

# Short Cuts

## **Don't Call Me Marlowe**

### **Preface**

"So, you're a screenwriter, Mr. Chandler?"

"Yeah, have written a good-selling novel, Mr. Maurer. But I'm working as a screenwriter for Hollywood now."

"Well, I'm not that good with novels. And Hollywood and its movies? Well, if you ask me? Hollywood is a shitty neighborhood, and the movies are corrupt lies. I work as a private investigator, but this Los Angeles of the movies I have not seen any day. Not to talk about my work as a private investigator. I would appreciate it if anyone had the guts to show the real reality of L.A. as well as the real work as a private investigator."

He was what one could call an acquaintance from the bar. I had seen him a few times before, but we had not talked before this time. Yeah, dressed up in a fine style, sharp shoes, he would match Hollywood and all these puffed-up egos.

"Let's see, maybe I will write a novel one day, with a private dick - in the new hard-boiled manner of Dashiell Hammett? The war will soon be over, and I think that this will change a lot."

Yeah, the war, the fucking Nazis. Why did we have to die to solve the European problems? They had screwed it up - appeasement, what a shit! And the insane Nips? Not much better, even worse! Yeah, we would have soon won the war, but at what price? And the fucking Germans? It would be best to little them forever, these racist swines.

## **Don't Call Me Marlowe**

### **It's Dark, And By No Means A Game**

#### **Waiting for a Case**

I sat in my office, Happy New Year!, my small office with no secretary and no anteroom, and waited for a case. Not that I had no success, whatever one would define as success. I had not built up a big detective agency with many guys working for me, a considerable anteroom, and a fucking hot secretary - blond or a redhead, whatever you would prefer. But, over the decades in this job, I had a few big and spectacular cases and had made my money. The last few years hadn't been that "thrilling". Well, I started to get old, liked my independence all the more - I had enough to make my living.

Some more years, I thought, some more years and I would retire. Would I end up as a night watchman or even a porter? Whatever, looking at my country today, my state, my city? It felt like it all would turn crazier with every day. Okay, we had won the war. We had defeated the fucking Nazis, totally. The Nips, the Nips had been more difficult, but we had the bomb, and we used it twice. But now it had started with the Russians, and our main interest now was to hunt communists. I hated communists. I really hated them. I saw no difference between a communist and a Nazi. But, to label everyone who does not agree with you as a communist seemed a bit too easy. That had the smell of a dictatorship.

Okay, maybe I was biased? Living in California, Los Angeles even? However, not everyone living in California or Los Angeles had to be a liberal or even a communist. Sure, Hollywood was a fucking corrupt institution, and all the glamour was only a facade. But, Los Angeles was more than

Hollywood, much more, much more than the white surfer boys and girls from the magazines, songs, and TV. And I lived in this other Los Angeles, the real Los Angeles, the heart and soul of Los Angeles. And I was proud of.

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I sat in my office, Happy New Year!, my small office with no secretary and no anteroom, and waited for a case. Not that I had no success, whatever one would define as success. I had not built up a big detective agency with many guys working for me, a considerable anteroom, and a fucking hot secretary - blond or a redhead, whatever you would prefer. But, over the decades in this job, I had a few big and spectacular cases and had made my money. The last few years hadn't been that "thrilling". Well, I started to get old, liked my independence all the more - I had enough to make my living.

Some more years, I thought, some more years and I would retire. Would I end up as a night watchman or even a porter? Whatever, looking at my country today, my state, my city? It felt like it all would turn crazier with every day. I had made a mistake. I had viewed the CNN webpage while sitting at my desk in front of the screen. A major earthquake in Japan, fears of a tsunami - wow, not the former wannabe dictator who headlined the webpage or the "migrant crisis" at our southern border. But of course, it would only be a matter of time before we returned to normal. It was challenging to see what happened in the nation, as if it would be important who wins the GOP primaries. It was essential that the candidate, whoever it was, not win the next presidential election. That was the only thing that counted. Every of these "conservative" candidates would be a threat to our democracy. It would be essential that the GOP has to learn the lesson that the nation as a whole, not single fundamentalist states, was not willing to follow their way into dictatorship. It would become a very crucial year in 2024 for the nation.

Okay, maybe I was biased? Living in California, Los Angeles even? However, not everyone living in California or Los Angeles was a "liberal". California and Los Angeles could be very conservative. We still held firm on the death penalty, even if it was not executed for now because of "technical" problems. Good old Arnold, the man from Austria, like Adolf, had no concerns about the execution of a 76-year-old man, blind, and sitting in a wheelchair. Would the Terminator have been hard enough to do the lethal injection by himself? But, Los Angeles was more than this. And I lived in this other Los Angeles, the real Los Angeles, the heart and soul of Los Angeles. And I was proud of.

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The doorbell of the office rang. As I said, I had no anteroom. The door to the office, an opaque glass door, was the former door of a condo. In fact, it still was so.

I could buy this condo for a reasonable price some decades ago - well, not in the best neighborhood, some would say. I redesigned the first room into an office and replaced the former wooden entrance door with a glassy one. The wooden door to my left, when sitting at the desk, led to the rest of the condo, where I lived. They had accepted it as I moved in, and that was still the case. It was very practical for me. It was a short way to my workplace, and it was cheap.

I stood up to open the door, curious about who would be in the hallway. A new case, earning some money, wouldn't be bad. Wasn't short of money, but living in the city wasn't cheap either. I opened the door.

## **Memories**

### **Sugar in Dover**

When I was eighteen, I spent some time in England, my first large trip without my parents. On the plane to London, I stayed for a few days in London before traveling by train to Dover. I was a longer time in Dover, not sure about the exact timespan, but two weeks in any case. Then by train back to London, again a few days in London, back to Germany by plane.

Well, it might be that this sounds not very thrilling, but for such an insecure person like me, it was a very demanding issue. I was proud that I did it and that I could handle it, but it was also very stressful. And, of course, some things went wrong. I ran into difficulties not only once or twice. With a pack of sugar, for instance.

I was in Dover, Bed & Breakfast, it was a simple room in a typical, small, English terraced house. They were surprised that I stayed so long and asked if I were for business here, if a company would pay for me. But the landlady was a nice woman - the second person I saw there was presumably her son.

Well, I had an electric kettle in my room, and I liked tea already at that time. So I had bought myself some tea and a pack of sugar - two pounds or so. As I prepared to drive back to London, I had a lot of sugar left, and I wasn't sure what to do with it. Well, what about simply asking the pleasant landlady if she could use it? But, that would mean that I would have to address her. And, even more difficult, what if she refused the offer? I was in severe trouble.

But, I found a solution. I poured the sugar into the sink in my room and tried to flush it down. It functioned well for a moment, but then the disaster started - the sink clogged! I started to get panicky. Should I say something, or better not? Should I try to leave, hoping that she would not see it before I was gone? However, how humiliating would it have been to tell the landlady what I had done? I endeavored to find a solution.

The tube of the sink was connected to a tube that led to the next room, which was my restroom. I entered the restroom, looked at the situation, and asked myself if it would possibly help to flush the toilet. I had no clear idea in what way, but a feeling for physics told me that maybe it could help. So I flushed the toilet. And in fact, back in my room, I saw some change in the situation in the sink. The water was gone! Only some sugar was still in it. I flushed the remaining sugar carefully down the sink, and it was done!

I was exhausted, and I mean exhausted. It had cost me a lot of energy to handle this situation - what a stupid situation! The problem? Such moments happened constantly, and they definitely did not help me become a more confident person. Let's talk about the famous "Dover Sole" the next time.

### **Arnold & Maurer**

#### **Small Town Pleasure**

"Nice, isn't it?"

"What, the new year?"

"Well, sitting in the diner in our nice small town? What about that, just enjoying the moment?"

"Sitting in a diner? I can also do it in the big city?"

"Yeah, Mr. City Slicker! You're still one of these boring metropolitan guys - at least from time to time. What about the clear blue sky, the woods, and the snowy mountains? What do you see sitting in a diner in your big city? The next crossing?"

"Los Angeles is surrounded by water and mountains. And behind the mountains is the desert. Some of all!"

"Yeah, show me the woods! And, you really see this all while sitting in a diner? Are you kidding me?"

"No, of course not. You're right. This is a sight you will never ever find in Los Angeles. And not only if sitting in a diner."

"So, you're still satisfied that you're no longer living in the big city?"

"Sure, so much is easier here - and the people are definitively more relaxed. And if needed, it's not such a long trip to the big city. But I have to confess, less and less I have this feeling to return, even for a limited time."

"Yeah, Peter! You will wake up one day, and you will discover that you have transformed into a real small-towner."

"Would be a day definitively not to be sad - back to the office?"

"I would have to do some shopping?"

"Okay. See you later, Linda."

"See you, Peter."

## **Surrealistic Pillow**

### **Wishing Well**

"You don't get it?"

"Okay, I can wish me whatever I want, it will happen. Fine, but we stand in a kind of nowhere. It's all white around us, looks dull, like heaven or so in a boring movie."

"This is not heaven, this is the place where everything is possible."

"Sounds like hell - do you have more than a voice?"

"I can appear as whatever you want me."

"Your "normal" appearance?"

"You don't get it. This is a place where everything is possible. This means that all that is possible is at this place, you simply cannot be aware of it. But, if you wish for a certain possibility, then this possibility will be there for you."

"Sounds like a holodeck in a trivial TV series."

"You still do not understand. It will be there, it will be real. Say that you wish to kill someone, very brutally. This person will be real, this person will suffer in real, will die in real, will be really dead."

"Okay, I wish that Adolf Hitler would be here, so I can kill him. Does this make sense? He's already dead - would this change history?"

"You still do not get it. Why should you wish to kill Hitler? Would you be a Jew, for instance. Aren't there others that would be more interesting for you?"

"And if? Again, would this change history?"

"Get it! At this place, everything can be real, real real."

"This makes no sense. It makes no sense that Hitler is dead and alive, that I could kill him or not, and that all these possibilities have the same value. If everything is possible, then nothing is real."

"You could wish that the most beautiful women were here and had only one interest, to please you. And they would be real!"

"Well, all happens in the head. For my brain, it's not relevant whether something is real or not. My brain is my wishing well. Everything is possible there, like in Brazil."

"Brazil? Why is everything possible in Brazil?"

"The movie, I discuss the movie, even if I do not agree with Gilliam. But, in fact, he's happy at the end, even though it's very bitter to see him so. But he's happy, really happy."

"You're missing a one-time-only chance, Peter!"

"You're underestimating my brain. It can be very soft or very brutal, relentless. It can be

everything.! Sometimes, I sometimes sit somewhere and think: What if the people around me knew what happens in my brain just now. My thoughts, fantasies, wishes, ideas..... - sometimes it's very puzzling, not to say scary, what happens up there."

"I've got the feeling that you're now on the way to getting it, Peter."

## **Matosinhos Blue**

### **All Those Happy People**

Are all people happy in Matosinhos or Portugal? - a silly question, you might say. Florebela, she wrote harsh words about her fellow citizens. But she referred to fado, and fado is in southern Portugal, not here up in the north. She moved to the north, to Matosinhos, no fado here. And well, she committed suicide here, in the north, in Matosinhos. Maybe this can be the answer?

But it might be that the word "happy" is wrongly set. As far as I can see, there's one major difference between Portuguese people and Germans. The Germans yammer all the time, like a child fearing that someone could steal his or her lolly. I do not see this constant yammering in Portugal. And this is doing me good.

Okay, I have no profound insights, I'm no expert on Portuguese society. But, it seems to me that they see more of what they have, the daily pleasures. The Germans always fear that they could lose something - a reason is always easy to find. They have a lot, but who knows, will it tomorrow still be the same? Enjoy your café today, do not fear the end of everything. Who knows, maybe you're already dead tomorrow, or have committed suicide.

## **Don't Call Me Marlowe**

### **It's Dark, And By No Means A Game**

#### **The Case**

I opened the door, and a somewhat small man stood in the hallway - lean, one could say. The age? Early thirties, I would say. A normal guy in normal clothes, ordinary, unremarkable, thousands of him in the streets. I invited him to come in.

His name was Miller, as if it would have needed such a name to underline his commonness, but I had noticed his eyes. We sat down at the small table with the three chairs that I used for advising clients. He chose water, I tea.

"So, Mr. Miller, what's your concern? Why are you here?" I started with a standard phrase. He seemed partially nervous.

"Well, Mr. Maurer, I'm not sure where to begin."

"Straightforward is always the best, Mr. Miller."

"I'm not sure if you will accept me as a client - you haven't heard my name? Newspaper maybe?"

Well, I could have said: Miller? Perhaps on the front page! But I tried it another way.

"I'm not certain. It might sound strange, but I'm not always that interested in the news. The front pages, of course, but.....too much happens in this city."

"The murdered communist? Does this help you, maybe?"

"Not so much, to be honest. It may be better to start at the beginning."

I had, in fact, no real idea about what he talked. Los Angeles, did we have to talk about our murder

rate? A day without one or two was a strange day! And a communist? Well, it would be even stranger if no communists were among those murdered people.

"A friend of mine got murdered, but no one is interested. They say that he was a communist, which isn't true. The LAPD? Well, what's even worse than being a nigger, a Latino, or an Asian? A communist, even in the so liberal California, the so chill Los Angeles."

"Well, it's like in Hollywood. You can have sex with underage child starlets. You can even be gay, as long as you don't talk about it - but never be a communist.

I think I have to tell you something. I hate communists, they are like fascists. Communism is a bloody dictatorship! But, you said that your friend hadn't been a communist - and you?"

"We're socialist. That's something fundamentally different. Communists hate socialists because we're not interested in establishing a cadre party and suchlike."

"Wow, that's a message every American will understand, Mr. Miller. You have any idea who could have killed your friend?"

"Well, the climate in the USA? This is no matter what one has to discuss, McCarthy always sends a clear message. Communists are fair game today - even as the fucking hero of a novel, you can kill them as you like. And yes, it's difficult to make understandable that socialism and communism are two entirely unique political systems."

"You did not answer my question."

"Sorry, you need a name?"

"If you had one."

"I have told the police who did it. They have asked them, asked them! What a surprise, no one could remember having killed someone."

"They? More than one killer?"

"We had meetings, and we got pressure from some guys in the neighborhood. They told my friend, our meetings happened in his condo, that he should leave the neighborhood. They would otherwise make sure that our "communist cell" would find a very abrupt end."

"Okay, one could call this a hint, but it's not that much. I....."

".....the police asked them one time, and that it was! Case closed, not even interested in the crime scene!"

"Because he was considered a communist?"

"We're talking about the LAPD. Are they interested in a dead nigger? Why? But a dead white, from the hills or so, especially if the murderer could be a nigger, then they have suddenly unlimited resources. Do you really live in this city?"

"I'm simply listening. I have to decide whether I will take the case or not. Why me?"

