

### Karl Extract

‘You don’t understand,’ said Karl passionately. ‘Everything’s so easy for you! You just sit at your desk and put pen to paper, and stories come pouring out! You don’t know what it is to sweat and strain for hours on end with no ideas at all, or to struggle with materials that break, and tools that go blunt, or to tear your hair out trying to find a new variation on the same old theme – I tell you, Fritz, it’s a wonder I haven’t blown my brains out long before this! Well, it won’t be long now. Tomorrow morning you can all laugh at me. Karl, the failure. Karl, the hopeless. Karl, the first apprentice to fail in hundreds of years of clock making. I don’t care. I shall be lying at the bottom of the river, under the ice.’

[...]

Putzi the cat, waking from his snooze on the hearth, came and rubbed his back against Karl’s legs. Karl kicked him savagely away.