry, whether you like it or not. It is so sweet, and it is called Jan Kniep. People gave him a name, but the more significant inside which shines, is unknown to them, it is this significant side that will continue to exist into eternity for Crisje, Jan and Jeus, because they were able to learn those laws!

Fair's fair. The Grim Reaper cannot be attacked, disfigured, or cheated. Because this was decided beforehand by Our Lord. If you pray day and night for Jan Kniep you will soon have to accept that your prayers cannot help, and consequently they will not be heard by any God, any Lord. This is the material and the earthly end! When, they now wonder, must you pray, and can you pray for your loved ones? Did you think, Jan and Crisje discuss that with each other – and Crisje, who is like a saint, after all, and a full-blooded Catholic, Father knows that and he will give his own life for that – that she was now still capable of moving Our Lord to give Jan another five months in order to be able to keep the material life for another while... that she had a Mass said for Jan? That Mass and those prayers no longer help. Jan has to die, he will die here, but he will live there for eternity, with José, with Jeus' Tall One and the many others who have kicked the bucket! Isn't it simple, Jan says to Crisje, if you know all this beforehand and if you can give in to the Grim Reaper? Here spiritual science is discussed; here they experience reality, even if the Catholic

church is in their midst, it now gets universal space and truth through Jan and Crisje. If the people could ever accept that, and if Father could feel that as Jan, and Crisje have, and together could convince 'Rome', then this faith would be..... Divine depth and space, and the Catholic church would represent God and Christ. Our Lord, for eternal reunion, in which almost each human being wants to believe and can accept, because it is so real and natural, because it is part of a Father of Love! Would a saint like Crisje be able to feel and think otherwise? No!!! She cannot, because this is it!!! Jan does not cry either! Jan cannot cry. He knows! And because he now definitely knows, faith in God has become supernatural. Good heavens, people, this is it, after all. This is it! Jan, the great, confides in Crisje:

'I am prepared, Crisje. And I thank God that you wished to take care of me like this. I will appreciate that, Crisje, and never, ever forget. You know, I have never been an ungrateful person.' Jan the colonial says that. And this colonial is as strong as a master and aware with regard to accepting the Grim Reaper. 'Just let me bleed empty... good 'Reaper'... I know who you are! You are not a destroyer, not a demolisher, but a good person. One thing we do know, despite everything, we will soon knock your rotten crown from your dirty head, because behind the inner life... No I don't mean that, 'Reaper'... I mean, behind this grievous, inhuman mask which you wear, I see life and I am therefore not angry with you. But this crown must be removed from your head! You hit people through their ignorance. Of course, honest Reaper, you are not to blame, they do want it any differently, for that matter. So, just forgive me.'

Jan accepts the justice of the Grim Reaper. They have shared life honestly, Jan finds him kind and loving. Soon Jan will get universal wings, because he was a good person, Jan has not caused sorrow to anyone. But whoever has done so, yes, it will be more difficult for them, because you have cheated that universe and that eternity. And the Reaper will take you there. It is because of this, even if his collar is not yet around your neck. The Reaper has more than enough arm and leg chains. He even has them as trivial as pin-pricks, but still, also as result of such a trivial poisonous little thing you will kick the bucket yourself for the Grim Reaper and Our Lord. And it is as mean as a dog... the sound is quarrelsome! That is now you yourself!

Do you feel it? You yourself will first kick the bucket but falsely,

insincerely and in an ugly way, no one will want to listen to you. It sounds beastly but your own life is now leering at you and talking to you.

Do you not even want to listen to those nice little voices? Where you go, you are alone, alone with your insincerity and your own rotten soul and happiness! Hard? But you cannot escape it, because now the angels know your name and who you are! Or did you think you could still cheat even Our Lord? They would like that, wouldn't they, Tall Hendrik? Then the rich people would buy new stomachs and other, new, better brains and everyone would act like Rembrandt, Beethoven, and Bach; but those things are not for sale!

Jan stinks to high heaven, but what does it matter? And that is called bleeding cancer. For millions of people the way of stepping out of it in a decent way and that, Crisje knows, in the 'third degree' can still be cured. But woe the person who is troubled with the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh degree, they cannot be cured by cow dung, and Jeus will later explain his own laws and worlds, dear, dear Crisje, because that is also part of his task. Isn't that something, Crisje?

Grim Reaper, you will not get the 'droedels' here... you know what this means and that cannot be discussed for your life. 'Of course, Jan, we will see each other again there.'

Did you hear that? This is how Jan and Crisje talk. They will later see each other again. For these natural lives, there is no eternal damnation, Also no purgatory, your few sins, even if you have committed murder, you can make up for it again for Jan and Crisje's Lord, and you also get the Divine opportunity for this. Is this not just a note for your soul and happiness? Is that not just music to your human ears? Yes, just accept that the God of all life, Who is LOVE, and has always been that, does not put you in a purgatory or in an eternal hell, HE cannot miss your life! You, human being, must go back in order to represent HIM there in everything, for everything, and that represents Light, Life and Love... also for fatherhood and motherhood!! You can question this ten million times, and thank the God of all that life and call out: 'HE is Love!' However, He will not exclude one spark of Himself from his heavens, because each spark of life, and especially people, has received a Divine independence! When Crisje and Jan felt and went over all of this, Jan was just skin and bone, his life stank so badly, that the doves on the roof thought: in what kind

of rotten world are we now living, it is like the universal manure pit is open. It was that bad! They experienced it in the attic, the doves cooed less when Jan was still there, they also knew and understood, we will soon get nothing more from Jan, he is clearing off! But those good doves!

Four months later there was a stone above the material grave of Jan Kniep and it read:

'Here rests Jan Kniep in Peace, brother of Gerrit, Anneke, Greida and Willem, may God be with him.' And also something else... but that was a part of the Dutch East Indies.... Jan the colonial was as dead as a doornail!

Are there any things left from Jan? Here you have everything. Is that really everything? Yes, there is not any more. You see, we would have liked a reminder of Jan; you can understand that, after all! Of course! Just take everything, Jan lives in our hearts. You take the things and that will mean something, after all.

Jan wasted away. The Grim Reaper ate at his body and it happened infallibly consciously and certainly... Just say it, Crisje? Say it, Bernard? Did you not go to the funeral? Did you see Crisje's boys crying? Did you not see Bernard? He cried as if he had lost Crisje. Did you see Johan? Did you not see Jeus, Hendrik, Gerrit, Miets and Teun? Did you not see Tall Hendrik and Crisje amongst Jan's family? No, then as a punishment you will experience Jan's deathbed at six o'clock tomorrow evening, because you will have to learn to think for this and the next life! People, get out of my sight. I cannot see you! It is a pity, but it is the truth!

Do I love you? Do not believe it! It is nonsense! I cannot live any more without you? Tomorrow, or in only three years' time, you will be stabbed in the heart! Do not believe what people have to say to you, only look at their deeds, weigh them, and consider them, because in fifty years they will still succumb. Only then will you be faced with human cheating!

You will never leave us anymore? Tomorrow they walk away themselves! You love me? I will give you everything? When it comes to it, believe it, then you will leave, they will throw you out on the street with everything you once gave and were able to give, out of love, yes certainly, or do material things no longer mean anything? Of course not, no... only if your heart is in it, then it lives and the material will

become eternal of its own accord. Whether Bach, your Beethoven as well, God forgive me, also your Titian and all those great people of soul and spirit, went under before that, and their precious necks were broken; as if those things hadn't happened. Therefore, because of this the world knows, that flesh and blood did not get everything, after all, Crisje has got to know that. Just doll yourself up... it is that what's inside! That gives colour and shape to the material being and brings it to inspiration. Only now do the soul and personality speak through the material being and a person is nice, and awe-inspiringly great.

You would now think, those inner feelings are completely indulged by this. However, Crisje feels that she is not yet free. On the contrary, they are still there, even though, and that can be felt very clearly, it has nothing more to do with the collar of the Grim Reaper. It is true, she thinks, when she experienced all that misery through Jan, it was a bit softer, now it has come back with great intensity. Now her feelings go to Bernard. The boy knows no danger. Even if Tall Hendrik is strict and Bernard sometimes sits downstairs in the darkness, Tall Hendrik does not beat it out of him.

Bernard gets his money for a tram ticket, but he enjoys selling this security and jumping on the Zutphen-Emmerik tram. Jan de Neus*) wanders through the carriages, from front to back, Bernard and his friends jump on and off, speed past Zutphen-Emmerik and now get on the tram for nothing. But Crisje didn't even know that until Tall Hendrik got wise to him, took him to task, which didn't help anyway. At the end of the day you cannot beat him to death. Jan de Neus serves Zutphen-Emmerik in his way. He knows, eventually those lads will be at their last gasp and all those parents will have troubles. He punches the tickets and looks, Jan is not strict enough, and there are all kinds of things to see.

'Bennad, will you not cause mother any sorrow?'

'No, mother, I will make sure of that.'

Every morning Crisje has her hand on her heart. You are powerless. As an adult, and parent, you have nothing more to say. Jeus dreamt one night that Bernard was walking around on two crutches. Bernard was lying under the tram, went to a hospital, and was walking around on those two crutches. When he awoke in the morning, he still knew about it, but he did not mention it to Crisje; mother has worries enough. It was a horrible dream! Crisje is sitting one after-

noon behind the stove and slumbers off a bit. Suddenly she is wandering through the Zutphen-Emmerik tram. Isn't Hendrik here? There is Tall Hendrik and here is Johan. Where is Bernard? He isn't here. She races through the tram four times and cannot find Bernard. She screams, but she doesn't hear it. Miets wakes up with a fright. Day-dreaming, she thinks, is dangerous, and she is left with a horrible feeling. But what is Bernard doing? If only the men were here. They are home an hour later. She talks to Bernard, the boy bows to her, but the anxious feeling inside still does not lessen, it eats at her heart.

This morning the feeling is extremely bad. She has made the sandwiches. Last night it was freezing slightly. They race out the door one by one. Her heart is thumping now, but what is the matter? Bernard, but Bernard, she should just have kept him at home this morning, if only he was ill. But what can a person do if you are healthy? Can a person make a wrong decision about his own life? No, it is not in your hands. Bernard has run out the door in the same way as usual. Half an hour later the door opens. A woman is standing in front of Crisje, and that is the most terrible human monster they know here. If she comes round she brings a pile of misery with her and the devils sing in hell. Crisje, now your anxiety has gone, now you may hear it. 'But Crisje, they have run over both your Bernard's legs.'

