

Am kürzeren Ende der Sonnenallee

Informationen & Vokabeln

N.B. nur **fettgedruckte Wörter** werden getestet
schwache Verben nur als Infinitive gelistet; starke Verben mit allen 3 Formen
| zwischen Präfix und Verb zeigt ein trennbares Verb an (separable-prefix verbs)

Kapitel 1

The main point is that Michael Kuppisch (Micha) is trying to imagine what could have brought about the absurd separation of the Sonnenallee, the street where he lives, into a very long stretch on the western side of the Berlin Wall, and the short segment on the Eastern side where he lives in the shadow of the Wall. → In this chapter, we read a humorous story he invents as to how this could have come about. This fits with the tagline of the movie on which the book is based: "Ich wohne in der DDR. Ansonsten [=other than that] hab ich keine Probleme": the humorous premise is that whatever problems Micha has are the result of his living in the DDR, and that if the Sonnenallee hadn't been divided in this absurd way, but rather had just been part of West Berlin in its entirety, he wouldn't have these problems.

Kapitel 2

Seite 7

- sich treffen, trafen sich, haben sich getroffen = to meet

Seite 8

- **am Platz rumhängen = to hang around the "area"** (which sounds a lot cooler than "going to the playground" when you're 15)
- verbieten, verbat, verboten = forbidden (this word will come up a lot in this book → learn it now!)
- **auf|nehmen, nahm ... auf, aufgenommen = to record** [on tape - Tonband]
- wenn es hieß = if one heard/if it was said
- **aus welchem Grund = for what reason**
- von vorne bis hinten = from front to back, i.e. completely
- **die Stimmung = mood**
- wiegend = swaying
- **bemerkten = to notice**
- der ABV = der Abschnittsbevollmächtigte (this was an abbreviation-happy time...) = a minor official with authority [=Vollmacht] in this "section" [Abschnitt].
- **plötzlich = suddenly**

Seite 10

- aus|machen = switch off
- **ganz unschuldig tun = to act totally innocent [tun, tat, getan]**
- **die Begeisterung = der Enthusiasmus**
- dufte = neat
- meinte = sagte (you'll see this a lot!)
- Wuschel ist einer von Michas Freunden. Wenn man einen Wuschelkopf hat, bedeutet das, dass man wilde Haare hat.
- **beliebt = populär**
- fetzig = a geeky term for "cool"
- der Dicke = another of the friends, named for being a bit overweight
- Das heißt ja = I mean yes

Seite 11

- **sich unterhalten über + Akk = to talk about something**
- Herzlichen Glückwunsch = (heartfelt) congratulations (*this is the German formula for all congratulations*)
- weshalb = warum
- ist der bei mir abzugeben = it (the passport) is to be given to me (if found)
- ganz genau = very precisely
- **brav = well-behaved, docile [NOT "brave"]**.
- nicken = to nod

Seite 12

- etwas einfallen, fiel ... ein, ist eingefallen = to remember something
- wem seine? = wessen
- **eigentlich = actually**
- vor Schrecken = in horror
- **sich vor|stellen = to imagine**
- munter = cheerfully
- zu|trauen = to be capable of
- herab|setzen = to demote
- **schikanieren = to harass, to hassle, to victimize**

Seite 13

- **nach vorne = forward**
- die Dienstwaffe = the weapon (i.e.gun) carried by a policeman as part of his job [Dienst].

Kapitel 3

Seite 14

- *Note the narrative is looking ahead here: the love letter that will be lost in the Todesstreifen has not yet been written.*
- für sein Leben gern = more than anything
- **das Ereignis = the event**
- aus dem Grenzübergang = from the border crossing
- **der Wachturm = watch tower**
- das Fernglas, -"er = binoculars
- **sogar = even**
- verstummen = stumm werden
- **etwas Genaues = something specific**

Seite 15

- **das Verhältnis = relationship**
- **fremd = (here:) unknown, mysterious**
- ein uneheliches Kind = a child born out of wedlock
- ab|biegen, bog ... ab, abgebogen = to take a turn
- das Standesamt = the government office where weddings are performed and registered in Germany
- die im achten Monat war: i.e. she was 8 months pregnant
- sich aus|kennen, kannte ... aus, ausgekannt = to know one's way around
- **der Grenzübergang = the border crossing point**
- umherlaufen, lief, ist gelaufen lief = to run about
- **wütend = angrily**
- **aufgeregt sein = agitated/excited**
- **gründlich = thorough(ly)**
- sich beschäftigten mit + Dat. = to occupy oneself with something/someone
- **verhören = to interrogate**
- **schaffen, schaffte, geschafft = here: to make it**

Seite 16

- eine AWO, also das Motorrad = an AWO, i.e. *the* (ultimate) motorcycle
- **hinaus = outside [direction] ≠ hinein = inside (siehe auch: heraus, herein)**
- zu Gesicht bekommen = to get to see face to face
- ihm fiel niemand ein = He couldn't think of anyone

Seite 17

- **ab|holen = to pick up**
- **hoffnungsvoll = hopefully, optimistically**
- es fertig bringen, zu ... = to managed to
- aus|fragen = to ask someone a lot of questions
- die Auskunft = die Information

Kapitel 4

Seite 18

- eine echte Notlage = a real bind, a real emergency
- die Aufmerksamkeit = attention
- auf sich leiten = to attract towards oneself
- **bestehen, bestand, bestanden = to consist**
- "zu etwas verdonnert sein" is a colloquial expression meaning to be forced to do something as a punishment.
- *In this chapter, Micha gets "zu einem Diskussionsbeitrag verdonnert," i.e. condemned to make a "discussion contribution." A "Diskussionsbeitrag" means a public speech contributing to the ongoing discussion of communist principles, and the irony explicitly discussed in the text is that making such a contribution is officially supposed to be an honor (p. 19, lines 14-17:) "Diskussionsbeiträge waren eine echte Strafe [=a real punishment], obwohl sie eigentlich eine echte Ehre [=a real honor] waren."). In particular, the students who are "verdonnert" to a Diskussionsbeitrag have to walk a fine line between not offending the teachers and not seeming too uncool to their classmates for giving such a party-line speech. It's for this reason that Micha is initially very worried about the idea of having his Diskussionsbeitrag be the first time Miriam really notices [=bemerkt] him, but then it turns out to be a stroke of luck when soon afterwards she's also verdonnert to make a Diskussionsbeitrag and so he actually gets to spend some time close to her. All the other boys will try to also get verdonnert to make a Diskussionsbeitrag as soon as this happens to her, but they're too late, as there can only be two speakers at a time, so they have to settle for other punishments.*
- der Spruch = slogan (also means "saying")
- Die Partei ist die Vorhut der Arbeiterklasse = The (communist) party is the vanguard of the working class. *Die Vorhut/the vanguard is an advance party in a military expedition; in this context being the "Vorhut" means assuming a visionary/leadership role. This is a famous quote from Lenin.*
- Mario adds an "A" to the word "Vorhut," and you can look up the result in your dictionary ☺ [hatte das Wort Vorhut an der richtigen Stelle um ein "A" bereichert = had enriched the word Vorhut by an "a" in the right spot]
- **jemanden verpetzen = to rat on someone**
- Noch so ein Ding, dann... = Pull something like this again and...
- eine rote Parole = a red slogan, i.e. a communist/socialist slogan

Seite 19

- **leider = unfortunately**
- beleidigen = to insult
- der Frieden = peace (*the "peace movement" that was instrumental in bringing about the fall of the DDR regime was called "Die Friedensbewegung"--that's not relevant here, but a good thing to know*)
- **bekämpfen = to fight against, to oppose**
- wie es aussah = apparently (by the looks of things)
- strafen = to punish; here: cursed
- die Strafe = punishment
- eine echte Ehre = a real honor
- sich herausreden = to talk one's way out of something
- befürchten = to fear, to worry that

- der mit der roten Rede = the guy with the (who gave the) red speech, *i.e. a speech in accordance with the communist party-line*
- bemerken = to notice
- **vorher = previously**, *i.e. before he gives the speech*
- sich in Szene setzen = to do something to get oneself noticed

Seite 20

- Stimmung kam nie auf = the atmosphere never became lively (*since the dance ends so early*)
- **trotzdem = nevertheless**
- **die Gelegenheit = the opportunity**
- günstig = favourable
- etwas vor|haben = to intend something, to have a plan
- **der/die/dasselbe = the same**
- erst als = only when (*i.e. not until*)
- die Etiketten abreißen = to tear off the labels
- schnattern = sprechen [literally: to gabble, like geese]
- nichts anderes übrig bleiben als ... = to have no other option than to ...
- zurück|legen = to cover a distance
- quer = diagonally
- sobald = as soon as
- sich Mühe geben = to try hard

Seite 21

- **blamieren = to make a fool of oneself**
- von der schlimmsten Sorte = of the worst sort
- schlagartig = abruptly
- **unterbrechen, unterbrach, unterbrochen = to interrupt**
- kichern = to giggle
- sie tat, als gäbe es ihn nicht = she acted as if he didn't exist
- tapfer = brave
- wagen = to dare
- jemanden zum Tanzen auffordern = to ask someone to dance (*recurs at the top of p. 22*)
- leblos = lifeless
- plötzlich = suddenly
- **geschehen, geschah, ist geschehen = to happen**
- eine Unruhe griff um sich = a commotion spread
- jemanden anstoßen = to nudge someone
- putzen = to clean (NOT "to put"!)
- ihm klappte der Mund auf = his jaw dropped
- klappen = to fold on a hinge; note "es klappt" means "it's working out as planned"
- das gibt es doch gar nicht = that's impossible/that's unheard of
- einfach so = just like that