"Well, I have heard that you are a person of integrity and not interested in hearsay. You have worked for niggers and poor people, and you have never had a problem standing up for your clients. That's what they say about you."

"Yeah, I stand for my clients - if someone becomes my client. I, for instance, hate the word "nigger"."

"Sorry, I used it only to stress something - at the beginning. I'm shaken, I have problems concentrating."

"Okay, I do not say that I will not accept you as a client. But I hope that you understand that I have to ponder on it. I will do some research. Let me decide whether I see you as a communist or a socialist."

"You know the difference! Sorry, I'm distressed."

"No issue. My ancestors are from Germany. I know the difference between the communist party and the socialist party, the KPD and the SPD. And I know that neither of them, the KPD or the SPD, voted for the Enabling Act to give Hitler ultimate power. This was the merit of the conservative party, the Center Party."

"You know a lot!"

"Surprised? That a little private dick can know something about high policy, Mr. Miller? - Socialist Miller."

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I opened the door, and a somewhat small man stood in the hallway - lean, one could say. The age? Early thirties, I would say. A normal guy in normal clothes, ordinary, unremarkable, thousands of him in the streets. I invited him to come in.

His name was Miller, as if it would have needed such a name to underline his commonness, but I had noticed his eyes. We sat down at the small table with the three chairs that I used for advising clients. He chose water, I tea.

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"Well, Mr. Maurer, I'm not sure where to begin."

"Straightforward is always the best, Mr. Miller."

"I'm not sure if you will accept me as a client - you haven't heard my name? Newspaper maybe? Social media?"

Well, I could have said: Miller? Perhaps on the front page! Not much in social media.....but I tried it another way.

"I'm not certain. It might sound strange, but I'm not always that interested in the news. The front pages, of course, but.....social media.....too much happens in this city."

"The murdered white supremacist? Does this help you, maybe?"

"Not so much, to be honest. It may be better to start at the beginning."

I had, in fact, no real idea about what he talked. Los Angeles, did we have to talk about our murder rate? Not so extreme any more than a few decades ago, or even some decades before. But still, somewhat more than one murderer every day - as well as somewhat more than one suicide. Either way not cool! And a white supremacist? Well, it would be even stranger if no white supremacists were among those murdered people.

"A friend of mine got murdered, but no one is interested. They say that he was a white supremacist, which isn't true. The LAPD? Well, we pretend to be so liberal in California today, chill in Los Angeles. But is this true, Mr. Maurer?"

"Well, is Hollywood still Hollywood? Or is it even worse today? Harvey in the sky, and Epstein's list is very long. You can have sex with underage girls if you're from the GOP and sitting in Washington, fuck a porn star while your wife is pregnant, as long as you deliver what your religious supporters are demanding. We live in crazy times.

I think I have to tell you something. I hate white supremacists, they are fucking fascists. They hope for a bloody dictatorship! But, you said that your friend hadn't been a white supremacist - and you?"

"We're conservatives. That's something fundamentally different. Real conservatives hate white supremacists because we're not interested in establishing a dictatorship or suchlike."

"Wow, that's a message every American will understand, Mr. Miller. You have any idea who could have killed your friend?"

"Well, the climate in the USA? This is no matter what one has to discuss, we simply have to watch the news. This country was never as divided as it is today. Even during the McCarthy era, the country was not in such turmoil. In some parts of our country, I'm a bloody white supremacist. A traitor in other parts, a RINO. And yes, it's difficult to make understandable that being conservative and being a white supremacist are two entirely unique matters."

"You did not answer my question."

"Sorry, you need a name?"

"If you had one."

"I have told the police who did it. They have asked them, asked them! What a surprise, no one could remember having killed someone."

"They? More than one killer?"

"We had meetings, and we got pressure from some guys in the neighborhood. They told my friend, our meetings happened in his condo, that he should leave the neighborhood. They would otherwise



make sure that our "white supremacist conspiracy" would find a very abrupt end."

"Okay, one could call this a hint, but it's not that much. I....."

".....the police asked them one time, and that it was! Case closed, not even interested in the crime scene!"

"Because he was considered a white supremacist?"

"We're talking about the LAPD. Are they interested in a dead homeless? Why? But a dead white, from the hills or so, especially if the murderer could be a homeless, then they have suddenly unlimited resources. Do you really live in this city?"

"I'm simply listening. I have to decide whether I will take the case or not. Why me?"

"Well, I have heard that you are a person of integrity and not interested in hearsay. You have worked for people of color and poor people, and you have never had a problem standing up for your clients. That's what they say about you."

"Yeah, I stand for my clients - if someone becomes my client. I, for instance, hate the phrase "people of color"."

"Sorry, I'm shaken, I have problems concentrating."

"Okay, I do not say that I will not accept you as a client. But I hope that you understand that I have to ponder on it. I will do some research. Let me decide whether I see you as a conservative or a white supremacist."

"You know the difference! Sorry, I'm distressed."

"No issue. My ancestors are from Germany. I know the difference between a conservative person and a racist person. A conservative person would have no difficulties therewith, buying his needed things in a Jewish shop. A white supremacist would send the shop owner into the gas chamber."

"You understand a lot!"

"Surprised? That a little private dick can know something about ethics, Mr. Miller? - Conservative Miller."

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"Miller."

"It's me, Mr. Maurer. I only wanted to inform you that I'm taking the case."

"Thanks, Mr. Maurer."

## **The Journey**

### **Basic Pondering**

What, if one invited you on a journey, on an exceptional journey? A journey to all places in the universe, time and space would have no meaning. A supernova in slow motion, colliding galaxies in time-lapse. You would discover how huge the universe is in fact - if, and if so, what kind of border, and what would be beyond. You would witness the very beginning of the universe and its final end. You would see everything!

And then, a second journey. From the largest to the smallest. You would be shown what a particle in fact is, an electron, for instance, a photon, or a neutrino. What charge means, or spin, color charge, or flavor. The structure of time and space.

But, who should be your guide? God? A kind of god? A transcendental identity? An alien? This might be a problem.

But, imagine, such a journey would be possible. Wouldn't it be a thrilling journey? A journey where humans would play no role, in any way. They would be not only marginal, they would be invisible. It might be that because of that it would be such a thrilling journey.

## **Surrealistic Pillow**

### **Father's Death**

I had several dreams last night  
I normally forget them  
But this time  
My father (nearly) died in my arms

I always say  
I have never had a nightmare, I love dreaming and my dreams  
And even this was no nightmare  
It was surprising and puzzling

We spoke with each other as my father collapsed  
He lay in my arms, and I wasn't sure what to do  
Laying him on the floor and calling for help  
Or staying with him

He recovered somewhat  
Then I woke up  
And was perplexed  
Not knowing what to do

Yeah. One day he will die, as my mother did last year.

## **Arnold & Maurer**

### **Small Town Delight**

I sat in the office, doing paperwork. Linda did some shopping and would come later to the office, after our lunch together. We had two cases, both not very effortful, and apart from that, the paperwork had to be done. Linda would do some monitoring overnight. What had all changed! In the big city, I always sat alone in my office, had lunch alone, and had very messy days all the time. Sure, as a private investigator, you did not work in a factory with clearly defined working times and breaks. But that wasn't the cause, at least not in total. On some days, I ate nearly nothing, and on others, I ate a lot. And what I ate was not very healthy. My life had been very chaotic. Much had changed since I lived in this small city. I enjoyed it a lot, having lunch together, having someone to speak with, not only with the man behind the bar. I had come down, and my life was much more regular now. Not only that, but I went shopping at the weekly market, and I cooked meals for myself in the evening - never would I have done this in the big city. I hoped to retire in a few years. And the prospect of living in this small city, this town, seemed very nice to me. Getting old here? I felt a deep relief as Linda entered the office, back from shopping. "I bought you some of the bread that you like so much, the one with green spelt." I had mentioned, while eating lunch together, that I was running short of my favorite bread that I had found here. The wonderful green spelt home-bread of our local baker. Linda had been that kind and had bought me a new one.

## **Don't Call Me Marlowe**

### **It's Dark, And By No Means A Game**

#### **The Reason For**

I had decided to take the case after I had done some close investigation. I would never help a communist, a white supremacist, but it would also not be acceptable to follow hearsay. Thus, I had to decide on my own, and that I did.

I started to read articles in newspapers, to watch TV, to ask people about whom I thought they could help me, and, of course, to use social media. Was he a communist, a white supremacist? Well, I could find no evidence that would prompt such a conclusion - quite the contrary. All that could be considered watertight supported his version.

A major aspect was that he had handed me the protocols of their meetings, that I had trawled through his social media activities. Well, protocols one could manipulate, social media activities one could manipulate. But he could prove the authenticity of the protocols, he could prove that nothing regarding his social media activities had been changed afterward. And what counted finally the most was that no one could show or hand me anything that would prove that Mr. Miller was a communist, a white supremacist. Thus, only one conclusion was possible: Mr. Miller was no communist, no white supremacist.

But, one could also put the cart before the horse. If he was no communist, no white supremacist, what then was he? He said, a socialist, a conservative - did I agree with that? A socialist, a conservative? How would I define that? Well, he stood for more worker rights, like paid sick leave or maternity protection, for the fact that a family as a life plan had to be protected, that we had values that derived from our Christian heritage. It was not the question of whether I shared these ideas or not. The question was whether these positions fit a socialist, a conservative. Did this fit for Mr. Miller? I would say yes, and therefore I took the case.

## **Memories**

### **Dover Sole**

I stayed in Dover, eighteen years old, for a longer time - two weeks at least, but most likely more. It was as I had just finished my apprenticeship as a cook. It was the time between my apprenticeship and my first job, and I had just experienced the legendary English kitchen in London. I stayed there before, and I would return. I had learned that frying a steak was difficult for a cook in London, or giving some salt to vegetables and potatoes. Sandwiches were a practical alternative, as were pies from the supermarket. And that you could enjoy Indian - or better, Pakistani? - and Chinese cuisine in this city. But nevertheless, one dish I had to eat in Dover was one of the famous Dover Soles.

And where? At the sea, of course, on the promenade. Thus I chose a hotel restaurant that was very sophisticated-looking. I was no fool. It would become costly - too expensive, most likely - and I would not fit in that place. But, as a young German cook, I had to eat one of the famous Dover Soles at the fitting place.

As expected, everything was very sophisticated inside. It was forty years ago, but surprising enough, it was okay for me. I did not start to sweat, and I ordered a Dover Sole and most likely a white wine. Most likely, at least a soup and a dessert - and how did it taste? Well, I can remember that the fish was not terrible, but that I thought: Would I have made this fish, such a wonderful sole, in my apprenticeship workplace, like that, then they would not have been very satisfied with me.

Boring, unsalted vegetables, and potatoes, all as usual.

Of course, it was expensive, especially for a young man like me, right after the apprenticeship. It was extremely costly, and I asked myself why one paid that much for such a boring and, in the best case, average meal? But it seemed okay for everybody, so I was satisfied that I had done it and that I had managed it for my person quite well. Dover Sole, the legendary dish of the legendary city of Dover.

Was all bad at Dover? No, in no case. It would be an essential time in my life. I will not talk here about Dover Castle. I have already done it. "Cozy Days In London," for example, and I will do it again, "Days". And eating in England? Well, interestingly, I had one of my finest meals ever in Dover, in an English restaurant! But this will be the next part: "Dover Pot".

## **Male Fantasies**

### **Let's Take it Slow**

"Let's take it slow, boy," she said to me, "it would be too much for you, baby." - and, fuck, I knew that she was right. She would be too much for me.

\*

It was always nice to see, reflecting on oneself, what weak creatures we men were. We always behaved as if we were tough and would stand above all, but it did not take much in the end to prove this illusion and lie wrong. An ankle was sometimes enough, stocking-footed or not. What about delightful footwear? High or low - did you like black high heels more, or cute Mary Janes? Not to talk about a fine cleavage or a nipple, visible through a top.

Okay, maybe you needed the harder stuff? Always horny and wet schoolgirls, looking forward to being fucked in every hole by one or more black cocks, like American-made porn offered you? Or did you even require the perverted Japanese stuff? Like little girls looking "actresses" molested and raped by a bunch of pervert men? Preferably in public?

Or, were you an aficionado? The old-school classic stuff? Women in hot stockings and high heels, nice dresses, and fancy make-up? The Italian way, or the American way? Scandinavian with the bold school girls, or French with the elegant ladies? Whatever, women as women, always willing and ready.

\*

"Okay, I said slow, buddy," I started to be in reality again, "or you're no longer interested in me, sweetheart?" - as if this would be a question when looking at her naked body on the bed.

## **Don't Call Me Marlowe**

### **It's Dark, And By No Means A Game**

#### **Being a Socialist in the USA**

Well, I did not consider myself a leftist, but definitely not a rightist. It was sometimes difficult in the

United States, you had only two choices - left or right, black or white. I had some knowledge about Europe, where they handled many things much differently. Sure, we had our traditions, but why not more than two parties? Because it was so given to us by the British? What about the other European countries? I did not get it. The same was true of our procedure to elect our president. Why such a difficult and confusing procedure? Why not ask the American people in total whom they wish to have as president? Because this would have been difficult a hundred years and more ago? We lived at the beginning of the 50s - what would the founding fathers decide today? Not the same - this was for sure, at least for me.

But not only our political system. Europe could show us that it even functioned if workers had rights and real unions, not our mafioso unions. They had real health care, meaningful retirement plans, could strike, help for pregnant women, and much more. And not only since yesterday or the end of the war - sometimes since many decades, if not more. But I was sure that this would not endure in the USA. It would change because it had to change. Yes, I was a lefty in this way, possibly even a socialist.

Radicals like McCarthy were not allowed to have a future. We needed change, and we needed a liberalization of our country. Maybe not this decade, but the next. We no longer had slavery, but equality for Negroes seemed far away. Who talked about Latinos and Hispanics, or about citizens from Asia? Had people lived here before we came? I was sure that we would see change in the upcoming decades. They would not accept this forever.

Being a socialist in the United States? Mr. Miller considered himself a socialist. Well, this made it not easy in the States. In fifty years, potentially, one could simply say in the United States: I'm a socialist - yes, I'm a socialist! And the day would come when he would even have a chance to become the next President of the United States. But not today, not as long as swines like McCarthy would use the fear of the American people to manipulate them for his purposes. We would see change - at least I hoped so.

### **Being a Conservative in the USA**

Well, I did not consider myself a rightist, but also not a leftist. It was sometimes difficult in the United States, you had only two choices - left or right, black or white. I had some knowledge about Europe, where they handled many things much differently. Sure, we had our traditions, but why not more than two parties? Because it was so given to us by the British? What about the other European countries? I did not get it. The same was true of our procedure to elect our president. Why such a difficult and confusing procedure? Why not ask the American people in total whom they wish to have as president? Because this would have been difficult two hundred years ago? We already live in the 21st century - what would the founding fathers decide today? Not the same - this was for sure, at least for me.

