

2.6 Secrets

2.6.1

For several days, he had been sleeping in his small room and started to miss the nice, sunny place he had quickly gotten used to with Julie. **On the other hand**, he didn't mind being alone again for a while.

He remembered that he wanted to read his uncle's journals. He was curious to find out more about his family, but his uncle didn't write a history book. He wrote his thoughts in a **random** way, so James couldn't focus on it for long.

Also, the handwriting was hard to read. It was neat but very different from English writing, very curly. Julie said that's how people learn to write in school in Czechia. The handwriting didn't look like printed text.

Anyway, he had nothing else to do. He could take his time trying to read the strange Czech **script**, and maybe learn something he didn't know, or maybe something he knew and had forgotten, like so many other things.

Maybe it would be better if he just let it be, forgotten. He didn't like what the journals revealed. His family history was terrible.

He wanted to lock the journal away, throw it out, burn it. But why? That wouldn't change the past. He had a choice – he would stop looking for what happened in that first year in Prague, who he had met, and what he had learned about his family, or – he would accept it as it was.

If it had happened, if he had lived through it, if he had known it before, he could just try to understand it all again.

Learning Tip

random - náhodný (ale ne "náhodou", jen něco bez uspořádání nebo logické posloupnosti)

2.6.2

He opened the journal again but was interrupted by Julie. He hadn't heard the doorbell ring.

"Are you reading it again?" she asked, making it clear that this wasn't the first time James was reading it.

"Kind of. It's like reading a crime novel for the second time, after I've forgotten who the killer was."

He thought: *If she knows that I had read it before, maybe she even knows what it was about.*

"The killer is always the gardener." she said.

James frowned. His life didn't involve a murderer directly, but someone had almost killed him, whether on purpose or by accident. He also remembered Marian, the gardener, who once gave him some Slovak apricot brandy in the flat above the garage, in the **picturesque** English countryside. James remembered those eyes. They reminded him of something – just another flash of a memory which he couldn't reach.

"You're not **blinking**, you know?" Julie waved her hand in front of his face.

"I didn't hear you come in. That doorbell, I need to fix it. It didn't ring."

"The postman always rings twice," she said, then paused.

He looked at her, surprised. They stared into each other's eyes for a moment. Then Julie said cheerfully, "Good, you're blinking now. I was worried that titles of mystery stories hypnotized you."

"I don't get it," he admitted.

He couldn't focus. Memories rushed through his mind – what he had experienced and what he remembered – crashing into the bits he had just read in his uncle's journal. He needed to clear his mind.

2.6.3

He helped Julie up the stairs. It had taken her a lot of energy to walk down a moment ago, and going up again was hard for her without help.

She refused to walk with him in public using her cane. She always used a cane when she was alone, but she didn't want to feel weak. And then, when she found herself in a place with nothing to lean on, she struggled.

Until recently, she had refused his help. She used to give him that sharp look. But slowly, she realized (that) it was better to accept his help as **courtesy** and not as care for a disabled person. From that moment, she always smiled at him, as if he was just helping her with her coat or pulling out a chair for her.

They sat down in a café in the courtyard of the house across the street. James had never noticed the café before. It was simple, not a typical tourist trap like most places in his neighbourhood. It was a quiet spot in the busy city, reserved for a few locals who were lucky enough not to be forced out from the city centre.

Learning Tip (section 2.6.2)

The killer is always the gardener – vrah je zahradník

The postman always rings twice – pošťák zvoní vždycky dvakrát

2.6.4

"I used to feel at home here," Julie said quietly as James placed the order.

"Really? You know this place? Why don't you come here anymore?" He looked around in amazement at the cozy little café across the street from his place, yet he had never been there.

Julie nodded.

"Don't you dare say it! Not now. I've had enough," James protested.

He knew exactly what she was about to say. She always nodded in that understanding way, whenever she had to tell James something he should have known but had forgotten.

"Are you still loyal to us? Do you still come here? That's great," the waitress said cheerfully as she brought their coffee.

Both looked at her in surprise, and James noted with some satisfaction that even Julie was **caught off guard** by the comment.

"We haven't been here in a while, but it's still as nice as always," Julie said, almost apologetically.

"I haven't been here in a while either," the waitress laughed. "Two **maternity leaves** in a row. Ugh, I'm glad to be back. You don't get enough sleep for years, and the daily struggles... Well, you know how it is. How's your little one?"

True or False?