At the same time Crisje is lying on the floor, she succumbs! Jeus flies out of bed and makes a go for that woman. He grabs her and, as young as he is, he flings the woman onto the street. He sees the big person tumbling head over heels twice, but that is for her gossip. If it had only been other people who told Crisje this powerful news. As far as misery is concerned, she is always the first. As far as gossip is concerned, she always gossips and has sullied and disfigured many a person through her demonic character. Jeus runs away. He is flying again off the Grintweg, almost breaks his neck because of a height at Theet Hendrik's, loses a piece of his kneecap, but doesn't feel it. He must go to Bernard. When he arrives there, he sees that they have just laid Bernard on a ladder and taken him away. Bernard is laid on a table at the house of a family member of Tall Hendrik; the doctor has already been called. Bernard looks him in the eye. He asks:

'Does it hurt much, Bernard?'

'No', he says definitely and consciously, 'I don't want anything to do with pain.'

Jeus feels that his brother is forcing him to look behind him. There is a sheet lying over Bernard, when he turns round, he is looking at the piece of Bernard's leg with a shoe and a piece of his trousers on it, good heavens, is that of Bernard? The sheet is lifted, he is now looking at the leg run over and succumbs, but keeps himself attached to his day-consciousness. Adults now get to know Tall Hendrik's Bernard. The boys laughs, as if he has only had a scrape; it is no more than that. Jeus changes his mind, he sees that Bernard has lost a piece of one leg and not both his legs, and mother must know that. 'What happened, Crisje?' Trui assisted Crisje. Trui does everything to support her.

Tall Hendrik, Crisje, just went to Jan Hieltjes as always, the stop before Zutphen-Emmerik. Precisely when the tram was approaching, Tall Hendrik couldn't see either Johan or Bernard, he was at the bottom of the Grintweg and could get on immediately. The tram goes dead slow there and that monster has to reach the height of the graveyard, for which it has to use all its strength. Tall Hendrik is sitting in the tram, but he does not feel that Bernard over there, just at the side of the graveyard, is bleeding to death on the street, because Bernard walked a bit towards the Zutphen-Emmerik and there he jumped on it. Crisje, the footboards are slippery, because there was frost last night. Bernard slipped between the footboard and a wheel, and dragged along by Zutphen-Emmerik. If Tall Hendrik had looked to the left, he would have seen Bernard crawling. Bernard is crawling in the direction of the graveyard and starting to scream. His scream is not heard by Tall Hendrik, who is having a nice seat in the heat and knows nothing about it; nothing, Crisje. Even if he is right on top of it, he feels nothing! What you have already felt for months and which went for your heart, that Tall Hendrik is now on top of, and does not notice that this same Zutphen-Emmerik has run over his child's leg. Bernard's blood gushed against the bottom boards, it had almost reached Tall Hendrik, but he does not feel or see anything! He is not sensitive to his own blood, Crisje. That is now something completely different, you know better than that, but there is a very big difference between the inner emotional life and inner feelings and thoughts. And either you have that, or you do not have that precisely.

It is no more than that. Johan has just caught the tram at Hieltjes at his ease. And meanwhile, Hendrik is being told of what has happened. Crisje hears from Jeus what Bernard looks like, And that Ber-

nard is not going to die. He tells her about his dream, in which Bernard went to a hospital and came home with two crutches and one leg. Crisje thinks about her own dream. The anxiety has changed to pure and clear knowledge. The human heart now gets natural relaxation; it is over. Because now she knows, that Bernard has been tamed. Life itself has taken Bernard to task, Bernard is now quiet for his life!! And Jeus had to tell Crisje, on behalf of Bernard, he has no pain! But what a day. The urge felt and experienced in her has infallibly materialised. However, there is still something left. Not everything has gone yet. What is that? Will Bernard still die then? No, he will come home on two crutches; and she does not need to doubt Jeus' visions. Now they must wait for father. If only Tall Hendrik would come quickly. Finally, father is here. 'How is Bernard, Hendrik?'

'Bernard is doing well, Crisje. The doctors say that they have never seen such a strong child. He immediately asked for a pickled herring.' Bernard felt a bit weak and had a horrible taste in his mouth. It is a miracle. It is not so bad, Crisje. One leg off. Right arm broken in three places. Right leg broken in three places, right arm like a cork screw, hit by Zutphen-Emmerik. There are no internal injuries, Crisje, he will be home soon, everything is going really well, Bernard sends his love. How is it possible, Bernard can still get well? Jeus saw him coming home on crutches. Now Tall Hendrik hears about his dream, they know about it. The worst thing, Tall Hendrik feels, they are crossing him. And for Crisje everything is still the same inside, her feeling has not dissolved either, she feels, there will be more misery. Tall Hendrik can bow his head, Bernard will no longer sing for the time being. Jeus is walking about with half a kneecap, and life goes on, the papers are delivered now as well, but it is nearing an end, Tall Hendrik self is not in favour of it.

It is Crisje who gives Tall Hendrik new life. He seems broken inside. His future lies in pieces. Life has dealt him a blow from behind. Tall Hendrik is strong, but this was a hit, and Our Lord gave him this blow in order to think. Isn't that the case, Tall One?

The whole family is in Emmerik on Sunday. 'Good day, mother. Are you angry at me, mother?'

That Bernard. They will try everything to keep his knee. Two weeks later, they give that up and Bernard undergoes a few operations, there is only a little stump left of his left leg. Life now goes to the right...

That of last week always went left, now right, Bernard will not be a mechanic, but a tailor.

Nine months later he comes home, on two crutches. Now the ulcers inside start, there are still some splinters in his hip, and they must be removed. The child suffers terribly, but they now also get to know him as a strong character, you stand there crying. However, the dash has been driven out of Bernard, he is calm and the whole neighbourhood spoils him. Good heavens, you should see him. Is there nothing to pinch? Does Bernard not fancy a tasty apple? Will I go and have a look for you, Bennad? Jeus now goes out to pinch for his brother and brings him nice wine apples; but that was once and never again, they were after him. Is there still pleasure in living? Yes, by losing a leg your brains and your inner being have not been destroyed. That is something else, peace has come to it; they have tamed the old Bernard. Jeus now goes through hell for Bernard; he lies like a dog in front of his bed. And Tall Hendrik? He has become quieter, there is something brewing inside him, it is just like he is grieving about something. Father is failing inside, all the children see that. The fire in his eyes, which people are so afraid of, has died slightly, extinguished is something different. Gerrit Noesthede became involved and gave Tall Hendrik a going over. They were not used to doing that to him, but Tall Hendrik had to swallow it.

‘Cris, but what is the matter with Hendrik?’

‘He is hanging down his head, Gerrit.’

Bitters didn't bring about any change in Tall Hendrik. Still if you saw him, it was not even noticeable. You would have to know him longer for that. Perhaps, did the Grim Reaper sit beside them at the table? Were the clairvoyants here too involved with poor Bernard? Tall Hendrik, wake up, accept it! Crisje and Bernard are now outgrowing you. However, is that not the Grim Reaper sitting there? No, but it is beginning to saw and scream inside Crisje: no, it is not that, if only that was the case? It is languishing, it is something which is slowly growing, and rears also its own head. It is also something with a strong personality and which sees the chance to torment you day in, day out. It is something which slowly sucks your blood away, does not give you the time of the day and much more as well, from which you can no longer rest, the tastiest soup no longer tastes good any more, Your appetite has gone! You now feel that your prayers do

not go any higher than the kitchen ceiling. That is bad. That is terrible. That is something awful. It is above you and you cannot feel it, but still, it crawls towards your human heart like a poisonous reptile. It lives there and rests, or it is consciously occupied with suffocating you yourself.

Now it is just a case of waiting to see how it reveals itself!

‘Jeus, I am dead, but I am still alive’

Every year you experience that growing and blossoming of mother nature and later that dying off of life again; like summer changes to autumn, that is also the case for people and for all life. All life physically undergoes that process and whoever is not strong is faced with the material disintegration, many people say that the miracle now closes the inner calyx, life goes to sleep, the physical cells have experienced their breathing space during the summer and what will now happen is very ordinary, but you have to prove what you can, and the need to do that is only felt by few people. It all happens of its own accord! How many of the millions of children of Our Lord stop for a moment to think about all of this and experience it again? No one does it, because it comes back each year; Also, because you are involved yourself, but it is something awe-inspiring because it is connected with ‘life and death’.

There are people who say, most people die in the autumn. But then they analyse Mother Nature for themselves. Whoever understands, descends deeper into this material; then you are a doctor, then you consciously know, because Mother Nature has placed you before her laws. You are not afraid, but the doctor says: ‘Man, you are eighty, your own resistance has gone, and therefore take it easy.’ But if you are just past thirty-nine, then there is no question of fear and worry, the doctor tells you himself: ‘Don’t make me laugh, don’t try telling me anything, such a change means nothing for your body and character.’ Then you are calm, the words of the learned man mean everything to you, he must know! However, Crisje is not so calm!

Hendrik is sick. He is bothered by the change to winter, he has a cold. And because of a touch of bronchitis, he cannot go out. The doctor, who was called, laughed at Hendrik. Because he knew him with his strong disposition, and his bubbling vitality. That means nothing, Crisje, but do you not feel anything then, doctor? Do you not feel that you cannot try telling anything to Crisje? Even if she does not believe for herself that bad things will happen, a little adder lives inside her and that creature has been busy making her life bitter for so long, however a cold means nothing, of course, doctor, nothing!

You would sell yourself for a song, Hendrik thinks, because this is

no life, he cannot bear that lying-down, that resting for no reason, he wants to work. You simply appear to be deaf and dumb. Now if you got a proper dose of pneumonia, then at least you would know you were ill, then you would have something to fight against, but this is nothing! In any case, Tall Hendrik now has plenty of time to worry. It is true, you are yourself for a moment, you are looked after really well and you can talk to your wife now and again, whom you see too little of, and carry out a conversation about everything. You are at home for a while, which is nice, but you do not see that someone else is already sitting in your own chair. And if you know his name and wish to listen, you will be frightened to death, but you are just forty years old. You aren't even forty yet, what do you want, Hendrik? Such a snail's pace eats away at your life and your character. A November month like this has a strange character. You are not sick and not healthy, but have a bit of everything, and that is all that slow pace, which Hendrik wants nothing to do with.

