

Pink Lotus

Manfred Mitze

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*Banish learning, no more grief.
Between Yes and No
How much difference?
What others fear I must fear –
How pointless!*

*People are wreathed in smiles
As if at a carnival banquet.
I alone am passive, giving no sign,
Like an infant who has not yet smiled.
Forlorn, as if I had no home.*

*Others have enough and more,
I alone am left out.
I have the mind of a fool,
Confused, confused.*

*Others are bright and intelligent,
I alone am dull, dull,
Drifting on the ocean,
Blown about endlessly.*

*Others have plans,
I alone am wayward and stubborn,
I alone am different from others,
Like a baby in the womb.*

*Lao-Tzu, Tao Te Ching ~ Confused, confused ~ T'un t'un hsi**

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Deep gratitude for lightening the flame within to

Buddha

Lao-Tzu

Osho

John de Ruiter

Eckhart Tolle

*Love and blessings to Maja, Mukta, Christina,
Andy, Thomas, and all who have touched my life story.*

Eternal Hula

My name is Maddox Hough—as in hamstringing a cut of beef from the leg, used in stewing. Sitting at Lu Min's restaurant in Lahaina one rainy night in December, I cannot avoid speculating about what I will be able to offer as an heirloom gift. In my family, there are no precious possessions, and recently the economy was slow to react to stimulation, resulting in the pitiable amount of spending money in my purse.

Even the visit to Lu Min's separates a part of me, as if I were cut with a knife. I am thinking, *we could also adopt if I am too old to even offer the tiniest bit of sperm necessary to have our own child*. I am deep in thought while Lei is sitting right next to me. She is my fiancée and named Lei because her parents recognized in their child mother nature's expression of delicate flowers.

The rain that has poured for a while stops abruptly, as if severed. Across the street, the Pacific Ocean reflects solitary stars and some virginal clouds that are lightened by a hidden moon. Small boats bob up and down in the dark, iridescent water.

A Chinese boy, probably the child of the owner's girlfriend and server at the same time, is showing off his way of dealing with an extraordinary situation. He acts up, irritating people, to pass the night away.

My initial impulse is to ask politely, “Would you like to come to our table and we do something together, like play the little golden harmonica on the golden chain around my neck?”

For a moment, it catches the brat's attention, and at the same time, I notice the white guy, who I cannot pin an age on; he feels very familiar to me.

Lei suddenly intervenes and helps to entertain the disagreeable child who is interrupting our fun and could ruin the night. The waitress mother relieves me and all other guests momentarily of her mutinous youngster.

Across from the Chinese restaurant veranda where we are sitting, guests arrive in shorts and hula shirts for the trendy and costly restaurant at the water's edge. The street asphalt is sparkling with rainwater from the recent heavy shower.

I am a sociable person, and intrigued, I ask the lonely but civilized-looking guy at the table on the other side of the aisle, “Where do you stay here?”

Since I noticed him a moment ago but was preoccupied by my thoughts and the kid, it feels like I am helping destiny on its natural path. Slowly the man turns his head and looks at me with blue eyes, his thinning hair not quite blond anymore. For a moment, it feels as if time is standing still. I am not positive whether I am making a serious mistake, or perhaps the stranger actually likes the interruption.

“I am staying at a hotel,” he says, after looking at me for a long time as if lost or unsure how to answer. “The Royal Ohana.”

At that moment, I realize that the stranger likes the attention, and I become aware of an accent. “Where are you from?”

“Originally from Germany,” he says, as if going through a ritual, “but I live in LA.”

I must confess that I am thrilled by this revelation. A German in a cheap Chinese restaurant in Lahaina at this moment is perfectly opportune. It feels and appears to be a promise of distraction and an opportunity to practice my talent and trained investigative brain.

“What part?” I continue.

“I was born near Frankfurt,” he replies.

In this rather swift exchange, we establish a prescribed procedure of getting to know each other. He seems to be a somewhat interesting, unusual person. I am certain this impression is reciprocal, that he welcomes the interruption of events this early Sunday evening.

