



NORAH VII

THE  
RUINER

## SYNOPSIS

In Norah Vii's *The Ruiner*, we encounter a nameless narrator plagued by an inability to dream in a world where dreams are not only valued, but the center for an alien culture. Haunted by the execution of a fellow “dreamless” boy, the narrator grapples with existential dread and a growing sense of alienation from their tribe. Their journey of self-discovery takes a dark turn, leading to violence and a desperate quest for meaning beyond the confines of their tribe's beliefs.

The narrator's ambition leads them to envision the “sky mound,” a monumental structure intended to bridge the gap between their world and the stars, promising salvation from death and ultimate knowledge. As the self-proclaimed “executor” of this grand project, they manipulate their tribe, using language as a weapon to control and exploit their labor.

Framed as a letter of *apology* to their son, the narrative unfolds through a crude and imperfect writing style that mirrors the narrator's increasingly chaotic mental state. Their confession becomes an unsettling exploration of the corrupting nature of power, the perversion of language, and the cyclical nature of violence and trauma. The reader is left to confront the unsettling possibility that beneath the veneer of civilization lies a rotten core of delusion and madness.

I did not sleep like the others, and I did not know why. Sleep and dream never came to me like it did, for the rest of them. Instead, I was continually tormented, by my inability to sleep, and, likewise, by my curiosity, for the outside world. I was certain that I had dreamt, sometimes, but I wasn't able to remember what dreams were had, so I could not understand why everyone, was so amused, by the dreaming experience; why everything; everything in our lives, revolved around feeding a dreaming experience. We wake, and feed, only to fuel the dream, they would say. But I didn't know this dream! I was, sadly, a poor dreamer. Whenever I talked about my dreams, I lied, so I developed a talent for lying; a talent, for invention, since they killed those who couldn't dream, to help them dream. I hid, among them, as if a prisoner, within a state of agitation; for, if I moved, at night, they might discover who I am, and they might kill me, as I had witnessed before. They even called him, a pest. Instead of sleeping, he, the pest, would ask questions. This was one of the signs of a demon. I was told the demons questions are insatiable. There are no answers; there is only question, they said. They tried instructing him to dream, but he couldn't dream. All he did, was confess; to feeling tormented, by a gnawing desire to dream, but that, as hard as he tried to dream, he couldn't, so he wished to know the world, even though, they had said: this world existed, only, to fuel the dream. Our dream, they had called it. He said that he wanted to die. You are able to dream, but I am not such a person, he said. I want so much to dream alongside you all, and to share my dreams, with you, but I have nothing but pain; endless pain. Instead, I do things; things that do not make sense; things that don't fuel the dream at all, but lessen this pain; my pain; but, it's all in vain, since I'm still hurting, he said. It never stops, he said. I want to be giant, he said. And, I want to be wild; and to run across the stars, but I am not able to dream of these things, he said. Not in the ways that you can, he said, and he cried. I felt glad, that he had revealed himself, in this way. I looked into his eyes. I could look back and back into them, like there was not a back to them at all, and it felt like I was looking at something inside me. It was not like looking at the eyes of the others, in which I was only able to see eyes, and nothing more. It was different. Familiar. But then he cried, and again, he asked the others, to kill him. His mother cried: He has a terrible dreamlessness! And then his father held her in horror, that he had fathered a demon. Then, our chief led him, outside, to put him down. This boy, cannot dream, he said. And, as a dreamless one, he therefore thinks, not of fueling his dream but of using us; of misusing us to complete him! But you cannot be complete, can you? he asked the boy. No, I cannot, he said. What will complete you? he asked the boy. Only death, he said, and nothing more. And so shall it be, he bellowed out with much feeling: we will complete you and kill you; for you are an insatiable one; limitless, creative, destructive, magnificent, and terrible; your wild soul longs for death! It does, truly, the boy said. Whenever I dream I dream of death. (I, too, dreamed of death.) Then we must fulfill your dream! the chief exclaimed. And the chief then said, as if consolingly, that this, should be a happy moment, for him. It is, he said. People like me do not get better, he said, we only hurt. The chief yawned. We yawned. And he said, to the boy, that his pain would soon end. He ordered him, to breathe, in and out, deeply and quickly, so he did. Again and again, he breathed; the deepest breaths, and it seemed, as if he had seen this happen before; that no amount, of breathing, could sate him. The chief instructed him to stop, placed his hands around his neck, while pushing his palms, against his veins, and held him down. At first he seemed to go to sleep, then, his face became blue, and, finally, it was no longer blue, and he showed no signs of life. At last, he sleeps, the chief said. I felt something terrible at that moment: a great sense of relief and envy. He seemed peaceful like that; peaceful and young and beautiful—and dead. I didn't weep, like the others, although, I did