Is the Grim Reaper monitoring Hendrik, Crisje thinks? She would really like to talk to him about the Grim Reaper, as she was able to experience that pleasure with Jan, but Tall Hendrik would die instantly. Now you can keep quiet, but, oh my God, the nicest hours of your own life, and that of your love, are passing by. Later, yes, of course, later you will be hopping mad, because you said nothing, but then it was just too late. Your loved one is gone! Anyone who now dares to look the Grim Reaper and life in the eye, they are the strong-minded, they are the conscious ones, they have space and stand for nothing; they look every event in the eye. However, Hendrik cannot do that.

He is now occupied with himself, he plays football with his thoughts, and he thinks of his future. Hendrik is lying there and building castles in the air. What is a tapeworm? What is heart failure? He is shocked by these thoughts. He does not want to think of serious matters, for him is the quartet a serious matter and the stage, consequently, if you think about these things you are occupied with something real, the rest of your world of thoughts does not consciously belong now, and you do not want to talk about it. However, Crisje cannot talk about that, Tall Hendrik!

It is now a battle with yourself here. It is also the battle with regard to your social life and consciousness. A language is not spoken behind the scenes, such as French, German, Spanish and English, they are all

meaningless. Your own self says everything. However, that language, or whatever it is, now speaks under and in Crisje's heart, she already knows, it is from Our Lord! What does Hendrik want to know about it? Why is he not open to this bliss? Why think about tapeworms and stages, about the crowing of a human voice like that, why does he think about these only human matters, anyway, which will disappear from the earth sooner or later, does he not know that temporary things always dissolve and have to accept the familiar grave?

Tall Hendrik appears to be having a nice rest, but he is not resting, he is worrying, he feels beaten, a cursed cold like that dominates your inspirations. Yes, a triviality like that puts you out of the fight, which one you have to swallow. Crisje is anxious inside, there is someone behind the stove, she feels it is the collar of 'Jan Astral', therefore spiritually changed into a collar, it is now not bleeding cancer, but a slight cold, this is the first symptom of the thick rope, which will soon kill and consciously smother life, but then it will have become a strong rope, which is capable of stopping the blood circulation and making that ticking inside stop. But Hendrik doesn't want to hear about it!

His companions come and visit him. Peter, Gerrit and Jan Maandag, they hum and sing the new songs which they are studying for the following month, which he enjoys. Peter sings the first strophes for him, followed by Jan Maandag and Gerrit, Hendrik would have liked to tune in and follow them, if only he hadn't had this light bronchitis which is now stopping him from contributing to the whole. Crisje thinks: those men might help Hendrik, you never know.

Is he happy again now? No, and yet, yes, in a few days he will be fit again. The doctor says: 'Just get out of bed, that lying in bed is nothing for you.' He gets up. He is able to have a few bitters, but they do not taste right. Yes, Hent, do you still remember? I was on a spree for a while, just for a while, but a person needs something invigorating now and again. That was the case. Immediately after Bernard's accident Hendrik let go for a while. He was lax for a short time, it had touched him and then the bitters tasted really good. However, he had too many. It was bad, Crisje thought. She had to show him what could happen, if Hendrik thought that he could lose himself. Jeus had seen it. Even at school, amongst all those children, Jeus was aware that his father was drinking. When he told Crisje that and Hendrik was just above normal that day, he slid and bumped into the door post, he got

to hear it and was immediately sober. He gave her his word of honour that he would never do it again, the money was urgently needed for other things as well, and it could just not be missed.

Yes, Hent, but now I'm not enjoying the bitters. It is strange, but you would do anything for a cold like that. He quickly crawled under the blankets again, the doctor could tell him more. However, Crisje found that strange and certainly not reassuring. Father sick? Tall Hendrik crawled back into bed? That is something... that could not go well. It is in those days that Jeus dreams his father is going to die. He is experiencing it. Father is dead. That is not possible. Yet, that is the way it is: father is dead! He experiences the dying with father. When father was dead he said that he was still alive. Jeus can understand that, he knows those laws, José and his Tall One are also dead. However, they are alive as well! Jeus sees that he is walking behind the coffin. Father said to him that he would come back. Suddenly he sees father walking behind his own coffin. Gerrit is walking next to him. Jeus wants to copy the large footsteps of father. Gerrit sees it, he thinks that he wants to imitate father and now they have an argument behind father's coffin. Gerrit says:

'Are you not ashamed? Are you trying to imitate father?'

When he said to Gerrit that father was there as well, Gerrit poked him in the ribs. Jeus replies with:

'But don't you see, Gerrit, that father is there, that father is walking in between us?'

No, Gerrit can't see that, and then they shuffled along behind father's coffin to the church. Afterwards Jeus wakened and thought about what he had dreamt. Should he say something to mother about it?

Hendrik honestly said to Crisje, when he once got out of control: 'Just lash out, Crisje. But I had fun for a while.' Now that fun has gone. Crisje would now like him to be able to drink five hundred bitters. He can't get excited about it; they do not taste nice to him. Now Hendrik is thinking. His conscience is clear. He can have a good think. Jeus has accepted his dream. What will now happen does not yet get through to him, he is waiting for the following dream, also from behind his father's coffin, when he goes along to bury himself. That is extremely interesting, something new, because you cheat people by doing that.

There is a deathly silence inside Hendrik, but he is kidding himself. He wants to talk about what interests him, the quartet, the stage, and the boys, because Bernard has not yet lost his voice. That voice is still there, it remained outside Zutphen-Emmerik. Crisje is a saint, Hendrik thinks. How can he deal with everything, that deep love of Cris? His respect for Crisje grows every second, increased by happiness, he rests now and again and then Crisje hears him dreaming, it is as though he is delirious, but it isn't that, is it? What will our singing be like next time? How will they receive the new songs? He keeps wanting to talk. Crisje goes along with it, but Hendrik wants nothing to do with what she wants to talk about, that is too serious and too far removed from his life.

'It's amazing how a person can build castles in the air, Cris?'

'Yes, Hendrik', he hears from his loved one.

'But Our Lord knows it, Cris.'

'Yes, Hendrik, that is true.

He knows it.' A moment's silence, then Crisje gets to see her chalice. First Jan, then Bernard and now Hendrik as well. Is that possible? Is that possible? She is crying inside until her tears run dry. Hendrik does not see or feel it. But what's the matter with Fanny? What is wrong with that dog, Cris? Fanny feels more than Hendrik does. Fanny sees the Grim Reaper behind the stove. Fanny bites his calves, flies over Hendrik, runs through the kitchen like a wild animal and wants to bark until the Grim Reaper leaves, but he does not bother about Fanny's howling, he deliberately continues. Jeus hears Fanny's howling.

'You just come to me, Fanny. I know what you are feeling. But I will tell you something. I know as well, Fanny. Something is about to happen here. But did you not see mother looking then? Did you think that mother was stupid? Will you keep quiet, Fanny? Do we have to bring misery upon mother already?'

The dog no longer howls. The animal understands everything. Then Tall Hendrik must take responsibility. It thought it should warn him, but he does not see or feel it. Shouldn't that man behind the stove leave? Fanny feels it; Hendrik doesn't, what is inside him is not open to spiritual sensitivity, you have to lose yourself a thousand times and Hendrik does not want to lose any of himself, what belongs to him remains his!

'Fanny, father will come back', Jeus says to the animal when Fanny forgets himself for a moment and lies down next to the Grim Reaper.

'But what do you see?' Crisje asks the dog, which looks up now and again and then follows someone who is walking through the kitchen. You can see it, Fanny is following that life. Crisje knows what that means, but she is silent, she knows now, the preparation is over. Just come now, nothing can be changed about it, anyway.

The final hours, Tall Hendrik! Have you nothing more to say? A fortnight has gone... you have not spoken a word about yonder, or anything about eternal reunion. Nothing! Have you nothing more to say? It is still possible, you still live here, it will soon be over. You will no longer be heard, even if you can still be felt. No, Hendrik is sitting at the table for a moment, it is five o'clock in the afternoon. Little Teun says:

'Just get into the coffin', which Hendrik has to laugh about. Crisje deals with it. How is it possible? Have all those children foresight? Her Hendrik is leaving. She does not want to think about it yet, that is for later. He may not feel or know anything. Does a child like that know what a coffin is? Does an insignificant mite like that understand dying? Crisje is extremely shocked. Hendrik doesn't feel anything, but goes back to bed. He is feeling a little tired today, that cursed cold. He also said to Crisje:

'Did you hear that, Cris? He wants me in the coffin already.'

In bed he can have a good rest. Hendrik does not sweat, he does not get that far, but Crisje is sweating blood, however she cannot cry, of course not. Pray now, Crisje. Pray day and night. Crisje, who follows the 'Way of the Cross' for everything, cannot believe in it now, her prayers come back to her. Is that not the answer? Now you can no longer pray, now you have to lay everything in HIS hands and bow your head. The chalice for her personality is on the table. The Grim Reaper brought it. Its contents are important. She drinks from it continually. This wine is like poison, but she drinks. 'The Reaper' sees... this chalice is almost empty. When Hendrik rests, and closes his eyes for a moment, Crisje takes her chalice in her hands and takes a drink. But Hendrik... do you not hear anything, do you not see anything? She does not send any thoughts to Our Lord, which question HIS life. She does not understand it yet, but it is there. Her life cannot be brought to resistance. She says one Our Father after the other to her-

self. For the peace and quiet of Hendrik. So that his eyes may open! Protect him from evil. Take him to the Parvis! Show him what I know and what we were able to receive from Jeus. Does Hendrik not hear this? Is there no question of unity? Does he not feel anything? No, nothing at all! That he may dwell in Your paradise! Take away every wrong thought from Hendrik. Take him into your heart! For God's sake, I give it into Your hands...