I invite him to our table, catch a closer look at the man's features, and am surprised by his adolescent appearance. I am thinking he might be almost my age. My fiancée, Lei, appears to be rather pleased, and the boy vanishes into the background. I am able to let go of depressing thoughts and can now dig deep into my memory bank. I tell the stranger that during World War II, I spent time with the armed forces in his home country, specifically in the area he just mentioned. This confession on my part makes it easy to interact with him. I do not mention that I was in Germany because I was in the newly founded CIA as an analyst, interpreter, and evaluator for all kinds of situations and individuals. We order Japanese beer, and then my new friend talks for a long, long time.

Lu Min wants to close the place down. Lei and I have been very silently listening for a few hours, sipping on beers and experiencing how a stranger with the name Walter gently turned into an intimate acquaintance. I invite Walter for lunch at my place the next day and ask him whether it would be OK to record his story while we eat and during his visit with us. I know by

now that Lei will not object. Being a Hawaiian *wahine*, she enjoys a good, long story. Walter has many days of vacation and agrees to my offer; he appears to enjoy recounting his own life's narrative and also looks younger, fresher, and rejuvenated while doing it. We quickly say our good-byes and *mahalos*.

We continue the next day with recording.

Lei and I own a jewelry store in Lahaina. We specialize in Hawaiian heirlooms, diamonds, and Tahitian black pearls. As I mentioned before, business is not doing so well; tourists keep a tight belt while staying on Maui—in the event they even make it to Maui. Walter's arrival is a perfect distraction and helps me practice my journalistic abilities. Of course, uncertainties and doubts cross my mind—and especially Lei's because it begins to look like I am spending more time with Walter than with her. Meanwhile, she attends the store during business hours, and I operate the tape recorder while Walter tells his tale, occasionally interrupted when I ask him a question or two.

I have no idea where it will lead or whether there will be any notable outcome. It simply is a pleasure to listen to him, and for Walter, it appears as if it is an opportunity he has been waiting for.

