AFTER THE WAR

H. C. GORDINIER

After the War

H Camp Gordinier

37 North 19th Street

Lafayette, IN 47904

hcampgordinier@yahoo.com

765 491-8937 (voice mail and text)

765 426-1912 (voice mail only)

“ Magic is believing in yourself. If you can do that, you can make anything happen.”

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)

Rupert

In the spring, the Weser River always runs high. Minden lies on the west bank, halfway between Hannover and Osnabrueck. When in the spring of 1945 Germany was engulfed by the combined Allied armies, Minden missed the invasion of both the 2nd British army to the north and the American 9th army to the south. The Nazi regime surrendered unconditionally on May 9, 1945. Minden did suffer terrible damage, but the residents felt relieved to be spared the devastation and near obliteration of major cities such as Cologne, Dusseldorf, Dresden, Hamburg and Berlin.

Jacob Bruggermann, a farmer, ruminated on whether this was due to luck or a capricious "act of God." His farm of 150 hectares was just north of Minden. Luck or an "act of God," it didn't really matter. He could plant on schedule. That was the important, the necessary thing. The farm could go on. If you had good seed, fertile acreage, basic undamaged farm equipment, strong muscles, a wife as hardy as Matilda and healthy children, you could survive. Survival was all that mattered.

Another piece of good fortune aided spring planting. That year, although the brown silt filled river came up to the top of the retaining wall, it did not go over. They could begin right away. Long grueling days began. Jacob, Matilda and the four children worked to near exhaustion. The oldest was Rupert, then Heinrich, and two young women Sybille and Renate. Rupert hated farm life and left in 1951 when he turned 18, entering the *Technische Hochschule* in Braunschweig ,where in addition to being an honor student, he excelled in football as a ferocious defensive fullback. He also helped pay for his education by enlisting as a reservist in the newly formed *Bundeswehr,* the army of the German Federal Republic.

He underwent intensive physical training. He continued to serve after graduation. He was employed by the *Volkswagenwerk,* Wolfsburg as a manger, rising quickly in the ranks.

Rupert rented a flat in nearby Helmstedt, a city on the border that divided West from East Germany. For recreation, he rode a bicycle in and around the city. He also took up the piano and began lessons at the local music school. His teacher, Katrina, a young buxom woman from Silesia, openly flirted with him. After six months, she moved in with him at his flat.There were the usual squeals of delight in the bedroom along with pleasant after glows. Katrina was also a good cook. Life was pleasant and a social life developed around her friends at the music school. A favorite pair was Josef and Gudrun Messenger, both music teachers at the school. They all enjoyed the new restaurant, The Balkan Grill, run by a family from Dubrovnik. It offered an extensive and tasty menu of Serbian and Croatian dishes, a welcome change from the staples of *Wienerschnitzel, Kartofelnsalat,* and bratwurst.

Relieving this routine were trips to Goslar in the Harz Mountains. The medieval city of Goslar was miraculously spared from Allied bombing. At least once a month during good weather, Rupert and Katrina would take a weekend excursion there in his brand new teal VW cabriolet. Goslar had an atmosphere redolent of Grimm's fairy tales. It was a splendid change from the endless stucco row houses constructed in most German cities after the war. However, throughout Germany, optimism began to flourish. People were working. Ruined cities were being rebuilt. The Nazi past, if not forgotten, was beginning to fade. Spring merged into summer. Rupert and Katrina continued living together, making love, and taking excursions to Goslar. Summer turned into fall. Colder weather kept them closer to Helmstedt and local activities. In October the trees turned golden, leaves were falling.

One day an express letter arrived from Minden.

"Your father is very ill. The doctor gives him only a few more days. *Liebe Muti,* Matilda."

Taken aback, Rupert called softly to Katrina, hoping for support.

"Katrina, my father is dying. I am going to my old home in Minden. Will you come with me?"

She hesitated. "Do you think I am needed there?"

Rupert was surprised. "Well, they might not need you, but it would be pleasant to have your company."

"No, I don't think so. They will probably judge me as an unmarried slut. I really don't want to go."

Rupert was pained. He pounded the table. "Alright, I'll go alone."

He rushed to the bedroom, threw some clothes into a valise and bounded over to the door. "I am going. There is a late train at 19:22 hours. It's slow, but I can be there by 2300 hours. I hope you will be here when I come back."

"I will think about it," she groused.

Rupert felt a rush of anger. Only with the greatest effort of self-control did he refrain from slapping her. "*Du bist eine treulose Tomate!* ", he yelled. "You are a faithless friend!" He stormed out of the apartment, heading towards the *Bahnhof.* Perhaps he might have anticipated such a turn. Tensions had started as far back as the piano lessons. Katrina was a good piano teacher. Rupert was lazy. She coaxed. It didn't work. Tension kept building.

Then Katrina started scolding him. "You must really try harder. The scales and arpeggios are necessary if you want to play well."

Rupert would seem to agree, work on the exercises for a few days and then stop. Katrina's nagging did no good. He ignored her and became distant. He also started coming home late from work. Dinner got cold. She reheated it. He ate in sullen silence. No apology. No explanation. She began to think he was being unfaithful to her. It wasn't the case. He was just a garden variety German workaholic. So long before the letter came from Minden, their relations were becoming strained.

At the Minden station, his mother Matilda greeted him warmly.

"Rupert, *Endlich Du bist angekommen.*" " At last you have come.""

He felt awkward. His mother had been a "missing person" when he was growing up. Now she was so effusive. It didn't quite make sense. He responded stiffly and formally.

"Mother, I am here. I am not quite the dutiful son you wanted, but I am here. What are the funeral plans?" She also withdrew into formality. "They aren't complete, but here is an outline. Calling hours will be at Hirschfeld Undertakers, service at the Church of the Redeemer, reception at home. He hasn't gone yet. You'll see him tomorrow at the hospital." Then she kissed him on the cheek, and they went on to the old family home.

The next morning, he was summoned from his sleep to breakfast. Brother and sisters were there waiting. He dressed quickly to join them. They all plunged eagerly into an ample *Bauernomelette*. Times had changed since the end of the war when food was meager. Conversation was brief. Eating hurriedly, he went off with his mother to the hospital.

Jacob was dozing when they arrived. Matilda nudged him. He woke up, rubbed his eyes and looked around. He stared at Rupert and tried to smile, but it was more of a grimace. "Rupert, I see you have come." "Yes, father."

"You have been away a long time, too long."

"My life is different now. I have a good job. I have a lady friend. I am well situated."

"But you have forgotten your family."

"No I have not, but this is a different time."

"Yes it is. No more dreams of a glorious Germany>"

Rupert shot back. "Germany was never glorious, only deluded."

A tear rolled down Jacob's cheek. "*Das stimmt. Arme Deutschland, Das solche Lehre hat.*"

"You are right, poor Germany to have had such terrible teachers." An awkward silence followed. Jacob reached out to touch Rupert's forearm.

"Well my son, you are here. That is good." Rupert's mother put the flowers she had brought on the nightstand. She patted Jacob's hand. He tried to smile again. It was faint, but better than the grimace. He went back to sleep. Rupert and his mother tiptoed out of the room. Jacob lingered another ten days before he died. The wake, the funeral, and the reception went as planned. Two weeks passed Rupert was anxious to leave. He said a stiff goodbye to his mother, brother Heinrich, and sisters Sybille and Renate. As he boarded the train he fell asleep right away. If the conductor had not shaken his arm he would have missed the stop at Helmstedt. Next stop, Magdeburg, DDR, not a safe place to get off.

Arriving at the apartment, he called for Katrina. There was no answer. The flat looked messy. He felt irritation, then anger. "She is a lazy slut. No pride of place." He sat down on a chair, staring at the walls. Over an hour passed. He started to undress to get ready for bed. He was very tired. He heard the front door open. Katrina walked in.

"Rupert, is that you?" He stayed quiet as she came in. "You've had a long trip, haven't you? Do you want something to eat?" He didn't answer. She put two bratwursts into the frying pan. They cooked quickly. She put them on a plate and poured him a large glass of *Dortmunder Union* beer. He ate them silently and chugged down the beer.

"What have you been doing Katrina while I was away?"

"Keeping up with my piano practicing, also walking with friends. Did the funeral go well?" "As well as could be expected."

"What about us?"

"I don't know. When I left you weren't very happy.

"How could I be? You don't care for me. I annoy you."

"Well, I probably annoy you too."

"Yes you do."

"Katrina, I am very tired. I want to go to bed."

"Go then. I'm not stopping you."

He woke up in the morning and called out for her. She didn't answer. Driving to work in Wolfsburg, he nearly ran into a "honey wagon" on the way. The farmer cursed him and gave him the finger. Rupert slowed down. He arrived at his work station barely on time. He went through the motions returning home long after the dinner hour. Katrina gave him a sly smile. "Did you pick up a young whore on the way home?" The urge to slap her was very, very strong. 'No Katrina. There was no whore. You are my whore. I'm wedded to you." Katrina slapped him hard. "You see! I knew that's how you felt about me. You only wanted sex. That was it wasn't it?

"Yes, now it's true, but not at first."

The impasse, the anger, the emotional pain was raw now. It was going to end.

"Get out Katrina! This is my place. So pack up and go."

"No, I am not going. I tried to make this a place for both of us. It's mine too!" " Go or I'll call the police."

"Yes, call them. I'll say that you abused me. They'll take you away and jail you."

"How did I abuse you?" "For one thing you promised to hear my concerts at the *Schuberthalle*. You didn't show up. That hurt. That's abuse." "Alright, I will go. Stay if you like. I'm done with you!" Rupert went to the *Am Marktplatz Hotel* for the night. The next day he went to work at the usual time, He felt relieved. He made a plan to evict her.

At work, Rupert ate alone. On the way back to his desk, he looked at the positions offered on the bulletin board. "Hamburg, Aussen Alster, Moeltke VW, Service Mgr. 30,000 DMs annually. Tel: 981 444-8732x225, References. Company employees preferred." Rupert had been at Wolfsburg for a year. He decided to call. His interview was set up two weeks from the next Monday. He had asked Joachim Lutz, his supervisor, for a reference. Lutz agreed. He called the Lutheran Pastor in Minden for a character reference. The pastor put him in touch with Pastor Johannes Ackermann in Helmstedt. An appointment was set up for that evening. A promised gift of 500 DMs to the building fund secured a glowing tribute.

Rupert went to his flat expecting to find Katrina. He planned to confront her and remove her, by force if necessary, but she was not there. She had taken her belongings. Things were falling into place.

Hamburg is the second largest port city in Europe. There are docks and cranes everywhere. It was heavily bombed in World War II. RAF raids in July, 1943 used incendiary bombs which created a firestorm. The 1950s and 1960s were a time of robust rebuilding and growth. VW did a huge export trade through this port. As Rupert headed for the dealership, he marveled at the luxury stores on the Innen Alster. The interview was somewhat perfunctory, conducted by a woman of great reserve. Still, Rupert had managed to get her to smile. He left feeling confident. He had planned a free afternoon. He bought a new and expensive cashmere sweater at a shop on the Innen Alster. He grabbed a bite to eat at a *Schnell Imbiss* before he caught the evening train to Helmstedt. After arrival, he was still hungry. The Balkan Grill stayed open late. He ordered a *Bifstek Mirabeau* and an *Asbach Uralt* cognac. Pleased with himself, he paid, tipped well, and went home for a good night's sleep.

Rupert waited anxiously to hear from the Hamburg VW dealership. After two weeks, a curt letter arrived. He didn't get the job. Well, that was it. However, his work at the VW headquarters was respected. After two years, he received a promotion and a raise. It was not 30,000 DMs a year, but it was a raise nevertheless. He settled into the VW corporate culture.

One night, alone in the apartment, watching a *Krimmi* rerun, he decided to go to the Balkan Grill for dinner. Katrina and her good friend Henrietta were there with two young men who were obviously tipsy. They were kissing the women frequently. Composing himself, he pretended to ignore them. Katrina did not ignore him and came over to his table.

"Rupert, how are you? It is good to see you."

"Is it? What about your tipsy young man? Does he want you to see me?"

"I don't care what he thinks."

"Well, I care. I thought we were in love once. But then I didn't express enough affection, so you said. By the way how do you discern affection?"

"Oh Rupert, I was so foolish. It's just that those long silences of yours hurt me. I've grown up this year. I'm not so moody."

"Well, it's good to see you Katrina. My telephone number is the same "Oh yes, I do want to call, but let me give you my number." She wrote it down on a neat piece of paper. "If you come over, I'll have *Marzipan* and coffee for you. *Tschuss.*"

He waved at her as she went back to the table. Her companion had not noticed her absence. He had passed out at the table. She woke him up. The two couples left the Balkan Grill rather sheepishly.

Haunting Germany *in* the 196os were many demons. *Fasching* was *a* grand time of exuberant exorcism. You had to get out of places like Helmstedt and Minden. You could go south to *Bayern* or west to the Rhineland, especially to Cologne. Cologne went all out. Wine flowed freely. Elaborate costumes and macabre masks competed with joyful bacchanalian music to create an atmosphere of riotous indulgence.

Katrina and Rupert resumed their relationship. By the time of *Fasching,* they were living together again. They went more slowly. *Abendessen*, a play, Katrina's recital at the *Schuberthalle*, dinners with friends at the Balkan Grill; old friends like Josef and Gudrun Messenger and new friends as well. Katrina's friend Henrietta had a new boyfriend, Peter Kleist. Peter was the son of Helmstedt's *Burgermeister* Heinrich Kleist. Peter was a doctoral candidate in jurisprudence at the University of Goettingen.

Eighteen years after the fall of the Third Reich, Germany was in a state of furious reconstruction. No time to dwell on the past. *Fasching* provided a time of release from compulsive work. The demons rejoiced! *Fasching* was a sanctioned time of drunkenness and free love!

Katrina, Rupert, Henrietta and Peter headed off to Cologne to celebrate. It was a long drive. They arrived in the early morning and found a café near the ancient Cathedral called *Zum Teufel* The café offered traditional German food and lots of drink choices.

After a lengthy time, they searched for an affordable hotel. The first was completely booked. So was the second. On the third try they found a vacancy at the *Edelsteiner Hof.* It had only one room, but the clerk allowed both couples *to* share it. *It* was *Fashcing* after *all.* The night clerk provided another mattress. They were all young and happily inebriated so it worked.

They fell asleep quickly. Rupert woke up in the early morning hours. He took the stairs down to the street. There was still raucous partying going on. He bought a mask from a vendor and put it on. A young woman dressed as an 18th century courtesan put her arms around him and began to fondle him. The stimulation both excited and frightened him. He pushed her away. She laughed and made a suggestive gesture with her tongue. He felt confused and somewhat ashamed. This *Fasching* was not a release. It was a lustful entrapment. He took a deep breath and walked briskly back to the room.

The way of the demons is to excite us with lust and then punish us with guilt and shame. These were his thoughts as he went back to the hotel room. Unintentionally, he woke up Katrina when he lay down.

"Where were you?"

"I've been on the street. It's crazy out there. A woman tried to seduce me. It was awful. I am afraid."

"Oh Rupert, everyone changes in *Fasching,* especially women. We become more aggressive."

"Well, I'm not sure I like the change."

She held him. "Just let me hold you. Then the scary thoughts will leave."

"Katrina, this woman only wanted to toy with me."

"So now you have some clue as to why we broke up. I felt that you were playing with me."

"Well, I will try not to do that anymore."

"I believe you. I don't think you will."

Rupert fell back on the mattress. They both fell asleep entwined in each others arms. In the morning both couples had hangovers. All tried to minimize the discomfort, but all felt queasy and stupid. The common cure for a hangover in the Rhineland is strong coffee and two shots of Ashbach *Uralt.* The Zum *Teufel* was open. After "therapy" they went strolling in the Cathedral square and entered the iconic Cathedral itself. Kneeling down to pray, they lay down on the floor and went to sleep.

Cologne's Cathedral took 14 hits from Allied bomber in World War II, but it remained standing. It is the largest Gothic cathedral in Europe, redolent with a holy and mysterious Germanic atmosphere. As he awoke, Rupert looked up where they were lying. He saw a statue of the winged St. Michael the Archangel about to slice up a hideous figure of a serpent. It was not subtle symbolism. The serpent was the devil. As did everyone in Germany, Rupert's family paid the *Kirchensteur*, a church tax, but rarely attended a service. However, inside one of Germany's holiest places, the message came through very clearly. Rupert sprang to his feet and shouted.

"This festival of lust will destroy us!" His cry woke up the others. "We must get away from this festival of the damned. This is an orgy of lust and selfishness."

Katrina tried to calm him. Henrietta and Peter stood by mutely. They left the Cathedral hurriedly, returning to the car in a public parking garage. Painted crudely on the roof of the car, while they were gone, were two iron crosses and a swastika. Shocked and numb, they got into the car and headed to the autobahn to return to Helmstedt. On the five and a half hour trip back, there was almost no conversation. Rupert took Henrietta and Peter home. Katrina and Rupert stayed together at his apartment and shared intimacy of a different kind than before. They both had gone through a kind of purification. They were stronger and better prepared for the journey ahead. There is, after all, such a thing as divine intervention. We don't see it very often, because we don't believe it is possible.

Rupert and Katrina were married and stayed in Helmstedt. During their remaining years, Germany was reunited into one nation after the wartime divisions. Demonic forces sprang up internally from time to time, but they did not overcome the German nation. The marriage produced a son and a daughter, who lived close to their parents even after reunification. Kristina died before her husband. Rupert died a few years later as the 21st century began. A very different , more cautious but economically powerful Germany had begun a new era.

Chapter 2 Heinrich

When this story began, right after the defeat of Nazi Germany, the Bruggermanns were a family of six; stolid Jacob, loyal Matilda, sons Rupert and Heinrich and daughters Sybille and Renate. Jacob died and Rupert came home for the funeral. His story you know, but what of the others? Is it always the eldest that gets our attention, or are the others not worth an investigation? All families have scars. Some are almost too deep to heal. Heinrich felt envious of his older brother, Rupert, who had left home and become a success. Heinrich, the stay-at-home brooded over this turn of events. He tolerated it for a few years. Then, one night, without any advance notice, he left. His journey took him to the west. He became a machinist- apprentice at the *Henkels Fabrik*, the famous knife maker, in the Ruhr city of Solingen. Over a year later, a brief letter arrived in Minden."*Vater und Mutter, und meine Schwestern. Ich habe eninen Beruf gekriegt. Fabrik Henkels. Das Leben hier ist nicht so schlimm. Seid Ihr alle wohl? Schreib mir bitte. Heinrich."*

"Father and Mother, and my sisters. I've got a job at the Henkels Factory. Life's not bad. Are you all well? Write to me please. Heinrich." Heinrich put no return address in the letter or on the envelope, so they couldn't reply. He did this on purpose to cover his guilt over leaving. Matilda tried to reach him at the *Henkels* personnel office, but to no avail. They could not reach him. Heinrich was lost. Now lest you think this curtailed Heinrich, please know that he had grown into a handsome young man. He met a lot of women at various *Kneipe* in Solingen. He moved on to more interesting women in Cologne. One evening at the *Goldener Droschel* on *Kleinebrinkergasse,* an attractive red-head woman came to his table. Heinrich offered to buy her a *Doppelkorn* and a brandy.

Rosalinde, for that was her name, accepted without the slightest hesitation. In a very short time, she was tipsy and giggling silly things at Heinrich. Heinrich was young and inexperienced, but it was pretty obvious that this woman was feeling very warmly towards Heinrich. He did not resist and went off to her room on the *Kleinebrinkergasse.* It was his first complete sexual encounter with a woman. Despite it being somewhat awkward, he enjoyed himself very much. Alas, these encounters often have unpleasant after effects. Two days later Heinrich visited the company medical clinic with a case of the clap. He got a painful shot of penicillin which seemed to clear things up. Because of the quick results, he was not deterred from another encounter.

Heinrich was a moody and unpredictable young man. He quit his job at the *Henkel Fabrik* in Solingen. He moved straight away to Cologne and was able to find a flat with his drinking pal, Axel Kopelke, who flaunted *Budesrepublik* regulations by wearing Nazi clothing and paraphernalia, most notably a shirt with the *Shutztaffel* ,the symbol of the SS.

Axel and Heinrich started collecting Nazi items and selling them on the street. For these memorabilia young workers, male and female, paid handsomely. But the police did not look on kindly. They arrested Axel and Heinrich one evening in front of City Hall on the *Budengasse.* Revealing was both the gall and stupidity of selling such merchandise in public places.

Both Heinrich and Axel were given suspended sentences and a fine of 250 DMs each. When they were released, they continued selling the Nazi paraphernalia. It was too popular and too profitable, and neither the SS, nor the concentration camps were in operation to link the symbols with action.

Naïve socialists and timid educators alike ignored the potential danger. In the 1960s the enemy was the Soviet Union. The slogan, "Don't trust the Russians" although certainly not unfounded, dominated the thinking of the ruling center-right CDU and most Germans. Nazism was a bad dream. Heinrich and Axel could get away with their "illegal" but not "dangerous" enterprise amid the mindset of the ruling CDU party and the majority of Germans in the *Bundesrepublik* For American soldiers stationed in West Germany, it was a grand time. The exchange rate was 4 DMs to the US dollar, a real boon for the soldiers and their families. It was not so good for working class and middle class Germans. However, American troops were popular because of the money they brought to the economy and also because of the massive troop deployment in East Germany, especially enormous Soviet tank armies near Magdeburg and other large East German cities. West Germans accepted the post-war partition, but did not like it.

Cologne's relaxed social and sexual atmosphere pleased Heinrich. It reeked of personal freedom. He didn't have to punch a time clock as he had in Solingen. He could enjoy drinking and womanizing, sleep late, and earn more in a few hours in the evening than he made at the factory in a week. Not an atmosphere for discipline and frugality. How un-German. How delightful for this young man. It would never end. But of course, it did.

Axel began to be a serious practitioner of the Nazi past. He avidly denied the Holocaust. Yes, there were atrocities, he agreed, but on both sides. The Nuremberg trials were, in his eyes, a concerted effort to shame Germans with an exaggerated sense of guilt.

He read neo-Nazi literature, including an apologia, *War Deutschland Allein Schuld an dem Zweiten Welt Krieg?* Was Germany Alone Guilty for the Second World War?

Axel and Heinrich often took day trips to nearby towns such as Bornheim, a charming small city about 20 km south of Cologne. Bornheim had recently honored its native son, the Nobel Prize winning author, Heinrich Boll, who had been called "the conscience of Germany" by the literati and secure university people. Axel and Heinrich did not read that kind of elevated literature. They only reached the level of *Bild Zeitung* and other trash. So it was a shock, especially to Axel, when in a pleasant *Gast Stube* in Bornheim, they sat down next to a war veteran named Oskar Gruenberg who led them through some of his war experiences. If only the Fatherland had not been betrayed by the Jews and the Reds, they agreed, Germany would have turned the western front and resumed attacking France. It was the kind of distorted myth that comforted German nationalists like Axel and drew the unsophisticated Heinrich into a closer bond.

But then, Oskar recounted another war experience of his as a functionary at Auschwitz. Oskar had been a kind of bookkeeper. He recorded in grisly detail what happened. His eyewitness testimony would validate, years later during the Nuremberg trials, the unimaginable horror of this notorious concentration camp.

Axel wouldn't have it. He tried to punch Oskar. For his part, Heinrich was deeply moved by Oskar's narrative about Auschwitz, even as Axel insisted it was a made-up fantasy of an old man, some kind of SPD propaganda designed to keep Germany subservient to other powers, notably the Americans. "*Die Frage war: Was fuer eine Spinnerei hat der alte Bursche erzaehlt?*" "What kind of fantasy had the old man concocted?"

For a time, Heinrich's and Axel's friendship continued. Axel was the more forceful partner. Heinrich was not particularly interested in politics and certainly lacked any rigorous intellectual understanding. He was glad to be away from the farm in Minden. He was more interested in the easy money that the Nazi paraphernalia brought in as a fashion statement.

Most of us, in fact, are a lot like Heinrich. We just go along. We are like the king in the nursery rhyme: "I just want a little more butter for my bread." The pair managed to evade detection selling their Nazi goods. It became easier and easier. The new generation of young Germans in the Rhineland was not as rigid as their elders. Work was not an end in itself. Wages were better. People hadn't hunkered down in bunkers for twenty years now. The horrors and privations of war were fading memories or not remembered at all.

