

George M. Grow
Honey Fungus
Comedy

The Final Days of Humankind



Preface by Kattia Watson

Why are genius and madness so closely related?

A Hungarian researcher discovered why they are often so inter-linked: a gene called Neuregulin 1 which is already known for an increased incidence of psychoses, has been found to promote creativity.

And not every genius is phlegmatic, ironic and sarcastic when not properly challenged.

The protagonist Dr. Weingartner, bored to death at his job at the provincial Geological Institute in Concord, New Hampshire, is noted for his bureaucratic foot-dragging and crumpled look while shuffling through the endless hallways of the Institute, from room to room, lecture hall to lecture hall, collecting irrelevant items. This does not make the young doctor a comic-tragic figure such as Nabokov's Professor Pnin nor into an anti-hero, a loser, not a lost or uprooted figure always alienated from

everyday life, but rather a person like any other. We can all fall victim to the fate that overtakes him, no matter how smart, experienced or well-off we are. And just as the honey fungus can grow to cover several square miles, weigh hundreds of tons and live to be thousands of years old, the fate that Dr. Weingartner experiences is a problem that encompasses all of us as soon as we let our boring everyday life overtake us.

But if Dr. Weingartner were not some sort of genius, it would all blow by him unnoticed: boredom disrupts every metric, comfort degrades his life. It is not necessarily that he lacks the energy to break out of his familiar surroundings, but it is still difficult for him to change the direction of his life. He knows the signs of a life gone astray. He wants to just start over again and be happy but yet he remains a prisoner of the monotonous, soul-crushing surroundings that don't offer him any sort of long-term options.

And so he has no reservations about rejoicing over the upheaval taking place everywhere with masses of mud overflowing from the sewers. A disconcerting, disastrous scenario which literally allows Weingartner a breath of fresh air - while out doing field research. Events lead him to Peterborough, pretty much the end of the world, where boredom suddenly ends. Is Dr. Weingartner ready to become a hero in the face of the unspeakably hideous phenomenon and save humanity from an apocalyptic threat?

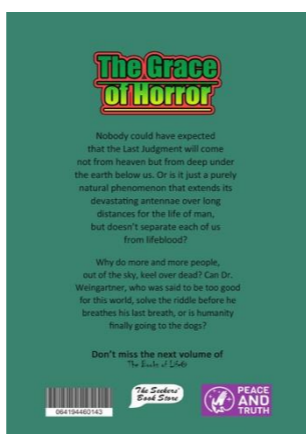
Starting with the very first scene, which gives a hint of the outcome of this horrific comedy, we find the lifeless body of Dr. Weingartner.

The young Doctor has hung himself in his wardrobe. An astounding feat: he is taller than the rack he has hung himself from. Was the deceased really just too good for this world, or was it the unresistingly accepted boredom that put the noose around his neck after failing pitifully in the heat of events?

But the protagonist and necktie fetishist is not in the thrall of a split personality like Robert Louis Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll changing into the despicable Mr. Hyde. But the effect is the same for both: Good and Evil in the human soul separate themselves from each other. For the good-hearted Dr. Jekyll with the aid of a serum and the good-hearted Dr. Weingartner by means of the boredom that suppresses his ability to enjoy life, until it casts its shadow over everything and drags the world down with it into the abyss.

A bittersweet comedy with memorable, lively characters spinning further webs into an expressive classic of modern world literature.

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