pretend to, nor did I confess my likeness to him. Instead, I lived, and envied his state: to cherish his existence, in this world of dreamers. For a time my appreciation, for his life and death, gave me a reason to savor my inability to recall my dreams, and so I concealed myself. I observed as everyone carried on. If they woke, it was usually only in order to tranquilize a hunger, which could be easily put to rest, using one of the foods that were readily available to them, from the many trees that enveloped us. As they dreamed I stared at the sky and dreamed, of their dreams, though I couldn't enter my dreams, nor remember them. Something blocked my path, into these dreams: a great nothing. Of course I desperately wanted this nothing, and of course I lacked the courage to reveal myself, as the boy had revealed himself. All my life, I had wanted to tell them that I had, on every dream-telling, lied, about my ability to sleep, and likewise to dream; that in truth, every dream, I told, was an outright fabrication: a complete lie. But, of course, I could not execute that telling. Instead, I imagined that telling, and my subsequent death; that the void that I emerged from would consume me again; for I did not believe in our beliefs; that we live, only, to fuel a dream. Instead, I thought the reverse to be true. But of course they would not accept it; instead, they would rather kill me. Each day, I would walk to where we left our dead, and, in an effort to pay homage, to him, I'd enjoy his progress. I watched the flies swarm, to partake in his flesh, and their young as they poked out from every part. I noted their movements: how without sleep they were. It was not the case, I thought, that we wake, just to fuel a dream. And so, again and again, I returned, and I watched his belly rise, as it did on the day of his revealing, and then worse, becoming bigger and blacker and more terrible than I imagined he could ever be: he was totally disgusting. And I knew that, as much as I wanted, to cherish him, and his likeness to me; he was no more; he was not dreaming; for his bloated, breathless, corpse, proved otherwise. He was dead and that was all. He existed only to fail at dreaming and die, I thought, and I, am also, going to die, and everyone else is going to die, too. I am the only person to see and know this to be true, I thought: that death, not dream, is why we are here. After that, I did not return to watch him rot. How, I asked myself, can I possibly enjoy fruit, or life, knowing this to be my fate? It's as if death, was, thenceforth, what underlined my every word and taste and feeling and mystery and discovery, and every possible thing I could find, and there was nothing that could attenuate the awful force that death impressed upon my mind, and in my dreamless state, it is was always death I thought of, every time, until I lost all sense of attachment to the world. I rapidly became totally insensitive to it, such that when I touched the world, I felt as if I were touching a kind of dream. The world itself is dream, I thought. And it is a very bad dream. At all times, I'd do what the world asked me to; I'd act, for this surreal, but with indifference. When I moved, I felt like I was made to move, not that I got to experience the joys of movement. So I was, at all times, the moved, and not the mover. And yet to my horror, I was never moved into telling them about my dreamlessness or sleeplessness. I simply watched all my movements play out, before me, as if I were imprisoned, in total revulsion and sequestered by my flesh, which to my horror, had never betrayed my lies; for every kindness and smile was underlined by, and, therefore, ruined, by the reality of death. Even a laugh, which was once the jolliest of sounds, had shrunk, into a pathetic and spasmodic yawn. It hurt, listening to that laugh; flapping reality back, and back, as if what's behind that laugh was fundamentally evil. If ever, anybody died, it was naturally impossible for me to think of any words, besides: Of course. Yes; of course, death is a thing. Yes; of course she is dead. He has died? Ah; of course. These dyings happen. Someday, I thought, I will die, too. It is inevitable, I thought, of course I will, I thought. I want to die, I thought, I cannot wait. But of course I did wait; wait I did, for years, but death didn't come, much to my dismay. My days and

