



International Rights Catalogue




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Nikola Richter

Verlegerin | **mikrotext**

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 Preisträger
Deutscher
Verlagspreis 19

 Deutscher
Verlagspreis 20

-
- A German indie publisher of new voices and exciting discoveries in recent literatures
 - Winner of the German Publishing Award (Deutscher Verlagspreis) 2019, 2020
 - Founded in 2013 in Berlin, extensive critical and press acclaim
 - publisher & founder: Nikola Richter
 - 90 titles: 1/3 print titles, 2/3 digital only
 - Rights sold to Argentina, Brazil, Denmark, also to theatre companies and audio book publishing

English language Reading Samples available of all titles in this catalogue

We're happy to get in contact with you.



Aboud Saeed The Whole Story

»Aboud Saeed is THE international author who has turned the Facebook post into a new literary genre, between poem and prose fiction. ... In classical literature, Aboud Saeed would have been called a picaresque, a prankster who, by pranking and teasing others, makes them show their true colours. And in that sense, his Facebook posts are also pranks, and the whole book also reads like a picaresque novel.«

THOMAS BÖHM, RADIO EINS

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Ruth Herzberg How to Become Unhappy with a Man

»The protagonist is the allegory of non-self-empowerment, the epitome of the anti-feminist, the frontwoman of the gender role mainstream. It's all so nastily exaggerated and at the same time (even nastier) true to the point, it's laugh-out-loud funny.«

VERENA HERTZ, HERTZLESE

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Dinçer Güçyeter Our German Fairy Tale

»The compelling power and beauty of his poetic work is gauged with the ethos of craftsmanship: the skill of 'working and adapting raw material with the right tools.' On the one hand, the aesthetic experience of matching form and content; on the other, the existential process of giving a life story the dignity and meaning it deserves. In the middle of it all are the poet and his mother.«

STEFAN KISTER, STUTTGARTER ZEITUNG

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Puneh Ansari Hopin'

»With Puneh Ansari, Vienna
(and the world) has a new author.«

AUGUSTIN, RUTH WEI SMANN

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Sarah Raich This Immaculate Blue

»You can leaf through Sarah Raich's stories like a
Pantone fan. Her style is as clear as the sea on some
days - and the episodes as dazzling as life itself.«

BARBARA WEITZEL, WELT AM SONNTAG

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Sina Kamala Kaufmann Bright Matter

»A complex, clairvoyant book, a burst of ideas,
auspicious and uncanny.«

ELISABETH DIETZ, BÜCHER MAGAZIN

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Anaïs Meier On Mountains, People and especially on Mountain Snails

»Magnificently whimsical narrative miniatures
from the shallows of Swiss life.«

REPUBLIC

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Aboud Saeed was born in 1983 in a small town near Aleppo, Syria, where he worked in a blacksmith's workshop for 15 years. He then became an active blogger on Facebook. After his first book *Der klügste Mensch im Facebook* (The Smartest Person on Facebook) was published in 2013 with status updates in German translation, he came to Germany as a Syrian author. He continued to write in Berlin, oscillating between asylum and alienation, and his life-sized news ticker about his childhood and youth in Syria was published. Finally, he returned to his first profession as a metalworker in Olafur Eliasson's studio. *The Whole Story*, marks his return with his third book-length publication.

Aboud Saeed

The Whole Story

- Aboud Saeed works as a metal worker in the studio of Olafur Eliasson, Berlin.
- He is a prominent figure of Arabic social media: 24 000 followers on Facebook.

The Syrian author and metalworker Aboud Saeed is considered one of the first representatives of Facebook literature and made a name for himself with his Facebook status updates, which appeared in 2013 as *The Smartest Guy in Facebook*. With *The Whole Story*, he tells us how it all began, spans an arc from Syria to Germany, to the life of one of the many newcomers in Europe, and, of course, does not mince his words once again.

»Everything about this author is really, really, really great. He's funny, he's witty, he's so sophisticated psychologically, and he's still a great formal artist. Nothing is clichéd, nothing is kitschy about it.«

IJOMA MANGOLD, LESENSWERT / SWR1

»An autobiography consisting of Facebook posts. An outstanding publication!«

BOOK TIP, WDR2

»Laconic and witty. ... It is worthwhile to turn one's gaze on contemporary German society in the shadow of renewed war.«

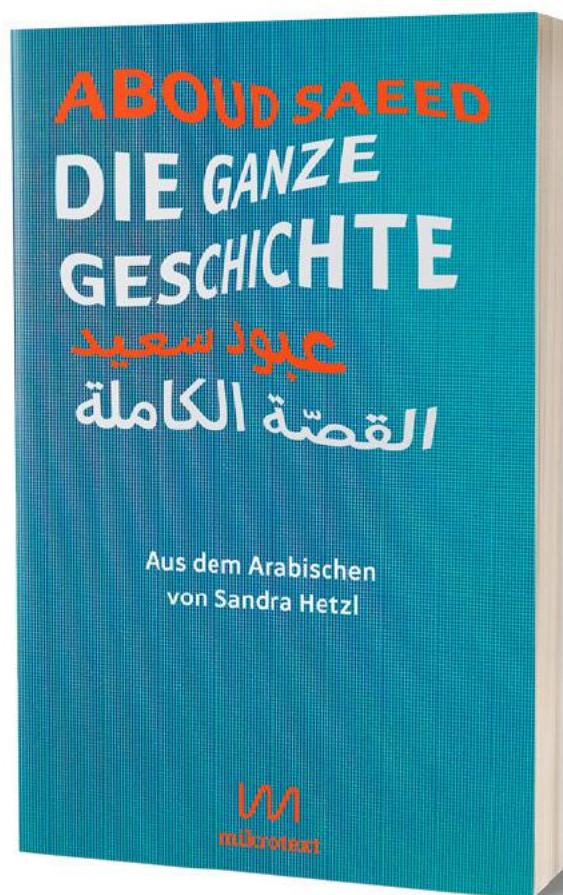
HOLGER KISTENMACHER, OUR LÜBECK

»Aboud Saeed is THE international author who has turned the Facebook post into a new literary genre, between poem and prose fiction. ... In classical literature, Aboud Saeed would have been called a picaro, a prankster who, by pranking and teasing others, makes them show their true colours. And in that sense, his Facebook posts are also pranks, and the whole book also reads like a picaresque novel.«

THOMAS BÖHM, RADIO EINS

CONTACT US!

**NIKOLA RICHTER, PUBLISHER
INFO@MIKROTEXT.DE**



»Loss of home, foreignness, prejudice, but also curiosity, pride and an unerring eye for the absurd contradictions of everyday life: this is a book about life between all stools, a wonderfully fast-paced text between braggadocio, self-irony, despair and hope.«

DENIS SCHECK, ARD / DRUCKFRISCH

304 PAGES

2ND EDITION

MORE THAN 2.000 COPIES SOLD

**BILINGUAL EDITION,
ARABIC / GERMAN**

**TRANSLATED BY
SANDRA HETZL**

The Whole Story

18 October 2013 at 00:47

370 likes

Tomorrow I'm going on a plane. Finally I'll know how the houses and streets and markets look to the pilots who bomb the city.

20 October 2013 at 17:23

310 likes

From an interview with a journalist:

—What would Aboud Saeed be without Facebook?

—Aboud Saeed.

—What would Facebook be without Aboud Saeed?

—The same, minus one really smart person.

25 October 2013 at 23:25

310 likes

Today a guy in Manbij asks a friend of mine how I'm doing these days:

—He's in Germany now.

—No way, what job's he doing?

—He's a writer.

—Wait, didn't he use to be a blacksmith?

22 January 2014 at 01:27

99 likes

While I was at an exhibition of ripped-up photographs in Berlin, a car bomb blew up near my parents' house.

10 June 2015 at 17:50

863 likes

Whenever anyone asks me “Where are you from?” I obviously say straight away, “Syria, Syria.” Their eyes pop out of their head, they go “woow,” and “I’m so sorry about what happened in Syria,” then they start talking about civil war, or refugees, or Islamists. There’s always plenty of pity and sympathy, and some pretty obvious mistrust too.

In primary school we used to have school fairs where there were displays of pupils’ drawings, arts & crafts, etc. I did have pocket money to spend on materials for things like this, but I used to spend it all on myself, so my contributions to the sales always consisted of a piece of metal I’d taken for free from my family’s workshop. Everyone was always really into it, so I took it further and started bringing more and more random pieces of metal: complicated shapes, jagged, with sharp edges and screws and bulges sticking out of them. The students and teachers just got more and more amazed. One time I used the gear of a combine harvester, which I found on the scrap heap, broken, still covered in grease and totally filthy. I put it in the display and the teachers and the headteacher and the pupils and the caretaker all gathered round it in awe. They ignored the suns and rivers and flowers that my classmates had drawn, the homemade candlestick, the veiled woman painted on cardboard, the calligraphied sayings of Hafiz al-Assad, the national flag, and even the paper replica aeroplane the teacher’s son had made—they paid no attention to any of them and instead just stared at my piece of metal!

In Germany, I feel like I’m a broken combine harvester gear and the world is a primary school art display. It’s such a pain

in the ass that I decided at some point to pick some other country. I choose somewhere that plausibly fits my skin colour, my way of thinking, and my poor grasp of foreign languages, and act accordingly. Sometimes I make use of the Turkish words I've learnt from TV and say I'm from Turkey, sometimes I aim a bit higher and say I'm Italian. (Why shouldn't I? There are tons of dark-skinned guys in Italy.) If the person asking me seems tolerant, I say I'm from Greece, and sometimes I set sail, crossing rivers and gulfs and oceans, and say I'm from Brazil. Sometimes I make a joke out of my birthmark and say I'm from India; when times are hard, I say I'm from Pakistan.

So that's how it goes. People's hearts are my nationality and I wander, homeless, from country to country.