It was our political system. Europe could show us that a party democracy seemed not to be the worst. One had to be a party member and be active at a party for a longer time to get the chance to be nominated for running for president. It was not about who could create the most massive super PAC, the most money, the biggest donors. It was about representing a certain political agenda, preferably for decades. It was about having worked on various political levels, preferably for decades.

Such traditions made it much more difficult for figures like the Orange Swine or Bolsonaro to become president and endanger democracy. They needed a long wind and fortitude to reach their aims, if even possible - what such figures often did not have. And this also gave democracy and the political opposition time to react, especially if more than one other party existed. And finally, there was no need for primaries anymore. The nation would not be in permanent campaigning. There would be time simply to govern. Yeah, we could learn from Europe. We, the world's ever best democracy.

Being a conservative in the United States? Mr. Miller considered himself a conservative. Well, this

made it not easy in the States today. What should it mean? Being part of a cult and following your guru wherever he will lead you? The way my ancestors followed Adolf Hitler? Or standing up for conservative values? The right side of the aisle had to decide what path they wanted to follow. But this was difficult today, as long as a swine like the one from N.Y. used the fear of the American people to manipulate them for his purposes. This would not last - at least I hoped so.

## **Male Fantasies**

### **Come Closer Now**

"Come closer now, babe," she said to me, "do you like what you see?" - as if anyone would have to ask, as I saw her lying on the bed. I looked at her, her red fucking-high heels, her white stockings - nothing more was left anymore. She let me see anything, absolutely nothing that she could offer me more.

I took off my jacket and the shoulder holster as well. Shirt and trousers, underwear, all very fast, always looking at her dark body - and she looked at me. Well, she was hot, I could not say this about me. Okay, for my age, I was still in good shape. It had to be in this job. But her body was perfect, especially the parts I always stared - I assumed that she had seen and had had better equipped men. But she was a professional. She would give me the feeling that I would be the best guy she ever had in her bed. I looked down at me - not that bad at all, I thought, as I heard that somebody cocked a gun.

I did not turn, she changed her mood very fast and covered up her fantastic body. She covered up her body! Come on, fucking America! She had shown me literally everything, but now she covered up her body? What a shit was this! And then she said: "Sorry, babe, but I think that you no longer need this."

\*

I knew it would be over one day, but in that way? Everybody had to die, but behaving like a schoolboy? I awaited every second of hearing the sound of the gun and feeling the impact of the bullet - couldn't that have been after we had sex? But, as I had just said, she was a professional, and the guy - had it have to be a guy? - behind me, most likely the same. I looked down at me, not very impressed with what I saw now. What a fucking way to leave the stage!

## **Surrealistic Pillow**

### **A Deep Feeling of Happiness**

In a dream, I was in a foreign city - Los Angeles? I searched there for the right direction. In my dreams, I often search for the right direction to reach a certain destination. Whereby, I normally do not reach my destination. The dreams are getting increasingly chaotic and confusing.

I knew my aim. It was a park, a playground, an open space - I was there before. I had used Google Earth to know the rough direction - I always do this if in a foreign city. The rough direction. The rest, we will see. I was at a beach for a longer time, a beach where I'm sometimes in my dreams, very nice, then I entered a factory grounds with many containers. Somebody told me that I was not allowed to be here, but I argued that there was no distinct sign that it was prohibited to walk around here. Apart from that, I would have lost my way, I would search for the entrance. This would be my

rough direction. The man showed me where I could leave the factory grounds, and suddenly, I saw the open field!

A meadow with large green trees on the other side - that did not fit Los Angeles! But I knew, Google Earth, that the park was to the left, and the playground as well. And so it was, and I was so happy that I had reached my destination. A deep feeling of relaxation and happiness as I started to wake up. Now I was a bit disappointed - just at the moment, as I had reached my destination? In fact, I had not entered the park or the playground, but I would have if I had not woken up. And, the meadow, the park, the playground - why Los Angeles? I thought that this would fit much better with Matosinhos, Jardim Basilio Teles. Whatever, it had been a nice dream.

## **Memories**

### **Dover Pot**

Yeah, I was eighteen and had just finished my apprenticeship as a cook - I had started it when I just turned fifteen. And now I stayed in Dover, England, which is not that well known for good cooking. I had already gained experience with it, in Dover as well as in London, where I stayed before. And so it came, one evening, when it was already dark, that I walked through Dover, searching for a place to have dinner.

Well, Dover, in a way, has a very simple structure. The A256, split into two parts, structured Dover to a greater degree toward the channel, as two one-way roads. The part you drove toward the channel was also named Barton Road, and the part that led away from the channel was also named London Road. I walked along London Road, away from the channel.

And I walked long, passing some places to eat on the right side of the street, where the shops and elsewhere were. But I did not like them that much. On the left side, where I walked, were houses, typical English terraced houses.

I considered turning but decided to continue for a while, as London Road split in some way. The road as such, London Road, continued. But a smaller street now aside, but higher, the houses were higher now and had a somewhat different style, Buckland Terrace. I followed this road, London Road as such was under me now. However, still only houses, and also on the other side of the road, London Road, nothing interesting, until - there was something interesting.

We all know these English houses, which also have a flat lower than the first floor. Stairs up for the main building, and stairs down for the flat with not much sunlight. A window is left of the stairs to the main building, a window is right of the stairs to the building as such, and the entrance is under this staircase. Such buildings could be seen on this part of the road. Only, there was no flat to see, at least in the right part, through the right window, but a restaurant - a tiny restaurant, obviously!

I stopped. Should I enter it? It seemed small, and I was insecure, but an impulse let me go downstairs to the door. I looked through the window. It seemed to be empty. I thought to leave, but then I decided to enter it. What could happen? I could make a fool of myself, but this would not be for the first time and not for the last time. And this was England, Dover. Most likely, I would never come back. The food could be bad? Well, after the steak in London and the famous Dover Sole? It could not be much worse. It could be a small but costly restaurant? Well, I could order something cheap, or even leave the restaurant again. So I entered the restaurant.

A few tables, a counter, a young woman behind - the kitchen? A young man also - a young couple starting a restaurant in a former flat - maybe living in the other part, the left window? It had not to be bad. As far as I remember, no menu written on paper. But, in any case, a blackboard on the wall with various dishes. One found my interest - Dover Pot. Well, the board also told you something about the dishes, but my English was not good - it had been my worst subject in school, with terrible grades. I knew the word, but I could not remember the German meaning. I understood vegetables and potatoes. And, please, do not say that I could have asked the young woman who

served about the meaning. I would have never dared to ask. I always feared to embarrass myself. They started to work behind the counter after my order, especially the young man, obviously also the kitchen behind the counter. I saw him putting vegetables into a microwave oven. Well, obviously, not much space. To prepare something that you simply had to heat up again was not the worst solution - but this was England? Then I got my Dover Pot.

A pot with meat in sauce, nice triangle croutons on it. Vegetables and potatoes were separate. It looked nice - and the meat? Well, now I could remember what rabbit meant, Kaninchen! It was pot-roasted rabbit, various parts of it, all in all, not a little. And, it tasted fantastic! And the potatoes and vegetables were not cooked to death, and they had seen salt. This was my best meal in England, in an English restaurant in England, and one of the best I ever had!

I was there only once. It was at the end of my stay in Dover, potentially on the last evening. I know that I was disappointed not to have a chance to come again.

\*

As I was in Dover again, many decades later, I searched for the restaurant. The couple had been somewhat older than I - I did not expect that it still existed, but you never know. I found the house again. At least I was sure that it had been this house - no restaurant any longer. And, if it was not the right house, there was no restaurant at all in this area. Internet? I had forgotten the name of the restaurant, and I found nothing about a possible restaurant at all in this area. Well, many decades ago, and I had no idea about how long the couple - I assume that it had been a couple - had run the restaurant. Some research on site? Well, I was only one day in Dover, and I had, of course, another main interest - Dover Castle. The time in Dover as an eighteen-year-old, this was so important to me. Not that I felt it at that time, but it was so. I was at many places in Dover, and around Dover. And okay, London also had important moments.

## **Don't Call Me Marlowe**

### **It's Dark, And By No Means A Game**

#### **Conducting Investigations**

As I walked around the corner, I saw them. A group of people argued with a single man. I came nearer and started to meddle.

"Hey, hey, guys. You're five, and he's one. It seems a bit unfair to me."

The five guys looked at me, and one, most likely the big figure, came two steps closer.

"Who are you? Have I seen you before in our neighborhood? Are you a friend of his? Do you....."

".....sorry to interrupt you. But if you ask questions, you should offer the questioned person the possibility to answer."

"What a smartass is this?" One of the boys from the background. But then the big guy continued.

"I'm all ears, buddy."

"Okay, I'm Peter Maurer. No, this is not my neighborhood. It's most likely not the first time that I've been here in this area. Well, I'm all around the city, but I'm not sure. And no, I do not know this man."

"Fine," he said with a gesture that was most likely meant to be dramatic, "and why then do you disturb our little conversation that we have with this scumbag here?" He pioned at Mr. Miller.

"I'm a private investigator. Well, I'm no police officer, but I cannot ignore certain matters. And it seems to me that this is such an issue."



"Wow, you're a private dick." He grinned like an idiot, maybe because he was one. "Then tell this idiot that he should be careful when incriminating other people."

"He accuses you of having committed a crime?" I tried to pretend that I would see a possible client in front of me.

"Yes, you perhaps don't believe me, but he tells everybody that we would have killed his friend."

"But his friend got killed?"

"Yeah, and I cannot say that this is a problem for us, but it hadn't been us."

"Did he tell the police about it?" It functioned better, as I had thought. To start a conversation.

"Yeah, they investigate the murder - sure. We all had to make statements because of him. At the police station! But he doesn't accept that we have not done it."

"So, the murderer is not behind bars so far?"

"No, but is this our problem? Apart from.....," say it, then I have not to ask.

"Apart from?"

"That he's a fucking communist. And his friend was also a fucking communist. Only a dead communist is a good communist!" Again, somebody from the background.

"Shut up, Nelson! - His friend was a communist. They had a conspiratorial communist cell in our block. We do not accept communists in our block, but we do not kill them."

"But he's dead, and your friend is not very unhappy about it." I hoped that I could get him that way.

"Do you like communists?"

"I hate communists. They are like Nazis. You're a bit too young, maybe, but I have killed Nazis in Germany. And I would also kill communists if needed. But in a war, not in our cities."

"Maybe we're in a war, Mister! Maybe....."

"Fuck! Shut up, Nelson!" He seemed really upset - only for what reason? "Do not listen to him. He sometimes talks too much. You hate communists?"

"Yeah, I do. As I said, they are like Nazis. And I hate Nazis. They are a disgusting spawn of hell."

"I'm no communist!" Wow, perfect. Like the best actor in town. Mr. Miller had found the perfect moment for his next part of the show.

\*

Yeah, it was Mr. Miller, and of course, it was not an accident that I came around the corner. In fact, it was planned. At least so far, as such matters could be planned.

I had asked him to mill around the block where his friend had lived. So that he would, eventually, could catch the attention of the people he accused of killing his friend. Of course, I would be with him all the time, ready to step in every time. And, that he should be aware of, that even if it was possible that one of them, or they together, were the murderer, also other possibilities would exist. A jealous girl could be. And it functioned.

They only watched at him at first, out of a window, then addressed him, still from the window. He replied that this would still be the land of the free - really? - and that he would have every right to be here. They asked if they should come down. He answered that he wouldn't be anxious. And they came down, and I, totally by coincident, around the corner. This was the story.

Well, I had advised him and given him some tips. And I had given him some lines that he could use if they fit. And what to say, he made a pretty good job!

\*

"Who's interested in, communist?" From the background, not Nelson.

"Yeah, that's the shit they always talked about. As if this were a difference." My counterpart.

"Well,.....," I started, ".....technically seen.....it's, in fact, a difference."

"I knew that he's one of them! Smack him in the puss, this fucking communist's lover!" Oh, Nelson again.

"Shut up, Nelson!" This time it was me, and my counterpart smiled.

"I'm all ears, Mr. Maurer - Maurer was your name, right?"

"Yes. Peter Maurer. And yours? If it's okay to ask."

"Of course." He smiled. "I mean, for a private investigator? It would, for you, not be very difficult anyway, to find out my name - right?" What a clever guy he was!

"It shouldn't be. I would be a lousy private investigator if not."

"DeSantis, Ronald DeSantis. Ron, if you like.....Peter?"

"Fine Ron, nice to meet you."

"Nice to meet you too, Peter. And honestly, I would be interested in the difference between a socialist and a communist."

"As I said, I was in Europe during the war. In countries like France. They have a different view on such matters. Let's say that they are more "liberal". They often have socialist parties in their parliaments. Some even have communist parties. Italy as an example. A communist wants to have a dictatorship and no longer private ownership of businesses and companies. All gets planned, and there are no free markets anymore. A socialist accepts private ownership of businesses and companies, but with very regulated markets. Whatever, both do not fit the idea of the USA. The one may be less than the other. But ultimately, neither one nor the other is useful in the States. It might fit to Europe, but we have other traditions. And looking at the chaos in Italy, for instance - or France? Have they been able to stop Hitler and the Nazis on their own? Hitler needed only some days to overrun France - and then many collaborated with the Nazis. No, these are not American values and traditions."

"Nicely spoken, Peter." It was always nice to get tribute from such a person. "Could it be that you now understand our anger?"

"Let me express it that way. If - if - he were my client," I pointed at Mr. Miller, "then I would advise him to be very cautious when accusing someone of being a murderer. There could be a severe backlash, an understandable backlash - I would say."

"Well, Peter, I have the feeling that our ideas are very closely together." He fixated me.

"I would not go so far as to say that we share our worldview totally. But also, I see a good deal of harmony."

"It had been nice to meet you, Peter."

"The pleasure was all mine, Ron."

"And what's the matter with me?" Wow, I feared for a second that Mr. Miller would all screw up now. But Ron did not become aware of it.

"What do you think, Peter. What shall we do with our little communist - or socialist, if he wishes so?"

"As a private investigator? I would advise him to leave and to be happy that nothing has happened. He cannot play police or KGB. He cannot accost and stalk other citizens without the prerequisites for it. And even if. It's then a matter for our investigation authorities, not of "him"." I pointed again at Mr. Miller.

"Hit the road, communist. Fast, before I change my mind!" He had looked at Mr. Miller, now he fixated me again. "Until next time. I think there will be a next time, Peter."

"That suits me fine, Ron."

\*

"What do you think will happen next, Mr. Maurer?"

"Well, "Ron" is not a very pleasant person, but he's no idiot either. He has a big mouth. But I'm, so far, not certain, how large his stack is."

"Pardon me?"

"How much he's worth?" I looked at him, he still did not understand me? "I mean, how serious I have to take him."

"Okay, I understand. But do you think that they could be the murderers?"