Does Hendrik still have nothing to say? When the Grim Reaper was sitting on the edge of his bed, in order to look him in the eye, 'the Reapers' first touch reached him with his familiar conversation, however, it still did not get through to Hendrik that this was intended for him, he did not even listen. What he feels is, a sick feeling living inside, he feels like something savoury to eat, what would you say, Crisje, to a rollmop herring? No, I've changed my mind Cris, it is going away. Then Crisje heard:

'Cris, but my Cris. It is all different, I believe.' Yes, that is the case. Nine o'clock, it becomes twenty-five past nine, a while later ten o'clock. There is still no change. Shouldn't there be a priest here? A doctor can no longer help Hendrik. Gerrit Noesthede pays a visit. 'How are you, Hendrik?' 'The same, Gerrit. We will soon begin, Gerrit.' The children are lying there as well. Miets and Teun are sleeping with father and mother. Do the children not feel anything? Fanny is there as well, it came to have a look, which it never does. The animal sees that the Grim Reaper has gone. Fanny goes back to Jeus; he is awake. He is sleeping temporarily in the box bed with Gerrit. It is so quiet, that one can hear the mice running through the house. He is dreaming while fully conscious. Did you not see that there? Wasn't that father? How quiet it is tonight. It is much nicer sleeping upstairs, you have space there. Why do he and Gerrit have to sleep downstairs now? Crisje felt that when they have a cold I would rather have them near me. Jeus does not feel anything; he does not have the cold, and a bit of coughing like that means nothing. How quiet it is tonight. Do you understand this silence? Gerrit is already sleeping soundly. Jeus cannot sleep. Something is keeping him awake. What is that? Who was walking there? That man was just like father. But that is not possible, father is sick and is lying in bed. He hears whispering. Gerrit Noesthede is with father and mother. Suddenly the door opens and Gerrit races off. Where is Gerrit going so suddenly?

Twenty minutes later Tall Hendrik receives the last rites. Father is there. But with the priest here, his dream comes back to him. Father is going to die now, but his father will be back, he is kidding them all. Good heavens, how we will laugh. They hear him laughing in the kitchen. Now the priest leaves. Aunt Trui is also there with uncle Gradus. What is he mumbling about? But what a lot of noise they are making there. Does father not have to rest? Should father not die peacefully? May father not leave peacefully?

Hendrik says farewell to his friend, Father. The good man cannot understand it, he is not even forty years old. My God, but why? Is this human? Can You approve of Deut Messing remaining alive and this man, who has a dear wife and seven children, passing over? Why are You destroying this household? Our Lord, how hard it is to understand You, no one can understand this! Hendrik said:

‘Cris, my dear Cris, everything is different! It has become completely different!! I have nothing more to say! But watch out for Gerrit, Cris. Cris... Cris... watch out for him, he has pranks, Cris. I can no longer change him... no, not me... Cris.....My de... ar, de... ar Cris!’

Hendrik has gone, heart failure put an end to his life. To this life, at least. He will now open his eyes for the next life. However, they are still ‘extremely blind’... in all those years he did not want to use them for even five seconds. He himself shut his material eyes. He spared his dear Crisje that. When he felt and started to understand that it was serious, he immediately became himself once more. He will spare her that, there isn’t any more, Tall Hendrik, there is nothing else, that is everything for Crisje, and her seven children, which you leave behind for her. There is not a single cent! How is it possible? Is he sleeping? Yes, but you will not be able to waken him now, Gradus. He is stone-dead for this world. You don’t understand that, do you? That surprises you, it can even happen to you later and soon as well. Now you are starting to think. Crisje has thought, and because of that, she knew. You didn’t. Life is like that, Trui. You are suddenly faced with the Grim Reaper, And now everything is over. Hendrik already hears:

‘Turn left, Hendrik! Come just follow me. Watch out, there is the table. You are now walking through it, but in the beginning you think that you will bump into it and that frightens you. You must not be frightened here. That only makes you anxious, and the things which you will now get to experience, Hendrik, represent deadly serious-

ness. Now just turn right. But look, there is the hallway already. And yonder in the front room, in the box bed, you know that, we therefore do not have to go upstairs and that is also very interesting, that is where Jeus is lying. And he wants to see you now; you can talk to him for a moment. Now you will get to know one of your children, Tall Hendrik! You may talk to him, but then we will leave here quickly. I just want to show you the trees and the flowers of Our Lord, because it will strengthen and relieve you, for later. You may then admire HIS universe, HIS light, life and love for a short while. Do you not have your full senses, Hendrik? Yes, we look like each other. Jeus thinks that I look a lot like you, but my moustache is nicer, Jeus says. Don't pay any attention, you know what children are like. However, you are a child here... and you will learn from Jeus, because he is old for this world, Hendrik. Watch out, that is the door of the front room. Just carry on. Just give me your hand, then you can see a bit more, through me you have now received living light in your eyes. Isn't that wonderful, Hendrik? Yes, of course, my hair is slightly longer than yours, my hair reaches my shoulders. You used to wear your hair just like that. However, you will also learn to understand all that.'

'Gerrit, wake up, father is dead. But Gerrit, father is dead.'

'Let me sleep. Are you dreaming again? I want to sleep.'

'Gerrit, father is dead, but wake up. Here is father, Gerrit...'

Jeus looks his guardian angel in the eye and he sees his father next to his Tall One. The angel nods, he must listen for a moment.

'Be quiet, Jeus, just let Gerrit sleep for a while. Now you must listen carefully. Father has something to say to you.' Hendrik speaks to his son and says:

'Jeus, do you hear me talking to you?'

'Of course, father.'

'You must tell mother, that I will come back and that she must not worry. I am dead, Jeus, but I am alive. I will come back and soon as well. Good day, Jeus.'

'Gerrit, wake up!'

Aunt Trui comes; they must get dressed.

Jeus asks aunt Trui: 'How is father?' Trui replies: 'Father is fine, but you must get up.'

'Dirty liar, father is dead.'

He runs past his aunt, into the kitchen. 'Aunt Trui is lying, father

is dead, but father is still alive.' Crisje already hears:

'Mother, father is not dead, father is alive.' He takes a look at his father, who was just with him and is now lying here dead, but who will come back shortly. Gerrit wants to sleep; does he not believe it? It does not concern him. Trui pushes him out of bed, but he says crossly: 'Good grief, let me sleep, I have nothing to do with you.'

Jeus supports Crisje, he throws his arms around her neck and begs her to believe him. Father is not dead, father will come back, and this is only for a while. Father told him himself; now couldn't mother accept that? He now hears that he and Gerrit are going to Mrs de Man, they will sleep there. At that drunken woman's house? Must they sleep with that woman? Little Hendrik, Miets and Teun move to aunt Trui's. Little Teun was proved right, his father is going into the coffin. Johan and Bernard sleep with other family members. They have lost father. Johan and Bernard understand it, not Jeus, father will be back. Yes, Tall Hendrik, you must now go back, and that is for yourself, for Crisje and Jeus, and for this whole unaware humanity. That is now the order of Our Lord, and Jeus serves for this purpose! This is the proof in order to knock the crown from the 'Grim Reaper's head. However, with one blow this beautiful unit has been torn apart. Through one blow, hunger and misery are already lying in wait. Through one such mean blow hearts are beaten to a pulp, misshapen and squeezed out; spiritual suffering came in the place of this, in the place of this happiness, this bliss. And that in a fortnight, results of a little cold like that, even the learned doctor had to laugh about it. This blow is a hit. But why?

Does the life of Deut Messing mean more than that of Crisje and her Tall Hendrik? How can Our Lord approve of this? You would want to skin Him. You cannot reach Him. Crisje does not try that, she knows better, but now she cannot understand life either. Praying does not help you, if you have to die here, then you have to accept it. Your castles in the air are beaten into hazy shreds. What still appeared before you full of growth and blossom yesterday, is stone-dead now. Grim Reaper, what a rotter you are! Who will get to know you? What kind of dirty animal are you. One thing is true, Crisje's fear, that secretive feeling has now disappeared completely. That feeling, and that fear have taken off. They have changed themselves because of human suffering, they left an emptiness behind. And it is awful. Yes, now

that sick feeling has suddenly disappeared. Crisje is now experiencing the pure understanding! Is that not remarkable? You would say so...

Now that Jeus is standing in Mrs de Man's kitchen, he feels that this one-eyed soul is not so wretched after all.

'Do you want some water to drink, Jeus?'

'Yes please, Mrs de Man, I got a bit of a shock.'

Gerrit is already sleeping. He talks to Mrs de Man, and they understand each other.

'Why do they always have to drink like that here, Mrs de Man? Can you not control those men?'

'But you know what men are like, Jeus?'

'Yes, I know, Mrs de Man, from time to time you would like to smack their bare bottoms, wouldn't you, but then they would just laugh at you.'

'Of course, Jeus.'

'But, my God, Mrs de Man, how the old De Man can let rip. In our house we can hear him swearing on Saturdays. Can he not cope with drinking gin?'

'No, Jeus.'

'And still drinking, Mrs de Man.'

'Yes, is that not terrible, Jeus?'

'That is enough to drive you mad. But I am going to sleep, good night, Mrs de Man.'

'Good night, Jeus, sleep well.'

'Thank you, Mrs de Man.'

'My pleasure, Jeus.'

Father is lying on the other side of the wall, he thinks. However, here in this house they throw burning stoves and swear like troopers. What kind of people are they? Mrs de Man is a good person. Theet is his friend, but here they scream like wild pigs, and now he has to sleep here. Only this wall is between him and father. Theet still has his father. So does he, father is not dead, he will come back. What is the matter with these feet again, they are so cold. He feels himself becoming drowsy, he is taking a trip on the clouds again. Suddenly he is standing next to his body. His inner eyes look through the walls, father is lying there. He sees, Gerrit is sleeping deeply, he can now hear him snoring as well. But there is father. Walls are like clouds. There is the kitchen. He places himself behind the stove; he wants to

know what that looks like from this world, and how it feels. He sees everything, there is the table with the cups on it, the clock is hanging there, and he hears the clock ticking. Everything lives, nothing is dead, he feels the stones on which he is walking, and they feel cold, does father not know this? Mother was sitting there. This afternoon father was still sitting at the table, Teun and Miets were sitting there, and now they are lying there sleeping. They do not know that he is there. No, Teun and Miets are sleeping at aunt Trui's. Father and he are alone at home. Now he will have a look.

