

‘Just try. At night, when she’s sleeping, you can always creep down and raid the fridge.’

‘What do you think of his method, Kâzim? I can’t tell by your expression. You only very rarely give your thoughts away, don’t you? I imagined how Emilie would notice my lack of appetite, and ask, ‘Lukas, dearest. I see you’re not eating a single thing. Is something wrong?’

‘Yes, Emilie, sweetheart,’ I’d say in reply. ‘It’s nice of you to ask. You know, I’m yearning for you, but don’t know whether perhaps you wish for something better. Are you still happy with me?’

She’d have no option but to melt. – Do you agree, Kâzim?

So, that evening, like a professional hunger artist, I passed on Emilie’s fresh-from-the-garden seasonal salad, her unbeatable spinach savoury cake, and the caramel flan Markus had proudly helped her with, and how should I put it? The fact his caramel flan remained practically untouched offended him so much, he ran away from the table and cried beneath his bedcover like the twelve-year-old child he still was. When she looked over at me, Emilie’s eyes were aflame.

‘I love you, Lukas Zbinden,’ she said.

I jumped, I got such a fright. When Emilie addressed me by my full name, I’d reason, normally, to tremble.

‘And,’ she continued, ‘you should do everything you can to retain this love.’

From that day onwards – 12th August 1967 – forty-seven-year-old Lukas Zbinden put his shoulder to the wheel. He lent a hand with all the housework: cooking;