Young Germans masked their mistrust of their American conquerors. They befriended the "Amis." The American GIs were fun. They had a lot of money. They were Axel and Heinrich's best customers.

Unfortunately, the entrepreneurs became careless. The local police dressed a lot like the Americans in their civvies. One night, they conducted a sting. Axel and Heinrich fell. Since this was their second offense, they spent the night in jail. In the morning they were given a meager breakfast. The guards brought them into the courtroom antechamber where they were roughly pushed to a bench. After a three hour wait, they were escorted into the courtroom before a stern looking magistrate with slicked back graying hair. The magistrate first addressed the guards. "What have we here? Two young, incorrigible louts I presume?"

"Exactly correct, your Honor."

Glaring at Alex and Heinrich, the judge admonished them.

"I see that you have been caught twice selling SS stuff. It is strictly against the law to have these things, much less trade in them. But you know that. What should I do with you?" A brief silence ensued. Then Axel blurted out, "You should give us an award for patriotism, your Honor."

Caught off guard, the judge gave them a sly smile and stroked his chin. "Not so long ago, this would have been the case. But this is a different Germany. This is a Germany based on American and English versions of the law. What the Reich might have rewarded, the Federal Republic of Germany will punish. So, since this is a second offense, the penalty will have to be more than a fine. You are each sentenced to a week in the municipal jail. Each day you will have a supervised work detail cleaning the public toilets in the central city of Cologne. After your sentence is finished you will each sign a statement swearing never to engage in this activity again. The judge banged his gavel forcefully.

After finishing their unpleasant "community service", Axel and Heinrich signed off on the documents stating that they would never again sell Nazi contraband. Of course, they had no intention of honoring their pledge. Axel was further enraged by this infringement on his livelihood. He persuaded Heinrich to move to Bremen for a fresh start, where they hooked up with the *Nationaldemokratic Partei Deutschlands (*NPD).the "only significant patriotic force " for post-war Germany.

In a nutshell, its ideology was anti-global, anti-American and anti-Semitic. In other words, it was the neo-Nazi revival coming after Nazi Germany's devastating defeat and the determined de-Nazification program of the Allied powers. One of the NPD founders and promoters was "Fritz" Thielen, a successful building contractor from Bremen.

Bremen had suffered fire-bombing similar to that of Hamburg in 1943. Britain's Air Marshal Tedder had intentionally targeted civilians of these two major port cities. There was still intense bitterness nearly twenty years after the war.

"Fritz" Thielen was a strange combination of cynic and idealist. He needed others to share his impossible dream for a powerful Germany capable of regaining all the territory lost in the war. He didn't quite believe it, but if enough people would latch on then maybe, just maybe, the NPD would become a "third way" in German politics. Axel and Heinrich were willing recruits for this alternative universe. Compared with Cologne and the Rhineland, Bremen was a dreary place. Stirred by the NPD bravado, Axel and Heinrich did not notice. "Fritz" was quite generous. He provided them a free room in a clean pension.

Enhancing "Fritz" Thielen's generosity was his relationship with the American Air Force servicemen stationed in nearby Bremerhaven. He cultivated the enlisted men of the AFSS 41st RSM (radio squadron mobile) the self-styled "minor league spooks" who eavesdropped on Russian radar and radio communications. They were an elite and intelligent population, in the top one or two percent of postwar American service personnel.

"Fritz" was able to get them prize Mercedes-Benz and Porsche automobiles at a deep discount, as well as the best *Blaupunkt* receivers and among other things fine wine and cognac. The main currency was in American cigarettes and whiskey from the PX. "Fritz" collected a 15% commission on every transaction. Everyone benefited except the German government and the American taxpayer.

"Fritz" suggested that Axel and Heinrich apply for work at the base PX in Bremerhaven. He also expunged from their documents any of the police troubles the young men had incurred in Cologne. In less than two weeks, they were employed as stock boys in the cavernous PX warehouse. The pay wasn't large, 175 DMs each for a week. "Fritz" took out 20 DMs for the room. "Fritz" also encouraged them to become "independent contractors."

This contracting work consisted of setting aside a case of bourbon and Camels each week for "Fritz's" men to pick up by the bulkhead door to the basement. Axel and Heinrich would be responsible for getting the sour mash and cigarettes to the top step and unlocking the door. This was easy because the lock was a cheap combination type. It was simplicity itself. They would receive a bonus of 50 DMs each for every successful delivery. It was rewarding work. It appealed to their sense of adventure. "Fritz" also reduced the risk. He bribed employees on a regular basis. Who said the supply side economics doesn't work?

Heinrich and Axel began to prosper in their endeavors. The earnings from the bourbon sales gave them extra spending money. They pooled their resources and purchased a ten year old Opel four-cylinder sedan with over 125,000 km on the clock. They used it to pick up girls and go to the *Tanz Clubs*. After a few only months Axel in particular began to tire of the routine and planned more ambitious money-making schemes. The idea he landed on was simple but risky. Why not steal two cases of bourbon and Camels each time? One case each for "Fritz", and the others to stow in the trunk of the Opel? With their own personal stash, they could transport it to the Bremerhaven port and sell individual bottles and cartons to the dock workers at a premium price. The workers would be delighted to obtain this delicious American nectar. It would make their work more pleasant. Everyone would benefit.

Among the thousands of items in the PX warehouse, no one would miss a few cases of whiskey. Besides, for a few out of pocket DMs, Axel and Heinrich could pay the inventory clerk to falsify the stock on hand. By the end of the year, Axel and Heinrich were making three times more than the typical German national PX worker.

They decided to take a New Year's holiday to Amsterdam, a city with wonderful food, great museums, and a great many women eager to engage in "hot" relationships for a fee. They were granted four days time-off with pay by the PX administrator. On the Thursday before New Year's Day, they headed west on the autobahn towards the eventual destination: Amsterdam, Holland.

They took along six bottles of the best Kentucky sour mash for personal enjoyment and distribution. They left in high spirits without a care in the world. Little did they know that their weekend escape would turn into a strange ordeal. Life can only be understood by looking backwards, but life must be lived going forward in the darkness of time.

In the 1960s, Amsterdam was unfriendly towards German visitors. The Third Reich had treated the Dutch with contempt and brutality during the Second World War. Axel and Heinrich had learned a lot of American accented English while working at the Bremerhaven PX. This was the language that they spoke in public and in conversation with the local population. Still, it was not quiet fluent, and their German accents betrayed them. They were abruptly confronted one evening in a bar next to one of the canals. Axel and Heinrich tried to leave. They were held hostage by four very strong young men who screamed at them. "You, Nazi bastards!" You are not welcome here. You will never be welcome here."

Among the thousands of items in the PX warehouse, no one would miss a few cases of whiskey. Besides, for a few out of pocket DMs, Axel and Heinrich could pay the inventory clerk to falsify the stock on hand. By the end of the year, Axel and Heinrich were making three times more than the typical German national PX worker.

They decided to take a New Year's holiday to Amsterdam, a city with wonderful food, great museums, and a great many women eager to engage in "hot" relationships for a fee. They were granted four days time-off with pay by the PX administrator. On the Thursday before New Year's Day, they headed west on the autobahn towards the eventual destination: Amsterdam, Holland.

They took along six bottles of the best Kentucky sour mash for personal enjoyment and distribution. They left in high spirits without a care in the world. Little did they know that their weekend escape would turn into a strange ordeal. Life can only be understood by looking backwards, but life must be lived going forward in the darkness of time.

In the 1960s, Amsterdam was unfriendly towards German visitors. The Third Reich had treated the Dutch with contempt and brutality during the Second World War. Axel and Heinrich had learned a lot of American accented English while working at the Bremerhaven PX. This was the language that they spoke in public and in conversation with the local population. Still, it was not quiet fluent, and their German accents betrayed them. They were abruptly confronted one evening in a bar next to one of the canals. Axel and Heinrich tried to leave. They were held hostage by four very strong young men who screamed at them. "You Nazi bastards!" You are not welcome here. You will never be welcome here."

Axel tried to downplay their national origin. "It's true. We are Germans, but we were not, nor are not supporters of Nazism. We are just here for a good time. We work at the American PX in Bremerhaven. Do you think that the "Amis" would let us work there if we had a Nazi background?"

Axel's strategy was effective. The four large young men let them go. Axel was a master of the big lie. He had no scruples and no problem in lying to save his skin. The men let them go. In fact, they even bought the pair a round of Amstel beers. Still, after the peacemaking and toasts, Axel and Heinrich wisely bade their newfound friendly adversaries a pleasant good evening. On the street, Axel lit up a Camel cigarette. He exhaled copious smoke.

"Heinrich, we have just found new customers for bourbon and smokes."

"Why didn't you try to get some money from them before we left?

"The timing wasn't right. We'll go back tomorrow night. They like us now."

With confidence and not a little bravado, our intrepid pair went back to *Depeyster's* for that was what the bar was called. The deal went down smoothly. They collected money from the sale of six packages of Camel cigarettes and two bottles of bourbon. The total was 500 DMs equivalent to $125 at the prevailing exchange rate. After a couple of toasts they left. When they got out the door, they realized that the four Dutchmen were following them. They walked faster, but soon they were surrounded.

"Hello Krauts, you didn't think we were so stupid to fall for that 'good German' bullshit did you? We are going to the station now." Another sting had got our pair. They were engaged in illegal sales to undercover A-dam cops who took them to the station.

They were arrested, cuffed and put into a holding cell until the next day. This was a real blow to their plans to make money while enjoying a holiday.

The next day they were brought before a municipal judge. He imposed a 500 guilder fine on each of them. Pay up or go to jail. Jail it was. They spent the next ten days in a bad smelling Amsterdam jail cell. Fortunately, the police investigation of the pair had not revealed their neo-Nazi connections. Chastened, but not contrite, the pair fortunately found the used Opel where they had parked it. Axel turned the key. It started up and they left Amsterdam on the morning they were released from jail. The trip back to Bremen was very quiet indeed.

Despite the jail time, the temptation to make money in Holland occupied Axel's thoughts. Heinrich wasn't so sure. There still seemed to be a lot of bad feelings among the Dutch towards Germans even twenty years after the war. The police also seemed to be on the alert for these kinds of transactions, even the relatively small one that had been stifled in Amsterdam. Axel, however, was not deterred. The next attempt should be larger, multiple cases of Camels, not cartons. 12 case lots of bourbon, not quarts. Axel mapped out the next attempt. He contacted "Fritz" and proposed a much larger operation.

It involved "Fritz" bribing the port authorities in Rotterdam, the largest port city in Europe. " Fritz" had maintained contact there with certain persons who had been Nazi sympathizers in WW2. These people had made it easy for the *Luftwaffe* to bomb Rotterdam with impunity in May, 1940. Despite the end of the Third Reich in 1945, their dirty secret remained a secret. "Fritz" also had contacts in Athens with shadowy figures who had operated on both sides of the street so to speak.

One of them was the shipping magnate Konstantin Heliopolis, a man interested in shipments that would be hard to detect and earn a quick profit. The scale of Axel's proposal appealed to their sponsor "Fritz". Thielen quickly set things in motion. Despite his reservations, Heinrich went along. They traded the old Opel for a newer Volkswagen, a Kombi, a forerunner of the SUV. The advantage was that this vehicle had much greater cargo capacity than the old Opel. That would certainly result in larger shipments and bigger profits. "Fritz" also had friends with both the German and Dutch *Zollverein* or Customs Authority. The Kombis serial number, registration, and plates had been furnished to the *Zollverein.* When Axel and Heinrich arrived at the border, they were waved through without an inspection. For a new smuggling operation there were almost no hitches.

After nearly a year of this, on a bleak November afternoon, the pair was stopped at the border by the Dutch authorities. A tough looking border guard raised his hand and ordered the vehicle to stop. "Papers,please." Axel forked over the manifest and his passport. The guard also insisted on Heinrich's passport. He stared at the passports and the manifest for some time. He handed back the passports, but kept the manifest. The manifest did not conceal the true nature of the shipment: cigarettes and bourbon. The guard became suspicious. American cigarettes and whiskey, where was the German tax stamp for these items? Of course, there was none. Axel and Heinrich remained impassive. When the guard went briefly to his booth to call his superiors, Axel pressed hard on the accelerator and the Kombi lurched forward rapidly gaining speed. The guard swore and phoned in a description of the Kombi, but could only report a partial plate number. Luckily they had additional plates with them. After a short time, Axel pulled the Kombi off onto a dirt farm road with a tree shaded turnout. The old plates were swiftly replaced.

Then they drove back to the main Rotterdam autobahn about 50 minutes from the port. They congratulated themselves, mistaking luck for cleverness. At the loading dock four stevedores unloaded the Kombi with dispatch. Just like that, the cases of Camels and sour-mash were wheeled on to the pallets and hoisted onto the ship's deck with a crane. When they were done, the stevedores walked slowly down the lowered gangplank.

Axel called out, "Excuse me, haven't you forgotten something?"

The largest member of the crew answered him somewhat insolently. "Oh you must be some kind of Christian Socialist, you mean,'The laborer is worthy of his hire.'"

"That's the idea in general. More to the point, just pay us what it says on the invoice and the manifest. It's all there. Now you can remit the equivalent of thirty-eight thousand American dollars."

'That we'll do, but next time, we don't want any little problem like you had at the *Zoll.* We heard all about it."

"Yes," remarked Axel. "That was a little awkward wasn't it? It won't happen again."

"It damn well better not. Mr. Heliopolis wants things to run smoothly. Here's the money." The payment was transmitted in a large plain envelope wrapped in blue and white ribbons, the colors of the Greek flag. When finished, Axel gave the burly Greek stevedore a flourish with his right hand. It was somewhat ambivalent but accepted by him as acknowledgement. As soon as the money was in hand, Axel revved up the engine. The Kombi headed away from the freighter *Ekaterina* at a brisk pace.

Heinrich exhaled loudly. "Axel, that was tight."

"Heinrich, better get used to that in this business. We've had it pretty easy until now." Axel knew it had been a close call. Still, $38K was a nice sale.

When they returned to work they resumed their jobs as stock clerks at the cavernous PX in Bremerhaven. Their percentage of the transaction was twenty percent each or $7,600 each in US dollars, quite good for the 1960s. Still, it rankled them that "Fritz" got a 60% share, not to mention that the news of the shipment had somehow leaked to the *Zoll* official at the border. The situation had been very dangerous. The unpleasant perception of both partners was that "Fritz" was not entirely or trustworthy. It might not be quite as lucrative, but perhaps they could invest a share of the profits in a less risky venture. The current enterprise required an outsized risk to obtain an uncertain reward.

American banks were eager to invest in post-war Germany. The steel industry was booming.US Steel was aggressively trying to buy large shares of Krupp, infamous because of its sale of arms to Hitler, but very much back in business. However, both the American and German governments were averse to traditional mergers and acquisitions. Long before the popular "junk bond" strategies infatuated the American markets in the 1980s, German financiers promoted a similar strategy known as *Shrottenleihnen* literally "waste material" but in reality deep discount corporate bonds. Axel had made contact with a trader in Cologne named Willi Edelmann, a Jew who had miraculously escaped the death camps. Laden with crisp 100 DM notes, Axel and Heinrich visited him in small office only a few blocks from the Rhine. It was to launch a journey of spectacular wealth.

Axel led off the interview with an introductory proposal. Willi listened, but remained skeptical. He pointed out that the typical amount of capital for this kind of scheme was in the neighborhood of at least 250,000 DMs. Did they have access to this amount of capital? The answer, of course, was no, or at least not yet. The meeting seemed to have been concluded.

Then Axel presented a daring proposal. Security at the Bremerhaven PX was lax. He and Heinrich could "transfer" the commodity equivalent of the 250,000 DMs to Willi. Could Willi then find a way to make the cases of Camel cigarettes and sour mask whiskey into fungible assets, i.e into DMs? For his part, Willi did not like to have value tied up in any kind of commodities. However, he was intrigued by the proposal. The risk would be mostly borne by Axel and Heinrich. Although Willi would be on the hook if the authorities found out that he had received these "transferred" items. If a different nomenclature were used, he would be in reality a fence receiving stolen property. Will had a strong sense of social ethics. However, the profit motive was a powerful lure. In the end, he agreed. The three men warmly shook hands. Axel and Heinrich told Willi that they would contact him in less than a month's time with the plans to deliver the shipment. The meeting had a happy ending.

When our entrepreneurial pair got back to work at the Bremerhaven PX on the following Monday, there was a different atmosphere in the warehouse. The Inspector General had announced a surprise inspection on Friday. The "treads", the career NCOs and enlisted men, were in a dither. This had been a good situation for all. Now USARMY HQ in Heidelberg was putting a lot of pressure to get an accurate inventory after a two year hiatus. Overnight, things went from real loose to really uptight.

The snap inspection called for a rapid change of plans. A quick call to "Fritz" prepared the way to remove 40 cases of Camel cigarettes, 20 cases of the best bourbon and 20 cases of premium scotch in record time. The bribe to the inventory clerks was tripled so that the contraband was whisked out on to the loading dock with the necessary false invoice. The Kombi, overloaded in the extreme, was made ready for an overnight trip to Willi's warehouse in Cologne. Willi was alerted, but was told only that a smaller than expected shipment would be arriving in the very early morning. It was urgent that funds be available for payment. Axel and Heinrich got to Willi's warehouse at 5:15 a.m. Willi and some of his helpers were there and were able to unload the Kombi by 7:00 a.m. Willi had brought his brief case filled with 100 DMs and 50 DMs notes totaling 40,000 DM

The deal went down. Minor grumblings from Willi who wanted to know why the shipment was smaller and when the next shipment would come. Axel danced around answering him. He did not want to let him in on the enhanced security at the Bremerhaven PX because of the snap IG inspection. Axel smiled and assured him things would work out, just a little slower than anticipated. This seemed to satisfy Willi. They parted, not as warmly this time, but certainly not in an antagonistic manner. The drive back to Bremerhaven was uneventful. When they arrived, they learned that the IG inspection had been postponed for two weeks. Everyone at the PX warehouse was relieved. Everyone but Heinrich seemed content. Heinrich had other things on his mind.

Chapter 3: An Unpleasant Surprise

Heinrich had met a young woman in Bremen who was in love with him. Hannelore had strong reservations about his activities. She repeatedly warned him about the risks. For one thing he could be shot. For another, if he were caught in Bremerhaven, in Rotterdam, or at the border he could spend a long time in jail. Hannelore was in her late twenties and very marriage minded, with most of her friends either married or engaged.

At first, Heinrich was dismissive. As time went on, she became more concerned. Heinrich was not as convinced, as Axel was, that a political party based very much on the Third Reich and revenge would succeed. He was, in reality, along for the ride. Yet Heinrich was reluctant to share his doubts with Axel. Axel could talk him out of it. Heinrich was not an independent thinker at all. So the situation went round and round in his thoughts, He was not at all decisive.

Most of us are a lot like Heinrich. We just go along and don't think very much about it. We are usually not able to speak our mind, much less defend our thoughts to someone else, especially if that someone is more clever or certain than us. So Heinrich's indecision became, in effect, a decision go keep working with Axel.

After a time news came again to the Bremerhaven PX telling everyone when the next IG inspection was to take place. Again, there was more pressure to get cases of cigarettes and whiskey out the door of the warehouse. This time it was truly a rush job. Different clerks to bribe needed more cash to persuade them to co-operate with the theft. "Felix" had to furnish a substantial sum, two thousand DMs for each inventory clerk. It was done, however.

Willi had been contacted and was ready. Things seemed to be moving along. But at the Dutch border there was a rude surprise. Six fully armed customs guards held up their weapons and motioned for the van to stop. This time even Axel was unnerved. He cried out, "*Was ist den hier passiert?*" "What's going on?"

Clearly the guards had been given advance notice. How this had happened and who had tipped them off was not clear. What was clear is that unless Axel and Heinrich did some quick thinking and took evasive action, the shipment would be seized and they would be arrested. Axel backed up the Kombi and turned around. As he was doing so bullets whistled over the cab. These were warning shots. The guards could have easily raked the cab with automatic fire killing them both.

Speeding away from the border, a new dilemma arose: where to hide the cargo? Axel sent a detailed radio message to "Fritz' asking for instructions. The following radio chatter indicates the tension of the situation. It was clear to both of them that this had been a very narrow escape indeed.

"Wir haben Pech an der Grenze gehapt. Der Schutzwehr hat viele Waffen. Es war gefaehrlich. Unmoeglich. Was sollen wir tun?" "We've experienced big trouble at the border. Really dangerous. What should we *do?"* At long last "Fritz" answered. "*So was wilst du? Ich Kann von hier gar nicht einlosen."*

"What do you want to do? I can't solve it from here." Axel and Heinrich were hung out to dry. They had a van loaded with stolen goods and nowhere to get rid of it, at least not for cash. They headed back to Bremen. On the way, they pulled off at a small town and parked the Kombi. Then they headed for a *Gastube* for a beer and something to eat. The *Gastube* on the German side of the border was open for breakfast. Over breakfast of *Brotchen*, hard boiled eggs, coffee and a beer chaser, Axel came up with a solution. Heinrich was shaken and unnerved. Axel was shaken, but not unnerved. His neo-Nazi lore helped him calmly formulate a plan.

He recalled that after the Reich's defeat, the Allies had discovered art treasures stored by Hitler and his minions in salt mines. That hiding place appealed to Axel. His preferred site was in Thuringia, a part of Germany controlled by the DDR. Although there would be a problem at the *Zonengrenze,* Thuringia was the furthest place away from *Bunderepublik* snooping. Once there the cases of whiskey and cigarettes would be secure. Getting there, however, would be a very difficult problem. Axel sat for a long time refining his plan. His thoughts carried him to another place near the border, on the West German side, Salzwedel in the *Luneb*erge *Heide* near the Elbe River. Officials from Bonn of the *Budesrepublik* rarely went there. Axel also knew of an American intercept site nearby.

The "Amis" would buy Camel cigarettes and Jack Daniels Bourbon. Axel licked his lips.

"Cheer up, Heinrich. We'll unload this stuff in the salt mine and resell it."

Heinrich gulped. Hannelore's warnings flashed in his mind like bright comets, but he ignored them, He was too far in. They shook hands.

Hannelore had really wanted to get married. She was an attractive brunette with grey eyes, bobbed hair and copious breasts. She helped Heinrich overcome his sexual shyness. Both of them enjoyed sex, but Heinrich was ambivalent about marriage. This caused tension. He really had no desire to settle down to *ein Burgerliches Leben* in Bremen. He liked being on the road. In short, he was a self-centered young adult male. Now that Hannelore had bolstered his sexual confidence, he could easily fuck another woman, or so he thought. On the way to the salt mine in Salzwedel, they stopped in Hamburg, where he engaged a prostitute, but had difficulty maintaining an erection. She had to give him a hand job to finish him off. His confidence took a hit.

The main thing was that when our desperadoes reached Hamburg they were only 89 kilometers from Salzwedel. Axel had a neo-Nazi contact in that town, who could help them stow the goods in the nearby salt mine. Also, it was prudent that they leave Hamburg quickly. There were undoubtedly reports about a van with stolen goods on the loose in West Germany. Arriving in Salzwedel by mid-afternoon, they secured a room in a pension and waited for the contact to show up.

Finally, Rudiger, the contact did show. The first thing was to pay him 300 DMs for his services to navigate the tunnels in the salt mine. A long convoluted discussion followed about the prospects of the NPD, which didn't look good. The economy was roaring back. Finance Minister Ludwig Erhard was very popular.

Most Germans wanted to move on from the disastrous Third Reich experience despite the lure of German ultra-nationalism.

But this was not a political meeting. Rudiger's plan to get the goods into the salt mine by early evening had been modified. An unforeseen event had hastened its implementation. The *Bundes*wehr had scheduled maneuvers the next day using the salt mine as a redoubt.

The salt mine was an enormous compartmentalized cave. Cases were removed from the Kombi one or two cases at a time and put on improvised pallets. It took a long time to finish the job. When it was complete, the trio left feeling satisfied that the cargo would be out of sight from the *Bundeswehr.* After the maneuvers were over, they could safely get to the stash for distribution,

Rudiger took the pair to a different pension on the outskirts of Salzwedel called *Der Tal des Engels* which took in long term guests. The *Bundeswehr* field exercises might take a week or more before there would be ready access again to the salt mine.