DIRECTORY OF INDIVIDUALS

ABHIRAT ~ YOUNG AND BRITISH. CHANDRA'S LOVER
ADARSHA, MA ~ WALTER'S LANDLADY IN POONA
ANDREA, EGON, AND THEIR KIDS KATJA AND LUKAS ~ IN THE COUNTRY
ANDREAS (AVS) ~ LIAISON OFFICER IN WALTER'S ARMY UNIT AND FRIEND.
ANTHONY AND ALEXI ~ TRAVEL COMPANIONS IN IN THE EAST, TURNED LONG-TERM FRIENDS
ANTJE ~ KAVITA'S LEGAL NAME
ARIS ~ YACHT BROKER AND FRIEND IN PIRAEUS
BETTINA, HAUKE, AND WILMA ~ ACQUAINTANCES FROM THE DISCO IN BRANSFELD
BUD ~ HILDE'S LOVER IN OKLAHOMA CITY
CHANDRA ~ MOTHER OF WALTER'S THIRD CHILD
CHAKSHAN ~ HOST IN RAMESHWARAM
CHRISTEL ~ VISITOR IN VOLKER'S BIG HOUSE
CLAIRE, ELISABETH, WENDY ~ THREE WOMEN IN OKLAHOMA CITY.
CLAUDIA ~ HILDE'S DAUGHTER WITH KURT. HER THIRD CHILD
DAGMAR ~ ARRIVES WITH MARKUS, IS INTERESTED IN WALTER
DENISE ~ GIRLFRIEND WITH BABY.
DENISE HAUCK ~ ANDREAS'S GIRLFRIEND—OR NOT?
DIETER AND ANNE ~ HILDE'S FRIENDS WHO ALSO BECAME WALTER'S FRIENDS. THE TWO COUPLES DID A LOT OF SOCIALIZING TOGETHER.
EDELGARD ~ CHANDRA'S RESEARCH SPONSOR
ELISABETH ~ RED LIPS, WHITE BLOUSE, LARGE BOSOM. FRIENDLY GIRL, DAUGHTER OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD PUB OWNER.
ELIZABETH ~ FROM FRANCE. MEETS WALTER IN GOA
ERZEBET AND GASPAR ~ EMIGRANTS FROM HUNGARY. ROOMMATES AND LONG-TERM FRIENDS.
ESHANA ~ SANNYAS NAME OF MONIKA
EVELYN ~ FIRST LOVE, INTENSELY. SCHOOLMATE OF WALTER'S.
FRANKIE ~ FELLOW PATIENT IN THE HOSPITAL
FRAU GRETE MUELLER ~ BEST FRIEND OF WALTER'S MOTHER. SOMETIMES HIS BABY-SITTER AND MORE.
FRIEDER ~ LEGAL NAME OF CHANDRA AND WALTER'S SON
FRIEDRICH HERZOG ~ HIS "FATHER."
GERHARD ~ IRENE'S BOYFRIEND AND CHESS PLAYER FOR MONEY.
GERHARD ~ WALTER'S TRADE SCHOOL CLASSMATE TURNED FRIEND.
GERLINDE KIRSCH ~ INTELLECTUAL ACQUAINTANCE OF WALTER
GIL ~ CUSTOMER IN THE CAFÉ WHO IS FRIENDLY TOWARDS WALTER
HANNCHEN ~ ONE OF FRIEDRICH'S NIECES AND **KLAUS** ~ HANNCHEN' SPOUSE
HANS ~ BOMBAY LUFTHANSA OFFICE
HASMUKH, SWAMI PREM ~ WALTER'S FIRST SANNYAS NAME
HEDDA ~ KLARA'S GIRLFRIEND. CLASSMATE
HELMUT AND PERCY ~ TWO SWEET ACQUAINTANCES.
HILDE ~ WALTER'S LONG-TIME PARTNER, MOTHER OF TWO CHILDREN. CONFIDANT.
IRENE ~ HILDE'S BEST FRIEND IN FRANKFURT. ALSO BECAME WALTER'S FRIEND AND CONFIDANTE.
JAAN, SWAMI ANAND ~ WALTER'S SECOND SANNYAS NAME