Today a Senegalese woman asked me, "Where are you from?" I looked at her and said, with a clear conscience, "I'm from Syria. I'm Muslim. And Sunni, too!"

23 September 2015 at 11.59

906 likes

I invited my German neighbour over for Syrian/Arab breakfast: fried eggs, yogurt, cheese, olives, salad, and whatever else I could get hold of easily.

I handed him a plate and a fork and of course told him to help himself to whatever he wanted.

I was eating flatbread as usual, not because I like it per se but because I like the method of scooping things up with bread, holding it lightly between my fingers and making a spoon that will hold all the food. Scooping up food with bread is an art form among many peoples of the world—I'm so used to it I can't imagine eating a fried egg with a fork, or yogurt with a spoon, no

matter how civilised or assimilated I become! But my neighbour is the “refugees welcome” type, extra kind and friendly, and he wanted to make me feel at home, so he put the fork and the plate to one side and insisted on eating like me.

I watched as he poked his fingers in everything, often dropping his piece of bread—when this happened, he laughed, and spat crumbs all over the food and the table—and he even dipped the bread in his cup of tea before eating it, like a child.

This was spoiling my breakfast, in fact the whole morning, so much that I picked up the plate and the fork and said to him: “Please, just eat your own way! I promise, we know you’re a good person and open-minded and solidarity with refugees and all that... But please, just eat your own way!”

21 March 2016 at 14:03

815 likes

My mum just called. She woke me up. She said:

—It’s Mother’s Day today, get yourself down to Western Union and send your present before it closes.

—Ok Mum, ok. How much should I send?

—200 euros.

—Ok Mum. Happy Mother’s Day.

8 June 2016 at 11:24

700 likes

Syrians who live in Europe come to Berlin on holiday. Holiday means going out on Sonnenallee—Arab Street—and eating shawarma.

1 September 2016 at 23:01

338 likes

Health insurance in Europe doesn't cover teeth or loneliness.

20 October 2016 at 17:06

391 likes

I say to my girlfriend Sancho: I love you as much as I love lentil soup. She gets huffy at first but I manage to convince her it has a special place in my heart. I tell her nothing cheers up a guy living far from home, fed up of the winter and the cold and the loneliness, like lentil soup.

30 December 2016 at 12:29

807 likes

Yesterday a German woman sat down with me in a bar, and that doesn't happen every day. It's a pretty big deal!

As usual, like the idiot I am, I paid for her beer, and tried to be friendly and forthcoming. I tried to come up with a good topic of conversation.

"What are your hopes and wishes for the new year?" I ask.

"I hope I can stop being so late all the time. I'm always late to work, to appointments—I'm so sloppy. Sometimes I turn up five minutes late for things!"

While I was still chewing my cigarette in amazement at her bloneness and her new year's resolutions, she asked me, "And what do you wish for?"

I settled in my seat, ordered another beer, and got started on my wishes. The major disasters came first—Bashar al-Assad and co. I wished more.

“I want a homeland, I want my family, and I want to stay in Germany.

I want to eat kebab.

I want to love all the women in the world in the new year.

I want to learn German

I want, I want, I want...”

I kept on wishing till the barman came over and said, “closing time,” and I realised I was alone. The woman had left at my first wish.

29 August 2017 at 21:04

1200 likes

Didn't manage to send my mum the usual 300 euros this month, because I'm broke and I've had a load of guests. I got a text this morning from her. It said: Listen mate if you don't want to send us money then stop writing about us.

2 January 2018 at 14:52

279 likes

I always say to the German ladies:

Do not ask me: Where are you from!

And I will not ask you: How old are you?

26 January 2018 at 23:38

787 likes

We're at a family gathering with loads of relatives and members of our extended tribe. My brother, who lives in Saudi Arabia, is praising me. He says: “My little bro Aboud is slaving away in Germany, throwing himself into his work with all his experience and knowledge, and everything I've taught him, then in the end they go and stamp on the thing: MADE IN GERMANY”

27 January 2018 at 11:03

226 likes

I gave up watching the news a while back. I can't tell who's winning and who's losing any more, who's dead and who's celebrating. Whenever I call my mum to say hello, she asks: "Haven't you heard what's happening here??"

"No, no idea," I say.

She gets really pissed off at this, calls me a traitor, and says "Dear Lord, the foreigners have stolen you away from us"!

4 May 2018 at 21:16

860 likes

My German boss asks me at work, "Have you got Facebook?"

"Yep," I reply innocently. He looks me up and adds me.

Time goes by and he starts noticing how many likes and comments I get, how many followers I have... Meanwhile his highness struggles to get seven likes on a post...

Once he's clocked this difference he starts treating me extra nice, and two days ago he tells me he's planning to give me a raise from next month.

7 May 2018 at 12:17

609 likes

Went out with work friends last night. We drank a lot of beer and smoked a lot of weed, and I got super hungry and tired, so I grabbed my jacket and left. Only when I got home did I realise it was my Norwegian friend's jacket.

20 June 2018 at 19:07

393 likes

The summer holiday's coming up and the weather's nice, so my German boss asks me: "Where are you planning to spend the vacation? Are you going on holiday abroad somewhere?"

I say: "I'm on holiday right now. Being in Germany is one long trip abroad. Big vacation!"

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BY KATHERINE HALLS

PUBLISHED IN EXBERLINER 2002-2022. THE COLLECTOR'S ISSUE



Ruth Herzberg was born in East Berlin in 1975. After studying screenwriting at the Konrad Wolf Film Academy in Babelsberg, she devoted herself full-time to writing prose. In 2014 she published *Wie man mit einem Mann glücklich wird*, a collection of short texts. 2021 saw her debut novel *How to Become Unhappy with a Man*, of which an audio version was also produced. She lives and writes in Prenzlauer Berg, Berlin. *Die aktuelle Situation* is the sequel to her successful

Ruth Herzberg

How to Become Unhappy with a Man

- Daughter of renowned artistic family in the GDR
- Strong social media presence: Blog, Instagram, Facebook
- Columnist and reporter for Berliner Zeitung
- Novel will be adapted as a streaming series.

This woman knows what she wants: exactly this man, his mind and his body. She gets to know him and wants him. But he does not always want her. Again and again, she can't get away from him and for that she puts up with a lot. Who is the narcissist here? Him or her? A romance novel for our time.

»Definitely recommend *How Become to Unhappy with a Man* by Ruth Herzberg. She tells the emotional drama precisely and razor sharp, writing herself to the point of self-denial. Reading this book is akin to having a Long Island Iced Tea - you entertain yourself brilliantly, but if you don't take a break now and then, it also eventually leads to self-destruction.«

**BOOKSELLER DANIELA WEISS,
BERLINER ZEITUNG**

»Fabulous novel, ... highly pointed, breathless.«

**ANDREAS MERKEL,
SÜDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG**

»Seriously, read this fantastic lament of an obsessive postfeminist infatuation. Anyone who still claims that everyone has become way too cool is proven wrong here in a pulsating rant. You get sucked into this madness and can't stop. An experience!!!«

COVER THE BOOK

CONTACT US!

**NIKOLA RICHTER, PUBLISHER
INFO@MIKROTEXT.DE**

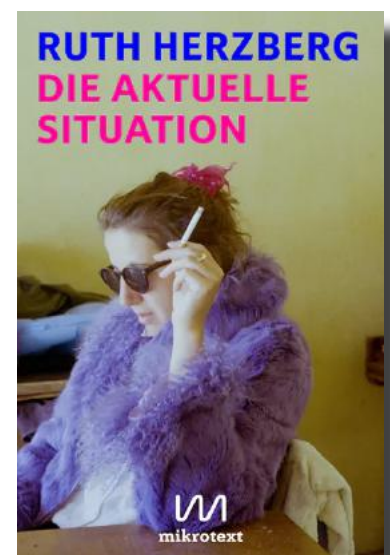


176 PAGES

2ND EDITION

3.000 COPIES SOLD

EXPLICIT CONTENT



»Ruth Herzberg, a mid-40s lyric wizard from Prenzlauer Berg, works her way through a 21st-century on-off relationship, from fucking to 'fuck you,' with rapid punchline ping-pong. Love, that drifting logic gap! There's 'room for notes' at the end of the book.«

**ERIK HEIER,
TIP BERLIN**

»Recommended reading for all those who want to know if this crazy state of being in love will ever end. And how to speed it up.«

BUCH UND SCHÖPFER

»Mercilessly honest, delightfully woozy, and smart«

KONSTANTIN NOWOTNY, DER FREITAG

»At a fast pace, the novel shimmies from love to despair to hate and straight into our hearts.«

IM GEGENTEIL

»So self-destructive. Powerful language and sweeping. If I were asked which author I would credit with a modern, zeitgeisty tone, I think it would be Herzberg.«

VOM LESEN UND SCHREIBEN

»The protagonist is the allegory of non-self-empowerment, the epitome of the anti-feminist, the frontwoman of the gender role mainstream. It's all so nastily exaggerated and at the same time (even nastier) true to the point, it's laugh-out-loud funny.«

VERENA HERTZ, HERTZLESE

»Jane Austen meets Henry Miller - but in the times of TikTok and Huawei. Ruth Herzberg has struck at the heart of a generation that is only superficially cool.«

JOACHIM LOTTMANN

How to Become Unhappy with a Man

IF YOU SLEEP WITH SOMEONE right after you met them and it was good, that's good. But if you want to do it again, but the other person seems not to, because he does not contact you afterwards and does not write back, then it is bad. That's why you shouldn't sleep with someone you just met. But you don't know beforehand that he won't contact you again, because he behaves as if he would still get in touch afterwards, which is why you slept with him right after you met him.

Besides, you don't know beforehand that he won't get in touch with you afterwards because you don't think about it while you sleep with someone you just met. Maybe that's why it was so good to sleep with someone you just met, because you didn't think anything of it.