"Could be, yes. But it's no question about "could be". I would need evidence. Let's see how

everything will unfold."

"What do you think will happen now?"

"Ron will try to get information about me. Let's see how successful he will be."

"So we will simply wait and see?"

"That you have to learn as a private investigator. Give everything its time. Do not try to quicken matters too much. This commonly always ends up in a mess. Let's have a coffee or tea - what happens will happen."

\*

The good old days, say in the 40s, 50s, or even in the 60s. You would have been on the street and had monitored a block or so. Today? I sat in front of the screen on my desk, deep in social media. There were these people, that had threatened Mr. Miller and his friend. I had told him that he should be careful, being too convinced that among them one could find the murderer. But, of course, it was worthwhile to take a closer look at them.

I had backtracked posts of them and had found an interesting closed group. You had to ask to get entry. You had to show your business card at the entrance. Thus, I established fake profiles on various social media sites. Now I had to fill them with content. I also started to post fitting comments, and I especially thanked Elon, for giving me such good opportunities. Only if you were allowed to call a Latino scum and a black person vermin, then you could be sure about to live in a free land. If it was okay to deny the Holocaust or to call a Jew an untermensch, then it was real and total democracy. Okay, as long as you did not mention that also gay people existed - or, Ron from Florida? The phone rang.

It had been Mr. Miller. He had asked if I had already found out some facts. Well, if it were that easy. I would try to get entry into this group, but it would not be that easy. I told him that I would work together with a young Internet freak, but that I had to do the basic work first. It would take some time. No longer the good old days of working on the streets. He was somewhat disappointed, and I focused again on my latest profile.

## **The Journey**

### **Particles I**

"What first?" I got asked, and I replied, "Why not start with the smallest?"

"The fundamental particles?"

"Yeah, the electron as such, or a photon. I would like to see them. To see what charge, spin, or flavor means in fact."

"The thing-in-itself, to speak with Kant? Do you mean that?"

"Well, I'm no Kantian, but yes."

"And you want to "see" these particles?"

"Yeah, sure! That would help so much to understand them."

"What do you mean with: To see them? With your eyes?"

"Sure, with my eyes." I started to get nervous.

"What's the way "to see something"? What has to happen for you to "see" something? Not in every detail."

"Well, let's talk about reflection?"

"Okay."

"We need a light source, let's say the sun. Sunlight hits on something, let's say a leaf. The leaf reflects some sunlight, photons of a specific energy. These photons hit my eye, through the lens and the vitreous humor, where they will be absorbed by the retina. Better, the visual cells transform the

energy of the photons into an electric impulse. This impulse will reach the visual center in my brain through the visual nerve. This information will be processed in my brain, the visual center, and I will "see" the image of a green leaf."

"Do you see some problems?"

"The green leaf is not the thing-in-itself".

"More fundamental." I got even more nervous.

"Let's say, that a fundamental particle would be there. Could it "send" a photon to you?"

"An electron can absorb and emit photons. So, yes."

"Even if your retina were able to process single photons, what information would you get?"

"There's a photon."

"Not much information."

"No."

"And in what way did you want to "see" photons?"

"Okay, what you want to tell me is, that the idea of "seeing something", visualizing something therewith, cannot function if talking about particles."

"Yes. It's as such not possible "to see" particles. You would need something that would be "smaller" like a fundamental particle, to visualize it."

"Okay, like a surface with a certain "roughness". Say that the unevenness is in the range of micrometers. It would make no sense to use a scanner in the range of millimeters. This would be absolutely useless. - I will never "see" particles."

"No."

"And you also have never "seen" particles?"

""Seen"? No."

"But, do you understand particles? Do you have any idea what, in fact, they are? What happens in this "world" of the smallest?"

"Yes, I do."

"And would you be able to tell me something about it?"

"Better, we can go there. Of course, not physically, this will be much easier regarding the universe as such. But, close your eyes, then I will be able to show you at least something."

## **Arnold & Maurer**

### **Rainy Weather**

Well, the weather was typically not bad here. But it had nearly constantly rained over the last few days. It seemed as though nobody was interested in stepping out, if not needed. Not much to do in the agency.

Linda and I shared the office work. The other could enjoy some time off. And office work was mine today. But if I looked out of the window, I had no problem therewith. To be honest, I was snoozing as the doorbell rang.

The doorbell? It required a second to awaken, and more than one more to react. I feared that I would be a bit slow, as I pressed the door opener, but there was still someone waiting - it was raining heavily at the moment. And so it was no surprise that I could welcome someone very wet in the office - someone?

Well, packed in a considerable coat and a raincoat, carrying an umbrella, not much was to see from this person at the first moment. One could see trousers and shoes, but anyway, it could be a man or a woman. I started to help her or him out of the wet coat - the person was a she. Mid-fourty, I would say. No special clothing, but very elegant - I offered her something warm to drink. As she decided on a tea, I made a new one, really hot, for her and me. As long as I prepared the tea, which was not needed so long, we spoke not much. Small talk about the ugly weather and that it was not nice to be

outside right now. She would not have had to walk long from the parking space that she had found, but she would be wet anyway. Then we sat together at our little table, sipped both at our hot tea, and I started the conversation.

"So, Mrs. Fisher," she had introduced herself already, "what's your concern? What can we do for you?"

## **The Journey**

### **The Blue Supergiant**

"This is a real astonishing sight," it was difficult to understand what you saw, "and this is only a supergiant, a blue supergiant, not even a blue hypergiant."

We were in a spaceship, with the blue star in front of us. And of course, I did not look directly at this star, through a window or so. The UV radiation alone would have killed me! What I saw was extremely filtered and dimmed.

"We're at the distance of the earth related to the core now - right?"

"Yes. And even now, the star looks tremendous - or what would you say?"

"In any case, and yet, it's interesting. Naos, as we call the star, has "only" twenty times the radius of the sun, but nearly sixty times the mass of the sun, and nearly eight hundred thousand times the luminosity of the sun - if our data is correct."

"Not bad in any case. And a bit more or less is not that important for such an object. The high luminosity? The star is, in fact, what you call a blue straggler. Once a pair of stars, they melted into one star."

"We're in a fixed position regarding the star."

"Yes. Even if the star is much larger than the sun, it rotates much faster. Twenty-five days at the equator for the sun, Naos needs only fifteen days. You can therefore see the ellipticity effortlessly."

"Yes, it's like looking at Jupiter - can we get closer to the star?"

"We can. The spaceship is capable of. We could also zoom in, if you like."

"What would be the difference? Wouldn't it be better to be on-site? We have also sent probes to the sun, very near the sun."

"We would have instruments here on board to show you every detail of this star at many wavelengths. Nearer to the object would mean that we have to shield you all the more from the radiation of the star."

"This means that I would be less and less able to see the star directly, right?"

"Yes, even now, we filter the radiation to protect you. Nearer would mean that you could decreasingly see the star directly."

"Like with the particles. It's not to "see" them directly, in reality, as such. I mean, I cannot be in a spacesuit and touch the star, to be on its surface. Apart from that, it's difficult to say what the "surface" of a star should be. It also depends on the wavelength you're using."

"And it's a matter of size. Even on the sun, a sunspot can easily be the size of the earth, and a solar prominence can be higher above the solar surface than the distance from the earth to the moon. Can you imagine how large all this is here? How large even a single convective cell is? If you were near, you would lose your oversight completely. Like you would be interested in the earth and would look at it with a magnifying glass. Sure, you would see interesting details, but you would totally lose the idea of the earth in its completeness."

"Wow, you would have to spend a long time here. Being nearer and at a larger distance, to try to get an idea of what's outside there, over the time. And it would take a very long time. And this is only a blue supergiant, twenty times the diameter of the sun. Some stars are over three hundred times the size of the sun and have over two hundred times the mass of the sun. Compared with them - even this giant would be a petite object. It's perplexing."

"Well, have you ever seen fog very near? Directly before your eyes?"

"Right, the fog has to be very thick then. And then you see nothing anymore. The best is, to see a fog front from outside."

"We will also visit some nebulae, but there will also be limitations. Being inside the Orion Nebula is not the same as seeing the nebula from far away, from outside. There will be no longer what you have in mind as "Orion Nebula". You understand?"

"Yeah, it's like looking at Los Angeles from a hill. Seeing this ocean of low houses, with some high glass facades in the background. And then, suddenly, you're within the city. But it would be different being Downtown, or in Koreatown. It would be absolutely not the same, but it would be both Los Angeles. But in both cases, you would no longer be able to overlook Los Angeles as such. Only a small and special part of it. Even the next block, on the other side of the road, could be something wholly different. You can spend a long time in Los Angeles and have not seen much of the city, at least in detail."

"Yeah, that will always be our problem - at least if you're rushing. Only getting an overview of the Orion Nebula would take a very long time, not to mention exploring the nebula in detail."

"I understand. All this is so unfamiliar to us humans. Timespans as dimensions as well."

"Yes and no. You humans have already developed good instruments to handle this."

"You mean simulations, tools like these?"

"Yeah. Colliding galaxies, for instance."

"Will you show me animations?"

"Yeah, in a way. Only that I'm able to show it to you in reality. A million years in a moment of time. Time is relative, as you know."

"How would you do this?"

"I think that we have to talk about something more fundamental."

## **Male Fantasies**

### **I'm a Bitch**

*I'm a bitch, I'm a lover  
I'm a child, I'm a mother  
I'm a sinner, I'm a saint*

"It simply does not function!"

What a statement! Okay, to say that he was still sober would be a farce. But I wouldn't say that he was boozed-up. And by the way, I had also reached my limit with the drink before.

"You cannot have it all. That's the fucking truth, my friend."

If I hated something, then it was that a drunken person who talked to you, lost too often every feeling of distance. He nearly sat on my lap while saying this.

"It's nice to have a woman at home who runs the household and knows how to cook. But hey, every man sometimes needs a dirty bitch. You agree with me - right?"

What should I say to him? That I had no housewife at home, that I would be my own cook? That, if I were a woman, I would send him to his bitch and tell him that he could stay with her. But I was most likely the wrong person for such a conversation.

A woman has to be  
Especially  
Not like a man  
That would not be womanlike

However, if a woman  
Tries to be more manlike than every man ever was  
Then this seems to be  
Not the solution

Maggie was a fucking ruthless politician  
And if Madonna presents her latest toy boy  
Then the doubt arises  
If this is the right way

Being a larger asshole than a man  
Makes you not a better woman  
Might be  
That not the women have to change, but the men?

\*

I always like looking at stewardesses at airports. My favorite airline allows women to decide for trousers or a skirt.

A woman in a skirt looks elegant. But sometimes, in some variations and circumstances, it is a very unpractical piece of clothing.

Heeled shoes are always a pleasure to see. Not to wear them, especially the whole day - on the job, for example.

Yeah, women always dress up to please men. That's a rule of nature.

*I'm your Hell, I'm your dream  
I'm nothing in between  
You know you wouldn't want it any other way  
(Bitch; Meredith Brooks)*

## **Matosinhos Blue**

### **It's Sometimes Hard to Love You!**

Learning Portuguese - that's not so easy. Well, learning a language was never easy for me. But Portuguese is a real mountain to climb.

You write an "o" but you speak an "u" - but not always. You pronounce a word like "nove" nov, or nove. Some people skip the last letter, whereas others do not. A "sch" in Germany is always pronounced "sch", and no other combination of letters is pronounced that way. The Portuguese know several combinations, all pronounced as "sch". It's often important how many syllables a word has - a single letter can be a syllable.

Yeah, I have the feeling that it's very nice to be able to speak Portuguese. It's a very beautiful-sounding language. But the path thereto is very steep and rocky. And yet, it seems worth the effort, and I still have some time. My biggest insight so far? Gosh, what all I have done wrong the last

time! I feel like an idiot! And yet: Not once did the Portuguese people let me feel it. - Well, a very polite nation.

## **The Journey**

### **Speaking Portuguese**

"Do you speak Portuguese?"

"Well, I try to learn it. Some simple phrases and a couple of words."

"Would you be able to understand the conversation of two native speakers?"

"In no way!"

"That's our problem. To explain to you certain matters, I would have to speak Portuguese with you."

"And I wouldn't be able to understand you."

"Apart from the one or other word, maybe even sometimes a simple phrase."

"You cannot explain to me various matters."

"Not in a simple way."

"And our journey?"

"Close your eyes for a moment."

"Okay."

"Now open them again."

"A galaxy."

"Which one?"

"A smaller bar, could be the Milky Way."

"It's the Milky Way. And you're the first human to see his home galaxy from afar. Not bad - or."

"Yes - the Magellanic Clouds."

"Let's have some more distance, and speed things up. The Andromeda Galaxy comes into sight - see what happens meanwhile with the Magellanic Clouds."

"They dissolve and merge with the Milky Way. And now the Milky Way and the Andromeda Galaxy will merge."

"Not at the first encounter. It will be much more difficult. It will need more time."

"But I know this from simulations."

"Can your simulation do this?"

"This is?"

"These are stars from each galaxy that pass each other. We're deep in the galaxies now."

"They do not collide because of their distance."

"Normally, they do not collide. But there are also near encounters and gravitational disturbances in those affected planetary systems. Do you like this?"

"Wow!"

"These are two regions of gas that collide. See the interaction."

"Starburst, a star cluster will emerge."

"Yes, but all is in motion."

"Tidal arms will form."

"Yes."

"These are millions of years we're looking at."

"As I said: Time is relative. You're smiling?"

"Yeah. I thought: Please show me the beginning of it all. What's called the Big Bang."

"But....."

"There's nothing "to see" at this moment."

"Yeah, "seeing" something needs photons."

"And there were no photons at this moment."



"Exactly."

"Crazy, totally crazy."

## **Don't Call Me Marlowe**

### **It's Dark, And By No Means A Game**

As I came home later that night, as I walked through the office to reach my private rooms, I noticed that the answering machine had messages for me - okay, it was one message, but a very interesting one. "Someone" asked for help and legal advice. He wanted to stay anonymous, but gave me his phone number to call back. You want to be anonymous but you gave your phone number to a private investigator? Why not your address, your name, and your SSN? I sat down and dialed the number.

"Fitzgerald?"

"This is Mister Maurer. The man you anonymously called and asked for help and legal advice."

"Fuck!"

"No matter, you already gave me your phone number. I'm a private investigator, and it would have been easy for me, knowing your phone number, finding out your name and address. But because I'm a private investigator, I also have a duty of secrecy. What's your concern, Mr. Fitzgerald?"

"Okay, then I can talk plaintext?"

"Would be good. Would make matters easier."

"Okay, and I can trust you?"

"It would be no good idea for a private investigator to chatter about clients' issues, Mr. Fitzgerald. Sure, you can trust me, Mr. Fitzgerald."

"Even if you possibly do not agree with your client's opinions?"

"I could reject him as a client, but it would not be okay to talk privately about his concerns."

