

Hans Laub

**Truth, possible truth,
wishful truth.**

A story, written by

HANS FLEISCHNER

Hans was a carpenter.

**He had many brothers
and sisters.**

**Ernst, Max, Moritz, Leo
and Lina, Bianca, Fritzi,
Judith and Malvine.**

**And now he was on a
train, whatever class, to
Nisko, to build something
together with many oth-
ers, so the Nazi's could
process the Jews more
efficiently.**

**Hans was a carpenter,
not a tool.**

**His tool was a hammer,
for example and now in
this very moment his tool
was to say no, no to what
had nothing to do with
being a human being and
he jumped.**

**His brain and many
other peoples brain in
this very moment didn't
analyze, was it bravery,
was it conviction, was it**

**leadership, they just said
no.**

**They went into hiding,
they escaped, they picked
up a stone, a knife, a gun.**

Anything to survive.

**Hans jumped off the mov-
ing train.**

**How many more jumped
at this very moment,
there is no record of it.**

**How many got injured,
killed, caught and killed
later, there is no record
of that.**

Hans managed to escape.

**He ran, where he ran to, I
don't know, but he ran.**

**That he ran successfully
the hundred million
miles dash I know.**

A letter was proof of that.

He asked for clothes to be sent to Rumania, this much Malvine remembered.

And there was Przemyśl.

Lazar their father was born there and it wasn't so far from Nisko, any way not a world away.

Could he find some relatives, friends there?

Also Belzec was not so far away, a death camp, not a

**world away, but the end
of the world, this world, a
world a carpenter learns
to build houses for.**

Nisko, Przemyśl, Belzec.

The Bermuda Triangle?

**No a corner in the east of
Poland at a very bad time
to be there, walk, run,
sleep.**

But sleep one must.

**Hans was tired and a dis-
tant light was hope.**

Die of hunger, freezing to death, an axe, a knife, a rope, beaten to pulp, a bullet, buried alive, wow so many choices, if I make the right one, I may become a millionaire.

It was a lonely light, a simple house and it could be anything from right to wrong, but it was the only choice, chance Hans had and he had to make a choice and take a chance.

**There was a dog, he
looked, he barked and
then he looked again, like
saying hello, who are
you?**

**And Hans said, hello,
how are you, is anyone at
home?**

**A man stood in the dark,
to the left, a revolver in
his right hand.**

Good evening.

**Come in and tell me
where you're coming
from.**

I'm from Vienna.

**What brings you over
here?**

**Oh, a job, but I got laid
off, do you need some
work done on your house,
I'm a carpenter.**

**Maybe tomorrow morn-
ing you can look at it in
the daylight and tell me if**

you think it needs some fixing.

Have you had supper, yet?

Not really.

Well, would you like to join me for dinner?

If you have enough food for two, just a little will be fine for me, I'm not much of an eater.

Well, you might need a little strength, wash up,

sleep well and see what tomorrow brings.

But you know, before we forget, what is your name?

Hans and yours?

Nestor.

You are from here?

I think we have a lot to talk, let's do that tomorrow, because whatever tomorrow brings and the days after, you need

**strength, so I don't want
to keep you up any
longer.**

You are safe here.

**Very safe, so just sleep
and don't think anything,
just sleep.**

**Thanks, I more than need
that and my body will be
very grateful, if I give it
that well needed rest.**

**It got me this far and it
will have to get me a good
while further.**

Coffee?

The smell of coffee?

**No questions asked, Hans
was up and ready to go.**

**I grew up in the Ruepp-
gasse, a small street in
The Leopoldstadt, which
is, was the Jewish Dis-
trict, like The Capital for
people coming from afar,**

Poland, The Shtetl, small towns, you know.

Rothschild built a train between here and there.

And we lived not far from the Train Station.

It's very beautiful, you should come and visit us sometimes.

The street was our playground and we played Ragball Soccer.

Malvine was a good player, too.

A girl, but a good player anyway, one of the boys.

When she was little our parents sent her to the Volkertmarkt, a few steps away from our apartment, to go and ask for some food.

Our Dad was already retired from his job as a

**cantor and times were
hard after the war.**

**Later when everybody
was getting a job, we
were doing alright.**

**Malvine met Walter, who
lived on Taborstrasse,
you can say the Main-
street and he was work-
ing over in the garment
district, across the river,
in the City.**

He was different, but I think he was a decent fellow, anyway Malvine liked him and they went out a lot together.

He left Austria a couple of years before I came out here to look for a job, I guess he is doing alright.

Judith left Vienna right after finishing Art School in the mid 30', she went as far as London, quite a

**girl. She met a guy there,
I think.**

**She and Malvine are
twins.**

**So where do you want to
go from here?**

Far away.

How about staying?

You got good hands.

**I help you around the
house, if you need a
helper, I'm good at that.**

Who are you with?

I'm alone.

**A long way to nowhere to
be alone.**

**I am alone, with nothing
and nobody.**

**I think you should stay a
few more days, gather
your strength, collect
your thoughts and think
deeply about where you
want to go.**

Maybe I can help you a little bit, I won't promise you anything and I will not ask you to stay.

Also I will not ask you to do something, you can not do, do not want to do or are even slightly unsure to be able to do.

So don't worry, you are safe here, very safe.

Hans could feel one thing for sure, relief, the rest would come by itself he thought or never or at least not till there was something, like peace, happiness, just feeling like a human being again, where when asked who he was, the answer “I am Hans Laub” was all that was needed to exist and to be respected for being just that.

The peace and quiet and the warmth he received, were like a bonus after a job well done.

But worries were rising, like thin white clouds chased by the wind, curling into dark shadows, clouding the sun, leaving a blinding haze and Hans closing his eyes, as if to protect them.

Leo was deported to Theresienstadt, escaped,

**was betrayed, got caught,
beaten to pulp, got killed.**

**Max felt safe in Prague,
he didn't choose the op-
tion to take his family to
real safety in London.**

**He and his son Rudi were
finally picked up and
shipped to Auschwitz, to
never return.**

**Moritz and his wife went
to New York, at least
they were safe.**

Lina, her husband and their lovely twins, a boy and a girl went to London, on to New York and started a new life in L.A.

Bianca, Loisl and Elfie were also in Prague.

Loisl and Max had been together in London, were not comfortable and felt the Nazi's were not after them, just their political enemies.

Their naivety proofed wrong, in case of Max and his son Rudi fatal.

But their naivety gave no one the right to ship them to anywhere and take away their lives, that's for sure.

Bianca and Loisl were picked up, too, towards the end of the war, luckily they survived and returned to Vienna with their daughter Elfie.

**Judith is in London with
Len and Malvine should
be there, maybe she can
help.**

**Ernst is in Zagreb I be-
lieve, maybe He can help.**

**Dad, Mum and Fritzi got
deported from Belgrad,
no postcard, no record,
no nothing.**

I must get to Rumania.

**Walter went to Spain,
hope he gets out of there**

**alive and makes it to
London.**

Did his father and his sisters also go to London?

**Whatever happened to
his cousins?**

**There must be uncles and
aunts.**

**You are thinking about
your family?**

**Hans nods, he didn't
want to speak, lest his
words, even his thoughts**

could turn into painful reality.

Let me give you a little present, a talisman, it brought me luck, maybe it will bring you luck, too and gave Hans a yellow key on a string.

Wear it around your neck, that way you cannot really lose it.

Forgive me if I ask, but what does this key do?

It opens doors.

Follow it, but also listen to it, if it doesn't want to open a door, don't ask it to do so anyway, because it could be a very wrong door.

Maybe I shouldn't ask this question Nestor, but what is your job and who are you, out here in the middle of nowhere?

I sell alcohol and women.

Bang. Bastard, but you saved my life, so who am I to ask, tell, maybe even judge.

You are shocked?

Yes, I am.

Don't worry, because it gets better still and let's out a boisterous laugh, that Hans didn't know what to make of.

And slowly Nestor starts to tell his story, letting Hans in on a world, he knew nothing about.

To start with, I am on the run, just like you, but for different reasons.

We are in a war, that is going to get bigger and right here we are between the fronts, no visible trenches, more like shifting sands and I am with nobody on either

**side, they want me both
dead, but for now I am
useful to all my enemies,
with nobody really know-
ing what exactly it is I
am doing.**

**For them I'm sort of a
bohemian, useless, but
for two things, alcohol
and women.**

**I am not ashamed to ad-
mit and saying anything
else you would anyway
easily discover to be a lie,**

I like women and alcohol, actually I love them both so much, I only control my alcoholic intake, in order not to go into the trap of maybe saying something I might later be sorry for, because these days later could mean I am already dead, but most important, I don't want to miss any romantic encounter of the female kind.