JOHANNES ~ HILDE AND WALTER'S SON. SECOND CHILD
KAETHE MUELLER ~ GRETE'S DAUGHTER. TALL, SLIM, LARGE BREASTS, MANY BOYFRIENDS, AND OCCASIONALLY WALTER'S SITTER.
KARIN ~ WHO LIVED NEAR TRIER
KIERSTEN ~ BEAUTIFUL, BLOND, AND CARING DANISH WOMAN
KLARA ~ GASPAR'S NEW GIRLFRIEND
KNUT ~ BAKER AND NANNY
KURT ~ ARTIST. WALTER'S SUCCESSOR WITH HILDE
LALITYA, ALKA, PARICHARA, KAYA ~ SANNYASIN WOMEN WHO BECAME FRIENDLY WITH HASMUKH
LARS ~ FELLOW TRAVELER, THE EXPLORERS MET IN BHADRA, INDIA
LINA ~ SWEETHEART OF A WOMAN WHO LOVED WALTER. OPA MITTLER'S SECOND WIFE.
LISA FROM LOS ANGELES ~ PERKY, CURLY. IN AND OUT.
LISA HERZOG ~ HIS MOTHER.
MADELEINE ~ WALTER'S FIRST INTIMATE GIRLFRIEND FOR SOME TIME.
MADIR ~ DEALER IN SIDNEY
MAGDA ~ WALTER AND HILDE'S DAUGHTER. FIRST BORN CHILD
MANUELA ~ AND HER DAUGHTER AGNES IN GRUENEBURGPARK
MARGARETHA ~ LOVES WALTER. HE LOVES HER
MARKUS ~ STUDENT OF THE LAW. FREQUENT VISITOR AT WESTENDSTRASSE
MELANIE ~ AFFILIATED WITH THE INFORMATION SERVICE
NELSON ~ LAWYER'S SON AND ACTIVIST.
NIMISHA, SARANGO ~ ROOMMATES WITH BABY IN HAMBURG
NIRVESHA ~ MARGARETHA'S SANNYAS NAME
OLOF ~ KAVITA'S FATHER
Opa MITTLER ~ LINA'S FATHER, WALTER'S GRANDFATHER. GRUMPY OLD MAN.
PARMESH ~ FRIEDER'S SANNYAS NAME
PHIL ~ GI TURNED HIPPIE FROM THE BRONX. ORIGINALLY PUERTO RICO.
PUNITAM ~ HOUSE OWNER OF THE SMALL COMMUNE IN WOHLTORF
RAIMUND ~ FRIEND AND VOLUNTEER AT THE INFORMATION SERVICE
RAINER ~ BUSINESS-SCHOOL CLASSMATE AND FRIEND.
RAKKASA ~ HASMUKH'S BELOVED FOR QUITE SOME TIME
RONALD ~ IMPRESSIVE GUITAR PLAYER. QUIET HELP IN THE CAFÉ
RUTH ~ WERNER PICK'S WIFE
SAMIT ~ SWISS SWAMI. DID NOT HAND OVER THE FUNDS FOR HASMUKH
SANDOR ~ HUNGARIAN HAPPENING ARTIST. ONE-MAN-BAND
SAROJA, TANYA, MICHAEL, HARSHINI, YOGESH ~ OF THE HOISBUETTEL COMMUNE
SILKE ~ MOTHER OF A TWO-YEAR-OLD AND PREGNANT AGAIN
SUDHA, MA YOGA ~ FAVORITE THERAPIST
SUSANNE ~ LISA HERZOG'S SISTER WITH WHOM SHE GREW UP IN FRANKFURT.
UDGATA ~ FELLOW STUDENT OF CHANDRA
ULRIKE, SHEIK, BERT ~ COUNTRY DWELLERS
VOLKER ~ FOUNDER OF ANOTHER LAND COMMUNE
WALDEMAR ~ NEW AGE LANDLORD OF THE FAMILY IN HAMBURG
WALTER HERZOG ~ THIS BOOK IS A TRUE STORY ABOUT FIFTY YEARS OF HIS LIFE.
WERNER PUCK ~ FIRST, FRIEND OF RAINER'S, THEN WALTER'S BEST FRIEND

Pink Lotus

Walter Herzog was born in a small town near Marburg, in the state of Hessen, about fifty miles north of Frankfurt. Looking back at his life, one can only say that it was and is like a dream—a dream filled with the spectrum of all colors imaginable; a life full of love, drama, and fear, with inner richness but disenfranchised. It was a life and existence of courage on the verge of desperation, as if madness tried to find guidance through him. He experienced deep depression, loneliness, and indescribably awesome bliss.

From when he was born in the forties of the last century until the year 2000 may not seem like a long time, but to remember standing at the crossroads of a small town in the middle of Western Germany when John F. Kennedy was assassinated seems like the brink of eternity.

Walter had been locked up; had survived stabbing; was spit on, yelled at, and cursed; and had stuff thrown at him. One Sunday morning, however, he was fortunate enough to ask a true question at the proper moment.

Tree leaves had already fallen to the ground after turning red and yellow. It was a melancholy season in Germany, with a certain smell ascending from the soil: putrid leaves on wet earth. A symbol for some that winter and death are close, the darkness in the Nordic hemisphere may cause sadness to rise in people and some to develop depression. On a gray day, a boy made his way through his mother's birth canal with a little help from a doctor and some midwives. No complication occurred during the delivery process except the unfavorable time and place into which Walter Herzog was born.