"And if a crime would be involved - if it's a crime?"

"Let's start it this way, Mr. Fitzgerald. You start slowly, and if it gets difficult for me, I say stop. Begin with something, Mr. Fitzgerald."

"Okay. We met some days before, on the street, the communist."

"Are you Nelson?"

"No."

"Then move on."

"Say that I would know who did it - you know what I'm talking about?"

"I think so."

"Could you tell me if it was a murder?"

"Well, it always depends on the circumstances. It might have been a coldblooded murder, but it might have been only a second-degree murder. Even self-defense would be possible. You would have to tell me something about the circumstances."

"A heated quarreling, then someone shoots. Not on purpose.....I do not know how to say it."

"He acted in the heat of the moment, on impulse? These are phrases the law uses. Would this fit, Mr. Fitzgerald?"

"Yes."

"Well, it would be by no means first-degree murder. But also not self-defense. It would now be essential to know the exact circumstances, Mr. Fitzgerald. Was the man who shot, possibly motivated by a third person, by this person's actions or telling? Matters like these. Would it be eventually possible that we would meet in my office, Mr. Fitzgerald? Then I could give you a very distinct answer."

"Could I get a moment to think it over for a moment?"

"Of course, Mr. Fitzgerald."

"Have I made a mistake now?"

"I think that it was perfect what you have done. I expect that the shooter will be prosecuted, but especially if he surrenders himself to the police, the verdict will be very mild. I'm from 8 a.m. on in my office tomorrow."

"Okay."

Then he killed the call, before I could say more. Well, I knew the murderer's name now. Mr. Miller had been right in his analysis of the situation. I would give Mr. Fitzgerald time until tomorrow. He could come to me, or surrender himself to the police. If not, then I would come to him.

\*

It all did not function. All this social media shit was too much for me. An answering machine had been something special in my youth. A car with a phone had been something for the upper-floor bosses. The first "mobile phones" had a weight of several pounds. Modems! And today? Yeah, I had started with Facebook, even Twitter - could someone remember Google+? But I got increasingly uninterested in all this stuff, especially as Google+ died - why was it always the most interesting stuff that died? I had no real idea how to get along with this case. Maybe I should tell Mr. Miller that he should search for a more skilled private investigator? More skilled in this social media stuff. My phone rang.

It was Bishop - he really called himself so - and he had news for me. While I tried to get access to this closed group with numerous efforts, he simply hacked it - I was too old for such stuff! He told me that it would be best if I visited him, then we could enter the group together. I agreed, and we arranged an appointment for tomorrow at 10 a.m. Earlier, he meant, on a Saturday, he would not stand up. 10 a.m. would already be a challenge. Okay, even I welcomed it today to get my eight hours of sleep, but at his age? But maybe it was only a matter of when you would go to bed, I thought. This image came me to mind. The crazy hacker who sat at his computer - better computers - the whole night long. Was it impossible to do it at daylight?

## **Arnold & Maurer**

### **The Case**

She had told me why she was in, and I was not very happy about her issue.

"Okay. You run a company, and it could be that two of your employees have a "romantic" relationship. And you want me to find out if it's so. Have I understood you right?"

"Yeah, exactly."

"Well, I'm not sure if this is the kind of matter we're best for."

"You would rather not tell me that you do not want to work for me - right?"

"Well, there have been times when most marriages started at the workplace."

"We're talking about corporate culture. We're talking about moral principles, Mr. Maurer."

"And who decides about them?"

"In this case? I, I'm the owner of the company. All my employees have signed a contract, and this contract defines my corporate culture and my moral principles. It's to protect my employees - especially the women, Mr. Maurer."

"Could it be that we exaggerate....."

".....could it be that it would be better that I speak with Mrs. Arnold? It's Arnold & Maurer - right?"

"We thought that Arnold & Maurer sounds better than Maurer & Arnold - we have equal rights. But if you like, Mrs. Arnold will be in later today. If you leave a number, then she will call you back."

She handed me her a business card and left the office - not much amused. I knew that Linda would

have the same opinion. Sure, there could be a relationship of dependency that one could make use of. But it had not sounded that way. My feeling was, that this was one of the matters in which we in the USA had lost any sense of balance. We did not allow minors to drink, but it was okay to gift a fifteen-year-old a handgun. This was crazy shit!

\*

I informed Linda, as she came to the office in the afternoon, about my conversation with Mrs. Fisher. We discussed it all for a while, but she agreed. This was no case for us. So I gave Linda Mrs. Fisher's phone number - she would call her later to inform her that she agreed with me. Thus, this case was closed for me, and I decided that this would be the end of my workday.

## **Pretty Nice Future**

### **Breaking News**

"CNN, breaking news! Our beloved president, Madam Nikki Mouse, has just announced that also this year, 2035, we had no mass shootings at all. She said that her laws and rulings have been a big success. But let us listen to her."

\*

"My beloved Americans, I speak happily to you. This year also, 2035, then years after you have made me president, we had again not one mass shooting in our beloved America! It was the right step to disarm all non-whites, especially this black scum and this Latino vermin. Weapons where they belong to! In the hands of white people, in the hands of Americans!"

\*

"And as if it had needed to underline this, a new case from Austin, the beautiful capitol of Texas. Bill Eliot, a honorable man of nearly sixty years, got threatened by numerous Latinos - gang members, most likely. But due to his firearm, he could gun down four of them. Three died, and the rest ran away. Weapons in white hands, where they belong to. - NRA, we rescue the lives of proud Americans! - More breaking news after the break."

## **Surrealistic Pillow**

### **Memoirs Found in a Bathtub**

Memoirs Found in a Bathtub - Stanisław Lem. It's difficult to top this topic, after this novel - roaming around in a building, not finding your way. An alternative novel, even if the novel has a somewhat different alignment: Franz Kafka, The Trial.

I often roam around in buildings, confused and disoriented, in my dreams, not only once at a university. It's not threatening. In a way, I even like it - until now. The last few times I had such a dream, I always found my way. This is puzzling! I had no problems at all! This is like the protagonist of Lem would simply walk into the building, and a short time later he would have settled his matter - this cannot function! Or Kafka, the trial would happen fast - not-guilty verdict. This cannot function! And my new dreams? I have the feeling now that they are boring in some

way!

\*

"I have gotten a letter," I said to the woman, middle-aged, behind the counter, "that I should come here, to the town hall, room 13, today, at 1:30 p.m." It was 1:20 p.m. when I said this.

"Yes, of course you got such a letter." She smiled in a very American, artificial, way as she said this.

"Everybody gets such a letter." And you little dummy, not knowing this.

"But it's not explicitly said why I should do so." She smiled like one of these robot pageant queens.

"Because it's a little surprise." And everyone gets such a letter? Why do I know nobody who has received such a letter? She simply looked at me.

"Shall I go now? - To room 13."

"What's the given time in your letter?" I was convinced now. She was either a robot or from the States.

"1:30 p.m." She turned her head very slowly towards the wall with a clock on it.

"Oh yes, hurry! It's already nearly 1:30 p.m. They already await you."

I did not ask now who "they" would be. I had a more severe problem.

"Well, where can I find room 13?" I could no longer look at her face - she killed me, as she bent forward and pointed in a direction to her left.

"Look, there is room one, and the next one is room two, and....."

".....and the next is room three," I said very fast before she could say it.

"Don't become impudent now," said Miss Jackson, my new teacher. Where was the moral pointing finger? Whatever, I thought that it would be the best now to leave and to walk swiftly to room 13. But as I started to turn.

"What are you doing?" I winced.

"It's already after 1:30. I should go."

"Fine that you have seen it on your own. Yes, it's already after 1:30." I waited a second, but the awaited information did not come.

"And.....?"

"What do you mean with "and"?" Now she appeared like a dominatrix, and I asked myself what weird fantasies I had currently.

"I only meant that I should hurry now because I'm already late." This should help me to end this.

"You think that you can still go to room 13?" Okay, now it turned bad.

"Not?" Let it end.

"Of course not! Punctuality is the most important thing in life. You're too late. Bad for you."

I started to turn again, but this time to leave the town hall. And again, I heard her voice, this time nearly tenderly.

"You're not interested in the further process? What now happens?" Her smile was motherly now.

"I thought, hard luck?" Gosh, my grandma now?

"We are no monsters. We have a heart. When you get a new letter, please come a bit earlier this time. And you already know now where room 13 is, right?"

"Right," I could approve. "And if I ask somebody about the letter and its purpose?" Now I was curious about how she would answer me. Her smile was staggering now.

"What a silly end it would be. Would it be possible to get to know what the purpose of the letter had been and will be? We cannot reveal this, and nobody else would ever reveal it. It's obvious, or."

Yeah, it was obvious. But, I would again get such a letter one day. I would be earlier there, I would enter room 13, and I would never say why or what happened inside. She was right. It would otherwise be a very silly story.

# **Don't Call Me Marlowe**

## **It's Dark, And By No Means A Game**

### **Even Private Investigators Make Mistakes**

As I stood up in the morning, after the normal morning stuff, I decided to call Mr. Fitzgerald again to ask him about his decision - he seemed not to be at home. Well, this could have more than one reason. He would be at a police station in the best case and would tell a police officer his story. I decided to have breakfast at the diner around the corner.

Eggs and bacon, hash browns, toast - the normal stuff with a lot of coffee. I watched and listened to the local news on the TV on the wall, with one eye and one ear. Just the normal stuff. A car chase at night ended in a traffic accident, corruption at the town hall, and a biased LAPD. And of course, a murder in any case, a man, battered, identified as Gerald Fitzgerald. I nearly lost control of my fork and spat out the delicious eggs. I watched TV with both eyes now.

They showed a picture of him, not the dead body, but a portrait. Had I seen this man at this night, on the street, with Mr. Miller? I had to confess, I wasn't sure about it. I finished my eggs hastily, emptied the coffee, and walked back to my office. Had I made such a fucking mistake? As I reached my apartment, my office, the glass door stood open. Only a tiny gap. Someone tried to play games with me? I gave the door a push with my foot, my gun in hand, not entering the office, at the wall. A voice came out of the office. A voice that I did not hear for the first time.

"Come in, Mr. Maurer. This is no trap."

A brief look into the office - do not trust people who break in your office. I saw "Ron", sitting in my chair. He seemed to be alone.

I walked slowly into my office, the gun still in hand. The door to my private rooms stood open, DeSantis' feet on my desk.

"I had some time and was interested in how such a private investigator like you lives." I did not answer him. I did not trust him - he was a murderer.

"Relax. We're alone. If you like, you can ransack your private rooms first. And then I would have a message for you."

"Say what you have to say and then piss off, murderer." I was in no good mood right now.

"Well, I'm no murderer. I have never killed someone. I think that you have already killed - and not only once?" I wasn't sure about why he felt so safe.

"You're right, I have killed more than one guy - and even a woman. And I would have no problems killing you right now." And I meant it seriously. Killing Fitzgerald had made the case a personal matter to me.

"I would not do this. I have friends at the police. And hey, they know that I will visit you this morning." He seemed very confident.

"You broke into my office - self-defense I would call this? I would tell this to my friends from the police this way." He seemed not to be impressed.

"Broken in? I do not see that someone has broken in. You should buy you a better lock for your door. It was too easy to open it."

Yeah, it was not a very cheap lock, but it was also not an exceptional one. Nevertheless, you had to be skilled to open it - he was obviously.

"Okay, as said. Say what you have to say." I needed to get him out of the office.

"It's not nice to see that someone is smarter than you - right?" I did not answer him.

"Fitzgerald has been the murderer. I could not tell you on the street, with him behind me. But he is dead now. The murderer of Mr. Miller's friend is dead. He has atoned for his crime. The case is solved. We all should be satisfied." What a wonderful speech.

"And the murderer of Mr. Fitzgerald?" He looked very satisfied now.

"You do not call the hangman a murderer, or. Those patriotic Americans who execute murderers? We do not call them murderers. In what nation you living, Mr. Maurer?"

"After a death sentence."

"And who sentenced those to death you have killed, Mr. Maurer? The woman, for example."

"She shot first. One would call this self-defense."

He slowly stood up and passed me, still standing near the door, very slowly.

"If you shoot me in the back now, in the hallway, I fear that no judge in the world would see this as self-defense." He laughed silently as he walked down the hallway.

The first thing I did was to ransack my private rooms - no one was there. I had thought for a moment that this could be the trap. That might be someone could hide in my private rooms to attack me after he had walked away - also to kill me. And, yes, I believed him. He was no murderer. He therefore had his henchmen. For doing the dirty work. Like Mr. Fitzgerald.

I did not want to sit behind my desk now. I sat at the small table. I had to ponder now, cautiously, what should be my next step. The message was obvious. But, what friends would he have at the police? Was this only a bluff? No, he was not a murderer. He was something much more dangerous. He was one of those guys who turned others into murderers. And he liked doing this. He was the real monster, and I had to hunt him down. It was a very personal matter to me now.

\*

I stood in front of the building, the gate, and rang the bell - no reaction. I had been intentionally too late. It was already 10:30 a.m., so I gave him a bit more time to wake up. Could it be that I was simply too old-fashioned? I fetched my smartphone that I owned in the meantime and dialed his number - was it good for a person like him to give others his address and phone number? Well, I was a reliable person, but he did not answer.

I have not had much to deal with him in the past, but I knew him as a solid person. I started to get moderately nervous. A small condo on the fifth floor. Not much with spying through windows and suchlike. I could leave him a message, an SMS at least. And if I could manage it, even a voicemail. But this seemed to be unrewarding. If he simply had not woken up in time for our meeting, then he would call me anyway - after being awake. Should I wait a bit longer? Not far away was a diner? I had already had breakfast, but coffee was always an alternative. I walked to the diner.

After I had emptied my second cup of coffee, I started to get really nervous. I had tried not only once to get in contact with him - should I try to get active? It was Saturday. Would I find a facility manager, or such a person? The police seemed a bit too much for the moment. I walked back to the building, and just as I had waited again for no five minutes, a woman left the building. I told her whom I wanted to visit and that he did not react. She knew him, have seen him two or three times - I think that we once had even a conversation. But what was important was that she could give me the number of the reliable person for the building. I called him.

Yes, it's Saturday. Yes, maybe he just simply still sleeps. But I told him that I would be a private investigator, and if he were not willing to come, then I had to call the police. With all its consequences, especially if he simply still slept. He told me that he would come. And in fact, no fifteen minutes later he arrived, and seemed not to be too annoyed. He even apologized for being a bit rude on the phone. No problem, I said, and we entered the building together.

At his front door, we rang the bell there, but there was still no reaction. Nothing seemed suspicious - that would be a fiasco, would he still lay in bed! After a night in front of his PC screens - he would have more than one in any case. The groundskeeper, thus the woman had named him, took his skeleton key and opened the door - nothing seemed suspicious, so I shouted his name. But Bishop did not answer. Well, it was indeed a small condo, it was not difficult to find the bedroom - was also his living room? In any case, it was the room with his computers. Not only one. And, as expected, several screens. The room was more or less a room for his PCs, with a couch and a small bed in it.

