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From Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*

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JULY 13

No, I am not deceived. In her dark eyes I read a genuine interest in me and in my fortunes. Yes, I feel it; and I may believe my own heart which tells me—dare I say it?—dare I pronounce the divine words?—that she loves me!

That she loves me! How the idea exalts me in my own eyes! And, as you can understand my feelings, I may say to you, how I honour myself since she loves me!

Is this presumption, or is it a consciousness of the truth? I do not know a man able to supplant me in the heart of Charlotte; and yet when she speaks of her betrothed with so much warmth and affection, I feel like the soldier who has been stripped of his honours and titles, and deprived of his sword.

JULY 16

How my heart beats when by accident I touch her finger, or my feet meet hers under the table! I draw back as if from a furnace; but a secret force impels me forward again, and my senses become disordered. Her innocent, unconscious heart never knows what agony these little familiarities inflict upon me. Sometimes when we are talking she lays her hand upon mine, and in the eagerness of conversation comes closer to me, and her balmy breath reaches my lips,—when I feel as if lightning had struck me, and that I could sink into the earth. And yet... with all this heavenly confidence,—if I know myself, and should ever dare—you understand me. No, no! My heart is not so corrupt, it is weak, weak enough but is not that a degree of corruption?

She is to me a sacred being. All passion is still in her presence: I cannot express my sensations when I am near her. I feel as if my soul beat in every nerve of my body...

JULY 18

Wilhelm, what is the world to our hearts without love? What is a magic-lantern without light? You have but to kindle the flame within, and the brightest figures shine on the white wall; and, if love only show us fleeting shadows, we are yet happy, when, like mere children, we behold them, and are transported with the splendid phantoms. I have not been able to see Charlotte to-day. I was prevented by company from which I could not disengage myself. What was to be done? I sent my servant to her house, that I might at least see somebody to-day who had been near her. Oh, the impatience with which I waited for his return! The joy with which I welcomed him! I should certainly have caught him in my arms, and kissed him, if I had not been ashamed....

JULY 19

"I shall see her today!" I exclaim with delight, when I rise in the morning, and look out with gladness of heart at the bright, beautiful sun. "I shall see her today!" And then I have no further wish to form: all, all is included in that one thought.

July 20

...You say my mother wishes me to be employed. I could not help laughing at that. Am I not sufficiently employed? And is it not in reality the same, whether I shell peas or count lentils? The world runs on from one folly to another; and the man who, solely from regard to the opinion of others, and without any wish or necessity of his own, toils after gold, honour, or any other phantom, is no better than a fool.