Like Hitler's Nazi party, the NPD had some brilliant tacticians and some real dimwits. Rudiger's wife was a real dimwit. Slovenly, sensual and bored with her husband, she started making moon eyes at Heinrich as soon as they were settled in at the pension. Their relationship was devoid of any meaningful conversation. This was fine with Heinrich who enjoyed a great deal of oral sex with her. Rudiger seemed out of it, as if he had been through this kind of thing before. Rudiger had little formal education but he had many skills in stowing and distributing stolen goods. The *Bundeswehr* exercise ended a little early. After the troops left, Rudiger led them back to the salt mine. They loaded the trunk of Rudiger's Audi and drove to the American intercept site at Pevesdorf on the Elbe river.

Rudiger was friendly with Staff Sergeant Jerome Buckley who was in charge of the site operations. The two of them had done some bartering recently: Good German Riesling in exchange for American cigarettes. The trip from the pension took about an hour. They arrived in the late morning. A guard stopped them at the perimeter, checked their documents and waved them in. Rudiger headed towards Sergeant Buckley's tent.

"Hello, my friend Sergeant Jerome, *wie geht's?"*

"Rudiger, old buddy, how the hell are you? You have something you want to sell or trade?"

"I do. How about buying four cases of Camel cigarettes and four cases of Jack Daniels?"

"The Sergeant whistled. "Good stuff. How much are you asking?"

"Six hundred dollars for the Camels, one thousand for the Jack Daniels, plus 20% transport charges. Sub-total is $1,920 plus $80 tip: total is $2,000."

Sergeant Buckley rolled his eyes and wiped his brow. "Give me about half an hour and I'll get it for you." When the sergeant was out of earshot, Axel started to demur. He knew this this was less than the goods would have brought in Rotterdam. Deals, however, are made in the here and now. The shipment needed to move. It was the best deal available.

Ist in Ordnung, Billig, aber es geht." "It's ok. Cheap, but go for it." Axel nodded to Rudiger, confirming the deal.

Half an hour passed in idle conversation. Sergeant Buckley finally came back with a large envelope full of cash. With him were two PFCs in fatigues who unloaded the good's from the Audi's trunk. The three climbed back into the car. Axel counted the money which was correct-$2,000 in US dollars. The guard opened the gate and the car zoomed out of the intercept site. They continued on to the pension in Salzwedel where they celebrated with a good meal and drinks all around. The next day, after bidding Rudiger goodbye, Axel and Heinrich started their trip back to Bremen in the empty Kombi.

At this time Billy Graham and his entourage came to Bremen. His stentorian voice, good looks, and virulent anti-Communism appealed to many Germans. The Word, according to Billy, was a scriptural exhortation to stand firm against the Red Hordes in the Soviet Union and the DDR.

Hannelore and her friend Giesela were among the thousands who came to Bremen's stadium to hear him. They were swept away. When Billy was in full tilt, his message bowled over many ordinary Germans who were left in a void after the war. It was a message of redemption and hope, not untinged with a large dose of German pride and nationalism. Instead of the failed Third Reich, here and now there could be a new Kingdom of God built in present day Germany

Hannelore was very worried about Heinrich. She hadn't seen him since he left to transport the contraband to Rotterdam in August. Her anxiety grew each day. Reverend Billy's late September crusade helped her, for a time, forget her troubles, but her worries persisted. Shortly after Reverend Billy left town, Heinrich and Axel showed up in the mud spattered Kombi.

They took it to a garage to have it washed, then they drove to Hannelore's apartment to wait for her to come home from work. At about 17:30 she arrived. Heinrich and Axel got out of the van and rang the buzzer. Hannelore peeked out of the window, overjoyed to see them. She rushed to the door to let them in.

"*Gott sei dank, Heinrich, du lebst!* " "Thank God Heinrich, you are alive!" she exclaimed, happy to see him alive. For a short time her joy was unbounded, then she began to scold .

"Why didn't you call or write? I was so worried."

Heinrich mumbled an apology and leaned forward for a propitiatory peck. She pushed him aside.

"You are such a thoughtless man. I felt so abandoned. You really don't care for me, do you?"

Heinrich was taken aback by her forcefulness. It had never been like that before.

"Hannelore, I do care for you, but it is very risky for us to phone or even write when we are on a mission. The police are everywhere."

"Well, you should get out of this business. It's not safe. I want you to be safe. I don't want to have to go to a morgue to identify you." Axel intervened.

"We are safe as long as we take precautions. We do take them. You are exaggerating."

Hannelore stared at Axel with cold contempt. "No, I am not exaggerating. Go away Axel! Leave me and Heinrich alone! You hear me!"Axel turned to leave.He spat on thefloor and glared back. "Heinrich, if you stay it's over with us. If you stay you are a coward."

After Axel's departure, Heinrich and Hannelore took a moment to calm themselves. Hannelore then went to the kitchen to prepare *Abendessen,* the German equivalent of high tea. At first things were somewhat strained, but the food was tasty and the strong tea gave them both a lift.

"Heinrich, you are not a coward. You have been walking on the edge too long. It's time to step back from the brink."

"You may be right, but my recent life was stimulating and challenging. Factory work wears you down, not only physically but emotionally too. It is so boring, so empty and dull. I don't want to go back to that ever again!"

"You don't have to. Why don't you stay here with me for a while? Take a look at some of the programs at our *Technische Hochshule* here in Bremen. I won't make any demands. I don't make a lot of money, but for a short time, it will be enough.""

Caught between male pride and the sweetness of the offer, Heinrich remained silent. Then she made an overture to make love. He quickly responded. In a moment they were naked in her bed. She climbed on top of him, slithering down on his hard shaft, moaning with pleasure. The orgasm was strong and powerful. They achieved it together, a rarity in any lovemaking. In the afterglow, he tenderly rubbed her breasts.

"Hannelore, I do want to stay with you. The truth is that being on the run and hiding is exhausting. It was alright for a time, but the time has passed."

Despite his angry bravado, Axel was worried. Heinrich had been, in the main, an asset for his plans. Now he could become a real liability. He knew the location of the stash

in the salt mine at Salzwedel. He could also report on their activities to the police, or even worse to the *Bundeswehr* security service. When returning to work at the American PX in Bremerhaven it would be difficult to explain Heinrich's absence to his co-workers, and especially to "Fritz". He decided to level with "Fritz" to enlist his co-operation in creating a cover story and explanation. He located a telephone booth near Hannelore's apartment. He telephoned "Fritz" using previously established code words for urgent calls.

"Allo, hier ist Laender. Ich bin wieder angekommen. Koennen wir wieder irgendwo treffen? Kanst du mir etwas emphelen.? " " Hello Laender here. I'm back. Can we meet somewhere? Can you suggest something?"

"Also, spricht hier Malipole. Was hast du mitgebracht? Wo sind die Kisten eingestecht?" "OK Malipole speaks here. What have you brought with you? Where are the cases stored?"

"Noch mal hier ist Laender. Die Kisten sind sicher in Salzwedel. Ganz bestimmt. Aber wie du weisst, wir haben Pech am Zonengrenze. Aber, ein anderes Problem ist Heinrich. Der kommt nich mit mir. Er hat eine schoene Dame gefunden. Die beiden bleiben in Bremen bei Ihre Wohnung."

"Once again, Laender here. The cases are safe in a secure place in Salzwedel. That's for sure. But as you know, we had difficulty at the border. However, another problem is Heinrich. He didn't come with me. He's got a cute girlfriend. They are staying at her apartment in Bremen."Axel knew that his livelihood depended on "Fritz" Heinrich was expendable. A solution to the "Heinrich problem" was urgent and necessary. They would have to act quickly and decisively. "Fritz" told Axel to meet him at his office right away.

Chapter 4: Sybille

After Jacob's death, the two sisters remained in Minden. Sybille, the older one, was strong and did the heavy chores. Renate, the younger one, helped her mother, Matilda, with the cooking, cleaning, and organizing inside the farmhouse. It worked pretty well for a time.

When she was 13, Sybille was sent to the Catholic grammar school in Minden. There was no equivalent Lutheran school there. Sybille was bored and often disobedient. He mother scolded and cajoled her, but to no effect. Finally, the authorities allowed her to leave school early to help with chores on the farm. It was easier for them to do this. School and farm work were both unsatisfactory for her. She became increasingly withdrawn and lonely. When she turned 19, she told her mother that she planned to leave home. Sybille enrolled in a nursing school at *Mater Dei* hospital in Cologne. The program offered a stipend with room and board. He mother made only token resistance. There was a solid inevitability about Sybille's choice.

On a crisp fall day, mother and daughter walked together to the Minden train station to wait for the train to Cologne. In the waiting room, they said very little. When the train was announced, Matilda held back her tears as she kissed and hugged her daughter goodbye. Sybille felt mostly neutral. She respected her mother, but did not feel close to her. Boarding the train, she waved goodbye and bounded up the steps. She was off on her own. She was glad of that. Elated and anxious at the same time, Sybille grasped the travel bag tightly. It would be the last time she saw her mother alive.

When she arrived at the Cologne *Hauptbahnhof,* she was met by one of the nuns from *Mater Dei* hospital.

She grabbed Sybille by the arm. After a brief tram ride, they got off at the main entrance of *Mater Dei* hospital. The atmosphere at *Mater Dei* was oppressive. From dawn to bedtime, the young women were closely monitored by a cadre of cold and unfeeling nuns with a key aim of breaking down the young women to become creatures without feelings, only conditioned reflexes. Catholic practice is often separated from the warmth of mystical teachings and piety of the faith. At *Mater Dei,* the Hail Mary and the *Memorare* were said very rapidly and in a droning manner. Had Mary herself been observing, she would have wept. But Mary was not there. The nuns kept her out. Had she been present, she would have rebuked the nuns, not the young nurse-trainees.

Sybille chafed at this regimentation. She left before the end of the first term. She had saved a small sum from the stipend. She had to give most of it back to *Mater Dei* hospital, but she kept enough back to secure a room for herself. The departure was completely lacking in any well-wishing from the nuns. Sybille walked out with a powerful sense of freedom from Roman Catholic institutional life.

She secured a room on *Im Dau* in the central city. It was cheap but very dreary. As soon as she had paid the first month's rent and moved in, she went to the library. She looked in the help-wanted section of the newspapers for jobs.. She circled two, both waitressing jobs. The first was a real dive, run by a surly Hessian. She left immediately. The second was located by the Rhine in a better area. A young man greeted her pleasantly and asked about her experience. Since she had none, he shook his head. Sybille left feeling crestfallen. The next day, however, she returned to the library. She spied a part-time job working at a movie theatre box office, The Bijou. The want ad stated that interviews were being held Monday to Friday from 1400 to 1600 hours. The next day, she came there at

1400 hours. She waited for over an hour. Finally, a rather plain middle-aged woman showed up.

"Did you come for the job?" she asked. Sybille nodded. She waved her inside.

"Hello, I am Berta and you are?"

"I am Sybille. I am here to ask about the box office job."

"Well, I am the other box office lady. You sell tickets and make change."

There was some small talk, and then Berta offered Sybille the job. Sybille accepted. Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday from 1600 hours to 23:45 hours. Dinner was to be eaten one half hour before start time. Berta explained that food was allowed inside the box office, as long as you had no patrons waiting you could eat.

Pay was low: 3.75 DMs per hour. This would be a fraction more than 87 DMs for the three day week. Sybille calculated that this would barely pay for room rent and a meager diet with very little extra. The Bijou was located on *Friessen Strasse,* very close to the *U-bahn* stop that would take her to her room on *Im Dau.* Berta told her to start on the following Monday, but to come an hour early before her start time to fill out the paperwork.

When Sybille got back to her room, she felt a little shaky. It was a cheerless place with just some bread and cheese to eat. She ate greedily. Then panic captured her. She dashed down the stairs into the street, heading north on *Severinstrasse* where it emptied into *Georgplatz.* She tried to enter *Sankt Georg Kirche* but it was locked. Lost and tearful, she wandered to the Rhine. She found a bench by the *Severinbruecke,* a lonely sentinel.

After sitting on the bench for some time, calm returned. She got up and began to walk back to her room on *Im Dau.* As she walked along she heard footsteps behind her. She felt her pursuer come closer. She sped up. They grew louder. Finally she turned around in fear, awaiting the worst. Before her was a figure radiating a halo corona. Startled she cried out, "Who are you? What do you want?"

"My name is Woglinde. I want only the best for you."

"How can you know what it the best for me? I don't even know you."

"Well, I am a true daughter of Germany. I have lived by the Rhine for countless ages. People used to sing my praises not so long ago." The odd name was not a clue for Sybille. Wagner was from the old order. She had never heard his music. She had no idea as to his influence on prior generations. The bright, iridescent glow around Woglinde grew stronger. "Sybille, you are lonely now. It is not good for us to be isolated from one another. I hope you will allow me to be your friend first, then perhaps your guide." Sybille stiffened. What did this creature want in return? "Why should you want to be my friend? I am newly arrived here. I am just starting out. What can I offer you?"

"Well, you could offer me companionship. It gets very lonely sitting on the terraced vineyard hills overlooking the Rhine with no one to talk to." Sybille considered this.

"Alright, we can talk at a *Lokal.* Will you buy me dinner?" "Gladly," said Woglinde. The nearest *Lokal* was on *Neue Weyerstrasse.* Its sign announced itself as the *Barbarossa Hof.* It was a cheap eats place with typical German fare, but also with some tasty Turkish dishes.

Woglinde seemed pleased with the choice. They both ordered the special with *Ritzi Pizzi* bouillon soup, hot and plentiful. You could order more soup at no additional charge. Sybille gulped the soup and practically inhaled the special. Woglinde was more circumspect. She realized her friend was extremely hungry. For dessert they ordered a cherry cream torte.

"Sybille, do you have plans for the near future?"

"Yes, I have found a job at the Bijou Theater taking tickets."

"That doesn't sound very absorbing to me. Do you have plans to go to concerts?"

"Not really. The job doesn't pay very well.

"Well, let me suggest that you find yourself a prosperous young man to escort you around. If that doesn't work out, try to get to an AMI NCO club. These fellows are very generous. They will want sex in return, but you can fend them off. Or you can give them what they want."

"No, I think I would prefer a German man, somewhat older than me."

Well, that is a good choice. However, sometimes our eligible German young women date the Amis, you know, to get started. Sometimes it works out. When it does they go to the USA where life is very fast paced and there is a lot of money. If it doesn't, you can find a German man, put the moves on him, and you'll get married here." Suddenly, without notice, Woglinde departed. A bit shocked, Sybille called the waiter. The waiter indicated that the bill had been paid for both of them with a substantial tip. Sybille was very glad of that. She left the *Lokal* and headed back to her room. A strange day, but she was glad to have met Woglinde.

She hoped she would meet up with her again. In the meantime, work at the Bijou would start the next day. When got to her room, she tumbled onto her bed and quickly fell asleep.

Where had Woglinde gone? Sybille did not know. The next week was dreary. Work at the Bijou box office, then the trek back to her room on *Im Dau.* Meager meals combined with boring routine. What had become of Woglinde?

Often, when we are at our lowest point, that is when our spiritual resources come to our aid. Woglinde, present or not, had given Sybille a new way of dealing with life. On free days, she would enter the cavernous Cologne cathedral and sit quietly. She didn't say any traditional prayers. She simply remained still. She didn't plead or ask for guidance. She chose the great emptiness of the place to calm her agitation and fears. It worked.

Spring came early that year. She began to take daily walks on the causeway by the Rhine. She looked at the flowers in area parks. She watched children play their aimless games. The farmhouse drudge daughter from Minden began to change. Her step had a spring to it. She hummed tunes from the German songs she'd learned growing up. Sybille became more of herself, feeling more free, more alive and capable of meeting life head on. When she found herself feeling this way, Woglinde returned. Sybille heard the tap, tap, tap on her door. It was magical sound. What a joyful meeting it was!

"Hello, Sybille. You are looking radiant."

"Oh Woglinde, it is so wonderful to see you again!"

Chapter 5: Renate

Renate, the youngest, remembered things from her childhood. One was cleaning up the war time rubble in Minden. Every day, groups of local citizens, armed with shovels, heavy street brooms, and wheelbarrows, placed the debris in piles for horse drawn wagons to cart the stuff away. It was real drudgery. When she was seven years old it came to an end. Afterwards, she stayed on the farm away from the city. As part of the farm routine, Renate helped her mother with the housework. She liked being with her mother, although her mother said very little to her. For Renate, the home and the farm life were pleasant. Unlike the streets of Minden, there were few signs that the war had been raging until recently. Renate dreamed that the family would always stay on the farm. It didn't seem possible that there could be any other kind of life.

But things changed when her brother Rupert left. Then Heinrich left. When her father died, things really changed. The two brothers did not want to live on the farm. Renate could not really understand all this. Finally, Sybille chose to leave. So Renate and her mother remained. She was determined to keep the farm going. It became very difficult. Pressure came from both Rupert and Heinrich to sell it to a developer and subdivide it for row housing. Sybille stayed mostly neutral until she went to Cologne.

Renate's mother decided to send her to the Catholic grammar school in Minden. She did not do well there. She did meet a young boy named Horst Kuppel, who had crush on her. They became friends and started to flirt a little. Renate did not develop a crush on Horst. In fact, she was alone a great deal. Despite that or perhaps because of it, Renate developed a real inner strength.

Renate continued to flirt with Horst, but resisted his advances. This was not particularly difficult because Horst was shy. Their friendship continued in this cat and mouse fashion for a few years. When Renate turned sixteen and Horst was eighteen, they made love in one of the clean horse stalls in the Bruggermann's barn. It was somewhat underwhelming. After the conjugal joining Renate worried that she might be pregnant. She missed one period, but it turned out to be a false alarm.

Shortly after the tryst in the barn they broke up. Horst left for a clerical job in Osnabrueck, a city not far away in miles, but distant enough to allow memories to fade. Renate became involved in environmental issues, taking the position of the more leftist SPD (socialist party) members who felt that both water and air pollution was being ignored by the center right Christian Democrats who promoted an aggressive pro-growth policy formulated by the economics czar Ludwig Erhard.

Renate worked hard to keep the farm alive. First, Rupert left for management training at the *Technische Hochschule* in Braunschweig. Not long afterwards, Heinrich departed without notice. After factory work in Solingen, he gravitated to Cologne where he continued to sell Nazi paraphernalia. Sybille was next. After dropping out of a nursing program, she ended up in a low paying job in Cologne.

Renate stuck it out, but when her mother died, the future of the farm was extremely uncertain. Yet against their strong objections, she persuaded Rupert and Heinrich not to sell the farm. Renate was indeed a very strong and forceful woman.

Chapter 6: Axel

After the exchange of messages with his neo-Nazi backer "Fritz" Thielen, Axel got into the Kombi and drove towards "Fritz's" office in Bremerhaven. Axel prided himself on keeping his cool, but this time he was scared. Yes, Heinrich had to be dealt with. That much was clear. However, what was not clear was how this was to be carried out. Sweat was pouring down his face so that it blurred his vision. He jammed on the brakes, nearly striking an elderly woman in a crosswalk. Shaken, he pulled the Kombi to the side of the street in order to gather himself. After about ten minutes, he started the engine again. He felt calmer. The schemer in him began to make calculations. Axel felt absolutely no loyalty towards Heinrich. His mind concocted several scenarios, all designed to expose Heinrich and cause him both personal and legal damage.

The afternoon traffic was picking up. The drizzle of rain began to increase in intensity making driving more difficult. Axel moved cautiously through the traffic, narrowly missing being sideswiped by an LKW, the German equivalent of a tractor-trailer. The thoughts of future harm to be inflicted on his colleague kept Axel in control. Axel knew how to do that. A plan emerged in his mind. He would present it to "Fritz". Things would be taken care of. Yes they would!

He began go sing some old German songs. They had the effect of channeling his anxiety. What had begun as a journey of fear was becoming a time of confidence. Things were going to be taken care of. Yes indeed!

"Fritz" had an office in the shadow of the American PX in Bremerhaven. Axel parked the Kombi about a block away on a side street. He walked slowly. Knocking at the door "Fritz" shouted for him to come in.

"Well, this is some mess, my dear friend, Axel. But this is no time for recriminations. Heinrich must be neutralized and right quick too."

Axel hoped that "Fritz" meant something besides an assassination. He waited for the details. "Fritz" however waited for Axel to respond.

"Come, Axel, I'm waiting for you to put forward a plan."

Axel stammered. He didn't want the responsibility for killing Heinrich. His mind brought forth a sample blackmail plot.

"Heinrich is banging his girlfriend regularly. I could take videos of them of them fucking and turn them over to you. Perhaps you could use them to discredit him with the PX." "I don't think the Amis much care if he is getting a regular fuck or blow job."

There was a long break in the conversation. Finally, Axel came up with an alternative entrapment scheme.

"I will get a couple of cases of Camels and Jack Daniels from the PX and bring them to Heinrich and his girlfriend as a peace offering. Then I'll photograph them smoking and drinking in their apartment with the cases prominently in the background. 'Fritz' you supply me with a micro-camera and false delivery invoices to the American colonel's residence."

"Axel, I like this plan. You haven't lost your touch." The plan was set in motion.

The next day, Axel called Hannelore at her apartment. He offered to bring over some gifts to her and to Heinrich as a way of expressing his contrition. Hannelore was wary, but invited him over for dessert the following day. Axel arrived with two cases of Camel cigarettes and two cases of Jack Daniels in fancy wrapping paper.

"Here are some small gifts for the two of you as an expression of friendship."

Heinrich smiled and opened them. He began to laugh. "Axel did a little gremlin at our favorite store in Bemerhaven bestow these on you?"

Axel grinned at him. "What do you think?"

"Well, let's have a drink together for old times' sake."

So Axel opened a bottle of Jack Daniels and poured it in three glasses over ice cubes. The glow was almost instantaneous, so Axel poured another round. "Here's to friendship, enduring friendship my dear friend Heinrich, and to you as well Hannelore. Let this friendship continue for a very long time."

After pouring the third round, Axel handed the love birds each a carton of Camels and stepped away. Slipping out the mini-camera, he took several photos of the smiling, happy couple. Heinrich obliged even more and began to kiss and fondle Hannelore. After another round and more laughter, and silly inebriated conversation, Axel paid fulsome respects and left. He walked over to the Kombi and burst out laughing. "They fell for it. There's going to be a big surprise for those two." There would be. There would also be one for him as well. Two days later, Axel gave one set of the prints of Heinrich and Hannelore smoking, drinking and fondling to "Fritz", reserving one set of prints for himself.

A week after the meeting, the American CID people and the *Bundeswehr* security knocked at the door of Hannelore's apartment at about 2100 hours.

Hannelore, somewhat taken aback, called out timidly, "Who is there?"

"Open up please. It's the *Bundeswehr* security. We want to have a word with you?"

"What's this about?"

"We'll tell you when you let us in."

"Well, I don't have to let you in. Tell me what you are here for."

In a moment, the door was forced open. Armed German and American soldiers entered with their pistols pointed at Heinrich and Hannelore.

"You are under arrest for stealing cigarettes and whiskey from the American PX in Bremerhaven. It will be best for you if you come with us and offer no further resistance."

The jig was up. Both of them realized that Axel had betrayed them. They had no choice but to go with these armed soldiers. Hannelore clutched Heinrich and wept. Heinrich was mute, but felt a tremendous rage boiling inside of him. His life had been upended. He vowed silently that Axel would pay for this, no matter how long it took. In these desperate straits, he thought of his older brother. He knew Rupert was living in Helmstedt and that he worked at the *Volkswagenwerk* in nearby Wolfsburg. After three days in jail, a Lutheran pastor from the Bremen neighborhood visited him on his weekly rounds of providing pastoral care for prisoners. He was young and eager to help. This was good fortune for Heinrich who asked him to contact his brother at the VW headquarters in Wolfsburg.

A week later, the pastor came back with the needed contact information. The pastor was able to take Heinrich out of his cell to a telephone in the intake center. Heinrich, under the watchful eyes of the pastor and a guard, called his brother at his office.

"*Allo, Rupert. Hier ist dein Bruder. Kanst du mir helfen? I werde in Bremen gefangen gehalten. Ich brauche Geld fuer einen Anwalt. Bitte, es ist sehr dringend dass du so fort kommst.*"

"Hello Rupert. This is your brother. Can you help me? I am jailed in Bremen. I need money for a lawyer. It is very, very urgent that you come right away."

There was a pause at the other end. "*Gut, Ich komme naechste Woche am Dienstag. Frueher kann Ich nicht.*" "Good, I'll come on Tuesday of next week. I can't come any sooner."

"*Mein Bruder. Ich danke dir. Ich erwarte dich.*" "Thanks brother, I'll expect you."