nights of laying awake and waiting and listening to footsteps, had, gradually, trained me, in the art of footstep-listening, and similarly built up in my mind, a schedule, for when those footsteps were, and were not, being made. By combining the both of these skills together, I had given myself the means to safely survey the trees beyond the outskirts of our space. At first, I was content just to marvel at their design, but then, of course, I had to eat what they had to offer. It probably was not a very good idea for me to eat so many of these strange berries, I had thought, after I had eaten several handfuls of berries, which had, by then, induced a terrible stomach ache; if not the absolute worst stomach ache of my life, such that I soon convinced myself that I had consumed a fatal dose of those berries, which I soon threw up. My nausea compelled me to flee back; back to our space, where, I hoped, I could treat my sickness, with one of the many sickness-treating plants we had, which, however, I didn't do; for my state of mind had become very, very different, when, at last I re-entered our space. It was truly the most fantastical state, I had ever enjoyed, and I intended, to maximize that ecstasy. For my head, which had hitherto felt so chaotic and wild and imaginative now felt as if it were buried beneath itself! That's why I need to dig it out! I had started to think. And my hands, too, felt strange; like rocks; like tools, which I could surely use to dig myself out; free and out of myself; completely free! And I could barely contain my desire to pounce upon my flesh; to rend it all; and free it all; for, it was kept in bondage by my own insufferable head, which, as I have said, was buried, and clawing to dig itself up and out. I then noted: how everything that was, especially the leaves, looked sharp, and fatal, and longing to kill; for every twig and rock and edge, was clawing into my eyes, as if to advertise their deadliness, and readiness, to serve me, as my liberation instruments, which, I now recalled, was what I started calling my fingernails, who were, by then, tigerishly scraping against my arms; to expose them, ever so slightly, more and more, with each, progressive, scrape, to the winds, who I felt were nestling within my cuts, and seemingly reciprocating the cravings in my head; a clawing; a chattering; a gnawing; for blood; for death! Death! Death! I must enjoy this death, I thought when I looked at the chief's son slumbering in the moonlight, so softly, and peacefully, inert. I then resolved to rend his flesh with a rock. After all, he was the next to replicate this lie; that we wake only to fuel a dream; this dream is our sickness, I thought: I want to be awake! To build, and break, and rend, and label, and see, all of these pieces, of me! If only you had seen the stealth and the fury I used to pounce on him! I had never felt more perfect, in my liveliness, and although I had acted most instantaneously, and thoughtlessly, the reasons, for my strange actions, did come to me, though, it was later on. They murdered my kind; for dream; for nothing! What they did was wrong! Wrong! Wrong! I had to correct him, and the rest of them. Death, and not dream, is all there is! I said to myself while I crushed his throat in my hands. And now you'll know the truth! I cried out in my head: You'll dieeee! His tiny face was terrified. He had no idea how to handle it, or how to process it. He probably thought: he was having a bad dream. I could feel the warm blood beneath my hands; pounding louder; harder, and faster, until he lost consciousness. Then I looked up to see if I had roused anyone, but they had not been roused. And so, with the utmost care, I proceeded to drag the body of the chief's son to a son-rending location, which, as I now recall, is what I had then dubbed the stream near our space. There will be plenty of rocks by the stream, I thought. The stream is the ideal son-rending location, I thought, because the stream will catch the moonlight and reflect it on my, not-yet-started, son-rending. I'm not sure why it did not occur to me that my actions were not in accord with my usual actions, but it didn't. It was highly, highly, unusual for me, to derive joy, from moving the chief's son (who was, actually, bigger, and heavier, and

older than me) to the stream, where I would rend his flesh: to examine his organs. And yet I did it anyway, because, I thought: there were many discoveries, to be made; many pouches, that comprised our dreaming mechanism. Naturally, I had to remove them all and examine them all; for their secrets, I thought, could grant me the gift of eternal life. But those pouches contained no such thing: only silence and blood and disappointment was inside those pouches, I had discovered, after I used a rock to carve open the belly of the chief's son, and, after extracting every last organ; making absolutely certain, that they tell me their secrets. But, as I'm sure you know, the only sounds they could make, were the ones they made, when they squished or slipped against each other. It felt like they were making a mockery of my son-rending and truth-seeking endeavors, and I felt absolutely tormented by their mocking silence. Naturally the mocking silence was intolerable for me: I simply couldn't accept it, either this squishing and slipping, or this hideous mocking silence, thus, I had to silence this horrible and inescapable mocking silence, by producing more and more squishing and slipping noises, and so more and more mocking silence, was, of course, pumped into my ears as a result, which was absolutely insufferable for me to hear. I told myself: there must be a way to silence this mocking silence; it can't be that you're hearing squishing and slipping noises and mocking silence! So I continually tore open those now quite hellish and now quite devilish organs, whose menacing and mocking silence, in the aftermath, of my really quite thrilling son-rending and truth-seeking project, now seemed downright evil, and the horror of my now failed son-rending project made me clasp my mouth and scream. Why have I utterly destroyed the chief's son?! I asked myself; seeing that in fact absolutely nothing but blood and silence and disappointment had been produced as a result of my son-rending project. I looked questioningly at the scattered pieces, of the chief's son, and I started thinking: if I had known, in advance, how disappointing the results of this son-rending project would be, I would have never started it, but it was too late. The chief's son was dead and disemboweled, for pure joy, which faded into nothing. While thinking of what to do with the terrible mess I had created of the body of the chief's son; for, in my excitement to rend the chief's son, I had flung his organs and blood, in every direction conceivable, it occurred to me: that cleaning up this mess myself would be an impossible task, but the stream was nearby, I was thinking, and I used it to wash myself clean. Perhaps, I thought, I can convince the others that it was not me who had rended the chief's son, but a bizarre and mysterious force! For what reasons, could I have, for rending the chief's son, anyway? I could think of no specific reasons: it was not me, who had rended the chief's son, but sheer lunacy, I had thought: something mysterious, I thought, but I couldn't say exactly what that something was, so I looked into the stream and thought, as I looked, at my own reflection, about killing myself, which, of course, I didn't do. But rather I rebounded from my thought about killing myself, and I recognized, in the reflection of myself, that there was blood on my nose, and I scooped some water into my palm and I, even more meticulously this time, washed myself clean. I then explained to the reflection of myself, that it was only human, and that, really, it was not such a bad thing, what I had done, so, of course, it answered me: saying the same thing, so there was complete and total consensus between us; myself, and the reflection, who started asking me: what I was going to do? And, because I had not the slightest idea what I should do, it started explaining what I should do. They are going to kill you, it said. You need to get out of here, it said. If you do not leave, you're going to die, it said, and I clapped my hand to my quite youthful and handsome face, and started thinking the same thing. I had to leave, but, I wasn't sure where to go. In addition, to my sleeplessness and dreamlessness, I thought, I have now killed, and now they're going to kill me.