'Still exactly the same', that is what father is. Father has not turned over; father is resting, but is kidding everyone. However, father is horribly white around his mouth, but his beard and moustache are still there. He sits down at the end of the bed and looks at his father. Clouds float around father and he sees light coming from these clouds. That is exactly like when he was playing with the balloons, exactly the same! He has still not forgotten that. Father, I am here! He sees Tall Hendrik in the clouds.

'Father, my father.'

Tall Hendrik is holding him in his arms. But Jeus also sees his guardian angel. He now sees them both. His Tall One winks at him; he feels, everything is okay now. His father presses his child against his chest; it is a royal mercy, a gift from Our Lord for his life. What did he do to deserve this? Hendrik says to him:

'Jeus, but my Jeus. Now I know where you were looking all those years. Now I know!'

'Are you going back, father? Mother cannot do without you for too long.'

'Yes, but that will take a little while, Jeus.'

'You can enter your body just like that, father. I also left my body, father.'

'I know that, Jeus, but for me it is something completely different.'

Then his guardian angel says: 'You must listen carefully to me, Jeus, Father is now going to work for Our Lord. And that is something completely different than there, you know that. You must now take good care of mother. And you must now go to sleep, for tomorrow is another day. Father is now going to Our Lord.'

Tall Hendrik can still talk to Jeus for a moment. Jeus is now lying in the arms of his master the Tall One. Some day he will be able to

find out that this is Anthony van Dijck, he was a great master in art, who has already accomplished a mighty task for Our Lord, and has now continued his life in order to bring humanity the highest thing of all. Then Jeus is the cosmic instrument for this century and for the University of Christ! Now the first foundations are already being laid, this is all proof in order to knock the Grim Reaper's crown from his horrible head, and for which millions of people on the earth serve! Did Christ not say: after ME it will take place? Jeus is one of them! And he will become the greatest of all! There will no longer be an instrument above him, because Jeus will experience and receive the highest.

Jeus descends into his body and drifts into normal sleep.

'Come, Hendrik, now you are sitting on my bike. You can cycle. I will now show you the way, which will take us straight to one world, created from all the millions by God. Turn left, Hendrik, just for a moment, afterwards you can no longer get lost. So, we have left the built-up area, we have said goodbye to Mother Earth and all her children. Now I will tell you something beautiful, Hendrik. We are now in the Divine space. Just do not ask me any questions, because it is too much for your personality. You would only succumb, Hendrik. Before Jeus was born, Jeus and I were one in this world, and we prepared ourselves for our mighty task, on which we are already working now. I will now take you to the Parvis of Our Lord. You will have a rest there for a moment. You will experience beautiful dreams there, Hendrik, they are visions, so that you will be prepared because we must go back again. However, you must want to experience your own funeral, Hendrik? I said to Jeus that you would return. I did that to prove to this humanity that you live behind the coffin. From the highest source, Hendrik, I received my task, because now, in this century, the Grim Reaper must die, and not we as people! You will serve for the University of Christ... Hendrik. All of us will! Your task there is over! All of us will take care of your dear Crisje, and you will get to know those laws. Now you are able to play your violins differently, Hendrik. Accept it, we now live in deadly seriousness, meaningless nonsense will take you to other worlds, you will also get to know that. Do you see, Tall Hendrik, that the universe is changing?'

On the way, Hendrik falls asleep. The master of Jeus lays him down and goes back. Hendrik now receives his visions, he will experience

powerful laws during this sleep, and later, when he is completely conscious, he will experience and follow them as a spiritual personality, and only then will he be faced with his end, his Crisje, and he will know why he had to die so young on earth! Tall Hendrik has accepted his eternal evolution!

Hendrik is not dead. Crisje's Tall Hendrik is alive! Jeus will receive the laws of this. Hendrik must go back to bury himself, which is itself a great miracle for every person on earth if the personality has not obscured himself for this light. He is sleeping yonder, in a sphere precisely underneath spiritual reality. Every thought of love is now a foundation of light in order to be able to look into that space. Hendrik was a good person, he gave his personality for good and beautiful things, but he does not yet have the mighty childlike qualities of Crisje, with her universal thoughts and feelings, but he will become familiar with that sacredness. Pansies blossom around Tall Hendrik. He will not have to pick them later, because they are not his. He will now start to make a Parvis of his own life. He gets hold of that possibility. The God of all life created this independence for every person.

Hendrik lives in the silence of Our Lord. He now knows nothing of his life on earth, but still, he will follow many lives, until he will lie down next to Crisje in the kitchen and will hear the prayer:

‘Tower of David... pray for us!

Ark of the Covenant, pray for us!... and then he will take off as quickly as he can, because he will have got to know the truth. Hendrik was on Our Lord's bike. ‘Bernard, your father now knows. If Marinus Jaspese had one like that, he wouldn't have to do anything again, the whole of this humanity would come to hire that bike from him, and that thing, Bennad, cannot be destroyed by cycling. You fly through everything with it, material is now no longer significant!

Crisje dear... Hendrik is already hitting himself during his sleep. Is it clear? See you soon, Crisje!

‘Mother, father is here and is singing for you’

When the cherry tree of Our Lord suddenly drops its fruit and you are sitting right underneath the tree, you are buried under all those delicious things, and life is good once more, life smiles upon you, for you have received food and drink again, and you definitely know, this is how good Our Lord is. He never forgets anybody! And then the gates of true paradise are also open to your life. If you now have the strength within you to go on, the strength which represents human understanding, humiliation, justice and willingness, friendship also, but especially ‘love’, then you will stand looking like a small happy child, and you will know... HE was never different, but you did not know Him!

Tall Hendrik experienced that! They laid him under that tree, and when he awoke, the tree of life shook itself until it was completely bare, and he could start on his very first breakfast, but without coffee, in the Parvis of Our Lord. You will not believe it, but Hendrik heard singing and he even thought he could hear his own voice. Is that the case? He thought that he heard Peter, his own boys and the men of his quartet. Hendrik fell asleep again, because it had taken him by surprise for a moment and he didn't know anything anymore. But this first contact with reality gave him inspiring strength, because Hendrik understood that behind the coffin everything is still the same, nothing will be lost of what you did with good intentions, and all of that lives, and was now food and drink for him! Could things be more just than that? No! Because this is rightfully yours! And then you stand on your own two feet or you fall asleep. This meant sleep for Hendrik. For Jeus, when he awoke in the morning, it was a happy feeling, also the inspiration to take care of Crisje, and he was immediately out of bed. ‘Mother, I have a message for you. Father is not dead, he is alive.’

Now that Jeus sees the woman who drinks like a fish, he remembers what happened. He was sitting under a cherry tree, the same one from which Hendrik also ate. All those words, all those phenomena are cherries from the tree of life and belong to Our Lord. It is cold and wintry outside, yonder it is summer and spring, eternal spring, which never comes to an end. Then he quickly goes to Crisje.

'Now you must listen carefully to me, mother. I have something to tell you. Father is not dead. Father will come back, mother, but you must be patient for a while. Will you keep strong, mother? Father has to work for Our Lord, mother. And I am here as well. I must take care of you.'

Understood, Crisje? What a fellow! Now you can go on, can't you? Can't mother give a little smile? Great, today he does not have to go to school. He doesn't want to go either; he must stay with mother and look after her. He does not leave Crisje's side for a second. Aunt Trui, he sees, is nice to mother. What sullen faces the boys are pulling. Father is not dead. What do those children want? Must he also pull a long face? They would want that, but he will not do it. Those whip-persnappers do not understand all of that, anyway.

In the course of the afternoon people in black come to visit. What do they want? There is one who wants to talk to mother. What does that man in black want to talk to mother about? And this evening people will come to pray for father. He laughs, because he feels that father will also laugh. After all, father is kidding them. Will those people also bring a coffin? That is enough to drive you mad. Is father not going a little too far in this game? Will those men put father in the coffin? 'Father, come back, they want to put you in the coffin. Do not stay away too long.' 'But mother, father will not accept that.' Jeus does not understand that his father must be put in the ground. Father will re-enter his body, if he can do that, and he will then live here again. He cannot think. Something inside refuses, he sees only this possibility, but still? Jeus could know this, because dead is not dead. Yes, the body; the spirit as a personality goes on. However, he does not see that. He holds onto the word, that is everything for him and there is nothing else to experience.

It becomes evening, the people are already coming to pray for father. He is also kneeling in the kitchen and is following everything. He cannot understand it, he does not understand it, and you don't need to pray for a living person, do you? Just look at those faces. There are hypocrites and people who swear like troopers here. Can they pray for father? Will father accept that? Just look at that dry sexton. Just look at that brat, that one there, who is possessed by a real devil now and again. Now does that man wish to pray for father?

'Tower of David, pray for us.'

This is where father and Peter sang, and Gerrit Noesthede always made a lot of fun here. Gerrit is sitting there now; do you not have to laugh?

‘Ark of the Covenant, pray for us.’

Good gracious, how they laughed when Chang and Carlo were here. Next door they swear, next door at Mrs de Man’s house, she is not here now, he is sleeping. Can Gerrit not laugh now? Does Jan Maandag have nothing to say then? Father is kidding them all... he bursts out laughing.

‘Gilt House, pray for us.’

The laughter resounds through the kitchen, the sexton looks round wildly. They are just like Lady Bountiful, they are praying for nothing, they are only kidding themselves and do not mean it anyway. Good heavens, how they laughed here then. Bernard told him everything. Gerrit told them about Manus Runsel. Anneke had been at Manus’ house. She had a toothache and then Manus played a trick on her. Good heavens, how he has to laugh. Aunt Trui comes to him with a bottle, which he must sniff. His nerves have got him. Does that cost much, mother? Are those people expecting to be paid for these prayers? Just look at that sexton looking nasty. But listen, mother, father is singing. Father is here... Father is singing and he hears prayers. That is happening here, he is experiencing it and he sees it, he can no longer follow the prayers. Suddenly he screams at Crisje:

‘Mother, father is here and is singing for you!’

The sexton is silent, the people look, they find the boy strange; but nerves are nerves and that is understandable as well. The sexton puts an end to it, the people leave. He is sleeping at Mrs de Man’s house again. And he sleeps well, his sleep is deep. His father is not there now.