**I am a poet and there is
nothing more poetic than
a woman and I don't wish
to care if she is true or
better a true lie, as long
as everything she does, is
like a dream full of poesy.**

**The alcohol, for a little
warm up, to help digest
the food, maybe set a
mood, lose myself in
some thoughts, when I
don't have to think about
anything, maybe actually**

**write some poem, but
mainly survive this
madness and have fun at
the same time.**

**You are looking at me,
like saying, fine but
where are the women,
I only see trees, not see-
ing the women for all the
forest.**

**Well it is quite simple,
I am doing something you
can call a public service,
some barter, some cash,**

with the important benefit, that I can help some people to survive.

If I survive in the end depends on luck, that one last chance to get away and on staying alert, so I don't really ever get drunk or I would be writing my own death sentence and that's no fun.

So okay and how are you doing it, you are asking and I will tell you a little.

The soldiers are lonely bastards, all the way to the big generals and they need alcohol to forget and they need women for warmth, mama, sister, whore.

The power trip thing matters and I can cash in on that, too, but the loneliness is what drives the business.

And they talk, which is another business and

**which keeps me alive for
right now.**

**You say fine, but fill in
the blanks please and I
give you a little more, but
not too much, because I
do not want you to worry,
that you could become
part of it all, so I tell it to
you more like a fairy tale
and if anyone asks you,
what did Nestor tell you,
you say just a fairy tale,
he is a poet and he likes**

**drinking and women,
which after all is true
and the truth I tell you,
don't ever repeat, just let
your fantasy play and
make up another fairy
tell or just act dumb, that
sometimes goes a long
way and you have a long
way ahead of you.**

Where to start?

**The Alcohol, it comes
from Spain, Barcelona.**

Carmen Negra 1888.

**A Brandy, not just like
any other brandy.**

**Carmen, who doesn't
know Carmen and wants
to spend some time with
her.**

**Negra, when the lights go
out and the smell of her
skin and her kisses let
you forget the day.**

**1888, for the Chinese it is
a very lucky number, so**

why not for us, the truth is, it is the year Makhno was born and my parents named me after him.

Our friends in Barcelona organize the brandy, make the label for us and ship it to Istanbul, like any other trading company would do.

There some of our friends divide the shipment into two, one for Odessa and one for Sevastopol.

**And then it comes here,
with some broken bottles
maybe on the way, but
that's part of the busi-
ness.**

Now the women.

**I am not a pimp and I am
not saying this to impress
you or maybe still go to
heaven God forbid, but I
am not, but I do coordi-
nate a bit the coming and
going.**

There are the good old time professionals, who work for us, because it's work, as well as our enemy is also their enemy.

Then there are women who work for us, because there is no other work and their decision to work for us is the same as for anyone, who doesn't want to live under a foreign power.

And finally there are the political ones.

They are us and they'd rather kill the bastards, then fuck with them or even just get them drunk, but they are first and foremost there to get information, so we can fight the bastards more effectively and also transfer that information to the other side, which keeps our and my back

covered, only for how long no one knows, so I keep my ears very close to the ground and always stay focused.

A drink?

What will Papa think?

One drink?

Do you have to?

If it helps you to survive, drink one on us, but don't make it a habit, I mean the drinking.

**For a little time it will
help you to forget, but
always remember us.**

One drink, okay.

**But remember, I must
stay focused.**

**And the truth is, I don't
know how to drink,
maybe sounds odd com-
ing from a carpenter, but
it's true.**

So to your life.

To a long life.

**Tomorrow at dawn is a
good time to start.**

**I will give you a letter to
carry to some friends.**

**It is a love letter and you
are bringing it to a
woman.**

**Do not ask and do not tell
and do not worry, be-
cause if you get caught,
you are only carrying a
love letter.**

I was thinking about how to hide my accent and the best solution I came up with was to stutter.

Brilliant and acting dumb plus one more thing.

What?

I give you my dog.

He knows the way, he is from there and he is a smart aleck, I call him Ganev and he really is

**one, but one that will be
your best guide, a true
survivor.**

**It will take you to get
there about a day and a
half maybe two days, de-
pending on how fast you
walk and how often you
must rest, hide or even
have to make a detour.**

**I drew you a small map,
Ganev will do the rest.**

But remember, under no circumstances must you be caught with the map.

Do not hide or throw it away, just eat it.

It's just a little paper, but a lot of peoples lives are on the other end of it.

I also give you a few tools, after all you are looking for a job and a hammer can be useful in more than one way.

**The food I give you
should be enough for both
of you, but don't spoil
Ganev, or he might end
up wanting to travel first
class and yes, you got the
food for a little job you
did on the way, think of
something or just ges-
ture, hammer for food.**

**It was peaceful, almost
too peaceful.**

The Landscape, while still sleepy, was open, relaxed, like saying, come in and so they did that and walked into a no man's land, which it was for Hans, only for Ganev it was familiar.

Suddenly without warning Ganev dashed for the bushes and Hans almost called him back, but then remembered, that Nestor

**had told him, trust Ganev
he knows his way.**

**So Hans dashed for the
bushes, too, holding on to
his very belongings, mak-
ing sure he wouldn't
loose a nail and there was
Ganev, stretched out like
a flatfish, almost comical,
but this was not the place
to laugh, because Hans
hardly catching his
breath could make out
voices and very soon**

there were people passing by, far enough not to see them and luckily no dog or geese or any other animal, that could have smelled them and Ganev in true fashion to his name, didn't make a sound.

Did he hear Ganev's heartbeat or his?

He could feel his and waited till Ganev started to move.

He was still there, lying in the grass, till he finally got up and they couldn't hear or see the farmers, that had passed them by on their way to the fields.

It struck Hans, that in times of peace he would have had the urge to say hello and chat for a moment, maybe a while, but now was the time of war and you just never know.

Peace was back, but only on the surface, because Hans could feel in every fiber of his body, in every little corner of his existence, that he was scared, more than when he was running for the last moment of his life, because here and now he was fooled by the quietness, so he realized, that the fear could eat him up and

that there was only one way to go on.

Follow the map, follow Ganev, like a hunter and not the hunted, take in the landscape and keep eyes and ears open, scanning and processing everything, because it might come in handy, if he ever was to walk here again.

They reached the edge of a swamp, but maybe it was just wetland and

they come and go, because there was nothing on the map, but then maybe Nestor didn't want to scare him or make him overly worried and anyway he knew, there was that smart aleck, so why worry or make Hans worried.

Okay, what?

Pick me up and I show you the way, a bit wet,

but safe, but too deep for me.

I got short legs, but a long nose and a good brain.

Said and done, Hans picked up Ganev and he pointed the way with his nose, sometimes looking at Hans, as if to tell him, you see I know the way.

They finally got to the forest, where they could rest and maybe spend the

night, because going through the forest in the dark, could hold more than one ugly surprise.

Hm, maybe Nestor did know something, because he gave him another pair of socks and so his feet could at least stay dry.

Sleep?

Better eat something first and than let the body do the talking.

This obviously was not a boy scout outing, so how to keep warm?

Hans did find a dry spot, made sure his feet were covered by the military blanket and as he was finding a comfortable position, Ganev got into the act, slipping under the covers, as if it was bedtime and before Hans could think, spoiled brat, he was glad, because

**Ganev kept him warm,
curling up against his
body.**

**I'd prefer a woman, Hans
thought, but then maybe
not out here and at least
in the hay under a roof.**

**Well, what do you know
and he almost started
laughing, because Ganev
was pouring like a cat,
but then he never had
slept with a dog before, so
what did he know.**

Anyway Ganev was comfortable, so I guess he could be too and go to sleep, maybe dream about a woman.

Carmen?

It was pitch black, the trees hiding whatever star there could be out tonight, moon must have been on vacation, when there was something.

Carmen?

**Ganev didn't move at all,
so there must be nothing
and Hans left it at that.**

**Hey, I am getting a hang
of this, out there no-
where, knowing nothing,
let's see what the day
brings.**

People with guns.

A wake up call.

Good morning.

**They actually said good
morning.**

**It wasn't get up, hands up
and a kick into whatever
part of the body.**

**And then there was no
one, but it was daybreak.**

And very peaceful again.

Almost frightening.

Where are the people?

Where is the life?

**Now a new challenge,
shitting.**

**Ganev made a hole into
the ground, Hans shits.**

**Ganev covers that and
shits on top of it.**

**Let the Nazi dogs do the
guessing.**

**After a humble breakfast,
they got their things to-
gether and continued
walking.**

A long walk.

Full of silence.

Actually very lonely.

So Hans walked faster, to let no loneliness, fear, or even only the slightest apprehension enter his mind and make him tired sooner.

He didn't want to spend another night out there.

Ganev stopped.

Barks.

And a Symphony of Barks was welcoming them.

**After all the sniffing,
rubbing and kissing,
everybody went back to
whatever they were do-
ing before Ganev's bark
got them barking.**

**But not the top dog, he
obviously had an ego
problem and curled his
lip, showed his teeth and
in general just acted
plain stupid.**

Ganev ignored him.

