

(He appears at CHARLOTTE's door. He greets CHARLOTTE in her native tongue.)

Guten Abend, Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE: *Guten Abend.*

DOUG: *Ich habe Deutsch gelernt, um Dein phantastisches Leben besser zu verstehen.*

CHARLOTTE: Excuse me?

DOUG: *Jetzt sollen wir Deutsch sprechen, ja?*

CHARLOTTE: You are learning to speak German?

DOUG: *Ein bisschen, ja. Ich habe mit Bertilz studiert.*

CHARLOTTE: You speak German. Me, English. I wear your clothes, and you wear mine.

DOUG: *Als das Ende des Kriegs kam, waren Sie noch im Gefängnis?*

CHARLOTTE: The Youth Penitentiary at Tegel? Nein. A miracle allowed me to escape, yes? I was serving my sentence, sitting on a combing my hair with an old ivory comb from *meine* Tante. And I heard a guard cry in the hallway:

PRISON GUARD: The Russians! They're flying over our roof!

CHARLOTTE: And it was true! Soon the bombs began to fall! The walls, they toppled down like sand castles in the tide. And the guard cried, "Run!" And so I picked up my blanket and my alarm clock, and I ran. I ran. I ran. Through the iron gates. Past the ruins of the old Jewish synagogue. And I saw on the street the large Russian tanks. And behind the tanks were coming horses with painted wagons. The Allies were coming to Berlin. And then there came a coach with the

~~officers! Decorated. Yes, yes. Russian soldiers, and they were giving loaves of bread to the people!~~

~~And it was spring! And the birds were singing in the trees! And it was an awful war.~~

~~Star~~
FINE SPENDE

(A telephone rings: short, European tones. It rings again. And again.)

ANSWERING MACHINE: *(the voice of JOHN)* "Sie haben die Wohnung von John Marks erreicht. Bitte hinterlassen Sie eine Nachricht nach dem Pfeifton."

DOUG: Are you there? Hello? Anybody home?

(a protracted beep)

DOUG: ... Christ, pick up, pick up, pick up ...

(JOHN picks up.)

JOHN: *(groggy)* Huh?

DOUG: John?

JOHN: Doug?

DOUG: Listen, I've run out of grant money, so I'm canceling my May trip. But all is not lost—I've decided to sell my car.

JOHN: You ever heard of time zones? It's four fucking a.m.

DOUG: It's an '86 Honda Civic, and I think I can get about

three thousand dollars for it. That should finance at least a month overseas, maybe more—

JOHN: Whoa, whoa, whoa. You're gonna sell your car? Don't you think you're going a little loopy?

DOUG: (*a burst of frustration*) John! . . . (*impassioned*) Don't you see? She doesn't run a museum, she is one! The rarest artifact she has isn't a grandfather clock or a Biedermeier tallboy. It's her. (*in slow, measured tones*) So, please. If I come in June, can I still crash on your floor?

(*A pause, and then DOUG speaks into his recorder, triumphantly.*)

Tape Fifteen. June 20, 1993.

(*CHARLOTTE smiles enigmatically, and gestures for DOUG to follow.*)

CHARLOTTE: Careful—you must watch the stairs. Today you follow me at your own risk. I show you *das Geheimnis*—the secret—of *meinem Grönderszeit Museum*.

(*DOUG obliges.*)

DOUG: (*into tape*) Charlotte's disappearing down a series of steps; I guess I'm supposed to go down after her. Christ, it's steep. Now we're in the basement, I think, of the house. It's dark. She's lighting a gas lamp.

(*DOUG looks about the room in wonder.*)

Holy shit. It's huge. Old-fashioned, rough-hewn tables on wrought-iron stands. Cane-back chairs. There's an enormous bar, made of oak, stocked high with glasses, liquors, and—it's porcelain, I can't quite tell, but it might be an ancient beer pump.

MULACK-RITZE

End

CHARLOTTE: Welcome to *die Mulack-Ritze*. An old tavern from the yesterday.

DOUG: The walls are mottled and old. Signs everywhere.

There's one, written in thin script on yellowed paper:

CHARLOTTE: "Prostitution Is Strictly Forbidden! At Least,

According to the Police."

DOUG: On a placard in bold type:

CHARLOTTE: "*Tanzten ist Verboten.*" Dancing is forbidden.

But we had this old phonograph—*mit einem*

Blumenrichter—and we would dance in the back, *ja?*

A long time ago, this old bar was sitting in the barn

district of Berlin on Mulackstrasse, number fifteen. From the

time of the Emperor Wilhelm II, it was a restaurant for gays

and lesbians. The owners wanted homosexuals because they

didn't get drunk, they didn't fight, and they always had

money to pay for the bill.

At this very table *haben* Bertolt Brecht, Marlene Dietrich,