When Rupert arrived the next Tuesday in mid-afternoon, Heinrich was sleeping. The clang of the outer door woke him up abruptly. He looked out the grated window of his cell and saw Rupert. It was a powerful moment of hope and recognition.

"*Rupert, dass ist ein wunderschoenes Ereignis, dass du angekommen bist.*"

"Rupert, it is so wonderful that you have come." Rupert smiled a little but did not reply. He was not comfortable seeing Heinrich in a jail cell. He also felt somewhat irritated, even judgmental, that his younger brother had gotten himself into this predicament, but he was, at any event, his brother. Heinrich narrated his version of how this had come to pass. Despite his inner disapproval, Rupert listened, and let him tell his story which was quite lengthy. When Heinrich had finished, Rupert shook his hand and cleared his throat.

"This is a serious matter Heinrich. You will need a very experienced and capable lawyer to defend you against what I am sure will be multiple charges. You have been associating with people who are part of a movement that wants to bring back Nazism. The authorities will know this. It is essential that your defense keeps you away from their views as much as possible. In short, you really didn't grasp what they were up to. You were, so to speak, looking for adventure and excitement, but not anything more. Even so, your lawyer will have his work cut out for him."

"I know, yes I know Rupert, but please give me the money to get a good lawyer."

"Yes, I will do that, but first I will need to make some inquiries with my colleagues at *Volkswagenwerk* who have connections in Bremen. This may take some time."

Hannelore was able to contact a friend about her predicament. Gisela came to her aid very soon after the arrest. The guard had taken a liking to Hannelore and contacted Gisela for her. When Gisela arrived she tried to calm her friend who was very distraught.

"Hannelore, don't panic. I think I can contact someone who can get you released on bond." "Gisela please soon! Not a moment too soon." It did happen soon. Within 48 hours a swarthy young man of about 40 came to visit Hannelore. His name was Ernst Troetsch. He worked for the Bremen Legal Aid Society. In the interview, Hannelore blurted out a lot of her worries about Heinrich's activities with Axel; her warnings about Axel to Heinrich; and the raid on the apartment which she rightly suspected had been arranged by Axel. Herr Troetsch nodded gravely.

"These NPD characters follow the old Nazi methods. They are ruthless. You were correct in advising your friend Heinrich to leave. Too bad he didn't."

Ernst Troetsch asked her to sign some documents that he would need to challenge the grounds of the arrest. He cautioned her not to try to contact Heinrich. He urged her to accept that he would defend her but not Heinrich. When he left, Hannelore knew that this made sense, but still worried about her lover. Was this a betrayal of him? The lawyer seemed cool and analytical but not empathetic at all. Still, what else could she do? She was in jail. She yearned to be free above all else. When she fell asleep that night she had nightmares. She woke up screaming.

The advocate Troetsch came back the next day with a release order from the court. Because she was a resident of Bremen, and had no criminal record, she could go home. She could not leave Bremen until the trial date scheduled in two months' time. She was also enjoined from visiting Heinrich in the Bremen jail. Herr Troetsch strongly emphasized this. He made it clear that any such visitation would compromise her case.

Hannelore was overjoyed at her release, and accepted reluctantly the prohibition on visiting Heinrich. When she walked out of the jail, it was an unusually pleasant and sunny October fall day. She still had some pocket change with her. The tram that would take her close to her apartment came soon. She paid the fare and in about twenty minutes, she got off a block from her flat. The day was going well. When she entered her apartment the phone was ringing. It seemed insistent. She picked it up and recognized the voice. It was Axel. "*Allo, meine treulose Tomate. Bist du gesund?* "Hello my faithless friend. Are you healthy?"

"*Axel, was wilst du?*, she stammered. "What do you want?"

Axel wanted her to shut up about his relationship with Heinrich. He was prepared to make life very unpleasant for her. She hung up. Immediately, she called her lawyer, Herr Troestch. Troetsch wasn't in. She left an urgent message with his secretary.

Rupert had made contact with a lawyer in Bremen who agreed to represent his brother Heinrich. Herr Wilhelm Weintraub, a portly, somewhat disheveled middle-aged man with a pockmarked complexion, came to visit mid-morning the week after Rupert's visit. He discussed a plea of *nolo contendere* with Heinrich. Admit to the theft in the amount of 1,100 DM, serve 30 days in jail and pay a fine of 750 DM. It was a reasonable plea.

Heinrich, however, wanted to know how this would impact his chances for future work. Weintraub explained that the record of the plea would be expunged if the fine was paid upfront and his time in jail was uneventful. Heinrich agreed.

Rupert had also agreed to provide funds for a bail bond of 5,000 DM in addition to the attorney's fee, the cost of the stolen goods, and the fine. Heinrich was, in fact, a very lucky man. The next day he was released from the Bremen city jail. He went straight to Hannelore's apartment He rang the buzzer many times but there was no answer. Hannelore's attorney had advised her to leave her flat after he was apprised of Axel's threatening call. She contacted her friend Gisela and moved in with her temporarily. She did not disclose this to Heinrich. Heinrich was in the dark. He had limited prospects of finding temporary shelter. Thinking through his options, he finally resolved to call, of all people, Axel. Old patterns of dependency are hard to break. Heinrich's fortunate release from jail was about to become dangerous. Axel answered the phone with a sneer. "So you have come to me seeking shelter. What's in it for me? You are a known criminal now."

Heinrich paused. Then he played the "for old time's sake" card. Surprisingly, it worked. Axel shot back . "Here is my address. Meet me at a nearby *Kneipe-Der Goldene Esel* near the *Rathaus*. Be there in half an hour. Be on time."

As you might imagine, the meeting was a tense on. Axel agreed to find Heinrich a temporary place to live while he was out on bail. However, there was a big hook. Heinrich had to earn his stay by driving a truck loaded with stolen goods from the Bremerhaven PX to the port of Rotterdam. If he were caught, the "reasonable" plea deal worked out by his attorney Wilhelm Weintraub would be over. New and more serious charges would be filed. He could expect no help from Axel or "Fritz". Rupert would be reluctant to help out again. It was truly a Hobbesian choice. Heinrich stalled.

"Axel, if I am caught, it means a long term prison sentence for me. That's pretty high rent you know."

"Heinrich, this is the best I can do for you. 'Fritz' doesn't like me helping you at all."

"Well, Axel give me a secure phone number. I'll call you back in half an hour."

Axel gave him the number. Heinrich then asked for a favor. "Axel, can you lend me 500 DMs" "What for?"

"I'll need to buy some food you know. The only free food is when you are in jail."

Axel pulled out five 100 DM notes and left them on the table. "Thanks old friend. I'll call you soon." Heinrich didn't call back. He went straight to the *Bahnhof* and bought a ticket to Helmstedt. Axel waited most of the night for the call. He did not sleep well. In the morning he called "Fritz" as soon as the office opened.

"Fritz" was in early and answered the phone himself. When he heard Axel blurt out the news he was furious. Rather than wasting time berating Axel, "Fritz" made an educated guess. He knew that Heinrich had a brother in Helmstedt. It was likely that Heinrich had gone there to stay with his brother. "Fritz" ordered Axel to take the next train to Helmstedt. He gave him information on how to contact an NPD operative in nearby Schoeningen named Klaus Schmidt. Schmidt had a track record as a useful man to hire when a political or other clandestine killing was in order. Axel had his marching orders. This time he couldn't be squeamish and do something "creative". No more stings. No more frame ups. Heinrich must be done away with right away. "Fritz" slammed down the phone and swore.

When the train from Bremen arrived at Helmstedt at 17:30 hours, Heinrich went to the telephone booth inside the station and called Rupert at his office in Wolfsburg. Although it was past office hours, Rupert, the workaholic, was still at his desk.

"Rupert, hier ist Heinrich. Ich bin nach Helmstedt angekommen. Ich bin frei, aber es ist jetzt sehr gefaerlich in Bremen. Kann Ich bei dir uebernachten?"

"Rupert, I've come to Helmstedt. I am free, but it very dangerous now in Bremen. Can I spend the night with you?"

Rupert was not entirely pleased to hear from his younger brother, but he agreed to take him in. In less than an hour Heinrich showed up at Rupert's home. His wife Katrina greeted him. "Welcome Heinrich. Rupert told me to expect you. Please come in."

The simple and warm greeting touched Heinrich's heart. He had lived a very estranged and precarious life for a long time. He blushed as he eyed her comely figure.

Although the atmosphere was superficially friendly, there was little conversation. Rupert was quite nervous about having his brother as a houseguest. He disapproved of his vagabond lifestyle now further compromised by his criminal case in Bremen,

Meanwhile, Axel found the Park Hotel in Schoeningen. It had seen better days. The tablecloths were smudged, and the mirrors on the wall had not been cleaned for some time. There was a strong odor of cigarette smoke in the dining room. Axel had missed the afternoon connecting train from Helmstedt, so he didn't arrive for his meeting with Klaus Schmidt until 19:45 hours. Klaus was working on his third cognac when Axel arrived.

Axel ordered a *Wienerwchnitzel mit Kartofelnsalat* and a large beer. He ate rapidly. He regretted it later, because the heavy greasy meal gave him indigestion. The trip, however, was not about going to a health spa. It was serious business. Axel outlined the job to Klaus who said little. When the target and location were given to Klaus, Axel told him the price:

10,000 DMs. Klaus frowned. He demanded 10,000 more. Axel was wise enough not to argue. Murder for hire is never inexpensive. The price settled, the two of them chatted about the nationwide furor: how the Soviet referee at Wembley Stadium had disallowed a goal by Germany in the World Cup final against England. The ruling cost Germany the championship and further stoked Cold War tensions. There was, however, so much traction that an event that happened six months ago could offer. Besides that, every good German agreed that it was a terrible call. Finally, Axel said it had been a long day, shook hands with Klaus in the formal German manner and booked a room for the night at the Park Hotel. He slept badly. Indigestion and a lumpy bed hampered his much needed rest.

Before leaving for Helmstedt, Axel had located Rupert Bruggermann's home in a new subdivision on the far fringes of town. The location seemed ideal for the arranged killing of Heinrich. The nearest police sub-station was 4.5 km away on the other side of town. Through sources, Axel had confirmed that Heinrich was there. "Fritz's" intuition proved correct.

For this assignment, Klaus Schmidt was supremely confident. Indeed, he was overconfident. Imprudently he had hid the murder weapon, an automatic pistol with a silencer. It made a telltale bulge in his pocket. As he rang the bell, he was clearly visible to Katrina, already nervous at harboring her dubious brother-in-law, looking out from the side window. She called softly to Rupert that a strange and possibly armed man stood at the threshold. Rupert, with his earlier military training and athletic prowess, was not to be trifled with.

Klaus rang the bell and waited, but Katrina and Rupert were ready. Katrina opened the door slightly. Rupert, hidden on one side of the door, pulled Klaus into the house and threw him on the floor. Katrina had an umbrella ready. She gored him in the eye with the sharp top as he lay sprawled on the floor. Screaming in pain, Klaus loosened his grip on the pistol. Rupert lunged at Klaus, stomping on the pistol hand and for good measure kicked him savagely in the groin. Schmidt doubled up in agony. Instantly, Katrina was on the phone calling the police. *"Wir haben eine schreckliche Sache hier zu Hause. Komm ab so fort!"*

"We have a terrible situation here at home. It's an emergency! Come quickly!"

While Katrina filled in the details for the police dispatcher, Rupert continued aiming the pistol at the putative assassin who lay groaning on the floor.

Heinrich, the intended target, emerged shaking from the living room. He was in a panic. Rupert held him and whispered soothing words. Heinrich came to his senses; He would let Rupert and Katrina handle this.

Norddeutscher Fernsehen had the story on the TV news at 2200 hours that very evening. There were few details. Axel watched the report on the dining room TV of the Park Hotel. He knew that he was in real trouble. He would have to find a way to get to the DDR on the next train out of Helmstedt. The train to Berlin was the best course. Paying his bill, he asked the proprietor to call a cab. The cab arrived at 22:15 hours, enough time to get to the Helmstedt station to catch the last train to Berlin.

Axel got on the Berlin train and sat in one of the second class cars. The conductor asked for his ID and his ticket. He looked them over carefully. "We don't have many residents of Bremen boarding here." Axel froze. It turned out to be just a passing remark. The conductor moved along to check other passengers. The night train pulled out smoothly. There were two stops on the way to Berlin center city, Magdeburg and then check point "Bravo" on the western perimeter of the city. Axel began to nod off. It had been an exceedingly tiring day.

The Helmstedt police arrested Schmidt and took him to the local emergency room. A detective remained to question Katrina, Rupert and Heinrich, especially Heinrich. His story was that he hadn't seen his brother since his marriage. This was a kind of impromptu reunion.

Rupert lied fluently to confirm this story. Katrina said little or nothing. The police spent over two hours trying to establish why an intruder would come to this brand new home and try to murder someone. Heinrich and Rupert painstakingly stuck to their story about a spur of the moment reunion. They too were mystified as to why the attacker had made an attempt to kill one of the brothers. The police finally left and warned Heinrich not to leave Helmstedt during the next 72 hours.

As soon as the constabulary had left, Heinrich burst out to Rupert, "Rupert, I must go back to Bremen. If the authorities there find out I've been here, my bail will be revoked, and I'll end up in jail again."

"If you do go back, the police will suspect that your reason for being here is false. They will contact the Bremen police, get you sent back here and put you in jail. No, wait it out here. Don't go back. Who in Bremen will know that you are here?"

Axel was dozing when the train made its stop at Magdeburg at around 0300 hours. Four uniformed men boarded the train and started sniffing around. They saw where Axel was resting and jolted him abruptly. "*Ausweis bitte. Sofort!*" "Identification please. Right now!" Axel complied. They looked over the identification and ticket carefully.

"*Sie sind aus Bremen, nicht wahr? Warum fahren Sie nach Berlin?*" "You are from Bremen, right? Why are you traveling to Berlin?" Axel groped for a plausible answer. He stammered and then blurted out a silly answer. *"Ich habe Urlaub. Berlin ist am schoensten. Ich hab' diese Stadt nie gesehen."* " I am on vacation. Berlin is said to be most beautiful. I've never seen this city." The chief interrogator frowned, but then waved his hand to move on.

Then they moved down the aisle to the first class car. Axel correctly suspected that they were *Stasi.(*East German secret police). He had been given a reprieve. He sat bolt upright.

Axel had contacted "Fritz" before boarding the train to Berlin. "Fritz" was furious about the botched job, but he took the report without comment. Axel knew better than to make excuses. The important thing was to get to Berlin. But who could he contact in West Berlin? He had enough money to stay at a cheap hotel and eat for about a week. Then the mindset of the true believer kicked in. He recalled bars where NPD adherents congregated. Suddenly a place flashed in his mind. *Das Blaue Leiche,* The Blue Corpse, not far from *Potzdammer Platz.*

Berlin was beginning to glitter again, at least in West Berlin. When he arrived, Axel went straight to *Das Blaue Leiche.* Ordering a *Currywurst* and a beer, he spied a forty-something woman sitting alone in a booth. She glanced at him and smiled. He posed a question that an NPD adherent would understand and answer correctly. "*Allo meine gnadige Fraulien. Sind die Amis treue Freunde?* " Hey there, kind lady. Are the Americans trustworthy friends?"

"Nein Mein Herr. Die sind gar nicht treue." "No Sir. They are absolutely not trustworthy." He joined her at the booth and they embraced. They spoke with hushed animation about a restored and vibrant Germany, united once again under a great leader who would expel the Amis, and round up the Communists, liberals and remaining Jews. Axel rejoiced. He had found a woman who would protect him. With her help, he could concoct a plausible story as to why the assassination attempt on Heinrich had failed. When this was rehearsed, with the help of this woman, he would contact "Fritz".

Axel began a lengthy brainstorming session with his newfound friend, Edelgard. The essence of the plan was to blame Klaus Schmidt, stating that his reputation as a hired gun was vastly over-rated. However, it had to be done in such a way as to avoid implying that "Fritz" had shown bad judgment. After all, how could "Fritz" based in Bremen know the real qualifications of an assassin based in the border city of Helmsted? A source in Berlin had told Axel that the only trustworthy professionals were located exclusively in Berlin. Had "Fritz" contacted an NPD operative in that city, it would have been a different outcome. It was a risky plan to be sure. "Fritz" did not like even the implication that his judgment had been faulty. However, without some kind of cover for the fiasco, Axel himself might become the target of a hired gun.

Trembling, Axel called "Fritz" reaching him around 2300 hours on his private line. "Fritz" listened to this spin and said nothing. At the end he said to Axel. "It was unfortunate that the chosen instrument was so sloppy and stupid. We will have to wait for another day. Where are you now?

"I am in Berlin in a café with an NPD colleague named Edelgard."

"Oh yes, I know Edelgard. Let me speak with her."

Axel handed the phone to Edelgard and gave her some space. She talked quite a while with "Fritz" before hanging up.

"You are a lucky man. He was in a good mood. I have seen him in a not so good mood. For right now he wants you to stay here. He said you should call him back in a week."

Despite Rupert's warning, Heinrich went back to Bremen. He kept a very low profile. Hannelore's trial date came first in mid-November. The charges against her were dropped. She walked out of the courtroom happy and relieved. She could begin her life again, a life that was safe and secure.

For Heinrich, the wait in Bremen was an agony. He became increasingly moody while waiting for his own trial date which took place on December 7, 1966 in the Bremen Municipal Court. It went better than expected. Attorney Weintraub had assessed the situation accurately. Heinrich pleaded no contest. He paid the fine of 750 DM with the money that Rupert had given him. He was credited with time served instead of a 30 day jail term. The ruling also stipulated that his no contest plea would not be on his permanent record. Heinrich also left the courtroom in a happy mood.

Afterwards, he called Hannelore to invite her to a really fine Bremen restaurant, *Der Engel.* He picked her up at her apartment in a taxi. He was feeling euphoric. At the restaurant he ordered *Kasselerripchen* for two, expensive wine, and a sumptuous torte dessert with black coffee. All was going well. Then Heinrich again put forth his grand plan for both of them to move to Cologne to start a new life there.

Hannelore froze, then frowned. *"Heinrich, Ich will nicht aus Bremen fort. Ich brauche Ruhe in meinem Leben. Das letze Jahr war volle Angst. Das ist nicht fuer mich. Bliebe hier!"*

"Heinrich, I don't want to leave Bremen. I've got to have some calm in my life. Last year was full of anxiety. That's not for me. Stay here!" Heinrich was taken aback. He said nothing in reply, but it was clear that he was angry. He summoned the waiter, paid the bill and they left. Hailing a cab, they rode to Hannelore's apartment.

Dismissing the cabbie, he paid the fare with a minimal tip. They took the lift to her flat. When they got inside, Heinrich began to remonstrate with her.

"Hannelore, what is there here for both of us? You have calm and security, but what have I got? Axel will come around sooner or later to get his fangs into me, then what? I'll be back to the business of stealing from the American PX, running shipments to Rotterdam and that whole mess. Why don't you see that?"

"Heinrich, you are acting as if you are Axel's puppet, but you are not. You have other choices. We talked about the *Technische Hochschule*. I said I would support you. Don't you remember that?"

"Look, I grew up on a farm. I had to do all the manual work. My brother Rupert was the brains. He left, went to Braunschweig to go to a *Technische Hochschule* there. Now, he works at VW as a manager. But I don't want a desk job. I want to roam."

They were at an impasse. There was no point in continuing to talk about it. Hannelore tried to change the subject by enthusing about the recent Billy Graham Crusade. Heinrich wasn't interested at all in religion. The whole question of religion left him baffled and confused. Hannelore put on a record. The Israeli couple Esther and Abbi Ofarim sang a German version of the hit song "My Wandering" *"Mir scheint mein Weg durch diese Welt wird nie nach Haus."* It is a very melancholy song. Then something powerful struck Heinrich. Of course Bremen would be the logical place to take vengeance on Axel for his betrayal.

A sly smile appeared on his face. "Alright, Hannelore, maybe I should stay here for a while."

Chapter 7: Woglinde Returns

Sybille's work week began smoothly. On Monday and Wednesday there were few movie goers. On Friday, it was a different story. There were big crowds for all three screenings. Sybille locked the door about an hour after the third screening started. She went back to the little box office to start tallying up the receipts. It had been a good night, about 1,350 DMs. She checked her math, wrote down the amount on the receipt form and put the cash and the receipt form in the cash bag. She put the bag in a small safe inside the kiosk. After putting on her coat and hat, she waited for all the patrons to leave the movie house. She checked the time, It was slightly after 23:45 hours. She walked to the subway stop to take the U-*bahn* to where she lived, so far, a pleasant and uneventful week.

Things changed when she got out of the subway station. Four seedy looking men in tattered trench coats accosted her as she exited to the street. They made suggestive remarks and followed her. She picked up the pace and began to run to her room in *Im Dau* about three blocks away. However, she couldn't out run them. They cut her off as she was about to enter the *cul de sac* called *Im Dau*. Thoroughly frightened she shouted, "What do you want?" "You'll see young lady. You'll see."

Fearing the worst, she screamed at the top of her lungs. "*Polizei! Bitte Hilfe!*"

A uniformed officer quickly appeared and the men scattered .He spoke sharply, "*Meine Dame Es ist sehr spaet. Warum sind Sie auf die Strasse allein?*""Lady, it's very late. Why are you on the street by yourself?" Sybille was too scared to answer. She was just relieved that he had arrived on the scene. Indeed it was almost magical. When she turned she saw Woglinde. In a soft voice, she said: "You need to live in another part of town."

"Maybe you need to live in another place altogether. I have an idea. Let's go to your room. We can discuss it there." In a few minutes, they were both inside the room. Sybille did what Woglinda had told her to do. She packed her sparse wardrobe, ate what was left in the refrigerator, and sat on the bed to listen to Woglinde.

"Sybille, I am going to take you to a charming town on the Rhine. It is called *Sankt Goar.* Don't worry, I have enough money for both of us to take the train. We travel first to Koblenz, change trains, and then stop a short distance later in *Sankt Goar.* I know an older couple who run a very nice pension there. You will like them."

"Well, I have to be at work at the Bijou Cinema by 16:30 hours on Monday afternoon."

"I understand that, but I think this time off will be good for you."

Sybille raised no further objections. She needed some relief from the large and strange city.

Even *Sankt Goar* had been visited by the war. It had been a launching point for General Patton's crossing of the Rhine in 1945. It had been spared any bombing, so the small city retained a lot of its medieval flavor.

Woglinde and Sybille arrived at the *Pension Engelhof* late that Friday evening. Woglinde had notified the hosts. When the bell was rung, a distinguished older gentleman opened the door. "Woglinde. *Wilkommen.*" Gerhardt Frankenmuth was the picture of nineteenth century German nobility. His silver hair, impeccable mustache, and steely blue eyes were softened by a warm, welcoming smile. He ushered the two women to a lovely small bedroom on the third floor.

They were tired and quickly fell asleep, each in her own twin bed.

The next morning a bell awakened them. They dressed hurriedly and went downstairs where Frau Rosalie greeted them with an ample breakfast. Her husband joined them. All of them listened to Herr Frankenmuth, a consummate storyteller.

"You know, of course, about the Lorelei. The jilted Lorelei remained on the rock at the narrowest point of the Rhine. She lured sailors to the rock where their ships were dashed to pieces." He shared his own experiences from April, 1945 when the American troops crossed the Rhine at *Sankt Goar*, hastening the end of Hitler's Third Reich in May, 1945. His tone became sad and wistful. Then he snapped out of it.

"Cheer up! That was over twenty years ago. Things are much better now."

After a polite interval. Sybille and Woglinde excused themselves. They went to their room on the third floor. Woglinde was excited.

"Sybille. today we are going to a wonderful city on the other side of the Rhine where they make the fabulous *Asbach Uralt* cognac. There is also a charming music box museum there. You will love Rudesheim." *Asbach Uralt* has the reputation of enhancing amorous feelings."Sybille hoped that the cognac might lead her to a young man both handsome and rich. The music box museum also appealed to her. Two hours later , they arrived by train at the Rudesheim station.

The city was not as pretty as Sybille had hoped. The music box museum seemed contrived. When the two women went to a *Kneipe* for some musical entertainment, the singer was mediocre. There were only a few men in the place, mostly portly and older.

Still, the *Asbach Uralt* had the effect of warming the heart and stirring the imagination.

After sitting at their table for nearly two hours, they saw two young men enter wearing the grey uniforms of the *Bundeswehr*. Woglinde gave them a big smile. The young soldiers toddled over to the table.

