Who Is Protecting Whom

An excerpt from The German Killer by Torsten Schönberg

In the satirical Vienna of The German Killer, Yuri Sonnenburg and his friend George are caught up in a murder case and threatened with deportation to Germany. His younger sister Máša, known as Mascha Sonnenburg in the music project, has ideas of her own about their fictional group, the Rebel Piefkes. When Yuri promises to protect her, she turns the question back on him.

The novel uses Máša and Yuri for the siblings, known as Mascha and Juri in the music project. George and the Rebel Piefkes follow the English book text.

Excerpt from the English book text

Máša stepped forward and crossed her arms over her chest. “Alright, people, that’s enough. Enough is enough! We’ve spent far too much time focused on ourselves. Congratulations!” Máša had leaned back against the wall on her bed, picking small stones out of the soles of her combat boots and tossing them against the window. “The murderer is still on the loose, and deportation to Germany is looming. Can someone please tell me what the plan is now?” She looked back and forth between George and me. “That clown with the black top hat gave me a work schedule and told me to report to the industrial kitchen. Apparently, I’m supposed to work as a server in the dining hall and provide him with regular updates. I have no idea what he meant by that. But let me be clear — I’m not working. I’m on vacation.”

I grabbed the schedule to take a quick look at it. Why was Markovic handing out work schedules? Kucera was still the deputy manager of the industrial kitchen. “You’re not giving Markovic any information. Do you understand me? George and I will protect you from him.”

Máša raised an eyebrow and smirked sarcastically. “He looked pretty dangerous. How exactly are YOU going to protect me? You were just about to shove Judith into his arms. And wasn’t there another little detail? I believe it’s called: DEPORTATION.”

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"Nonsense. No one’s getting deported. This will all get sorted out," I tried to calm the situation, though the uncertainty in my voice betrayed me.

Máša snorted. "In the event of your deportation, I suppose I’ll have to cut my vacation short. I’ll take over the strategic and technical leadership of the Rebel Piefkes on a part-time basis, if you politely ask me. As an intimate jewelry designer with my hardcore life experience from Grebendorf, I have all the qualifications necessary to run your little club here in the Austrian backwater."

George furrowed his brow and let out a dry laugh. "Listen to that. Greenhorn."

I smirked, even though the situation felt serious. Somehow, I was proud of my sister. Sure, you could tell she was still clueless as a Rebel Piefkes rookie, but she was right. We had to take the looming deportation to Germany seriously and finally solve the murder case. Inspector Paradeiser was fixated on the idea of getting us out of his pristine Viennese world for good. I took a deep breath and sat back down on the bed. "Alright, we need a plan. We have to find out who the real murderer is. And we have to do it before time runs out."

Torsten Schönberg: The German Killer, chapter “Máša Sonnenburg”. Excerpt from the author’s English book text. © Torsten Schönberg. The title of this reading sample is an editorial addition.

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