At about eleven o’clock the men in black come back to talk to mother. He has seen a coffin, does father have to go in that coffin? The doors are locked. And Aunt Trui has the key, no one is allowed in the house. Why not? Is that not strange? What do those people want to do to father? He knows very well how he can get inside. In a moment he is standing next to the pigsty and is walking through the hallway. He will first look in the room to see whether father is still there. It is quiet in the house. He is standing in the kitchen; it is completely silent. He goes step by step. What is that? Father has gone. What have they done with father? Have they taken him out the door, and he did

not see it? Back to the front room. He will also take a look there. He opens the door carefully. My God, father is standing there. They have put father in the coffin and that must not happen. He wants to run to his father, he wants to kiss father. He wants to help father, but there is something, a strong force which holds him back! He cannot move an inch. Now he has decided not to kiss father – because why could he not continue? – now he can take a step and approaches the coffin. He stands at the foot of the coffin and looks at his father's face. He thinks. It is quiet here, but that is going too far, does father mind? Good gracious father, is this really necessary?

He continues to look at his father. He already has marks on his face. His nose is rigid, and his lips are pressed together. Can father not say anything? 'Can you not talk to me, father? I am here!' Father is strange, that other one looks like him, this is nothing. 'Can't you hear me, father? I am here. You do want to come back, don't you? Do not make it too long, father. They have already put you in a coffin; that is going too far! Come back, father! Come back! Or the men will get you.'

He looks into the closed eyes of Tall Hendrik. But he sees lights in those eyes. And those lights are now everywhere. It is father. 'Father?'

'So, Jeus, you have come to pay me a little visit as well?'

'Yes, father. But why have you let yourself be put in the coffin?'

'But that is part of it, Jeus.'

'What are you saying to me, father? You can no longer come back?'

'Yes, Jeus, you will still experience that.'

'Are you kidding people then, father?'

'No, not really, Jeus, but wait, then you will understand.'

'If I were you, father, then I would not continue with it. You already have marks on your face now. And how do you want to get rid of them, father?'

'That will happen of its own accord, Jeus. We people do not need to do anything for it.'

'If people know this, father, then they do not have to be afraid to die, do they? They are alive, anyway, father.'

'They have known it for a long time, Jeus, but they do not wish to understand it yet. They are afraid of it.'

'I can understand that, father. They are scaredy cats. But how beautifully you sang, father. That was nicer than in the quartet, father.'

Mother should have heard that, shouldn't she? And those other people, then they could have believed me, father.'

'Yes, Jeus, but those people are not that far yet.'

'Does Gerrit Noesthede already know that you are kidding him, father?'

'No, Gerrit is still sleeping like all those other people, just like I myself, Jeus, when I was still there.'

'But you are still there, father, aren't you?'

'Of course, Jeus, but not for those people, they cannot believe that yet, and that is all.'

'And what about Peter, father?'

'Now you must listen carefully to me, Jeus. Peter must come quickly. Along with uncle Gradus. They must work for Our Lord just like me. Then we will all sing together again. Here, where I am now, you know that.'

'Of course, I know, father.'

'When Peter is with me, Jeus, you must just listen well, then you will be able to hear us and all the other angels; You must tell mother that. Now just say to mother, Jeus, that I have at least twenty violins, very expensive ones, and I will do my best. I will play for mother. And just tell her that I need all those violins. You won't forget, Jeus, will you?'

'No, father, of course not. You know that, father, don't you?'

'Of course, Jeus, I know. You do not forget anything. Now just listen for a moment Jeus. You must say nothing to Aunt Trui. But mother may know about uncle Gradus. And mother must know.'

'Do you mean, father, that I must tell mother that uncle Gradus and Peter will come to you?'

'Yes, that is all. As long as you remember. Because I was given this task, Jeus.'

'Did Our Lord himself say that to you, father?'

'I believe so, Jeus.'

'Do you know, father, that I have talked to Our Lord?'

'I know now, Jeus. Now I can understand everything better, can't I?'

'Of course, father, I know that. I have already known that for such a long time, father.'

'You know all about me and Our Lord, don't you?'

‘Yes, father, and I will tell mother.’

‘May I kiss you now, father?’

‘No, you may not do that, Jeus.’

‘But you will be back, won’t you, father?’

‘Yes, I will come and visit you. And now you must go, Jeus, I have to rest.’

‘Of course, father, I can understand that. Goodbye, father.’

‘Goodbye, Jeus. Take good care of mother.’

The door opens. Trui enters the room, and pulls Jeus away from Tall Hendrik. ‘Get out of here, what do you want here?’

‘I had to talk to father for a moment, aunt Trui.’

‘How did you get in?’

‘Through the pigsty, aunt Trui.’

‘Then we will just lock it, won’t we? You have no reason to be here.’

He thinks: just you wait, and soon you can have uncle Gradus put in the coffin. And then you can cry, then you will have no more talk, and you will be cut down to size; aunt Trui, I know something.

‘Mother, I talked to father. He will play his violins for you until they break. Father has been given really beautiful violins, mother. And father will do his best, mother.’

And now, so that Trui cannot hear, he whispers in her ear what his father told him.

‘Yes, mother, father said that uncle Gradus will be with him soon. But aunt Trui may not know yet. Peter as well, mother. Will you not say anything to aunt Trui, mother?’

‘Of course not, Jeus.’

Crisje presses him to her heart. If he weren’t there, she would not know what to do. He gives her the initial strength to be able to deal with all of this. And from this moment onwards his dream comes back to him. Now he can still only think of one thing: father will come back, and then father will show them that he is alive. He does not think about that corpse there, but it must not take too long. He gets to experience exactly what his Tall one wants him to experience and think. Jeus is universal, also a child, he only holds onto what is given to him, and now everything is going well, the proof of Our Lord flows to the earth and her children. It is those cherries! Crisje also gets to hear:

‘When father plays soon, mother, father will play so that you can

hear it.'

'Of course, Jeus...,' Crisje answers him, but the blow is terrible, the blow is enormous, her life is destroyed! They are lying in the kitchen again in order to pray for Hendrik. He has gone to sleep again; he will need his strength tomorrow. Tomorrow is the day for his eternal life and consciousness. Tomorrow, Tall Hendrik, you will bury yourself and you can support your pure love. That is only granted to people who really love and is, of course, a gift from Our Lord.

'Tower of David... pray for us.'

But how stupid the people are. Did they think now that they could pray for father? He is already laughing. There follows:

'But hush..., Jeus.'

'Gilt House...,' but what is that? Do you not have to laugh about that now?

'But hush!'

The bald one is sitting there as well. That man once stood at a grave and became so angry that he fell in and wanted to kick the coffin to pieces. His own nephew had cheated him in his life. And he now says: 'pray for us.' You have to laugh at that whether you like it or not.

'But hush, Jeus.'

Aunt Trui lets him sniff at her bottle again. That person who swears like a trooper is there again as well. The quartet is not singing now, the quartet is praying for father. 'Peter? Father said.....! Peter... father said...? He would so much have liked to tell Peter, but then Peter would be shocked to death. No, he may not do that, father would be angry. Peter could not bear it, of course. People cannot take it. They do not want to go in the coffin but still, father is alive. That coffin means nothing, Peter? Peter?..'

'Hush... Jeus!' However, Peter heard him saying his name; he looks at Jeus. Peter gives him a nod, that he must not interrupt the prayers. Trui stands up calmly and takes him outside. He says nothing; he would only laugh.

'Right, Jeus, that is better. Have a sniff, that is good for you.'

He sniffs at the bottle and feels ridiculous. Trui closes the door behind her and follows the prayers. Crisje asks him a while later:

'But why did you have to laugh like that, Jeus?'

'That's a good one, mother. Father has got all of them. And I had to think of the bald one and then I had to laugh, mother.'

They are ready to take Tall Hendrik away. Jeus keeps watch; father must come. If they are over there with father, father will come back. The coffin is raised onto the shoulders, his singers, friends carry him to the church. Crisje walks with Trui behind the coffin, then Johan and Bernard follow, and he along with Gerrit. Behind them are friends and acquaintances, from all around. The procession sets off; step by step they go. Now father should arrive. Suddenly he sees his father. He is walking between him and Gerrit. He wants to keep up with father and now takes large steps. Gerrit sees it and gives him a nudge. 'Father is there, Gerrit.' Gerrit thinks that he is mad.

'Are you not ashamed imitating father?'

Jeus looks him in the eye. His father says to him:

'Just leave him, Jeus, he knows nothing about this and he cannot understand you either. Now walk nicely, okay?'

'Yes, father.'

'It is good like that, Jeus, or people will speak wrongly about it.'

'Of course, father.'

Gerrit knows nothing about it; Jeus sees and feels that. No one sees father. But still, father has come back. Father is walking behind his own coffin. Mother doesn't know. Neither do aunt Trui and uncle Gradus. No one sees it, but still, father is here. Have the people gone completely mad then? But is father not going too far? Good gracious, that is going as far as the graveyard. They will put father in the ground there. Jeus looks at him, but he is actually walking with his eyes closed. He can understand that. As long as it's not too late yet. He now notices that the people neither know, nor understand anything about his things. Then they enter the church. He sees that father descends into mother and disappears before his eyes. But father is inside mother. Father is helping mother, because that's what it is. The mass is read for father, they have invited a wonderful singer to sing for father, it is beautiful what he hears, but it is not nearly as nice as the singing yonder. There are candles around father, and the priest blesses him, and he is there inside mother. It is ridiculous. Why doesn't the priest bless the real father instead of that dead one there? But of course, father still has to do with that. Father will soon crawl back in there. But this is ridiculous, isn't it? His head is spinning, he can no longer think, he could go mad. Suddenly he feels strong again and he can think again. Is that not José? Where is his Tall One now?

The church service ends;

Now to the graveyard, slowly but surely. It is heaving with people, Tall Hendrik is leaving. The great singer has gone; Crisje is left behind with seven children and not a cent in the house. However, she will work. And the boys are also already earning something.