- a) James didn't enjoy reading his uncle's journals because the handwriting was messy and the stories were confusing.
- b) Julie had never seen the journals before.
- c) When Julie mentioned "the killer is always the gardener," James was reminded of someone real, not just a book.
- d) James realized that the doorbell was broken only after Julie came in without ringing.
- e) Julie liked using her cane in public because it made her feel independent.

2.6.5

James glanced at Julie. *Our little one?* He frowned, trying hard to remember. *Damn memory!* This must stop. *I want to know everything; this can't go on!*

Was it possible that he had a child with Julie and she was hiding it from him? Had she sent the child away? Maybe because of the accident, she couldn't take care of a kid? That would be strange, even for Julie, but could he **rule it out**? He remembered his uncle's journal; some people are real **weirdos**.

He stopped paying attention to what Julie and the waitress were saying after that. Maybe he **should have listened**, at least he would know the name of *their* little one.

"**So**?" James asked when the waitress finally left the table.

"**Sew**, buttons," Julie replied and focused on her coffee cup.

"Don't do this to me. I'm warning you," he said through clenched teeth.

"You're warning me? Why? Is it my fault some woman confused us with someone else? After two kids, she's lost her mind. Just drink your coffee; it's really good." She seemed calm and confident. If she was surprised by the waitress's comment, it only lasted for a second. Now, she was in complete control of herself, as always. Well, *most* of the time, James corrected himself, remembering how hysterical she could be at times.

Learning Tip

To rule something out – vyloučit něco z uvažování

so / sew = obvyklá slovní hříčka, různá slova – stejná výslovnost; konzultuj českou verzi pro představu, jak to použít, když to nejde doslovně přeložit

2.6.6

For goodness' sake, when someone loses both legs, they're allowed to have weak moments. That would drive me crazy for sure.

He liked his comfort, and he knew it. He did nothing more than what was necessary. And an injury like that would mean treatments, exercises, sacrifice and a lot of self-discipline. He wasn't built for that. But Julie shouldn't **take advantage of** it.

As soon as the talk turns to her legs, James immediately **backs off**. And he never gets his way, not even when it comes to something as simple as making her finally tell him the truth.

You're always asking questions – Julie would get angry. And you don't care that these are things we agreed never to mention again. We both wanted to forget them. Not as completely as you did... but just move on and live like it never happened.

"So, there's no baby then."

"No."

"There's no baby because... when we had the accident... you..." He hesitated.

Maybe there had been a baby, and now there wasn't one. He wanted to know, but it was a sensitive topic.

Learning Tip

To take advantage of something or someone – využít něčeho nebo někoho

To back off – vycouvat (ze situace)

2.6.7

All night long, Julie's words echoed in his mind: "It wasn't your child. It was Tony's. He really wanted a child and promised to take care of me. So, I agreed, and then I met you, and in the meantime, I got pregnant with Tony. It was really difficult for me.

On the one hand, Tony's child meant (that) I was secure for life. **On the other hand**, there was you.

And the waitress remembers us sitting here all those years ago and me getting sick. I started bleeding. She called the ambulance for me. She thought the baby was born. But I miscarried."

"You said there was no baby," James insisted.

Julie replied coldly: "There was a baby. Only it wasn't yours. I was greedy, and I still wanted Tony's money, so I didn't tell him about the **miscarriage**. He's so rich, he doesn't even know what to do with all the money. I don't know how I thought I'd **get away with it** in the end. And then... we had the accident, and I told him I lost the baby in the accident. He didn't ask any questions. He probably thought he had lost his last chance to have a son. But I lost my legs. So now he takes care of me because, in his eyes, I'm still the mother of his unborn child."

Learning Tip

to get away with something = někomu něco projde, většinou negativního, bez trestu nebo bez povšimnutí

2.6.8

He was surprised that Julie wanted him to stay at her place for the night after he had forced her **confess** such things.

She was right – there are some things, moments, and situations that people would rather forget. Just like he now wanted to forget what he had learned from his uncle's journals. He could stop reading them, but he needed to know more. He had to. He wanted to be free to choose whether to remember or forget. No one would decide for him what he should or shouldn't know. Not even Julie. Someday, she'd have to tell him everything she knew.

At breakfast, James carefully started talking about the accident. *So, what were we arguing about? Why did you make up that strange story about a child?*

Julie sipped her tea, staring at the surface of the table without looking at James. She seemed to be thinking up a new story. James was ready to take her next confession **with a grain of salt**. He wanted to hear it, but he saw it as just another version of the truth. He had already heard too much from her.

Learning Tip

with a grain of salt – s rezervou

2.6.9

She said that on that day in the car, he told her (that) he was also going to have a baby with someone.