**But Tippy, Tappy, Toppy
couldn't stand being ig-
nored, so he gnarled some
more.**

**When a female walked
by.**

**Mother, sister, horny
bitch.**

**That got the top dog busy,
got his piece in and peace
returned to the woods.**

Hans handed the letter to the commander, who read it carefully.

Stay with us for a few days, we need a good carpenter to do some fixing around here.

Hans was happy to be able to help out, with what he knew best, rather than earn his survival as a courier, but then that was a useful and necessary job, too.

After a few days it was time again to move on.

And with another love letter in his bag, he and Ganev got moving.

This time it was for a woman.

He was told by the commander with a little smile in his eyes, that she was a real heartbreaker.

Hans didn't give it that much thought, but was

still thinking, better a broken heart, than to stay here, with all the uncertainties.

It was a short walk, half a day and nothing really unusual happened, almost eerie, but then even a refugee doesn't get shot at every day.

He reached her house completely relaxed, like a postman.

No bell to ring, no dog chasing them away, she was actually waiting for them and she was absolutely gorgeous, right out of a movie.

If she would have dressed up and put on some makeup, her beauty might have been lost, Hans thought and she read his thoughts and said, in days like these, it is better to just look

ordinary, so as not to attract too much attention.

Come in, she said and her voice got into Hans.

Should he stay or should he go.

Not much space, but I think enough for you and Ganev.

I will prepare a bath for you and a little meal, so you will be rested and

strong to continue your journey.

Hans stepped into the hot tub and she washed his shoulder all the way down his back, when without further ado her hand went for his, I am almost embarrassed to say, erected tool to see if it was capped or recapped, to find its head in full bloom.

**Shalom is all she said and
let out a heartily laugh.**

**I didn't know my penis
was that funny, Hans
thought, but Shalom I can
well live with.**

**It was a very warm and
pleasant night, the bath,
the meal, her eyes, her
voice, her hands, what
can I tell you and Hans
didn't feel his heart
breaking, he simply was
just happy and thought**

**maybe we will build a
roof together, but right
now just being together
was plenty of roof.**

**Let's go together. I must
still stay here for some
more time, so you go first.**

**I will give you a letter
and we will meet up
later.**

**When you see the purple
light, you will know.**

**Face east and stay calm,
it will appear and guide
you.**

**Now she got him and it
was better to go, than to
stay, after all it was no
time for a honey moon,
the moon had to wait for
another land to shine on.**

**This was all very easy, so
Hans braced himself for
some harder days ahead.**

**Better get going and
Ganev also showed some
signs of restlessness, so it
was time to go.**

**The day passed without
anything really happen-
ing, an ordinary day, if
one can say that, during
rather unordinary days.**

**But there always is an-
other day, so Ganev
wouldn't get bored, not
knowing what to do with
his life.**

**Ganev smelled trouble
and just started to move
faster.**

**Hans really had to walk
faster, too, avoiding to
start running, so as not
to arouse any suspicion.**

**As if in an old silent
black and white movie,
Ganev waited at corners
to turn only long enough,
so Hans would not lose
sight of him.**

His tail signaling, hurry up, or we get caught.

Finally he slipped into a doorway and Hans right after him, catching his breath.

They were safe, when a big burly guy, steps out of the shadow mumbling, did you bring the letter?

Did they go into a trap?

**Do you need some work
to be done around the
house?**

And shows the hammer.

**A hammer is a hammer is
always a hammer.**

No, not right now.

**But I know people, who
do, I take you there.**

**Ganev followed, so Hans
followed, always hoping
Ganev couldn't be misled
by some lower instincts,**

**like being hungry or a
comfortable place to rest.**

**Another house, another
man, more like Nestor.**

Shalom.

Another Shalom.

**Hans puts his hammer on
the table and hands him
the letter.**

**Tomorrow before dawn
we will go there.**

**The burly guy motions to
leave, but doesn't refuse**

the offer of sharing some food and a drink and then heads back to his home.

How is she?

She is fine, seems to be happy.

Maybe there will be a day, when you will be happy with her.

Him saying that, felt as if he was very close to her.

Was he family, a comrade, more than that?

**They started very early
and walked towards the
woods.**

**The light slowly came up
and the trees slowly
came nearer, what at first
seemed very far away.**

**As they reached the edge
of the forest, Hans
thought to have made out
some people.**

**But neither their guide
nor Ganev showed any**

sign of stopping or looking for cover, so he just walked along.

They walked for a while through the woods, which blocked the light, but then they came to an open area and on the other side some people in full gear welcomed them.

Partisans, regular troops, they wore uniforms.

Just the same, they welcomed them.

There was a whole community, like a little village in the woods.

There was everything and Hans saw work to be done.

Ganev gave Hans a look.

We stay here?

Maybe they need a carpenter and I finally have friends.

I stay? You go?

You come back?

You leave me?

Ganev had many questions and so did the people.

Where are you coming from?

What's your name?

Where are you going to?

Quickly everybody knew, Hans had to move on.

And me?

You, too.

They stayed for a few days.

Hans helped with some work, that needed to be done.

He got some rest, some new clothes, a pistol and enough ammunition for a couple of possible, dangerous encounters, at least to give him a win-

ning chance, but also advice how to avoid danger.

He was to carry a letter and also was to give the gun to the people he carried the letter to.

If he was to stay there or come back to stay or become a courier, this would become his gun.

Guns were a precious commodity and Hans of course knew that, but

**somehow a hammer in
his hand was more to his
liking.**

**It was time to go again
and one look, counting
Ganev, two looks and off
they went.**

No barking.

A silent goodbye.

**Hands and tails showing
it all.**

**As they moved through
the forest, a voice, was it**

Ganev or his innermost self, told him, don't play hero, look for the light and follow it.

The gun stayed tucked away, they made some detours, as the folks back in the woods had advised them to do and after a couple of days reached a town, that looked quite busy.

How without asking could they find their con-

tact, easy, as they walked like they knew what they were doing, a man came up, “Hello Hans, how are you doing?” and Hans answered matter of factly, “Fine, Just Fine and You?”

“Fine and I got some nice news for you.”

Hans couldn't help but look at Ganev and couldn't help but see a smile in his face, a real

ganev, my Ganev and followed the man.

He felt so comfortable, that when he met his contact, he almost without a word was going to give him the letter and the gun, when Ganev sneezed and coughed for ever so short a moment, for Hans long enough to get his defenses back and only after exchanging the coded welcome ceremony

gave the guy the gun first, because he really wanted to get rid of it, but also to show that this was the end of this journey and then the letter.

The message was clear and well understood.

No hard feelings, all along the way everybody always knew that a gun was not his thing, but the hammer was and he had

good hands and a good head.

It was time to board the ship and with a little money and another love letter in his bag, Hans felt quite happy and ready for his new life.

That new life took an ugly turn, when they didn't allow Hans to take Ganev with him on board.

No dog.

Something about papers.

Hans never owned a dog, so he didn't know anything about papers, as a matter of fact, nobody in his family ever owned a dog, so how should he know anything about dogs, mind you papers.

The discussion, before it could become an argument, which was hardly imaginable anyway, because all Hans could say

was, this is my dog and no more than that, because that might have revealed things, one just didn't reveal to anyone especially in a situation he was in, when a rich lady stepped forward, said something Hans couldn't understand, made some hand movement, picked up the dog and got on board.

Ganev threw a look at Hans, get moving, we are on and they got lucky once again.

You and your dog will stay with me, don't ask questions, you are my nephew now, I will tell you the rest later.

Hans thought, well maybe I am, she looks a bit like Mama, but do I have to know?

What's your name?

Hans.

**I am your Aunt Sarah
from Temesvár.**

**Well, Mama was Hungar-
ian, so what do I know?**

**If it is a big conspiracy,
I will never find out,
maybe only after my
death and if it is only a
little conspiracy, so what,
as long as it doesn't cost
me anything.**

Maybe she needs some fixing at her house.

Ganev was wondering what the hell was going on, but the main thing was they were together.

He didn't care much for the smell of the big lady, but then she helped them, so let her have her smell.

They had dinner and Ganev couldn't believe it, there were only well

**dressed people and even
Hans had a new suit.**

**What's with me Ganev
thought, but then realized
he was dressed all
right, maybe just needed
a bath.**

Where is a river?

**Only a big water and
much too far down and
anyway how do I get back
up.**

Hans think of something.

The lady did and made him understand that she would take care of that later.

Hans is very quiet and he hasn't shown his hammer, yet, but then this is all very new to him, so give him some time to get a hang of it.

After dinner they went to their cabin, it was not as big as the forest, but it was warm and cozy and

**he was shown his place
were to sleep, so he went
to rest, it was to early for
him to sleep just yet.**

**This was news, maybe I
didn't like it there, but
then where to go and
anyway we were safe and
why be picky, the lady
was treating us fair.**

**But now she wanted to
wash me.**

Now that was news.

