

For years her own father was known as a *bocher*—a student of the Talmud, the ancient, many-volumed codification of Jewish law and tradition. Yet Moriz Reizes must have had a very private inner world where he nursed his own hopes and dreams, probably influenced by the Haskalah, the Jewish emancipation movement that met strong opposition from both the orthodox rabbinate and the Hasidim in Galicia. One day he announced to his pious, simple parents that he had passed the general matriculation examinations and, worse still, intended to study medicine. He supported himself while in medical school (presumably in Lvov) by tutoring. Many years later he told his daughter that when he was taking his first examinations he knew that his mother was at home praying that he would fail. By the time he passed all his examinations he had broken away completely from his orthodox tradition, although he never cut the ties with his family.

As a child, Melanie loved hearing about her father's courage during a cholera epidemic. In answer to an appeal for doctors to go out to the Polish villages, he not only went but, unlike the other doctors who would stand at the windows telling the victims what to do, Moriz Reizes boldly entered the cottages and treated the patients as he would have done if they had been suffering from any other complaint. When he returned, he found a letter from his mother imploring him not to risk his life. Whether this act of heroism actually happened or not is immaterial; Klein believed that it had.

He was married twice, but Klein is vague about the details of the first marriage. It probably took place prior to his medical studies, because he was married in Jewish rites to a girl he had never seen prior to the wedding. The marriage was unsuccessful and was "soon dissolved"—in Klein's reckoning, when her father was about thirty-seven. No reason is given, but it is an indication of his independence and rebelliousness.

He was in his mid-forties when, on a visit to Vienna, he met a black-haired beauty, Libussa Deutsch, who was staying at the same boardinghouse. He immediately fell in love with this "educated, witty, and interesting" young woman, with her fair complexion, fine features, and expressive eyes. Her death certificate indicates that she was born in 1852, twenty-four years after her future husband. If she was such a beauty and the daughter of a rabbi, why did she marry this Polish stranger with whom there are no signs that she was infatuated?

In actual fact, Reizes was a general practitioner in Deutsch-Kreutz, a small town (which later became Burgenland, Austria) about seventy miles from Vienna, two or three miles inside the Hungarian border. Libussa, on the other hand, lived not in Deutsch-Kreutz (where Klein situates her) but in Warbotz (Verbotz) in Slovakia. She was named after Libussa, the mythical founder of Prague who in the nineteenth century became the symbol of Czech national identity. Klein's failure to give her mother's real birthplace could be accounted for if she despised the Slovaks, particularly as Slovakian Jews spoke Yiddish. Her mother, however, was proud of her origins and in a letter of 1911,