Tony was looking for a mother, and a woman was looking for a father because she and her husband couldn't have children. James's sperm could save the day. Apparently, they wanted to do it in a poetic way, like at Camelot Castle, when the **infertile** King Arthur invited the knight Lancelot to do the same for him. James wasn't going to let Julie manipulate him into her own fantasy again. This was too much.

"So, you told me that your child was from some Mr. Tony, someone I didn't **even** know. And now, to make it **even**, you're saying I did the same thing? I fathered a child for someone? Do you want me to believe that I have a five-year-old kid somewhere out there?!" He paused.

Adele's son. He was five. And he was born around the right time. *For God's sake! Maybe she isn't lying this time.*

He tried to remember all the conversations he'd had with Adele. Was there any hint? *Kevin*. They had gotten along well. So well, that Kevin had chosen him as a "substitute father"? What if he had? And everyone was so relieved when James got hit on the head one day and forgot about their secret **for good**.

Learning Tip

not even = ani

make it even = vyrovnat se (even numbers = sudá čísla)

for good = nadobro, navždy

2.6.10

How did they do it? Really, like Arthur at Camelot? Did they both get drunk and sleep with Adele, so that when she got pregnant, either of them could be the father, and Kevin would just go along with it?

Or did James meet with Adele alone? In a hotel? In his place? He didn't think so. He tried to figure it out, but he had no idea. The past was still completely in the mist.

He believed that he would recognize the truth when he hears it. That it would start to feel familiar. And when he felt nothing, he doubted that it really happened.

He just couldn't believe this story.

And maybe Adele didn't believe (that) he had truly forgotten either, because he brought the little boy presents every year. For a completely different reason, but who knows what Adele was thinking! Maybe she believed he was just pretending to forget, so he wouldn't have to look Kevin in the eye.

He ran his finger over the tablecloth, hoping it might help him think more clearly. *Is this true? **Could this have happened?** I meet Julie, we date, she gets pregnant by someone else, has a miscarriage. I stay with her, then I get a stranger pregnant. We still stay together, and then we go on a trip, and bang! – everything goes dark. It's over. I forget everything, including Julie.*

It was driving him crazy.

He had heard so many stories, and none of them brought him closer to his real memories. It was all Julie's imagination. Maybe. And maybe some of it was true, but he couldn't tell. He didn't know what to believe anymore.

True or False?

- f) The waitress confused Julie and James with another couple who used to visit the café.
- g) James was angry because Julie had hidden their child from him.
- h) James believed everything Julie said about the baby without doubts.

2.6.11

Not even the notes in their journal helped him. The things they wrote and put in the safe **could have happened** at any time. Time didn't matter. It was just their fantasies, their dreams, their desires. Some of them happened, maybe, but most didn't.

James started to vaguely remember how he had met Julie. Julie was friends with his uncle. She lived in the house across the street and often came to the antique store to read – that's what she had told him, and that's all he could remember.

She liked to listen to his uncle. And that's how she met James. She knew that the old man had died, and when the antique shop opened again about three weeks after the funeral, she came in. But James wasn't opening the shop for customers. He was opening it to paint the window and door frames.

They started talking. He spoke Czech very uncertainly. Julie offered to teach him.

She had read almost everything in the bookshop, she knew her way around, and she knew his uncle's system. She also knew about the vault that James had no idea about. She showed him where to find the key and what was inside. She knew about the journals, but she didn't read them.

Apparently, his uncle hadn't let her. "Be patient, girl. When I'm gone and someone opens that vault, you'll learn things. Even about yourself, **pussycat**."

James was curious what he might learn about Julie, and he really missed the simple "ctrl+f" command from his computer that would help him find the right passage in a second. Instead, he had to work through the Czech *calligraphy* and try to understand his uncle's unique style and unusual vocabulary.

Who was it?

- i) Who was the father of Julie's unborn baby?
- j) Who did James think his son could be?

2.7 Sworn Enemies

2.7.1

She saw Julie standing in the doorway and quickly checked her calendar. It was just a reflex. Sometimes she wasn't sure which client to expect. But she was certain that she wasn't expecting Julie.

"We don't have a consultation today," she said, trying to **buy time** while flipping through her diary. But she knew that Julie wasn't here for a consultation. Because James had just run out the door a minute ago.

He spent the night with Julie and then came straight to Dana's. Even though they hadn't talked since their last argument, he suddenly called and said that he was coming over. He always did that when he had a strange dream or when Julie gave him another hint, and he needed to talk about it with Dana. He was still trying to bring back some memories.