But if he doesn't get in touch afterwards, even though it was good, then maybe it wasn't so good after all. Then you only imagined that he also thought it was good. And then there must have been a mistake somewhere in the course of the encounter.

Maybe I was too fat or too old or not beautiful enough for him. Although I had the feeling that night that everything about me was just right, just as I felt that everything was just right with him.

A friend of mine tells me horror stories about men who didn't get in touch afterwards even though everything was going great.

Yes, I know, men who don't get in touch afterwards, even though everything was going great, are the subject of entire genres of film and literature. There are songs about it, trilogies, books of poetry, and anything you want.

My friend thinks I should not give up hope yet, because it could of course be that I'll catch his eye one night in two weeks' time when he's standing drunk at the bar and no one else is in sight, and that he will contact me again.

I could then meet him right away if that were okay with me, and then that would be that.

My friend tells me that she has friends who have been in this kind of relationship for three years. Then she goes on to philosophize about whether it's because of the men in Berlin and that maybe the men should be caught when they have just moved here and don't yet know the score.

Well, I don't want to sleep with someone who has just moved here, but with the man who now does not get in touch, although everything went great.

(...)

I'M FLOATING, I'm reeling, I'm dancing, I'm singing, I'm beaming, I'm cracking up. I have written to him again, mega cool, mega relaxed, mega smart, at a completely normal time of day, not totally off at three in the morning or something, but at 2 or 3 p.m.

"Heyyy, do you feel like getting together again sometime?", I texted and then put some emoji attached to it. And he replied IMMEDIATELY! Everything is easy, anything goes, soon I will see him again.

IT WAS AWESOME as always, but now I don't know if and when we will see each other again.

I just can't get used to it. Where is he, what is he doing? What is wrong with me? Why am I so possessive? What kind of love is this that stalks the other person on Facebook, that doesn't trust the other person, that wants to capture and control the other person?

It was awesome as always. About every two or three weeks now, it happens. He is suddenly there, where I am. In the evening, at night or in the morning. He comes in somewhere, he stands somewhere, he sees me, grins and from then on everything is clear, are we going to his place or to mine.

It's always like that when we run into each other. It is unthinkable that in this case, a little later, we will hurry home together.

He wants to write a rap with me and shoot a video clip to go with it, he wants to develop series and make videos to my texts. We should definitely meet during the day and brainstorm together.

Oh yes, I say. I'd love to.

We could also start up a production company together, he says, or write a short film together, or a feature film, or a multi-part

feature film, or a podcast, or he could read out texts in front of an audience, as I do on a regular basis.

Yes, I could definitely invite him, I say, that would be so great if he would come and perform with me. But he doesn't have any texts, he says. He had once written some super-good ones, but then his smartphone fell down the toilet in South Africa and all his texts since then in the nirvana, unfortunately.

But he wants to go with me to the recording studio soon, I should read my stuff there and he and he will make videos. He quite likes street art and what I write would be somehow also like street art. You could combine that. My cool lyrics and the cool street art.

He could also manage me and organize gigs for me. Really well paid. Germany-wide. In halls.

Then he explains to me how ingenious what I write is. Totally crazy and wacky, but that's exactly why it's so brilliant. If he had trained me as a copywriter in the 1990s, I would be a millionaire by now. I'd definitely be a millionaire by now. Multi-millionaire. I could do stand-up comedy, too, couldn't I?

He could film it and sell it to Netflix, they are desperate for content right now, just like they're really keen on ideas for series, and now I'm supposed to take off my clothes and put on my high heels and walk on them, all the way to the mirror and stop there, just like that, and walk back to him and then walk towards the mirror again and turn around and come back and then stand in front of him and turn around and bend over.

Further. Even further. Just like that. Good. Very good.

It may be that it was only through him that I realized how unique and gifted I am, and that I've never liked anyone as much as I like him, and that because of that, that someone I find so amazing finds me amazing, I feel extremely strong love.

Could be that that's why I'm in heaven when we spend the night together. Could be that he said we were a good match.

I may have said that we would have beautiful children together because of our good genes.

"Well yeah, of course!" he answered.

We may have made love without a condom.

I may have said "I love you" to him in the middle of it, in exuberance.

It may be that I am not in control of myself and that I would do anything for him and maybe I'm rushing things a little bit.

Could be that I don't have my act together.

Could be that we got a little too close a little too fast.

Could be that's why he's kept his distance.

Maybe it doesn't mean anything that I haven't heard from him for a while now. But it can also be that it means something.

(...)

"FORGET HIM, HE'S an idiot," people say. And "What do you want with him, he is a phony, a player, you don't need that, you deserve better." Nonsense. You don't even know him. There's no one better than him, at least I don't see anyone. I don't see anyone better than him. It's not that I wouldn't choose someone better... because I don't want to chase after someone who doesn't care

about me. but no one I meet is like him and even better. There is no one better than him and therefore I do not deserve him.

How pathetic that I even imagined it.

How pathetic that I can't tell sex from love.

Ok, I'll forget about him, I delete his number, I don't chase him anymore.

I think about my poor little messages flashing on his screen. What does he do with them? Does he just click them away? I want to try to be a better person, a worthy member of society. Not some baseless female in the stranglehold of her hormones. No more nightlife, no more fantasies, no more sloppiness. I will get up early from now on, eat healthy, exercise regularly, keep my apartment in order, become a real, normal woman.

A self-confident woman of integrity, who has her life in order and who will not be branded as a slut. A valuable woman that valuable men can fall in love with.

A valuable woman with whom good-for-nothings like him don't stand a chance.

He was last online in messenger 20 minutes ago, but my message is still unread and it's now 11pm.

He hasn't contacted me yet, but apparently he has been in contact with others. He has 13 new friends on Facebook, a lot of them women, and they only have him as a common friend with me.

Women of all ages and degrees of beauty and education – from near and far, from inner cities and suburbs.

It may have something to do with his profession. But it doesn't have to.

What was I thinking? Did I think that a guy I met in a bar at night was going to be my new boyfriend?

What's wrong with me? I stalk him on Facebook. I'm so disturbed. I don't want that kind of thing. I unfriend him and close the case.

**TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BY DEEPL AND SOME HUMAN TOUCH
BY LAURA MCALEESE**



Dinçer Güçyeter was born in 1979 in Nettetal and is a German theatre maker, poet, editor, and publisher. Güçyeter grew up as the son of a pub owner and a manual worker, and gained his secondary school certificate at evening classes. From 1996 to 2000 he trained as a tool mechanic, and subsequently worked as a restaurateur. In 2012, he founded the ELIF Verlag publishing house, which focuses on poetry. Güçyeter continues to fund his publishing venture by working part-time as a forklift driver. *Aus Glut geschnitzt* was published in 2017 and *Mein Prinz, ich bin das Ghetto* in 2021. In 2022, Güçyeter was awarded the Peter Huchel Prize. He has two children and lives in Nettetal.

Dinçer Güçyeter

Our German Fairy Tale

- Winner of the 2023 Leipzig Book Fair Prize / Preis der Leipziger Buchmesse
- Book of the Month 2023 of Darmstädter Jury e.V.
- Dinçer Güçyeter works part-time as a forklift truck driver, has published two volumes of poetry, and won the 2022 Peter Huchel Prize.
- He is a publisher himself of renowned ELIF Verlag for poetry.
- Selected and recommended by New Books in German, so financial support for its translation into English is guaranteed.

Our German Fairy Tale is Dinçer Güçyeter's first novel: a candid and convincing family saga told in the voices of three generations from the early twentieth century to the present, set in Turkey and Germany.

The story is told by three characters: Dinçer, his mother Fatma and his grandmother Hanife. It begins in Anatolia, with a stark example of the status of women at that time: it is the duty of every man to provide a homeless woman with shelter. A cartload of women whose husbands have been killed in the war is deposited in the village square. That same night Hanife is conceived by her mother Ayşe, a refugee from Greece, and the man who takes her in, Ömer Bey.

Ömer's other wives treat Ayşe like a slave, and when Hanife marries, she receives similar treatment from own husband, Osman. When Osman is killed, Hanife escapes to the city with her three children. A suitor, Yilmaz, asks to marry Fatma: reluctantly, Hanife agrees and Fatma travels with Yilmaz to Germany. She works in a factory making carburettors for Mercedes. Yilmaz runs a bar, which turns into a kind of clubhouse for his friends. However, it loses money, and Hanife takes on extra work in an attempt to pay Yilmaz's debts.

After thirteen years of marriage, Dinçer is born. Fatma adores him, but their financial circumstances become more extreme. Even though he is a child, Dinçer tries to earn money to help. Eventually Fatma is injured in an industrial accident and has to give up work in the factory.



PREIS DER
LEIPZIGER BUCHMESSE

2023

216 PAGES

5TH EDITION

20.000 COPIES SOLD

CONTACT US!

NIKOLA RICHTER, PUBLISHER
INFO@MIKROTEXT.DE



As Dinçer approaches adulthood he knows he cannot do the kind of work his mother would approve of: he is a writer. He spends all his free time reading, and feels like an outsider everywhere. In Germany he is aware of how Turkish he is, and in Turkey he feels very German. His intense love for a mother who worked herself into the ground for his sake is tempered by a desire to grow beyond this kind of life.

The book is a collage of short chapters with different first-person narrators and a variety of 'songs' written in prose in the third person, poems, and black and white photos. The photos in particular give a strong sense that these are real people, and the writing itself is direct, lucid, and affecting. Though explicitly denoted as a novel, the book feels very personal and true to life. An intriguing portrayal of under-represented life experiences and a powerful evocation of the intense and complex love between Dinçer and his mother.

