David W Fletcher, October 2001

SUMMARY OF HANS FALLADA'S *LITTLE MAN, WHAT NOW?*

Hans Fallada, *Little Man, What Now?* trans. Eric Sutton (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1933; reprint, Chicago: Academy Chicago Publishers, 1983), 383 pages, no introduction, no index.

"This classic 1933 novel provides a vivid picture of life in Germany just before Hitler's takeover and focuses on the lives of a young married couple who struggle to survive in the country's nightmarish atmosphere. With a light touch, that nevertheless carries deep feeling, Hans Fallada deftly captures the turmoil that engulfs Johannes and Bunny Pinneberg as they try to satisfy even their most basic needs in a society in total chaos from incredible, deadly inflation. A fascinating picture of a painful period in history, and one that illuminates our own parlous times."

—from the book jacket

"Hans Fallada was born in Pomerania in 1893, the son of a lawyer. He confesses to having been a moral reprobate in extreme youth a very dull scholar as he grew older. At the age of twenty he found himself, obeying an instinct he had felt from childhood, an agricultural worker on a farm in Thuringia. He looks back to those hours with vegetables and cows as among the happiest of his life.

"Then followed some years during which, as he says, he was 'unfaithful to the land.' He worked at a series of petty city jobs during which, it is probable, he gathered many of the impressions which later found their way into *Little Man, What Now?*

"Between 1920 and 1922 he wrote his first two novels, one of which he admits is no longer readable; the other he still considers his most creative work.

"The years that followed were years of poverty, distress, sickness, during which all thoughts of writing were given up. Then he married and gradually began to make a small place for himself as a journalist.

"A chance meeting with the famous German publisher, Ernst Rowohlt, gave him his opportunity to come to Berlin. Here, when office work was over he worked at his first long novel (*Bauern, Bonzen and Bomben*) which met with considerable success and established him among the leading younger German writers. His next book was *Little Man, What Now*?"

—from just inside the back book cover

Contents

2. *Mother Moerschel. Herr Moerschel. Karl Moerschel. Pinneberg meets the family*. Pinneberg (P.) goes home with Bunny (Emma's nickname) to meet her family, who live in a tenement house with twenty apartments. They exhibit characteristics of a typical working class family, i.e., poor living conditions, plain food, lack of social mobility, living day to day, autocratic male-dominated household, a lower class culture. P., who is chided by Herr Moerschel as showing proletarian traits, i.e., getting his daughter pregnant before marriage, is seen to be representative of middle class values, the bourgeois. He works overtime without pay; he trusts his boss; he's a member of a "nonunion" union–the German Employees' Union. As they sit down to a meal of "half-cold oniony potato pancakes, the sour gherkins, the tepid bottled beer for the men" (19), the son Karl, who comes home late, is told that Emma is to marry P.

"So she's done it, has she?" said Karl. "A bourgeois, eh? A working man wasn't good enough for her."

"You see," said Herr Moerschel, with great satisfaction.

"What do you mean by 'you see'?" snarled Karl. "Sooner an honest bourgeois any day than you Social Fascists."

"Social Fascists," raged the old man. "Who's a fascist, you little Soviet toady!"

"Who!" says Karl. "You damned old jingo . . ."

Pinneberg listened to these words with a certain satisfaction.

But the potato pancakes tasted no better.

In general it was not a very festive engagement dinner (20).

3. *A little conversation at night about love and money*. Bunny and P. begin to plan their future. They talk about a nice home, the change that will occur in her situation once she moves out, and their budget which will be very, very tight. With romantic naivete, they try not to dwell on how difficult things will be, especially with a new baby. Late into the evening, Frau Moerschel invites P. to stay for the night.

"It's all right," said the old woman. "I'm sleeping with father tonight. Karl won't be back. Take him with you, he's your —" The door slammed before she could say what he was.

"But, please, I would rather not," said Pinneberg, a little offended. "It really is very awkward here, with your parents and all."

"My dear boy," she said laughing, "Karl was right. You are a bourgeois."

"Not a bit of it," he protested. "If it doesn't disturb your parents." He hesitated again: "And supposing Dr. Sesam was wrong, I haven't got anything with me" (28).

Part One: The Little Town

1. *Marriage begins correctly with a wedding-trip but–do we need a saucepan?* The newlyweds travel by train from Platz to Ducherow, where they plan to reside at the place where P. has been staying in the country with the widow Scharrenhofer, who does quite well except she expresses concern over escalating inflation. They discuss the apartment, the furniture and its rooms, and more importantly, the gas-cooker which has only two burners. They decide for a proper meal they will need four saucepans, and that means spending savings which exasperates P.

"Well, I didn't think it was going to be like this," he said, sadly. "I thought we'd manage on what we have and save money; and here we're starting out at once by spending it."

"But since we must . . ."

"What do we need a stewpan for?" he said irritably. "I never eat stew. Imagine buying a whole saucepan just for a little bit of stew. Never!"

"And how am I going to roast, or . . ."

"And there's no running water in the kitchen," he said in despair. "You'll always have to go into Frau Scharrenhofer's kitchen for water."

"From far away a marriage looks extraordinarily simple. Two people marry and have children. They live together, they are quite nice to each other, and try to get on in the world. Companionship, love, kindness, eating, drinking, sleeping, business, housekeeping, an excursion on Sundays, and a movie sometimes in the evening.

But from near at hand, the whole affair dissolves into a thousand individual problems. Marriage in some sense disappears into the background, it is taken for granted, it is the basis of everything: but what about this stewpan, for instance? The reality is the stewpan.

Dimly they both felt this. But these are not yet urgent problems . . ." (34-35).