And in front of this bed, Bishop lay - dressed. But he would never sleep again, or forever - it depended on your standpoint. Not much blood was to see, but bullet wounds. At least two. One in his chest, one in his head. I had not to be a coroner to know that he was dead. I turned around to Antonio - he had told me his name. Do not move further on. This is a crime scene. Now I have indeed to call the police.

I sat in a diner again - another diner. I ate pancakes with a lot of syrup on them. It was all much too sweet. I hated it, but I needed it for the moment. Had I made such a fucking mistake? A very deadly mistake for Bishop. But, was his death indeed connected with my case? It was a bit early to say this. But I had a severe problem now. Not only that I did not get the information now that he had, not only that I had no one anymore now to help me with this computer stuff, social media stuff - or rather.

His murder seemed to be a very personal matter to me. Yet, if it was related to his Internet activities, and it most likely was so, then I would be the entirely wrong person to investigate this. I was too old. This was no longer my time, at least regarding all this social media and Internet shit. Okay, at the beginning, it had been cool, very interesting, and fascinating.

It offered you suddenly plenty of possibilities you had never dreamt about. But, of course, it also had its downsides. And I had the feeling that they increasingly dominated. Only to think about politics and manipulation, about the coming and the last presidential elections in my country? On the other side, in the country of my ancestors? Adolf did not need the Internet and social media. It seemed that I was simply too old for all that. I had no idea how to hunt down Bishop's murderer.

## **Arnold & Maurer**

### **Even Private Investigators Make Mistakes**

John Stewart back at the Daily Show? Well, I had loved Trevor Noah very much - his "style". John Stewart seemed to be sometimes a bit too much "show", too American to me. Trevor Noah had been somewhat more European. Nevertheless, it was always something nice to watch John Stewart. And, without any doubt, America needed individuals like him nowadays more than ever. Whether he talked about Joe Biden or Israel and Palestine - had I to agree all the time with him? Of course not. This was no social media garbage. This was way more intellectual. And more entertaining - when talking about America's best journalist grilling Putin. The phone rang. It was Linda.

"You're watching TV?"

"No, YouTube. You're maybe too young, Linda. But I have still lived through the time when you had to watch a TV program the day it got broadcasted, or you had missed it forever. Brave new world - this time is gone forever, and we can watch everything at any time. Why are you asking?"

"Local news. They have breaking news. Interesting news."

"Isn't it funny? Even a small community like ours had a local radio station in earlier times. But it's a TV station today. Would you provide me some information?"

"The police have found Mrs. Fischer's dead body."

"You're kidding me!"

"Unfortunately not. I mean, it's not very likely that her death is connected with the matter of what she was be in the office. But it's somewhat weird anyway."

"You sound like it would be a crime, a murder?"

"Three shots in the back? I wouldn't say murder. I would say, cold-blooded murder. She was not immediately dead, as the police announced in a statement. But they have provided no details. Do you think that we should be interested in her homicide?"

"We should try in any way to get some more information. We tell the police what we know. Maybe we can swap information. Do you think that I have made a mistake?"

"Why you?"

"Well, it was me speaking with her."

"If, then we both have made a mistake. But it's in any case too early to worry about this."

"Yeah, I think you're right."

Well, I had the creepy feeling that I had made a mistake. Okay, Linda was right. It was far too early to say this. But you learned in my job that coincidences occur. Despite that, you should always be cautious if coincidences came into play. I had the feeling that this would develop into a very personal matter.

## **Memories**

### **Above the City**

While I stayed in Dover for two or three weeks, I explored larger parts of the surrounding area. The Western Heights of Dover, The Citadel, and Dover Castle, of course. But I also walked along the cliffs, especially in the direction of the castle and the harbor. But I cannot remember that I was near the cliffs, not to talk about the edge of the cliffs. I mean.....

I have been aroused by looking down from the height of the Great Tower of Dover Castle, the possibility of falling down and dying. However, what would top this view, this feeling, if not, when looking down from the cliffs? Yet, I cannot remember that I have done this or that I was even near the edge of the cliffs.

And it was definitely not because it was not possible to walk along the cliffs, even the edge of the cliffs. There are paths even along the edge of the cliffs. Thus, knowing about my strange mind and memories? Haven't I really not done it, or do I have only no memories about it? This is a real question for me. I was for weeks in Dover, but if I put all specific memories together? It's not much for even a few days. And what have I done the rest of the days? Good question.

## **Surrealistic Pillow**

### **Lost in Habits**

A slave of your habits, that's what you are, he had told me. That I would never be able to change, he had told me. I listened to his shit as long as I could bear it. Then I let him see and feel to what extent I was indeed capable of changing.

I started to get a new shape. A weird mix of a bird of prey, a kind of dragon or dinosaur, and a fish from the deep sea. Then I started to play with him and to chase him, like it would have been a problem for me to grab him. And he started to scream.

That he had not meant it that way, he screamed. Not the outside, inside! Well, I said, would he have ever been able to see my emotional life? And I answered my question for him. He had never had any idea about my emotional life. Thus, he could not judge whether my emotional life had changed as well or not. He felt sorry, he said, this coward. And, because I was never interested in hurting him, I let him go. And my emotional life? Well, what shall I say? I liked my new outside, so I kept it. And my emotional life is still as far away from you, as before.



## **Male Fantasies**

### **The Male Perspective**

Well, does something like a "male perspective" and a "female perspective" really exist? In no case in a simple way, I would say, like black and white. This would mean that all men and women would be the same – and I'm sure that not all women are like Maggie or Nikki. And the men?

Well, sitting at an airport and looking at stewardesses, does this tell you something? Do women look at stewards? Do I have to ask me whether I'm an average man? Well, I hope not. Not for the men as such, but for me. Playboy magazine – who bought (buys?) Playgirl magazine? Do not tell me that only gay men.

I sometimes ponder on, if this all has to be important to me. Okay, these toxic asshole men are always threatening the world, but not all men are like them. Putin gets killed like the Czar, the swine from N.Y. gets a heart attack and dies, Netanyahu goes to jail, the man from Hungary fails the next election, and Xi falls off the Great Wall. The world could easily be a much better place. Only a few men would have to say goodbye.

No, I doubt that there's a male or female perspective as such. This appears to be too easy for me. There are too many cultural aspects, traditions, and matters that could be changed easily. A bit less Hollywood shit (it's a metaphor), some more reality. The wife of Einstein had been a very skilled mathematician - what was her name? Einstein, of course, like Albert!

## **Surrealistic Pillow**

### **Running Down a Dream**

Well, it was not the first time that I had a dream that puzzled me. But this dream was, for some reason, very weird. I woke up, had to go to the restroom, and looked at the clock - it was somewhat after 4 a.m. I fall asleep fast again, and then it happened.

I was in a room, and I knew whose room this was - I was simply there. Later, I was again in this room, and once more, I did nothing. I'm not sure how often this happened, but then I was again in this room. There were different doors, and I opened the first door. A bathroom with a bathtub. Obviously recently used, but empty. I opened another door, and I cannot remember what was behind it. Then another door opened, most likely a bedroom behind, and the person stepped in, whose rooms these were - Mrs. Elizabeth W. Grant, also known as Lana Del Rey.

Well, she did not notice me. She made something with her left earring, most likely her last preparations to go out. I tried to leave the room before she would notice me, but it was too late - she noticed me. So, I started to try to explain that she had nothing to fear, that I would leave - I knew that I would be in big trouble now.

Then I was outside the room, in a hallway. I sat down on a chair to wait - to wait until someone would come, and my trouble would begin. But no one came, and I woke up. I looked at the clock. It was exactly - in fact - 5:00 a.m. And now?

Well, I never every had dreamt about Mrs. Grant in my life. But, the moment she entered the room, it was so real. I really had the impression that she would be with me in this room - despite that, I was also aware that I would dream right from the beginning on. Have I to ponder about the bathroom, or the room I can no longer remember? Well, we were in the living room, and she obviously came out of the bedroom. I had seen the bathroom. What could be left for the missing room? Am I too often in Los Angeles right now? I have no idea! The Dark Blue Letter?

A strange thing is - music. I listen to music in my car. Say that it had been Honeymoon two days ago, and Lust for Life yesterday. Today it would have been A.K.A., and I would work now. The music in my mind would be Honeymoon today, Lust for Life tomorrow, and A.K.A. the next day.

There's always an offset of two days. Anyway, it feels a bit creepy to have been in her rooms - I was right from the beginning aware that they were hers, only that I was not aware that she was next door. I also knew that it was her bathroom and bathtub. Okay, I did not enter the room. I had limits. Well, let's see about whom I will dream next.

## **Memories**

### **Living in Dover**

I was eighteen and had seen the housing areas in London, now in Dover. Well, I had seen movies, British movies, and these terraced houses, all gray and not very inviting, had been nothing new to me. But walking down the streets, alongside these always-the-same-looking houses, this had been something depressing. And I walked a lot through Dover, along the two large streets, but also up the hills. And it was always the same - I could not imagine living there. Well, in my youth, also Germany was not necessarily a very colorful place. But not to this degree, it was monochrome. Dover definitely disappointed me in certain ways, England did.

I pondered about Italy and Spain at that time - the Mediterranean area - wasn't they more colorful and more life-affirming? However, I never traveled to such a place - Sweden had been my next aim. Not very well-known to be extraverted people, the Swedish. Maybe it would have been better to travel to Italy instead? And Dover, England?

It was obviously not the last time that I have been in England, Dover even. But I never developed any relationship with this nation. I even cannot hate it. I hate the US in some ways, as I deeply love it. England stays emotionless.

## **Don't Call Me Marlowe**

### **It's Dark, And By No Means A Game**

#### **A Fucking Personal Matter**

I informed Mr. Miller that the murderer of his friend had been murdered as well and was also dead now. And I told him that I was in no way satisfied with this result. That I was indeed totally pissed off, because the fucking puppetmaster behind it all felt so safe that he even thought he could treat me like a stupid school boy. Mr. Miller agreed with me and also had the feeling that this case was not closed in any way. Especially as I dropped the name DeSantis. What would be my plan now, he asked.

Well, I had to confess, that wouldn't be so easy. Okay, in the good old days, as I was young, there had been two alternatives. Either I would have killed him - by self-defense, of course - or I would have paid some guys from the street to beat him up so much that he would not need any doctor anymore thereafter. But this time would be over, would be no longer, I told him. And that it maybe was not bad at all that we had the 50s today and not longer the 20s. Well, he was not totally happy about my response, and I wasn't either. I asked him to give me some more time. I had to ponder about it. He accepted - he did not have to know more than was needed.

\*

I informed Mr. Miller about the latest developments, and that I feared that this could become a

dead-end street for me. Even if I had the technology and all the needed knowledge, the police had all of Bishop's computer stuff now. And I also had no idea about what he had found, what he wanted to tell or show me. Yeah, this was a fucking unsatisfying situation.

My advice was that he possibly should reach out to another private investigator, younger and with better knowledge and skills regarding the Internet and social media. Of course, I wouldn't send him a bill. He said that he would ponder about it.

I felt humiliated, and it was not my nature to accept this. There had to be a possibility to react and act. In a classic crime novel? I would monitor Bishop's home now, for instance, and something would happen, and I would nail down the fucking murderer. But this seemed a bit too easy and naive. Some courses about computers and social media at the community college? Could I get in contact with one of Bishop's friends? Did a guy like Bishop had had friends? Maybe I could find out at his funeral.

## **Arnold & Maurer**

### **A Fucking Personal Matter**

"The police doubts that Mrs. Fisher's death is in any way linked with her wish to hire us, Linda."

"And who from the police says this, Peter?"

"Your best buddy at the police, Tom."

"You mean Tom with the buff body?"

"You know more than one Tom at the police?"

"Could be."

"Yeah, Tom, the man with the perfect body. He told me so, that I share it with you."

"Tom was always a nice person."

"And how reliable do you think is his informations? Apart from his perfect body, of course."

"Well, besides his fantastic-looking body? He is still a police officer. But I think that we can trust him."

"If you think so, okay."

"I will ask him personally at our next date, Peter."

\*

"Arnold and Maurer, private investigators, Mr. Maurer on the phone. What can we do for you?"

I listened to a female voice on the phone, and her issue puzzled me a bit.

"Okay, Mrs. Thompson. But the fact that the police have questioned you has to mean nothing. And again, why do you know that Mrs. Fisher has contacted us with a matter that's related to you?"

\*

"Hey, Linda. I think that we have to talk about Tom."

"Come on, Peter! Are you taking this seriously?"

"Not his perfect body - it's a bluff. But we could possibly have a new client."

"Not Tom. Don't try to fool me."

"No, but Mrs. Thompson, the female part of the romantic couple Mrs. Fisher talked about. "

"Are you kidding me? Is she now under investigation by the police?"

"This seems not to be all clear already, but she has been questioned twice so far. The last time at the police station."

"Okay. And why "could be"?"

"Well, I would say that this twist has some puzzling aspects. Mrs. Thompson could not, or better

she did not want, answer me distinctively why she knows that Mrs. Fisher has been in our office and why. But I have scheduled an appointment with her. But I think that it would be good when we both were in."

"This I see all the same as you, Peter."

## **Matosinhos Blue**

### **The Unmade-Up Perspective?**

Well, Portugal has voted, and joins now all the nations with strong far right-wing parties, like Germany. So far, Portugal has been the stronghold for socialist ideas in Europe - until now. Is Portugal to blame? Well, maybe some of them.

The socialists themselves have screwed it up! You have to blame them! They had an outright majority, but now they have, after acting like idiots - most likely - lost everything. Why always the same shit? The strongest enemies of the socialists are the socialists. They do not need an opponent - they always kill themselves. Like Olaf kills in Germany, as the leader of the socialist party and chancellor, every perspective for the socialists due to his fucking style of governing. The same is true in Portugal.

Is Portugal a failed nation now? Oh dear, look at the States or Hungary, for instance! Portugal is not the Garden of Eden, but it is still a much nicer place to live. The typical small houses are disappearing, and housing blocks are rising. The small restaurants and pastelerias dwindle, sushi and hamburgers are now in Matosinhos as well. But apart from that, that change is a natural matter, as long as the supermarkets are smelling of bacalhau, so long all is okay. I still look forward to the day, when I travel to Portugal with a one-way ticket only.

Yeah, inflation, high prices on the housing market, inequality of wealth, such matters, and more, you will also find in Portugal - well, Portugal is still a part of this world and will be forever. But it's a pretty charming part of the world, and I hope that it will be forever.