"Gnadige Damen. Durfen wir bei euch sitzen?"

"Lovely ladies, may we sit down with you?"

"*Naturlich"*, replied Woglinde. The chase was on.

The two young soldiers were doing their mandatory time in the service. One was a housepainter, the other worked in a butcher shop. They were both stationed in Koblenz. The young men offered to buy dinner. . It was quickly accepted. They put in the order. While waiting, they ordered more beer and four more glasses of Asbach Uralt. The glow grew warmer as they waited for their food.

Woglinde initiated the conversation. "How do you like Koblenz?" Both men were from Cologne. They tried to be polite, but it was clear that they found Koblenz somewhat staid and constricted.

"Well," interjected Woglinde, "when you come back to Cologne you can visit us there."

That seemed like a capital idea. The young soldiers asked where the two women lived.

Sybille gave her address on *Im Dau*. Woglinde gave them address in *Neustadt*. Delighted, the young men wrote it all down. After a hearty dinner, there was a delicious plum compote for dessert and more *Asbach Uralt*. By then all of them were quite tipsy.

One of the soldiers slid his hand onto Woglinde's knee. She pretended to be a little shocked. Out of propriety, she removed his hand but continued to smile at him. The other soldier was more forward. He placed his hand under Sybille's skirt and between her legs. She slapped him lightly then giggled. He withdrew his hand. This sort of cat and mouse foreplay continued for a while longer. The soldiers were "decent sorts" so they eventually desisted. They bid the young women a pleasant good evening and headed back to their quarters in Koblenz. There they would tell exaggerated stories of the evening encounter with the two young women to their comrades-in-arms.

Woglinde and Sybille caught the late evening train north from Rudesheim at 23:22 hours. Two and a half hours later. They arrived at the *Pension Engelhof.* Herr Frankenmuth had given Woglinde a key, so they were able to quietly open the door and tiptoe up to the third floor room. Woglinde stared at Sybille's attractive nude body as she undressed, but made no advances towards her. Sybille could feel the latent energy.

"Woglinde, I would so much like to live in this area of the Rhine, but what could I do here?"

"If you really desire something, you will find a way to do it."

"What would you suggest?"

"The process must come from within you. You must be willing to follow what really inspires you." This was not the answer that Sybille had hoped for. She wanted to be told.

We all have dreams of something better. For most of us, and for Sybille, there is the matter of the paycheck.

Unless you are a sprite like Woglinde, you can't flit about on whim, pleasant at that may be. On Monday, Sybille was back in the box office at the Bijou. It was a very slow evening. She almost fell asleep in the booth.

At the time of the late showing, there was a tap on the pane. She jumped up, pasted on a smile and greeted two American soldiers out on the town. As she was selling the tickets the tall one winked at her. Without thinking, or any reserve, she winked back with a fetching smile. His German was not very good, but he tried.

"*Nach der Austellung wilst du mit us zum Lokal gehen?*"

"Sagt man auf Deutsch 'mit uns'" she replied, startled at how forcefully she made the correction.

"*Sprichst du Englisch*"

"I do", she said. "You want to take me out after the show."

"Yes, that's right. *Ganz bestimmt.*"

"OK, but first we must eat something, not just drinks."

"That's fine. See you after the show."

His name was Phil Allen. He told her that he was from Green Bay, Wisconsin. She was disappointed. She had hoped he was from New York or San Francisco. He talked a lot about a team called the Green Bay Packers who played football with their hands. She was incredulous. Cologne had its own football team, FC *Koln,* nicknamed the "Billy Goats". Sybille told Phil that the team had won the *Bundesliga* in 1963, locally, a source of pride.

The two of them bantered back and forth a little. Sybille casually mentioned that FC *Koln* was at home on Saturday against Bayern *Muenchen* a leading team. Phil saw the opportunity.

"Would you like to go to the game with me?"

Sybille was surprised at this, but said she would like that. Phil's companion David Migliore asked Sybille if she had a friend. Sybille said she did, and immediately realized that it might be difficult to contact Woglinde. The three of them left the *Lokal* together. Phil wrote down his telephone number and asked for hers.

"Sorry, but I don't have my own phone yet. I will give you my address. There is a pay phone outside the door. I'll give you that one. Anyhow, meet me at about 0900 hours. *Tschuss."* With a friendly wave, the young Americans said goodbye.

Sybille was elated when she got back to her room. The young men seemed fun to her. She wouldn't have to travel to an NCO club a long way off. It was a good situation for her. Woglinde's parting remark at *Sankt Goar* came back to her. "Follow what really matters to you." This still wasn't clear, but she felt that she had made a good beginning to really enjoy life in Cologne and not simply be a work drudge at a movie theatre.

Phil Allen called to the pay phone a few days before Saturday to see if Sybille had arranged for another young woman to go to the game with his friend David. She had not been able to contact Woglinde. In fact, there was no way to contact her. Sprites who live on the banks of the Rhine don't have direct telecom. She gave Phil an elaborately fabricated bluff. She said she would keep trying. Sybille worried the whole next day. Friday came, but there was no communication from Woglinde. She had not appeared either.

Phil called her again on Friday afternoon. She put him off again with a feeble excuse. She was about to go to bed thinking that the whole excursion to the game had fallen apart. Then she heard a tap, tap, tap on her door. Leaping off the bed, she opened the door. It was Woglinde!

"Do you think I would let you down? True friends don't abandon friends. My senses told me that you had met a handsome Ami who had a friend. So here I am, ready to go with you to the game on Saturday." Sybille was overcome with joy and happiness.

"Oh, this is so wonderful. But I was so worried. Isn't there some way I can contact you besides relying on your special powers? Is there an intermediary with a phone?"

"Well, I provide you with an answering service. When you call, they'll contact me."

"That would be good. Thank you."

The two women drank some Riesling that Woglinde had brought, chattering about this and that. Woglinde ended the conversation. "Well, we should get some sleep. It will be a big day on Saturday. When are they coming to get us?"

"Promptly at nine. Now I must call Phil to let him know that David has a companion for the day."

Phil and David arrived a little early that Saturday. It was a bright, sunny day, often a rarity in Germany. Everyone was in good spirits. They waited a few minutes and boarded a tram that would take them to the stadium. The tram was really crowded. They were separated by a pushy, fat man festooned in football attire and Nazi paraphernalia. This angered Phil who confronted him in heavily accented German.

"Hey there, bud. The war is over. The Nazis lost."

"Ami", the man shot back. " I don't give a shit what you think."

It was about to get ugly. Then Woglinde spoke softly to the fat man.

" *Wir sind Rheinlaender, mein Freund. Wir haben eine ganz andere Geschicte, friedenvolle und freundlich. Lassen wir uns Ruhe haben.* "

"We are Rhinelanders, my friend. We have a completely different history, peaceful and friendly. Let's stay calm."

It was quite remarkable how her words affected the man. He smiled at her, took Phil's hand and shook it.

" *Verzeiung. Ich wolte keine Auseinandersetzung zwischen uns.* "

"I am sorry. I didn't want an argument between us."

All of this diplomatic nicety would never have happened without Woglinde's timely intervention. The whole atmosphere on the tram became happy again. No need to call the metro police, good feelings had been restored. In another 25 minutes, the tram arrived at the stadium.

The game was a close one. FC *Kohln,* the underdog, won 2-1. The happy spectators left singing team songs with elation. As Americans, Phil and David didn't understand all the lyrics, but they joined in with the crowd and tried their best to participate.

Back in the center city, Woglinde suggested a restaurant featuring Turkish food near *Walruf-Richartz Musee am Martinstrasse* not far from the *Rathaus.* Cappadocia was the place.

It was well known for good food and a pleasant atmosphere. After a lengthy meal with wine, they all took a walk to the world famous Cologne Cathedral. It was nearly 2100 hours and the Cathedral was about to close. A docent let them in, but advised them that they had only twenty minutes to remain inside. Sybille was awestruck by the vaulting ceilings and the mysterious, sanctified mood of the place. The two Americans were not so affected, but remained silently respectful. In a few minutes they were back outside on *Domkloster* the square in front of the Cathedral. Phil put his arm around Sybille's shoulder. As often happens on double dates, David and Woglinde stayed side by side but did not advance any closer. Finally, Woglinde broke the silence.

"It has been a wonderful time with both of you. I must be going now. I have to catch a train to Koblenz and then on to *Sankt Goar.*"

Phil spoke softly to Sybille. It has been a really good time. Can we get together again soon, just the two of us?"

Sybille blushed but smiled. "Yes, I would like that. Let me call you mid-week."

On Wednesday, Sybille called the American Air Force installation near Cologne. She was quite nervous, but happy to hear Phil's voice. A meeting place was arranged for dinner on Saturday, followed by a visit to the theatre. It all seemed wonderful to her.

They went back to the Cappadocia restaurant. The conversation had some awkward moments. Neither of them was fluent in the other's language, so there were some gaps and misunderstandings. Sybille wanted to correct Phil's German for what he considered minor mistakes. His English was thoroughly American, so he used slang that went over her head. Still, by the second bottle of wine, things became fluent in a sense.

They decided to skip the play. They hadn't bought tickets yet. They walked around the *Alt Stadt* in the mild spring air. Strolling along the west bank of the Rhine they both remarked on the moonlight shimmer. Walking arm in arm, Phil pulled Sybille close to him and engaged her in a soul kiss. The kiss stimulated her, and she returned it.

"Phil, do you like it here?"

"*Ja Kohln ist bei mir sehr schoen und interessant,* But I miss my hometown a lot."

"Phil, I would like to go to America with you. But first, let's go to New York or another big city. I grew up on a farm near a small city called Minden. I like Cologne because it is a big city."

"The big city near me is Chicago. It's about a day's drive from Green Bay. We could go there first if you would like."

"Oh yes, I would like that a lot." The kiss that followed was long and lingering.

Things rarely move forward steadily. Phil and Sybille did not get together for nearly a month. Phil was on exercise on the border between West and East Germany listening in on Soviet tank radio communications, mostly of a tactical nature. It was very stereotyped and boring. The amount of useful intelligence gleaned was limited. Once on exercise, participants could not make any contact outside the perimeter of the field of operations. Phil had no way of contacting Sybille..

Sybille had not been told. She did the next best thing, however, and called Woglinde's answering service. A day after the call there was a soft tap, tap, tap at the door of her room on *Im Dau.* She rushed to the door to behold Woglinde.

"You called in distress, so of course, I am here. True friends never leave true friends in distress."

"Oh, Woglinde. It has been such an anxious time. I have not heard from Phil in over three weeks. I have no idea where he is or what is going on."

"Well, I spoke with Dave while you and Phil were exploring each other's tongues. I found out what their MOS was, Ami talk for their military jobs. They are Russian linguists. They go to the *Zonengrenze* often. They can't disclose this. If they did, it could be prison."

Woglinde put her arms around Sybille and hugged her. This gesture calmed her. Woglinde then led her gently by the hand. "Come, let's go and have some fun."

The two of them headed for August-Sander Park where there was a decorated antique carousel famed throughout the region. The hurdy-gurdy machine played loud waltzes and polkas. People tanked up at the nearby *Bierstube* before and after riding the carousel's painted horses. An atmosphere of childish delight pervaded everywhere. After about an hour, the two young women were laughing and waving from the round and round whirling machine. Sybille completely forgot her troubles and her loneliness. This trip was so much better than brooding in her room or trying to meet another man to fill the void of Phil's absence. Play is everything, even better that the gold that Woglinde and her Rhinemaiden friends possessed in Wagner's opera.

The two women wandered around the park after the carousel ride, stopping at a *Schnell Imbiss* for a creamy gelato. The delicious nectar urged them to have another gelato of a different flavor. They ate with happy abandon.

Altogether it was a carefree and blissful day for Sybille. She and Woglinde walked arm in arm all the way back to *Im Dau.* It was a very long walk. When they got back, Sybille did not want Woglinde to leave. Woglinde could not stay. Rhinemaidens must return to their observation posts on the terraced vineyard hills above the Rhine.

After her departure, Sybille felt the melancholy and loneliness return, but it did not oppress her as before, As she lay down on her bed, she fell quickly into a deep sleep, dreaming of an enchanted carousel carrying her back to Phil. It was a dream she long remembered.

More than a month passed and Sybille had not heard from Phil. Her job at the Bijou box office became increasingly boring. At night, she had difficulty sleeping. One morning as she was awakening, she heard the pay phone ring outside her door in the hallway. Other people in the rooming house used the phone. At first she paid no attention. The ringing continued more insistently. She went outside into the hall and answered. It was David, Phil's friend. He spoke in halting German. *"Ist Sybille da?"*

"Ja, hier ist Sybille. Wer hat mir angerufen?"

"Hier meldet David. Leider habe Ich schlecte Nachrichten.Phil ist tot."

Sybille, realizing that David's German was limited, broke into English.

"Oh David. Is Phil really dead? That is terrible. How did it happen?"

David recounted a trip to Koblenz in a car. There were four of them. They were celebrating the end of the exercise. They all had drunk far too much. Phil was the passenger

in the front seat. The driver passed a car on a curve. They were met by an oncoming LKW. Swerving to avoid a head on collision, the car hit a large tree on the river road by the Rhine.

Both the driver and Phil were killed. David and his buddy in the backseat got out of the car with broken arms and concussions. After inquiring about David's well-being, she wished him well. She hung up in a state of shock.

Phil's body was shipped to Green Bay, Wisconsin for burial. David called her again to inform her of that. After David's second and final call, she felt numb, not unlike an army widow who has lost her husband in a foreign land, never to see his body again. Although she hadn't known Phil for long she felt a deep attachment to him. She called Woglinde's answering service. No response. She felt abandoned.

Right after David's second call, her sister Renate called her with more sad news. Her mother, Matilda, had died of pneumonia. Renate implored her to come back to Minden to help with the funeral arrangements. Sybille contacted Berta to cover for the box office job at the Bijou while she was away. Berta even loaned her 50DMs for travel and expenses. Overwhelmed by this kindness, Sybille put her arms around Berta and kissed her. It was Monday. She went back to the room on *Im Dau* and packed hurriedly. She also emptied the jar with 30 more DMs in it.

Walking to he *Hauptbahnhof* in a drizzle, she bought a second class roundtrip ticket to Minden for the train departing Cologne at 18:15 hours. Minden was one of the many stops for this train. Sybille was glad that the train took nearly three and a half hours before it got to Minden. It gave her some time to think and collect herself. When she got off at the Minden station a teary Renate greeted her with an embrace. That nearly cost Sybille her

fragile composure she had built up on the journey. She did not lose it though. Renate gave her some space. They went back together to the old home. They talked for a short time. Then Sybille said she was tired and wanted to sleep. Renate guided her to her old room. Surprisingly she slept well. The funeral was simple. Rupert and Heinrich both came back. At the gathering following the church service, a few of Matilda and Jacob's old friends and neighbors came to the farmhouse to express condolences and share memories. They didn't stay very long. The two brothers and two sisters felt awkward after the older friends left. This wasn't home anymore. Renate was very anxious in getting their help in sorting things out to get the house and land ready for sale. The three others agreed to help, but only for a few more days, explaining that this was the most time they could get off from their jobs.

Rupert, the most experienced in business, had already contacted a lawyer who had been used by Jacob and Matilda. At Rupert's request, the lawyer moved the will to probate. He also arranged for a real estate agent to market the property. He agreed with Rupert that the farmland should be subdivided for housing development. Although the Minden area was not booming, the *Bundesrepublik* was offering low cost financing for *Siedlingshauser* (row house) construction, which was in demand everywhere. Rupert claimed that this would be the most advantageous way to settle the estate.

Renate emphatically disagreed. She yearned to keep the farm intact and preserve the pleasant rural aspect of the surrounding area. She wanted to engage a tenant farmer and manager. She felt a strong sense for the place and its heritage. She had stayed the longest on the farm, even though she was the youngest. It was clear that were not going to be a smooth settlement between the four heirs.

On the last evening that the siblings were together, Renate pulled Sybille aside.

"Men always think that they know best, but they don't always, do they?"

"Well," Sybille replied, "That depends on the circumstances, doesn't it?"

Renate shot back. "I feel that Rupert and Heinrich don't give a damn about family or history. They just want to make a quick profit."

Heinrich's decision to remain in Bremen was made for dark, ulterior motives. The resolve to kill Axel had been festering in him for a long time. The urgency, however, had begun to leave him. He did what Hannelore suggested. He enrolled in the Bremen *Technischehochschule.* He needed help in reading, writing, and basic math.

He found the instruction extremely tedious, but he stuck it out. He became more employable. After two months, he applied to be a clerk at Karstadt's department store for the Christmas season. He was hired as a seasonal employee. The money wan't that great, but he could pay his own way and not be completely dependent on Hannelore. Hannelore was pleased, not only because of the extra money, but also because he was staying with her and not wandering about and getting involved in high risk ventures.

The German Christmas season is truly charming. During the 1960s, Christmas trees had real candles. School children would sing sentimental carols in department stores and town squares. Karstadt's spared no expense in decorating for the holidays, knowing that the festivities would result in greater sales and net profits. Germans felt that it was important to "Keep Christ in Christmas". Most retailers played on these religious emotions to drive sales

and to drive employees. Twelve hour days were the norm. Ludwig Erhard had surpassed Santa Claus in popularity and influence.

Heinrich was assigned to men's shoes. It was better than being in women's shoes, but still there were difficult customers. Heinrich let a lot of this roll off his back. One day he saw Axel trying on a pair of dress shoes with the other salesman. He brushed off the salesman and took over.

"Axel, mein Freund. Lange Zeit, nicht gesehen." "Long time, no see."

For once, Axel didn't have a quick rejoinder. He froze. His face became a mask of icy calm. His role in Heinrich's attempted assassination was clear to Heinrich. Axel's days might be numbered now. Habits, however, are hard to break. He smiled.

"So Heinrich, I heard that the weather in Helmstedt did not agree with you. Perhaps after Christmas, we could work together again. I am sure that you would make more money than you are making now."

"You may be right, Axel, but I found that that kind of work was not good for me."

Axel handed him a card. "Here, in case you change your mind." He took off the new shoes. Heinrich put the filler paper back in the box, carefully wrapping the shoes. The two went to the cash register. Heinrich finished the sale with a friendly greeting.

"Froeliche Weinachten, Recht schoen Dank."

Axel slipped into the stream of holiday shoppers and disappeared.

Heinrich felt a strange new power. Axel had given him the means to contact him and exact revenge. The rest of the workday was uneventful. Despite strong emotions he was able to handle the other customers with polished efficiency. This job wasn't so bad after all.

After work, at the apartment, he was withdrawn. Hannelore left him alone for a time. Finally, however, she became impatient.

"Heinrich, what's going on? Bad day at work?"

"No, it was a good day at work. Axel came in and bought a pair of shoes. He gave me his card. I will fix him good."

On the evening of December 26th, after a long day at Karstadt's handling returns, Heinrich called Axel. "Hello, Axel. Heinrich here. I've decided that perhaps we could work together again."

"Delighted to hear that Heinrich. What do you have in mind?"

"Are there still cigarettes and whiskey in the Salzwedel mines?

"Yes, they are still there. What's you plan?"

Heinrich mentioned his contacts at the *Volkswagenwerk.* Clearly the whiskey could be sold to the office workers. The cigarettes could be sold to the Turkish assembly line workers. Both of these items could be sold in smaller quantities to the dock workers in Bremerhaven. It could amount to as much as 30,000DMs. Not quite as much as at Rotterdam, but much safer and certainly worth the effort. Axel listened to the proposal without comment. Then he shot back. "How about going to Salzwedel this weekend?"

Heinrich played a little coy. "Well, it's possible, but I would have to ask my supervisor for the time off."

"Well, if you want to play it safe, I suppose you must. Call me when you get approval."

Heinrich had a good relationship with the shoe department manager. She granted him permission for the weekend off. On the following Saturday Heinrich and Axel headed out of Bremen on the autobahn towards Hamburg. They arrived in Salzwedel that afternoon. Rudiger, NPD contact, had arranged for a room. The visit to the salt mine was set for Sunday.

Early Sunday morning, Rudiger led them to the location in the salt mine where the contraband was stored. He was paid 400 DMs and told to take a case of cigarettes and three quarts of bourbon for his personal use. Rudiger quickly accepted the bonus.

Heinrich and Axel loaded as many cases of the Camel cigarettes and Jack Daniels as would fit into the trunk and the back seat. They drove back to the room where they were staying, dropped Rudiger off, paying him the cash along with the promised goodies. Then they drove straight to Wolfsburg and VW headquarters to make the sale. What was unknown to Axel was that Heinrich had tipped off his brother Rupert, who had called the police in advance of the arrival.

At about 1500 hours, Axel drove into a gas station in Wolfsburg to fill up. While Axel was engaged with the pump, Heinrich moved away, lit a cigarette and made a show of turning towards the street. Then he pivoted into an alleyway behind the gas station. Rupert was waiting there along with four police officers. Heinrich told them that they could find

Axel and the car loaded with stolen goods at the gas pumps. In moments, the police swooped in, arresting Axel and seizing the heist. Rupert then took Heinrich back to his office at *Volkswagenwerk.* When they arrived, they both exhaled deeply.

"Heinrich. Stay with me and Katrina tonight. You can take the early morning train back to Bremen. For God's sake, don't mess this up. Stay away from these adventures. I won't always be able to help you, you know."

"You know Rupert, I actually have a pretty good life in Bremen. My lady friend, Hannelore, really loves me. She cares for me. I am out of the stolen goods game now. Please believe me."

"Yes, for the first time since we left the farm, I think you are on the right path."

The brothers embraced. Rupert locked up his office. They walked together to the parking lot. Rupert turned the key on in his teal VW cabriolet and they headed to Helmstedt.

In the Wolfsburg municipal jail Monday morning came early. Two burly guards brought breakfast to Axel in his cell. He ate it hurriedly. The guards came back, grabbed him and escorted him to a police van. The van headed to Bremen for arraignment in the courthouse there. He was remanded to the city jail, but allowed to make a phone call. He called "Fritz". Grudgingly, "Fritz" arranged for a lawyer. There was no sympathy in "Fritz's" voice.

At about the same hour, Heinrich ate a hearty breakfast with Rupert and Katrina. Rupert then drove Heinrich to the train station for the 07:22 morning train to Bremen. The brothers said a hasty goodbye, Rupert headed to work in his car. Heinrich shortly after

boarded the train in a second class coach, flopped on his seat, and fell asleep. When he woke up, the train was approaching Bremen for the mid-afternoon arrival. Leaving the train, he allowed himself the luxury of a taxi instead of taking the streetcar. He felt more confident and secure than he could remember. At Hannelore's flat, he tipped the cabbie 50 *pfennings* and let himself in with the spare key. It was only around 1600 hours. Hannelore would arrive back from work in about an hour and a half. He lit up a cigarette.

He felt pleased with himself. His plan had worked well. Axel had been arrested. He would receive a stiff sentence. Hannelore would cover for him. She would state that he had been with her in Bremen during the whole thing. Rupert would deny seeing him in Wolfsburg. Axel would insist that he was with him. However, his brother and his lover would provide a tight alibi. The police and the prosecutor would agree with the alibi. Axel's shady past worked against him. The good citizens of Helmstedt and Bremen carried considerable credibility even when they were lying. Heinrich exulted in his newly found cleverness. He heard the key turn in the lock. When Hannelore came home, they embraced passionately. Their war was over, or so they thought.

After a lengthy interval, Rupert and Heinrich rejoined their two sisters at the farm. Rupert announced the plan to settle the estate. The farmhouse itself would have a small plot of land. The fields would be subdivided to make way for the construction of row houses. He estimated that this plan could earn about 300,000 DMs or about 75,000 DMs each, a tidy sum at the time. Renate strongly objected. "This will ruin the countryside. It will replace a working farm with its singular beauty with an ugly development. It should properly be named Kiesinger *Himmel* after our beloved CDU Chancellor and former Nazi ."

"What a wonderful legacy for the Bruggermann Farm, six generations in our family! All lost because of greed!"

Rupert and Heinrich were truly taken aback. They began a ferocious counterattack. Rupert led off. "Well, I suppose you two just loved the long days and meager rewards on this beloved ancestral farm. Why do you think I left? Why did Heinrich leave? Why did you leave Sybille? And for that matter, Renate, how long do you think you will be able to manage things?"

"You know, Rupert, you don't think women can manage things, but we can. Why not hire a family to live in the house and take care of the farm?"