Seite 22

- und dazu = and on top of that/and with it
- **sogar = even**
- wer je das Glück hat... = whoever ever has the good fortune
- einteilen = to subdivide, classify
- **knutschen = to smooch, to make out**
- heftig = intensely
- wurde auf der Stelle herausgeschmissen = was thrown out on the spot
- Micha war damit der Mann der Stunde: *Micha is the man of the hour since he and Miriam will both be giving Diskussionsbeiträge, and so instead of having to be mortified by that, he can now enjoy the opportunity to be close to her.*

Seite 23

- *As mentioned earlier in these notes, all the other boys now try to do something for which they would normally [normalerweise] be punished by having to give a Diskussionsbeitrag, in order to get close to Miriam when she gives hers, but since only two people can do that at a time, Micha and Miriam remain the only two who will give one, and the other boys all get alternative punishments.*
- **das Ziel = goal**
- etwas ausfressen = do something that gets you in trouble
- **die Grenze = here: the limit, the border**
- eine Fünf = a bad grade, like a D or D-: *German grades are awarded on a scale of 1-6*
- die Liegestütze = pushup
- am 7. Oktober: *anniversary of the founding of the DDR in 1949*
- die Fahne = flag
- sich herausstellen = to turn out
- in Strömen giessen (goss, gegossen) = to pour rain

Kapitel 5

Seite 24

- die Begegnung = the encounter
- die Bühne = the stage
- die Versammlung = the assembly
- **die Rede = the speech**
- kichern = to giggle
- ohne FDJ-Hemd: *FDJ = Freie Deutsche Jugend = the DDR youth organization, which everyone joined at 14. The uniform shirts were blue. Miriam still needs to put hers on, which will be exciting for Micha.*
- aufgeregt = excited
- **überall = everywhere**
- kaum = hardly
- **flüstern = to whisper**
- noch nie = never before
- atmen = to breathe
- der Knopf = the button
- Hast du auch was ausgefressen? = Did you get in trouble too?

Seite 25

- **wegen - Genitivpräposition = because of** (siehe auch: weil – Konjunktion = because of)
- *Ich habe Lenin angegriffen, dazu auch noch die Arbeiterklasse und die Partei. Du kannst dir ja vorstellen, was da los war = I attacked Lenin, and on top of that the working class and the party. You can imagine [dir vorstellen] what a commotion that caused.*
- unterbrechen, unterbrach, unterbrochen = to interrupt
- **der Klang = the tone**
- die Stimme = the voice
- es jemandem zeigen = to show/demonstrate it to someone
- auf|hören = to stop
- als wäre ihr eben eine Idee gekommen = as if she'd just had an idea
- ahnen = to have an inkling [*"it dawned on him"*] (keine) Ahnung haben = to have a/no clue
- feucht = moist
- glänzen = to shine
- sich nähern = to approach
- bemerken = to notice
- aufregend = exciting
- sich heben und senken = to rise and fall
- **riechen, roch, gerochen = to smell (der Geruch = the smell)**
- sanft = gentle
- **blumig = flowery**
- ausgerechnet in diesem Augenblick = Of all times just at this moment ...
- Was bedeuten "wurde" und "wurde gerufen"?

Seite 27

- die Bühne = stage
- **der enttäuschte Blick = the disappointed look**
- **irgendwann = sometime**
- eine Rede halten = to give a speech
- bekennen = to admit, to profess
- besonders = especially
- treu bleiben + Dat. = to remain faithful to
- bewegte wohlwollend den Kopf = moved her head approvingly
- *Was bedeutet es, dass Miriam während ihrer Rede [=speech] die Finger hinter dem Rücken kreuzt?*
- **beinahe = fast = almost**
- außer sich sein = to be delirious/beside oneself (here, with joy)
- dass er ... von dem vorbereiteten Manuskript abkam = that he ... deviated from his prepared script
- der Gedanke (-n) = the thought
- belebt sein = to be animated by
- der Augenblick = the moment
- leuchten = to shine [*Micha is getting carried away by his own impromptu speech.*]
- **herrlich = marvelous, splendid**
- prachtvoll = splendid
- **duften = to smell** (used if something smells good, like a perfume, flowers, or food)
- blühen = to blossom
- sich um|sehen, sah, gesehen = to look around

Seite 28

- leise = quietly
- was davon = some of that [*Haben Sie den Film "When Harry Met Sally" gesehen?*]
- Verstehen Sie, warum Michas Diskussionsbeitrag so romantisch inspiriert ist?
- die Versammlung = the assembly
- **das Geheimnis = the secret**
- der Ausgang = the exit
- hinterher laufen = to run after someone/something
- die Beifahrer/in = the passenger (m./f.)
- verschwinden, verschwand, ist verschwunden = to disappear
- **gute Laune = good mood**
- trotzdem = nevertheless
- **versprechen, versprach, versprochen = to promise**
- jubeln = to cheer ecstatically, to rejoice
- versuchte er sich nichts anmerken zu lassen = he tried [versuchte] not to let anyone notice what he was feeling

Kapitel 6

Michas Familie: Doris (Mutter), Horst (Vater), Bernd (Bruder), Sabine (Schwester) und Onkel Heinz aus dem Westen.

Seite 28, cont'd

- Ich halte doch den ganzen Laden zusammen! = I'm the one who holds everything together!
[literally: "the whole store"]

Seite 29

- beinahe = fast = almost
- **merkwürdig = strange**
- Aufforderung zur Musterung = notice for the medical inspection prior to entering military service
- eine Bekanntmachung für die Musterung = a (public) announcement of the Musterung
- einfach tun, als hätte er sie nicht gelesen = just pretend he hadn't read it
- **verlangen = to demand**
- merken = to notice
- **ängstlich = timid, fearful**

- **aus|breiten = to spread out**
- "Ich komme auf Ihre Annonce" *ist ein Witz [=joke]--verstehen Sie den Witz?*
- erzählen = to tell [what happened/a story]

Seite 30

- **sich aus|drücken = to express oneself** [*i.e. he started using the strange military language that he had himself found strange at first*]
- der Urlaub = vacation, leave
- das Abendbrot = Abendessen
- Essen fassen: *I'm not sure if there's a real military expression being parodied here, but in any case, this is an intentionally absurd expression for eating.*
- Nach dem Einrücken in den Zuschauerraum bezog ich in Reihe acht meine Stellung = After moving into the spectator area, I assumed my position in row eight.
- **beunruhigt = worried**
- sie ließen sich nichts anmerken = they didn't let it show [*that his strange language worried them*]
- Das wird schon wieder werden = It'll be alright [*We don't see any more of Bernd in this edited version of the book, but in the full version, Bernd's problem gets much worse later*]
- **anstrengend = exhausting, arduous, trying, tiring**
- der Straßenbahnfahrer = the street car driver
- Feierabend haben = to be done with work

Seite 31

- das Alter mit dem festen Freund = the age at which one has a boyfriend [*literally: "firm friend"*]
- **allerdings = however**
- dauernd = constantly [*Verstehen Sie den Witz (=joke) in Zeilen 4-6?*]
- **sich merken = to memorize**
- nicht mal = not even
- aktuell = current → Sabines Aktueller = Sabine's current boyfriend
- nach|machen = to imitate, copy someone
- *Note there's a small typo here: it should be "Herr Kuppisch," not "Herrn Kuppisch"*
- der Parteiantrag = application to join the party, i.e. the communist party [*the SED: Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*]
- sich aufregen = to get upset
- zeigte entschuldigend auf ihren Aktuellen = pointed, by way of excuse, at her current boyfriend
- **bürgen für + Akk. = to vouch for** [*i.e. he'll vouch for her as being worthy of membership in the party*]
- **erklären: this means "to explain," but is often used, as here, to mean "to declare," i.e. to indicate that someone said something somewhat emphatically**
- Nicht wahr? = Isn't that right?
- nicken = to nod
- *Auch wenn Sie hier nicht alle Vokabeln verstehen, können Sie verstehen, was Herr Kuppisch mit dem Parteiantrag macht?*
- *The unsteady table mentioned here plays a comic role in the movie on which the book was based, and also in the full version of the book, but it's been removed from this edited version. It's meant to be an eminently practical multifunctional table, ideally suited for the cramped apartment, and Herr Kuppisch is very proud of it, but it causes him nothing but trouble. The ABV is also proud of it, as a great achievement of DDR design.*

Seite 32

- der Stammpplatz = the accustomed seat [*siehe auch: Stammkneipe, Stammtisch*]
- scheinen, schien, geschienen = to seem
- das Neue Deutschland [das ND]: *die offizielle Zeitung der kommunistischen Partei [so wie Pravda in der alten UdSSR], also referred to as "das Zentralorgan der kommunistischen Partei"; it's a minor act of political rebellion on Herrn Kuppisch's part not to read the official party newspaper*
- dahinter|kommen, kam, ist gekommen = herausfinden = to find out