Be brave, you have survived worse situations.

Hans looked at him, sort of shrugging his shoulders, but not really looking very alarmed, so I guess it will be alright.

He got washed, dried and combed, which hurt a bit, but after it he felt better.

The procedure was not all that irritating and being clean was comfortable.

**Good God what is this,
the lady wanted him to
smell like her and she
sprayed some of that
smell on him.**

**He couldn't help but
gnarl, even give her a
good bark.**

**She got flustered, but was
good natured, I'm sorry,
sorry, just a teeny bit.**

**Well okay, but a bit is
more than enough.**

Ganev smelled at himself, phew, I better stop breathing, maybe I can lick it off, eh, what taste is this, where is the river.

An uneventful night, but where to piss and where to shit?

The lady showed him a place and again no choice really, but what am I asking for, I'm safe, I'm clean and I am not hungry, so you accept a little

inconvenience, not much of having a choice, right Jack, okay if you say so.

Quite a humbling experience, he was not really what you call much of a fighter, but he was very independent minded and he knew nothing else.

Hans seemed to be doing alright, well maybe he was domesticated early on, so it is easier for him.

**Well, we'll do alright,
I guess, we got this far,
we'll get further, I'm for
sure.**

Where am I from?

**They are talking about
me.**

Maybe he is a polish dog.

**He doesn't look very pol-
ish, what do you think?**

**My friend called him a
Russian fox terrier, but
we met in Poland.**

I think he's got a lot of different ancestors.

I think he is sort of a black spitz fox terrier with nice white feet and look at his tail, his chest and nose, sometimes I think he is a cat, but don't tell him that.

Ganev gave Hans a look, which could have been misunderstood as that look that kills, but it was more like, you are a

**funky dude, but I love
you for that.**

He doesn't talk much.

**Yes, he is a thinker, I
think he is an intellec-
tual.**

Does he have girlfriends?

Not when I am around.

Maybe he is gay.

**Well, maybe behind the
bushes, but you know we
have been pretty much on
the run, we didn't have**

all that much time thinking about sex, it was all more about surviving.

I only met one woman, maybe I could have had a ball all along the way, but my mind was not on that, I just wanted to get away from it all, so maybe when I can say I found my place to live, do my work, I will start looking, without even trying. What's your job?

I am a carpenter.

You got a job, once we get off the ship and set foot on steady ground again, I'll tell you.

Something very funny and strange happened, Ganev started to walk around like a German, you could swear he even was saluting, but then there was also something sad in his eyes at the end of his little performance.

He must have seen something and was showing it to us in his way.

Maybe another time he will be able to show more, even find the place where he saw, what he just showed.

He repeated his little stick in front of the people on deck and they loved his performance and to everybody's

amazement, he topped it with a Chaplin.

What a dog, who cares who he's got sex with, he is a spunky, smart aleck by any name.

Brilliant, anyway.

The Lady had a plan for Hans and only in passing mentioned, that her husband was in the construction business, which did not pass by the ears of

Hans, but also did not enter very deeply.

To say he didn't register what she said, would be a lie, because while not directly responding to her, he simply asked, is your husband living in Istanbul.

To which she answered, he travels a lot.

Where does he build houses then?

I do not really know, I am not involved in his business, but he can tell you, when you meet him.

This was not really his world, Hans thought, but then the world is changing, so maybe he has to change with it.

He wished he had his brothers around him or at least only a telegram away, but he was very much on his own right

here and just had to play it by ear.

Anyway he had to get this letter delivered and in the meantime it was better to take it easy and to enjoy the luxury he was surrounded by, because who knows what he will encounter, once he gets off the ship.

The days passed in almost obnoxious easiness, he simply was not accus-

**tomed to and only slowly
could find pleasure in,
but looking at it as a
holiday from running
was not a bad idea, which
helped and he started to
relax.**

**Istanbul was coming
closer and looking at
Ganev, he realized, that it
might be a problem to get
him off, as it was to get
him on board.**

Ganev returned the look with a big question mark across his face, when the Lady opened her handbag and gave Hans the papers, which gave Ganev a name, a place of birth and that he was alright.

Maybe no one will ask you, but just in case remember the information, so as to answer any questions naturally.

From now on or at least for the time being, Ganev was Jimmy, an international name, from Temesvár, why not and he had no diseases.

The Captain was a family friend and issued the certificate and wrote a personal letter, adding that the papers had gotten lost in all the commotion on board, war right and

anyway the dog was alright, as a matter of fact he knew the breeder personally.

Istanbul.

For sure another world, nothing in his life had Hans prepared for that.

But his survival training had hardened him somewhat and he decided to leave the comfort of his protector and went

straight to meet his contact, but suave survivor enough by now, he had written down her address and promised to visit the next day.

Someone was waiting for him, but couldn't make him out in the crowd, after all his appearance had changed, but for Ganev, who was like his trademark now, so the contact was made, the agreed

upon greetings were exchanged and off they headed to meet the receiver of the letter.

He was received, as if he was a long awaited friend, either he had proven himself or they tried to suck him into something, that much Hans knew from way back Vienna.

The Slimmer Association you might call it, by any

**international standard,
so his defense went up,
keeping a little smile on
his face.**

**We have people from
Paris to Tokyo, you won't
believe it and even all
across North Africa.**

Ganev looked at Hans.

This is not for you.

With or without religion,

with or without a political calling, let's go where you want to go.

Just let's get our royal sweet asses out of here, after that let's see.

Hans looked at Ganev.

You are smart, good thinking.

Hans and Ganev had become so close, a look was enough and each knew

what the other one was thinking.

Maybe they should have gotten married or rob a bank.

After all, it was all about intuition, which makes or breaks it, the marriage, the bank, both.

But before any intuition or wisdom was settling in, he was given a letter,

**not another one, but the
one:**

Wait for me,

Shalom,

Anja.

**Those few little words got
the blood pressure rising
in all the right and wrong
places and it showed.**

**He decided to wait, but
also to see the Lady from
Temesvár and Ganev**

**seemed to fully agree
with that decision.**

**They heard some noises
and their survival senses
told them, that the air
was getting thicker.**

**A razzia was in the mak-
ing and the Lady's home
definitely was a safer
place to be, than the
streets or even a posh
café.**

You are safe.

Your papers are okay.

But you are an exile in a somewhat friendly place, where our enemies are also around and they don't play by the rules or worse, they play by whatever dirty rules they can come up with to make our lives miserable, so stay low key, don't make friends, you have the right ones to move on and don't visit them, as if we

are all on a holiday, we are not, we are on the run, so let's walk inconspicuously, what a word, what a way to walk, but you and Ganev are quite a sight, a funny, but also dashing couple, if I may say so.

The razzia seemed to be over or at least there were no such like noises. What was that all about?

Maybe just a little bank robbery and then there is a big fuzz, so everybody knows or is supposed to think, that no one gets away, for them to say, we are everywhere.

Noise.

Quite a few steps on the stairs, coming towards their door.

A couple of knocks, Hans and Ganev go to the bed-

room and the Lady opens the door.

Has anybody come here?

No one comes here, unless they are welcome.

Sorry for having disturbed you, madam.

Not at all, but if I may ask, what is it all about?

Nothing really, just a trivial matter, but don't worry, it will all be okay, we will see to that.

**I am sure, gentlemen, if I
can be of any help, I will
let you know.**

**Another cup of coffee
Hans?**

**Just a small one, it is
quite strong.**

**Remember they left it at
your doorsteps, but you
make it differently, fa-
mously so.**

Maybe you should build a coffee shop and make the coffee, too.

What do you think?

I would be your first and best customer.

Right now I really can only think to get to the next port.

Which one?

Haifa.

**Nice city, but how about
Havana, Buenos Aires,
maybe Sydney?**

No, Haifa.

**It seems like a safe haven
and it will be, but please
do not think of it as a
rose garden, there are
plenty of thorns, without
the roses.**

Will you be going alone?

**First available ship, but
maybe someone will
come there to meet me.**

I know her?

I don't think so.

You don't want to wait?

I will wait there.

**There was a ship, there
was a ticket and there
was a letter to be deliv-
ered, before possibly the
last departure.**

Hans and Ganev went back to where they had delivered the last letter, with a difference.

Ganev had a newspaper between his teeth, which was really news for him, but he did, like that was his daily routine.