"Prices for agricultural goods are high now. If we made a 60/40 deal with them we could live comfortably. Not grandly, but with dignity and peace."

Sybille jumped in. "Rupert, you asked me why I left. I left for some freedom and independence. I don't need a lot of money, but steady income from the farm would help."

Heinrich also spoke his mind. It was clear that he thought the plan to engage a tenant farmer was both impractical and foolish. "You know Renate, the leftists too want to tear everything down. They are today's Nazi's, but they come from the left. What is so bad about all of us making some real money from selling the farm?"

Rupert, the eldest, offered the last word. "Well, we can either fight among ourselves and watch the farm lose a lot of value because of neglect, stupidity and stubbornness or we can try to work things out. Now, I have to be back at my desk in Wolfsburg tomorrow

morning. Can anyone offer some kind of framework so that we can work out an agreement?"

Renate spoke up. "Why don't you two men at least allow my idea for renting out the farm for a specific period of time? What if we agreed to do this for a year to see if it could be done? How about it? What's the big rush to sell it off?"

"OK Renate," Rupert replied. " I am willing to let you try. You would need a lawyer to draft an agreement, Also, the most I would be willing to offer the tenants is forty percent of the income. Sixty percent would then be divided equally among the four of us." Heinrich showed some interest. 'I would be willing to lease the farm the way Rupert proposes. I want a fair deal for all of us. I think we should try this." Sybille was also on board. Renate's eyes sparkled. "This is a good sign", she said. "A very good sign, indeed."

Rupert left for his job in Wolfsburg that afternoon. The next day Heinrich traveled back to Bremen. Sybille remained with Renate. She offered to help Renate with the sorting out of her mother's personal items, so they spent the day and well into the evening sorting and boxing things in order to make a big pile to give to the Lutheran Social Services at their parents' church. The next day they were up early. Renate made breakfast. She also made a lunch for Sybille to take back with her on the train. It was a friendly but tearful parting.

"Renate, I am so glad that you stood by your plan and did not give into our brothers." "Well, I think it is right. I will begin advertising for tenants today. It may take some time, but it will be for the best." The two women embraced. Renate drove her sister to the station for the late morning train to Cologne. When she boarded the train, Sybille felt very proud of her sister's inner strength. Sybille arrived in Cologne at 18:45 hours.

She stopped at a *Schnellimbiss* for a bite to eat. At the room on *Im Dau,* she felt tired and depressed. She lay down on her bed ready to fall asleep, but a tap, tap, tap announced itself at the door. It was Woglinde! Overjoyed, Sybille embraced her. Woglinde triumphantly entered the room.

"Your sister is wonderful. You must emulate her. Let her strength be your strength."

"How did you know about Renate? But you know that I am not like her."

"Don't be silly. Of course you can't be like her. But do take charge of your happiness. Let's contact the soldiers. It will be good."

Woglinde phoned Peter Brucker in Koblenz. It was Thursday. She told him to bring his friend Thomas Schmelzer with him. They would all meet at the Cologne main station at 18:15 hours on Friday. Then they would be their guests at the old and famous *Gasthaus und Weinhaus Brungs* on *Mars Platz* close to the station. When Peter got off the phone, he immediately contacted Thomas. Brimming with excitement, they both went to see the Sergeant in charge, with whom they were in good terms. He gave them a weekend pass to Cologne. Peter called Woglinde right back. She had given him the number of the pay phone right outside the door. "It's all set. We'll see you on Friday." Woglinde hugged Sybille.

"You see. You've got to be forward looking. Don't get stuck in sadness. We Germans do that too often."

"Woglinde, how can we possibly pay for this? I have almost no money. I won't get paid until the end of next week.""Silly girl, don't you know about the *Rheingold?"*

"No, I don't." "Well, I have access to it. I will call my pal Wotan at DeutscheBank."

Woglinde gave Sybille a big kiss on the lips. "When you believe, you can do things. You can you know. Now let's do a preview of the *Gasthaus und Weinhaus Brungs.* We'll spare no expense. Didn't Luther day 'sin boldly'?"

It was indeed an extravagant evening, almost 500 DMs. Woglinde paid for all of it, including a generous tip for the beaming waiter. They both left the *Gasthaus und Weinhaus Brungs* in high spirits.

"Sybille, we are really going to impress our two *Bundeswehr* friends tomorrow."

"Woglinde, after spending all this money tonight, how will you have more for our soldier friends and both of us?"

"You forgot about Wotan at the Deutsche Bank and the special account."

They both walked arm in arm to the room on *Im Dau.* They hugged each other. Then Woglinde indicated the she must leave. They set up a time to meet at 1700 hours at the main coffee shop at the *Hauptbahnhof,* giving them plenty of time to wait for the train from Koblenz. After Woglinde departed, Sybille flopped on the bed feeling a little dizzy, but extremely happy. The preparations had been really splendid. How would it be possible to improve on them?

Sybille came to the coffee shop a little before 1700 hours. Shortly afterwards. Woglinde breezed in. They both chatted happily in anticipation of the train's arrival from Koblenz. But then an announcement came over the public address system.

"*Der Zug aus Koblenz hat Verspatung. Es kommt nicht um 18:15 Uhr. Die Ankunft ist 19:30 Uhr.*".

The train would be and hour and fifteen minutes late. Wopglinde telephoned *Gasthaus und Weinhaus Brungs* to make another reservation 20:00 hours. She was told that it would not be possible. Vexed Woglinde hung up. This was not a huge problem, however. There were plenty of decent restaurants near the *Bahnhof.* Many of them would likely have tables available for late seating. Woglinde pulled out her list. By the time the train arrived from Koblenz, Woglinde had a reservation at another fine restaurant *Frueh am Dom.*

Peter and Thomas greeted Woglinde and Sybille. They explained that there had been a demonstration at the Koblenz station by some of the followers of Rudi Dutscke. When the police arrived, the demonstrators flopped. The police had to haul them away.

"They were probably the sons and daughters of prominent politicians, so they got the 'kid glove' treatment", opined Thomas.

"That's right. If they had been Ruhr coal miner's kids, their heads would have been cracked with batons. At least we were out of uniform, so we didn't get asked to help out the police.", chimed in Peter.

"Well that's over now, so let's eat, drink and fondle," Woglinde winked at Peter and Thomas. Sybille turned scarlet. However, they went quickly to *Frueh am Dom,* which was packed. The *maître d'* guided them to a table next to one of the old, exposed Roman walls.

The service was slow because of the crowd. The waiter apologized and offered another round of cognac on the house. Woglinde, Peter, and Thomas cheered him on. Sybille acquiesced but felt uncomfortable. She thought that Woglinde had not needed to suggest sex moves to the soldiers. They were already primed for that. She missed Phil.

She sensed that this was going too fast. She didn't like the idea of sex with either one of them, or even flirting with them for that matter. For the first time since she had met Woglinde, she felt that the Rhinemaiden had let her down. Sybille's anxiety grew, then panic set in. She jumped up from the table. "I am not feeling well. I am sorry, but I am going home now." She left the table in a frightened state, tipping over a glass. It crashed to the floor.

Woglinde tried to restrain her. Too late, Sybille bounded out the door.

She ran all the way to her room on *Im Dau.* Out of breath she fell on her bed, bursting into tears. What was going on? Why was she so emotional? The answer didn't come. Tossing and turning, she fell asleep.

The next morning she heard a familiar tap, tap, tap at the door. It became more insistent. Opening the door, she saw Woglinde.

"You missed out on some fun last night, Sybille. The three of us had a good time. Peter and Thomas took the late train back to Koblenz. Why did you leave?"

"I didn't want to stay and flirt with them. They aren't men I am interested in. I had a good man, but he was killed in an automobile accident. But you knew that. So my question to you is, why did you make the arrangements with those two common soldiers. You ignored my feelings." "I didn't ignore your feelings. You kept them all to yourself, you know." Woglinde tried to put her arm around Sybille, but she was brushed away. Sybille was still very angry and upset. "Go away Woglinde, back to your perch on the vineyard terraces. Leave me alone! I am not ready for this kind of life. I am going back to my sister, Renate." "Sure, it's safe there. No risks for you. Yes, go to Minden, your happy place."

"Well, I can't be like you. I will never be able to be like you."

"My dear Sybille, don't be like me. Be who you are meant to be."

Sybille did go back to Minden. First she had to settle for her rent on *Im Dau*. Then she had to give notice to Berta at the Bijou. She gave her Renate's address in Minden. Berta promised to send the last paycheck there. They hugged a little wistfully.

"The big city was a little too much for you, am I right?"

"Yes Berta, it's true, but it's not the whole story."

"Well, it's never the whole story. Gunter Grass just wrote the whole story."

"Who Berta?"

"Oh, he's just about the most famous writer in Germany right now. Pick up a copy of *Der Spiegel* at the station. You can read about him on your trip to Minden."

Wiping away a tear, Sybille gave Berta a last hug and walked to the station to wait for the late train. It was a long wait. Finally, the train arrived. She got on. She didn't buy a copy of *Der Spiegel.* The train was on time.

At 22:33 hours, Renate greeted her on the platform in Minden. She greeted her sister warmly. "My sister, you've come. It is so heavenly. It is so wonderful."

They took a taxi to the farm. Renate explained that the old truck was in the garage for repairs. She didn't tell her the bad news. Four couples had interviewed to be tenant farmers. All of them balked at the 40/60 arrangement. One couple had even been rude.

There was no deal. She hadn't told Rupert and Heinrich. They would be angry. Renate waited until after breakfast the next day to tell her sister.

After breakfast, both sisters discussed what should be done. They both agreed that the percentages should be reversed. The tenants, who worked to make the farm produce crops should receive 60% of the net profits. They decided to call Rupert. After all, the 40/60 terms had been his proposal. Renate made the call.

"Rupert, the rental situation has not gone well. None of the tenants who applied would agree to the 40/60 arrangement. It must be changed. Sybille and I agree that it should be 60 for the tenants and 40 for the four of us." There was a long silence.

"Well, that isn't a good return. I still think we should sell it to a developer, but I am willing to try this for a year. I will contact Heinrich. I think I can persuade him. I am trying to respect your views and Sybille's as well."

"Thank you Rupert. I am grateful that you are willing to do this. Thank you so very much. As soon as I have a contract, I will call you back. Tell Heinrich hello, and that this is the best that can be done."

"Yes, Renate, I will do that. Say hello to Sybille for me."

"For sure I will Rupert. Goodbye."

Renate gave Sybille a big smile. The sisters embraced. This was a good outcome. However, a lot of work remained to be done. To celebrate the immediate success, they drank two glasses of *Dopplekorn* in quick succession and felt very tipsy. They had prevailed.

The farm would not be subdivided. There was a spirit guiding their endeavor. What kind they didn't know, but it seemed like a good one.

Trying to find anyone to manage the farm proved to be difficult, even with the 60/40 split favoring the tenants. The postwar economic boom was in full swing. It was much easier and more lucrative to be employed at a steady nine-to-five job. Dawn to dusk hours required of farming did not appeal to many.

After nearly six weeks of fruitless interviews, Renate and Sybille were thoroughly discouraged. Then, an unusual applicant appeared: The *Kurfurstendam Collectiv*, "KC" for short. It consisted of four young men and four young women from Berlin, who talked in vague and idealistic terms about "Mother Earth", "expanded consciousness", and the shared responsibility of child rearing in a village environment. They readily agreed to the 60/40 arrangement. They did not want to sign a lease. Renate and Sybille were almost willing to forgo it, but after a conversation with Rupert, they insisted on a one year lease.

The "communards" reluctantly signed it, but only after a long lecture about Rosa Luxemberg, a long ago German socialist. They put down a 400 DM deposit split evenly among the eight members. The receipt was made out to the *Kurfurstendam Collectiv.* What was not discussed, nor mentioned in the lease, was the kind of crops that would be planted and harvested. The group planned to grow cannabis, at that time illegal in the *Bundesrepublik.* Also illegal was any form of polygamy, which the communards enthusiastically practiced, extolling the wonderful orgasms achieved that they described in radical underground newsletters published in Berlin. But at the time Renate and Sybille were happy and clueless. Renate called Rupert and told him the news in glowing terms.

Rupert was not as enthused, but said it was the best deal under the circumstances, knowing nothing of the problems to come.

In Germany, when you move, you must register with the local police. The KC people were well aware of this. They also knew that if all eight of them registered at the same time, it would look strange and encourage a visit from the police. So they cast lots, and chosen was Edelgard Klumpke , a short mousy brown-haired thirty-something woman. She informed the Minden police that she was renting the old Bruggermann farm in order to pursue her painting. This was true to a certain extent, but Edelgard had never sold an actual painting. For small change she did sketches of tourists in front of the infamous Berlin wall. Edelgard was the first to occupy the house. Under the cover of darkness, she was joined by the others.

Renate and Sybille had previously engaged a small flat near the Minden *Rathaus.* Looking over the want ads in the *Mindener Tagesblatt*, They found the usual retail positions, but also ads for van delivery drivers making daily runs to Bremen. Sybille applied for one and was found suitable. The pay wasn't large but better than that at the Bijou. Renate also secured a part time job opening up a small grocery store in the morning and working from 0700 hours to 1300 hours six days a week. Renate also did the cooking and housekeeping. She also visited the farm and collected the tenants rent on the first of the month. For the first two months, that went smoothly. On the first of the third month, Renate went to the farm at the usual time around 1400 hours. When she arrived she realized that there had been a wild party in the old family home. Broken bottles, broken glasses, ashes, and cigarette butts were everywhere. There was also the smell of vomit. She called out three times.

Finally, an unkempt young man named Horst Bindermeier answered.

"*Wer ist da?*"

"Hier ist Renate fuer die Miete!" "It's Renate for the rent!"

Clearly taken aback, Renate composed herself. Then she excoriated the communards.

"You pigs! This has been our family farm for generations! We were willing to give you a chance, but you have made our lovely farmhouse a filthy disgrace. You must pay the monthly rent of 400 DM right away. Then you must immediately start cleaning up. The rent is due now. I must insist."

The unkempt man began collecting from the other members of the commune. He handed over the 400 DM in small, grubby bills. She counted them and stuffed them into a small satchel. The amount was correct.

Renate left with a warning. "I will be back in two days at this hour. If the farmhouse is not back in good order, I will bring the police next time with an eviction notice. Is that clear?"

Horst answered for everyone, "Yes that is quite clear."

When Renate returned to the flat in town, Sybille was waiting for her. "Renate, you are late. Did something happen?"

Renate started crying. "Oh dear sister, when I went to collect the rent today, our home was in a shambles. It was disgusting. I got the rent. I told them. I'd be back the day after tomorrow to check that the place was clean and in good order."

"I told them if it wasn't, I would bring the police and evict them. I am so disappointed."

"Well, Renate, this is shock, but we must keep our wits about us. We have options. Even if it is necessary to evict them, there is now an official government policy in Germany that gives good subsidies to farmers to help them keep their farms. But first, see that they comply.

Renate returned to the farm in two days. The place had been cleared up to a certain extent. However, the home emitted an unpleasant odor. It was a combination of cannabis being cured and smoked. Renate went through the entire house. She was not convinced that this situation was workable. She held off, however, on contacting the police. Instead, she went back to Minden and contacted Our Savior Lutheran Church where her family had ties.

She rang the bell at the office door. The secretary answered. Renate explained that her parents, Jacob and Matilda Bruggermann had been church members. The secretary was new, but she took Renate's telephone number. Renate asked for an appointment with the pastor, who called back three days later. He also was new. He introduced himself on the phone as Pastor Stephan Heideger. The appointment was set for the next day at 11:00 hours.

When Renate arrived, she was surprised to see such a young man as Pastor Heideger. He greeted her with a friendly smile. "How can I help you, Renate?" He ushered her into his office, and closed the door. Renate stated her reason for the interview.

"Pastor, we have rented our farm to some strange and I think, untrustworthy tenants. There are eight of them. They live in a communal lifestyle. They are raising cannabis, which is illegal. My sister and I want them to go."

"We will get an eviction order, but then we will have the problem of renting the farm to a reliable tenant family. Can you suggest any members of your church who might be suitable or might be interested?"

"Well, at the moment I can't. However, I can put an announcement in our Sunday bulletin as to what terms you are offering."

"Here are the terms. The tenants retain 70% of the income. Our Family gets 30%, The monthly rental fee is 300 DM. There are generous subsidies from the government."

The pastor jotted down the terms. Renate came up with another idea.

"Pastor, I do appreciate your suggestion about your Sunday bulletin. May I also suggest that you bring this up with your board at the next meeting? Would you permit me to present the terms to the board?"

"Yes, I could do that. We Lutherans want to help our communities. I think they would be willing to consider it. Our board meets a week from this coming Tuesday at 1900 hours. I will contact you if they approve."

"Thank you very much, Pastor."

She left the meeting with the Pastor feeling encouraged. A week went by. Renate was very much on edge when the telephone rang in their flat on the Monday before the scheduled Tuesday meeting. It was the Pastor, inviting her to the meeting. Renate was pleased.

"Oh Sybille, I think there is after all another possibility besides those strange Berliners. I am going to make an appeal to the church board tomorrow evening to ask them to help us find a good tenant."

Chapter 8: Outside the Box

At the meeting, the board listened respectfully to Renate's plan. They did not seem really moved, however. Stolid German tradesmen, they could only faintly grasp the rationale for preserving the farm, rather than using the land for a housing development. Renate left the meeting with a feeling of uncertainly. This was a respectable group, but not a group used to taking the initiative. When she came back to the apartment she felt depressed. "Sybille, they heard proposal, but I don't think they will look very hard for a tenant." "Sybille snapped back.

"We need to think outside the box. Let me contact Woglinde." Sybille left an urgent message outlining the situation. The next day Woglinde called back. "Hello Sybille. Yes, we have some nasty anarchists now in Germany," Woglinde began. "I think I know their jargon and ways of operating. Here's what I propose. I will send them a telegram summoning them to Berlin for an emergency strategy meeting called by Rudi Dutscke. I am sure they will fall for it." She stopped.

Sybille replied, "Woglinde, what should Renate and I do?"

"It's pretty logical. Go to the police and get an eviction notice. Show them the lease signed by Edelgard Klumpke. Tell the police that there are seven other tenants. That will get their attention. They don't like that kind of game." "What about their belongings?"

"Pack them up and put them in storage. You don't want them charging you with theft." The telegram was sent. The Communards left on the evening train to Berlin, stopping at the border crossing at Helmstedt. The Minden police had sent a message to the Helmstedt police telling them to detain the eight communards. They were put in jail.

Renate had called Rupert right after the call to Woglinde. Renate was very nervous. When Rupert did not criticize her, she felt a great sense of relief.

"Renate, I agreed to your plan for a year. The year isn't up. While you look for an honest tenant I will continue to honor my word. It will be difficult, but you know that already." When the call ended, Renate looked at Sybille. "It's been so hard, my dear sister."

The next morning, Pastor Heideger called Renate. He had heard from a young couple interested in leasing the farm. Could she meet with them at the church at 1400 hours? Renate called Rupert at his office in Wolfsburg. Rupert cautioned her against being too hasty, but added that it did seem promising.

At 13:35 hours, Renate rang the bell at the door of the church office. The secretary answered and let her in. She sat in the antechamber waiting for the 1400 hour meeting. At last Pastor Heideger opened the door to his office.

"Allo Renate. Darf Ich mal vorstellen das Ehepaar Ferdinand and Heidi Shottenheimer."

"Hello Renate. Let me introduce to you the married couple Ferdinand and Heidi Shottenheimer."

The pleasantries over, things got down to business quickly. The arrangements were made. The Shottenheimers could start within a week. Renate allowed that much time in order to clear out anything left by the KC communards, and to make sure the house was clean and in good order. They all shook hands. Renate went to the flat and poured herself a double shot of As*bach Uralt.* She waited *for* Sybille to come home from her driving route from Bremen. When Sybille arrived, she found it hard to contain herself.

"Hey my good sister, you seem very high spirited this evening. What's going on?"

Renate's words cascaded out of her mouth like avalanche.

"We've rented the farm to a good couple. Pastor Heideger found them. I met with them while you were at work. This time it is going to be different. Even Rupert seems to think so. I called him at his office. Hoopla! They start in a week. *Gott sei Dank."* Sybille put on a record. The two young women danced exuberantly together.

The Shottenheimers began farming as scheduled. They were a strong and healthy young couple who did not yet have children. They worked long hours and seemed to understand the basics of farming. The first of the month came around. Renate went to collect the rent. She was welcomed by the couple and invited to tea. A lively conversation ensued. They shared their strong interest in farming. They talked shop about yields and the best way to keep the soil healthy. After the chaos of cannabis and politics of the KC communards, it was deeply reassuring. Renate left the farm felling that at last this would work out.

The next few months were uneventful. The rent was paid on time. The government subsidies started to come in. The Shottenheimers and the Bruggermann women seemed content. Heinrich, however, was quietly seething. He felt that his share of the income was not enough. He had lived a life, until only recently, with many risks but also very lucrative rewards. Hannelore had to remind him that going back to that kind of life would mean ending their relationship. This threat reduced his complaints to grumbling and murmurs.

Rupert also felt that the income from renting out the farm was not entirely satisfactory from a financial point of view, but he kept this view to himself.

He felt a strong sense of family honor in keeping his promise to Renate. Sybille, too, was glad that she was able to live away from the stress and memories of the big city of Cologne. She did, however, find it constricting living with Renate. Renate was simply glad to have the friendship of her older sister and not be burdened with the day to day operation of the farm all by herself. The wild card in this seemingly harmonious arrangement was Heinrich, who became increasingly dissatisfied with his share of income from the farm. As the months rolled on, he became ever more irritable about it.

"Hannelore, we are getting the short end of the stick. It's just ridiculous. The land alone is worth so much more. We are being foolish idealists. I am not going to be part of this much longer."

Hannelore was worried. Heinrich was prone to impulsive and thoughtless reactions.

"Heinrich, we have a good life in Bremen. We have enough. We don't need to have more. What would we do with more?"

"Get out of this cramped apartment. Buy a home. Have children that we could support. Live a little more comfortably."

"Well, this is the first time I have ever heard you say that you wanted to have children. That is really a surprise, you know."

"Well, I am tired of planning everything so carefully. We deserve a little fun. Vacationing some place warm in the winter like Algiers or Sicily. Germany in the winter really weighs me down."

"I'm not against that. What about putting income from the farm into savings?"

"In a year, we could have enough to buy the airfare."

"Axel and I made more in a week than the whole year's income from the damn farm. You know that, but you always telling me that it is too risky. Well, it is equally bad to defer all your dreams. I am going to see a lawyer to see if I can get my share out of the farm."

Heinrich, I am not going to be part of something really stupid."

Contentment for some seems constricting and boring. Heinrich did contact a lawyer, but he was not an honest one like Wilhelm Weintraub who would have talked him out of cutting himself off from a steady, inherited income. Instead, Heinrich engaged a lawyer named Icarus Stolz, who had an unsavory reputation in Bremen for cutting corners and even defrauding his clients. Heinrich paid no attention to this. He wanted aggressive representation. After the usual pleasantries, Stolz came to the point: his fee.

It was a large one. In fact it was much more than Heinrich received from the farm income. Heinrich swallowed hard, but agreed to the fee. Stolz told him that his case might be difficult because Heinrich had not opted out before agreeing to the arrangement. He indicated that he would raise the question whether his older brother and two sisters had been honest with him. He would portray them as schemers and accuse them of ulterior motives that were not clearly presented at the time of the agreement. The unscrupulous lawyer would accuse the other family members of bad faith. As an expert in bad faith deals, he would make it very uncomfortable for them. To get rid of these accusations and the damage that they would cause to their reputations, they would agree to Heinrich's terms. The terms were a lump sum settlement for Heinirch of 100,000 DMs to make it go away.

Heinrich with his very elastic moral compass agreed, shook hands with attorney Stolz , and left the meeting resolved to get his just due no matter what the cost to his family relationships. When he went to the apartment, he told all of this to Hannelore, who was dumbfounded and depressed by the news.

"How could you do this, Heinrich? You are selling out your family because of your anger and greed. You are no better than Axel."

"Hannelore, don't you see that we have to choose something else, rather than always being nice and pleasing everyone? When we do this, we are always shortchanging ourselves."

"No, I really don't understand it that way. We will create so much enmity and bitterness by doing this. This was what happened during the Third Reich. People were betrayed, families were torn apart, people were murdered, hatred prevailed and our country was destroyed. Please don't go through with this. I beg you, please don't."