REVIEW BY NEW BOOKS IN GERMAN

»The compelling power and beauty of his poetic work is gauged with the ethos of craftsmanship: the skill of 'working and adapting raw material with the right tools.' On the one hand, the aesthetic experience of matching form and content; on the other, the existential process of giving a life story the dignity and meaning it deserves.

In the middle of it all are the poet and his mother.«

**STEFAN KISTER,
STUTTGARTER ZEITUNG**

»A sometimes quiet, gentle, vulnerable book, but often an equally angry, wounded, rebellious book. Above all, however, it is a virtuously composed work of linguistic art that one cannot escape«

**GERRIT WUSTMANN,
QANTARA**

»A poetics of experience. ... This extraordinary book take readers on a journey in a double sense, for never before has one come so close to the inner life of Turkish migrant women who have lived with and among us and worked for us for so long as in these texts.«

SABINE SCHOLL, DER STANDARD

»Now he has succeeded in making great literature out of Fatma's silence, which she shares with so many women and men of her generation. This idiosyncratic, raw book is a must-read.«

**KAREN KRÜGER,
FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG**

»The book is certainly one of those that will keep us busy for longer than just one season.«

**JÖRG SCHIEKE,
MDR KULTUR**

»The first generation of people who came to Germany as so-called guest workers has recently been increasingly the subject of contemporary literature. But as stylistically multifaceted as the writer and publisher Dinçer Güçyeter, born in 1979 in Nettetal, takes on the story of his parents, one is unlikely to have read this aspect of the history of the Federal Republic before.«

SWR BESTENLISTE

»I know and love Dinçer's poetry. That he has now written a novel is very good news.«

SAŠA STANIŠIĆ

»A story of arriving against all odds? A sceptical stocktaking? A declaration of love perhaps, an angry reckoning, or a sentimental family story? Dinçer Güçyeter pulls the rug out from under all expectations and presents a novel that is unusual in every respect.«

**JULIA SCHRÖDER,
DEUTSCHLANDFUNK / BÜCHERMARKT**

»A poetics of experience. ... This extraordinary book take readers on a journey in a double sense, for never before has one come so close to the inner life of Turkish migrant women who have lived with and among us and worked for us for so long as in these texts.«

**SABINE SCHOLL,
DER STANDARD**

»Apart from its literary quality, Our German Fairy Tale is also a tribute to the many people who have come to Germany from Turkey since 1961, carrying in their luggage little more than the hope of earning enough money to return home in a few years as made people.«

**DANIELA ABELS,
KÖLNISCHE RUNDSCHAU**

The Cocoon / Fatma

The days come and go. We get even more furniture from the German neighbours. I'm rather pleased about the doll they gave us. She's missing a leg, but I don't think it's a tragedy. I knit her a little dress out of an old pillowcase so that she looks whole again. Yılmaz finds a porcelain pot. I brew tea in it, even if it does taste a little bitter here, I don't mind, I'm slowly making this place my new home. The teapot gives me the foundation I need to spread my wings.

Yılmaz gives me 20 German marks so that I can go out shopping on my own. First, I think about all the things I could buy for my family in Türkiye with the money. But it's still too early. I take the note and go into a shop, I don't really pay any attention to the packaging. A man in a white coat wearing glasses stood behind the counter- this is how professors dress back home. He wants to say something to me. *Nikkis, nikkis ...* I throw a few items into the basket, I give the man the money, and he gives me two coins back. I have four German marks still left in the bag and with it I buy bread from the bakery and return home proudly. Yılmaz gets back from work, looks at the items and roars with laughter. I bought soap instead of butter, liver pâté instead of jam, shampoo instead of oil. He laughed like a colt on his wedding day. *May God punish you, I say, you're making me look like a fool, you're laughing at me!* He laughs louder, I throw the packages at his enormous head, he hides behind the door and carries on laughing.

The men come in the evenings, some of them even have wives now. With each meeting we drink between two and three pots

of tea. The women's faces are like crumbling garden gates. *We're tormented by longing, longing for people, here you only see machines,* most of them complain. *We have to come to terms with our fate* I snap back at them like a commander. The men's joy is lost too after a short while. They're getting fed up with the life in cheap worker's hostels. They've got the rent, the responsibility, and a self-pitying wife. Even the pleasure of fucking doesn't make up for all the downsides, the women just end up pregnant and moan even more.

Yilmaz gives me 50 German marks; I should go for a wander around the park with the women and get them to cheer up. Good, the parks are the cheapest places after all. Every time we get together, we wonder why the ducks are still alive swimming in the pond, they should have gone in the pot a long time ago. Ah well, new country, new customs. Before I sort my own problems out, I'll take on the role of the experienced tour guide *ha maşallah!* Every weekend we get together with the newcomers. We give it our all trying to turn village women into elegant ladies. Even though we wear miniskirts we don't want to be completely godless, so the headscarf stays on. Every evening the West German Radio features a Turkish broadcast. We hear the voice of Yüksel Pazarkay urging us to act reasonably: *please ladies, don't go out onto the street in your indoor clothing, you don't want to give guest workers a bad name now, do you?*, whatever that's supposed to mean. But obviously we're used to doing what we're told. We are willing servants of fate.

On the border with the Netherlands, it's said that there's a small village called Lobberich. Workers are needed. The bosses stand outside of the gates with big posters and throw their arms around everyone that passes. Yilmaz, my great oaf of a husband,

doesn't want to work in the mine and wants to see the village for himself. *We have our home here, a little place of our own, please let us stay here*, I beg him, but he ignores my pleading. We pack our things and travel to this small village, Lobberich. Yılmaz gets a job at the foundry. I'm still waiting for a child. All I want is for everything that flows within me to sprout into new life, but nothing is happening. My womb remains a barren chamber, a little stage for my monologue. Our first family picture comes from the village. Mama is in the middle, Hasan on the right, Mehmed Ali on the left. Hasan's handwriting is on the back, *a lifeless memory of my sister*, he writes, *Lifeless? Come on, Hasan, why lifeless?* I can see what makes your whole world go round just from your faces alone. I put the photo on the bed side table next to the alarm clock. When Yılmaz sleeps, I speak to the photograph, and I cry secretly. Yes, I long for my home too, a longing that is often stronger than the pull of fate.

Months pass and I'm still not pregnant. *Yılmaz, I want to work, find me a job*. He manages to get me a job at the shoe factory. Sevim, who works on the same line as me, tells me she's pregnant. I hug her. Afterwards I can't help but think: where's my baby? Tears fall to my feet. I can't stop them. The foreman Willi stands in front of me and shouts at me, I don't understand him. He shouts and my lips tremble. He shouts, I cry, he shouts, my lips tremble more. He gets even louder. I throw a shoe at his head and at the top of my lungs I yell *you asshole!* God forgive me! Shocked, he takes a step back. So that's how it is here too, you have to stand your ground and puff your chest out like a cockerel if you want to be left alone. I shut myself into a toilet cubicle and I cry until at last my tears refuse to come. In the evenings there's a programme on the television called Heidi. It's about a girl wi-

thout parents who lives in the mountains with her grandpa, it's always cheerful and everyone runs about and dances barefoot. They even look happy drinking goat's milk. Heidi is my sister-in-arms. We laugh together and we cry together. I gather a couple of pairs of shoes from the factory that were sorted from the bin. I want to send them to her. I ask Willi if it's possible to do so and he laughs at me. *What an arsehole!* Can anybody help me? I think about Heidi, she's going to catch a cold, there must be a way to send the shoes to her, there must be!

Our family grows and flourishes in Germany. Many of them come as tourists, they remain here, then they find work illegally- just like my brother. Until they find their own place to live, we take them all in ourselves. As I've said already, Yılmaz is a great big oaf. Complete strangers he met in the pub try to persuade him that he can import weaving machines from Istanbul and sell them on here for four times the price. He quits his job and flies to Istanbul. And guess who doesn't come back again... Yılmaz. I go to the bank, and I tell the man behind the desk to give me 100 German marks. He shakes his head, *that I can't do, he says, you're 20,000 marks in debt.* Ach Yılmaz, what have you done, what have you done...

Yılmaz forged my signature to take a loan out at the bank. After six months he comes back home with his tail between his legs. Of course, someone's ripped him off. One day five men knock on the door wanting to see Yılmaz. *Why* I ask. He borrowed money from them too. My brother-in-law Mustafa and I beg to have another two months. I run straight to Willi and put myself on the rota for every weekend shift and every hour of overtime I can get. I spend more than twelve hours a day in the factory. I count it all up in bed and it's still not nearly enough. I go to

my brothers, to my friends and to relatives who found jobs with Yılmaz's help to beg them all for money. The latches are thorny, the hinges are sharp, the locks are rusted. *Unfortunately, Fatma, unfortunately, Fatma ...*

My brothers are already having their first houses built in Türkiye. *Unfortunately, sister, unfortunately, sister ...* they tell me I should split up with Yılmaz. *But without him we'd all still be in Türkiye, he made it all possible for us to be here.* Nobody wants to hear a word of what I'm saying. No, I won't turn my back on my husband over money. He's lazy, too comfortable perhaps, but compared to other men he's nice to me. No! No! I don't want to hear another word of it, I may as well be deaf, I may as well be deaf. I drive to Grevenbroich with Mustafa, my brother-in-law, to see an old colleague of Yılmaz called Ibrahim. I tell him the whole story. *Yılmaz has behaved like a complete and utter fool, but I beg you, sister Fatma, don't leave him. You know a divorced woman is like prey for people with bad intentions, even your brothers will show you the door after three days* he says as he counts the damned money in his hands.