2. *Pinneberg grows mysterious and Bunny has some riddles to solve*. In Ducherow, P. wants Bunny to behave as if they had just met, not like they are married. In this respect, he is very distant and reserved, as if he is hiding something from her. He hires a car to take them from the train station to his place at Green End on Feldstrasse. The pastoral setting is pleasant, but the third-floor apartment is small and very cluttered, since it is furnished. Bunny immediately takes a dislike to the place and wants help or, better yet, a place of her own. Frau Pinneberg has just moved up in the world, and young Herr Pinneberg has been initiated to one of the realities of married life–the deception of appearance.

"Who's going to keep all this clean, please? . . . You'll let me have a charwoman, won't you?" asked Bunny, now a Bunny no more.

. . . There she stood, resolute, flushed, aggressive, fury in her eyes.

Pinneberg said slowly: "Do you know, Bunny, I didn't think you were like this. I thought you were much gentler."

She laughed, flung her arms round his neck, stroked his hair. "Of course I'm quite different from what you thought, I know that too. Do you think a girl who went straight from school into business, and had to hold her own against my brother and my father and the bosses in the shop and the other girls, would be a little softie?" (42-43).

3. *The Pinnebergs pay a courtesy call*. The young couple visit their reclusive landlady, Frau Scharrenhofer. Frau Ssharrenhofer relates the loss of DM 50,000 held in savings since before the war, a loss due to recent inflation (according to P.) but, in her opinion, due to a clever, falsifying tenant who manipulated her accounting books. The sudden mysterious closure to the visit revolves around Frau Scharrenhofer's clock, a gift from her late husband on the occasion of their betrothal, the striking of the clock, and the unwillingness of the young couple to stay at Frau Scharrenhofer's apartment.

"The young people have brought my clock back," she muttered. "The clock my husband gave me. The young people don't like being here. They will not stay. No one stays."

And as she spoke, the clock began to strike again, . . . "It strikes," she whispered; "It goes on striking. And then it will not strike again. This is the last time I shall hear it. Everything goes from me. Three thousand marks for butter. When the clock struck, I always thought how my husband used to listen to it too."

The clock was silent.

The pair slipped past her, nervously, like two scared children.

Suddenly the woman called after them in a voice now clear and strong: "Don't forget to report to the police on Monday, or I'll get into trouble" (47-48).

4. *Bergmann and Kleinholz, and why Pinneberg must not be married*. Because of their promise to always be honest and open with each other, Bunny presses P. to explain why he has acted so

mysteriously about their marriage, about why it must be kept a secret. P. relates the story of his dismissal from Bergmann's Outfitters (Jewish owned) and expectations of employment with Emil Kleinholz's Corn, Fodder, and Manures (Aryan owed). Kleinholz badly wants to marry off his daughter Marie, a "beast" who has her eye on P. To be married would offend his current boss and jeopardize his job. Further, to save face, he cannot go back to Bergmann, since he left him after a nasty row with his wife. However, the chapter notes that fierce competition is a necessity for survival in the business world, just like money is a necessity for survival in the world in general.

"Yes, money," he said; "just money. It's hateful, but we can't do without it" (50).

5. *The master of the Pinneberg destiny*. In a delightful section, Fallada highlights a constant of lengthy marriage with children–apathy, boredom, and the need for excitement. On a Sunday night when brandy and beer are not enough to quell Herr Kleinholz's restlessness, Emilie Kleinholz, of poorer ancestry than Emil, zealously guards her thirty-four year old marriage by confronting and fetching her husband from the local Tivoli, where he passes the night away in dance with "a little dark-haired bitch." The next morning, Frau Kleinholz must attend to business matters, as Emil sleeps off the effects of his drunkenness. When he finally awakes and is rebuffed by both Emilie and Marie, he is incensed and determines to force the issue of his daughter's marriage on young P.

6. *Lauterbach the Nazi, the demonic Schulz, and the husband-in-secret get into difficulties*. Fallada characterizes P.'s coworkers: Ernst Lauterbach, formerly a bailiff, a proud member of the Nazi party, "wore the Nazi badge, had a repertoire of excellent jokes about Jews, and told them all about the latest Storm Detachment recruiting march to Buhrkow and Lensahn. In a word, he was a good sound German, an enemy of the Jews, the French, Reparations, Socialists and the Communist Party" (65). Schulz, "the demonic Schulz . . . [was] a slave to women, an unscrupulous libertine who couldn't keep his hands off anything in skirts, . . . the dandy of Ducherow" (66-67). On Monday morning, Schulz, who was at Tivoli's the night before, tells his coworkers what happened between their boss and Frau Kleinholz. Emil Kleinholz overhears and angrily threatens to fire one of the three employees, but in reality, he only uses this as a ploy to put pressure on P. to try to get him to marry Marie.

7. *Pea soup is prepared and a letter written; but the water is too thin*. Bunny tries to be a good housewife, but experiences difficulty when she puts too much water in the pea soup. She does manage to write a letter to P.'s mother in Berlin, from whom P. is quite distant emotionally, since he disapproves of her barmaid job and her love affairs even though she has been a widow for twenty years (see 86). Bunny reads some about motherhood, but its all too new and fascinating for her. The real issue, though, is Kleinholz's pressure on P. concerning his daughter. P. contemplates his options, while Bunny suggests that she talk to his coworkers to see if Kleinholz also threatened them. But in other ways besides the cooking of pea soup, the water was too thin.

Bunny believed in the solidarity of all workers. "They'll back you up, don't worry. No, darling, that's the best thing to do. I'm quite sure nothing will go wrong with us. Why should it? We work hard, we're careful, we aren't bad people, we want the baby–we want him very much, don't we? Why should things go wrong? It wouldn't make sense!" (78).

