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## Looking for a Walk

### **Dramatis Personae**

- Carl Ehler: friend of Leonhard Euler, an amateur mathematician, the Mayor of Königsberg.
- Klaus: employee of Carl Ehler, an honest man but at times a little dense
- Lorelei: Klaus' love interest, a very difficult woman

Klaus: Come for a walk with me!

Lorelei: No.

Klaus: Come on Lorelei, just for an hour. Lets go for a walk!

Lorelei: Klaus. No.

Klaus: Why not?

Lorelei: I don't like you.

Klaus: That's not true and we both know it.

Lorelei: Oh do we now? Are you a mind reader?

Klaus: No... I mean—

Lorelei: Are you calling me a liar?

Klaus: No! I would never—

Lorelei: Then what do you mean?

Klaus: Nothing! I just meant... You seem as if you do like me.

Lorelei: And because your ego tells you that I must like you, that makes it true?

Klaus: Lorelei!

Lorelei: I'm not going for a walk with you.

Klaus: Please!

Lorelei: No!

Klaus: What would I have to do to get you to go for a walk with me?

Lorelei: Well...

Ehler: Dear Leonhard, I hope that this letter finds you well. I have been doing some mathematical thinking, after a fashion, as you know I often do, and I have come up with a problem that my very limited mathematical capacity does not allow me to solve. You see there are seven bridges here in Königsberg, and it occurs to me that it should be possible to walk across all seven of them without crossing one of them twice, but I haven't been able to do so thus far. I think there must be a mathematical way to determine how one can do that, and I propose that the great mind of Leonhard Euler is certainly up to the challenge. I am enclosing a map of the city for your perusal. I look forward to hearing back from you. How is your family? How is Russia? How is your work? Tell me all about it. Sincerely, Carl Ehler.

Klaus: Lorelei! Lorelei!

Lorelei: Stop yelling! I'm here.

Klaus: Come for a walk with me!

Lorelei: We've been through this Klaus...

Klaus: Oh come on, stop being so difficult and come for a walk.

Lorelei: Difficult? I'm being difficult? Why on earth would you want to go for a walk with someone who is so 'difficult?' You should go find another, more compliant girl to take on your walk.

Klaus: Don't be like that?

Lorelei: Like what? What am I like Klaus?

Klaus: Nevermind... Will you please just come for a walk?

Lorelei: Nope.

Klaus: Lorelei...

Lorelei: Don't give me that. We've been through this before... I wouldn't go for a walk with you last time, and I'm not going with you this time.

Klaus: Why not?

Lorelei: Because.

Klaus: That's not a reason.

Lorelei: Have you met my condition?

Klaus: Well... no.

Lorelei: Then I'm not coming.

Klaus: But I'm working on it, so we might as well pretend that I've done it, that way when I do we won't have wasted all this time.

Lorelei: Nice try... Goodbye Klaus.

Klaus: See you later Lorelei.

Ehler: Dear Leonhard, I was very happy to get your letter. I am glad that everything is going well for you there at the Academy. Your work on polygons and polyhedra was fascinating. Speaking of which, I don't mean to be a bother, but I notice that you didn't address my mathematical question. Has a lowly politician managed to stump you? I'm joking of course, but I would really appreciate your answer soon. My curiosity you see is quite overcoming my patience. I am very eager to have the problem solved. Sincerely, Carl Ehler.

Klaus: Hey there!

Lorelei: Nope.

Klaus: I didn't even say anything.

Lorelei: I know. I was being preemptive.

Klaus: Why would you do that? You didn't even know what I was going to say.

Lorelei: You were going to ask me to go for a walk.

Klaus: So who's the mind reader now?

Lorelei: The difference is that I'm right. Aren't I?

Klaus: No!

Lorelei: Liar.

Klaus: Okay, well maybe, but that doesn't mean you can always assume you know what I'm going to say before I say it. That's rude!

Lorelei: Fine Klaus. I apologize.

Klaus: I accept your apology... So... do you want to go for a walk?

Lorelei: Klaus!

Klaus: What?

Lorelei: No!

Klaus: Why?

Lorelei: I've said it before Klaus. I will not go for a walk with you until you meet my condition.

Klaus: I'm trying!

Lorelei: Well, either try harder or give up.

Klaus: I'm trying as hard as I can.

Lorelei: Well I guess that only leaves you with one option... [Walks away]

Ehler: Dear Leonhard, I must say that I was less than pleased with your response to my letter. Saying that my problem "bears little relationship to mathematics" is absurd. The question of the seven bridges almost certainly has a solution in geometry, which is, if I am not mistaken, a branch of mathematics. So I do not have any qualms with asking a mathematician to find the answer.

Perhaps the time has come for me to explain the importance of the question. There is a man who works for me, a young man, a good boy, but not always bright. He has become deeply enamored with a girl who seems determined not to have him. After refusing him, repeatedly, she finally said that she would only see him if he could walk her across all the bridges in Konigsberg without repeating any. The poor boy must have drawn two hundred maps before he came to me for help, but as I said in my previous letter, this is far beyond my mathematical capacity. Surely you can have a little pity and help him. You've been blessed with a lovely wife and family. Why not share the blessing. Thank you Leonhard. Sincerely Carl Ehler.

Klaus: Lorelei!

Lorelei: Klaus. Not again, please.

Klaus: Just hear me out.

Lorelei: Haven't you given up yet?

Klaus: No. I'm trying harder.

Lorelei: What do you mean?

Klaus: I'm drawing more maps. I'm trying more paths. I've asked Mister Ehler for help. I will find a way.

Lorelei: Klaus, just go home. Find another girl to draw your maps for. Leave me alone.

Klaus: If I wanted another girl I wouldn't have to draw maps... It would be much easier to love another girl, but I don't. I love you!

Lorelei: That's a stupid decision Klaus, and I could never love a man who makes bad decisions.

Ehler: Dear Leonhard. Thank you for getting back to me so promptly. I appreciate your help. The theorem you came up with to solve the problem is brilliant; I

never would have been able to come up with something so elegant. As I'm sure you are aware, I am now faced with a dilemma. Should I tell Klaus the answer? Or should I let him continue to search until he himself decides to stop. I don't want to crush his spirit, but it seems cruel not to tell him... Thank you for all your help. Sincerely Carl Ehler.

Klaus: Hey there Lorelei.

Lorelei: Klaus. I thought I told you to leave me alone.

Klaus: I found the answer.

Lorelei: What do you mean?

Klaus: I found the answer to your request.

Lorelei: You did?

Klaus: Yep.

Lorelei: Then I suppose I owe you a walk, don't I?

Klaus: No.

Lorelei: Why? That was the deal.

Klaus: It's impossible.

Lorelei: What?

Klaus: There is no walk that crosses all seven bridges without repeating one. It doesn't exist.

Lorelei: Who says?

Klaus: Mister Ehler wrote a letter to his friend, Doctor Euler, he's a mathematician at the academy in Saint Petersburg. Doctor Euler came up with a rule to solve these kinds of problems. It's always true, and it says there is no way.

Lorelei: So you can't win. You can never meet my condition.

Klaus: That's correct, you have escaped from me.

Lorelei: You must be crushed.

Klaus: Well I'm not very happy...

Lorelei: Why don't we go for a walk, and I'll try to cheer you up.

Klaus: That sounds amazing.

Ehler: Dear Leonhard, I suppose it all works out for the best. I saw the two lovebirds walking along the river yesterday completely undeterred by their having to cross one bridge twice. That being said, I've submitted a proposal to the city council, suggesting that they put in an eighth bridge. You never know when someone else might need to cross all of them exactly once.