The complete oaf that I call husband doesn't learn his lesson and tries his hand at another get-rich-quick scheme. He buys every kind of garlic sausage he can in bulk from a Turkish merchant in Düsseldorf and tries to sell the foul-smelling things in the pub. Who on earth wants to buy sausage here? Everyone wants to save up for more houses in Türkiye, one isn't enough, two is the bare minimum, three, four, then a summer house, a shop perhaps ... Fatma is sitting on a mountain of debt whilst everyone else is off building their houses. Yılmaz inherits a pub- that's a second job for me then. Before my shift at the factory starts, my day kicks off with cleaning

in the pub. After my shift in the factory, it doesn't stop. The dishes in the sink, the shitty toilets, full ash-trays, everyone and everything relies on me. I'm still not pregnant. I don't have time to comb my hair, but I still take in the neighbours' and relatives' children. I cook for them, breathe the air of childhood into my lungs, sing lullabies, knit vests and socks. One morning I'm sweeping leaves away from the door of the pub and Mother comes to me holding a plastic bag. She's argued with her daughter-in-law again, *of course you can stay with me, Mother*. She sets herself down on the step by the entrance as a German woman and a dark-skinned child pass us by hand in hand. My eyes brim with tears, *God, You are the Almighty, You are gracious, please ...*

My mother can't control her temper once again, *what's the point of a child like that, you don't want something like a puppy, do you? A child, mother, I would like to have a child, it could be made out of dust and mud for all I care, there's nothing I want more in life than a child that I can hold to my breast*. Yılmaz brought home a video player and a couple of tapes, on one of them my favourite actress Fatma Girik plays a nomad who moves from one land to another with her folk on camelback. She gives birth to a child. Whilst finding somewhere new to settle, her child is stolen by an eagle from the cradle on the camel. She hunts the eagle down and finds it on the crest of a mountain, then she fights for her child and then they both fall off the mountain and perish. *Burn in Hell, you rotten eagle* I roar at the television screen, I howl and roar, I howl and roar, I howl with snot and tears, *you rotten, vile eagle*.

I quit my job at the shoe factory and start working at another company that manufactures carburettors for Mercedes. The

hourly wage is better so I can pay off the debt quicker. Everything's going fairly well in the pub, the earnings aren't bad, but the bottom line is the business is losing money. The punters, as well as friends and relatives, borrow money from Yılmaz. With the money they borrowed they go to casinos and brothels in secret. Yılmaz can't bring himself to say no. The list of debtors keeps getting longer and longer. The regulars only pay for tea so they can pace themselves and play cards all day long. For many, even going into the kitchen isn't crossing the line, I'm greeted daily with an overflowing sink and an empty fridge.

My brother-in-law Mustafa, who's been living with us since his arrival, has two children with his wife who remained in a village in Türkiye. The pair don't particularly like each other, in fact he's rarely in Türkiye, yet it's still possible to have children somehow, it's the work of God!

Again, I come back home after a long shift to find both children, Iskender and Hasan, in the pub on the fruit machines. Mustafa had flown back to Türkiye to see his children. He told his wife who lives in the village that he's taking them into town to buy clothes and toys, instead he brought them here to Germany. The two of them look afraid and malnourished and haven't got a clue where they've ended up. I shout at my brother-in-law, *you have no right to take the children away from their mother, you can't do that to a woman*. Yılmaz sends his father a telegram telling them not to worry about the children, they're in Germany now.

Even though my sister-in-law feels awfully sorry for me in this situation, it's wonderful to have children running about the house. This is how time flies by... the time that always seems to stand still is passing at last. I've been here for thirteen ye-

ars. I still don't have a child. I go to see the hoca, an Islamic teacher and spiritualist, and receive blessings, I even pay to see psychics. Yılmaz takes me to a clinic in Cologne. The doctor says there's a narrowing in the fallopian tubes that can be corrected with an operation. Yılmaz translates. Before he could utter another word, I lie on the bed and spread my legs. *Cut out everything that's blocking the way, now, at once!* I beg the doctor, *now, right now.*



**THE FIRST PHOTO IN GERMANY:
FATMA AND YILMAZ, 1967**



GUESTS ARRIVE, 1967

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BY LEWIS COLLEY



Puneh Ansari, born in Vienna in 1983, studied theatre, film and media studies. She lives as an author and artist in Vienna. Her books *Hopin'* and *Hallo Everybody* (2023) were published by mikrotex.

Puneh Ansari

Hopin'

- Full English translation available by Genia Blum, Swiss-Canadian-Ukrainian writer, translator, and former ballet dancer
- Underground star in Vienna
- Stage adaptation by Fanny Brunner at Kosmos Theatre, Vienna
- Second volume of texts *Hallo Everybody*, published in February 2023

A radical, a poetic, an angry, an intimate book. The best texts of Viennese author Puneh Ansari in her own writing style. It's about the future and the end of the world, penguins and Windows. In fact, about everything.

»A counter-language to the bureaucratic neoliberal stupor. And in the end, the title is also fitting: Hopin'.«

TILLMANN SEVERIN, FIXPOETRY

»I love *Hopin'* so much.«

GENIA BLUM

»Breathlessly apocalyptic work.«

3SAT/KULTURZEIT, REBECCA RAMLOW

»Stunning. A recommendation, even for the Facebook-less civilization-weary.«

TITANIC

»The seemingly tossed scraps are carefully polished, like well-set rap lyrics.«

TAZ, NINA APIN

»With Puneh Ansari, Vienna (and the world) has a new author.«

AUGUSTIN, RUTH WEISMANN

»Latent apocalypticism becomes palpable in her postings. Fantastic realism? Semi-escapism? Puneh Ansari's lyrics are at once highly fragile and indestructibly solid.«

FM4, LUKAS TAGWERKER



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THE ARTIST**

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**NIKOLA RICHTER, PUBLISHER
INFO@MIKROTEXT.DE**

Hopin'

- 5 -

i dreamt i was in africa somewhere on the west coast by the sea where there's no one and i placed my laptop on the craggy rocks near the spot where i got in and went for a swim and when i came back i saw the super massive atlantic surf had been there and my laptop's full of water and i turned it over and shook the water out like a waterfall coming down over the cliffs and tried to dry/dried it off not all in vain the touchpad still worked then i searched for a motel with a reception and a taxi stand and felt kind of foolish

- 6 -

Facebook is the commune thing of the 21st century
Everyone likes everything by Everyone and shares everything with Everyone like There's no viruses no Aids a. no tomorrow.
& then they wonder that venereal disease gets THEM their own flesh & blood their most precious possession their macbooc3000
Then they suddenly figure out they've spent insufficient time with their family and get all existential

- 7 -

Is "office helper" an ok expression?

- 8 -

Darth Vader is such a cool figure!
so tragic, ridiculous, wretched & evil
After he became evil decades of being bad to everyone and tormenting, he watches impassively for 30 seconds while his son

gets tasered up before he gives himself a shove anyway via his
civil courage a. transforms the emperor into a lightning bolt
that he smashes pissed off into the air like a paper airplane & af-
ter that no-one gives a shit The bad guys are gone & there's
a pagan celebration

- 9 -

hi!

I'm looking for work again still maybe someone needs me for
something

i could bring flyers to bars for eg?

You're all artists and stuff like that always printing flyers (for
whatever reason in 2015

when everyone's strung out on Facebook, or for rolling filters at
the club or the kitchen as fridge decoration under the fish mag-
nets)

I'll get your shit out there!

Otherwise you won't have time for it anymore I can give piano
lessons glockenspiel lessons i can alphabetize people unfortu-
nately the State locks down all these masses of potential inco-
me opportunities for itself (schools) and then gives you a dumb
look when you show up

I can make fancy gaudy cakes for you (srsly) one takes 1 working
day and therefore

costs 100 euro minimum

;))

(y)

I can watch your nerve-racking kids!

i can bring your shunted-off grandparents all their stuff when
they forget it, unlock

doors for them when they lock themselves out in this lonely era

of senescent isolation

But maybe i should do something decent which thats profit)able
Drug trafficking, human trafficking, arms trafficking

- 10 -

the Inuit got it right

I'm sad

I'm getting old

these "home remedies" just don't work because cell division has
shut down

the raw onions, healthy nutrition all in vain

everything that breaks from now on stays broken from now on

i cut my finger .. doesn't clot bleeds 50 years ..

i bust something .. 50 years splint

i get sick .. 50 years sore throat

50 years coughing

50 years sniffing

50 years hoarseness

where are the delightful times when i partied hard with 50 C
fever for 3 days not batting

an eyelash full power from the TU roof to uni from cafe drechs-
ler to the embassy just

bambambam all in one go like a God

in other cultures I'd be left behind in the snow to die so I wouldn't
be a burden to them

but here i have to, like i said about 50 years cirka you don't die,
that's what it is ..

struggle through with bandages from the dm drugstore and
pharmacy junk at the end of

the day. added together they're expenses too .. gauze with ever-
ything, let's say 10 euro a week, betaisodona paracetamol and
salt etc. easily 10 makes 80 a month

960 / year

48,000 Euro in total until The End

- 11 -

I'm just imagining myspace as the backdrop to an opera
madama butterfly would be set in the ruins of myspace her
house the halls of myspace
full of fading pain the memories of a half-built life the half fil-
led scaffolds of profiles in
its midst simply left behind and buggered off to facebookistan
and only madama
butterfly is still there alone and is torn from sleep by the sound
of her breath

- 12 -

30 million years ago there were these so-called giant penguins
in New Zealand
They were approx. 1.80 m tall

- 13 -

In 30 million years when we're extinct for sure there'll also be
these approx. 30cm tall mini-humans with mangled feet who
walk slowly on all 4s, who everyone thinks are cute
There's constantly some kinds of animals that were once able to
fly & now can't, or were able to walk & now can't
That's evolution
A degenerative sausage

- 14 -

I'm pleasantly surprised

These Korean noodle soups at Spar. i didn't think they'd be this fierce, especially since they don't even have a matching chili on them with a sombrero waving at you from a throne of brown thorns of dried Asteridae, surrounded by arid fire and preserved pain, concentrated sharpness in its desiccated seeds. a stinging-nettle-god of jocular peyote countenance with a mega-smile. It's just light green the package it opens on an appendicitis-noodle soup with chamomile tea included in case something perforates so nada burns ;)

but it's really hot! wow

like not "hot" for people with a tic, but hot-hot, so you no longer notice anything of the actual taste and the real world

it gives you a rush in your temples gets me wide awake and confident i want to tear myself loose screech farewell go off into tomorrow's storm and cause a dazed ultra-fuckup with a bell jar over my head and return with my blissfully numbed body with a cool cherry-wood walking stick and an eye patch return from my bullshit-fairy-tale-adventures and report on the "Hurricane of the Century in Vienna, Nov. 30th 2015 15 degrees C drizzle"

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BY GENIA BLUM

PLEASE NOTE:

The entire book is available in an English translation by Genia Blum, we only included extracts.