- dass in allen Zeitungen im Grunde dasselbe stand wie einen Tag zuvor im ND = that all newspapers essentially contained the same information that had been in the ND the day before
- **überreden = to persuade**
- wechseln = to change [*auch für: Geld wechseln*]
- der Mist = the crap
- die Stasi = die Staatssicherheit = the East German secret police, whose agents were reputed to be everywhere. [*Indeed after reunification, the Stasi files [die Stasiakten] became publicly available, and revealed that in addition to those who actually made their living working for the Stasi, great numbers of people had collaborated with the Stasi, either willingly, or for fear of reprisals, or through various degrees of coercion.*] Der ist bei der Stasi = Er arbeitet für die Stasi, i.e. Herr Kuppisch suspects his neighbor of working for the Stasi.
- "Weil er das ND liest": *We're meant to find Herrn Kuppisch's reasoning funny, not convincing.*
- finden, fand, gefunden = to find
- **der Beweis = the proof**

Seite 33

- sicher = sure
- Telefon haben: *in der DDR war es nicht so leicht, ein Telefon zu bekommen. It was easier to get things like cars, phones etc. if one was in the party, and even easier if one was a high-ranking official or an employee of the Stasi.*
- Frau Kuppisch fiel wirklich nichts mehr ein = Frau K. really couldn't think of anything else [*i.e. of any other ways to counter her husband's argument*]
- die Eingabe = petition to the authorities (generally a formal complaint)
- **vorsichtig = careful(ly)**
- das Einzige = the only thing
- die da oben = those guys up there → *Frage: Wer ist hier gemeint?*
- ab|stellen = to shut off
- unterbrechen, unterbrach, unterbrochen = to interrupt
- einfach nur eine Beschwerde = just simply a complaint
- **als ob = as if**
- *Frau Kuppisch is afraid of irritating the authorities, so she doesn't like to think of the Eingaben Herr Kuppisch occasionally considers sending as complaints.*

Kapitel 7

Seite 34, cont'd

- *In this chapter, we meet Onkel Heinz, the family's uncle from the West. Though this book is certainly critical of the former DDR, Onkel Heinz is a parody of West Germans' exaggerated ideas about the problems in the DDR, of what goods were available, what was forbidden, and how minor transgressions were punished.*
- allerdings = however
- was er als Westonkel seinen Verwandten schuldig war = what, as an uncle from the West, he owed his relatives
- Guckt mal! = Look! (pl.)
- zur Begrüßung = as a greeting
- mit gesenkter (die) Stimme = lowering his voice
- **grundsätzlich = as a matter of principle**
- *Möchten Sie die Tüte Gummibärchen, die Onkel Heinz in seiner Unterhose geschmuggelt hat?*
- an der Grenze = at the border
- schrecklich nervös = terribly nervous
- erklären = to explain
- **eine Platte = eine Schallplatte = a (vinyl) record**

Seite 35

- **drohen = to threaten**
- *this is an example of Onkel Heinz' exaggerated ideas of punishments imposed in the DDR*
- Platz nehmen, nahm, genommen = so take a seat

- **klagen = to complain** (die Klage = the complaint)
- die reinste Todeszelle ist das = this is a veritable death cell
- **schon vor Jahren = already years ago**
- die Heizung = the radiator (*die Heizung* also means "furnace")
- der Krebs = cancer
- vorsichtig = careful(ly)
- *Here we find out that although he always talks about sending off an Eingabe, Herr Kuppisch never actually does send one (but late in the book, he finally does, and the whole family is very proud when it succeeds)*
- auch wenn = even if
- **(sich) erinnern an + Akk. = to remind someone of something**
- aus|stopfen mit = to stuff with
- neugierig = with curiosity
- **zusammen|knüllen = to wad** (ex. a piece of paper)
- glätten = to smooth out
- die BILD-Zeitung: *crappy conservative tabloid. This was unfortunately by far the most widely read newspaper in West Germany, and has continued to hold that position after reunification. During the Cold War, the BILD Zeitung was staunchly anti-communist. Incidentally, the paper's radically reduced vocabulary, meant to help it appeal to the lowest common denominator.*

Seite 36

- **blass = pale**
- eine fette Überschrift = a heading in big print
- rechnen = to do arithmetic; nachrechnen = to check something by doing a calculation
- rechneten mit = did the calculations with her
- ein|ziehen, zog, ist gezogen = to move in
- den Urlaub nicht mitrechnen = not include the time (we were) on vacation
- nicht ganz = not quite
- in der stand ganz dick = in it one could read in very bold print [*notice that in German, "es steht" is used for the Engl. "it says" for printed matter*]
- **die Stimme = the voice**
- Meinst du...? = Do you think...?
- dauernd = constantly
- **sich beschweren = to complain**

Seite 37

- gehören (Dativverb)= to belong
- oder (mit) einer Kugel am Bein = or with a ball and chain on one's leg (*i.e. as a convict*)
- nicht unbedingt = not necessarily
- bestimmen = to determine
- um...zu = in order to
- die Vorbereitungsklasse = preparatory class
- besondere = special
- "Rotes Kloster" = "Red monastery": *the reason for the name is presumably its strict affiliation with communist party dogma [==> rot] and that this was a boarding school [==> Kloster]*
- hervorragend = outstanding
- das Berufsziel = the career goal
- politische Einstellung = political attitude
- das Verhalten = the conduct, behavior
- **tadellos = immaculate**
- der Ruf = the reputation
- sorgen für + Akk. = to make sure; to see to it
- worum es ging = what was at stake
- *Though Herr Kuppisch still tries to argue, Frau Kuppisch is going to insist this time that he switch to reading the ND.*
- **Eben! = Precisely!/That's just it!**

Seite 38

- **aus|fragen = verhören = to interrogate**
- Ihr Auto wurde in nur einer Woche repariert = Their car was repaired in just one week.
- aus|sehen, sah, gesehen = to look like
- die SED = Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands: die kommunistische Partei
- sogar = even
- die Frühgeschichte = prehistory
- schon damals = already back then
- sich sehnen nach = to yearn for
- die Grenze = the border

Seite 39

- auf den Bus zu = towards the bus
- betteln = to beg (der Bettler – the beggar)
- auf|reißen, riss, gerissen = to open wide [literally: tore their eyes open]
- rufen = to call out
- **der Zustand = the condition** [often by implication bad or unacceptable conditions]
- der Eiserne Vorhang = the Iron Curtain
- *(the metaphorical term for the heavily guarded border between the communist Eastern Block countries and the Western European countries during the cold war)*
- **verschwinden, verschwand, verschwunden = to disappear**
- sich totlachen = to die laughing
- sich halb totlachen = to laugh oneself half to death
- sich vor|stellen = to imagine Lust haben = to feel like
- mitmachen = to play along, to participate
- dagegen = on the contrary, on the other hand
- **übertreiben, übertrieb, übertrieben = to exaggerate**
- immer mehr = more and more
- *Miriam wollten sie zum Lachen bringen: wer ist das Subjekt und wer das Direktobjekt?*

Kapitel 8

Seite 40

- ein Stück die Straße hinab = a little way down the street
- Monteverdi Hai: *Siehe Seite 17, Zeile 28*
- sich anmelden = to register
- **unvorsichtig = reckless, imprudent**
- gleich = right away
- **bemerken = to notice**
- sich verstecken = to hide
- **heimlich = secretly (das Geheimnis = the secret)**
- auf|fordern = to ask (for a dance); to exhort
- ihm wurde klar = it became clear to him

Seite 41

- sich voneinander verabschieden = to say good bye to each other
- Nach Meinung seiner Mutter = In his mom's opinion
- die guten Sachen = the good clothes (Sunday clothes)
- der Anzug = suit
- die Jugendweihe: *an annual coming of age ceremony held in the DDR as a sort of secular alternative to religious rites of passage such as confirmation ["Weihe" = consecration, ordination]. Every 14 year old boy and girl was expected to participate and pledge his/her solidarity to the socialist state and community. Participants received a propagandistic book, and spent the rest of the day celebrating with their family. Afterwards, they were considered to have symbolically become adults, were addressed as "Sie" and received their "Personalausweis" [the ID Micha is always having to show the ABV].*
- **wachsen, wuchs, ist gewachsen = to grow**
- der Sturmangriff = the massive attack

- die Hüfte = hip
- **fassen = to grasp**
- **einfach = simple, simply; nur = only → einfach nur = just**
- weich = soft
- **der Atem = breath (atmen = to breathe)**
- **der Duft = scent (duften = to smell +++)**
- vorbei sein = to be over
- los|werden, wurde, ist geworden = to get rid of

Seite 42

- immer weiter = the same way (lit.: further and further)
- den Verlauf nehmen = to proceed in the same way
- **wechseln = to switch, exchange (here: switch partners)**
- der Reihe nach = in order; in sequence
- sich sichern = to secure
- **beobachten = to observe**
- (sich) vor|bereiten = to prepare
- der Stapel = the stack
- **zählen = to count**
- **üben = to practice**
- Es machte ihm nichts aus, sie zu treten = He didn't mind (accidentally) kicking them
- krachen = to make a loud crashing sound; to bang
- **wieder einmal = once again**

Seite 43

- zu Boden gehen = fallen
- **fürchterlich = horrible**
- der Ruf = the reputation
- erst = only; not until
- **gelingen, gelang, ist gelungen = to succeed**
- der Abschlußball = the final ball ending the Tanzkurs
- sich aus|denken, dachte, gedacht = planen; vorhaben