But then I simply couldn't bare to imagine the thought, of my quite youthful and handsome face being rended, as I had rended the chief's son, who was rather ugly. That's when I decided, to get up from the face-cleaning position, and leave the stream and everything else, behind me. Rather than allowing myself, to be guilted and destroyed, by my failure, I simply left all of my failings and my would-be destroyers, behind me. There comes a time in our lives, when we realize, that all of the people who we have surrounded ourselves with, are not really useful people, but, our destroyers, therefore we have to move on, and away from them; just so we can feel safe, from their weapons of destruction: language. Instead of sharing our dreams, we share our language, I had thought, to myself, during one of our dream-tellings, but this language of ours fails to relate our complexity, and our visions, so all it can do, if taken seriously, is destroy us. We made our ridiculous mouth noises so we could sentence they who can't use our ridiculous mouth noises to die, I had thought, because they are too complex. When a person is unable to speak, about what he or she thinks, or dreams, we fear that he or she is capable of the unspeakable, I had thought, and so we destroy that person, and call them wild, since they're indomitable. This is why I must lie at all of these dream tellings, I had thought, because, as soon as I reveal, my inability to reveal, the natural response is to kill me; because things that can't be revealed have no value or use, to this community, of dream-tellers. This is also why I continuously think about killing myself, I had thought, because all of these uncrystalizable potentialities bounce back against my skull, then swing back around, to hurt me; therefore, I had thought, my urge to kill myself, is just my strange and mysterious way, of canceling out that pain, and staying balanced, so I can think about the next best, and unspeakable, thing. On the one hand, we are lonely, so we want to know what others are thinking, on the other, we don't; because, we are afraid, of being choked to death, rended, and ripped apart, by their thinking, I had thought: we're afraid of being engulfed and subsumed and manipulated and ruined, by others. Of course, in hindsight, I now realize that I had, in fact, choked to death and rended and ripped apart the chief's son, which is why I had to run, away from the stream, and everything else: to create the greatest possible distance, from everyone, so that I would not accidentally, engulf, and subsume, and manipulate, them. I made a mistake, and I learned some things from it. My fear of the unknown had bonded me to my would-be destroyers, and I had actually deceived myself, into believing that I needed their protection, when it would have been better for all of us had I left earlier on. Naturally I did not have time to think about this after rending the chief's son, as I was too busy moving through the wood. The more distance I created, the more I enjoyed that distance, and so I moved with a high sense of enjoyment, until I had totally exhausted my enjoyment-producing and distance-producing movement-faculties. For the longest time; indeed, for my entire life, I had felt totally trapped by and destroyed by the others, and now I was glad to no longer feel that way; instead, I felt free. My head, was light; my legs were light, and I exploited my sudden freeness and lightness; to carry myself far away from the others, and deeper and deeper into the mysterious wood. And I likewise extracted all the joy I could extract from that experience, until I finally collapsed, which was surely the high point of my run, through the wood; for that was when I was finally free to bask in, and enjoy, my ability to create all that distance and freedom and tiredness and enjoyment I created, which I hoped to remain inside forever, that is, until I passed out. The next morning I had no idea where I was, but my head felt, as if, it were killing me. And I thought, about killing myself, but didn't. I must not kill myself, I thought, I must find something to eat. Sometimes, we will think about killing ourselves, but then, instead of killing ourselves, we reinvent ourselves, thereby killing the self who wanted to be killed by way of the