We will be happy to send the entire English language manuscript.



Sarah Raich was born in 1979 and grew up in Lower Saxony. She has spent time in Berlin and San Francisco, and now lives in Munich. Her writing zeroes in on the layered intensity of seemingly quiet moments. Sarah resisted the drive to write for many years but found that too many of the books she wanted to read had not yet been written. She is now making up for lost time. *Dieses makellose Blau* is her first book, published in spring 2021, and her young adult cli-fi novel, *All That's Left*, will be published by Piper Verlag in autumn 2021. In 2023, she published *Equilon*, a dystopian young adult novel.

Sarah Raich

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»It's impressive how people don't want to seek closeness in This Immaculate Blue, but then always find it, even if it's in memories.«

TILL RAETHER

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This Immaculate Blue

It starts in the top left corner, by the bunk bed. The wallpaper darkens, breaking out in black blisters; for a moment everything seems to stand still, and then the firestorm sweeps the room away.

“Mama, you’re supposed to be building!”

Would they feel pain? Or does it happen so fast that the nervous system shuts down before the sensation hits?

She goes into the kitchen and puts two pieces of bread into the toaster. The room is warm and comfortable, and everything is fine here. Everything is fine. The cream cheese is starting to dry out, a yellowish crust collecting on the sides of the tub. She raises it to her face and sniffs for signs of mould. The white mass smells as it always does, cool, salty, and metallic.

“Mama! Food!” The happiness in their voices is loud and rough-edged. They nudge their small bodies against her body, hop on the spot with their arms stretched upwards as if they could change the fact that her head, all the way up there, is unreachable. She smiles back, strokes their tousled hair, it’s so important to mirror their emotions.

The sun is bright, the sky is blue. As blue as if there were nothing behind it, no blackness lying in wait for night. It seems so real, the sky above them. But nothing about it is true. It is just a shell between them and reality, the murk of the universe and the burning stars.

“Look, a helicopter,” says the little one and points upward. She doesn’t look, there’s nothing flying up there, she knows that already. “Yes,” she says. “Lovely.”

The flames come again, this time they sweep across the street, melting the asphalt, she can see it beginning to boil. She cannot stop thinking about it. Would there be a moment of pain?

“Look what I can do!” The big one has climbed onto the roof of the bin shed. She looks, her hand over her eyes so that the sun does not blind her. He spreads his arms, his whole body stretched out, an accumulated cell cluster wound tight. “I’m flying!” he screams and pushes off with both legs from the pebbledashed concrete. She takes a step forwards and opens her arms. His body falls onto hers with full force, they almost topple, but she takes another step to catch herself.

“Did you see?” She is still carrying him, holding him tight, and he takes her face in his hands, eyes blazing with pride. She nods and wonders how it is that eyes can look like that, so full of feeling. At the end of the day they are only coloured fragments, nestling around a black hole. She slides him slowly to the ground and strokes his forehead.

“Did you see?” he asks again. She nods and grasps his hand. With the other, she takes hold of the little one and hauls him onto her hip. He is already so heavy, but when she carries him, she doesn’t have to pay attention to where he is currently running off to. Sometimes when she watches him he reminds her of a badly programmed robot that wanders here and there, picking things up and throwing them down again, always looking for the logic in its code.

“Where are we going, Mama?” the big one asks without any suspicion in his voice. A pure curiosity that she would like to remember experiencing, but she isn’t sure that she has ever felt that way. “Just down the street a little way,” she answers finally. She knows that he would not let it be if she said nothing. He has never accepted that. So she has got used to saying whatever is

left of her thoughts after they have passed through the many filters set up between her mind and her words. We're just going down the street a little way, because there is nowhere to go, because there is nowhere to hide.

"Why can't people fly?"

"Because we're not birds." She knows that this is not enough of an answer. She wants to gather herself and say something about weight and tubular bones, about the ratio of wingspan to body size. But she does not manage to collect her thoughts in a way that she wants to voice.

"You're flying all the time," she hears herself saying, finally. "We're all flying through space." On this tiny globe from which there is no escape.

"Cool!" he shouts and pumps his fist into the air. "Like Superman! We're all Superman!" Then he pulls away from her hand and clambers onto the wall next to them. "Will you catch me on the other side?"

"Yes," she says. "Of course." She looks up at the sky. At that immaculate blue.

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BY EILIDH JOHNSTONE

Autobahn

The car slipped past them so slow and so close that she could see the flecks of dirt on the chrome trims, and that the dark lenses of the driver's sunglasses were held in place only by a thin wire, like the glasses in *The Matrix*.

Everything seemed so still. As if she could push open the door between them, then the next, and slide over into his back seat. Secretly, quietly. And then she would hammer down the Autobahn in the next car over, to Hamburg, to the sunset, to the end of the rainbow, wherever. The man with the *Matrix* glasses wiped his face, put his foot down, and disappeared. Their car moved leftwards. Now the bushes were rushing past again, closer this time, dust-green blurs, dark rifts. They must be overtaking a lorry, she felt the change in the air pressure, or whatever that was, the car made a soft rocking motion. She pressed her forehead to the cold glass and looked out at the median strip, at the world rushing past behind it, at the cars in the opposite lane running together into coloured streaks, hardly more than racing ghosts from another universe.

“Are you fucking someone else, or what?” She tightened her grip on the handle, but her damp hands kept slipping. “Go on then!”

“No.” Of course that was what she should say. “No. You're the only one I want. To fuck. And for everything else too. Children. Love. You're the only one I want. I'll tear my eyes out so I never have to see anyone else. I'll burn my pussy to a cinder so no-one else can have it.”

“No,” she wanted to scream back. If she ever had to feel another

skin against hers she would die, go up in brief bright flames or crumble into dust. “No, I’m not fucking anyone else. No, I don’t want you any more. I don’t want to feel you next to me any more, or on me. Or in me. I don’t want to smell you, or taste you, I don’t want to hear your voice any more. No.” She wanted to crawl inside the door, between the switches and the plastic casing, and never come out again. She would get herself settled in, build a little bed out of the dust and scraps of fluff that found their way into her hidey-hole. She would roll up in there and sleep, and sometimes she would hum a tune into the quiet. She had a flying feeling in her stomach, a feeling a little bit like being in love, at the beginning, the glances, the stolen touches, before the others noticed anything. Exciting and secretive. And always that sensation, like her body was filled with crackling stars. Yes, this felt quite similar, as if all her body wanted was to fly away. But the stars had disappeared, leaving only dark, endless space around her.

“What are you doing hiding back there? Talk to me! You always want to talk, so talk!” He tugged at her knee as if he could move her up or down a gear. His fingers, too, were cold and damp. She pulled her feet up onto the leather of the back seat and thought briefly about the marks that the soles of her shoes might leave there. He had rented this car specifically. A heavy, fast car, a metallic frog pressed to the asphalt, that was now supposed to shoot them towards the coast. With him at the wheel, her in his arms. To the ocean. To the sunset. To “You’re the only one I want”.

Why didn’t she say anything? She looked at her hands, still gripping the handle. She tried to
feel her tongue. It was lying in her mouth, a paralysed worm,

as helpless as she was. “Take me home.” Every movement of her mouth felt strange and small. A dying fish in its last throes. “Please.” One last time, her tongue rolled heavily around between her teeth. Clicked against the roof of her mouth. She could feel every tensed muscle. She could not imagine ever saying another word.

“Don’t ruin it! Why are you doing this!” She heard the way the car wailed, the way the noise of horns bore down on them, muffled by steel and glass. “Here! I’m here!” screamed a voice in her head. “Can’t you see me?” “Why don’t I just crash this car?” He laughed, shrill, but she could hear the tears too. His voice was different. It wasn’t as if he had never cried before. In the last few weeks, even, she had often seen the narrow wall of water slowly rising in his eyes, swelling at the edge of his eyelid, until it finally grew too heavy, tore through its own surface tension and tumbled down. “None of it matters anyway!”

She closed her eyes. Yes, maybe he was right, maybe none of it mattered anyway. Her legs pulled further upwards, a snail’s body searching for its shell. Outside there was more honking. Tyres squealed, the seatbelt tore into her. More horns. Very close this time: the sound stabbed at her ears. “Yeah, fuck off!” he screamed. “They can’t hear you,” she thought. “Nobody can hear us.” Then she was forced back against the heavy leather seat again. The engine whooped, as if it were having fun. He liked Formula One.

“Do you think I won’t do it, or what?” She pressed her forehead against the leather on the door. “No, I believe you. I believe everything. Everything you say. Every word,” she thought. The new-car smell was so strong for a moment that she almost vomited. She saw the nausea like a little green flame dancing somewhere in her chest, nervous, incensed. She rolled all her thoughts

around it, wrapped the little fire in darkness, and all that was left was the flame and her body somewhere out there, and she was nothing more than stillness, encasing the flickering green.