Kapitel 9

Seite 43, cont'd

- so was = stuff like that
- sonst = otherwise → auch sonst für nichts = for nothing else either
- **versuchen = to try**
- **auf die Spur + Genitiv = on the trail of**
- *Exile on Main Street: Diese Platte [=record] haben die Rolling Stones 1972 gemacht, und viele Leute denken jetzt, dass es ihre beste ist. Wenn Sie sie nicht kennen, sollten Sie zu iTunes gehen, und Proben [=samples, excerpts] von den Liedern hören. Sie sollten zum Beispiel "All Down the Line", "Happy" und "Shine a Light" versuchen. Dann wissen Sie, was Wuschel so gern hört.*
- besitzen, besass, besessen = to own
- *Notice this use of "sollen" to indicate gossip or hearsay: "Madonna soll einen neuen Freund haben"*

Seite 44

- der Fernsehturm = television tower (*Many big cities in Germany have one, usually with a revolving restaurant or a platform for looking out on the city at the top. The one in Berlin (completed in 1969 in East Berlin) is the tallest one in Germany at 368 meters; the one in Stuttgart, built in 1956, was the first one of its kind in Germany and became a model for the worldwide construction of similar towers.*)
- **führen = to lead**
- so darfst du das nicht sehen: this is colloquial usage; here "du darfst nicht" means something more like "you shouldn't" or "you can't" than its literal meaning "you're not allowed to."
- tauschen = to swap
- **verfolgen = to follow**

- ängstlich = timid, fearful
- die Hausdurchsuchung = house searches (conducted by the police/authorities)
- **deshalb = therefore**
- halten, hielt, gehalten = to consider
- **unschuldig = innocent**
- verstecken = to hide
- sogar = even (i.e. as in "he had even gone so far as to...")

Seite 45

- streichen, strich, gestrichen = to cancel
- **das Gefängnis = prison, jail**
- der Unterrock = the underskirt/slip
- sich auf|regen über + Akk. = to be upset about
- die Wut = the rage
- die Träne = the tear
- trotz = despite, in spite of
- **das Abenteuer = the adventure**
- der doppelte Boden = the double bottom (*in a suitcase for smuggling*)

Seite 46

- der Einreisestempel = immigration stamp
(i.e. stamps in Onkel Heinz' passport documenting his many visits to the DDR)
- Tesafilm = Scotch tape
- gesiebte Luft = air that has gone through a strainer [das Sieb]
(i.e. through prison bars: he thinks the Grenzer is on to his smuggling)
- die Handschellen = the handcuffs
- **gestehen, gestand, gestanden = to admit**
- bestimmt ein Freund unserer [politischen] Ordnung
- nicken = to nod
- sicherheitshalber = on the safe side
- flüstern = to whisper
- zeigen = to show
- zum Vorschein kommen = to appear
- **riesig = huge (der Riese = the giant)**
- jede Menge = lots of, all kinds of [literally: every amount of]
- der Grenzer baute sich neben der Anlage auf = der Grenzer stellte sich vor die Stereoanlage
- stolz = proud, proudly

Seite 47

- darauf: here, this means "In response to that"
- erwarten = to expect
- Na, gucken Sie sich doch das mal an = Well, go ahead and take a look at that (colloquial)
- die da drüben = those over there
(i.e. in Japan, but he's actually referring to the capitalist West in general)
- die Knöpfe = buttons
- Das ist doch was! = Now that's something! (i.e. a good, solid product)
- Damit kommen alle klar = Everyone can operate that
- der Schalter = the switch
- **unnötig = unnecessary**
- verschwinden = to disappear
- **es handelt sich um = it's about**
- das Missverständnis = the misunderstanding
- preisen = to praise, to extol
- raus = out
- jemals = ever
- **Mal für Mal = time after time**

Seite 48

- nach|denken, dachte, gedacht = to deliberate
- in der Zone = in der Ostzone = in der DDR (*hence the term "Zoni" on p. 6*)
- tauschen = to swap, to trade [here: to trade places]
- durch|machen = to go through
- ungerecht = unjust
- **treuherzig = trustingly**
- der Strich = the line
- schaffen = we'll get something done; to manage
- **überlegen = to wonder; think about**
- sich verabschieden = to say goodbye
- *Warum sich Kommunisten überhaupt mit erhobenen Fäusten grüßen, hatte Heinz nie begriffen = Heinz had never understood why communists greet each other with raised fists in the first place (this is another of Onkel Heinz' amusingly foolish misconceptions about the DDR: communist leaders did/do sometimes use a raised fist as a gesture indicating the power of the working class, but this was never a routine greeting)*

Kapitel 10

Seite 49

- **geschehen, geschah, ist geschehen = passieren; to happen**
- fast = almost
- traf ihn fast der Schlag = he almost had a stroke (metaphorically, from the shock)
- **begrüßen = to greet**
- sich zurecht machen = to fix one's appearance
- auf einmal = suddenly
- verärgert = annoyed, irritated
- **offenbar = apparently**
- erleben = to experience
- selbst wenn = even if
- etwas nicht leiden können = not to be able to stand something
- **schaden = to be harmful, do harm**

Seite 50

- die Passinhaberin = the owner of the passport (*i.e. Helene Rumpel*)
- die Sperre = the barricade, in this case the border
- **lösen = to solve (die Lösung = the solution)**
- unbenutzt = unused
- der Fahrschein = ticket for public transportation
- **die Unterschrift = the signature**
- die Entfernung = the distance

Seite 51

- locker = relaxed
- selbstbewußt = self-confident
- **fehlen = to lack; to be missing**
- Was blieb ihr anderes übrig? = What other choice did she have?
- **sich schämen = to be ashamed**
- die Menschheit = the humanity
- der Grund = reason
- wie früher = like in the past
- seinen Augen nicht trauen = couldn't believe one's eyes
- wirken = to seem
- erklären = to explain
- **heimlich = secret**
- der Friseur = hairdresser
- das Zeichen = the sign

Seite 52

- nicht wieder zu erkennen = unrecognizable
- besorgt = worried (siehe auch: beunruhigt)
- **erschrocken = scared, startled**
- feierlich = solemnly, ceremoniously
- sich vorstellen = to imagine
- satt = full (from eating)
- nicken = to nod
- etwas nicht übers Herz bringen = not to be able to bring oneself to do something, because one knows it will hurt someone's feelings
- **längst = for a long time already**

Seite 53

- loben = to praise
- *Wenn Sie vergessen haben, warum Miriam beim Abschlussball [=final ball ending the Tanzkurs] der Tanzschule mit Micha tanzt, dann lesen Sie noch einmal Seite 42-43!*
- sogar = even
- putzen = to clean
- führen = to lead
- [Kontrolle] überlassen, überliess, überlassen
- **genießen, genoss, genossen = to savour**
- ausgerechnet = of all things
- sich verabschieden = to say good bye

Seite 54

- tauschen = to trade places with; bis eben = until just now
- **weiter|machen = continue**
- fest umschlungen = firmly embracing
- zu|kleben = to seal
- der Umschlag = the envelope
- **zusammen|stoßen, stiess, gestossen mit = to collide with**
- davon fliegen = to flow off
- weg|wehen = to blow away

Seite 55

- befestigen = to attach
- **von nun an = from now on**

Kapitel 11

Seite 55, cont'd

- nicht mal = not even (informal)
- **sich drehen = to revolve**
- es fertig|bringen zu... = to bring oneself to
- **zu|geben, zugab, zugegeben = to admit**
- lächerlich = ridiculous
- die Beleidigung = the insult
- **sich lächerlich machen = make a fool of oneself**

Seite 56

- *Micha and Mario try [versuchen] to fish [angeln] for the letter in the "Todesstreifen" using a makeshift "fishing rod" made of an eraser [Radiergummi] covered in glue [Klebstoff], and a mirror [Spiegel] to see over the barrier.*
- **der Erfolg = success**
- **gerade = just recently**
- die Baskenmütze = beret (typically French type of cap)
- *Jean-Paul Sartre: existentialist philosopher (1905-1980). His philosophy emphasizes individual freedom and moral responsibility. In the full version of the book, "die Existentialistin" is something of a parody of*

intellectuals with trendy, poorly thought out beliefs (this is still evident in our version from the way she's always referred to as "die Existentialistin" and never by her name). Nevertheless, her belief in the freedom and responsibility of the individual is also to be taken seriously as a contrast to the State's insistence on submission to the greater wisdom of the ruling communist party. In the full version, she tells Mario in one of their first conversations that "Jeder hat die Verantwortung für sich, und jeder ist auch an seinem Unglück schuld. Denn du hast immer die Freiheit, dich zu entscheiden ... und du kannst niemandem die Schuld geben für das, was du tust" = "Everyone has the responsibility for himself, and everyone is to blame for his own unhappiness. For you always have the freedom to decide ... and you cannot blame anyone for what you do." She also blows Mario away by telling him what Sartre would say about the Wall: that it follows from humanity's radical freedom that one day, the Wall would cease to exist--an idea that for Mario was inconceivable.

- wie Mona Lisa – d.h. schön und mysteriös
- Micha and Mario are waiting for the glue to dry [trocknen] so they can see if they "caught" the letter with their contraption.
- von denen, die ... = of those [boys] who ...