self-reinvention process, which I exploited in order to adapt to life in the wood. Yes, I thought, I will kill my old self, and replace it, with this new self, and I did, and I was reborn, but I could not recognize any of the trees in this area, nor could I see any indication that they had food, of any kind. Thus, driven by hunger, I continued to walk even deeper, into the wood, more or less, in a straight line. If I need to go back to the stream for drink, I thought, then I must remember where the stream is; but I could only remember that the stream was, somewhere, backwards; thus, I continued to stride, forwards, which I shouldn't have done, if I was to properly examine the strange and unusual plants nearby. I generally felt attracted, to and connected to, plants, and even more intrigued by and drawn to the strange and unusual plants; but, I told myself, not to examine any of these plants; figuring that: the right fruit, would present itself soon. I trusted in my fruit-identification abilities enough not to worry much about failing to identify a fruit, in the wood, which, in my experience, were usually quite colorful: usually red or purple or blue. The right fruit will present itself soon, I thought, and it will be delicious. I entertained myself, with the idea of the ideal fruit, as I continued to stride through the wood, which, in itself, was an enjoyable experience; for I usually felt quite attracted, to and connected to, the trees, and the manifolds of leaves thereon. Suddenly I had an abnormally hard time, sensing the liveliness the trees normally produced; for, behind me, there were trees, and, ahead of me, there were trees, but they were the smallest trees I had ever seen: far too small, for me to feel connected to them. It was only their mysteriousness that attracted me, since they were too small for me to make out anything about them, besides their smallness. I approached them thinking that I would pick one of them up; but, after striding forward, for what seemed like a long time, I realized: that I had not brought myself any closer to them. Why am I not able to pick up these tiny trees? I asked myself; realizing that, in fact, the trees I had wished to pick up were now ever so slightly larger, than they were previously, and growing ever larger, as I moved closer and closer, towards them. I then looked behind me to see that the wood had apparently gotten smaller, thus my analysis of the shrinking and growing trees began after I had noticed this phenomenon. I started by running forwards, away from the wood, and then by running backwards, towards the wood, trying desperately to comprehend what was happening; I found myself pacing, back and forth, in what was probably me at my most stupidest. I didn't think it were possible for the trees to grow and shrink in this fashion, and yet, nevertheless, they did, grow and shrink, and surprisingly it was in accordance with my movements. Over and over I walked, back and forth; first, towards the wood; and then, away from the wood, and I was completely baffled; thinking that, somehow, I must have gained the ability to make trees grow and shrink, but, I simply couldn't think, of any reason for why I had gained the ability to make trees grow and shrink, and so I elected to walk, towards the tiny trees, until they weren't tiny trees anymore, but full-sized trees. Astonishing! I thought, as I glanced backwards at the wood, which was now equal in size as the formerly-tiny-trees: it would seem as though the further away you are, from an object, the smaller that object becomes! Until then it had not yet occurred to me that all things tiny could, actually, be quite large, and so I walked forward, into the wood, which, I started to call the new wood. I simply love the new wood, I thought to myself, as I walked deeper into the new wood: everything about the new wood is pleasing to me, I thought; especially, its newness. I should acquire even more, new things, I thought, and experience even more newness, I thought; supposing there to be an entire universe, of undiscovered newnesses, to be right outside my local universe, of oldness, which, compared to the everydayness, of the local universe, was not very pleasing to me, since it did not provide the novelty, I had discovered, in the new wood, which, compared



to the old wood, was quite refreshing; but, my state of refreshment can't last forever, I was thinking, and so it's quite likely that I shall continually stride; forwards; ever further, into these forever undiscovered universes of undiscoverable newnesses, in search, of a state, of perpetual refreshment, which is unattainable, I realized; because, at some point, I'll be dead. This is when I paused and I thought: who will get to enjoy this perpetual-refreshment-process after I'm dead? Me, or somebody else? I call myself I, I thought, and the others call themselves I, too. But who is I, really? How can I, be I, if the others are, also, able to say, that they, are I? Shouldn't we call ourselves, by our own names? But, as soon as I asked myself this question, I remembered, that there was a boy that did this, and he was irremediably stupid. No, I thought; shaking my head: that can't be. I would sound idiotic if I did that. We are still individuals, I thought, when we say I, it is implied that we are, who we are, and not the same thing. But the temporality of my being suddenly started to depress me, since I could not only, not experience, to totality, all of that inconspicuous newness; for upon death, I thought I would take the entire sum of those acquired newnesses, along with me. So what about any of this is worth striding towards? I asked myself, and I thought, of nothing, and killing myself. But there is a piece of fruit in front of me, I was thinking, and I stuck out my hand to grab hold of it and took a bite, and it was delicious, though incredibly sour. The taste of the fruit was delicious, but, the temporality of it, was unpalatable. When we eat something, we kill it, I thought: we kill it, to kill, our hungry selves, I thought, but if we don't eat something then our hungry selves will kill us, instead, which, of course, is most unpleasant, I thought: so we always kill ourselves, in the most pleasant way possible, I thought, like the stream, which flows, continuously, in the path of least resistance. But, that thought of the stream had reminded me of my experiment, on the chief's son, which had failed to grant me eternal life, and imagining all that blood flowing downstream was now making me feel quite nauseous, but the sour fruit seemed to counteract that nausea, and thus, I kept on thinking of the sour fruit and the blood and the taste of death, that permeated everything, ruining it. Of course, in a flash, I simultaneously realized: that death, was the liberator. On the one hand, the thought of death is a horror to me, I thought, on the other a wonder; for it invariably erases all of life's burdens. Failure, want, and disappointment. Death refreshes life, by killing stale life, I said, to myself, so death, for the life-process-in-general, is, in actuality, the refreshment-mechanism, for itself, but, not myself, I thought, since I am not the life-process-in-general; therefore, I thought, it is only by dominating the life-process-in-general and the refreshment-mechanism (death) that I will stand a chance, of acquiring a state, of everlasting ecstasy. It goes without saying that, while these thoughts of death dominated me, they never compelled me to kill myself, since my thoughts, which I have conveyed above, are, actually, several decades old, and I fully intend to live, for decades more. Even then, I had maintained a cool head while thinking about these, life and death, existential matters; just as now, as I write this account. How this art of head-cooling came to exist, I'll never know, but I know it has been existentially indispensable to me. I must apologize, for this diversion, notwithstanding its usefulness as a death-diversion, which, of course, was not the intention of this diversion; because, I have only now admitted that it is a diversion, and nothing more than a diversion, though it certainly could be and most probably is a death-diversion, but only accidentally. But this is not the place for me to talk about thought, or death-diversions; what is interesting, however, is the diversions usefulness, for head-cooling. And in point of fact I had noted its usefulness after I had consumed a second sour fruit from the sour-fruit-tree; for it had induced a highly refreshing effect; on both body, and mind. Having totally refreshed my physical and mental faculties, I opted to explore the new wood, baring the