8. *A pact is sworn. Still no pea soup*. In fear of their jobs, Lauterbach, Schulz, and P. make a workers' agreement to all quit if Kleinholz fires one of them. P. works late and comes home to an overcooked meal–burnt pea soup! While it "all costs money," there's "'no need to cry,' he reassures Bunny. 'It's all under the head of experience. I . . .' he stiffened heroically: 'I make mistakes myself'" (82).

9. *A Pinneberg excursion arouses interest in certain quarters*. On Saturday, Bunny and Hans plan a Sunday outing to Maxfelde. Due to a conflict in schedules, P. is pressured by his boss and coworkers to work the stables that Sunday, since they assume he has nothing else to do. But P. refuses to allow work to disrupt plans to spend the day with his wife. Due to the crowds from the city, Maxfelde is disappointing, but they find a nice secluded place where they can enjoy the splendor of nature and each other in quaint conversation and talk about P.'s mother (which reveals the different perspectives of working-class Bunny and middle-class Hans). Suddenly, an auto of occupants with "astonished faces, stern and indignant faces" speeds past the two, so that P. "suddenly flung away from [Bunny] and made a deep bow towards the car" (87-88). Seemingly, the people in the car hardly notice. It was the Kleinholzes!

10. *How Pinneberg strove with the Angel and with Marie Kleinholz and how it was too late*. On the following day, the first of the month, Lauterbach comes to work terribly beaten up after a Nazi meeting ("Is this the reward of patriotism?" 90), and Schulz complains of a threat from a farm girl in Helldorf who claims he got her pregnant. Only P. seems without trauma. Herr Kleinholz threatens the first two with notice by noon and sends them off on errands, but to P. he remarks quite friendly, "Those two fellows, Herr Pinneberg, are like dung and manure, nothing to choose between them" (93). P. now feels a fool to have agreed with his coworkers to give notice himself if one of the other two are fired. Eventually, Marie Kleinholz comes in to do the ritual Monday laundry and bugs P. She scolds him about the incident on Sunday, and when they see Bunny walking by, Marie belittle her to P. P. comes to his wife's defense, tells the daughter of the boss that he is married, which upsets Marie intensely. Marie seems to reach some sort of emotional stability about the matter, and P. appears "quite pleased with himself" (98). A bit later, though, Kleinholz returns, gives notice of dismissal to P. for his unwillingness to work on Sunday in order to have the day with a girl, and Lauterbach and Schulz both fail to show solidarity with P. "The church clock, slowly and stroke by stroke, struck twelve" (99).

11. *Herr Friedrichs, the smoked salmon, and Herr Bergmann*. Three weeks later, P. registers his name with Herr Friedrichs at the local branch of the Clerks' Union. Friedrichs promises to call him if anything turns up by way of employment, but the prospects look grim. P. returns to his office at the store, since he remains employed until the end of the month, but the work becomes difficult, since he feels betrayed by his coworkers. He focuses on the pleasantries of home life to get him through, and laughs aloud when he remembers a funny incident about Bunny and a piece of smoked salmon. The story shows the tenderness of P. in spite of the economic problem he is facing. He decides to swallow his pride and go see his old boss. He begs for his old job back, but Bergmann refuses on grounds that are quite condescending to his own wife.

"It's not a simple business, marriage, and I see you're starting in early."

. . . "I'd like to take you back, but I can't, my wife won't have it. She flew up when you said you didn't take orders from her, and she won't forgive you. It's impossible for me to take you back; I am very sorry, Herr Pinneberg, but it's no use."

. . . But she wouldn't take you back, and I should have to tell you in the end it was no good. Women are like that, Herr Pinneberg. Ah well, you are young, what can you know? How long have you been married?"

"A little over four weeks."

"So you still figure by weeks. Well, you'll be a good husband, anyone can see that. You don't need to be ashamed of asking for anything, the great thing is to be always kind. Always be kind to your wife. You must always remember she's only a woman, and hasn't got very much sense. I'm sorry, Herr Pinneberg" (106-107).

12. *Bunny (in her apron) makes a call on her husband*. Bunny receives a letter from Mia Pinneberg, P.'s mother, in Berlin. Bunny intends to leave the letter for her and P. to read together later, but she cannot wait, opens it, and immediately goes to see him at Kleinholz's store. Frau Pinneberg had secured a job for P. as first salesman in Mandel's Store for DM 350 per month. The couple are elated, but P. breaks the news to his coworkers and boss stoically. Lauterbach remarks, "Mandel? Jews, of course." Kleinholz notes, "Mandel? Make sure it's a respectable firm. I should find out first if I were you." Schulz observes, "Is you wife always so hysterical, Pinneberg?" (111).

Part Two: Berlin

1. *Introducing Frau Mia Pinneberg*. P. and Bunny move to Berlin to live with P.'s mother and her lover, Herr Holger Jachmann. P. deeply resents his mother and her behavior–both past and present, but Bunny immediately takes a liking to her. So Bunny is caught in-between Frau Mia and her husband. Again, a key issue is economic power or money, which strongly influences the characters of Fallada and their interpersonal relationships (116).

2. *An imperial French bed and Herr Jachmann*. The young couple view their new quarters, meet Jachmann, and realize that they have been duped by Frau Mia to come to Berlin for a job that probably doesn't exist. Jachmann is described as a "giant" (in contrast to P., both physically and metaphorically, who is the "little man"), and he is best seen as a savvy but ruthless business dealer who describes himself as "a most scrupulous and orderly man in business matters, almost pedantic in fact" (123). He seems to have no problem with cash flow and appears to be quite generous to both Frau Pinneberg and the young couple, as if a "father" to P. and a "father-in-law" to Bunny.