Crisje drinks her very last drop for this scene. She does not know, but there is already another chalice standing ready, and it is full to the brim again. Another wine is standing waiting for her life. Just a moment ago that chalice was brought, but no one knows who it was. This one is completely empty! It is the one belonging to her and Hendrik. These are now the last drops for her. Father is mad, Jeus thinks, he is really letting himself be buried. He can keep upright, but his thoughts are like a snowstorm, he just doesn't know and has nothing to cling to any more. Everything is strange! Father is completely mad! He lets himself be buried, and soon sand will be thrown on the coffin! That is enough to drive you mad! Can you approve of that now, father? There is mother. He sees that father is there. No, they will not get any sand on father; they would like that. Father is with mother. Father helps mother. But why has father let it come so far? Must he make mother unhappy then? They put father in the ground anyway, and he does not understand that any longer. His head is bursting from all that thinking and from this tension. You would go mad if father were not there. Father is inside mother. Mother would collapse, but father is keeping mother strong. Yes, that's it!

Then they lower father to the ground. He is screaming inside. Are you mad, stay away from my father! Johan, kick those men away, they are burying your father! What a pity that Bernard has lost his leg, he would teach them a lesson. Dirty rotters, stay away from my father. He is standing next to Crisje. There is father as well. Now he becomes calm inside and he can breathe for a moment. It is a terrible drama. Is father not doing anything? No, he even allows the priest to talk about him. He listens, but he has to laugh. Father is here. Again, he has to sniff aunt Trui's bottle. Stronger, Jeus. It is good like that! Will you now stay calm for a while?

When the priest has finished talking, others follow. Peter, Gerrit, Jan Maandag and others have something to say about father. And father is standing there himself, listening. It is enough to die laughing. He is laughing as well, so that they can hear him on the Grintweg.

Finally it is finished. They go back and on the way home, he sees his father and hears:

‘Be quiet now, Jeus.’

‘Why did you let yourself be put in the ground, father?’

‘But that is part of it, Jeus, isn’t it?’

He wants to say something, but there is the Tall One. ‘Jeus, now listen for a moment. Father will be back, but that will take a while. You must not worry. Now listen carefully, that will take a while... and you will now take care of mother. Have you understood me, Jeus?’

‘Of course, that is a good one. I will take care of mother. Now I know.’

‘Then see you soon, Jeus.’

‘See you soon, father.’

‘Goodbye, Jeus.’

‘Goodbye, father.’

When they come home and Jeus sees that the people get food and drink, then start to talk about father, he takes off with Fanny into the woods. He goes a long way from home, near to the Hunzeleberg, where he once found the money, and he lies down there. Fanny needs to know all about it now. He holds a funeral oration for Fanny. First, he starts to bless Fanny. Fanny is lying on its back and has to close its eyes. However, that does not work, so Fanny just has to listen.

‘Oh, Fanny, what a good lad you are. How good you are for people and for your Cris.’

No, that is not working. Fanny has nothing to do with mother. Yet, it did. So he can continue. ‘What a good person you are Fanny. My God, Fanny, how well you could sing, and how many people didn’t enjoy your voice! There were thousands. My Fanny, how I will miss you in the choir. You are irreplaceable. Fanny. Crisje, Fanny... I mean... Our Lord gives you the strength to bear all of this.’

Fanny jumps up. ‘No, Fanny, I have something else to say. I am now Peter. But you won’t understand that anyway. Peter spoke Germany’s, Fanny, and not a bit of dialect. But I understood him. My God, how I will miss you, Fanny. I have nothing to say to you, Fanny. I have nothing to say to you, Fanny, and you can understand that anyway, Fanny? How bothersome that is, how annoyingly Peter talks, Fanny. Do you not want to have a little bark now?’

Fanny barks out of gratitude. Jeus wanders about the woods until

late, but he will sleep in the attic again tonight. It stinks in that house of Mrs de Man.

When he comes home, mother is sitting behind the stove alone. It is quiet! Mother is sorrowful, but father will be back. What is it, mother? Do you still have to cry? The boys go to bed; he is alone with Crisje. He talks to her and feels as though he is Tall Hendrik. Has mother gone completely mad then? Do you have to hang your head now, mother? You say that you can accept everything; but what is this? What are you doing now? You are staring into an empty space, Crisje. And that mustn't happen, you must complete your task.

'Yes...' says Crisje... 'now we have to prove what we can do, Jeus. That is true!'

Crisje, Hendrik did not leave one second too soon or too late. It was exactly his time! I wish you strength! And more so, an awful lot of strength for your task! We will talk to each other again. Crisje takes Jeus in her arms and goes to sleep! That same night they were back in the Parvis of Our Lord. They found the first living, snow-white 'orchid' from Hendrik, the father of Jeus, for Crisje! This was already a good piece of work and that just after being released from the material body. However, this really meant something. True or not, this is the work of Our Lord, Tall Hendrik! The world will still get to know you. You will live on into eternity, Tall Hendrik! Now just rest a while, soon we will fetch you for something else. Your new leader will be waiting for you then. I also wish you strength and a lot of courage. See you soon, Tall Hendrik!

‘Jose, but where is father?’

Crisje cannot get to sleep because she misses Hendrik and has many worries. Life is threatening to crush her; she wonders where this ship will strand. She has a load of worries on her shoulders. Johan is earning something, but the rest cry the whole day: ‘Mother, I am hungry.’ Jeus says: ‘I will quickly finish school, mother, and then I will go and earn money.’ But good heavens, was this now necessary? Why did father have to die so young? Deut Messing is still alive. Arsonists and crooks remain alive and have a good life, they do not pay any attention to a Lord, but a religious person, a father of seven children is suddenly torn away and no one can understand that. Idlers are lucky, but still you may not say that Our Lord does not know.

I have to work for Our Lord, but can that not be done here with my wife and children? Did Hendrik not do his best here, after all? My God, give me strength, give me the knowledge, give me the ability to be able to bear all of this. It is bad; it is terrible! This blow is horrible!

She lies awake for hours and cannot sleep. Because she has to think. There is no way out, neither left nor right, forwards or backwards any more. It is enough to drive you mad! Crisje has lost her support, seven hungry lives live next to her, and they do not understand it. Of course, she can manage for a while, but then what?

Tall Hendrik is attached to everything here. She does not dare to sit on his chair, then it is as though he is sitting there, and sometimes she hears him talking. However, are they not her own thoughts? When Jeus sees how mother struggles on, he could cry. The boys help her to bear it; but what is there to bear here? One evening Crisje got to hear from him:

‘Do you want to destroy yourself, mother? Then you must carry on thinking like that. You have no faith any more, mother. And did you think that Our Lord and father had forgotten us?’

Yes, certainly, Jeus, mother believes everything; but can you survive on that? Crisje looks him in the eye, she does not know what she should think of it, but it was just as though Hendrik was talking to her. When I leave school soon, there will be no more worries. Is that not a bit of help, Crisje? Does it not help you? Can you no longer laugh then? Can you not spare a smile? Must you mourn yourself to

death? Crisje is extremely grateful to Jeus, however, then do you not hear the crying here: 'Mother, I am hungry'?

A few months later aunt Trui is also walking around in black, she was able to bury uncle Gradus. Then Crisje told her what Jeus had predicted. Is aunt Trui not pleased with such a prediction? She thinks this is a truth which is of no help to you, And anyone who comes with that, you should kick out the door. Trui is poisonous. Crisje bows respectfully, at the end of the day everything is in the hands of Our Lord, but that is nonsense to Trui. The sisters carry their burdens in a different way. One is doubled over under her great sorrow; the other one resists and complains about everything, also about Our Lord. A person thinks; but can a person think normally and naturally? Idlers have everything, Trui says. That 'Man'... and that is Our Lord, does not know any more. That Man does stupid things. That 'Man' takes part in injustice. That 'Man' gives one person everything, another person nothing. That 'Man' supports worldly cheating and does not see the good in people, that 'Man' is blind! Does Our Lord not see that Crisje has seven children, does He not know that Hendrik cannot be missed here? That appears to be the case. You wonder whether there is a Lord.

You are suddenly beaten senseless. The Grim Reaper would skin you alive. Where does that brat live? If only you could get a hold of him. That 'Man' is getting old! That 'Man' does not know any more what justice is. Or that 'Man' would not do such contrary things, because this is enough to drive you mad. Can you disagree with Trui? Is what she says so inhuman? How is it possible that both sisters have become widows? Trui now looks differently at Crisje's boys. They are sailing one and the same sea, but Trui has a bit more steam, she has it easier. She is mad about Bernard, she puts something in the boys' hands now and again, however, yes, the wage has gone, good Gradus as well.

And when Gradus only just lay in the ground, Peter also left.

Gone, Hendrik, Gradus and Peter, the quartet must now sing for Our Lord, for the angels, for all the spaces created by God. Isn't that something, Crisje? The candles also burned for Gradus, people also came to pray for him, but Jeus saw nothing there, he also said constantly: 'pray for us, Tower of David... pray for us...' he saw nothing of uncle Gradus.

A person may build castles in the air. There is no one, who forbids that, nor does Our Lord, but suddenly they come and call you and then you have to bow your head to hundreds of thousands of matters. Although you meet all those injustices every day again, no one knows why, but still, Crisje, all those apparently hard and unjustified matters, exist for a reason. They would not have been there if mankind had not evoked them, and one day, Jeus will explain that. Only then, Crisje, will this humanity, after all, despite all this shouting, this inhuman necessity, get to know a 'Father' of love!

Crisje is sitting one evening behind the stove and she is thinking. A while later Jeus sees that mother is sitting there crying. A movement is starting in him, he does not know what will happen, but the strength, which comes to and in him, dominates his personality and now he utters:

'Cris, but I had thought that you were stronger.'

'What did you say, Jeus...', Crisje gets a fright... questioning... It is as if Hendrik is talking to her, and there already follows:

'You are just behaving, Cris, like you have no sense any more. Just like the people who have no faith, who cry about worries until their tears run dry. What have you always taught me, Cris? If I now tell you that I am here myself, that I am alive, Cris, can you not show more willingness then, Cris? But you must understand, that I am talking to you, Cris. Put your shoulders to the worries, Cris, and think about our children. After all, you have Jeus with you.'

Suddenly the talking stops. What should she make of this? Hendrik is talking to her and then she hears:

'Cris, I have to go. Now promise me that you will not continue to be so downhearted. There is no one, Cris, who can separate us. Jeus is right. People are sleeping, Cris, and Our Lord knows! Jeus is now possessed by me Cris. However, you know what Father said? I Cris, possess him. Goodbye, my Cris, I have to work.'