location, of the sour-fruit-tree, in mind, which I no longer continued to call a sour-fruit-tree, but, instead, my exploration-recharging-station; for I exploited it as such for the entirety of my exploration of the new wood, because baring the terrible weight that was the incompleteness, of my mental picture, of the new wood, was an insufferable experience, for me, so, naturally, I had to compensate, for that incompleteness, by allowing myself to be pushed, ever further into the new wood, but never too far from my exploration-recharging-station, which in fact was also the center of my exploration-circle, which again and again I returned to, as I carefully completed my incompleteness; doing so with a high sense of excitement, until I had, ruthlessly, completed my exploration of the new wood, and, likewise, depleted the sour-fruit-tree, which, sadly, I had to demote to the rank, of shade-tree. Thus, I had not only eradicated the terrible weight of that incompleteness, and sour-fruit, but I also created a fitting hierarchy, for the purposes of tree-ranking. After exploring the new wood I had become quite tired, but I wasn't so tired that I couldn't continue to explore my memories, of the new wood, which comprised my now completed mental picture. I thought about the new wood, and how much I loved it: the pleasant smells, colors, auras, and how beautifully alive I felt being surrounded, by my surroundings. I feel so good, I thought, so glad to be immersed, by all of these beautiful, fantastic, sparkling, things, that I would even feel good, if a rock were to enter my skull, to kill me, right now. Or, right now. Right now. Right now. And now. And now. And now. Wait. Wait. I am still alive, I realized; and these moments won't stop collapsing, until you're dead. But my eyes are so heavy, I was thinking, so I'll die for a moment, or maybe even forever, I thought as I then nestled into forever and my thoughts of forever, death forever, I thought as I closed my eyes for forever. And ever. And ever. And ever. But of course, I did not sleep for forever; it was far from forever, it was really only a few moments I slept, after which, I thought: I think, I really want to kill myself, which, however, I didn't do. Instead, I thought about how bored, and restless, I was, and how I seriously wanted, to cure myself, of my boredom and my restlessness, by exploring the new wood, again. This time I did not have any sour-fruit left on the shade-tree formerly known as the sour-fruit-tree, but that's okay, I had realized, because I'm full. That's when I changed my mind about exploring the new wood: I will not explore the new wood, I thought, I have already explored the new wood, so there's really no good reason for me to explore the new wood, I thought; observing in myself the agony of my restlessness; but I knew I had to do something, and thus, I thought it best to stride straight towards the new stream, for a drink, after which I calmed down considerably. I thought about the new stream in the new wood in contrast to the old wood's stream, which, roared endlessly, in the most obnoxious manner, making it difficult to hear oneself, think. The new stream does not do this, I thought, the new stream is rather quiet, not so, in the new wood, I thought, where it seems as though it is not the stream that roars on endlessly, and obnoxiously, but my own thoughts. Clearly, I thought, my time near the old wood's stream has trained me, in the art of endlessly thinking loudly, which is why I'm over here, drinking and thinking about the two streams; which is the better of the two streams, which of course is a stupid question; for the better of the two streams is, obviously, the one that makes it the easiest to kill the chief's son and not be heard: the old wood's stream. But as I sat at the edge of the new wood's stream, I reconsidered; for I didn't want to be killed like I had killed the chief's son. This is not a very good spot for son rending, I thought. In fact, this spot, would make it basically impossible for someone accustomed to life around the roar of the old wood's stream to sneak up on you and kill you, I thought, therefore this stream is really the better of the two streams, I thought, especially if you value your life. They don't value their lives, I thought;