## **Matosinhos Blue**

### **A Seagull's Delight**

Opposite to the pasteleria where I always have breakfast in the morning, a smaller side street, there's a larger butchery. Two days ago, while enjoying my meia de leite and my torrada, a butcher put a larger plastic trash can in the street and filled it with bones. Then he selected some smaller pieces, with a bit more remaining flesh on them, and threw them on the street. Well, it needed only seconds, and there were plenty of seagulls on the ground. Cars that used this street had to slow down. But they did not use the horn or so, they just slowed down. The butcher did the same later again, until a truck came to pick up the bones. I cannot imagine that I would see something like that in Germany, especially not on a public street. Give the birds their share - I thought that it was nice. Such moments are those that make Portugal especially nice to me.

## **Matosinhos Blue**

### **Altering?**

I have booked my room for my next stay in Matosinhos six months in advance, and I have decided to stay at O Sardinhas again. Okay, as normal today, I could cancel the booking again without costs until shortly before the stay. But it's a sign for me. I can continue then where I have stopped this time. The pastelerias for breakfast, the daily menu, the restaurants, and the places to write. I have to improve my mornings - Maia in any case, the zoo. At least one more metro line until the final halt. Jazz club again. More Portuguese speaking - I have time to plan. I see increasingly that I live in Matosinhos, a bit like I would be retired. I see the way I have to go, and I do not see any reason why I should not be able to do so.

I had always had the idea so far to do many things, but I did not have much in the end. But always, living somewhere, you have your places to go shopping, your restaurants, or your places for breakfast and lunch, when in the city. Twice a year, visit the zoo, the aquarium, the park, or the jazz club. Living somewhere means having routines. I have to develop mine.

Okay, at the end, I do not know exactly where I will live. But say that it were Maia or any place between Maia and Matosinhos? It would be easy to reach the beach with the metro - I would be a retired person with no commitments regarding a job or so. I have to develop relationships in Matosinhos - real relationships. It has started, that the time in Matosinhos is what counts. The time in between is to make my living for the next few years and to prepare to alter to a different land. These two weeks have been the next step.

## **Male Fantasies**

### **A Sweet Little Queen**

*It's good to be king and have your own world  
It helps to make friends, it's good to meet girls  
A sweet little queen who can't run away  
It's good to be king, whatever it pays  
(It's Good to be King; Tom Petty)*

Well, I always looked at couples, traditional families, and wondered: Is this the way you want to live? And the answer was: In no way!

I'm turning fifty-nine soon - living in Portugal as a really old man? Alone? Who said that I would have to? I live in my own world - at least I try to. Well, I'm no king, not in the traditional way. But hey, I do not dream of a sweet little queen that can't run away, anyway.

When sitting in a restaurant in Matosinhos, they have these nice dishes for two - bad if you're just one. Arroz de marisco or tamboril, misto de 4 bacalhaus, and so much more. Well, for some reason, it could be nice not to be alone. And not only regarding ordering dishes in a restaurant. But I still have some years of time.

## **Memories**

### **A Tale About Sweden I**

Sweden, or Scandinavia, is often seen as an excellent place to live, a place of happy people. But is this realistic?

Finland, for example, has problems with alcoholism and a high suicide rate. Denmark was long a hot spot for legal child pornography - Color Climax. In Sweden, the people like it to stay at home, especially over the long winters, and the movies of Bo Widerberg show a different Sweden - Ingmar Bergman. And Norway?

In a way, I have always had a favor for Scandinavia, especially Sweden. Some of my collections deal with certain Swedish topics. I stayed for a time in Sweden and pondered living in Sweden and working in Sweden. I started to learn Swedish, but of course, it led to nothing. And today?

Okay, Los Angeles in the summer is too hot, but Scandinavia in the winter? Like Canada in Winter. And there's no ocean around Scandinavia - only some water. My time in Sweden? Well, it's some decades ago, but there have been some interesting aspects.

## **Surrealistic Pillow**

### **A Different View**

Dreams and dreaming, it can be much, especially something very intense. The last days, my dreams - nothing spectacular, but very intense. I do things that I have not accomplished in my dreams for years. I dream about math and physics, about mathematical formulas, but in an extremely intensive way. And I always know that I'm dreaming, at least in certain moments, but this makes it even more intense. And I like it, such a dreaming, waking up, and being curious about how everything will continue when laying down again.

My dreams have changed very - would "dramatically" be too dramatic wording? Does this mean that I have changed? I see a development and be insecure about where it will lead. But it has to be.

\*

"I'm not sure which way I shall go," the guy asked me.

"Do you have a distinct aim, a place you want to reach?" He was one of those who always asked questions only to have to answer none.

"Yes, sure, but it's not so easy. You're a bird, a magpie - I know what's said about magpies. Maybe you could tell me which way I should take. You're a bird. You can fly high into the air. You should know where these ways lead to."

Yeah, he was such a clever guy, but he would not trap me with his meaningless words.

"As you might know, as a clever man, every way leads to somewhere. Is it important to walk a certain way, or is it more important the way you walk the way? You could choose the right one, and possibly, it would be the right way for now. But still, in the future? You could choose the left one, and possibly, it would be the false way for now. But still, in the future? Which of the ways should I recommend you?"

What a meaningless babble.

"Is this a kind of riddle? Let me ponder on it for a moment."

"Take your time. I have mine."

And maybe I will tell you, that after the ways have rounded the mountain left and right, they will meet behind the mountain again. Maybe, maybe not - I'm the magpie.

## **Don't Call Me Marlowe**

### **It's Dark, And By No Means A Game**

#### **Backlash**

The coffee was not bad at all - 7-Eleven, medium-size mocha, cinnamon-flavored. But the coffee started to get cold while I was sitting in my car at the side of the road on 9th Street. The coffee got cold because I had to wait until dumbass DeSantis had managed to sneak it up on my car. Then, finally, he had reached the passenger door and opened it with momentum.

"Do you think that I do not realize that you are following me?"

Do you not realize that I always wanted you to realize that I follow you?

"Nice to see you, Mr. DeSantis. I simply park here and enjoy my coffee - shopping?"

"I thought that you would have understood me, as I've visited you in your office. If you are not stopping this shit, then I have to call the police."

"Yeah, I know, the friends you have by the police. I tell you something. Mr. Hitler killed not one Jew with his own hands, but he's responsible for the deaths of millions of Jews. You have not killed Mr. Miller's friend, and most likely not Mr. Fitzgerald. But you're the responsible person. You knew that Mr. Fitzgerald had killed Mr. Miller's friend, and you know who killed Mr. Fitzgerald. Most likely, you have ordered his killing. That's how I see it."

"Fine, if I were in your spot, I would run to the police to snitch on me. I have to be a very horrible person. Let's see. I might not have betrayed a friend, and the rest is speculation. Yeah, this will send me for a very long time behind bars, if not death row. This is my last warning, Mr. Maurer."

He slammed the passenger's door shut, and I opened mine and exited my car.

"Hey, DeSantis, you're nothing but a puffed-up asshole. You can frighten some of your boys, but do not try it with a man. What do you want to tell your friends at the police? That I do my job as a private investigator? I keep an eye on you, DeSantis, and not only I. You maybe have friends at the police, I have friends on the streets. Not only my eyes will watch you from now on. Have a lovely day, Mr. DeSantis."

I got into my car again and drove away. He started to get nervous.

\*

The funeral? Well, not many were there. The parents, of course, but also two younger guys. I tried to get into a conversation with them, what was not such easy. He has helped me two or three times with some computer stuff, I had told them, and they told me that it would be very difficult to help as long as the police had all his stuff. But if they were getting some information that could be interesting for me, then they would inform me.

I asked myself, after the funeral and a coffee in front of me, whether it would be better to stop all this. Should I try to get an easy job at a mall? It all started to get increasingly stupid. In a few years, I had hoped to be able to retire.

It seemed as though everything would get crazier every day. The GOP in Washington was totally out of control now, a fucking bitch started to control everything there. Wouldn't she be a good pick as VP for the GOP guru? It would be not the first time to have a nuts conservative bitch as a potential GOP VP - with her all that shit had begun in a way. If I wrote a novel about the future now, it would become a dystopia.

I pondered about the death of a white computer freak, while in Ukraine, they died because we did not support them enough. While a young black man died in a hail of bullets - nearly a hundred in under a minute. It sounded like Bonnie and Clyde. Not only the GOP seemed to be out of control. A few years, it all seemed crazy. Record temperatures everywhere. It all appealed to the fact that we had screwed it up. Well, the world wars, Vietnam, and Ukraine today - all this found its end and will find its end. All this was caused by fighting humans against humans. But this time it was humans fighting nature, and this fight would know only one winner. And we humans wouldn't be it. I emptied my coffee, to return to my office and home. I would be alone there. But it felt as this would be the better, even if somber, alternative.

## **Matosinhos Blue**

### **The Unmade-Up Perspective?**

As I was in the zoo in Maia, there was also a group of students. Some of whom were obviously students, wearing their black uniforms. Others I wasn't sure about. They looked like technical staff to me in their overalls, with something written on them. One had a large wooden spoon. Now I understand the background - hazing at Portuguese universities. Okay, this happens not only in Portugal, but it also shows you a certain part of Portuguese society. One of the elements is unquestioning obedience and total submission. The man with the spoon was the "Duke".

What should be the result of this? A German word would be "Duckmäusertum". Moral cowardice, not casting doubt on something, being a nice servant - of course in your social stratum. The scenery in the zoo appeared a bit absurd - now I know why. Especially because this is nothing extraordinary at Portuguese universities - at universities as such, not fraternities only. Okay, is it better in Germany? At universities as such, yes. But not at the - often right-wing - fraternities. Nevertheless, it's total shit for me. We don't have to teach subordination and how to accept everything - keep your mouth shut. But I'm only a simple guy.

## **Don't Call Me Marlowe**

### **It's Dark, And By No Means A Game**

### **Sometimes You Have To End Something**

"Is this your solution ?" he seemed still to ponder if I meant it seriously. I even did not put in an effort to answer him. I just pulled the trigger. Then I arranged everything, and called the police.

"Yes, I had no choice.....I had to shoot.....It was self-defense."

Was I happy now? No, but it was the 50s and this was Los Angeles. Sure, it would cause an investigation. He had white skin. If he had black skin, no one would be interested in him. Well, it was the 50s, and this was Los Angeles.

\*

Months later, I had reached nothing. The police have had a suspect but no arrest. Sure, it was not the



first case in my "career" that I could not solve or had an unsatisfying outcome. But I had the deep feeling now that I had to change some matters. The world had changed, and I had changed.

## **Arnold & Maurer**

### **Backlash**

Mrs. Thompson entered the office, a good-looking woman, business-like dressed, no thirty, potentially somewhat beyond - who would be able to say this? Linda offered her a seat at our table and asked her about her wish regarding a beverage. As all the standard issues had been settled and the usual kind words had been exchanged, I started with the real conversation.

"Well, Mrs. Thompson, as you know, we have spoken together on the phone. And I have to say, I was not pleased after the conversation because one topic hadn't been answered by you. Further on, and this is our opinion," I pointed at Linda, "that we have to clarify this topic first. We both think that otherwise it's not meaningful to start any conversation about whatever."

I looked at Linda, and she nodded her head. Then I looked at Mrs. Thompson, and a tiny "okay" was heard.

"You said," I continued, "that you know that Mrs. Fisher has contacted us, and this would be the reason why also you also contact us. This raises the question of why you know that Mrs. Fisher contacted us before her death, and why this is a reason for you to contact us as well. We both need a distinct answer from you," I said, looking at Linda again, "otherwise we have no basis for whatever."

It seemed as she was not very surprised regarding my statement. In fact, she started with a very straight answer.

"I have to confess that I have seen a notice in Mrs. Fishers' shedule - you know what my function in the company is, or maybe was?"

She looked at both of us, and Linda answered.

"No, and as Mr. Maurer has told me also this question was not answered by you in a clear manner. Something like, that you have worked closely together with Mrs. Fischer."

"Yes, I was her right-hand woman, her assistant, and I had and have still procuration, at least to a certain extend. It was something normal that I knew her activities."

"Okay, Mrs. Thompson, I understand," I started, "but you not tell me that she entered a note in her shedule, that gave you the information that she has contacted us because a matter related to you? Do you?"

I looked at her, she showed not the slightest emotion.

"It was her private schedule on her smartphone. But, and you have to believe me, it was not totallly uncommon that I also used her smartphone. I sometimes entered appointments there, or even wrote SMSs for her - such issues. It was not her real private phone, it was a business phone."

"Okay," now it was Linda's turn, "we take this. But, why you are sitting here? Are you interested in what Mrs. Fisher has told us? Do you need some information?"

Still, she did not show the slightest emotion and had no problem answering the question.

"I'm afraid that I need help because someone tries to cheat me. Not necessarily to make me look like a murderer, but to harm me and to kick me out of my possition."

"That's a good question," I started now, "who owns the company now?"

"A real good question. I do not know her will, and so far, I have no real information. She was not that old, and she had no children. I simply fear that she died intestate."

"But this would mean that you simply not know what the future for you in the company will be - I'm a bit confused."

Not only Lind was somewhat confused.

"With whom you had a romantic relatonship?"

I tried to change the topic somewhat.

"With Mr. Norton, Trevor Norton."

"And he is or was - in the company?"

"He works in the production."

"Something special about him? You worked some floors above him - at least metaphorically. I do not know your company building."

"Well, he has a perfect body, and.....let's say that he is well-equipped and very skilled."

Well, I started to get a bit annoyed, while Lind grinned. With my not-so-perfect body and the rest - Linda continued.

"Is this all what you have to say about Mr. Norton?"

Wasn't it enough, I thought, maybe some details about his body, his equipment and his skills?

"Yeah, he had a relationship, a "romantic" one, with Mrs. Fisher prior - might be for a time with both of us."

"Wow, now I'm perplexed." I was, in fact, confused. "Why then does Mrs. Fisher, and not you, have four bullets in her back? Is, or was, this all a kind of cat fight between Mrs. Fisher and you?"

All the time I tried to see a reaction in her eyes - nothing.

"Let's put it this way. You know the talking about the alpha males? We were two alpha women. I needed and wanted the job, and she needed me to run the company. Suchlike it functioned very well."

"So you would not shoot her four times in the back?"

Also Linda tried it.

"This would be cowardly. I would have shot her between the eyes while looking into her eyes, one time. The only problem was that I needed her the same way that she needed me."

"Are you sure about that?" Now I started to doubt. "Could it be that Mrs. Fisher contacted us because she wanted to get rid of you?"

"In no way! She would have had no chance to run the company alone."

"Mr. Norton?"

Linda had not finished the name as Mrs. Thompson started to laugh out loud - and it seemed to be very honest laughter.

"Trevor? He has a huge cock and knows how to please women, but running a company? He's a good toyboy, but it's simply absurd to imagine that he could have been able to run the company together with Mrs. Fisher, that he not would have been able to."

"And together with you?"

I loved this question from Linda as I started to feel a bit better again.

"As said, a good guy for sex, but not for running a company. And by the way, his chatter caused the police to suspect me."