Ganev went in, Hans followed, stayed at the door, Ganev came out, clutching the newspaper like his last bone and out they

**went on the street again,
back to the Lady's home.**

**He had left a message for
Anja where he was going
next and in return re-
ceived a little note and an
address, that would
probably help him to find
his way around in a new
city.**

**Roofs he knew, people
and streets he had to get
to know.**

**There were many stories,
that they might not be
able to enter the harbor
or even while already
docked, they might not be
able to disembark.**

**Hans was not worried
and Ganev looked like,
where are my sunshades.**

**As they get off the ship,
Hans takes a very deep
breath and with his eyes
closed, just feels the air,
that feels like home and**

**he sees making roofs and
when he opened his eyes
and sees the blue sky, he
sees even more roofs and
finally his eyes come to
look at the earth and
what does he see?**

**Lots of people and Anja
standing there.**

**If she was beautiful be-
fore, now she was some-
thing else, not just beau-
tiful, but someone to
come home to.**

**She wore a simply dress
and her left arm was
resting on her body and
with her right hand she
was waving at him.**

Was she pregnant?

**They embraced and her
first look was an incredi-
ble welcome, her second
look was how are you and
her third look was telling
him, that she had a sweet
surprise for him.**

**Shalom she said and
maybe he felt that way
for the first time really.**

**A new life was starting,
but first Hans had to ask,
how did you get here be-
fore me?**

I flew.

You what?

I flew.

How?

**They flew me in and now
they flew me out.**

If a face can be speechless, Hans's face couldn't spell.

I am a paratrooper Hans, but now let's go home.

And the baby?

It's so tiny it wouldn't know if it is under water or up in the sky.

What do you think it will become?

Maybe a pilot, maybe a president.

A carpenter, maybe an architect, city planner, housing minister, that way I can always get a job.

Ooh, are you corrupting our baby?

No, just thinking practical.

Come let's get practical and rest a little bit.

You haven't really kissed me, yet.

Right now?

**No, better in my room,
so you won't have to stop.**

**There was a sea of love
and Hans enjoyed swim-
ming.**

**Ganev was wondering,
am I still here and what's
this talk about a baby, am
I getting competition.**

**I better start looking and
get busy, is there a pen-**

sion plan for guys like me?

I think I better get some insurance.

Well, as if hearing him, he received some assurance, Anja's hand.

She gently stroked him, so he knew he was here and he couldn't help but think, you are one lucky guy Hans.

**I gotta get me my own
Anja.**

**The room was small, but
it was their room.**

**Ganev stayed outside, he
understood privacy.**

**When he looked, Anja
said, later and he
couldn't help but think,
she could have said any-
thing, she is just so beau-
tiful.**

**Stretching out, curling
up, well lying down, am I
love starved.**

**Since I know Hans, we
have always been on the
run. I will never forget
those times, it was better
than any movie, it was
really real and I will al-
ways love Hans for that.**

**I mean I helped him, but
I am just a dog, but he
never made me feel that**

way, he always treated me as an equal.

Well, so much for life and philosophy.

I need a woman.

I will talk to them, after they have finished their hanky-panky.

They didn't finish for a good while.

They must really like this, or are they making another baby.

They did finish and the door opened and they let me in.

Boy did I smell things, this really makes me horny, but I must stay cool, like I know nothing, I am just a dog right and this is not my Anja.

When can we go Anja looking or can I go out on my own, I'll be back for breakfast at the latest, I promise.

**Do they worry about my
lineage.**

**I got twist and turns and
curves in my bloodline,
that would make any dog
show judge curl in
amazement.**

**I'll find my right Anja, I
got a nose for that.**

They took a walk.

**Boy, smells and women,
too, plenty, beautiful.**

**Have they all come here
and left Europe to the
loonies.**

How did they come here?

**I didn't see them on the
ship.**

An Anja.

She gnarls?

**Hey, I am not just any old
refugee, I got a lineage.**

**I can wait lady, I'll show
you some patience.**

Actually, I wasn't really looking.

Anja?

I think I must choose another name.

How about Ganova?

Michelle?

I think they call any cute woman like that and anyway we are not in Paris.

Rachel?

I think, I'd have problems pronouncing that.

You don't have to pronounce it, just think it and she will read it in your eyes.

Anja?

No, Rachel.

Speaking of eyes.

Look at Hans and Anja.

Do you call this, eating each other up?

They don't need dinner.

Hans, your eyes are a picture book, a movie, a fairy tale?

Anja, there are no words.

Just love me, Hans, let me be your fountain pen and your heart our bottle of ink and I write beautiful stories for us.

You write stories for us?

I love the way you talk to me, Hans, don't stop.

**Only stop to make roofs,
but don't forget to talk to
me, I love your way of
talking.**

**You want me to talk to
you again?**

Right now, right here?

No, later in the room.

**And Haifa saw the best
Paris kissing scene, with
no photographer around.**

**But Ganev will remember
and also surely will keep
looking for his Ganova.**

**And if he can't find
someone with a name he
can pronounce or simply
just likes, then he will
bark nicely and when she
barks back nicely and
smells nicely, what's the
big deal, what's in a
name anyway.**

Up the stairs and into their room, Ganev took up his doorman position.

A good while passed and he wasn't sure, had he dreamt, or was he all ears and nose.

Anyway there were those familiar sounds, I think it is called kissing, some talking in between and then some sounds they say women make,

when men take off their dresses.

Ganev was wondering a little bit, if this was all really necessary, but then people are people and dogs are dogs.

Dogs.

Playmates, bitches, ladies, is he hanging out with the right crowd?

Relax, you only just got here.

**Yes, but I am horny,
naturally, not because I
am eager to show off
what a top dog I am and
anyway with Hans and
Anja around, I don't
know where to look at,
so as not to get turned on.**

**Thinking, letting the day
pass by his closed eyes,
he didn't really see a dog,
for playing or mating.**

**Bloodline aside, let's not
get arrogant, but then I**

am a political dog, I have a political consciousness from even before I had met Nestor, or I could not have been with him.

His enemies were my enemies, people who put people down, don't respect dogs, they just use them, they never listen to us, they don't even try to see things from our point of view, so Nestor and I were natural allies.

And when I met Hans and Nestor asked me to be his guide, I without question did it, because I could see these two guys had something in common and Hans needed my help, but also I liked Hans and very quickly respected him, because even so I knew, that he was lonely and at times scared, who wouldn't be in his, our situation, he

**never lost sight of where
he was going and he
never asked me to do
things, I couldn't ask him
to do for me.**

**I think that's fair, I re-
spect that, anyway I like
him, but where can I
meet my Anja.**

**Maybe not on the street,
maybe in another envi-
ronment, no I don't want
a salon doggy, I want a
mate with a political con-**

sciousness, is that too much to ask for.

Hans and Anja were talking now and Hans told the story of Ernst, I hadn't heard before, but that very much showed his philosophy of life and Hans was proud of his brother.

Ernst was married to a very pretty woman and they had a good life.

Not everybody did and his wife's brother became a student radical, he wanted to change what was wrong in their society.

As the situation became more radical, there was a clash of opinion, more than that and he ended up in jail.

Don't ask me for details now, jail and it is not a funny place to be, in no

climate, weather and political wise.

Ernst got his brother in law out of jail, no question.

He was a capitalist and his brother in law was a communist, but family was family, politics was another thing.

That was Ernst and Hans never forgot about that.

After all the sound making and talking, taking a walk was a good idea.

Anja knew a place where people enjoyed some coffee and exchanged the news of the day, not just Haifa, but the world and it was a nice walk to get there.

Like out of nowhere, the Lady appeared, with a dog and Ganev was ready to try out his charme.

Woof.

No woof.

Woof, woof.

Still no woof.

Woof, woof, woof.

What?

Is she hard of hearing?

Okay, let's try smelling.

She pulls away.

**Okay, maybe I shouldn't
have licked her right
away.**

Woof, sorry, woof.

What?

Is she being difficult?

**The Lady sits down,
Anja sits down opposite
her and Hans thinks,
maybe there is a job for
me, lucky day.**

**Ganev tries to keep eye
contact with the Lady's
dog, but she ignores him.**

Bitch.

Ganev!

What? What she think?

She doesn't like my accent?

I'm not a good enough breed?

I'm a survivor, what she looking for?

A poodle?

Okay, they are smart, but they look kind of funky with all that trimming, how do they look like, naturally?

Doesn't she like my coat?

Do I smell bad?

**She is shy, she is still a
virgin, the Lady says.**

**How she know I was in-
terested, I was just mak-
ing small talk.**

**Maybe the licking was a
bit over board, but then
maybe she remember me
and anyway I liked her
taste.**

Does Hans lick?

Ganev, is that dog talk?

**Why, Anja looks nice,
can't taste that bad?**

**Looks and tastes aside,
the Lady and Anja did
not really hit it off and
Hans was getting a bit
uneasy.**

**Ernst and Max would
have charmed them and
kept them busy with
sweet talk, they would
not have had a chance not**

to like each other, as a matter of fact, they would have just melted away.

Anja, too?

How is your husband, was Hans's best shot and at the same time was wondering, why do the two women not really get closer to each other?