Seite 57

- **vor|machen = demonstrieren**
- die Hüfte = the hip
- **nach|machen = imitieren**
- sich gegenüber = across from/opposite each other
- **endlich = finally**
- einholen = reel in
- **der Hauptgewinn = the big prize**
- **drüben = over there = der Westen**

Kapitel 12

Seite 57, cont'd

- **weshalb = why**
- das Zeichen = the sign

Seite 58

- blättern = to leaf through
- kopfschüttelnd = shaking the head
- **die Illustrierte = das Magazin**
- zu|sehen, sah, gesehen = to watch
- sich sammeln = to collect oneself
- Luft holen = take a deep breath
- unangenehm = unpleasant
- die Aufgabe = the task
- **das Verständnis = the understanding/sympathy**
- **die Härten = the hardships**
- auf die Idee kommen = die Idee haben
- **sich lustig machen über + Akk. = to make fun of someone/something**
- stumm = mute, silent
- **begreifen, begriff, begriffen = verstehen**
- worum es geht = what is up
- auf|sehen, sah, gesehen = to look up
- **versteinert = stony**

Seite 59

- **je = ever**
- bemerken = to notice
- ausdrucksstark = expressiv
- die Not = poverty, misery
- **still|halten = to keep quiet, i.e. not to revolt**
- ein strafender Blick = a reproachful look

- plötzlich = suddenly
- **selbstbewusst = confidently**
- die Kunstpause = a pause for effect
- lügen, log, gelogen = to lie
- zu solchen Lügen greifen = resort to such lies
- **je** schmutziger die Lügen, **desto** mehr am Ende ist der Gegner = the dirtier the lies, the more the opponent [Gegner] is finished [am Ende].
- *All of his friends are capable of it, but Micha has a real talent for telling authority figures what they want to hear.*
- jmdn. nachdenklich machen = to make someone think
- **erfreulich = pleasant, gratifying**
- alle Achtung: indicates that one is impressed by what someone has done [Achtung = attention, respect]
- **sich Gedanken machen = to ponder** [i.e. he thinks Micha has potential ideologically]

Seite 60

- **der Feind** = the enemy
- **der Klassenkampf** = class struggle
- davon|kommen = to get away
he's "verdonnert" to give a "Diskussionsbeitrag," but he's avoided a more serious punishment for this potentially quite serious offence]
- belastend = incriminating
- zu|klappen = to fold shut
- zu|nicken = to nod
- *Mario suddenly [plötzlich] decides to show his protest openly, and tries to come up with the most offensive things he could possibly say to the party functionary and the principal: "Sich zu allem bekennen, was nicht erlaubt war" = "To declare his allegiance to everything that was not permitted." Thus, he mentions Freiheit [=freedom] and Menschenrechte [=human rights], which were loaded terms, since Western criticism of the Eastern block focused around them. The Eastern block regimes of course contended that their people were free and that human rights were not being violated in their countries, and that Western criticisms were based on hypocritical interpretations of these terms. He mentions Sartre (see the note above on p. 56, line 17 re: why the DDR-regime did not approve of Sartre). In the unedited version of the text, he also mentions Gandhi, whose idea of non-violent resistance did not fit with communist revolutionary doctrine.*
- aufgeregt = excitedly, agitatedly
- **die Freiheit = the freedom**
- ganz durcheinander sein = to be confused
- sich zu etwas bekennen = to declare one's allegiance to something
- **erlaubt = permitted**
- die Relegation = relegation, used here as an official term for expulsion from school
- **unbarmherzig = pitiless**
- trösten = to console
- der Rausschmiss = throwing out

Seite 61

- **widersprechen = to contradict**
- der Anfang = der Beginn
- die Vorschrift = rule; regulation
- fuhren sie baden = i.e. zu einem See
- füttern = to feed
- gegenseitig = reciprocally
- **erfinden = to invent**
- Friedrich Nietzsche: 19th century philosopher whose writings inspired the existentialists; Leo Trotzki: communist politician and theoretician, whom Stalin eventually had killed; Rudolf Steiner: philosopher and educational reformer--incidentally, there's a Rudolf Steiner school in Ann Arbor. See <http://www.steinercollege.org/rs.html> for more info on Steiner, and <http://www.rssaa.org/waldorf/frame.html> for info on the Steiner school in Ann Arbor.

Kapitel 13

Seite 62

- der S-Bahnhof = local train station
- sich vor|nehmen = to resolve to
- aufgeregt = excited
- **geschehen, geschah, ist geschehen = passieren**
- entführen = to take away (literally: kidnapped)
- sich treffen = to meet
- *Perhaps the AWO driver was thinking of the promise Miriam made with her fingers crossed behind her back during her Diskussionsbeitrag (Seite 27, Zeile 5-9), that if a man went to the army for three years, she would remain faithful to him for three years...*
- **sich trennen = to split up, to go separate ways**
- gerade/ungerade Nummern = even/odd numbers
- heraus|bekommen = to find out
- zufällig = by chance; accidental(ly)
- die Begegnung = the encounter (sich begegnen = to run into, to encounter)
- noch immer = still
- wie ein Bauer auf Regen = like a farmer (waits) for rain
- dass es jetzt soweit wäre = that now the time had come
- *There's a typo here: "vor den groben[=rough, coarse] Ferien" should be "vor den großen Ferien" i.e. before the summer (big) holidays*

Seite 63

- an den Punkt an|langen = to reach the point
- irgendwann = *sometime* (siehe auch: irgendwer, irgendwo, irgendwann, usw.)
- schwer schlucken = to swallow hard
- ewig = forever
- verzweifelt = in despair
- sanft = gently
- sich freuen auf + Akk. = to look forward to
- der Satz = sentence
- etwas von ... verstehen = etwas wissen
- das Sehnen = the longing
- zu|bringen = to spend time
- *In the full version of the text, the narrator tells us that Micha realized he had underestimated Miriam, like everyone who thought she was naïve just because she was so overwhelmingly beautiful [überwältigend schön].*
- merken = to realize
- **reif = mature**
- sich erinnern = to remember
- **erwachsen = grown-up; adult**

Seite 64

- der Abschlussball: *Siehe Seite 53-54*
- **ahnen = to have an inkling (keine Ahnung haben = to have no clue)**
- worauf es genau herausläuft = what exactly is involved
- **leicht = easy**
- von heute auf morgen = overnight
- das Grenzgebiet = the border area
- verhaften = to arrest
- Sie saßen stolz um den Apparat herum = They sat proudly around the phone
- die Bescherung = the unpacking of Christmas presents
- klingeln = to ring
- wagte es, den Hörer abzunehmen = dared to lift the receiver [Hörer]
- der Anruf = phone call (anrufen = to call on the phone)
- neugierig = curious, nosy
- **verlegen = embarrassed**
- Rücksicht nehmen = to be considerate

Seite 65

- Jo = informell für "Ja"
- sich mehr von etwas versprechen = to expect more from something
- auf|legen = to hang up the receiver
- beruhigen = to reassure
- **macht nichts = es ist OK**
- rumkommen = to come over, stop by (informal)
- **kriegen = to get (informal)**

Seite 66

- geduldig = patiently
- *The full version of the text says: "mit Engelsgeduld" = "with angelic patience"*
- **Bis gleich! = See you in a minute/right away!**
- der Ausweis = ID/passport
- *remember the ABV is still mad at Micha about his demotion, and asks him for ID every time he sees him*
- erschrecken = to become scared
- bemerken = to notice
- holen = to fetch, to get
- fest|halten = to hold on to; to restrain
- **sich los|machen = to free oneself**
- um sich schlagen = to flail about
- kräftig = stark
- Der ABV wusste, dass es bei Micha in dieser Nacht um alles ging, aber er hatte ja mit ihm noch ein Ding laufen = The ABV knew that everything was at stake for Micha in this night, but he still had a score to settle with him
- Natürlich ging es nicht darum = Of course it wasn't about
- **inzwischen = meanwhile, by now**
- die Begründung = reason
- aufgegriffen werden (auf|greifen, griff, gegriffen) = to get picked up (by the police)
- dem seine Personalien müssen an einem anderen Ort festgestellt werden = that persons's personal (identity) information must be ascertained elsewhere

Seite 67

- **im Laufe der Nacht = in the course of the night**
- ein Protokoll aufnehmen = to write a police report
- im Besitz + Genitiv = in possession of
- gültig = valid
- flüchten = to flee
- **beweisen + Dativ = to demonstrate to; to prove to**
- böseartig = mean
- **die Feinheiten = subtleties**
- auf|fordern = to ask (someone to do something)
- *Note this doesn't mean he no longer cared to go see Miriam. It means he no longer cared about anything because he hadn't been able to get to Miriam's even though she'd asked him four times (and he expects that she won't forgive him for that).*
- quitt sein = to be even

Kapitel 14

Seite 67, cont'd

- das Rote Kloster: *Siehe Seite 37*
- **im Halbkreis = in a half-circle**
- das Plakat = das Poster; das Flugblatt
- betrachten = to look at
- Schach = chess

Seite 68

- der König = king
- jemanden herbei|rufen lassen = to have someone called
- **streng = strict(ly)**
- unterbrechen, unterbrach, unterbrochen = to interrupt
- zu|sehen, sah, gesehen = to watch
- **selbstverständlich = of course**
- auch wenn = even if
- der Erfinder = inventor
- meinen = denken (*note that "meinen" is very frequently used as a synonym for "sagen," and can also mean "to mean"*)
- der Bauer = pawn; farmer
- genau so viel = just as much
- wert = worth
- eine Kunstpause machen = to pause for effect
- Dann verdunkelte sich ihre Miene = Then her expression became grim [literally: darkened]
- Sie stach mit ihrem Zeigefinger genau auf die Spitze der Königsfigur, wo ein Kreuz war = She poked her index finger precisely [genau] at the tip [Spitze] of the king, where there was a cross
- *Christianity was not in favor in the DDR and other communist countries*
- **genau in dem Augenblick = just at that moment**
- außer Atem = out of breath
- verschwitzt = covered in sweat
- **nur mit Mühe = only with difficulty**

