

Chapter 1

Dorothy Winslow turned the bedside table light on and gently shook her niece, Lucy.

“Lucy, dear, you need to get up,” she whispered. “But don’t wake the children...” Trotsky, who always slept upstairs when Lucy’s husband, Klaus Tischler, was away on business, wagged his tail at Dorothy, then settled down again with a sigh. Lucy squinted at the clock next to her bed.

“What’s the matter, Aunt Dot?” she asked, yawning. “It’s two o’clock in the morning.”

“There’s an elderly gentleman wearing a beret sitting in the armchair next to the fire in the sitting room,” said Dorothy. Lucy sat up, now wide awake.

“A beret? Oh, dear. That’ll be Klaus’s Uncle Peter. He’s a bit eccentric. He sometimes just turns up here, though not normally this late. This was his house, you see, so he has a key to everything. I’d better go and make sure he’s all right and then phone his home to say he’s safe. He has a live-in nurse, you see.”

“No,” said Dorothy. “You need to call a doctor. He’s dead.”



Uncle Peter was buried a week later in the Tischler family grave, just above his parents and next to his brother. Lucy stood with Klaus

beret [ˈberɛɪ]

• Baskenmütze

elderly [ˈɛldəli]

• älter

live-in nurse

[ˌlɪv ɪn ˈnɜːs]

• 24-Stunden-Pfleger(in)

settle down

[ˌsetl ˈdaʊn]

• hier: sich hinlegen

sigh [saɪ]

• Seufzer

squint [skwɪnt]

• blinzeln

turn up

[tɜːn ˈʌp] *ifml.*

• auftauchen

wag: ~ one’s tail

[wæɡ]

• mit dem Schwanz wedeln

whisper [ˈwɪspə]

• flüstern

yawn [jɔːn]

• gähnen

and the rest of the close family at the front, while Dorothy stayed at the back with her friend from the village, Armin von Weiden, and learned about the relatives.

“Peter was a bachelor,” Armin told her quietly. “But his brother, Fritz — Klaus’s father — and his sisters all had children.”

“Lucy and Klaus don’t talk about them much. Is there a reason?” asked Dorothy.

“Fritz was close to Peter, but not to the sisters, Gertrude and Evangelina. Gertrude — she’s the one with the dyed blonde hair — married a Herr Grüber, who worked for a pharmaceutical company, and they spent a lot of time in America. They came back to Germany when he retired, but then he died shortly afterwards. Klaus said Herr Grüber’s heart just gave up when he realized he was going to be spending all his time with Gertrude.”

“Oh, dear! Children?”

“Living in Houston. Apparently, they barely speak German any more.”

“And Evangelina?”

“She’s standing next to Gertrude. She was an English teacher — not a very good one — at a Gymnasium in Speyer and is married to Herr Steinherz, who worked for the tax office. They have two children, who must be in their late thirties now. I once had to rescue Klaus from them when they were small, at some family party of



apparently

[əˈpærəntli]

• anscheinend

bachelor [ˈbætʃələ]

• Junggeselle

barely [ˈbeəli]

• kaum

dyed [daɪd]

• gefärbt

Exercise 1: Comprehension

Read these statements about Peter Tischler.

Are they true or false?

- | | t | f |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. He died in Lucy and Klaus's home in the middle of the night. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. He had a key to the house and had let himself in. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. He owned the house and had previously lived there for many years. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. He had been in hospital, cared for by doctors and nurses. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. He wanted the family to sell his former home and make a lot of money. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Exercise 2: Typical mistakes

Evangelina Steinerherz is described as “an English teacher — not a very good one”. Maybe you noticed some typical German mistakes in her English? In these pairs of sentences, one was said by Evangelina and one is a corrected version. Tick the correct sentence.

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1. A. You must introduce yourself and shake the hands. | <input type="radio"/> |
| B. You must introduce yourself and shake hands. | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. A. That's how to do it in England. | <input type="radio"/> |
| B. So you do it in England. | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. A. What for was he coming here? | <input type="radio"/> |
| B. What was he coming here for? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. A. He told Peter many times. | <input type="radio"/> |
| B. He told Peter much times. | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. A. He could make big profit. | <input type="radio"/> |
| B. He could make a big profit. | <input type="radio"/> |



Chapter 2

The next day, Lucy and Klaus came back with long faces after speaking to Uncle Peter's lawyer. It was true: there was no sign of a will.

“What I can't understand,” said Klaus, “is that Uncle Peter kept on telling me he was going to write a will and give it to me to look after. In the end, it seems he never did, though. He was very forgetful in the last year or so, and I didn't want to ask him myself. The trouble is that we simply can't afford to buy out Gertrude and Evangelina.”

“What about the flat he lived in?” Dorothy asked. “If you gave up your share of it to them, couldn't they give up this house?”

Klaus shook his head. “This land with four new houses on it would be worth an awful lot of money. I had no idea how much. It's very sad, but we'll have to move. I don't see any alternative.”

“Well, at least you'll profit from the sale.”

“Not really,” said Klaus. “We'll have to put any money it generates into buying a new house, which can never be as nice as this one. And of course, while we're waiting for the new houses to be built and

look after sth.

[lok 'ɑ:ftə]

→ sich um etw.

kümmern