Her forehead hurt where it had struck the doorframe. She waited for shards of glass to rain down on her, for screeching metal. But there was only the chirruping of sparrows. She opened her eyes and saw them in the corner of the churchyard, taking a sand bath. They hopped in and out, fluttering on the little fleck of dried-out earth that the last heavy rainfall had left there. One after another they pressed their little bodies against the ground and wriggled with their wings as if they wanted to hug the world below them, only to shoot upwards again a few seconds later into the dazzling sunlight.

“Fuck off!” The click of the door lock seemed terribly loud to her. She pushed the door open a bit and waited. But nothing happened. She pushed again against the weight and let her legs slide out until they met the ground. They went over the cobbles, carried her across the wickerwork of joints between the grey stones. She saw the way they moved, with the same canvas shoes on their feet that she had laced up that morning. Despite that, though, they didn’t seem hers. As if they were sticks that someone had lashed to her body in place of her old legs. Something hit her on the head and flopped to earth. Her bag. The colourful tassels that she had tied onto the zip, one yellow and one pink, glowed strange and shrill. As if they weremscreaming. They were neon colours. That had never occurred to her before. “I hope I never see you again, you piece of shit!”

She knelt down and grasped for her bag, which was lying slack and flabby on the sunwarmed stone. Her hands struggled to properly grip the fabric. As if they hadn’t had enough practice at taking hold of things, and now they lacked the strength and the

finesse to manage it. She watched the sparrows flurry upwards as the car skidded out of the car park. They scattered into the blue and disappeared somewhere between the old houses.

“Schnapps?” She smelled the harsh kick of it. The glass that the barwoman from the pub on the corner held out to her was full to brimming. She took the drink and downed it. “Love is a right bastard,” said the woman and took the empty glass back. Her hands were red and heavy. When they had gone to her pub for a nightcap after the disco, her hands had looked quite different. It must be the light, that bright, bright sunlight.

“HmMMM,” she said. Nothing more made it out of her mouth. Her throat burned from the schnapps. Even the ‘hmMMM’ scratched painfully in her larynx and came out weak and reedy.

“If you need another one, come on in, yeah?” The barwoman hauled herself upright, walked back over the cobblestones - rounded and gleaming like buried skulls - and disappeared into the doorway of the pub. For a moment she could see the slot machine flashing. It glowed like a sun in the darkness.

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BY EILIDH JOHNSTONE



Since 2013, **Sina Kamala Kaufmann** has been researching the societies of tomorrow while working as a communications specialist for development organisations and tech companies. Her aim was to explore what "social" and "individual" responsibilities may look like in the future. Her first fictional work, *Bright Matter (Helle Materie)* is one of the results of her explorations. Between 2012 and 2018, she drastically limited her social media presence to retreat from common attention and recognition systems while writing her utopian miniatures as independently as possible, in forests, on farms, and in cities across Europe. She is an ecological activist and acts as the co-editor of the German edition of *The Extinction Rebellion Handbook* (Penguin), published by S. Fischer Verlag in September 2019.

Sina Kamala Kaufmann

Bright Matter

- Former Press Spokesperson for Extinction Rebellion Germany
- Wrote book for 5 years while working her Marketing Job in the Gaming Industry
- One story published by Cory Doctorow's page Boing Boing

Narcissism tests for executives, a game of the super-rich whose stakes are human lives, buying boycotts, fools who become moral leaders, or socially regulated electricity consumption: in Sina Kamala Kaufmann's stories, the world as we know it is transposed into a possible, hard-boiled future.

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**RAPHAEL THELEN,
WAR REPORTER AND JOURNALIST**

Primary Sludge

They laughed and it really pissed me off.

"Every cell, please, every microbium." The female voice murmured softly from the tree house.

The three of us lay in the soft mud. The mud pressed heavily against my body. Could my skin still breathe like this? The fine earth around me was tender and firm. I lay on my back for a long while and submerged my head in the mud. It contracted around my body, covered me densely, it gurgled somewhat hollowly; and for a short while it hushed the cackling of the two women, who were bathing about four, five metres away from me in this artificially created mud lake in the deep Polish jungle. It was unlikely that they had come here voluntarily. I emerged from the mud again and felt it on my face, heavy between my eyelashes.

Both the intestinal rehabilitation and the microbial communication training took place in the same location within the dense forest. Some people could not leave here for a long time. The mud was thick, the sun squinted through the dark green leaves, the lake lay surrounded by the trees, some of them several hundred years old, reaching far into the sky above us.

I observed the three single clouds gliding slowly across the sky. The leaves rustled above my head in the mild summer wind and finally the cell clusters behind me listened within themselves and fell silent. When I inhaled, my body was pulled to the surface by my chest, and when I exhaled, I sank further into the mud. I could clearly sense my weight and I felt my spine, my buttocks, the back of my thighs, my calves, pressing themself-

ves into the fine granules of moist, warm earth. We were lying in a mud-mix: earth from the home continent, from the Afar Depression, or the Albertine Rift, at any rate from the cradle of mankind, fine ash particles from the Japanese volcano on Cherry Blossom Island, from the Puyehue in the Andes, the Kilauea in Hawaii and the classic mud regions in Italy, from where the "fanghini" specially trained in the production of organic mud also originated. All these traditional healing earths from all over the world have been gathered here. We lay in the healing-mud-mix, and if we managed to reach a state of emptiness, to open ourselves completely, then we would become one with everything, we would perceive how our cells, our bacterial inhabitants interacted with those in the mud, we could remove our selves and become one. Are clouds empty?

If we succeeded in meditating at this sacred place of new disorder, we would return to everyday life with a further degree of freedom.

The experience of resonating on a bacterial level came very close to enlightenment.

While I continued to gaze up at the sky while lying on my back in the mud, my critical inner voice deduced that indifferent detachment and luminous omniscience were always rather difficult to distinguish from the outside.

The archaic upheaval had indeed raised some new questions. "You are neither trapped in your mind nor in your body", the soft-subliminal voice of the shaman murmured again from the tree house above the lake.

I really must be stuck in an early transition program. In a beginner's training course. Why did she still use all those words, the language and categories of white men? "Mind" – "body" – "neither nor" – she could just let her body produce true sounds

... "trapped"? She spoke to us almost as if we were binary fundamentalists and not simple practitioners. "Better lose the whole mind," my inner voice suddenly became agitated and encouraging, "a half mind only causes confusion."

The ladies next to me in the mud laughed again. I turned around, slid through the shallower mud at the edge of the lake like a crocodile and slowly moved towards the shore. I kept my head submerged up to my nose in the fine dark mass. I peered around with large, unpredictable, crocodile-like eyes.

I turned my head, from the depths of my neck, just as crocodiles do. With my hands in the soft ground, I crawled further towards the shore, saw the smooth surface of the mud up close. My belly was already touching the ground from time to time. I bent my knees, pushed the firmer ground away, and remained in the mud with my body for as long as I could. Then I placed my feet next to my body, stood up, carefully stretched my knees and emerged from the lake, covered in a layer of mud. I was startled by the length of my legs, my sudden height and the unsettlingly airy atmosphere.

I took a few steps on the solid forest ground until I reached a large moss island and laid my already drying mud-covered body on the soft moss, stretched my limbs, and heard the leaves in the treetops, now rustling even more clearly, the three clouds had changed their formation, two of the three were now almost out of sight.

TRANSLATED BY DEEPL AND REVISED BY LAURA MCALEESE
PUBLISHED BY CORY DOCTOROW ON BOING BOING



Anaïs Meier, born in Bern in 1984. She studied literary writing at the Swiss Literature Institute in Biel. In winter 2021, her debut novel *Mit einem Fuß draußen* was published by Voland & Quist. Her stories *About Mountains, People, and especially Mountain Snails* are her prose debut. She is a member of the author collective RAUF. In 2022 she was awarded the Förderpreis Komische Literatur of the Brückner-Kühner Foundation for her prose writing.

Anaïs Meier

On Mountains, People and especially on Mountain Snails

- Winner of the 2022 Literary Newcomer Prize for Comic and Grotesque Literature (Förderpreis Komische Literatur)
- Stories about Swiss culture and people with a strong ironic twist.

Anaïs Meier belongs to a young generation of German-language writers whose awareness of the present meets a critical knowledge of history; conditions are mercilessly and sharply denounced. Her texts are brash and very carefully constructed.

»Anaïs Meier surprises as a new, indeed: unheard-of voice of literary comedy. Her prose is artistically captivating, poetically dense yet light, funny yet serious. The short stories in the volume On Mountains, People and especially on Mountain Snails offer imaginative praise of folly that moves along the spectrum between commonplaces about Switzerland and lifestyle fads, skilfully satirizing diverse modes of writing.«

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»In her short stories, Anaïs Meier bluntly brings up what has been kept secret. This is surprising and delightfully funny. But she also does the opposite. She writes about the biggest Swiss clichés and eviscerates them with relish. But linguistically also completely surprisingly different. This is satire, sometimes dressed up as reportage, sometimes in the form of analytical commentary, sometimes as a satire of a scientific paper. Traditional procedures are as much the subject as new-fangled follies, lifestyle and underestimated vegetables. These short stories are everything from wryly poetic to crassly funny. Anaïs Meier is able to mine gold from everyday trash, and who can say that about themselves?«

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»It's the anti-Bärfuss view. It's the other view of Switzerland that doesn't take the liberty of summing up what's wrong with this country, but just standing next to it in the Walserian way and taking it all down.«

**LUCIEN HAUG,
PODCAST BUCH BASEL**

»I completely and utterly devoured this book and found it to be one of the best German-language texts I have read recently. Humour and not only ab- but also profundity are polyamorously married here. Happy, because they are allowed to equally unfold their validity in these little prose pearls. An exquisitely engaging writing style!«

**SOFIE STEINFEST,
ON AMAZON**

»This is brilliant. Every, really every sentence is a knife. ... I don't want to give too much away in terms of content, just this: which do you like better? The sea or the mountains? Did you grow up in the mountains or in the flat countryside? Or at the foot of the mountains? Then, according to Anaïs, you're the poorest off.«

GERTRUDE BLÜMENKOHL

»Out of the naive-simply disguised wordscape suddenly leaps a tiger, a highly complicated linguistic-philosophical proof! It's all very funny, mercilessly insightful, and so dry it makes you laugh your head off.«

MICHELLE STEINBECK

Confessions of a Morning-After Pill Popper

(Warning! This text ignores serious and important concerns regarding contraception, such as sexual violence and lack of access to contraceptives. As such, it may be regarded as thoroughly superficial, first-world, degenerate nonsense. No need to cast aspersions on the author, though.)