Everybody was very quiet during postnatal care, and soon Lisa Herzog needed to go home and try to get food for the newborn baby and herself. Germany was defeated, crushed to the ground, bombed, and the Allies had dismantled all major industrial factory equipment and shipped it abroad for others' use. Germany's infrastructure had been destroyed by British and American bombing and by fighting on the ground. Twelve months after the end of the war in Europe, it still took seventy-two hours to travel by rail from Munich to Hamburg. Heavy war reparations had to be paid by the remaining Germans.

The alleged father of the baby, Friedrich Herzog, had yet to return from a prison camp in Russia. When the Russians released him back to Germany in 1947, he could not work in his own bakery because of his membership in Hitler's National Socialistic Democratic Party, the Waffen SS, and the Sturm Abteilung.

Of great significance in Walter's life was his unawareness of Friedrich not being his biological father. Walter did not think differently until much later, when he turned fifty, and that happened long after his parents' demise. The reality they made him believe was that they conceived him during one of Herzog's honor visits at home, when the Russians let him leave for a vacation to see his wife for a few days.

Frau Herzog was not happy about any of it. Another child at that time presented only predicaments for her. She had no love left, being in pain from everything in her life. The death of her first child only four months earlier, the war, the end of the war, the grim and hopeless-looking future, and her husband in Russia were devastating conditions. Her own need to feel loved resulted in this pregnancy, and the prevalent emotion was guilt. Her wounds from the death of her firstborn had not healed. The death triggered mental impairments that would never mend; she remained broken until her sad ending. Walter's presence continually reminded her of her sexual indiscretion during her husband's absence. The never-ending efforts to feed and take care of the bastard overwhelmed her, and she unconsciously blamed the child for being a burden, even though the aberration happened only as a result of existential survival mechanisms. The fact that Walter developed into the sweetest boy one can imagine, with large blue eyes and fine features, made her even more ashamed when watching him. He reminded her of the hours spent with the good-looking foreign lover.

Walter's first memories were of bakery aromas coming up the stairs into the modest Herzog apartment. Freshly baked loafs of rye bread coated with water by a wide brush emitted steam and particular fragrances that Walter relished. He also remembered how he placed sugar cubes outside on the windowsill; Walter badly wanted a brother or sister. He was told that sugar cubes would help bring about his wish. Although he tried a lot, brother and sister never arrived.

His parents gave him a used tricycle with solid, hard rubber tires on metal rims. He made his way back and forth on the sidewalks and around the corner down Erbsenberg Hill, pushing the cycle up the hill and greeting the neighbor with a huge mustache.

On one of those occasions, he saw his father, who had returned from Russia, leaning against the house next to the big pile of wood he had been splitting with an ax. He seemed to be in pain, and his left hand was all bloody and wrapped in a piece of cloth. Then Walter saw that Friedrich Herzog had just lost half of his left thumb. For a few moments, the boy froze in panic and became sick to his stomach. Somehow, he managed to race up the hill, around the corner, and up the stairs to the kitchen into his mother's apron.

During his bike rides along the sidewalks of his immediate neighborhood, Walter encountered the presence of the victorious American forces. Army platoons went down Main Street, maneuvering troops and machinery through town. They created a lot of noise with their jeeps and large tanks. For the first time in Walter's life, he met black people face-to-face. The Americans tossed chocolate bars and chewing gum from their armored vehicles and waved back with smiling faces. Walter loved them immediately.

Local authorities made sure that Walter's father could not run his own business for the next ten years because of his involvement with the Nazis. He got a job at a bakery where the son also became a frequent visitor because the bakery owners were caring, friendly people. Sitting at the long kitchen table with all the employees, everybody had lunch together, like an alternate family. Most of the workers came from Eastern European countries, decimated by the dramatic events of the recent war.

The Herzogs moved into a small apartment with kitchen, tiny living room, and one bedroom on top of an electric-appliances store. All three rooms, as well as the lavatory, were separated by a long, large hallway. With no bathroom, the family used a large zinc bucket instead and had to clean themselves in the kitchen. At night in bed, Walter would hold a blanket in his hands and slowly pull the edge of the blanket through his mouth from one side to the other and then back again, while chewing on his right or left thumb at the same time. A special scent from the starched saliva developed on the blanket rim. It had a soothing effect on the boy. Both of his thumbs developed somewhat larger right in the middle of the lower joint, and after some time a callus layer built up due to the constant rubbing of teeth on skin.

