

A Heart
for the Dog

Somesortofshitsomesort.

Neumann is sitting in the office armchair. The coffee is on the right, cold, on the left the telephone. In the middle the calendar for the week is lying on the desk.

Somesort. Breeding enthusiast. You know the sort. Standing outside in the anteroom talking away at Miss Kunze. And Kunze leans on the desk with the upper part of her thigh and dreamily lays one hand on the filing cabinet. A bit tall, Kunze. Now she turns her head on her thin neck and checks whether her hand up there is in the right pose. It's right, says Neumann, she certainly isn't going to forget it up there.

In the meantime this breeding enthusiast has pulled a bundle of papers out of his jacket, at long last, waves it to and fro a

couple of times before he bangs it on to the table and once again digs down into the inside pockets of the jacket, and there he's found what he was looking for; he's holding a brown envelope in his hand, and now Miss Kunze says something, and the shit, the gentleman, exposes his full set of teeth and looks around for a chair.

Neumann can see all of this through the sheet of glass near the door. From the outside the sheet of glass is a mirror, five feet tall, eighteen inches wide, but here from the inside you can look through like through real glass — there really are such things. And now Kunze comes towards the door. Neumann leans back and folds his arms across his stomach.

Miss Kunze, he puts on a friendly tone, let the gentleman enter. Actually Kunze isn't even in the room yet — has only just opened the door.

Kunze is a good observer, she would tell what the man was like by what he has on — in the mirror that's perhaps not so clear — so let's see what the man has on, presumable age and then the symptoms which indicate the animal-love of the person concerned: No hat, hairs on the trousers, nibbled-at shoes, trousers with cuffs. It'd be better to forgo the pleasure. So show the gentlemen in please. There he comes. Filbert, he says, with that

movement of the arm which can replace any kind of bow, my name is Filbert. On February 26, 1942 I lost my heart to the German boxer. Your magazine *The Dog* despite several proposals which I made —

Okay sit down first, says Neumann.

Neumann's my name.

There is the bundle of papers and Mr. Filbert lays the brown envelope on top. Here I've written down —

Yes, says Neumann, approximately hundred pages. The photos are in the envelope. Miss Kunze will write out a receipt for you.

With a rubber stamp please, says Filbert.

Without, says Neumann. Letterhead.

The animal did extraordinarily . . ., says Filbert.

Yeah sure, Neumann interrupts. But first, you said you lost your heart. How did that happen, go ahead and tell us.

I went to Meier, I had met him, like you meet someone when you haven't seen him for twenty years, on the street of course; I say Meier, you old son of a gun, and he says Filbert. We were schoolmates. And three days later was his birthday. So I went there with cognac and flowers and there stands the boxer bitch Ada von der Karolinenhöhe.

How did you know the name?

Meier'd told me of course.

Oh yeah of course, says Neumann, and how was that with your heart? Interests me.

Okay, my heart, says Filbert. Let me think. He puts his hand to his breast, shifts it around a bit, lets it lie above his stomach and makes a face as if he were strenuously communing with himself.

More towards the left, says Neumann. How was that now?

My heart, says Filbert, trembled like a flower in the wind. You know, in autumn —

Yeah I know, says Neumann. But you said February before. 'Forty-two. You were exempted, weren't you.

I had — I mean I was indispensable. In the *Warta Gau**.

Aha, says Neumann. But with dogs up until then, you hadn't —

Well not directly. A few from the ranks were specially trained with dogs. But, as you remarked, with those I had nothing —

And in Berlin, asks Neumann.

At headquarters, says Filbert and interrupts himself. But listen, I think you wanted to know —

Exactly, says Neumann, your heart. You lost it in other words.

He takes the brown envelope, opens the flap, takes out a picture. Filbert has drawn

* in occupied Poland

himself up, one hand on his breast, the other on his knee, and tries again to concentrate. And that's the way it was, he says.

And Neumann has the picture in front of him: A man in uniform with a German shepherd dog, the hair slanting across the forehead, insipid look, hands laid together on his genitals. Beautiful animal, the dog, well-known photo in those days.

You've brought the wrong envelope, says Neumann and lays the picture back on the table. You lost your heart, Mr. Filbert, that's the way it was, huh? 'Forty-two, in February, to the dog.