- 1 Prologue
- 2 The taboo of unwanted children
- 3 The concept of emergency contraception
- 4 The limitations of reliable contraception: the Immaculate Conception
- 5 Acknowledgments

1

There are four appropriate ways to write about contraception.

1. In the form of a religious exhortation written by a sixty-year old mother of thirteen with hepatitis c.
2. In the form of a brazen, raunchy essay, by a post-emancipated woman in her late thirties with red lipstick and an undetected *Ureaplasma urealyticum* infection.
3. In the form of an erotic poem by a fifty-year old pottery teacher who is sometimes troubled by genital warts.
4. In the form of diary entries by a forty-year old male gynaecologist who is travelling the world and studying traditional Chinese medicine. (The forty-year-old gynaecologist doesn't have any sexually transmitted infections, as he is always careful to protect himself on his travels. Any other way of writing about contraception is inappropriate.

2

Having unwanted children is bad news. I realised this when I was seven, watching TV with my grandparents.

The programme was for grown-ups. In the studio where it was filmed there was a blue partition behind which an adult – whose voice had been distorted – was talking about how his parents had fried him, in a frying pan, when he was a child.

When I asked my grandparents why this had happened, they just kept on looking at the TV screen and answered, in unison, "Because he was an unwanted child."

During puberty I learnt about the existence of my father's two half-sisters and my mother's half-brother.

I realised that I would never meet my grandparents on my father's side because my dad was an unwanted child. His half-sisters were the wanted children. And I learned that I would never meet my mother's half-brother because he too was an unwanted child. Unwanted children are first pan-fried, then silenced and, subsequently, disowned.

As this is unpleasant for all involved it would be better if there were no unwanted children. "So that's why it's important that the man has a good job." My grandparents told me this because I was a wanted child.

According to my grandparents, a child is wanted when the mother and father have been together in the same monogamous relationship for no less than a year; are, at the very least, engaged if not married; and share the same postal address.

When I was conceived my parents fulfilled these requirements. Except that, unfortunately, my father didn't have a good job. In fact, he didn't have a job at all. On top of that he smoked hash, typical behaviour for an unwanted child. My grandpa-

rents also explained that many unwanted children go on to take drugs and don't have good jobs.

So I realised that I didn't want to have an unwanted child. This means I'm very conscientious about contraception. One example of this is that I have never been pregnant. Unfortunately, though, I don't have a good job and I occasionally smoke hash.

3

As I said, I've never been pregnant. For years, in critical situations, I've used a relatively new option for sexually-active women who don't want to fry their children. The advantage of this is that you will almost certainly not get pregnant. The disadvantage is that you may have breakthrough bleeding and cramps which can last up to four days.

The product is commonly known as the morning-after pill or, more officially, emergency contraception. It's effective when another form of contraception – or discipline – has failed.

In Switzerland, you can get the morning-after pill at the chemist's. They will ask you, "When did you last have sexual relations?"

Their voice won't go up at the end of the sentence because the written instructions for dealing with this situation do not imply a question mark. And by the way, having sexual relations doesn't – shouldn't – have anything to do with your actual relations.

The first time I used emergency contraception was about three years after it was introduced. I had never heard of this potentially life-saving possibility for young women before and had already spent a whole day in a state of panic.

Then a friend told me that she lived with two exceptionally promiscuous nurses who frequently used this new product. (Both of whom, by the way, got pregnant young because of sexual

intercourse with people they hardly knew, despite both being wanted children, having a good job and not smoking hash). My friend and I got all het up about how debauched her flat mates were, then I went to the chemist's at the station in Bern and took my first step into the world of the morning-after pill. Since then I recognise morning-after pill women straight away. The woman's boyfriend has often come to the chemist too.

He'll be standing behind her, turned slightly away, scrutinizing the deodorants while she, eyes lowered, is whispering across the counter. When the girlfriend disappears with the chemist into a back room, the boyfriend expands his knowledge of glucose tablets.

I must say I was welcomed into the world of emergency contraception with open arms. The chemist was a pleasant woman of around fifty. After I'd taken the pill she gave me a small bouquet of roses and said, "Thank you and Happy Mother's Day." When I looked perplexed, she started to laugh and explained that it was Mother's Day today so they gave all women a bouquet of flowers.

I'm afraid my subsequent encounters were less friendly. Baden-Württemberg, 2008: In Germany, I am informed at the chemist's that the morning-after pill is only available after a medical examination. Because it is the weekend I go to St. Mary's Hospital, close to where I live. I wait for three hours in A & E before a doctor tells me he won't write me the necessary prescription because this is a Catholic hospital and the principle of emergency contraception is a sin.

I hadn't looked at it like this before.

It doesn't take me long to come to the conclusion that, in my situation, an unwanted pregnancy would be the greater sin. The Catholic hospital, however, believes I have insufficient grounds to avert the potential fertilisation of my non-believer

egg. I'm starting to get nervous because, depending on where you are in your cycle, the pill is only 100 percent effective for 24 hours after sex. After 24 hours the pill becomes less effective hour by hour. If you're close to ovulation, you need to take the pill straight away. It's a matter of a few hours.

So next I go to a hospital that doesn't have a Mary in its name. By now, it's after midnight. In this second hospital I'm told straight away that only certain gynaecologists can prescribe the pill, and there isn't one on duty. I'm getting slowly desperate and I tell them it's important I take the pill as soon as possible, to which the nurse replies that time doesn't play a role. She says you always have 63 hours during which emergency contraception will work.*

At home I ask my flat mate, a nineteen-year-old trainee nurse, if this is true. She says it is.** The next day I get an appointment with a gynaecologist who refuses to write me a prescription unless I first let him carry out a sweeping and excessively crude physical examination. For a long time after the examination I can't shake off the feeling that I've been assaulted. When I tell him that in Switzerland you can just pick up the morning-after pill at the chemist, he says that handing out emergency contraception is what results in dissolute young women like me.

Basel, 2014: Certain that in Switzerland one is not subject to the same kind of treatment as in Baden-Württemberg, I visit a chemist's called Blösi's. On the one hand it's close, on the other it has a funny name.

When I tell the assistant I need emergency contraception she starts to giggle and says she'll call the chemist. The chemist at Blösi's is hardly any older than me, but is clearly married (ring on finger) and has Christian tendencies (a cross round his neck). He tells me, immediately, and without my asking, what he thinks

of women who are always partying, going to bed with men they don't know and then popping the morning-after pill willy-nilly so they can just go out and party again.

As he hands me the tablet saying, "But don't party, party, party tonight!" and makes rhythmic movements with his clenched fist, I know that Switzerland can give Baden-Württemberg a run for its money. At Blösi's, anyway.

4

Catholic St. Mary's, the gynaecologist, and the chemist at Blösi's in Basel all have one thing in common: they believe in the Immaculate Conception. So they would be all the more pleased by the next tale, which really did happen:

In the year 1999, just before the millennium and almost exactly two thousand years after Mary – who later became the mother of God – saw an angel, the miracle of the Immaculate Conception was repeated in the parish of Schaffhausen am Rheinfall.

The protagonists of this modern-day miracle are Steffi^{***} and Manuel^{****}. They have been together for a fortnight.

On Wednesday afternoon, Manuel's mother is at work and Steffi comes round. The two strip down to their undies and then rub their lower bodies together through Steffi's Snoopy and Manuel's Batman logos. Somehow something gets wet, so afterwards they're not sure whether they were safe. Steffi goes to the supermarket with her best friend Manuela^{*****}(13) and buys a pregnancy test. The test is positive. And that's only one hour after sexual intercourse did not take place!^{*****}

Manuel is into men today (actually, he was back then too) and what became of Steffi isn't known. The staff of St Mary's, the gynaecologist in Baden-Württemberg and the chemist at Blösi's in

Basel now sing “What ay ay ay ay shame, hee hee hee hee hee, hee hee hee hee hee... heh...” in chorus as they sway gently back and forth in the nave of a church. Suddenly, the ground opens up beneath them and swallows them up. They will all be reborn as unwanted children in the next few years. Therefore I recommend the morning-after pill if in doubt. Or would you like the staff of St. Mary’s Hospital to be your children?

Exactly.

Notes:

* Which is complete bullshit. The woman had either received a pitiful education or she was malicious, or she was in cahoots with the papal mafia.

** Four months after this incident, this nurse was also pregnant.

*** Real name known to author.

**** Real name not known to author.

***** Real name not known to author.

***** Later they realised they hadn’t read the instructions properly.

5

I would like to thank Achillea, the 24-hour chemist’s at Bern station, for their humour and appreciation of the fact that a nineteen-year-old does not want to get pregnant; St. Mary’s

Hospital in Stuttgart for the interesting introduction to applied Catholicism; the gynaecologist Dr Ulrich of Ludwigsburg for his ‘whatever’ assessment of emergency contraception in Switzerland and for the realisation on my part, gained through him, that I will never set foot in his practice again; and especially Dr C.A., chemist and manager of Blösi’s in Basel, for his valuable party tips.

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BY KATE BROWN