3. *Simultaneous acquisition of a job and a father*. Jachmann poses as P.'s father to break the ice with Herr Lehmann, the chief of the Personnel Department at Mandel's Store. P. works his way through an onerous bit of bureaucracy to talk with Lehmann and somehow land a sales position with the company.

4. *A despondent walk through the little Tiergarten*. P. belittles his own ability, good appearance, and humility, since his employment came as a result of the intervention of Jachmann. As he goes through the Tiergarten, he compares himself to the "masses of men in gray clothes and with pallid faces [that] waited–for what they themselves did not know. No man now waits for work. Helplessly they stood about; they could not endure their homes, and what else was there to do but stand about? . . . Outwardly Pinneberg did not belong to them; his outer husk was that of a respectable man. . . . Hence outwardly Pinneberg did not belong to the unemployed" (136). But in spite of his securing a job, "he belonged much more to these who did not earn than to those who earned a great deal. He was one of them; any day he might be standing here like them, and he could not help it. Nothing could protect him. He was one of these millions. Ministers made speeches to him, admonished him to lead a life of self-denial and self-sacrifice, to be a good patriot, to put his money in the savings bank, to vote for the constitutional parties. Was he not one of these harmless, starving, and now hopeless animals huddled in the little Tiergarten? . . . Perhaps he hadn't really got used to Bunny yet, but as he stood there looking at these men he hardly gave her a thought. . . . She might seem soft but really she was tougher than he was. She wouldn't be standing here, she belonged to the Social Democratic Party–but that was only for her father's sake. Her real place was with the Communists. She had a few simple ideas, men are only bad because they are made so, no one should judge another because he doesn't know what he would do himself, the rich always think that the poor don't feel things. Not that she'd ever thought them out. But you could see her

heart was with the Communists. And that was why you couldn't really talk to her. Well, he must go home, tell her that he'd got the job, all the reason in the world to be happy, he *was* happy. But behind his happiness lay the fear: Would it last? No. Of course it wouldn't last. Then: how long would it last?" (137).

5. *A salesman (with the assistance of Herr Heilbutt) is born*. P. proves himself to be a versatile salesman in the men's ready-to-wear department, with a little help from the first salesman, Herr Joachim Heilbutt. P. invites Heilbutt over for a visit.

6. *Pinneberg gets his pay, behaves badly to a salesman and becomes the possessor of a dressing-table*. P. receives his pay for the month of DM 170 net–eighty marks less than Bunny expected, sixty less than he thought absolutely necessary. On one of their walks, P. and Bunny had seen a dressing-table at Himmlisch & Co. On his way home from work after receiving his pay, P. goes by the shop, looks at the piece, sighs gloomily, and turns away. He thinks to himself, "No: Not for you, little man. Go home, little man, waste your money as you will and can and may, but leave things like this alone" (150). He goes in the store anyway and haggles with an older salesman. He buy the furniture for DM 125, not only for Bunny, but for appearance, to impress–"Heilbutt would be coming that evening and it would be nice if his friend could see this present for his wife" (153).

7. *Bunny receives a visitor and views herself in the glass*. As Bunny and Heilbutt get acquainted, P. brings home the dressing-table. P. wishes to put his wife on display along with her new gift. "'Bunny, I dreamt of this. And now my dream's come true! Heilbutt, it may be a hard life and lousy pay and we're treated like dirt by the brutes that feed on us . . .' 'Even if we are,' said Heilbutt, 'we can, if we choose, remain untouched.' 'Of course, I always knew that. But this is the kind of thing they can't take away from us. Let them do and say what they like, they can't stop me from standing here and watching my wife in her bath wrap look at herself in the mirror'" (159). Then P.'s mother knocks and wants to speak to P. about the rent. P. circumvents a discussion about the price of the dressing-table, as well as the request of his mother for the rent money, "There shall be no more talk about money for the whole evening; let's all go in the kitchen and see what we can find. I'm starved, myself" (160).

8. *Some Pinneberg conjugal customs. Mother and son. Jachmann again to the rescue*. Bedtime customs show a certain formality between P. and Bunny but also the affection, tenderness, and idealism of young newlyweds. P. finally gets up the courage to tell Bunny that he spent a large portion of his monthly pay on the dressing-table, i.e., he only has forty-two marks left. She worries about how they will make do and take care of the baby. To add to their frustration, P.'s mother comes up from one of her drinking parties, and in self-pity she demands her rent money. Jachmann defuses the situation by sneaking DM 300 to the couple which they promptly turn over to Frau Mia for two months' rent.

9. *Why the Pinnebergs will have to move*. Through a coworker that he dislikes named Kessler, P. finds out the nature of his mother's "business"–staging parties for unhappily married men with "a charming and unprejudiced circle of ladies" (176). He decides that he and Bunny must find another place to live.

10. *Happy consequences of a fainting-fit*. Bunny is unable to locate a suitable place to live on the little income that P. earns. Many places do not welcome a young couple expecting a baby. "*She* soon lost courage. She tramped and tramped the streets, but what was the use? There was no reasonable lodging to be had for what they could afford" (181). For her part, as she takes a look at some places in the low rent district, she is not willing to go back and relive her childhood experience. After she almost faints in

a small grocer's shop, the man of the shop recommends that she go inquire about a place with Herr Karl Puttbreese who owns a furniture store. The woman of the shop schedules a time to go with Bunny to pay a visit to Puttbreese.