Next door was a little public park with sandpit, large trees, and grassy area. Walter became friends with other children by playing in the sandpit. They invited him to their homes for some sweet stuff or fresh juice.

Everything was nearby in the small town. He could visit his father in the bakery and also walk to neighbors' homes. Behind the apartment and electric-appliances store, a very large, uncultivated garden stretched for a quarter of a mile, with berry bushes, fruit trees, and all kinds of unexpected things to discover. At some point, the owner must have owned a construction business. A mysterious shed was off limits for the boy, and all kinds of slowly rusting equipment had been dumped on the property. It presented daily adventures for Walter, roaming around the bushes, trees, and equipment on the estate. At the same time, it was a challenge to avoid the owner, who did not want anybody to pick apples, quinces, cherries, or berries from his trees or bushes. The apples, gooseberries, red currants, and cherries tasted very delicious when ripe. Beyond the fence surrounding the property flourished many weeping willows, and a river with greenish water ran through it.

In winter in Germany, it could become very cold, with lots of snow. Small ponds and frozen river backwater gave the kids space to enjoy the cold season. Every day after homework, it was time to go outdoors in snow and ice. Walter's parents gave him used, old-fashioned ice skates that he had to screw onto his boots. Much more fun was riding on the sleigh. It was very thrilling and sometimes dangerous to rush down a hill covered with trees and make it through them. All the neighborhood kids did it endlessly until it became dark.

Summers were hot and whenever possible were spent in the public swimming facility, the Ohm River, which ran around the town. Walter went there with his parents; Frau Mueller, his mother's best friend; and Frau Mueller's daughter, Kaethe, with her various boyfriends. It was great fun to spend a little time with his father, who would go with him into the river. Walter could not swim yet; the water was deep, cold, and had a current. Friedrich let him sit on his shoulders or kept him close between his arms, and they played games for some time. He would let go of him and catch him, teasing the shrieking Walter.

Walter loved the world. In summertime there were always many Maybeetles flying around or climbing in trees. The brown, fat, shiny beetles would eat leaves, and the kids were allowed to shake the trees and collect them. It was much fun to keep them in shoeboxes with small holes punched in them, then feed the beetles until they really stunk and Mother or Father would throw them out. By then, most of the beetle collection had already died.

Very few incidents disturbed those peaceful, joyful first six years of Walter's life. One of these incidents occurred when he noticed other children with small leather bags loosely dangling

around their necks. He became fascinated by them and wanted one for himself. Naturally, he also was curious to find out where the children went with satchels around their necks. His mother told him they were going to kindergarten. So Walter wanted to go to kindergarten and wanted a bag like the others. He paid a visit to the neighborhood leather-goods store and convinced the owner that it would be OK to give him one; his parents surely would pay for it later. Of course, the sales clerk gave it to him smilingly, and his mother returned the purse immediately. Then Frau Mueller took Walter by the hand and walked with him to the kindergarten to test him on the subject of attending. At the point when they entered the building and Walter heard children shouting through the closed door, a great panic overcame him, and he would not go inside. Walter just froze on the spot, and nobody could convince him to enter that room.

The same panic returned three years later, on his first day of school. But then he was not allowed to go back home.

The year 1954 was an important one for the Germans when the national soccer team won the World Cup by coming back from two goals down to defeat Hungary. Walter remembered how extremely exciting it was to sit around the radio and listen to the moderator. When it was over, he yelled out of the window with joy.

