

# Low Konrad

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“Dad, hey, the window is weeping”, little Jesse said to his father, looking at him with his bright children’s eyes. It had been snowing thick flakes since the early morning hours. Every once in a while a few of these rather soft, icy rain drops were blown towards the living room window by strong gusts of wind. Yet the snow flakes melted almost instantly due to the badly isolated pane, and lastly they were streaming slowly down the glassy surface. Perhaps they froze again on the outer wall of the house, before they could reach the ground. Jesse seemed to be fascinated watching this metamorphosis of water. He was standing in front of the sill, leaning against the radiator. With his four years of age, he was just tall enough to look out of the window. Jesses father didn’t answer, but he nodded understandingly. Then he also began to stare through the pane into the yard, which he had already cleared from the snow.

During the last night a cold front had approached Germany, coming from Scandinavia. It had covered the surrounding land with the purest white. That is, winter had come with all its might. In the villages nearby a lot of power failures were reported. Maybe a few trees had cracked under the heavy weight of the fresh snow and damaged some of the power lines. Low Konrad – it was announced in the weather forecast of the local radio station – will most likely remain lingering over Germany for the next days. What a remarkable coincidence – Konrad – that was also his own name, Jesses father eventually realised. But, thanks to God, they still had electricity in their home. Without any power supply everything would certainly have been more difficult to handle.

Konrad shifted restlessly from one foot to the other. The waiting wasn’t easy for him. He thought that they must arrive every moment now, if they aren’t held up by an accident or traffic jam on the slippery roads, of course. What a strange year it had been thus far – destructive storms, landslides, floods and other natural disasters in so many countries – perhaps all this had to do with the global climate warming. Or maybe not. Anyhow, the roses in the garden had been in bloom three times this past summer. Even in autumn one had had the chance to admire these beautiful flowers. Konrad hadn’t experienced this in his entire lifetime. His wife, Alexandra, had rejoiced like a small kid at Christmas.

Konrad was about to turn around to go into the kitchen, when Jesse suddenly spotted a car driving up to the house. A moment later the door bell rang. Konrad let them enter the flat, after he had given them a flabby handshake. “On the second floor, to the left after the stairway”, he advised them. They went upstairs without saying a word. When they came down again, Konrad accompanied them to the car. Jesse remained standing at the door’s threshold. The windows of the black Mercedes were decorated with frost patterns resembling flowers, and – despite everything – Konrad noticed a springlike feeling in the pit of his stomach. He helped them until the sledge clicked into place, creating a metallic sound. The coffin with Alexandra was rather light – she didn’t weigh much in her last days. A single tear was rolling down Konrad’s cheeks, but he wiped it away. Enough water had been flowing for today, he figured, stepped towards his son, and embraced him fondly.