"Well, I've made up my mind. The lawyer Stolz has said that he would make it work for me. I stand to get 100,000 DMs in one payment. That's a lot of money. Think what we could do. Think where we could go. Think what our future might be like with 100,000 extra Marks!"

It was clear that no amount of reasoning or pleading would change Heinrich's mind. Hannelore turned stone cold and left the room. Maybe they were finished this time.

A week later, Stolz's letters were received by Rupert in Helmstedt, and Renate and Sybille in Minden. They had the desired results: shock, anger, and bitterness.

They all consulted with each other, first on the telephone, then in person at the apartment in Minden. The consensus was that they would resist. But letters kept coming, each one more ominous than the last. The final letter summoned the three of them to the trial court in Minden on conspiracy charges that were untrue, but very intimidating. Rupert calculated that it would take at least 75,000 DMs to defend themselves, plus court costs. At a later meeting in Helmstedt at Rupert's home, he made the case that they should allow Heinrich the 100,000 DMs contingent on his dropping the conspiracy charges. They all agreed.

Rupert called his attorney in Helmstedt, Peter Kleist. Kleist held a doctorate in jurisprudence. He was a really skilled attorney. As the son of a former *Burgermeister*, he understood the politics and the optics of the situation. He told Rupert that Heinrich's attorney Stolz was using classic intimidation tactics. He suggested at first that they call the bluff and dispute the charges in court. However, Rupert was reluctant. He mentioned that he and his sisters wanted to settle. They were trying to avoid long term bitterness. They were hoping that perhaps this "way out" might lead to reconciliation later on. Kleist listened quietly, but put forward his view that appeasement often emboldens bullies. The shadow of Chamberlain, Hitler, and the *Sudetenland* still hung over post war Germany like a noxious cloud. Rupert was not persuaded. "No," he said, "it's best for the family that it be handled out of court." Of course, he agreed that Heinrich needed to stop his foolishness about a conspiracy to cheat him. That was without question.

"That may not be easy Rupert. I know about this Stolz and greasy characters like him. They keep hounding people with outrageous charges. They are not easily stopped."

"However, if that is what you and your sisters want, I will make a strong effort on your behalf. But these fraudulent charges must be dropped first prior to any discussion of a monetary settlement. If not, then we go to court and fight. I am sure that you and your sisters would win."

"Peter, winning isn't the point. Family harmony is the point."

But first there would be push back. The irreducible minimum was that there would be no deal unless the charges were dropped.

Attorney Kleist wrote the following to attorney Stolz.

"I represent Rupert, Sybille, and Renate Bruggermann. They categorically deny the charge that they conspired in any way to reduce the share of the estate allotted to your client, Heinrich Bruggermann. They desire to reach an equitable settlement with your client. Prior to any negotiated settlement, you client must drop all charges against my three clients that they conspired to defraud Heinrich Bruggermann. I repeat, these baseless charges must be dropped first before any settlement is considered. Very truly yours, Peter Kleist."

A week later, Kleist received a response.

"Attorney Kleist, I dispute your assertion that the charges of fraud against you clients are baseless. On the contrary, they most assuredly have considerable merit. Nevertheless, my client, Heinrich Bruggermann, is willing to forgo a court case for a settlement of 200,000DMs to be paid from the Bruggermann estate or other income sources that your clients have access to. Most sincerely, and with highest esteem, Icarus Stolz."

Kleist then called Rupert. They met in his office the day after the letter arrived.

Rupert, I think this is pure garbage, *Reine Quatsch*. My advice to you is to tell Stolz that you and your sisters will settle for no more than 100,000 DMs payable in four instalments of 25,000 annually. If Stolz does not agree, we can go to court and win there."

"Peter, I don't think this will work. Heinrich is very stubborn. I think we should agree to a lump settlement of 100,000DMs. I will advise Sybille and Renate that this is my opinion. My desire is not to have this become an endless game of chess. We can mortgage the farm. I can get a loan from *Volkswagenwerk* on my pension. Let's end this quickly."

Peter Kleist frowned and rubbed his chin. "Very well, Rupert. Let me know what you and your sisters agree on. I am not sure that a slimy character like Stolz will agree to the 100,000 figure. Would you be prepared to go to 125,000 or even 150,000?"

"You know, Peter, I would. In fact, I will suggest the 150,000 figure to my sisters. Let's end this soon. It has been very upsetting."

"Rupert, please call me soon. I too want to end this for the three of you, as your attorney and as your friend."

Rupert got the agreement from Sybille and Renate on the 150,000 figure. Renate did not agree so easily, but finally came to the conclusion that bringing the matter to closure was worth the price. Still, there was hesitation in her voice.

"You know, Rupert, Heinrich has always been willful and stubborn. I do think that if he does not accept this more than generous offer, we should go to court. But we should make this offer through Attorney Kleist, and hope it is accepted."

Kleist sent the letter. After a wait of over two weeks he received a reply from Stolz. The gist of it was that Heinrich agreed to the amount of the settlement. Charges of conspiracy were to be dropped. However, Stolz stated that Rupert, Sybille, and Renate must send an "appropriate" letter to Heinrich for disturbing his peace of mind. Kleist exploded at this last demand. He waited for two days after reading Stolz' letter to call Rupert. He sensed correctly that the three of them wanted very much to settle. He knew that he could not calm any anger that they might have about the letter if he himself remained angry. He would be cool and restrained.

So the matter was settled Heinrich agreed. Attorney Stolz insisted that his fee be paid as soon as the 150,000 arrived. A cursory letter of apology was sent to Heinrich. Kleist was a little slow in getting the funds available for transfer. However, the entire amount arrived at Stolz' office within two weeks. Rupert borrowed against his pension. That step took time. Stolz fee was 30,00DMs, twenty percent, not bad for a few hours work and some letter writing. Heinrich glumly accepted. He was, after all, 120,000 DMs richer than before.

Chapter 9: Hannelore On Her Own

The money did not improve Heinrich's and Hannelore's relationship. She left him. She also left Bremen with no forwarding address. Heinrich was at first relieved, but then he felt lonely and depressed. He had counted on his being able to bend her to his desires when the money was in hand. Hannelore was not bendable. She had always felt that the injured family members had been unjustly treated. She could not accept being Heinrich's trophy wife, the object of scorn and loathing from his two sisters and brother. She, like Sybille

before her, sought a new life in Cologne. She found a room, not far from the central *Bahnhof.*

She had some cash for a few weeks, but she sought employment immediately. The interview at *Commerz Bank* went well. She was hired as a teller. The salary was not large, but it did cover her expenses and left her with a small amount of discretionary money.

About three weeks after her move, she wrote a letter to Sybille. The gist of it was that she was sorry that her ex-lover, Heinrich, had been so greedy and had treated her, Renate and Rupert so badly. She asked that Sybille come visit her in Cologne soon.

Sybille was thrilled to get the letter. She wrote back right away and suggested that they meet on Friday evening after the work day was over. Hannelore had told her about her work at *Commerz Bank* and the location. Sybille suggested a nearby Turkish restaurant. Hannelore agreed to meet on the next Friday. Things were beginning to brighten.

Heinrich was all alone in Bremen. His anxiety was high. The old patterns began to surface. He tried to establish a small street business selling Third Reich paraphernalia, but the market was saturated. He certainly didn't need the money. With the 120,000 Dms remaining from the settlement, he really didn't need to be selling on the street. Heinrich, however, did not have any real business skills or business acumen. He had always followed the leader. When Axel, his leader, failed him he became dependent on Hannelore. Now, Axel and Hannelore were both gone. This downward spiral accelerated. He spent evenings at bars playing the role of the big shot, big spender. The women who drew near to him were empty and promiscuous. For a while, that worked for him, but only for a short while.

One morning, after a particularly bad hangover, he sobered up and went walking on the streets of Bremen for hours, alone and aimless. He ate lunch at a *Schnell Imbiss.* Afterwards he went to the bank to withdraw another 500DMs to re-start the cycle.

He nearly fell down, but managed to spiral to a bench in a nearby pocket park to sit down.

After nearly an hour of dizziness and nausea, he managed to compose himself and stand up. A thought came to him through the fog. "Call Rupert, seek his forgiveness. Try to work something out with him. Offer to give back the money."

He went back to the room he once shared with Hannelore. He lay down on the bed. Almost immediately, he fell asleep. When he awakened, the morning light was filtering through the curtains. Then he remembered his mission.

He went to the telephone and called Rupert. Even though it was not yet eight, he knew that his brother would be at his post at the *Volkswagenwerk.* The ringing went on for a long time. At last it was answered.

"Allo, hier ist Rupert Bruggermann. Wer hat mich gemeldet?"

"Hello, this is Rupert Bruggermqnn. Who is calling?"

Heinrich's call from Bremen upset Rupert. He felt a strong urge to hang up. Rupert felt that he had done a lot for Heinrich. In Rupert's view, Heinirch had paid the family back by extorting a great deal of money from him and his sisters. He was the ultimate ingrate. A certain repressed rage started to overtake him. He put the phone down and walked to the window of his office. The spring sunshine was streaming in. He picked up the phone again.

Heinrich plaintively repeated his desire to meet with his older brother and be reconciled. Rupert remained silent on the line for some time. Then he responded forcefully.

"*Heinrich, Denkst du dass Ich solche Narr bin? Du hast unsere Familie verdorben. Du bist mein Bruder, dass ist werklich Wahr. Aber du bist eine treulose Tomate, ohne Menschlichkeit!*"

"Heinrich, do you think that I am such a fool? You have soiled our family. You are my brother, that's certainly true. But you are a faithless man, without humanity!"

Rupert put the telephone receiver in the cradle. He tried to compose himself, but tears were streaming down his face. He thought he had left the family anguish behind, but it clung to him like a form of leprosy. The work day ahead seemed impossible. He struggled until the noon lunch hour. He told his boss that he felt ill and asked to be allowed to leave early. He went to the car in the parking lot. It was a beautiful spring day. Instead of driving home to Helmstedt, he turned the car in the direction of Goslar and the Harz Mountains. The teal blue cabriolet glided effortlessly along the highway towards the Harz. As did many postwar Germans, he sought refuge and a less complex life. He drove very fast, too fast for this narrow curvy road. He took a turn too fast and ended up hurtling to the top of a knoll by the road. Fortunately, the spring rains had softened the soil and cushioned the impact. He got out of the car, bruised but alive.

Both Sybille and Hannelore woke up refreshed from a good night's sleep. After a light breakfast in Hannelore's room, they headed to the *Koehlnische Stadtmuseum.* They had no particular interest in the collection. They wished to survey the young male art students who were there and strike up a conversation with them. After a short interval, they were successful. Sybille initiated things. She had not forgotten the ways of meeting in Cologne,

After some superficial small talk about the collection, the young men invited them to a small restaurant close to the museum. The lunch went well, with lots of talk about contemporary German painters and old masters. The young men, Dieter and Hans, were very enthusiastic about Paul Klee, Emil Nolde, and Ernst Kirchner, famous German expressionists of the early twentieth century.

Sybille and Hannelore knew nothing about them, but played along as a way to get the young men to take them out to a dance club in the west end of Cologne that evening, They agreed to meet at *Barrakuda* at 1900 hours.

It was a warm spring day. Sybille and Hannelore decided to walk near the Rhine in the *Hohenzollern Bruecke* area. They bought some *Apfelsaft* at a stand along the river bank. They sat down on a bench to enjoy some lazy time. Dozing off in the sunshine, they were abruptly awakened by a whoosh and the sound of light laughter. They rubbed their eyes, not quite knowing who it was. Soon, it was evident to Sybille, that the sprite and enchantress Woglinde had come to visit.

"Woglinde! This is such luck. Let me introduce you to Hannelore."

"Yes, Sybille, I knew that you would come back to Cologne when you realized that Minden was not your place. And who is your friend? And where is she from? Ah, yes, I think I know. She comes from Bremen where she has left her lover to come to the sparkling city." Hannelore was taken aback that a stranger knew about her personal life in such detail.

"How did you know that about me?"

Sybille intervened. "Don't be upset, Hannelore. Woglinde has incredible and wonderful insights. You will find out how her wisdom and perception will open new avenues and new possibilities."

"So you two are on the prowl for adventure, are you not?" Woglinde asked."Yes,we have left our dull lives for a moment to have some fun.", answered Sybille.

"Well, don't have too much fun too fast. Let your young men friends romance you."

"Lead them on a little. Let them spend some money on you. Don't' let them speak of love and then cast you aside. Find out about their ambitions and see what they are after.

Some just want a one night stand. Some are more serious. I have had to rescue so many unfortunate young women lately."

Hannelore was a little shocked by Woglinde's candor, but Sybille gave her a sly smile. "Oh, Woglinde, we want to have some fun, but we are not stupid. Neither of us wants to get tied down with a self-centered man."

"That's right, " Hannelore added. "I just left a man because he always wanted his own way, even when it was a disaster for him."

"Well, the last thing I want to do is spoil your Saturday night romp on the town. When do you meet these young men? Usual time:1900 hours? Let me guess, it's either *Einundfunfsig* or *Barrakuda,* am I right?"

"It's *Barrakuda."*

"Okay. Let me take you out to eat. You'll need something before drinking."

The decibel level at *Barrakuda* was indescribable. It was almost a torture chamber of sound. Conversation was impossible. It seemed that everyone was in a frenzied state of motion. The assault on the senses was overpowering. All the patrons could do was move about with empty smiles, pretending to have a good time. After half an hour, Sybille tapped Hannelore and gestured frantically. She screamed, "Get out! Escape before we all get migraines." Dieter and Hans got the message. All four exited together.

"That was a lot of fun, wasn't it." blurted out Sybille sarcastically. Both the young men looked sheepish and crestfallen. Hannelore interjected. "We should go to a quiet place and have something to eat and have a few drinks afterwards."

Dieter and Hans grabbed the life line. Dieter replied at once. "Yes, let's do that. We know a good place in *Altstadt Sud,* the *Baern Ecke*. It's about a twenty minute walk, but we can take a taxi if you would prefer." Sybille had already hailed a cab. The four of them climbed in.

After the raucous *Barrakuda,* the *Baern Ecke* seemed subdued. It did, however, have a good menu of solid German food. Sybille and Hannelore ordered the most expensive dinner they could find on the menu ,*Kasslerripchen* at 25 DMs a plate. Dieter and Hans chose *Wienerschnitzel* at seven marks thirty. They ordered a decent *Riesling.* The two couples settled into a friendly mood, aided by the good wine. Hans and Dieter chose the topic of conversation: late 19th century French painters. They were particularly interested in Manet and Degas. This was not something that either Sybille or Hannelore knew anything about, but once again they played along in hopes that the young men would order a really expensive dessert after the main course with French *Courvoisier* in addition.

Chapter 10: Heinrich's Surprise

Rupert lay on the side of the road for over two hours. He felt the pain of the bruises and a laceration, but he was fortunate. No concussion and no broken bones. Finally, a lone motorist driving a very old Fiat 500cc saw him and pulled over.

"*Bist du verwundert?*" "Are you injured?" the man asked.

"*Ja, aber nicht so schlimm. Ich brauche Die Polizei anrufen.*" "Yes, but not badly. I need to call the police."

"*Bitte, komm mal herein. Wir fahren nach Das naechste Dorf. Gibt's da ein Telefon.*"

"Get in. We'll drive to the next village. There's a phone there."

So Rupert got in and was driven for twenty minutes to the small town. The man in the Fiat took him to a local tavern and pension where there was a phone. Rupert thanked him. The man drove on. Rupert made the call to the police. In about an hour, an officer arrived. He asked a lot of questions and filled out a lengthy form. Rupert asked him if he wanted to see the car at the scene of the accident. "No, the day shift will go out in the morning."

He gave Rupert a copy of the report and asked him to sign it. Then he left.

Rupert booked a room located above the bar for the night. Then he ordered a *Currywurst* from the limited menu along with a beer and a *Doppelkorn.* He ate morosely. The pain from the bruises began to bother him. He asked the proprietor to use the phone again, left two 2 DMs , then called his wife Katrina in Helmstedt. He was glad to hear her voice. She asked him where he was and why he was so late. He told her about Heinrich's call,

how upset he was with him, and the unfortunate drive to Goslar and the accident. He told her not to worry, which made her worry more. After the phone call, he wearily climbed the stairs to the guest room over the bar. His injuries hampered his sleep.

At about nine the next morning, a police officer came to the tavern to see the car. Rupert and the officer drove to the scene of the accident. It was clear that it was a total wreck. The daytime duty officer filed an amended report which stated that fact.

The officer took Rupert back to the tavern and pension. Rupert immediately called his office at *Volkswagenwerk*. His supervisor accepted his explanation, but also said that he very much hoped that Rupert could be at work first thing the next day. The "hope" implied that he had better be there.

Rupert then called Katrina and asked her to pick him up at the pension and tavern where he had spent the night. She was happy to hear from him. After about four hours she arrived and greeted him with a warm embrace.

Oh, Rupert, Gott sei dank dass du nicht schwehr verwundert bist! Ich hatte solche Angst."

"Thank God that you are not seriously injured. I was so worried."

They embraced again and got into Katrina's VW, a more modest 1300cc beetle, for the drive back to Helmstedt.

Rupert filled her in about what had happened. "Heinrich called me at the office two days ago. He asked to be forgiven. This upset me very much. I feel this is too much to ask right now. What do you think?"

"Well, my dear husband, I realize this would be difficult for you to do, but you asked me what I think. I think you should forgive him. It is possible that this is a way to end the bitterness between Heinrich and you and your sisters. I don't think it will be easy for you." "Easy! Easy! He is a scoundrel. Ever since he left the farm he has been involved in shady deals and criminal behavior. I think he is putting on the con." "Well, that may be true. Did he offer to give back the money?"

'Actually, he implied he would. I was so angry though that I cut him off."

"If you decide to call him back, ask hm. If he says yes, he's sincere."

Katrina and Rupert arrived back at their home in Helmstedt around 1700 hours. Katrina prepared some drinks and they sat down together on their comfortable leather divan. The drinks relaxed them both. Katrina felt amorous, but didn't rush things. They embraced and kissed. Then she got up and started to prepare dinner. She wanted to make it special, but she was nervous and in her haste she burned the potato pancakes. She was a creative cook however, so she prepared another vegetable. She had seasoned the roast pork with cooking wine and herbs. She added another kind of potatoes with the roast. It took nearly an hour to finish. In the interim, they drank three more glasses of *Bernkastler Doktor,* a really expensive wine. They ate the meal with gusto. The wine had the effect of a slow acting aphrodisiac.They skipped dessert, but had a special dessert of stimulating oral sex and intercourse, which helped Katrina have a very loud orgasm. As they cuddled in bed, Rupert whispered in her ear.

"*Das war absolut Sagenhaft.*" "That was absolutely fabulous."

In the morning Rupert got up very early, drank strong coffee and ate some bread and cheese. He sat at the table brooding with sadness, anger, and despair. Katrina joined him at the table for her own breakfast. Putting her arms around his shoulders, she said in a low voice, "Your brother is eating up your insides. Is this what you want? What about us?" Rupert glowered. "It's not what I want, but I won't grovel to him." On the morning drive to Wolfsburg, Rupert realized that she was right. The bitterness hung over him like a poisonous shroud. When he got to the office, he called Hannelore. The phone rang and rang. He felt frustrated. If he couldn't contact Hannelore, how could her contact Heinrich?

Then it occurred to him. There would be a record of calls that had come into the *Volkswagenwerk* office .Many for sure, but not many from Bremen.

He went to the controller's office to ask to see the phone records from the past week. The controller was a punctilious sort and put up a wall. It would be necessary to get around him in order to find out. During his time at VW, Rupert had developed a good relationship with his supervisor, Joachim Lutz. He explained to Lutz that his brother had called him on an urgent matter the morning before he had the accident on the way to Goslar. He now needed to call him back but did not take down the telephone number. Would Lutz be willing to ask the controller's office for the record of that day's incoming calls, especially those that had originated in Bremen.

Lutz was hesitant at first. This was an unusual request, but he was willing to help Rupert, an efficient and valued employee. The next morning Rupert found an unmarked file folder on his desk. Inside there was a phone number from Bremen that had been circled from the list of calls. Rupert felt a wave of emotion come over him, but he had made up his

mind to call Heinrich. Rupert sensed that Heinrich would be at home and likely asleep at this morning hour. He made the call. The phone kept ringing. Finally it was answered, Rupert recognized Heinrich's voice. *"Allo, Wer ist da?"* "Who is there?" *"Hier meldet dein Bruder, Rupert."* "It's your brother Rupert calling." There was a long pause. At last Heinrich stammered. *"Ich hab' gedacht dass du wolte nicht mehr mit mir kein Wort zu unterhalten."* "I thought you had dropped any contact with me." *"Damals, du hattest recht, aber alles ist jetz verendert."* ' A while ago you were right, but things have changed now."

Rupert went on to explain that the felt oppressed by the anger and bitterness that had developed between them. It was time for a new beginning. There was another long pause.

"You know, Rupert, that has been my thinking lately. The money has not made me happy. In fact it has been a tremendous weight on me. I would be willing to give it back and divide the 120,000DMs equally: one quarter for you, one quarter for Sybille, one quarter for Renate. I would ask to be able to keep 30,000 DMs for me and Hannelore, less what I have already spent. That is if she will have me back.

It was a stunning offer. Rupert was at a loss for words. It indicated a profound change in Heinrich. Rupert, however wary, seized the opportunity.

"Yes Heinrich, this seems to me to be a very good solution."

"Well, can we all meet in Minden at the old family place?"

"I think it can be arranged. I will contact the Shottenheimers, the tenants."

"How about a week from today, at 10:00 hours?"

"Yes, that's good. Rupert will you contact Renate and Sybille?"

"Yes, I will. God bless you Heinrich."

"Thank you, Rupert."

The very next day Rupert called Sybille and Renate. They were overjoyed. They quickly agreed to the arrangement. For both of them it was almost too good to be true. Yet it must be true, else why would Rupert have called?

Contacting Heinrich again, Rupert urged that they all meet at Peter Kleist's office the next day in the afternoon. That would allow travel time for Heinrich and his two sisters. Rupert called Kleist. Kleist set the time at 1500 hours. Kleist himself expressed happiness and relief at this outcome. When the day for the meeting came, Rupert, Sybille and Renate met for lunch. They moderated the amount of wine they drank. Arriving at Kleist's office about ten minutes before the scheduled time, they made small talk with Kleist as they awaited Heinrich.

Heinrich was late. They were all worried. Finally, at about 15:35 he showed up, disheveled and tipsy. He did not apologize. There was a short and strained silence. Attorney Kleist broke in.

"Well, we are all here because Heinrich has decided to divide the 120,000 DMs equally for each of the surviving heirs of the Bruggermann estate. His share will be somewhat less as he has spent some of the funds. Is that correct, Heinrich?" Heinrich made no response. Kleist restated Heinrich's offer. Again, Heinrich remained silent, but then spoke up.

"Yes, I suppose it is. However, I wanted to do this informally at the farm."

Kleist offered a lawyerly response. "Well, it might be best for all concerned that there is a record of the distribution."

Heinrich frowned. "You know, Rupert, you told me that we were going to meet at the farm in Minden. Why this change? Why this formality? What do we need this attorney for anyway?"

Rupert was flummoxed. He remembered that the farm was the place he had mentioned to Heinrich in the phone call. He now felt that he had made a mistake in contacting Kleist. At the same time, he felt that it was prudent to have Heinrich's distribution on the record. He cleared his throat.

"Heinrich, I think we all want this settled. It will be necessary to show the tenants that we have all come to this conclusion. They can have the right of first refusal or make an offer to buy the farm. It is necessary that there be no encumbrance to the title. This will make it official and clear the way for the property to be sold." He realized that he was ad-libbing the situation. Fortunately, Kleist came to his aid.

"Heinrich, Rupert is correct. If there is a record of the settlement, if there is a record of the distribution of your cash shares, then the buyer will be assured that there is no lien or encumbrance to the property. It will make the sale much quicker."

The word "quicker" captured Heinrich's attention. He too wanted things settled soon. He cast a dark look at Kleist, but said nothing. If signing a few papers would expedite the sale, then there was a good reason to do it.

"Okay, Mr. Kleist, draw up the papers. As soon as they are ready I'll sign."

Kleist called his secretary and dictated the agreement to her.

Heinrich signed. He had, in fact withdrawn the entire 120,000 DMs from the bank in Bremen. He had brought it with him in a satchel to Kleist's office. The funds were denominated in 1,000 DM notes. Thirty notes for Rupert; thirty notes for Sybille; thirty notes for Renate. There was less than thirty for Heinrich. He deducted what he had spent.