Jeus wakes up, he does not know what he has said. Crisje does not dare to say a word, what came out was: 'Yes, Jeus' she did not dare to say Hendrik. But, it is a miracle! Jeus has become thirsty, he is exhausted, it is a strange event, it does not get through to him, he does not know anything! However, Crisje is back, she will take her task to hand, she may not mourn; Hendrik is alive! That would be scandalous for Our Lord, she understands, she must therefore set to

work now. A while later she has the boys' things under control, but she continues to think, it was a miraculous event.

People keep an eye on her and think that she is brave. Johan does his best, but eight people cannot live on five marks. Crisje is already working for people on the land, and is bent double with work. Nevertheless, the weeks and months pass. Jeus has not yet heard anything from father. And that yearning now eats away at his heart. José does not show himself either, and he does not know where his Tall One is. He looks terrible and he can no longer eat. Crisje is now worried about Jeus. Jeus knows his father has a lot to do, of course, he can understand that, but why does it take so long? All very well, but where is father? Now he must come back! Has father forgotten him? His heart begins to bleed; does father not see that? Does father not know anything?

It reaches the point where Crisje has to call a doctor. The child can no longer stand on his own two feet. The other boys have already overcome the loss of father; Jeus has yet to start. The doctor cannot find anything, but yet, he has a fever. Jeus looks like skin and bone, good heavens, will Crisje have to lose him as well? Then life will mean nothing any more.

But where is father? Why does father not come? Jeus can no longer talk; he is waiting. Crisje does not know what to do. He beats himself up, he lashes out, soul and bliss now receive a blow. Will Jeus also die? My God, that is too much for one life.

Crisje prays and experiences one Station of the Cross after another. Father also helps her pray, this is too much for a person. Now she is faced with the Grim Reaper again and he wants to have Jeus, but that is not possible, is not it? Jeus is delirious, she hears different names, he is asking for his father in his sleep. 'Father, why have you let me wait so long now...?', she hears him cry deliriously, so that her heart breaks. She understands, he has only now lost his father. The great problems, which he underwent, removed him from material reality. She wonders what goes on in this child's mind. The doctor cannot help him, he cannot find anything, and medicinal drinks do not help in this case. He does not want to see any friends, no Anneke, no one, he is wasting away. And where is Hendrik, but where are they? However, the doctor supports Crisje and does everything he can. He honestly admits, he doesn't know, but they will be patient for a while. He talks

to other learned men about it, and he considers a consultation with a well-known colleague.

Jeus has already been in this miserable state for a fortnight, with a fever and delirium, and there is no change. Fanny cannot help him either; he does not want to see Fanny. Even if Fanny has already been lying in front of his bed day in, day out, Fanny cannot get him out of his condition now; something completely different is needed for that. On the sixteenth day in this highly tense situation, something happens. After days Crisje heard his first words. She asks him:

‘Will you have a nice sleep now, Jeus?’

‘Yes, mother, I believe that I can sleep today.’ A while later Crisje sees that he is fast asleep for the first time in weeks. Is there a change on the way? Will she be able to keep Jeus?

Jeus falls into a deep sleep, but it is the sleep to be able to play on the clouds. Less than five minutes later he is living in that other world and he looks his friend José in the eye.

‘What are you doing here, José? But where is father?’

The friends embrace each other. José says to him:

‘I will pick some flowers for you, Jeus.’

‘What did you say, José?’

‘These flowers are for you yourself.’

‘That is nice of you, isn’t it? Why did you not come before, José? Why did I have to wait so long?’

‘You had all kinds of questions, didn’t you? But it was not yet the right time, Jeus. We have to do with time, and you forgot that.’

‘I should have known that, José.’

‘You should have known that, Jeus. People always want everything in their own time. However, it is not always possible. This is the time of Our Lord, Jeus, and you should have known that.’

‘You are right, José.’

‘Of course, I am right. You cannot change anything about this. But as a result of your own worrying, you have become ill.’

‘Could you not just have come to me then?’

‘No, that wasn’t possible, I had no say in it. Moreover, it was not yet time, they left you be. You got yourself far too worked up about nothing.’

‘I could hit myself over the head, José.’

‘I can understand that, but will you be any the wiser for it?’

‘No, you are right again, aren’t you?’

‘Your mother should have done that as well. And that is bowing your head, Jeus.’

‘I know, José, and that will not happen to me again, will it?’

‘Of course not.’

He is suddenly different. He could shake himself from happiness; he has learned so much again from it. He is beginning to understand that he wanted to take the laws of Our Lord into his own hands, and that is not possible. Jeus does not know what his Tall One wanted to achieve, but he has learned from it. They must not have resistance here. His Tall One has now already crushed those feelings! His personality may not ask and may not want, he must bow to it and wait with gratitude, but he was not yet capable of that. Now this ability of bowing his head has taken possession of his soul; and that is all for later! He has given himself a terrible beating. Now he is living in beautiful surroundings. There are flowers, the birds are singing; this is paradise. José walks with him through these rich surroundings, they tell each other nice things, he has already forgotten his misery from there. Suddenly he sees his father, who is just walking towards him.

‘Jeus, but my Jeus.’

‘Father, my own father. I am so happy!’

When he has finished crying, the Tall One also comes along, and Jeus is now lying in his arms. Jeus gets to hear:

‘Now you must listen to me, Jeus. Your father is dead to the world, but he is alive here. And you know that, don’t you?’

‘Of course.’

‘That dying there is not dying, you see that now. That other person now lies in the grave, but the real one is here with Our Lord. If you had thought a bit more about it, then you would have realised that for yourself. Is that not the case?’

‘Yes, I know.’

‘But you wanted to have this father back, didn’t you? But we have to listen to Our Lord here, and you did not think about that.’

‘I could hit myself on the head.’

‘Then things would be even worse, Jeus. You have had enough misery already. However, this is everything. You wanted to have that sorted in a few days. Did father kid you then?’

‘No, of course not.’

'Now you are better in one go, Jeus. Father has to work for Our Lord. Now you must leave your father in peace, Jeus. Can you understand that?'

'Yes, of course, I can see that.'

'That is everything that I wanted to tell you. Now you can talk to your father.'

Tall Hendrik walks hand in hand with Jeus in Our Lord's paradise, one of the millions of worlds created for mankind by God from all the life, for many the Parvis.....! Tall Hendrik and José, show him the worlds, while the Tall One goes away. He sees mighty mountains, crystal-clear waters and the birds come to meet him. Life is wonderful, oh, how good life is if you know all of this and can accept it. Now it is time to go back to the earth. And the Tall One is there again. José says goodbye to his friend, but he promises him that he will come back later. However, that is in the hands of the Tall One, and Jeus can understand that. He says goodbye to father and his angel. On earth it is six o'clock. Crisje had not slept a wink last night. She heard almost every word. Hendrik talked to her for a moment through Jeus. Consequently, he does not have to tell her anything, she already knows.

'My God, mother, I was in a lot of places last night.'

'Now just have a drink, Jeus, I know already.'

'Mother, I am better.'

'I know that, Jeus.'

'Father is alive, mother.'

'Yes, Jeus, father is alive, and he must now work for Our Lord.'

'Did father say that to you, mother?'

'Yes, I know.'

When the doctor comes, he is able to determine that the child is better. Prayers help! Saying Stations of the Cross, that helps! God hears human prayers. Nevertheless, everything is different! A person receives his life and his death in his own hands; only then does he understand the Grim Reaper! This all had nothing to do with it, nothing at all! You do not have to cut his throat. Jeus has got to know him, also his father, Peter, and uncle Gradus, but they were somewhere else, they must also work for Our Lord. All those millions of children work for the awakening of this humanity!

Jeus talks to Crisje about life behind the coffin. They know! The weeks fly past, it becomes spring again, and now Jeus leaves school.

And he has made it, he can now say it is over. Mother, I am now going to work. He went to the brush factory secretly, and they have taken him on there. Jeus will start to earn money for Crisje and the boys. It is his household, he must take care of Crisje and the boys, and he will make every effort for that.

Bernard has made Jeus a long pair of trousers. Which looks good on him. When he puts on the trousers, he has stepped out of his wonderful youth with awareness and humanity, he now belongs to society. When he soon enters the gates of the brush factory, that same gate will shut him off from this paradise, but it will give him new thoughts and feelings, Jeus will learn a lot.

‘Are you pleased, mother, that I am going to work?’

‘Yes, of course, Jeus.’

‘Then our worries will also be behind us, mother.’

‘Yes, that is true, Jeus.’

Crisje gives him her most beautiful thoughts. He throws his arms around her. The children experience the after-glow of school, not him, he already has society on his mind now, and he must earn money! A heavy task rests on his shoulders! He still runs with Fanny through the woods. They do not forget a single spot where they have been all those years. He now closes off one scene after another for his life. That is over, Fanny. That will not come back, but we will build further. We have nothing to complain about, Fanny, later, when we are grown-up, we will go back to all these nice things and then we will learn all those powers and strengths. Yes, of course, Jeus, it will happen like that.

They drink their cup of coffee together this morning. He is sitting in father’s chair. They are having a lovely conversation, together they experience the awe-inspiring beauty of life. Because they know that father is still there, otherwise it would not be possible. Jeus is already playing the role of father. He wants to have the same rights; the children now have to listen to him.

Crisje helps him to put on his coat. As he is ready to leave. She kisses him, three times even. They are now standing at the door; the next step will be an end to his youth. Crisje opens the front door slowly and carefully.

‘Goodbye, my Jeus.’

‘Goodbye, mother.’

‘Will you take good care of yourself?’

'Yes, mother. See you this afternoon, mother!'

He leaves. He has a sandwich in his pocket; he is holding the coffee flask. Who is that?

'My God, father, are you coming to see me off?'

'Yes, Jeus. I just got permission from Our Lord to see you off.'

'Thank you, father.'

Hand in hand, with Fanny next to them, they walk along the Grintweg. In five minutes they are at the brush factory. Fanny first has to find out what time he must collect him. Fanny runs back to Crisje to say that.

'And now, goodbye, Jeus. Take good care of mother and the children. I will take care of the rest myself.'

'Yes, father, I will take care of them.'

They briefly look each other in the eye, but then his father dissolves before him and he is standing in front of the big gate. This event puts an unrelenting end to his youth. The gate closes behind him. A new life has begun.

Goodbye, Fanny, see you this afternoon.

The End

*The second part is entitled:
Jeus under the people*

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