Seite 69

- verhaftet = arrested
- (*In the full version of the text, Micha says: Ich wollte ja noch abhauen [= to run away (slang)]...und hab mich gewehrt [= tried to resist]*)
- **Raus! = Get out! [Herein! = Come in!]**
- genug = enough
- in Tränen aus|brechen = to burst into tears
- versuchen = to try
- dafür sorgen = to make sure
- die Fahne = flag
- Quartiergäste auf|nehmen = to accept lodgers
- **das Mitglied = member**
- das ND: *Siehe Seite 32 & 37-38*
- abonnieren = to subscribe to
- *Verstehen Sie, warum Frau Kuppisch die Plastiktüten [=plastic bags] von Onkel Heinz nur mit der Schrift [=writing] nach innen benutzt hat?*
- **vorbei sein = to be over**
- *For a reminder on Herr Kuppisch and his Eingaben, see notes on p. 33 line 12 & p. 35 lines 16-17*
- tatsächlich = actually; really; in fact
- Was Micha als Erstes auffiel = What M. noticed first

Seite 70

- der Bauer = pawn; farmer
- ab|halten (hielt, gehalten) von = to stop
- **sich kümmern um = to care about (or, in other contexts, for)**
- der Blick = look
- zurück|nehmen, nahm, genommen = to be revoked
- stolz = proudly
- **Voller Genugtuung = with great satisfaction**
- sie rein|winken = to beckon them to come in
- verlegen = embarrassed
- er mußte (noch) mal = he (still) had to go (to the bathroom)
- lügen, log, gelogen = to lie (die Lüge = the lie)

- bereits = already
- vorletzte = second to last
- Micha beschönigen = make M. look/appear better than he was
- **verschwinden, verschwand, ist verschwunden = to disappear**
- Kaugummi kauen = to chew gum
- durcheinander = messed up

Seite 71

- die drei oberen Knöpfe = the three top buttons
- dulden = to tolerate
- an ihm herumzumachen: *she tries to fix his appearance*
- Micha stieß sie mit einer Handbewegung zurück = M pushed her back/warded her off with a movement of his hand
- einen Blick auf ... werfen = to give a look
- unsicher = insecure
- **der Eindruck = impression**
- an|sehen, sah, gesehen = to look at
- *Hat Micha einen sowjetischen Brieffreund? Warum spricht Frau Kuppisch von ihm?*
- der Brieffreund = pen pal
- selbstverständlich = natürlich
- wedeln = to wave
- auf|fordern = to ask (someone to do something)
- *Was sagt Micha? Siehe Seite 50, Zeile 7-8 & Seite 72, Zeile 17-18*
- **verlassen, verließ, verlassen = to leave**
- danach = after that
- genug = enough
- Frau Kuppisch brauchte sich auch keine Beschönigungen mehr einfallen lassen = FK no longer had to think up ways to make Micha's behavior seem better than it was.

Seite 72

- **froh = glücklich**
- die Entscheidung = decision
- anständig = decent
- *A song by "Die Toten Hosen," a band that hates the soccer club Bayern München roughly like many Americans hate the Yankees and the Cowboys (since they can and do buy success) included a line to the effect "What kind of parents would let their kid play for such a club?" The irony of Frau Kuppisch's statement here is similar.*
- bester Laune sein = to be in a great mood
- bald = soon
- der Stolz = pride
- schwenken = to wave (something)
- Denen haben wir es heute gezeigt! = We showed them today!
- selbstsicher = self-confidently
- **die Anstrengungen = the effort**
- einen Schlußstrich ziehen = to draw a line under something/put an end to something
- *Er = Micha*

Kapitel 15

Seite 72, cont'd

- **verzeihen, verzieh, verziehen = to forgive (Verzeihung! = Entschuldigung!)**
- Da sie von Michas Verhaftung durch den ABV nichts erfuhr = Since she heard nothing about Micha's arrest by the ABV

Seite 73

- **verletzen = to hurt someone's feelings; to injure**
- nicht mal = not even
- die Einladung = invitation

- **reagieren = to react (die Reaktion = the reaction)**
- (rum)knutschen = to smooch; to make out
- das Geheimnis = secret
- nur als Spielzeug = only as toys
- tatsächlich und ganz in echt: "in actuality and totally genuinely" *i.e. the real cars are coming to pick up Miriam, not just the toy versions the boys give her brother*
- blass = pale
- (etwas) hin|kriegen = to pull something off
- verraten = to tell someone (or give away) a secret
- **in Wirklichkeit = in reality**
- **schlimm = bad**
- sich vor|stellen = to imagine
- Verstehen Sie den Humor von "Für einen Big Banger, eines der seltenen [=rare] Autos, mit denen Miriam noch nie [=so far never] abgeholt wurde [was picked up]..."?
- der Kerl = guy, dude
- immer derselbe = always the same one
- wie er das schafft = how he manages to do that

Seite 74

- schließlich = finally
- *der Scheich von Berlin: in the early 80s, it was a common stereotype in Germany to think of Arab sheikhs as fabulously rich*
- **machtlos = powerless**
- Seine Nerven lagen blank = His nerves lay bare, *i.e. he was totally on edge*
- zurück|brüllen = to yell/roar back
- **wütend = furiously (die Wut = the rage)**
- geh ich für drei Jahre an die Grenze: *i.e. he'll enlist as a border guard*
- ab|knallen = to mow down (with a gun)
- **der Wutausbruch = outburst of rage/fury [literally: eruption of anger].**
- Hotel Schweizer Hof: *a luxurious hotel in West Berlin*
- benutzte einfach ihre Wagen = simply used their (the rich guests') cars
- schief gehen = to go awry, to go wrong [literally: to go crooked/tilted]
- der Autoschaden = damage to a car

Seite 75

- der Unfall = accident
- sich ... je hätte ausmalen können = could ever have imagined
- die Schwierigkeiten = difficulties
- der Zoll = customs
- der Kofferraum = trunk (of a car)
- sich etwas aus|leihen, lieh, geliehen = to borrow something
- **gehören + Dativ = to belong to**
- die Stasi: *if you've forgotten what the Stasi is, take a look at the note on p. 32, line 17*
- verhören = to interrogate
- **zurück|bekommen, bekam, bekommen = to get back (i.e. these weren't returned to him)**
- *Warum warten die Mafiosi am Grenzübergang auf den Scheich von Berlin?*
- genau so, wie er befürchtet hatte = exactly as he had feared
- Löcher in die Luft starren = to stare holes into the air (the pointedly bored manner of experienced violent criminals who are about to seriously brutalize you)
- **die Schwierigkeiten = problems; trouble; difficulties**
- hinter sich (Dativ) haben = to have just finished with
- echte Schwierigkeiten = *real* trouble
- **höflich = politely**
- der Bürger = citizen
- **jemanden weg|schicken = to send someone away**

Seite 76

- **um|kehren, ist umgekehrt = to return**
- (jemanden) an|flehen = to beg (someone) abjectly
- **betteln um = to beg**
- Dort ging man darauf ein = There his request was accepted
- der Fußgänger = pedestrian
- vorbei = over

Kapitel 16

Seite 76, cont'd

- **das Merkwürdige an (+ Dativ) = the strange thing about**
- ungewöhnlich = unusual; out of the ordinary
- Sie gehörte so sehr zu ihrem Alltag, dass sie sie kaum bemerkten = It was so much a part of their everyday routine [Alltag] that they hardly [kaum] noticed [bemerkten] it.
- Wenn in aller Heimlichkeit die Mauer geöffnet worden wäre, hätten die, die dort wohnten, es als allerletzte bemerkt = If in all secrecy the Wall had been opened [geöffnet], those who lived there would have been the very last to notice it.
- der Reisepass, der Personalausweis, der Zettel [= piece of paper]: *In East and West Germany, one used a small passport, "der Personalausweis," as one's ID ("der Führerschein," the driver's license, functions only as a driver's license in Germany). For traveling, West Germans had a "Reisepass" in addition to the Personalausweis. East Germans did not have Reisepässe, but instead were given a "Reiseanlage zum visafreien Grenzverkehr" [= "Supplementary document for travel across the border without a visa"] for travel to other Eastern block countries. This document is what the book refers to dismissively as "ein Zettel." For travel to the West, a visa was needed, but only granted in exceptional circumstances.*

Seite 77

- die Leipziger Buchmesse: a large book fair held in the East German city of Leipzig
- Simone de Beauvoir: influential French feminist intellectual who had a long relationship with Sartre. Her writings were based in part on existentialist principles.
- **klauen = to steal [informal]**
- dabei entdeckt wurde = was discovered doing that
- besonders = especially; dumm: here, this means "inconvenient, unfortunate"
- extra = expressly (refers to doing something one wouldn't normally do for a specific purpose) ==> er hatte sich extra die Haare geschnitten = he had expressly cut his hair
- passieren = geschehen, geschah, ist geschehen = to happen
- **erinnern = to remind (sich erinnern = to remember)**
- *i.e. although the residents of the Sonnenallee were normally oblivious of the Wall (as described on p. 76, lines 14-20), something happened that reminded all of them of where they were living.*
- in einer Weise = in a manner
- hinterher = afterwards
- **sich etwas beschaffen = to get a hold of something**