Then, they always ended up on the therapy couch. She glanced at it and noticed that she hadn't tidied it up.

She had just gone into the bathroom to freshen up, and suddenly, Julie had appeared at the door. James probably hadn't closed it. It was almost eleven, and he had rushed out to open his shop on time.

When Dana looked out the window after him, all she saw was a blur. She hadn't noticed Julie. Maybe Julie had been hiding somewhere to avoid **running into** James, like she had done the first time.

Learning Tip

to run into somebody – na někoho narazit ve smyslu setkat se s ním nečekaně

2.7.2

"Would you like to make an appointment, Miss Vašková?" Dana asked, looking Julie straight in the eyes.

"Let's not call each other *miss* since we both sleep with the same guy."

"Excuse me?" Dana hadn't expected such a direct approach.

"Don't try to fool me, you bitch," Julie said, her eyes flashing with anger.

"Whatever," Dana shrugged. She wasn't going to fight back. She was going to play Julie's game to figure out what she was up to. "What guy are you talking about?"

"Tsk," Julie grinned. "Are you trying to tell me that with your looks, flat chest, and squinty eyes, you've chased off more than one?"

Dana leaned against the table and took a deep breath. It was a cruel insult, but she was a psychologist. She knew how to handle situations like this. It was her job. The right approach might reveal the true character of Julie's visit. Dana hadn't trusted her from the beginning, and now she had the chance to make that clear.

She threw up her hands. "If you mean James, the foreigner you were teaching Czech some years ago – he absolutely loves it when I cross my legs behind his neck. He's in heaven."

"You disgusting bitch!" Julie shouted, swinging her cane at Dana.

Doing that, she lost her balance and started to fall backward. Dana reacted quickly and helped Julie land in the chair and not on the floor.

True or False?

- k) Julie came to Dana's office because she had a scheduled consultation.
- l) James had visited Dana earlier the same morning.
- m) Julie spoke to Dana politely and calmly.
- n) Dana lost control and hit Julie during their argument.

2.7.3

Dana wanted to punch her, just to **mess up** her angelic face a bit. But she didn't want Julie to get seriously hurt by falling on her back. Dana wanted to **humiliate** her, but that was all.

No one was going to mock her for her squinted eye without consequences.

That's why she had studied psychology. She learned how to defend herself from people who tried to hurt her. And Julie had just asked for it. Few people had the same level of disability as Julie – she had lost her legs. What's one squinting eye compared to that?

Julie took a deep breath and tried to sit up straight in the chair to gain some **dignity**. Then she said, "How can a therapist be such a monster? How can you take advantage of someone's weakness?"

"We're not having a professional conversation, are we? You're **calling me names**, and I don't understand why. I mean, if you've known James for so long, you must know what he's like. I'm sure he wasn't any different before. Or do you think you're going to change him by telling him your stories?"

"Did he tell you something?"

"He tells me everything. He's so selfish, he even tells me that he's sleeping with you. Even when he's about to unzip his pants and have sex with me."

Julie shuddered. She didn't want to hear that. She sat up straight and said loudly and firmly, "James loves me."

Learning Tip

humiliate – ponížit někoho

dignity – důstojnost

to call somebody names – nadávat mu (nejen vynadat, ale užívat vulgární výrazy jako pojmenování dané osoby)

2.7.4

"He loves **no one but himself**. Haven't you noticed that? Is he interested in you? Does he ever ask you anything?" Dana began to ask questions as if Julie were one of her desperate clients.

Julie rolled her eyes. "Oh God, does he ask? He never stops. He asks millions and millions of questions. It gets tiring sometimes."

Dana nodded. "And he's asking questions about you. He wants to know what you've done in the past **five years**, what you did yesterday, if you need help with anything, when your birthday is – that kind of thing, right?"

Julie closed her eyes.

No, James hadn't asked her any of those questions. If she hadn't told him about Tony's foundation when they went to England, he wouldn't have known what **she did for a living** or how she managed to live in such a convenient, accessible flat. She was happy that he didn't care about her missing legs and accepted her as she was. He didn't question her, and everything was easy.

There were many things she didn't want to talk about, and she was grateful to him for being so focused on the present moment. Maybe she wanted to ignore the deeper truth: He asked a million questions, but only about himself. He wanted to find out more about the accident and his life. He didn't care how often she needed to see doctors, that she had to take medications. He never asked if she needed any help.

But she couldn't admit any of that now to the woman who was stealing him from her.