**Looking at them closer,
he could see how different
they were, actually
worlds apart.**

**But aren't we all the
same now?**

**Forget what was before,
we are alive, so let's
make houses for every-
one, more people will be
coming every day.**

**He is planning to set up a
company here and is**

slowly getting all the documents together.

Still needs some funding, but the market is here, so the money will be coming through.

Maybe you two should meet and talk.

I am sure he would be happy to have someone like you on the team.

We have never been to Vienna, but someone

from Vienna was always well received back home.

The Lady's husband was more into choice real estate.

Villas along the coast, condos up the hills, some hotels, hospitals, good restaurants, hobnobbing this and dangling that.

Well this maybe explains, why Anja kind of kept a distance, but I need a job.

We will go and see some of Anja's family tomorrow, when we get back to town, I will drop by your husbands office.

Smart move Hans, are you learning from Ganev or are you discovering some of your hidden genes?

Maybe the weather?

They decided to move on, but Hans didn't forget to

ask for the address and she wrote it down on a piece of paper, she took out from her notebook.

If he is like her, can you work with him?

Do you want to work with him?

I need work Anja, not just to eat, but to feel whole again.

I understand that very well and smiling, actu-

ally why don't we go and see some of my family?

They live in a villa along the beach, with swimming pool and gardener?

You and Ganev, who is the bigger Ganev, can you tell me that?

That's a very difficult question to answer, Anja.

Cheeky fellow, I love you for that.

I love you, too, Anja.

Building houses as part of a business or creating housing for people, who come here to start a new life, having run for their very existence, was going to dance around his head.

So visiting Anja's family, living in a community, where people seemed to get along very well, might provide Hans with some pointers, maybe advice from those who

had been around for a while and seen some changes, for the better as well as for the worse.

And dogs?

Ganev, please.

But one very good indicator that there was something happening here, that maybe was for the better, was that Ganev very quickly relaxed.

You literally could see him resting his chin in his right hand.

Hans looked around and he could see making a house or two, without even thinking, he was so very full of energy.

But then a thought traveled across his mind, that had never occurred to him before.

**A roof for oneself should
not mean less of a roof for
someone else.**

**Very poetic, very real,
but why does this come
up now.**

**The thought was some-
what discomfoting.**

Maybe it will go away.

**Should he find out about
its meaning.**

**Later, right now he
slowly started to feel like**

Ganev, which was always a good sign.

Anja noticed that and a little smile hushed across her face and she asked, what are you thinking about?

It is a bit like Nestor around here.

If this was a quiz show Hans, you just made a very important guess.

But no millions here, just a lot of life.

Hans let his many passages turn into one long chain of a very colorful journey.

There were many different colors, like a rainbow, but more earthy.

All these colors were here, too.

**If it kept them together
on his run for life, what
keeps them together here
in this relaxed tree
shaded place.**

Survival.

**There were many people,
with many different
ideas and opinions.**

**Remember what Nestor
said, about no trenches
and shifting sands, it was
all here, all over again,**

with one very big difference.

There was land to stand on and there was land to build on.

But this land had many owners, many roots feeding off the same water.

Some where rightful owners, some just took the right to own, some wanted to own and some had to own, not for the

sake of ownership, for the possibility to buy and sell, but for the possibility to start a new life.

It got even more complex, when questions of rights, history, tradition, religion, borders, politics, oil, water, trivial things like sunrise, sunset, yes, even snow to ski on, became front page news.

Right now it was survival, with many political, philosophical, psychological and and ways of looking at it.

The common denominator was, land to stand on, build a roof and grow food, everything else had to come later, it wasn't a matter of moving from one district to another or to move from one climate

to another, because one preferred it cold or hot.

This was not a lukewarm hangout for sure, it could get very hot and also very cold and one had to develop some new instincts and ways of survival or one could not really live from one day to the other, without worrying, if there was a sunrise after the sunset.

**What are you thinking
Hans?**

**I am wondering if I can
combine building a house
here, with building a
house along the coast, up
the hills, not the very ne-
cessity, but the luxury,
that seems to me quite
out of place, especially
right now, at this time
in our lives.**

**You can combine, if you
know where you stand,**

**where you are going and
how far you want to go,
without losing your vi-
sion.**

Vision.

**My vision right now may
not be very grand, be-
cause all I want right
now, is a roof over my
and Anja and our baby's
head.**

Woof.

Yes and of course Ganev, too, he is family.

And I want to work as a carpenter, first and foremost, because I am good at it, I love it and also because I think there is plenty for a carpenter to be done here.

Okay, why don't you start here, only remember nothing belongs to anyone, everything belongs

to everyone and still private is private.

So if you should decide to move to another community, back to the city, maybe even another country, you move with what you came and with what is yours and if that means your toothbrush and a radio, one pair of pants or three, if it is yours, it is yours, but communal is communal.

And if you want to sell something, sell it to the community first, but that's up to you, but anyway we may have no money, so think of barter and if it means we pay you with food or some tools or whatever we can give you, in exchange for what you give us.

And that company you talked about, you can start it from here, with or

without us, because if you work out of here and therefore work less with us, we expect you to give in cash or kind, for whatever you get from here.

But maybe with your skill and connections you can create a company, that is both a cooperative and yet gets jobs in the open market around the country.

We are open to many ways of living and working together and if there is one rule, maybe better say basic rule, it is being guided by respect in everything we do together, as well as individuals.

Respect for each other and respect for the community, we don't divide and conquer, we live together.

**Sometimes we may sound
and even act like dream-
ers, but better dream and
then adjust to reality,
than not to dream at all
and just do as someone
else has always told us to
do things, from Kings to
Queens, from Presidents
to Prime Ministers, from
Chairmen to Party Secre-
taries, yes and forget
about Popes and Priests,
we well can do without**

them, if we need someone to talk to, from tooth to head aches, from loneliness to fantasies, we talk to each other and we have among us or know near us many people, who know more than we do, like dentists, doctors for everything and psychologists and we read, we read a lot and from learning a lot, we know new answers and are not shy

to ask those who know more.

We are proud, we think and we know how to tell our ego to go for a walk when it gets in our way, but at all times we are realistic about everything, what we know, what we can do and what we are.

You don't have to sign anything of that, find your way, if you have

come this far, you must know something, we also know and maybe more.

Woof.

Before I forget, Ganev looks for his Ganova, are there any around?

We got a few Ganovas, but there also are some Ganevs around, but I think he can make friends here, he really is quite a Ganev.

Where did you meet him?

Nestor gave him to me as a guide.

How is Nestor?

He was fine and I hope he still is fine, but he knew it could get very tight for him and that he might not make it to wherever it would be safe and from where he could start a new life, there, here, wherever.

**He is tough, I know and
he will always have a
place here, so let's al-
ways think of him, maybe
that gives him that extra
strength, exactly when
he needs it most.**

Woof.

Ganev.

Woof, woof.

**Alright, you go looking,
we'll be looking around,
too.**

Hans and Anja went looking around, for Anja to breathe in what she knew and for Hans to get to know the place.

There was an old, not used house and there was a space for a new one.

Even in good times cost would be a question and in tight times, every nail was counted.

What do you think?

The old house can be fixed and will last a few more years, before it needs some serious remodeling, a new one is a new one.

Let's talk to my family, what is possible and what is feasible and also what plans the community has regarding housing.

Economics ruled, as a matter of fact survival ruled, so before Hans

could think of hammering away, a broom was tool number one.

They cleaned the old house.

Paint?

Paint costs money, the house will have to survive another year without a new coating.

Most important a bed for two to start with, a table, two chairs and a little bit

**of what would resemble
some cooking possibility.**

**There was a communal
kitchen, so the houses
didn't really need a
kitchen, maybe just for
making some tea or cof-
fee, when there was time
for that.**

**Thinking of all those lit-
tle things made Hans feel
at home and he relaxed
with the vision of the**

new house making him smile.

Anja didn't have to guess what was on his mind, especially since Hans was looking at the spot where there was space for a new house, so she didn't ask , but said, maybe you have some ideas and can introduce them at a meeting discussing what needs to be done, to improve the

**housing here, I'm sure
you will find some people
who listen.**

**And sitting down next to
him, they saw something,
that made them both grin
from ear to ear.**

**Ganev was coming home
introducing his Ganova.**

**She was pretty, some-
what younger, but looked
like she had seen a bit of
the world, I mean rather**

not like Ganev, but there can be quite a world out here, because every tree has a story to tell and sometimes from one tree to the next, there can be quite some territory.

They looked fine with each other, you could see and feel respect between them.

She was looking quite similar to Ganev, only gold brown and light

brown eyes and she carried herself well, like a lady and then maybe more like a sister, I mean in political terms.

A comrade you say, maybe that's too political, but then these were quite political times, not a matter of which article in which news paper over what cup of coffee, but a matter of survival, mentally, emotionally, physi-

cally, I mean the real thing, like life, with plenty of fun and love and all that stuff, but existence was not a matter of tea or coffee.