Seite 78

- **der Gedanke = thought**
- **kreisen um = to circle around**
- fast = almost
- verrückt = crazy
- sogar = even
- sich melden für = to enlist in
- **der Wachturm = watchtower**
- mit Hilfe einer selbstgebauten Anordnung aus = with the help of a homemade contraption composed of
- vertiefte sich gründlich in den Stoff = studied the details thoroughly
- **nötig = necessary**
- die Berechnung = the calculation
- die Stelle der Mauer = that part of the wall
- der auf Herrchens Grab den Mond anheult = which howls at the moon on its master's grave

- **tatsächlich = actually; really**
- bester Laune sein = to be in a terrific (good) mood (siehe auch: schlechter Laune sein)

Seite 79

- verloren = lost (verlieren, verlor, verloren)
- **der Liebeskummer = lovesickness, depressing problems with one's love life**
- ich komm da nicht ran = I can't get at it
- unterbrechen, unterbrach, unterbrochen = to interrupt
- **erstaunt = surprised**
- **verzweifelt = in despair (verzweifeln)**
- **erschiessen, erschoss, erschossen = to shoot**
- Das erzähl ich dir morgen = (*d.h. wie man den Brief bekommt*)
- es eilig haben = to be in a hurry
- Du stellst Fragen! = The questions you ask!
- den Kopf schütteln = to shake one's head
- *Wuschel is expressing his surprise at the questions Micha is asking because to him it's obvious how Micha can get at the letter, and he can't understand that that's not obvious to Micha. He's about to explain his solution, which could perhaps work, but certainly isn't actually obvious.*
- der Staubsauger = vacuum cleaner
- geht das doch = it will work/can be done

Seite 80

- **sprachlos = speechless**
- die Stelle = die Lage = the spot
- berühren = to touch
- irgendwann = sometime
- sich fest|saugen = to get attached by suction
- holen = to fetch
- **sofort = immediately**

Kapitel 17

Seite 80, cont'd

- aufgeregt = excited, irritable
- **schimpfen = to grumble, to "bitch"**
- wie schon lange nicht mehr: i.e. it had been a long time since she last "schimpfte" like this

Seite 81

- **die Schnauze voll haben = to have it up to here**
- ab|hauen = to flee, to get out
- wer noch nicht abhauen will, der wird auch noch dahinterkommen = whoever doesn't want to get out yet will figure it out eventually
- der Letzte macht das Licht aus = the last one turns the light off
- *This is a reference to a joke common at the time about there being a hole in the Wall, and Erich Honecker (the state and Party chief) waking up to find everyone gone and a note on the Wall: "Erich, mach's Licht aus, du bist der Letzte."*
- aus|gehen, ging, gegangen = (lights) to go out
- **wie durch ein Wunder = as if by miracle**
- tatsächlich = indeed
- überall = everywhere
- ein gewöhnlicher Stromausfall = an ordinary, run of the mill power failure
- aufs Stichwort kommen = to come on cue (*i.e. just when die Existentialistin had talked about "das Licht ausmachen"*)
- Der Existentialistin wurde dabei so unheimlich, dass = This felt so eery/uncanny to die Existentialistin, that...
- (sie) sich Mario um den Hals warf = (she) flung her arms around Mario's neck
- **So ein Mist! = Damn! This sucks!; echt = really**
- vergessen, vergass, vergessen = to forget
- nicken = to nod

- **erfahren, erfuhr, erfahren = to find out**
- genau in dem Augenblick = just at the moment
- kompliziert = complicated
- die japanische Stereoanlage: *Siehe Seite 46, Zeile 21 - Seite 47, Zeile 24*

Seite 82

- das Stromnetz = power grid
- an|schließen, schloss, geschlossen = to plug in
- der Kurzschluss = short circuit. *Verstehen Sie, warum der Kurzschluss passiert ist?*
- im ganzen Wohngebiet = in the entire residential area
- dunkel = dark
- Sie war einzig und allein dazu dem Zoll in die Hände gespielt worden, um einen Stromausfall zu bewirken = It had been put ("played") into the hands of customs for the sole purpose of bringing about a power failure.
- **die Leuchtmunition = flares**
- der Himmel = sky
- An dem lag es wohl = It was probably because of it/this (i.e. the full moon)
- als sonst = than usual
- **aufs Dach = onto the roof**
- das Schauspiel = the show
- beobachten = to observe, to watch
- Jahrestag der Republik = anniversary of the founding of the DDR (*October 7*)
- der Staubsauger = the vacuum cleaner

Seite 83

- der Schlauch = the hose
- **zurück|ziehen, zog, gezogen = to pull back**
- *In the light of the flares, Micha, Wuschel and the vacuum hose [Schlauch] are throwing multiple shadows [Schatten] on the Wall, and since the flares are moving, so are their shadows, producing an effect that will look threatening to the border soldiers.* verbreiten = to spread; hell = bright; mehrfach = multiple times; sich abzeichnen = to emerge; steigen und fallen = to rise and fall; wirken wie = to appear like; stürzten ineinander oder zogen voneinander weg = collapsed into each other or pulled away from each other; rissen in alle Richtungen aus und verschwanden plötzlich = tore off in all directions and disappeared suddenly. *The guards are going to shoot, and I think this passage makes it much clearer why they do so than it is in the corresponding scene you will see in the movie.*
- Kein Grenzer wäre auf diese Idee gekommen → Konjunktiv II, Vergangenheit
- holen = to get, to fetch
- unmöglich = impossible
- unschuldig = innocent
- **wirken = to appear**
- dazu = and on top of that
- als der Schuss fiel = when the shot was fired ("fell")
- bewegungslos = immobile, not stirring (sich bewegen = to move)
- ein Treffer = a hit, i.e. a shot that hit its mark

Seite 84

- ebenso = auch
- **heulen = weinen = to cry uncontrollably, to wail**
- erleben = to experience
- sich hinunter|beugen = to bend down
- beim Sterben = while he was dying
- **wenigstens = at least**
- bequem = comfortable
- auf|knöpfen = to unbutton
- hervor|holen = to produce (i.e. took out of his jacket)
- verwirrt = confused, dazed
- **retten = to save** (die Rettung = the rescue)

- *We can laugh at the end of this scene, but obviously it refers to the real shootings that happened by the wall, and that did not have a happy end.*
- echt = genuine, real
- die Ausgabe = edition
- Stücke = pieces
- in Tränen aufgelöst = dissolved in tears
- wagen = to dare
- **der Gedanke = thought**
- reichen = to be enough; hätte nicht gereicht: Konjunktiv II, Vergangenheit

Seite 85

- **trotzdem = nevertheless, still**
- hell brennen = to burn brightly
- niedergehende = falling
- in Brand setzen = to set on fire
- darauf = (here:) thereupon
- zurück = back
- **an|sehen, sah, gesehen = to look at**
- verbrennen, verbrannte, verbrannt = to burn up
- begreifen, begriff, begriffen = verstehen
- in allen Einzelheiten = down to the last detail
- irgendwie mit ihr zu tun hatte = somehow had to do with her

Kapitel 18

Seite 85, cont'd

- **sich begegnen = to meet**
- Als ihm Miriam ihr Herz aus|schüttete = When Miriam poured her heart out to him
- **wagen = to dare**
- wahrscheinlich = probably

Seite 86

- **damals = back then**
- remember: "es gab" is the past tense of "es gibt"
- tropfen = to drip
- ein schlechtes Gewissen = a bad conscience
- an jemandem (Dativ) leiden = to suffer because of someone
- zu weit gehen = to go too far
- **unbeschreiblich = undescribable**
- das Glück = this good fortune
- an|fangen, fing, gefangen = beginnen
- versuchte Micha zu erklären = versuchte ihm zu erklären
- vor|schreiben, schrieb, geschrieben = to prescribe (make rules about)
- ab ... und aufwärts = starting with ... and upwards
- das Sagen haben = die Kontrolle haben
- irgendwie = somehow
- etwas dagegen unternehmen, unternahm, unternommen = to do something about ("against") that
- erken = (here:) to feel [normally, this means "to notice"]
- das Gefühl = the feeling

Seite 87

- kurz vor dem Absturz stand = was about to crash
- Einfach um die Sache ab|zu|kürzen... = Just to make things shorter...
- **unterbrechen, unterbrach, unterbrochen = to interrupt**
- *(the ice cream is melting → Micha wants to end the conversation quickly, which gives him the courage to ask...)*
- die Sehnsucht = the longing, yearning

- das Fernweh = longing to travel far away
- befreit = liberated
- endlich = finally
- erlöst = delivered, released from a burden
- sich verabschieden = to say good bye
- winken = to wave
- Phileas Fogg und sein Diener [=servant]: the main characters of the movie *Around the World in 80 Days*.
- unsicher = insecure, unsure of himself
- wagen = to dare
- der Panzer = tank
- der 7. Oktober: "Tag der Republik," the day the DDR was founded
- lärmern = sehr laut sein

Seite 88

- trösten = to console
- weich = soft
- **nicht gewachsen (sein) für = not made for, not up to**
- **höchstens = at the most (wenigstens = at the least)**
- den Kopf schütteln = to shake one's head
- blicken = to look
- sich Sorgen machen = to worry
- *Der ABV und Micha sind jetzt quitt (Siehe Seite 67, Zeil 15-16) → er kann jetzt wieder nett zu Micha sein.*
- *There's a typo here: it should say "Als Micha am Bett saß," not "sab."*
- retten = to save
- wollte ... schon immer = had always wanted to
- sogar = even
- aus|brechen, brach, gebrochen = to break out

