

Chapter 35_Forty Rubles Extra ...

In this chapter of "Mother Night," the protagonist, identified as Campbell, learns from Wirtanen about the intricate deception surrounding his relationship with Helga. Wirtanen reveals that Helga's mission was to make Campbell love her, which he acknowledges with a bittersweet tone, realizing the manipulation behind their connection. This interaction opens up questions about Helga's suitcase, which contained his collected works, intentionally used as props for her mission.

Wirtanen informs Campbell that these manuscripts weren't in Berlin but were stored in Moscow, having been discovered by Stepan Bodovskov. Bodovskov, a corporal fluent in German, uncovered Campbell's writings by chance as he scavenged after the fall of Berlin. Recognizing the potential in Campbell's works, he began publishing translations of Campbell's poems, which gained immediate acclaim.

Wirtanen elaborates about Bodovskov's success, particularly regarding his adaptation of Campbell's play "The Goblet," which became a phenomenon in Russian theater, likening it to the classic "Charley's Aunt." Campbell is astonished to hear praise for his work, prompting a recollection of the play's narrative, which touches on themes of purity, love, and the quest for an unattainable ideal, encapsulated in the figurative Holy Grail.

As Wirtanen narrates the plot, Campbell realizes that he wrote it, experiencing a sense of disbelief at its success, especially among prominent figures like Stalin. The chapter reveals that not only did Bodovskov produce plays based on Campbell's works, but the writings culminated in a book titled "Memoirs of a Monogamous Casanova," which was published in Budapest and enjoyed significant popularity, despite its controversial nature.

Wirtanen explains that while it couldn't be published directly in Russia, it cleverly skirted censorship, becoming a smuggled item for young couples attracting intrigue and curiosity. The chapter closes with Campbell grappling with the unintended consequences of his artistic legacy, which has flourished under an identity he no longer owns. The material ends with a touch of dark humor regarding the book's illustrations, serving as an added layer to Campbell's complex feelings towards fame and anonymity.