

126, Long Acre  
London WC2

3rd November 1928

Dear Sir,

I write this post upon your leaving a meeting. I am going to be frank - please pardon any offence that I cause. I am not certain of Dr. Highsmith's motives in this case but I have a sense of curiosity in you in which I have decided to place my trust. I find myself in need to unburden myself of things that I have left unsaid. I hesitate to put these on paper but nevertheless I proceed.

Contrary to possible appearance I am anxious to help Alexander. His father was a good friend of mine so I have known him since he was just a small boy. He is decent, gentle young fellow who, I think, falls in with circumstances that mislead him.

I will talk of my first visit to Alexander in St. Angles in June of 1927. Dr. Highsmith told me he was unimpaired and lucid and I found this to be the case despite some periodic confusion and whisper. But his conversation was odd indeed. He seemed quite unlike the young man I knew. One of the few references in a talk that I could make sense of referred to the book he authored and upon my return to London I undertook to look at it. You may be sure that five or six years ago Alexander published a volume called *The Walker by the Lake*. I had never picked it up before - I believed that it would be difficult for me to digest - but though much within it was indeed bizarre or puzzling, somehow it held me. Certain words and phrases therein reminded me of Alexander's talk at the symposium and I could see that these writings spoke to the root of his incapacity. Oddly, sections of the narrative were in German: I transcribed and later translated these passages.

My second visit to Alexander was about six months later, the first, just before Christmas. On this occasion I found him seated and correspondingly uncommunicative. Anxious that my journey not be a fruitless one I thought to try an experiment. I had brought some papers with me, transcriptions of his book, and I began to read out one of the German passages in that language. I am not sure what I expected for this. I suppose I was merely seeking a reaction of some kind. I stumbled over the phrases. I am not skilled at languages, but then Alexander responded. He spoke the text along with me. As he did, I stopped reading myself and tried to engage him. What happened next is difficult to say.

He kept speaking now and I could see he was ~~overly~~ excited so I was reading out to touch his shoulder. As I did suddenly felt my work and the next thing I knew I was on the floor. I was inexplicably paralyzed. The maid came and stood at my side, giving me assistance, and Alexander stood above me. His face was his old one and very sad. "I am very sorry, Doctor. I cannot change what you saw." And then I remembered what that was.