they believe that they wake, only to fuel a dream; that's why all of them are huddled around that stream; sequestered, by fruit trees, I thought, because all they want is to dream, and die. Why? I asked myself as I looked up at a star: the brightest star in the sky. It reminded me of the pest, who reminded me of myself, who had wanted to be giant, and to run across the stars, but was killed by the chief instead. The stars don't die, I thought: they're always there. So small; so bright; so, beautiful. It would be nice, I thought, to touch one. But of course I had never touched a star, nor did I think it were possible; but, maybe, that's not true, I started to think; reminding myself; that the further away you were, from a tree, the smaller it became. It should be possible to move up into the stars, in just the same way as I had walked into the new wood, I thought; all I need to do is figure out how to move up, but the trees move up, I was thinking, and the ground is uneven, too. And then a brilliant idea instantly entered my vision; and it was the most stunning vision of something I had ever seen; something I imagined would transform our lives irreparably for the better, something I started to call: the sky mound. The sky mound, I thought, will allow us to walk into the sky, where we might live forever, just as stars live forever. It was amazing: my vision. I could feel all the stars; sparkling at me, in approval, and I practically felt them caress me with their magnetic radiance, and whisper into my ears, asking me to construct the sky mound. I will build the sky mound, I thought, but I can't build the sky mound alone. I will need the others to assist me with the completion of the sky mound, I thought. I will have to convince the others to assist me, I thought, just as I convinced the others that my dreams were really dreams and not lies, which the sky mound is certainly not. By showing them the clearing, I thought, I can easily convince them that the real purpose of their lives is to build the sky mound, and that, if they dream, they should dream, of nothing, but better ways for building this sky mound. Ideas, Intellect, Muscle, Everything: their entire being should exist only in order to build the sky mound faster, I thought; for if the sky mound isn't complete, before I die, then everyone will be lost and without direction. Thus, I decided not to actually construct the sky mound, myself, or even to touch the sky mound, but to have the others serve as my executive sky mound building instruments. I must be chief executor, for sky mound building, I thought. Initially I had wanted to build the sky mound hand in hand with the others, but this seemed to be the better way. If I don't execute, the sky mound will look wrong. That is what I thought, because I knew that most of the others were stupid. The importance of the sky mound may be totally incomprehensible to them, I thought, in which case, I might need to stimulate them, with one or two made up stories, about how enjoyable life, as a sky mound builder, will be. By continually stimulating them, I thought, it should be possible for me to induce a kind of sky mound building trance. I thought: eventually, it will hurt not to be building the sky mound. This really was an effective use, of my time, I thought, as I talked at my reflection in the new stream: by exercising this art of self-persuasion, you've exercised the all too necessary art of seduction. You can do this, it said. Seduce them, it said. Tomorrow, it said. Go to sleep, it said. And I, realizing how agreeable my reflection of myself had been, decided it best to go to sleep, so I went to sleep at once, because I was, after all, quite tired. I can't wait, I thought the next morning: to get back, to the old wood, so that I can introduce everyone to my plans: for all of them to build the sky mound, for me. But first, I thought, I will need to rank my future builders. Besides, I asked myself, surely some of them will be better at building, than others? Yes. I answered aloud. This is absolutely necessary. Just as there is now a hierarchy, for tree-ranking, so, too, there must be, a hierarchy, for people-ranking; for, like the trees, some will surely produce, for me, more fruit than others, which, of course, brought me to realize; that

I was no longer talking, about people, producing fruit, but sky mound. The fruit people produce is sky mound, I said to myself, while not quite knowing why I had said such a thing. From now on, there shall be no people, I thought. Only sky mound builders of various types. So naturally the executor is the highest type, I thought, since it ranks, which reveals: their true value, as builders, and executes, which, likewise, reveals their true value to the executor, as he measures the progress made up the mound and to the stars, which, I said to myself, is our true goal. Stars, I thought, again and again, with increasing intensity, until it felt as if my mouth, were watering for them, which, as I now recall, was indeed the case. I must consume the stars! Thinking of the stars made me very happy. It is a very good thing that I am pursuing a path, that not only makes me happy, I thought, but also reveals the truth, about the others: that it is they, and not the pest, who are evil; for they put down a person interested in the greater good, which, of course, is the sky mound, I thought. This is what makes them evil: choosing the smaller good, over the greater good. That is what I thought, I now recall, walking through the new wood. The truth is things are not always as they appear. It is only by getting closer, to them, or, by measuring them, or, by testing them, that we can reveal the truth, about them; that's the truth, I now recall, striding through the clearing. And it's only logical that the others be subject, to my judgments, on all of these sky mound matters; for I am the teacher of the sky mound, and, as such, I am the foremost sky mound building expert, I thought; for nobody exists, who has ever tried to build a sky mound, only me, the executor, I thought. The knowledge of who is the better sky mound builder shall be the saving principal of our lives, because the stars are immortal, I thought, that is what I will tell them. So long as we are dying we are in error, because we don't have enough time to determine the truth about everything, I thought. It is only by making ourselves like the immortal stars that we will gain the time necessary, to uncover the truth about our lives, which, of course, cannot be that we live to fuel a dream, and die. That is what I'll tell them, I thought. Besides, I thought, it must be the case; that immortals, such as the stars, have quite a few ways of curing themselves, of their boredom, that do not include killing themselves, because, I have never seen a star die. That is what I thought, as I walked through the old wood, and also how great it felt to be walking through the old wood, which, I realized, I had missed very much. Everything here is so perfectly alive; fresh and full of life; the tiny animals; the trees; the grass, beneath my feet, and the smells, I thought: gorgeous. What a delightful place, I thought, it is perfectly suited to our needs because, unlike the new wood trees, these old wood trees have generous amounts of fruit, and not just fruit, I thought, but shade, too. I found my state, at that moment, to be perfectly agreeable, and it was that lovely state of total agreeableness that stirred up an even greater sense of agreeableness, greater and greater, more and more, I stirred with the old wood, which I didn't want to die; so I concluded, that we, the old wood and I, should put an end to my existence, because; having achieved that truly perfect, and tranquil state, of total agreeableness, with everything, it naturally follows that nothing, be equally agreeable. I want to die, I thought, and immediately I regretted wanting to die, but it was too late, I realized; for I had already thought that I wanted to die, so then I simply pleaded guilty, to myself: Yes, I want to die. I want to die, I said to myself, repeatedly. But my ears are ringing, I was thinking, and the ground seems to be moving in a curious manner, too. I saw this, and inexplicably sat down to focus on the ground for an indefinite amount of time. That is, until I had become bored with my ground-focusing. I mustn't focus, on the ground, I thought: I must focus on the sky, which is my goal; our goal, I thought, correcting myself, while simultaneously repositioning my body, so I could get a better look at the sky. I started to refer to, this position; this upside down