Seite 89

- kaputt gehen = to break, to break down (*extended here metaphorically to people*)
- das Tagebuch = diary
- Betreten verboten = no trespassing, no entry
- Tagebuch führen = to keep a diary
- Die Schrift sollte ja ungeübt aus|sehen, sah, gesehen = After all the writing was supposed to look unpracticed
- **die Wirkung = effect**
- **(sich) überlegen = to think about, ponder**

Seite 90

- **etwas Besonderes = something special**
- das Bekenntnis = the confession (bekennen = to confess, to admit)
- **das machte ihm nichts aus = he didn't mind that**
- war ihm jedes Mittel recht = he was ready to do anything
- von Tinte verschmiert = covered in ink [Tinte]-smears
- **leer = empty**
- die Tintenpatrone = ink cartridge
- *schoolkids in Germany often write with fountain pens*
- husten = to cough (perhaps in order to clear his throat in preparation for reading)
- wichtig = important
- **sich lohnen = to be worth it**
- an|fangen, fing, gefangen = beginnen

Seite 91

- *Verstehen Sie, warum Micha sagt, dass es so wichtig war, dass er das "B" gelernt hat? ☺*
- unterbrechen, unterbrach, unterbrochen = who didn't want to be interrupted right at the beginning
- **begreifen = verstehen**

- **strahlen = to radiate happiness, to smile radiantly**
- schließlich = finally
- der Hals = neck
- ziehen, zog, gezogen = to pull
- endlich = finally
- ein (das) Versprechen ein|lösen = machen, was man versprochen hat
- zeigen = to show
- Wurde ja auch Zeit = It was high time
- nicken = to nod
- die Wolke = cloud
- frieren = to freeze

Kapitel 19

Seite 92

- **verlassen = to leave (braucht ein Direktobjekt)**
- das Glücksgefühl = feeling of (profound) happiness
- *Verstehen Sie die Ironie? Siehe Seite 36, Zeile 3 & 19-21*
- klingeln = to ring
- der Anzug = the suit
- sein Beileid aus|sprechen, sprach, gesprochen = to express one's condolences
- **winken = to wave (to)**
- das Treppenhaus = stairwell
- erfahren, erfuhr, erfahren = to find out
- der Leichenbestatter = the undertaker
- überrascht = surprised
- **blass = pale**
- **ein|schenken = to pour**
- ungewöhnlich = unusual

Seite 93

- *There's a typo here: It should say "wenigstens," not "wenigsten."*
- Da wissen wir doch wenigstens, woran wir sind = At least we know where we stand (*with respect to the neighbor*)
- **trotzdem = anyway, nevertheless**
- verständnisvoll = understandingly
- **sich an die Arbeit machen = to get to work**
- sich zusammen|ziehen = to contract
- **die Träne = the tear**
- *There's a typo here: It should say "dass," not "das."*
- so was = stuff like this
- die Beisetzung = the burial
- ließ man Frau Kuppisch nach Westberlin fahren: *It was by no means automatic that one was allowed across the border even when a close relative died, and so the remainder of the paragraph speculates as to why she might have been permitted to go.*

Seite 94

- zurück lassen = to leave behind
- **die Fahne = flag**
- die Rückkehr = the return
- die Dose = the can
- Geht das schon wieder los! = Is that [smuggling things that are perfectly legal] starting again!
- **neugierig = with curiosity**
- das Pulver = the powder
- hatte als erste eine Ahnung = was the first to have an inkling of what was going on
- betrachten = to look at, to regard
- **übertreffen, übertraf, übertroffen = to outdo**
- ließ sich nicht denken = could not be imagined

- Friede + Dativ = peace (to)
- *There's a typo here: It should say "machte," not "macht."*
- **zu|machen = to close**

Seite 96

- beerdigen = to bury
- Die Beisetzung fand in aller Stille statt = "The burial took place very quietly."
- *This is a standard formula for reporting on funerals in German.*
- sich versammeln = to gather together (used for people gathering)
- sogar = even
- die Totenrede = the eulogy
- **feierlich = ceremoniously, solemnly**
- der Schwager = brother in law
- Ob ich Schriftsteller werde? = Sollte ich Schriftsteller werden?
- das: *Micha is referring to what's going on around him, and life on the Sonnenallee generally*
- den Kopf schütteln = to shake one's head
- **die Wichtigkeit = the importance**
- In what follows, Micha will list some of the conversations that are going on on the way home from the funeral, as examples of the kind of things that would make his readers shake their head if he reported them.
- die Kindererziehung = upbringing of children
- **erscheinen, erschien, ist erschienen = to appear, to get published**
- wie einen Indianer auf|wachsen lassen = let (her child) grow up like a Native American

Seite 97

- Obermeister: *Siehe Seite 11, Zeile 3-4*
- **die Wahl = the election (wählen = to vote, elect, choose)**

Kapitel 20

Seite 97, cont'd

- der Trabi: *Siehe Seite 101*
- **selbst wenn = even if**
- die Fahrschule: *In both East and West Germany, one needed to take extensive (and, in West Germany, very expensive) driving lessons at a driving school before one was allowed to get one's driver's license (this continues to be the case in unified Germany).*
- **sich beschäftigen mit = to occupy oneself with**
- *Warum sieht die Existentialistin nur noch Marios Füße, nachdem sie den Trabi kaufen?*
- *Wie kann so ein einfaches Auto so kaputt sein? In the full version of the book, Mario responds with some amusingly obscure car talk that indicates how well one got to know one's Trabi from repairing it so frequently. The flip side of this is/was that where one is often helpless when a modern car breaks down, Trabis were still constructed quite intuitively, if shoddily, so that it was quite possible to make repairs oneself--and generally much faster than waiting for a shop to do it (remember how early on in the book Herr Kuppisch's suspicions about the Stasi neighbor are exacerbated when the neighbor gets his car repaired speedily ☺)*
- **jemanden beruhigen = to calm someone down**
- die Wehen setzten ein = labour began
- es geht los = it's starting

Seite 98

- den Zündschlüssel herum|drehen = to turn the ignition key
- "Das kann eigentlich gar nicht sein, murmelte Mario": *A few impossible things are going to happen during this ride in the Trabi, and this statement marks the first one.*
- der Beifahrersitz = passenger seat
- Es regnete in Strömen = It was pouring rain
- **verlieren, verlor, verloren = to lose**
- der Auspuff = the exhaust pipe

- (perhaps what's actually meant here is just the muffler; in any case, the point is that the car, which is loud anyway, now becomes absurdly loud)
- krachte und knatterte = war SEHR laut
- einen Schaden fürs Leben haben = be damaged for life
- bei einem Luftangriff zur Welt kommen = to be born during an air-raid
- **begeistert = enthusiastic**
- der Lärm = the noise

Seite 99

- die Feinheiten = subtleties, details
- ehe = bevor
- ab|stellen = to turn off
- der Motor = the engine
- den Gang ein|legen = to put the car in gear
- **ein|biegen, bog, gebogen = to turn into (a street)**
- die Staatskarosse = vehicle for state visitors
- rasen = extrem schnell fahren
- **nach und nach = gradually**
- überholen = to overtake
- *Ist es realistisch, dass ein Trabi Staatskarossen überholt, die mit Höchstgeschwindigkeit fahren?*
- fast = almost
- die Kolonne = the convoy
- **an|halten, hielt, gehalten = to stop**
- ab|stellen = to turn off

Seite 100

- die Verzweiflung = the desperation
- ein|fallen, fiel, ist gefallen = to occur
- eine bittende Bewegung machen = to make a pleading gesture
- die Richtung = the direction
- tatsächlich = really, actually
- einer der Russen stieg aus: *The full text adds an important detail here: this Russian had a birthmark [Muttermal] on his forehead, which may remind you of an important Russian politician (and perhaps of the beginning of one of the Naked Gun movies).*
- **mutig = courageously (der Mut = the courage)**
- die Handbewegung = hand gesture
- der Himmel = sky, heaven
- im gleichen Augenblick = in the same instant
- **auf|hören = to stop**
- fertig gewickelt = fully swaddled
- **berühren = to touch**
- an|springen, sprang, ist gesprungen = to start up (for cars, engines)
- Wunder vollbringen = to perform miracles
- *Does this ("ein Russe, der Wunder vollbringt") remind you of anyone in recent history?*

Seite 102

- sich entfernen = to move away
- **deutlich = clear**
- den beiden = to both of them
- wahrscheinlich = probably
- genau so wenig = just as little
- begreifen, begriff, begriffen = to understand
- die Luft bewegen = to move the air (wir sagen viel, aber wir tun wenig)
- **von vorn bis hinten = from beginning to end, all of it**
- es ist zum Kotzen = it sucks (it's enough to make you puke (kotzen))
- **prächtig = wonderfully**
- klug = intelligent
- **aber eigentlich = but really, but to be honest, but actually**

- *In the full version of the text, Micha comes to this conclusion a few pages earlier, after listening to the conversations on the way home from the funeral.*
- stürmen= to storm
- The last paragraph distinguishes between "das Gedächtnis" [memory] and "Erinnerungen" [memories]. *Note that "das Gedächtnis" refers more to storing facts/events without changing them in any way (which, however, isn't really possible), whereas "die Erinnerung" suggests more that one is internalizing and thus transforming the experience of those events.*