11. *Odd lodgings. Appearance of Master puttbreese. Reappearance of Herr Jachmann*. Bunny secures two cozy rooms overhead a storage area at Puttbreese's for only DM 40 per month, but really for nothing since the furniture store owner could not rent it out legally. The Pinnebergs transfer their meager belongings from Spenerstrasse to their new lodging in Alt-Moabit. Their departure is discovered by Jachmann who "watched them disappear down the gray and foggy street; a cart with some odds and ends on it, a rather shabbily dressed woman who was going to have a baby, an insignificant youth, dressed with sham smartness, and a fat old boozer in a blue overall" (189).

12. *The pros and cons of a normal budget*. Bunny writes out a "normal budget" for her and P. and presents it to P. when he comes home from work. They discuss the new quota system for salesmen at Mandel's. Bunny remarks, "Well, suppose [Lasch] isn't such a good salesman–is that any reason why they have to take away his living and his whole happiness? Haven't the weaker got a right to exist? Do you have to value a man by the number of pairs of trousers he can sell?" (193). The couple discuss the history of their spending and all this ends when P. signifies his agreement to the normal budget.

13. *Heilbutt thinks we have courage. But have we?* Herr Spannfuss, the "efficiency engineer" at Mandel's fixes the monthly sales quota for each salesman at twenty times the employee's monthly wage. Cynically Fallada remarks, "The arrangement was solely in the interests of the employees; every one of them now possessed the mathematical certainty that he was valued exactly in accordance with his deserts. . . . 'Give me your sales-book,' cried Herr Spannfuss, 'and I will tell you what sort of man you are'" (200-201). Obviously, some manipulation of documentation did occur, some detected and some uncovered, but production was the key. As Bunny's pregnancy progresses, she grows distant from P. as her concern for the baby increases, and P. misses the physical and emotional closeness to Bunny.

14. *Suppose I never see her again*. The time for the baby to be delivered comes and P. takes Bunny to the Hospital. She is taken to the "confinement ward" where P. cannot come due to quite different medical practices than today. P. worries whether he will see Bunny again since "Things happen. Often" (214).

15. *How babies are made*. P. recalls his first encounter with Bunny and their intimacy. "No, they knew nothing of each other, they merely felt that they were young and that it was good to love. They did not think of the baby. And now he was on his way. Around him the city roared. It had been glorious, it was still glorious–he had drawn first prize. The girl of the sand-hills had become the best wife in the world. But he could not claim to be the best husband" (218). He returns to the Hospital the next morning, but he is turned away by one of the Sisters since Bunny is still in labor.

16. *Pinneberg pays a visit and lets himself be tempted towards nudism*. Restless, P. roams the streets not knowing what to do, until he decides to visit his friend Heilbutt. He is startled at Heilbutt's collection of nude photography displayed on the walls of his place at Frau Witt's. Heilbutt defends his taste as well as the society to which he belongs: "'Natural nakedness is without shame. . . . We are free men and women, Pinneberg. . . . Do you believe . . . that I could stand it all–the eternal selling of clothes, our idiotic colleagues and those filthy shop-walkers, and'–with a wave of his hand towards the window–'all

the mess Germany is in, if I didn't have this?'" (223-224). Heilbutt invites P. to a meeting of the nudist society that night. P. debates whether or not to go since Bunny is in labor in the Hospital.

17. *What Pinneberg thought about nudism and what Frau Nothnagel thought about it*. A little nervous, P. accompanies Heilbutt to the *Schwimmbad* where he meets Fraulein Emma Coutureau, in the buff, and Frau Nothnagle, an older lady who is also a visitor and fully clothed. P. listens patiently as Nothnagle talks about her friend, her business, and her problems. "'People haven't got much money. But if only they weren't so beastly to me. Do you know,' she said cautiously, 'I'm Jewish–perhaps you noticed it?' 'No . . . not particularly,' said Pinneberg awkwardly. 'You see, people do notice it. I always say to Max that people notice it. I think people who are anti-Jew should put up a placard on their doors, and then they wouldn't be bothered. As it is, I never know what to expect. "Take your stuff away, you old Jewish sow," someone said to me, yesterday.' 'Brute!' said Pinneberg savagely. . . . But Pinneberg had a sudden fear that he might have to listen to this chapter of her life as well. . . . He really could not conceive of any future for Frau Nothnagle. But he was already depressed enough that night, and he suddenly cut short what she was saying: 'I must go and telephone. Excuse me.' And Pinneberg fled" (234-235).

18. *Pinneberg's first deception of Bunny*. At midnight, P. learns that both mother and baby are well, but he cannot visit until the next morning. He sets forth on a "long nocturnal peregrination" of Berlin to find some flowers from one of its gardens. "It was already the middle of March and there was hardly a flower to be seen: shameful. . . . Pinneberg was disgusted with the city of Berlin" (238). But eventually, he spots a few yellow blossoms on a bush which he does not hesitate to pick. He visits both Bunny and baby on the next morning and is startled by the sight in the bundle the Sister held–"an ancient, ugly, wrinkled face, varnished red, with a pointed pear-shaped head that squealed and wailed and yelled. Pinneberg became suddenly wide awake, and all his sins, from his earliest youth, came into his mind: his youthful abuses, the little girls in the sand-bins, and the four or five times that he had been very drunk. And while the Sisters smiled at the little ancient wrinkled dwarf, the fear within him grew and grew. Bunny could certainly not have seen this baby. At last he could not contain himself, and he said with terror at his heart: 'Sister, does he look all right? Do all newborn babies look like that?'" (240-241). They name the boy Horst.