Learning Tip

no one but himself – nikoho kromě sebe ("but" může mít i význam "kromě = except")

to do something for a living – něčím se živit

2.7.5

"I also like that he ignores my eye," Dana said, as if she could read Julie's mind. "It **even** seems like he can't see it. Not that he tolerates it or respects it. He just doesn't notice it at all. He's only interested in himself and how he's doing. And when he feels good with you, he can be charming. But there are limits. He'll never give you a present, never offer you any help. Only when he needs something."

"So why don't you kick him out if he's so bad? Next time, send him away. You don't have to keep him. Just kick him out and leave him to me!"

"There's a **good chance** I'll do that soon. I'm getting tired of his constant complaining. It's too much for just a little bit of sex," Dana said.

She quickly tried to **convince** herself that it wasn't true. That she was only playing along with Julie to see how she would react, what she would do, and what she would say to James.

But deep down, she doubted him. She was really starting to believe it. He really was like that. Yes. And she almost despised him.

True or False?

- o) Dana studied psychology to protect herself from people who tried to hurt her.
- p) James often asked Julie about her life and feelings.
- q) Dana and Julie both thought James was selfish.

2.8 Vladimir

2.8.1

After the first drink, Sonia got upset. She started explaining that her boyfriend lived with them **on and off**, didn't have a permanent job, always found money somehow, took care of the family for a while, and then he stopped.

The year when Sonia caused the accident and went to jail, he wasn't living with them. He hasn't shown up since and hasn't cared about his son for five years.

James started feeling **dizzy** from Sonia's story. She didn't like their uncle, but she had a lot in common with him. At least in the way she gave information. It was total chaos. James couldn't keep track of who she was talking about, because everyone was "this guy" or "that guy." It was hard to follow.

After a while, James stopped trying to understand and just let her talk. Maybe he would still learn something, and he would be able to respond at the right moment.

She talked about her unreliable partner, the father of her son. Then she said something about her son Vladimir. **Apparently**, in the past, one of them – James assumed it was her partner, not her son – had **convinced** her to ask James for her share of the inheritance. After all, she was his sister.

She said her partner was always focused on getting money and benefits.

Learning Tip

on and off – chvíli jo a chvíli ne (jsou to slovíčka také pro zapnutí přístrojů a ten podobný význam to má i v kontextu zde)

2.8.2

Sonia was worried that their son might be the same, especially **since** he lived without a mother or father for a few years. While she was in prison, her partner didn't care about their son.

James hoped that once Sonia became a co-owner of his small business and was financially secure, her son, Vladimir, would calm down. And then James wouldn't be responsible for them anymore. They were his family, but they were not like him at all. They lived in a completely different world and had completely different ideas about life.

Today, they were meeting at Adele's to work out the details of the property ownership. It would take some time to sort it out. Afterward, they went for a drink, and now James had a headache from Sonia's **endless chatter**.

Then Sonia mentioned some jewellery. James looked up. It was their mother's jewellery. He remembered the vault. So, the pouch of jewellery had existed. Someone had sent it to him from Melbourne, and he had given it to Sonia.

Sonia didn't like their mother because of what she had done to her. So, she sold the jewels, and by doing that, she cut her mother off — just like her mother had once cut *her* off.

James understood that this could help Sonia **deal with** the past.

Learning Tip

to deal with something – zde "vypořádat se" ale může znamenat i "řešit něco, něčím se zabývat"

2.8.3

Now he was happy that he knew what had happened with the jewellery. It had been in the vault.

It was frustrating when he couldn't remember something, and it was just as frustrating when he remembered something that didn't make sense. Now it was finally clear.

That evening, he finished reading the last volume of his uncle's journals. A few months before his death, the notes suddenly stopped. He probably wasn't strong enough to write anymore. Sonia had mentioned during her first meeting with James that their uncle was old and sick. And she also said that he was cruel. James now agreed with her.

Uncle had also written about Julie. She seemed to like him when she talked about him, but he wrote about her in a disgusting way, with disrespect.

James knew that Julie was a bit strange, but he thought it was because of her disability. He couldn't believe what his uncle wrote about her.

On the other hand, his uncle couldn't be fully trusted. He had written bad things about Sonia, too. It showed something about him: that he was cruel, jealous, and unhappy.

It probably didn't show anything about Sonia or Julie.

True or False?

- r) Sonia's boyfriend was always reliable and took good care of their family.
- s) James found it easy to understand Sonia's story because she explained everything clearly.
- t) Sonia sold their mother's jewellery to cut ties with the past.
- u) Uncle's journals described Julie in a very positive way.