First Ganev and Ganova where just sitting there, waiting, aren't Hans and Anja going to offer us some water at least, we have to bring our own water, this is communal, this is the new society?

The grin on Anja and Hans's face just got bigger, almost 360 degrees and they got them some water.

Ganev and Ganova were looking at each other, what are they grinning about, there are no puppies, yet, to be proud grandparents of.

Puppies?

**What color are they
gonna be, I think they are
gonna be a riot and smart
alecks to make Ganev
and Ganova very proud
and very busy, I can tell.**

**Ganev had some time to
think, pondering about
life, thinking about all
the political proddings,
that were anywhere from
insects in the midday
heat to land mines eve-
rywhere, from people you**

couldn't tell, did they turn their coats to air them out, or was their very soul carrying the filth of human existence, to flies, so busy, a day was their world and other than being food along the chain, Ganev could do without.

All the way from Nestor to here, there were dates and names of great importance being floated,

**the importance to be
measured by excitement.**

**Ganova couldn't help but
see the colors rise from
Ganev's brain and she
thought, what's that
spell?**

**Durutti and she let the R
really tremble.**

**Is he Italian, Ganev
thought, maybe I should
call you Ginevra.**

Ganev he is Spanish.

**Remember Nestor and
his stories and Carmen
Negra 1888.**

**How does she know about
that?**

**Ginevra, it's Italian and
it means, woman of the
people, Ganev was mus-
ing.**

**How you know that
name?**

**And there was more than
curiosity in her voice.**

I looked it up.

Which made Ganova chuckle, because true or not, it was a good answer.

And she gave him that look, that could only mean, let's go to the woods for some privacy.

They slowly trotted towards their sanctuary, sniffing along the way, as was natural for them, but also so nobody would

think, they were doing anything else, but trotting and sniffing.

People.

Once they couldn't be seen anymore by these ogres, the sniffing served another purpose and Ganev couldn't wait to lick her.

Is she a virgin?

Is she an enemy dog?

In times of war, you can have thoughts like that, but let's stop talking about that here or we never get it on, or worse get lost in those never ending higher politics.

Smell, lick, lick, smell, licky, licky, licky, that tastes good, she is delicious, I won't need dinner tonight.

Ganova liked it, she rubbed her butt into his

**face, she pulled away,
to rub it some more again
and to become juicier and
juicier, dripping and then
squeezing his nose, like
no, no, no and running
away a smell or two.**

Wait. Wait, wait.

Lick, lick, lick.

Only licking?

**It's called foreplay and I
could play till the stars
fall out of the sky.**

**Yes, fine, but get it on or
there won't be any pup-
pies.**

She's got a point.

**With all your licking, my
eggs are all dancing and
steaming.**

**Well two more licks,
maybe that gets two more
eggs steaming and with a
couple millions of my
submarines we might get
a nice brood together,**

**keeping the alecks race
alive and going.**

**She was fine, I need no
other one, make three or
so goes with her and then
retire, I can say I in-
vested myself well in this
world of madness, bring-
ing plenty of alecks into
it, to hopefully make it a
saner world.**

**Ganova pinched Ganev
for that last drop and
animal unlike savored**

**that moment blissfully,
what do people know?**

**Take a lesson from us al-
ecks and you will have a
long way to go till you say
stop and just savor those
moments, that make life
so uncomplicated.**

**Ganev and Ganova went
back to the house, to find
no one was there.**

But before they started looking, they smelled and saw dinner.

Food anyway and some water.

What a nice thought, I think Hans and Anja are really cool.

What do you think?

I think so, too, after eating let's go look for them.

Licking the bowls shiny clean, they looked at each other, smiled and made their way to where they heard sounds of what seemed like a lot of people and also where there was some light.

Smell?

Well, people.

It was like a community meeting, lots of sounds, people talking, some-

**times rather loud and
their hands and some-
times arms making signs
and figures into the air
and smoke.**

**Smoke from cigarettes
and pipes, breath, sweat
and lots of thinking, no
cigars and cognac there.**

**But plenty to smell and
analyze to make you
dizzy and one word, ac-
tually two, no more, that
I couldn't pronounce, but**

my Ganova gave me a little help there.

Stalinist this and stalinist that.

Stalinist dogs and pigs, traitors, murderers and lunatics and what else there was in the political dictionary.

Before I could even think what it was all about, I disagreed with one thing, stalinist dog.

**I'm a dog alright, but I
am not a Stalinist.**

**I was looking at Ganova,
to see what she was
thinking.**

**Don't take it personal,
but people still have to
learn, not to make us re-
sponsible for their short
comings, because I think,
just like us, pigs, bulls,
monkeys, snakes, you
have it, got their shtick,
so why don't people take**

**care of their own crap
and take a person or a
people for what they are
and keep us out of the
equation.**

**Okay and what is it all
about.**

**Well, actually quite simple,
you may say, that
Stalinists are the Pest of
the Left, if not the world.**

**There is a left and a right
in the world?**

Well, actually there is 360°, but people easily get lost in their tunnel.

Tunnel, that's dark, you can go blind, if you stay in there too long.

If people could see half as well as we smell, boy that would be quite a different world.

So does this mean we are better than them?

**In some ways we are, but
tell people that.**

**And people who under-
stand that, are the ones
we can trust, but you
know, always keep your
nose clean and your ears
turned towards the wind,
because you never know
what's gonna come your
way.**

I guess that's life!

**I guess so and how about
some more love, if not for
the race than for the fun.**

Some more licking?

**You may lick, my Dear,
but don't get lost in
trancing, I like you all
the way and then you
may get lost, but don't let
me catch you looking.**

Get lost?

What do you mean?

**Aleck, I mean my sweet
Ganev, I mean get lost in
thought, not your way,
'cause anyway you go
nowhere where I don't
go.**

Not even hunting?

**Hunting, we got food at
home.**

What age are you in?

**You're a wolf or some-
thing?**

**No, I am a happy dog in
love with you, maybe it
is just the genes.**

Genes?

**Now you know, why they
call you Ganev, but that's
why I love you.**

**And if there was a mirror
around, Ganev would
have made it blush and
his Ganova loved him for
that, too.**

Hans and Anja were home, talking and drinking some tea.

A political discussion.

Ganev was surprised about himself, seeing pictures of what they were talking about, very clearly, very vivid, but couldn't necessarily pronounce all the words they used, well he figured it's people's language, but than Ganova had a knack

**for that, so he was able to
at least see the words,
even if he was not able to
cough them up, what are
you looking at, I am a
dog, you know my vocal
cords, my tongue and all
that gum, you see and
you know nothing about
my brain and feelings, so
hush or shall I say think
before you speak.**

**There was something
about communists.**

To make it simple it went like this:

A good communist is an anarchist and a bad communist is a stalinist.

What do you say my dear Ganova?

A bit simple, but a good start for a discussion.

You think we can shed some light on all that good and bad stuff?

**We can piss, shit, gnarl,
barf, bark at the bad stuff
and we can howl from the
bottom of our hearts to
the good stuff.**

What's that?

**Freedom, respect, disci-
pline, harmony, love, in-
tegrity, pride, elegance,
anything else?**

You forgot sex.

**Ganev, how could I forget
sex, it's all there.**

Where?

Inside everything.

You mean sexuality.

**One more round before
we go hidy?**

How about tomorrow?

You can wait?

I think I will be inspired.

By what?

Imagine.

What?

The look from your beautiful eyes.

You are so romantic.

If there was a bank for your looks, I'd be a millionaire.

And we could buy nails for Hans to hammer away.

Hammer, remember that, because we need a house, too, you are pregnant.

I am pregnant?

You are not?

Wait and see.

I have to wait?

**Well, while you wait,
you can engage in your
favorite pastime.**

What's that?

Ganev.

Yes, my dear Ganova.

We go for a walk?

After breakfast.

You can wait?

A little breakfast.

Okay, a little breakfast.

But chew well.

I always chew well, dear.

But not in a hurry.

**I can wait Ganev, that
makes me so really hot
for you.**

**Is there a difference be-
tween your steaming
eggs and Anja's boiled
eggs?**

Ganev.

Just asking.

And drooling.

You had to notice that.

Well, it's an indicator.

For what?

Ganev.

**Okay, okay, okay, let's
have breakfast.**

**From the distance it
looked as if they all had**

**breakfast around the
same table.**

In spirit they did.

**It was a holiday and
Hans and Anja had de-
cided to have breakfast at
home.**

**It was a nice morning
and they really enjoyed
being there together.**

**Very simple, nothing
fancy, just being to-
gether.**

And as Ganova was sort of going to give Ganev a sign, hey remember, the forests are waiting, talk turned to puppies.

That's us.

And they were all ears.

Hans and Anja started talking about breeding.

Something wrong with their sex life, why are they talking about ours?

**And then they talked
about training.**

**Why, are we misbehav-
ing?**

**They want to build
houses.**

For us?