19. *Children are born to the Lords of Creation, and Bunny embraces Puttbreese*. While Bunny prepares to leave the Hospital, P. reflects on their lowly situation. "His joy had gone. He stood there staring darkly into vacancy. Thus it began and thus it would go on; it was foolish to suppose that a new and brighter and more sunny life was now to start; it would go on exactly as hitherto. He and Bunny were used to it all; but he wished the child might be spared their troubles" (244). They take little Horst home and with an air of uncertainty and a recognition of their need of help from others, they discover their inexperience as new parents. But they have each other, their new baby, and with this they are happy.

20. *The baby-carriage, the two hostile brethren and the Confinement Grant*. A discussion about items for the baby prods P. to write his Insurance Society for an allotment of money out of the "sick-fund." Purchase of a second-hand baby carriage, plus delay in receipt of the allotment, sends P. to the Insurance Society offices to hasten the process, "but he realized that he who has to pay out the money is not usually in such a hurry as he who has to receive it" (258). Fallada comments, "Here comes the little man Pinneberg; he wants a hundred marks–or perhaps it will be a hundred and twenty, he has no idea what will remain after the hospital charges are deducted. He walks into a vast, resplendent edifice. He looks small and shabby in the mammoth hall. Pinneberg, my poor fellow, a hundred marks–? Here we deal in

millions. The hundred marks are important to you? To us they are quite unimportant, well, no, that is not wholly true, as you will see later on. This building was in fact constructed out of your contributions, and those of people as small as you, but you are not to think of that now. We use your contributions exactly as we are permitted to do so by law" (258-259). P. meets resistance from a young man. "The young man looked at Pinneberg, Pinneberg looked at the young man. They were both very neatly dressed . . . they were both well washed and shaved, both had clean nails, both were employees. But they were deadly enemies, deadly enemies, for one of them sat behind the railing and the other stood in front of it" (260). Nothing is accomplished, but P. receives a letter in a few days with "two sheets of enquiries to be answered: no, no money, no hurry about that" (262). This letter also includes a request for P. to "get certificates showing what Societies you and your wife have belonged to during the last two years. We are well aware that doctors incline to the view that, in general, women carry children for nine months only, but it's just as well to make quite sure; so, for the last two years, please. Perhaps another office can be made responsible. And we trust, Herr Pinneberg, that you will not be inconvenienced by waiting for a settlement of your claim until the necessary information has been forwarded. 'The bastards,' groaned Pinneberg" (262). In response, P. writes a letter of complaint or inquiry to the Control Office for private Benefit Societies: "Could the Sick-benefit office make the payment of money due in respect of a confinement dependent on the provision of such information? And must it go back over the last two years? Lastly a question: Can't you see that I get the money soon? I'm badly in need of it" (263). After P. sent in all the extra documentation, the money did come quickly. But there is no answer to his questions. P. responds to Bunny predictably, "Next time I'll vote Communist" (266).

21. *Disappearance of a tower of strength*. Over time, pressure mounts at Mandel's as the "damnable quotas" begin to sour the art of salesmanship. Further, it is discovered that Heilbutt is involved in a "nasty business," i.e., the sale of nude photographs of himself, and he is dismissed from employment. But Heilbutt is not worried, since the picture on the front of a local tabloid was published without his consent, and he has recourse against Mandel's in the Labor Court. After a while, P. hears that Heilbutt won his case, "but when Pinneberg got to Heilbutt's lodging [for a visit], Heilbutt had vanished" (275).

22. *Jachmann sees ghosts. Rum without tea*. Curiously, Jachmann greets P. at Mandel's after work one day, accompanies P. home but by a circuitous route and in strict secrecy to avoid detection by an old man (apparently following Jackmann). Along the way, Jachmann stops at several shops to buy gifts for Bunny and the baby.

23. *Jachmann discovers the wholesome things of life*. Jachmann somewhat imposes himself on the young parents for a couple of days, as he seems to be hiding from the police. He censures himself as a fool in that he has missed "the wholesome things" (288).

24. *Jachmann as discoverer and the little man as king*. Jachmann takes P. and Bunny out on the town, and they go to a cinema which shows a movie that remarkably resembles the situation of P., Bunny, and Jachmann. One major theme of the movie is money, and the picture has its own "little man, [who] has only [a] two-and-a-half room flat with a wife and child . . . nothing else" (295). The little man becomes a king through the benefactor of a friend who gives the couple a lot of money, but the intent of the friend is to win the love of the poor, but beautiful wife. The wife enjoys the freedom produced by the money, but the situation is different for the husband. "What ecstasy for the wife to be able to buy anything she pleases–anything! And what terror for the husband, who knows whence the money comes" (296).

25. *The movies and life. Uncle Knilli abducts Jachmann*. The next day, after a discussion of the movie, Jachmann wants to take P. and Bunny out on the town again and reluctantly they go. On the streets, Jachmann is spotted, leaves with a certain "Uncle Knilli," but promises to return to the Pinnebergs' place by noon on the morrow. Mysteriously, a long time passes before they ever see Herr Holger Jachmann again.

26. *The baby is ill. What can be the trouble?* The crying of little Horst keeps the young family on edge through the night. P. ponders whether or not to fetch a doctor, but he fears that the doctor would report them for living "in such a place." "Pinneberg sat on the edge of the bed and looked gloomily at Bunny. 'You're right there,' He nodded. 'We've got ourselves into a pretty mess, Frau Pinneberg. We never thought of that.' 'You mustn't talk like that, dear. Things look bad now, but they'll get better.' 'It's because,' said Pinneberg, 'we're people who don't count. We're quite alone. And the others are just exactly like us, they're alone too. We think ourselves a cut above the workers: I only wish we were working people. They call each other *comrade*, and they really are comrades.' 'I'm not so sure about that,' said Bunny. 'When I think of what father often told us and what he had to go through.' 'Yes, of course,' said Pinneberg. 'I know they aren't very nice people. But at any rate they can say what they think'" (309). P. does fetch one of the Sisters from the Municipal Infants' Clinic, and when she comes she diagnoses the problem–Horst is cutting his first tooth!