"Details?"

Now I felt even better.

"With pleasure."

\*

"Could you tell us about his chatter. What has he told the police?" Linda asked.

"Well, of course, the police also interviewed us regarding Fran's death - Mrs. Fisher's death. He had nothing better to do than to talk about that he has an alibi, but that he wasn't sure about me. As if I would kill her by shooting he in the back, four bullets."

"Three," I said, "it has been three bullets."

"Hadn't you said four before? You both?"

"Maybe a mistake." Lind continued. "What kind of alibi?"

"He wasn't in the city. He can prove this. And hey, I knew that he wouldn't be in the city - wouldn't be a good timing to kill her."

"Not whether it happened during a discussion or a quarrel in affect. The police think that it wasn't a

planned murder. I believe that the police has asked you whether you own a gun or not."

Could I imagine her as a murderer? Well, she could be a virgin madonna as well as the sleaziest whore – she could be anything. And the more I heard, also that from Mrs. Fisher as we had phoned, the more I had the imagination of two women, alpha women, fighting each other in the most terrible women's way. Remembered some black-and-white Hollywood stories about how dangerous, ruthless, relentless, and devastating women as such where. The doom for every man, especially if fighting each other with a man as third character – Johnny Guitar was only one of the movies. And yet, not only today these were simply lousy Hollywood stupidities. Johnny Guitar still one of the better ones. Hollywood, the contradiction of reality.

"Well, I own a hand gun and a rifle. But both are not fitting, the police said. Sure, I cannot prove that I had not a third one in my ownership. The problem is that I have no alibi."

"Because of?" Lind asked her, I was somewhat distracted.

"I was alone at home. Trevor as not in town, and I was too lazy to look for another boy for the night. There are enough alternatives to have fun as well."

"Why not buy one for the night?" I was, in fact, curious. "Enough agencies in the city, this is Los Angeles? I guess that it wouldn't be a matter of money."

"I was a bit lazy this evening. Another woman would have maybe been an alternative? Yes, good money but also a lot of stress. Every so often, I simply enjoy it to be only with me and the silence. This is a hectic city."

Should I feel sorry for her now? Most in the city worked a lot and hard, with more than one job, and had not the opportunity to ponder on buying a man or a woman, or spending the night alone. I started to get weary of the conversation. I thus turned to Linda.

"What do you think? I think that we should have a conversation about all of this."

"I agree, but I would have a final question." She turned to Mrs. Thompson. "What exactly do you think we could do for you?"

"I need some support to manage this situation. This is a critical situation, and under such circumstances it's always good to have good people at your side."

This seemed funny to me.

"And, do you think that we're good people, Mrs. Thompson?"

"Yes, Mrs. Arnold. Mrs. Fisher thought this, and she was always good at choosing capable personnel to work for her. She has chosen me, for example."

"Okay, I agree with my partner. We have to discuss this. Would you give us two or three days to decide?"

"Of course. And if something grave happens, regarding the police's interest in me?"

"Then inform us, and we will not leave you out in the cold, Mrs. Thompson." I meant this seriously. She was no client so far, but she has come to us. Either we would say distinctively "no", or we had at least some commitment.

\*

Again the usual kind words for the goodbye, then we were again alone in the office. At least what concerned me, I had no distinct idea how I had to interpret Mrs. Fisher, Mrs. Thompson, not to talk about their relationship. Was it because I was a man? Or that I, for example, thought that there would be no difference between having a toygirl as a man, or a toyboy as a woman, that both were pure disgusting bullshit? In any way, it would be very interesting for me to hear Linda's valuation.

## **Don't Call Me Marlowe**

### **It's Dark, But By No Means A Game**

#### **Ain't That Tough Enough?**

##### **Hollywood Babylon**

"You can't do this, Peter." He started to annoy me. "He's one of our most famous actors, you cannot kill him."

"He's a filthy swine, a fucking pervert asshole. That's what he is." I kicked him in his stomach. He looked silly laying on the concrete floor.

"It's enough, you have enough problems right now. He has powerful friends. At the police as well as in politics." Sure, and this was the reason why he was allowed to do everything. Because many watched his movies and adored him.

"So, you tell me it's okay that he has raped an underage girl because he was interested in how it would be to fuck a young girl?"

"Well, her mother brought her to the hotel." What a shit was this? If mommy was horny enough about fame, then it would be most likely okay for a ten-year-old girl to show her pussy in a "men's magazine"?

"Does anybody talk about her, her feelings?"

"We all know what it means to be a child actress in Hollywood. And hey, she has the fame." Did I really have thought that he would be a friend of mine?

"Yeah, she has to pay a price for her fame – what about that the price for her would be her life in the end? Drowning is a nice death, I have heard."

"Can you imagine the headlines if he will be found death in an old factory building? Do you think that they will not hunt you down?" Why did I think that I would need his support?

"I'm an old man, I've fucked up enough in my life. Well, maybe it's better for you to leave now."

"This is Hollywood, Peter, this is Los Angeles, we live in California. Do you really think that you can be the judge?" No, but the hangman.

"You leave now, that's my last word. It's a matter between him and me. He had not had to come. But the chance to rape an even younger girl was too arousing for him. I needed over three months for this trap - he would have had the chance to say no. But he said yes, and now he has to pay the bill."

He left and I was alone with him. The rest of the story? Well, humans are burning humans alive and like it to hear the screams of the victim. They have no problem in erasing whole populations, tribes, religious groups, nations – their insanity had no limits. In Germany or the USA, Japan or Russia, they all defined themselves as humans. So, what could I do with him that would be able to shock you? Or was it the aspect that he was a world-famous actor, poet maybe - why not a president? Well, I pulled the trigger twice, I wasn't the guy for too much drama. Then I called the Château Marmont Hotel and told them that he no longer needed his room – perhaps I should book him a new one in the Four Seasons?

## Arnold & Maurer

### Not Your Kind of People

"I'm sick of it," I told Linda, "with every day more. I'm sick of this modern, civilized, western world and living style. I'm sick of that we have to have increasingly more, that we all have to be something special. As if it wouldn't be enough that we all could be feeling individuals, capable of using their own minds. We could've had it all - she now lives in Los Angeles, no longer in Britain. Yeah, we could have it all, but this is not enough for us. We need more and more, we have to be more and more exalted."

"Okay, I can understand you, Peter. But what shall be the consequences?"

"I'm sick of all these Mrs. Fishers, or Mrs. Thompsons, or their male equivalents. To be honest, I'm not interested in the person that has murdered Mrs. Fisher. This is not good for our business, maybe I should quit the job."

"Well, I would say that Mrs. Fisher has tried to play her game, as Mrs. Thompson tries to play her game now. They both attempted and attempt to play a game, to play it with us as their figures. I do not believe in one word of Mrs. Fisher, neither in one of Mrs. Thompson. I would say that we have two alternatives."

"I would sometimes wish that I would live in a wooden house, up the hill, deep in the forest, no TV and no phone. One or two times a year, someone would find his way to me, would tell me about the latest news, and would show me that I had not to return. And one day one would find the remains of my dead body, died a longer time ago."

"And this would be the solution?"

"This would be shit. I hate it with every year more, the cold of the winter, the short winter days. Your alternatives?"

"We do nothing and say "no" to Mrs. Thompson – the murder case is an issue for the police. Or we go to the bottom of it."

"What would be your preference?"

"Your preference would be a block house in Wyoming?"

"Too cold."

"Well, in a way, it would be interesting to find out what all this hassle around Mrs. Fisher and Mrs. Thompson is based on. On the other side, I had a phone call. But it would be a very trivial case."

"We have to set preferences. I left Los Angeles and moved to Agua Dulce to get a distance to all this exaggerated nonsense. Well, it's still Los Angeles County, but at least somewhat up the hill."

"Then I have to make two phone calls? One positive answer and one refusal – right?"

"That's how I see it."

"Okay."

*We are not your kind of people  
You seem kind of phony  
Everything's a lie*

*We are not your kind of people  
We find when you start talking  
There's nothing but white noise*

*We are not your kind of people  
Speak a different language  
We see through your lies*

*(Not You Kind Of People; Garbage)*

## **Don't Call Me Marlowe**

### **It's Dark, But By No Means A Game**

#### **Ain't That Tough Enough?**

##### **Southern Pride**

1963, we had a young president, many crises over the years, the Cold War, Vietnam, and the foreign world in turmoil. And our world - the American world? A young president who had generated many hopes, the Civil Rights Movement, but honestly, with not so many results. Not so long, and he would ask for reelection - would he get a second chance? For what? I wasn't confident that I would vote again for him as I watched the white girls at Hermosa Beach.

1963, a black person was still a nigger in the South - raping and killing a nigger girl an unimportant matter. But hey, we did not live in this dark world of the south. We were the proud Californians, the civilized and intellectual Americans. A Latino sold lemonade while I watched the white girls at Hermosa Beach.

1963, did we mourn after Eisenhower? Well, he had decided for the Republicans, but he had hated Nixon and damaged him. And Kennedy had won by the slightest margin. When would Nixon become president? When would we become a nation of one and no longer an Indian-like-shaped nation with a caste system? And I still watched the white girls at Hermosa Beach.

\*

West Hollywood at night, at a gas station, some assholes started to shoot around. It all happened very fast. A car pulled away at high speed, and I had my gun in hand - inside the gas station, looking out of the window. Two bodies on the ground, a voice behind me: Have you seen it? Had it been Latinos or Africans? Well, on the ground, there are two white-looking bodies near the gas pumps under the neon light. It had been dark-looking bullets as much as I could see them, I answered the asshole behind me.

\*

##### **National Anthem**

As long as we all the time mention  
The first black whatsoever  
And celebrate  
As long we will be no united nation

What else do we have to mention?  
The first Latino  
The first Asian  
The first Native

This suggests that  
Always the white leads the way  
And the rest follows  
As a natural rule

And as long as that we no longer mention race  
As a distinguishing mark  
There will be no united nation  
No common National Anthem

## **Arnold & Maurer**

### **Living in Sweet Water**

I reached the crossroads, Agua Dulce Canyon Road, while driving along Darling Road towards the airport. Yes, Agua Dulce a CDP with no more than four thousand inhabitants but an airport - I turned right and stopped my car. The Home Made Restaurant, just at the corner, or driving the few yards to the Maria Bonita Mexican on the right, or the Cowboy Tavern to the left? Was not a such easy decision. I decided to park my car just here at the Home Made Restaurant - a snack on the patio and a cold drink would be my aim. Yeah, Agua Dulce.

Well, not a very long way to Los Angeles, but enough landscape was in between - the Valley, of course, and the Hollywood Hills. There was a good deal of landscape in Agua Dulce as well. The houses were scattered, and there were some farms as well. Agua Dulce was no city or town in the way, with streets and houses along them. All was scattered, a lot of brown soil, and some companies as well. And wine - a lot of wine, wineries.

It was interesting to sit here in the noonday sun with an ice tea on the table, imagine the place that had been my home not that long ago. It had been the right decision, as a car slowly drove by. A convertible, with two guys and two girls inside, marked tourists. Should I tell them the wrong direction? That the rock was to be found in the other direction? Or maybe they had already found it and were on their way back? Whatever, as my phone rang – Linda?

I still sat on the patio of the Home Made Restaurant after the phone call, but I was somewhat confused. She had received a phone call in our office about a possible new case. Well, was nothing so strange for an investigative bureau. But the circumstances were strange. Better, the caller had been something strange. Linda had thought, at first, that I would try to fool her - a man living on a farm near Wheeler Ridge had called. Apart from, that Bakersfield seemed to be closer to mandating a private investigator than Agua Dulce. It was what he had replied as Linda had asked for personal information.

\*

"His first name is Peter."

"Wow, like me? This is really strange, Linda."

"Guess his family name."

"Is this Trivial Pursuit?"

"No, and I give you a hint - his first name is P-E-T-E-R."

"Okay, not Maurer."

"No, at least not since he is wedded to with the widowed proprietress of the farm. His name is Peter Forster today, married to Daryl Forster."

"But his name was Peter Maurer before?"

"Yes."

"You try to fool me? But okay, why not. Maurer is a not so uncommon name in Germany, Peter as well. His ancestors were immigrants from Germany as mine? In the end, funny in a way, but not impossible."

"And if he had worked, before he stranded on the farm, because of a case, on the farm he now lives

on, as a private investigator in Los Angeles?"

"Come on, this would be more than pulp."

"Find out. Can you be there tomorrow at 6 p.m.?"

"Near Wheeler Ridge? Of course."

"Have a nice day tomorrow, Peter, meeting Peter."

\*

Linda gave me some additional information about the route to the ranch. Peter Maurer, now Forster, a former private investigator from Los Angeles, now farmer. But okay, we found some differences in the end. He was born in San Francisco and had moved to Los Angeles. I was born in Los Angeles and had lived my whole life in Los Angeles until I had moved to Agua Dulce. He had different jobs in his life, now farmer. I had been a private investigator my entire life. Nevertheless, it all seemed a bit strange. I was very curious about whom I would meet tomorrow on this ranch near Wheeler Ridge.

## **Memories**

### **A Tale About Sweden II**

The time in Sweden, I liked it very much. I was with my car there, so I could drive wherever I wanted. The people were friendly, but I had my common problems with myself.

Smörgås, the Swedish variant of the sandwich. I was in a shop, and I have forgotten the town, where they created your smörgås just the way you wanted it. I knew this already from London, and they offered a lot of options. Nevertheless, I started to become nervous, insecure, I was a cook. Behind the counter I would have created very cool smörgås with all these options. But so I hesitated, not knowing to name several of the offered foods, especially some obviously Swedish specialties with fish. I ordered a simple sandwich in the end, just to get it out of the way.

In Malmö, a sunny day, a café with a patio - would be nice to sit there. I entered the café to order something - I had the feeling that you had to order inside. I had to queue, I was not sure what I should order, not knowing all that was offered - I left the place again.

Especially in Sweden, I always had the feeling that it would be absolutely okay if I needed help or if I made a mistake. I frequently did not do something, or not the way I would have liked it to be done, just because I would rather not come into the focus. I simply restricted myself due to my insecurity. So I missed many enjoyable moments due to this. That's the sad part of it.

One pleasant moment in Sweden? I was on the coast of the Baltic Sea - it was late afternoon. The sun shone, but the water was cold. There was a short wooden pier, and I had the wish to swim - I was all alone. But in the cold water, if someone would see me? I hesitated, even though I wished to do it, despite the cold water. Swimming in the sea was my wish. And I did it, after a longer hesitation. After it, I laid on the wooden pier in the sun to get dry again. A man passed by, looked at me and asked if the water hadn't been cold. I answered "yes", and was a bit proud of myself that I had done it.



**The Journey**

**Particles II**

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**The Unmade-Up Perspective?**

**Don't Call Me Marlowe**

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**Ain't That Tough Enough?**

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