**Are they gonna make a
dog village?**

**Maybe a ghetto, for dogs
only?**

Wait a minute.

Ganev and Ganova looked at each other and decided to go for the woods.

Where are they going, they could still hear.

Looked briefly back, were understood and saw Hans and Anja wave.

Okay, see you later.

They didn't really feel comfortable and it showed in their bodies, so once in the woods,

they rolled and rolled to get that uncomfortable feeling out of their bones, shook their bodies well to rid themselves of the last ounce of bad energy and started kissing, sniffing, licking and got it on.

Trotting slowly back to the house as if after an extensive surveillance mission through the woods, they first of all got themselves a refresh-

**ment, licked their wet
lips and sat up, looking
straight at Anja and
Hans.**

Okay, what's the story.

**You are smart, you are
naturals, we thought you
might be interested in
our business proposal.**

What?

**Let's breed smart puppies
and make a company sell-
ing smart dogs.**

They wanna sell our puppies?

Ganova looked at Ganev.

You'd be the stud and I'd be the puppy factory?

No way, we are dogs, not machines.

Turned and walked away a little bit, enough to show the distance, but still close enough to keep eyes and ears on Anja and Hans.

Alright, I think we upset them, so let's not talk about it anymore and see what happens after their first puppies come around.

Well before Ganova had her puppies, Anja introduced her sweet little screaming stinker to the world.

And Ganev and Ganova were waiting what was coming their way.

First they felt a little bit left out and thought, we are not dogs, we are family and thought, well we will be having a family soon, too, so let's see what that does to our relationship with Hans and Anja.

It was somewhat different, nothing bad happened, but there was distance, like the baby was more important, than us.

Well, as things go, it was their kind and we are a different kind and not everything mixes.

I guess there is such a thing as people and animals and plants and whatever, but still, we are all part of the same deal, life, so what's the distance.

I guess if we ask too much, they might feel challenged.

But then what are all those political discussions about, if not to challenge, to reach new levels of thinking.

Okay let's be diplomatic, they still feed us and right, you don't bite the hand that puts that bowl full of food and water out there, three, at least two times a day.

Well, one thing you can say, once you start think-

ing, you also can run into some unthinkable situations, but they said we are smart and we are naturals.

But then maybe that's politics.

Do we have to deal with that?

What was this about freedom, equality, integrity and all that jazz.

Ganev, Jazz, let's have some fun.

Ganev looked at his Love and said, and now you know for sure, why I call you my Ganova.

I don't know how many days there passed, but suddenly there was a crying monster.

A baby.

A boy or a girl?

**Let's wait till it starts
crawling, so we can see,
if there is something
hanging down or not.**

**How many days have
passed?**

Why?

It's not crawling, yet.

Maybe go smell.

Ganev!

What? Just smell.

Its not your own.

It's like a puppy anyway.

Before the answer boy or girl could be answered, another issue came up.

The Yellow Key.

Hans wasn't sure what to do with it.

Put in a box, give it to Ganev, place it next to the door, send it to Nestor, what a thought, when Anja simply said, with that voice, that al-

**ways made him melt, like
snow in the spring sun,
keep it, it brought you
luck.**

But I never used it.

Now, that is real luck.

**Sweetheart, am I that
simple?**

**I don't think you are that
simple, you are just
lucky.**

**Would we be sitting here,
if you were not lucky?**

Now that's good reasoning.

You think you are lucky, too?

For that very reasonable question Hans was rewarded with one of the biggest and juiciest kisses in the whole wide world and that from his lovely Anja.

There was a wind, making everything making noises, a restless symphony, hard to fall asleep, but they did, Anja knows some ways of how to get Hans to ease into the night, whatever the weather.

Knocking.

In the middle of the night?

The wind had gotten stronger, there was a strong light, Hans looked at Anja and if she could be more beautiful, she was it right now in all that light with all that wind.

Is she gone?

She was breathing and turning away from the light.

Hans was wide awake.

Was the baby sleeping?

It was.

What time is it?

4 AM.

**What is this, morning,
night, middle of the
night.**

Who was knocking?

**Hans carefully got up and
went outside to see.**

**Well, if there were rob-
bers, would they knock?**

Nazis would they knock?

**God, would he knock,
maybe.**

Nestor?

**He would have sent some
message ahead of time,
but anyway not come
here, this way, but what
do I know.**

**He is on the run, to here,
he is looking for the yel-
low key?**

Where is Ganev?

He is sleeping.

**When Hans said that just
in his mind, Ganev sat
up, yawning.**

We are going?

**Nestor maybe said good
bye.**

**Walter Benjamin had his
best friend living some-
where here.**

It was not the wind.

Hans?

Anja stood there, so beautiful, fully lit by the moon, like on a stage or in one of those dramatic movies.

Is she real?

She came over and her warm body made him shiver and yes, gave him this royal erection, which released this priceless patented sound, Anja's deep down sensual voice,

**yes my dear soldier,
where are we going?**

**And they made love right
there, with Ganev look-
ing at his Ganova, who
was in her dreamland,
so he went back to sleep.**

**Hans woke me up for
that?**

**I know he loves Anja,
he doesn't have to tell me
that and show it, too.**

People, maybe they have to show it, we dogs, don't just do it anywhere.

Well, I guess that is a matter of breeding.

A very clear morning.

Anja was taking care of the baby and Hans went over to the community center to see what's up.

See, if there were some news.

A letter for Anja.

When he got back to the house, she was sitting there, feeding the baby and Ganev and Ganova just lying there at her feet, one to the left and one to the right.

The Queen with her Prince and her two Palace Guards.

Nestor sends his best wishes and says, the sands a very shifting, he is looking for some

**steady ground, a boat, a
truck, an aeroplane and
we will see each other
soon.**

**A name for the baby,
their boy, their prince,
their screaming monster.**

**Nestor, Benjamin, Lazar,
Peter, Max, Maurice,
Ernesto, Leo, Shmuel,
Ganev, Joseph, Judah?**

**Benjamin Nestor Lazar
Laub and if at any time**

later he wants to call himself Joe, why not, it would be up to him.

The weather was changing a lot and so was the life, the society, the laws, the value of everything.

Dark clouds made shadows, floating across the landscape, giving time to wipe the sweat from the blistering heat, but they also brought rain, much needed rain.

**More rain than expected
and more time to talk.**

**Hans was appreciated
as a worker, as someone
who would go out to do a
job, not wait to be called.**

**And he enjoyed doing
good work and received
the respect he very much
deserved.**

**But politically he was
looked at, as if he was
nowhere.**

Meaning not really fitting into the group.

He started to feel some distance, but accepted that, as he accepted the change in the weather.

Political.

He was happy to be able to work and very happy to contribute to the community and that was quite a lot of politics for him.

So what was missing?

Opinion.

Social opinion.

World opinion.

True, it all mattered.

But in his mind, life was shaped, by building houses for everyone, especially for those, who had none or very bad ones and providing housing was a very important political act, by which

one could easily measure the condition of the society, like one could measure the health of a person, by looking at the living conditions.

Reading, writing, washing, eating, talking, working.

Everybody somehow does this, the how he thought, made the difference.

So how apolitical, if this word has any place in any living dictionary, could he be, doing what he was doing.

The answer was not that easy and wasn't really forthcoming.

So what was he missing?

You are laughing maybe, if I tell you what Hans was missing now.

His Family and if there wasn't Anja and Benjamin, he would be one lonely bastard.

Giving himself this time, this luxury to think and feel, he was standing in front of this big black hole.

Was he standing on the edge, was he inside, was it inside him, where was this big black hole.

It suddenly was everywhere.

Was this the knocking at 4 AM?

And what brought him back, from doubting, falling, running?

The warmth of Anja.

Was she the purple light, was she the way to the purple light, was she looking for the purple light, was it inside her,

**was she carrying it,
was Benjamin the light,
were many little Ben-
jamins and Rachels and
Ganevs and Ganovas the
light?**

**He saw a lot of light in
the eyes of the little ones
and one thing he knew,
he had to bring light into
this, his big black hole,
that invisible space, that
could be quite heavy to
carry, but he was a car-**

penter and he could build windows and doors and definitely a very good roof, so the darkness would turn into a stream of warm light.

And then there was Anja and Nestor Benjamin Lazar Laub and of course Ganev and Ganova, now that was plenty of political activity for right now, after that let's see and

**Hans was ready to see
and go way beyond that.**

Was he missing something?

**Yes, making love with his
sensensual Anja.**

**Now that's politics and
you do not argue with
Anja about that, you just
enjoy doing it.**

Afterword:

Malvine believed she had seen Hans in a film.

Some news from Moscow, while she was living in exile in London.

Till her dying days she didn't give up hope, that somehow he survived and she left with that last image of her brother.

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Hans Fleischner, Vienna 2024, January.