27. *The inquisitors and Fraulein Fischer. Another reprieve, Pinneberg!* After a very long night, P. is reprimanded for being late to work. Prior to his "inquisition" with Herr Spannfuss, he overhears the dismissal of Fraulein Fischer who is having an affair with Herr Matzdorf, another employee. When P. talks with Spannfuss, he is drilled about the importance of the House of Mandel and why The Firm should be first, second, and third in his life. He is warned that another tardy arrival to work will warrant dismissal without notice.

28. *Frau Mia again*. P.'s mother comes to Alt-Moabit to pay a visit. She makes a nuisance of herself, but her real reason in coming is to find Herr Jachmann. Bunny has trouble dealing with her forceful mother-in-law, but leaves the situation to P. on his arrival home, who promptly puts his mother out. They do learn from Frau Mia, though, that a warrant had been issued for Herr Jachmann for "fraud and cheating at cards" (322).

29. *The jig is up*. At the end of September, P. is well below his quota of sales for the month: five hundred and twenty-three and a half marks' worth. In desperation, he is reminded of a prayer he uttered as a schoolboy, so he prays, "Oh God, please send me a customer who wants a dress suit. And an evening coat. And a . . . and . . ." (327). Kessler, whom P. despises, offers P. some of his total receipts for the month, but P. refuses. In an unusual gesture, Herr Jaenecke encourages P. and tells him not to worry. Shortly, P. gets a promising customer who turns out to be the chief actor in the movie he, Bunny, and Jachmann saw–Herr Schlueter. They talk about the movie, how it reflected "the voice of the people" (332). After P. shows Schlueter several pieces of clothing and discovers that the actor is only looking not buying, he pressures the actor out of concern for his own personal situation and lack of the monthly quota. Schlueter complains to Jaenecke, the department head, about P.'s "blackmailing methods." Jaenecke apologizes to the actor and tells P. to "go at once to the Personnel Department and ask for your papers" (334).

Epilogue: Continuation

1. *Should you steal wood? Bunny earns a great deal and gives her husband something to do*. P. and Bunny move out of Berlin to a hut in the countryside left to Heilbutt by his aunt. Their income is considerably less, as they have dropped into dire poverty and now receive welfare or "the dole." Bunny is able to make a little by doing darning and mending for more well-to-do families. P. busies himself with chores around the hut and some gardening. Tempted to join with other poor who illegally pillage the forests for firewood (which Bunny frowns on), P. reflects on the futility of it all: "And so it went, for weeks and weeks, months and months. That was what was so ghastly–it just went on and on. Had he ever thought that it would end? The appalling things was that it always went on, on and on, just the same . . . future there was none" (340). It's hard for the two to be optimistic, but they do find joy in the simple pleasures and in little Horst.

2. *Man as woman. A matter of six marks*. Basically, the roles of P. and Bunny are now reversed. She goes out during the day to earn a few marks by sewing, and he stays home to care for the baby and take care of the hut. Indeed, the situation for many in the rural area had altered significantly. "One these three thousand little plots of land hardly fifty persons were left this winter; anyone who could raise the money for a room, or get himself taken in by relatives, had fled to the city to escape the cold and dirt and solitude. Those that stayed, the poorest, the most enduring and courageous, felt somehow that they ought to hang together, but unluckily they did not hang together at all. They were either Communists or Nazis, and thus involved in constant quarrels and conflicts" (346-347). P. also gets a bit of abuse from Frau Rusch, wife of a manufacturer, who owes Bunny six marks for mending. He is persistent and despite the woman's resistance, she gives him the money. "'Thank you very much,' he said, taking off his hat. The baby gurgled something. 'Yes, money,' cried Pinneberg. 'Money, little one. And now it's home for us!'" (351).

3. *Why the Pinnebergs do not live at home. Joachim Heilbutt's Photograph Agency. Surprising news about Lehmann*. For the purpose of the Labor Exchange, P. and Bunny still lived in Puttbreese's place, so it was necessary for P. to go into Berlin twice a week, i.e., to have his card stamped, to collect his DM 18 unemployment benefit. He could not use the Labor Exchange nearby, so this travel cost him fifty pfennigs per trip. He could have worked for Heilbutt's Photograph Agency, but this did not seem right, since it was a business in nude photographs. But the demand for Heilbutt's product continued to grow, so P. decides to stop by and see Heilbutt, but only after an angry exchange with his old landlord Puttbreese, a stop P. made every two weeks to pay off his arrears of rent. On this occasion, P. notices that Heilbutt a new girl, new furniture, with books, Persian rugs, and a gigantic writing table in a real gentleman's room, "such as Pinneberg had always longed for and would never possess in this world" (362). Even though Heilbutt helps P. with a return of the DM 10 "rent" (for taxes) on the hut to keep it heated and the walls dry, P. still feels dejected. "Pinneberg stopped in front of a dress-shop window in which there was a large mirror. He looked himself up and down: no, not a pleasant sight. His light gray trousers were tar-stained from his labors on the hut roof, his overcoat was worn and faded, his shoes were in their last stages. . . . He was just a broken-down creature without a job . . ." (361). But P. does find some satisfaction in the fact that old Herr Lehmann had been fired by Spannfuss just like P. and Heilbutt.