position, as my spider position. From my spider position, it's very easy to feel grounded in the sky, I thought; now, I don't want to kill myself so much; I don't wish to be falling into the ground. Instead, I realized, I'm wishing to fall into the sky, somewhere else. That is what I had realized, from the spider position. It is a good thing that I try different positions every now and again, I thought, by forever checking the many positions, that are available to me, like, that of the spider, it saves me from the discomfort that comes from remaining, in the same position; such positions, I thought, can be, deadly, if, you stay in them too long. Perhaps, I should not march, right into the company, of the others, and assume they'll be subject to my judgments on all of these matters concerning and connected to the sky mound, as I planned. Besides, I asked myself, what if I need a class of people to stimulate the builders, and even an inner class, who stimulates them? What might we teach them, if my wish is to subject them? Aha! I know what I will teach them: that whenever you're addressing a person, you are addressing a subject. Most excellent, I said to myself, as I looked up at the sky. Perhaps since my intention, is to sentence them, to a lifetime, of sky mound building, what's best, for them to learn, is that they are the subject, of my every sentence. Then by agreeing to be this subject, they'll be aggregated by me, as I go on to sentence them and execute them with my speech, almost as if, like a spider, I realized, while laying, and looking at the sky, I, were spinning, a kind of web from my mouth, and into their minds, which, I then realized, would kill them as I executed; for whenever you speak to people, they involuntarily lose the ability to see and hear, nature. The nature they will know will be sky mound, I thought to myself while looking at the sky and touching my lips; it's only natural, that I, a controller of lips, might use my lips to take away their nature, and control it and kill it as I speak and execute my plans. I'll turn them into subjects by talking to them with all my words; my word trauma, which will, simultaneously, remove all the nature around them, with my speech, since I'm able to speak, endlessly. Every day, all I will have to do is speak, and evoke a trauma world, around them, so all they'll have, is a trauma world; not an actual world; never an actual world. Besides, this world is only the first step, towards a sky mound, I thought while laying on my back, and soon I'll step across those threads I've weaved into their heads, and I'll feast upon the stars. And I found myself having a difficult time, resisting the urge to open and close my mouth; pretending to bite into the sky, since, I suspected, that was surely possible. All you really need to do, is speak, the stars seemed to say, then, as you speak of us, to them, you will kill them, for to you, they are like extra limbs, attached, to your tongue. And this will always be possible, since all ears, and all tongues, are the same, the sky said, to me, as I laid on my back in the spider position; as I imagined myself, walking upwards, to enter the sky. But, as you know, my son, I was not able to enter the sky. The sky mound was not only not high enough, but, we soon learned, that if you see a star fall, you ought to sacrifice twelve, or so, women, and children. That is what the various sky mound builders, all decided, themselves, when I not only failed to enter the sky, but watched, for the first time, a star falling, as it burnt furiously, at us. Naturally, my son, it is difficult to understand; how we came to adopt these women and children sacrificing rituals; how we constructed, the many sky mounds you've seen; why the enemy tribes hate us, and banned counting, past three (if you make three points you are making a mound); why they say my demands are infinite and impossible. And so I have written this account: to explain the nature of the subjects, at your disposal. I am leaving this empire, in which we speak and others listen: the speaking-listening empire, to you. It is my sincerest hope, that this account be like a key, which I've placed in the spider room, which unlocks this empire, you did not know, as a boy, but now you will know the full truth of it, and, for that, I am sorry.