Lisa Herzog and "Father"

Friedrich Herzog had been born in 1908 in a small village in the state of Hessen. He was one of eight children growing up on a small farm when it was the custom that the firstborn male takes over the family business. Since Friedrich did not inherit the farm, he became an apprentice in a bakery. Times were tough in Germany, with an increasingly high number of unemployed. As a result of the unemployment, frustration, and people's needs, Adolf Hitler's organizations grew very strong in the early 1930s. They not only offered ideological content, but provided work, clothing, and food. Friedrich joined them.

About six feet tall, hook-nosed, and black-haired, he was a gentle soul if not provoked. He treated Walter with care, and only occasionally, when Lisa distressed him for some reason, complaining and whining about Walter, did he rush after him, grab, and beat him fiercely. Friedrich used his hands; Lisa usually grabbed a coat hanger or wooden cooking spoon. She broke countless of those on Walter's back and behind. It also happened frequently that his father hit him in the face because his mother put too much pressure on her husband. Friedrich could take tension, but only to a point, and then he needed relief—and that was usually his son. After a while, he would feel guilty, almost apologizing, and sometimes he even wept. During those moments, a bond and understanding developed between father and son, resulting in a relationship in which the third person, Lisa, was transformed into an outsider.

Lisa had been a beautiful woman with hazel eyes and wavy brunette hair. What did Frau Herzog really do when her husband was detained in one of Russia's prisoner-of-war camps after World War II? Could it be that she tried to enjoy life in one of Frankfurt's nightclubs, where local girls went to have some fun with American soldiers? It will stay a mystery. She never told her son. She confided in nobody except possibly Frau Mueller, but then again, maybe not even her.

Walter never really understood or knew what was driving his mother until he was able to forgive her completely. She and her sister, Susanne, who was two years older, had grown up in Frankfurt with a railroad-worker father, who was a discordant, irritable person most of his life, and a mother she had dearly loved but who passed away much too early. After her mother's death, her father married Lina, a friendly and compassionate person. Through the marriage, the

two combined owned a respectable number of smaller agricultural properties in the garden farmland suburb of Oberrad. The girls had to start working early. Lisa became a tailor after completing junior high school. She was thirty-four years old when she conceived Walter.

First Changes

Grete Mueller, originally from Pomerania, which had been annexed by Poland and then Russia, had escaped the Russian troops occupying that part of her country. Her status in Germany was that of a refugee; the German government provided her with a pension. She had a daughter, Kaethe, a tall, slender, brown-haired girl. Often Walter reluctantly had to spend time with them because his mother was busy with something. The Mueller home was about twenty minutes' walking distance from where Walter lived. They rented rooms in a farmhouse that stood between railroad tracks on one side and fields and meadows on the other side. The land belonged to the working farmer's family, which occupied the downstairs floor and kept livestock in a large stable.

One day Walter made his usual trip up a hill, crossed the railroad tracks by a bridge, and then went down the road along the tracks toward the last building. When he arrived, he found that Frau Mueller was not at home. Kaethe and her girlfriend, the farmer's daughter, had to take care of him. They wanted him to come outside and play. Of course Walter went with them; he did not want to sit alone in the Mueller's' one and only large room. As it happened, Kaethe and friend directed Walter to the railroad tracks. The steep and densely overgrown embankment area provided a great place to play hide and seek.

Suddenly, both girls stopped in a clearing in the brush and told Walter to join them. He tentatively moved to them, and Kaethe said, "We want you to do something for us, but you are not allowed to tell anybody. If you tell, you will be punished the rest of your life."

Of course, Walter did not want to be punished at all. So he asked, "Yes, what do you want me to do?"

Kaethe took his hand and said, "You have to touch my spot; it makes me feels good."

Walter did not know what her spot was and let her take his right hand. She pulled at the elastic band of her black pants and then widened the gap of her panties. She guided Walter's hand into the opening and then below, to something that to Walter felt like his father's chin because of the growths. He was scared and dazed, but Kaethe insisted that he keep on touching, and so Walter did. It felt extremely peculiar and outlandish to him. What he touched was not a developed female organ, just a young girl's crevice between her legs. For Walter, the experience

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