Heinrich was being honest. He had made some withdrawals in Bremen for his various sprees. When the cash had been distributed, Rupert moved towards Heinirch to give him a hug. He was rebuffed. Sybille and Renate also attempted this gesture of reconciliation. They too were refused. Renate began to weep. She looked at Heinrich as if to say, "Why won't you accept that we love you?", but she didn't speak. She dried her tears with a handkerchief offered by Sybille. Rupert controlled his emotions, but he was stung by Heinrich's ungrateful and hurtful gesture. All of the Bruggermanns left Attorney Kleist's office crestfallen and somber. Kleist did not say anything, but his countenance reflected a certain anguish. He felt that the family strife was not yet over.

Heinrich took the late afternoon train out of Helmstedt to Bremen. He sat in the second class car wearing a morbid expression. He felt deflated and empty. His mind wandered back to his adventures with Axel Kopelke. His depressed mood began to change. He felt the rush of these memories of danger and bravado. They made him feel alive again. He had never full abandoned his addiction to this style of precipice living. For Heinrich, it was a high better than sex, drugs, or alcohol. It gave him confidence, however, false, that he could conquer life victoriously. As the train approach Bremen, his mind was racing. He schemed about a reunion with Axel, no matter what the cost.

After waking up the next morning, Heinrich had second thoughts. He recalled that he had set up a sting that had resulted in Axel's arrest. Previously, Axel had made threats against both him and his lover Hannelore. Axel had also entrapped them, resulting in their jail time and a conviction for himself. These memories checked his impulsivity.

Was the cost too high? The gray sky and dim morning light of Bremen further diminished the ardor that had been with him on the train ride back from Helmstedt. Then another pathway emerged. Why work with Axel at all? The prime mover in their activities had been "Fritz" who was embedded in the American PX administration at Bremerhaven. Heinrich was scared of "Fritz". Axel had been the one who had devised the plans. "Fritz" was aware of that. Still the prospect of a boring, but stable life appalled him. He began to think of a scheme that would appeal to "Fritz".

Sybille and Renate went back to Minden. Renate notified the Shottenheimers that the two brothers and sisters had agreed to sell the farm and divide the proceeds equally. She also indicated that if they were interested in purchasing the farm, the family would give them the right of first refusal. When she mentioned the price, however, the couple became very upset.

"Wir haben solches Geld nicht bei uns. Wir glauben dass Deutsche Bank wird nie uns diese Summe verliehnen" "We don't have that kind of money. We don't believe that Deutsche Bank will ever lend us this amount." Renate nodded, but urged them to try other lenders.

It was clear that unless the farm was sold that Rupert would be out of a lot of money. He had borrowed against his pension and liquidated many of his investments in order to come up with the 150,000 DMs that Heinrich had demanded. Even with the 30,000DMs

from the settlement reached in Kleist's office, he needed to sell the farm or suffer a significant loss. He still thought that the fastest way to sell the farm was to sell it to a developer who would subdivide the property to build row houses. Financially, this would be the easiest and most sensible way. Renate would have none of it. He called her one evening.

His hope was to "talk sense into her." The call ended in an angry exchange between them. When the call ended, he felt empty and depressed. Even Katrina's offer of a "special dessert" did not appeal to him. He went to bed feeling drained and depressed.

Sybille, who usually took Renate's side in family disputes, was irritated at the "purity" of Renate's thinking. She did not want to remain in Minden poking along with a low paying job so that the farm could be preserved. She sympathized with Rupert who had gone out on a limb to provide the funds to settle up with Heinrich. She missed the drinking, dancing and party-time atmosphere of Cologne. The relationship with the sisters began to turn tense. One day after she came home from the delivery job, she started an argument with Renate.

"Renate, you are way too idealistic. We are both young. We need to have fun with some nice young men who will buy us presents, take us out dancing and make love to us. Do you want to stay on this farm, forever?"

"You sound like Heinrich. I want to sell the farm, but not destroy it for quick money."

"When and where do you think this wealthy and good-hearted buyer will come from? The tenants don't have that kind of money. On the other hand, there are a number of developers who would pay a good price. We could all go our ways, live where we want and be happy."

"Well, I won't be happy if the land is ruined with ugly row houses. That's something I can't stand. If you want to go back to Cologne, go ahead, I won't stop you!"

Renate started crying. This time Sybille did not put her arm around her.

Heinrich made an appointment with "Fritz" "Fritz" greeted him coolly. Heinrich made his proposal, but it was not well thought out. About half way through, "Fritz" cut him off. "My friend, there are too many loose ends. You are wasting my time. When you have something more concrete, contact me again. Now, good day to you."

After the interview, Heinrich realized that without a smart partner, he could not carry off the fencing operation by himself. He went back to his room, sullen and distraught. He tried to contact Hannelore, but there was no answer. He began to think about the farm. Well he wasn't one of those environmentalists. In this life, you had to look out for yourself. He called Rupert at his office. He was not in. The secretary took an urgent message asking him to call him back before the end of the day. At the end of the work day, Rupert called back.

"Heinrich, what's on your mind? The message I got said it was urgent."

"Well, Rupert I want you to know my views on how best to sell the farm. You know, I liked the original idea. Sell the whole damn property to a developer. Of course, Renate won't be happy, but I think you might be able to persuade Sybille. I don't think she wants to stay in Minden much longer. If you get a decent offer, you will probably get the full value of your pension back. You could also buy some good dividend producing stocks from the proceeds of the sale. We would all be better off. What do you think?"

"Well, Heinrich, from a business perspective it makes sense. However, Renate will protest. She may even take the three of us to court."

"Even if she does, it's three versus one. Check it out with your friend Kleist."

"Well, I think he will think it is logical solution. I will call him. Meantime, you call Sybille to see if she will support this."

"Yes, I will certainly do that. I will call you back when I have her answer."

Heinrich called Sybille right away.

"Yes, Heinrich, what do you want?"

"I want to sell the farm and do it quickly. This shouldn't drag on. I've been in touch with Rupert. We both agree that the best way is for a developer to buy it, subdivide it and put up row houses. What do you think of that?"

"I think it would be good, but Renate will try to block it. She's pretty set against this."

"Well, Sybille, it's three against one. She'll get over it in time.

"I don't think she will."

"Look Sybille, I don't think anyone wants to buy this farm in order to farm. Rupert agrees with me. Do you agree with us or not?"

"You know Heinrich, the farm is an incredible weight, but have we given this enough time? The tenants can't get financing, but is there no one in Germany who will buy the farm and make a go of it?"

"Oh yes, there is someone in Germany, but we might wait ten years or more before we find him, 'the farmer with the burgeoning bank account'." Come to think of it, someone could write a satirical play using that title. It would get a lot of laughs."

"Unfortunately, I think you may be right. Still, Renate will be very upset."

"She could take the three of us to court. That would be a lot of fun wouldn't it?"

"Sybille let's cut to the chase. Will you support our plan to sell the farm and the acreage to a developer?"

"Well, I guess I could do that, reluctantly, but yes, I will go along."

"Good, I will call Rupert and let him know that you are on board."

"Alright, Heinrich, call him back. But I think this will separate all of us from Renate forever.

Heinrich didn't respond to that. He thanked Sybille for her decision and hung up. Sybille hung up the phone feeling lost.

"Damn this old farm. Yes, goddam this old farm. It keeps clinging to all of us."

Heinrich called Rupert to tell him that Sybille would support a plan to sell the farm to a developer. He also mentioned that Renate would be angry and upset.

"Yes, Heinrich, I know that she will be upset, but we can't have this albatross hanging around us forever." "Will you call Renate?"

"Yes I will. Stay in touch."

Rupert exhaled and took a break from the office. He came back after a half an hour walk around the grounds at *Volkswagenwerk* and made the call.

"Renate, this is Rupert. I have some news."

"Yes, I can guess. You want to sell the farm to a developer. You have probably got backing from Heinrich and Sybille. Am I right about that?"

"Yes, you are correct. This is the best course."

"Well, it's not the best course. The best course is to preserve it as a farm. But I am sure that I am outvoted three to one. Am I right about that?"

"Yes, Renate, you are right about that. It's unfortunate, but all three of us think it is the only sensible way to secure the funds that have already been distributed in anticipation of the sale."

"Rupert, you are so fucking smug! You have no sense of history. You are turning your back on four generations of honest Bruggermanns who toiled and kept faith with the land. You are a real bastard, Rupert, you really are! Go ahead, you've got me cornered, but know this: my hatred for you, Heinrich, and Sybille will not fade away." With that, she slammed down the receiver.

Sybille's decision to side with her brothers deeply hurt Renate. She had never fully trusted Rupert or Heinrich in their agreeing to have the farm remain a farm. Now it was clear, although not a total surprise, a real shock. She could, of course, contest their plan but to what avail? It would be very expensive. She was outnumbered. Rupert's clever lawyer and friend, Kleist, would make it difficult. She went into her room in the

apartment. She shut the door. For nearly an hour, she wept uncontrollably. She did, however, manage to compose herself. She realized that Sybille would be home soon. She didn't want to see her. Quickly, she packed her things, grabbed the cash on hand and headed to the bank to withdraw the money from her savings. She got there just in time.

Taking the cash with her in 50 DMs notes, she ran to the train station and bought a one way ticket to Cologne, the magical city of enchantment. When the train pulled out, she slid back into her seat, hoping that the conductor would come soon, so that she could sleep. He did come to take her ticket, but she could not sleep. She was too agitated.

Many thoughts rushed through her mind. Where would she go to get a room in Cologne? What would she do for work? Was it all over with her family after all? She tried to cry, but there were only dry tears. Her despair was very deep. She felt lost and completely abandoned by her family. When she arrived in Cologne, she booked a cheap hotel near the *Bahnhof.* She went to her room, lay down on the bed, but sleep did not come. Renate woke up early feeling very hungry. She went to a café in the *Bahnhof* for *Kase, Brothchen und Kaffee* – cheese, a roll, and coffee. She wolfed it down and sat quietly for a few minutes, pondering her situation. She went back to the hotel and asked permission to wait in the lobby to meet a friend before check out. The clerk granted her request. She sat on a well-worn beige divan pretending to wait for someone. After two hours, no one had arrived. The clerk came over to ask if she wanted to wait a little longer, but he could only allow another half an hour.

"The hotel has to be careful about vagrants", he explained.

She nodded. The clerk went back to his post behind the reception counter. Fearful and distraught, Renate began to tear up. Then there was a rush of sound and an unusual light. A young woman appeared in a kind of gossamer outfit and sat down.

"You are Renate, aren't you?

"Yes, how did you know my name?"

"Your sister, Sybille, called me yesterday from Minden. She said you had taken the late train to Cologne, so I started to look around the *Bahnhof* area."

"Are you, by any chance, Woglinde?"

"Yes, I am . My mission is to give hope to those who are lost in the Rhineland, and to give them a measure of protection." Sybille had mentioned this Woglinde to her, but her account about her seemed farfetched and distorted. Yet, Woglinde was sitting next to her on the old hotel divan. Renate took a deep breath.

"Please help me, Woglinde, I am lost."

"In what direction are things going now, Renate?"

"In a downward direction, you see my two brothers and Sybille want to sell the family farm to a developer. The developer would then take the farm house and the land, and then subdivide it in lots to build row houses on it. If this is done, all that will be left is the farm house. Next to it, where fields and crops flourished, will be ugly row houses. It's awful!"

"What alternatives are there?"

"Our current tenants, the Shottenheimers, would like to buy it, but they have no money at all, not even for a down payment. The bank won't lend them any money."

"Did Sybille ever mention to you that I have a large line of credit at the Deutsche Bank in Cologne? My friend Wotan is the head of the office there."

"No, she told me nothing about this. What are you thinking?"

"I am thinking that you should contact the Shottenheimers and suggest that they meet you in Cologne at the main office of the Deutsche Bank. They can meet with Wotan and apply for a loan to buy the farm house and all the land. Wotan can be very generous. That's what I am thinking, dear woman."

"This is incredible, Woglinde. What do you get out of this?"

"Just knowing that good German farmland won't go to greedy developers."

"Woglinde, you are very special. You are very different from most people in your thinking."

"Yes, I know. We must let the past heal us, not destroy us."

Renate made the call. The next day the Shottenheimers arrived at the Deutsche Bank in the early afternoon to meet with Wotan. He was a corpulent fellow with an old fashioned handle bar mustache. Renate and Woglinde were also present. Woglinde handled the introductions. Wotan waved them all into his large, plush, paneled office, almost the size of a king's chamber.

The loan was quickly arranged with a minimal down payment of 1,000DMs. It was so small that the Shottenheimers became suspicious. Wotan remarked that this was done because Woglinde was a very special customer. This loan was of great interest to her in helping preserve the pastoral life in Germany, especially in the Minden area. After the loan was approved, all said goodbye to Wotan.

Wotan bowed to them in a gesture of *noblesse oblige.* On the street the foursome embraced. Woglinde invited them all for a sumptuous lunch at the Intercontinental Hotel. The feast last until late afternoon. The Shottenheimers had a reservation for the 17:45 train back to Minden. Renate and Woglinde saw them off. Then they went for a long walk on the Rhine waterfront. They said little at first, but after a time, Renate asked Woglinde, 'What now, my new found friend and confidante?"

"Well that is up to you. A large burden has been lifted off your shoulders and also from your sister and two brothers. You can go in any number of directions.'

"That makes me quite anxious. My whole life has been wrapped up in that farm."

"Well, it's not your responsibility anymore, so don't take it back."

They walked on for another twenty minutes or so. Woglinde made this obse3rvation.

"You know, Renate, all families have scars. Yours is no different. Sybille lost a lover. Heinrich was fooled by a schemer. Even Rupert had a really rough period in his marriage. You can't expect everything that you wish for will come true. Besides, what we wish for changes over time."

"Well, you may be right. I know that I have to decide for myself what I will do now."

They continued to walk along Cologne's west bank of the Rhine. The evening had stolen in. It began to feel damp and chilly."

"Woglinde, I wish you could stay near me forever."

"My dear, I can't do that. No one can do that. But my spirt will stay with you if you want that."

"Yes, I think I would like that. Are you going now?"

"Yes, I must go back to the terraces, a little further to the south, not far from the *Lorelei.* That is my place you know."

They embraced for a long time. Woglinde walked slowly away. She did not wave goodbye.

After Woglinde had departed, the next morning Renate went out to a street closer to the city center and bought two newspapers. Striding to the *Bahnhof* area she found a bench. She went directly to the help wanted sections in both papers. It was just after ten, so it was a good time to begin making calls. The first three yielded nothing. The fourth, however, put her in touch with Herr Brunner, an older retired man, who was looking for a housekeeper to help him with his ailing wife. She made an appointment with him for 1300 hours. The house was quite close to the *Bahnhof.*

Renate showed up on time. The interview went well. Renate was offered the job. It was a good situation for her, stipend plus room and meals included. Renate rushed back to

the hotel to check out. The clerk told her that check out time was noon and it was now after 1500 hours. The clerk demanded payment for another night. Renate demurred and put on a charm offensive. The result was that she was only charged a 10DMs late fee.

On her way to her new living quarters, she pulled out all her change and went to a pay phone in the *Bahnhof* to call Sybille. Breathlessly she divulged how Woglinde had arranged for a loan to the Shottenheimers to buy the farm and the land in Minden.

Overjoyed, Sybille wanted to know the amount. When Renate told her 350,000 DMs Sybille nearly swooned.

Catching her breath, Sybille burst forth, "I will go to the Shottenheimer's today and arrange for the date to close the sale."

"Yes! Yes! Yes!" shouted Renate. "Please do call Rupert and Heinrich too."

"I am flying out the door! Call me tomorrow. I'll let you know. *Tschuss.*"

Renate continued her walk to Herr Brunner's home on *Zellendorfer Strasse* 497, about half an hour from the *Bahnhof.* She arrived in time to prepare the evening meal. She was a good cook. Herr Brunner was pleased. When he had finished, Renate ate quickly and took a plate of food to Frau Brunner's room on a tray. Fran Brunner's appetite was diminished, but Renate helped her to eat, so that the old woman slowly finished her portion. After dinner, Renate washed the dishes and set the table for breakfast. Tired but happy, she fell asleep as soon as she lay her head on the pillow.

At seven in the morning, Renate woke up, washed up and went downstairs to prepare an ample breakfast. At half past eight, Herr Brunner came right on time and ate

with full satisfaction, commenting favorably on the meal. Frau Brunner was served, the dishes washed and Renate asked permission to call her sister Sybille. It was granted. Shortly after nine, Sybille answered. "Sybille, it's Renate. I couldn't wait. What news do you have?"

"Well, I met with the Shottenheimers and called Rupert and Heinrich. The closing is set for Friday September 29th at the farm. Rupert, Heinrich and I will be there, and of course the Shottenheimers. Will you be there?"

"I will have to ask the permission of Herr Brunner. He seems pretty reasonable."

But Herr Brunner was not reasonable. "You have only been here a day. You want two days off next week?"

"Herr Brunner, my parents' farm is being sold in Minden. The closing is set for Friday, September 29th. It is important."

"You should have told me that when you took the job."

"Herr Brunner, I did not know that then. My sister told me just a few minutes ago."

"Well, it is most unusual, but if you can find someone to help when you are gone, I will allow it."

"Herr Brunner, I will certainly try, but I can't promise."

"Well, do your best. I did manage for a time by myself."

Renate resumed her morning duties. After lunch, she had an hour off. She decided to find a pay phone outside. It would be awkward to ask Herr Brunner again.

A the corner of *Zellendorfer Strasse* and *Muehlheimer Strasse* there was a public telephone. Renate had the contact number for Woglinde on a scrap of paper. The answering service took an urgent message asking her to substitute for Renate at Herr Brunner's home for two days. She explained that she would need to be in Minden on September 29th for the closing at the farm. In the urgent message, she left Herr Brunner's address and phone number. Arriving back at the Brunner's just as the break ended, she put on her apron and made herself look busy with a feather duster.

Her busy work was right outside Herr Brunner's bedroom. She knew his nap schedule. She timed it just right as Herr Brunner ended his nap and emerged from his room. She began dusting rapidly. She was clearly visible to Herr Brunner who nodded and gave her an approving smile. As soon as he was out of sight, she resumed a more leisurely pace.

Renate began dinner preparations a little early, taking care to have everything in order and tasty. After cleaning up and setting the table for breakfast, she went upstairs, hoping for a call from Woginde. It didn't come.

The next morning, Renate began the breakfast preparations as usual. Just as Herr Brunner was arriving for his breakfast, the phone rang. When Herr Brunner answered, he heard Woglinde say that she could substitute for Renate. Somewhat surprised, Herr Brunner asked if she had done this kind of work before.

"Of course, Herr Brunner, at all the best homes in *Sankt Goar,* near the *Lorelei.*"

This satisfied the old man. He went into the dining room to eat his breakfast that Renate had kept warm for him.

Several hours after the call, Woglinde arrived. She was greeted by Herr Brunner who asked her to come into his sitting room as soon as Renate had shown her the maid's bedroom. When she had finished unpacking, she sought out Herr Brunner in his sitting room reading the morning newspaper. She softly inquired about her duties. It was pretty straightforward. She was to prepare meals and do the housework. Woglinde smiled and left the room. Herr Brunner returned to his newspaper. Woglinde started the cleaning routine, trying not to use her magical powers by flying from room to room, except when she was certain that no one was looking.

Renate took the 10:35 morning train from Cologne which arrived at the Minden station at 16:30. A beaming Sybille greeted her.

"My dear sister Renate, it's finally going to happen! Tomorrow, the farm will be sold. We will each have 87,500 DMs from the sale. What a relief. We will all be free to live out our lives as we wish."

"Sybille, if I could have what I really wish, I would remain on the farm."

Heinrich's train from Bremen came later at 19:37 hours. He had booked a room at the *Hotel Grotehof,* the most expensive hotel in Minden. For the closing, he had bought a fancy new double breasted suit with bell bottom trousers. The matching silk shirt had ruffles and was completed with a large stripped tie.

Rupert's train came last at 21:23 hours. He had changed trains in Braunschweig which required a layover of almost two hours. It was, however, a pleasantly sentimental stop. He recalled his time at the *Technische Hochschule* many years ago. He had also booked a

room at the *Hotel Grotehof,* Entering the hotel, he noticed Heinrich in the lobby eating snacks and drinking a cognac. Heinrich greeted him volubly.

"Allo Rupert. Alles ist fertig. Morgan, es wird beendet werden. Kein Mehr Pech mit dem Bauernhof und die andere Laende." "Hi Rupert. It's all set. Tomorrow it will be over. No more problems with the farmhouse and the adjoining lands."

Rupert gave him a wan smile and shook Heinrich's hand in the formal German manner. *"Hoffentlich du hast Recht, mein Bruder."* "Hopefully, you are correct my brother." Then he gave a short bow and went to the elevator to get to his room on the third floor.

Entering the room, he felt anxious. Heinrich brought uncertainly with him. Rupert exhaled deeply. He was too tired to dwell upon it. He fell asleep, but it was not a restful sleep. He woke up three times in the night remembering Heinrich's grandiose demeanor and his tone of voice. It bothered him, but then he recalled that Heinrich was always the wild card, never predictable.

The long awaited morning came. The four Bruggermanns and the Shottenheimer couple assembled together at farmhouse for the closing. Representing the Bruggermanns was Peter Kleist, experienced, polished and prepared. Representing the Shottenheimers was a thin woman, not long out of law school, named Hortense Roehm. The Shottenheimers had brought four certified checks totally 350,000DMs from the Deutsche Bank in Cologne. Everything was in order for a smooth transaction. Hortense Roehm, however, raised a question: was the deed going to be a Quitclaim deed or a Special Warranty Deed?

Peter Kleist stated that a Quitclaim deed would be simpler and less costly to the buyers. Attorney Roehm asserted that a Special Warranty Deed was preferable. "I think the

Shottenheimers want the protection of a Special Warranty Deed- no hidden liens, no outstanding taxes, no hidden surprises."

"Well, that will cost them more money," said Kleist.

"No Attorney Kleist, it won't," said Roehm. "The sellers should pay for the kind of deed the Shottenheimer's want." An awkward silence ensued. Heinrich's body language indicated agitation. Rupert was impassive. Sybille frowned. Renate burst out, "Let's get on with it. We Bruggermanns will absorb the additional cost."

Heinrich grimaced, "We shouldn't have to."

Rupert pursed his lips, "Maybe you are right, Heinrich, but we don't want to stop the sale on a technicality."

Sybille also interjected, "We've come too far to mess this up now."

Attorney Kleist put on his smoothest, most professional demeanor. "Attorney Roehm, this is most unusual. However, it seems clear that my clients are willing to pay for the Special Warranty Deed, the fee to be deducted from the proceeds of the sale."

Kleist hurriedly produced a Special Warranty Deed, and modified the terms of the sale with speed most unusual for an attorney. The papers were signed. The sale was completed. Four checks were distributed to each of the Bruggeman heirs. The Bruggermanns paid the Shottenheimers 2,000DMs to cover the additional cost of the Special Warranty Deed. The net amount for each of the Bruggermans was 86,500 DMs .

After the handshaking, a few pleasantries were exchanged between the attorneys. Sybille and Renate wished the Shottenheimer couple happiness and good fortune. Rupert and

Heinrich nodded. All walked outside into the mild sunshine of early fall, always appreciated in northern Germany, so often overcast with gray clouds.

Sybille and Renate conversed for a short time. They embraced when there was no more to be said. Rupert and Heinrich went their separate ways. Heinrich left on the early afternoon train, eager to return to Hannelore to start up fresh. Rupert left on the mid-afternoon train to Berlin with stops at Hannover, Braunschweig, and Helmsted at the border. He felt a certain sadness. There was nothing in particular that came to mind, only the overwhelming feeling that his brother and sisters might never be together again.

After a short time, he cleared his thoughts. He thought of Katrina, the woman he had married. He ruminated that they had been through times of strain and anger. He also knew that she loved him deeply. He too had come to love her deeply. While these thoughts were floating around, he boarded the train. It left the station right on time. German trains were invariably on schedule, unlike much of life, which could not be so easily scheduled and was often unpredictable.

Over time, Rupert had developed some faith. He knew that although it was often capricious, that life was all and so it must be embraced. These last thoughts gave him some inner peace. He began to relax. He dozed off until he heard the conductor announce the arrival of the train at Helmstedt.