

- L The narrator feels a mud-patch on forehead; the mud-patch turns into a coin; he buys "The Writings of a Madman" by Der Nister (p.1)

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"THE WRITINGS OF A MADMAN" BY DER NISTER

- K Der Nister complains about the bears he has to feed.
I When he last came home, they were there waiting. He fed the first 8 bears one finger each, but the ninth bear bit off the 2 remaining fingers. The tenth bear wants his heart; he delays him by telling him the story of his riches. (pp.1ff)

THE STORY DER NISTER TELLS THE BEARS

- A Der Nister uses his "own ladder" to go to the high places; he spends much time in the beautiful parts, then crosses the frontier to a country of mud and filth. He is unable to eat, becomes ill, and decides to leave. As he leaves, the inhabitants revile him and throw mud at him until he is covered with mud. (pp.3ff)
B He crosses the frontier of a beautiful land; the mud has turned to gold. He is treated with great deference, and begins to buy up the whole land. (pp.5-8)
C He wants to be ruler over the whole country. The paramount ruler sends Der Nister his footstool (which looks like a crown). Der Nister removes the final mud-patch from his forehead, which is the best gold of all, and decides to arrange a ball, and challenges the paramount ruler. The ball takes place; the ruler comes, takes the crown from his own head and places it on Der Nister's head. (pp.8f)
D Der Nister begins to drink, shouts that he wants the Star Bear to come down and dance with him. The dance begins; the lights go out, and the only light is from a star in the Star Bear's head. Der Nister shouts in his drunken pride; the star in the Star Bear's head goes out, and he pushes Der Nister into the pit down past the ladder into the lower world, telling him he will have to feed 10 earth bears. (pp.10ff)
E Having recovered from the fall, Der Nister finds a bit of mud on his forehead. He believes himself rich; he makes trouble, and eventually gets in a bloody fight and is incarcerated in a madhouse. He insults the keeper, is knocked unconscious, and awakes having no regrets that he has lost his estates. (pp.12-15)
G He finds 2 other inmates in his bed one night; they ask him why he does not have enough to feed himself. (p.15)

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THE STORY DER NISTER TELLS THE TWO INMATES

- F Der Nister tells how he had grown rich, danced with the Star Bear, and was incarcerated. He goes about inside his head; once while doing so he meets the 10 bears, who demand food of him. he pawns his candles (the stars) to provide food for the bears. (pp.15f)

- H The 2 other inmates trade food for his candles; this happens several times. (pp.17f)
I He feeds 9 bears 10 fingers; the last one wants his heart. (p. 18)

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- J Der Nister asks the bears to spare him; they agree. (p.19)
K His fellow inmates recommend that he write down his story and send it to the madhouse doctor, complaining about the bears he has to feed. He is waiting for the answer. (pp.19f)