4. *How Pinneberg started it all. The forgotten butter and the policeman*. P. learns that he had been the pretense for the firing of Lehmann. By hiring favorites, such as P., Lehmann had been falsifying papers, i.e., he recorded that P. came from the Breslau Branch when in reality he came from the firm Kleinholz at Ducherow. Spannfuss threatened criminal prosecution against Lehmann, so Lehmann had to accept the

dismissal. But all was a consciously planned ruse, just like the pretext for dismissal of P. on the basis of failure to meet his sales quota. "They had pushed him on the pavement all right–the stupid little fool. Because he hadn't sold his quota? Nonsense–after Heilbutt had gone, he was the only one who had more or less kept up with it. That was why he had aroused rather particular interest among the other assistants; that was why a letter had appeared among his personal papers, an anonymous letter, of course, to the effect that this Pinneberg belonged to a Nazi Storm Detachment. Lehmann had always thought it was rubbish, since, if it had been true, how could Pinneberg have been friendly with Heilbutt? But it was quite useless to protest, Spannfuss would believe only Jaenecke and Kessler; and besides it was almost notorious that Pinneberg was the man who had persistently drawn swastikas on the walls of the lavatories, scrawled 'Down with the Jews,' and depicted a fat Jew hanging on a gallows with the inscription: 'Death of Herr Mandel.' These drawings had ceased with Pinneberg's departure, and the lavatory walls were now immaculate–and a man like that had been engaged by Herr Lehmann as coming from Breslau" (366-367). P. reflects on this as he makes his way through the city to the train station. He notices more girls on the streets, i.e., "even eighteen months ago he had heard in the shop that many wives of men out of work had gone on the streets to earn a few marks" (367). But it is late, and he has forgotten to pick up some butter and bananas to take home. He looks through the window of a large grocery but is harassed by a policeman to move on. Stunned, P. hesitates while the policeman intends to make an example out of P. "A little group was standing round the window, well-dressed people, respectable people, people who earned money. But in the morrow of the window still stood a lone figure, a pale phantom, collarless, clad in a shabby ulster and tar-smeared trousers. Suddenly Pinneberg understood everything: in the presence of this policeman, these respectable persons, this gleaming window, he understood that he was outside it all, that he no longer belonged here and that he was rightly chased away; he had slipped into the abyss, and was engulfed. Order and cleanliness; they were of the past. So too were work and safe subsistence. And past too were progress and hope. Poverty was not merely misery, poverty was an offence, poverty was evil, poverty meant that a man was suspect" (369-370). After receiving a blow to his shoulder, P. is chased out of this section of the city.

5. *A visitor in a taxi. Two sit waiting in the night. No chance with Bunny*. Jachmann visits the hut, as he has been recently released from jail. He wants to help the young family, to do things the same again, but Bunny is resistant. "'Tell me, Jachmann, is this to go on forever, women going out to work? It's impossible!' 'Come,' said Jachmann. 'How do you make that out? In the war the women did the work, and the men killed each other, and everyone thought it was all right. This arrangement is even better.' 'Everyone didn't think it was all right.' 'Well, nearly everyone, young woman. Man is like that, he learns nothing, he always does the same foolish things over again. I know I do too.' Jachmann paused a moment. 'I'm going back to your mother-in-law'"(373). Bunny worries about P., since it's past time for the arrival of the last train from the city. Jachmann consoles but then leaves with the mahogany trunks that he had come to get.

"Good-night, Bunny, I'm off."

"Good-night, Jachmann, and I wish you the very, very best of luck."

Jachmann shrugged his shoulders: "The cream's all gone, Bunny, when a man's in the fifties; it's all skim milk after that." He paused, and then said softly: "There's no chance for me, Bunny, is there?"

Bunny smiled at him, out of the very depths of her heart: "No, Jachmann, no good at all. The boy and I . . ."

"Don't you be afraid about the lad. He'll be here very soon. Bye-bye, Bunny, perhaps we'll meet again."

"Good-bye, Jachmann, I'm sure we will. When things are better. Now don't forget your trunks. They were the main point."

"Why so there were, my dear. Right as always; dead right" (378-379).

6. *A mysterious bush*. Outside, after the car drives away, Bunny notices something between two bushes. It was P. who asks, "Has he gone?" Bunny explains why he came, talks about her day, asks P. several questions, but he gives no response. Finally, she give up and starts to go inside. "'Oh my darling!' she cried. 'What is it? Do say just one word to your Bunny. Am I nothing to you any more? Are we–just alone?' It was no good. He came no nearer, he said nothing; he seemed farther and farther away. The cold had risen to Bunny's heart; it gripped her until she was chilled through and through. Behind her shone the warm red light of the hut window, where the baby was asleep. Alas, children depart also, they are ours only for a while–six years? Ten years? We are all of us alone. She turned towards the red glow, she must go in–what else could she do?" (382-383). P. calls to his wife. She does not stop. He catches her at the door and holds her and tells her, with tears, what had happened: "'Oh Bunny, do you know what they did to me? The police . . . they shoved me off the pavement . . . they chased me away. How can I ever look anybody in the face again!' Suddenly the cold had gone, an infinite soft green wave raised her up, and him with her. They slid onwards, and the twinkling stars came very near. She whispered: 'You can always look at me. Always and always. You're here with me and we're together.' The wave rose and rose. They lay on the sea-shore by night between Lensahn and Wiek, once more the stars were close about their heads. The wave rose higher and higher, from the polluted earth towards the stars. Then they both went into the hut where the baby lay asleep" (383).