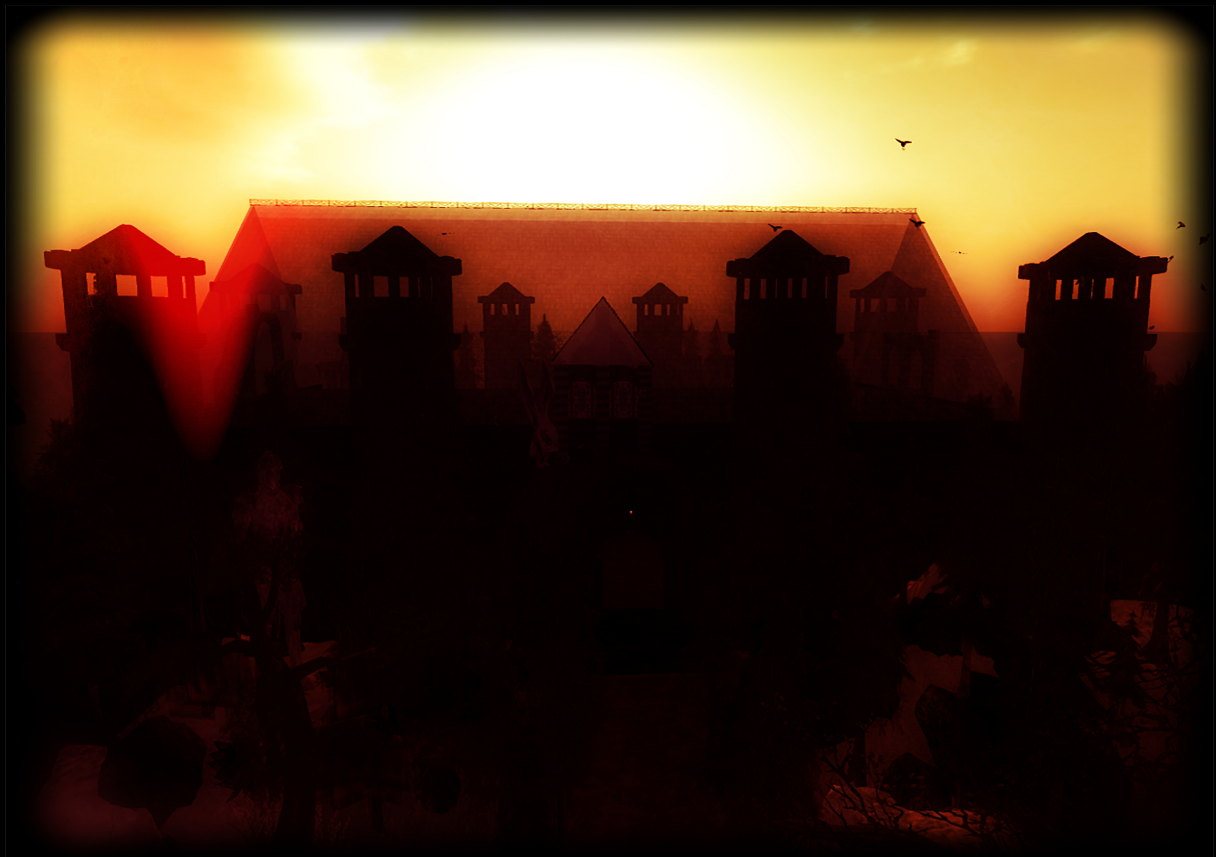


THE GUILD HALL AT EISENMARKT



Joerg Savio a.k. Malon Wyngard

"Up to here and no further on!" The voice from the coach-boom comes down. The coachman is unrelenting. "Not a werst I will continue!"

Through the window of the closed box I can see obliquely ahead the roadway. It does not look any different than the roadway on which we came from Eisenmarkt. The lowered view perceives that the carriage seems to be on a kind of extended space.

The two horses are constantly throwing their heads up and trotting with their hoofs as uneasily. The rattling of the chains in their grommets and the dull thumping and scraping of the iron horseshoes on the dark yellow gravel of the plaza strewn by grass spots dig into my senses. The clanging of the bridles is also unmistakable. The indecisive movements of the horses make the carriage swing back and forth. Every time the two blacks squeal softly squealing sounds and beat the tail.

I'm a bit piqued. I had not chosen this gaunt four-wheeled fellow with his two-horse carriage without certain hindrances. Because in Diemrich the selection of coachmen is probably huge. Diemrich is a substation for the trade route from Bucharest across Temeschwar and Budapest to Vienna. Many coachmen with the same number of carriages are therefore to be found on the transshipment place of Diemrich.

This one had me however particularly well liked. He belongs to a special kind of coachmen, who transport a small number of equally special and especially well-paying passengers especially fast on the individual sections of the trade route. This small number of really special passengers wants to be on the road a lot faster than this is possible with the coaches with up to ten gigantic castors.

In the end the decision for him was this bad fight taking place in front of the Conciergerie, that building at the transshipment place which includes the main administration, and where such drivers are waiting for their very well paying customers.

The reason for the fight was not clear to me. But as the big-bony gaunt guy has also very skilfully and disciplinedly distributed his fist hits, that one of his opponents, whether alone or even together, could not reach the water.

For my order, this was no more suitable, for I needed a guy like this, who does not seem to fear the devil himself or his emissaries.

I am Jan Hellenbaum, and I am an inspector of the General Government Administration in its branch, the Inspectorate Administration of Temeshwar. Oh yes, I got it far! Just 28 years old, I found good patrons who have pledged me directly from the court school in Budapest to the Inspectorate Administration. I have enjoyed a pleasant sumptuous education, and have also been promoted to the inspector soon.



Bold I also look in my slim figure, almost six feet high, like a close-fitting dark-blue mantle, with a noble, glossy black, protruding collar, the hem of which reaches down to the knees. In front, from the bottom to the belt, with its magnificent buckle open, it shows my light-brown trousers, tailored to the latest fashion from England, with a straight blow up into the shafts of the knee-high dark brown boots with their close-fitting cuffs. Above the belt, the lilac brocade vest covers the pleated shirt with its high collar and the white bow around the neck. Above my beardless face, a high hat with a wide buckle sits round its stump below, which can scarcely restrain the dark-brown locks on the round head.

This is the official robe of the inspectors. The inspectors are required to do so when accomplishing their orders.

The order here in Diemrich is not the first of its kind for me, but perhaps one of the most puzzling. Not that it would have been particularly exciting that people are disappearing on the trade routes, after all, there are enough events that do not make people just disappear. Robbery

for example is whole well-organized gangs, which would have been a case for the gendarmerie or even the military administration.

And exactly for such a case I have been determined. I am supposed to investigate why, in the vicinity of Diemrich to Eisenmarkt, Karlsburg, and even to Turda to the north and Reschitz in the southwest over a longer period of time, people simply disappeared, and then even without a trace of robber bands, or any announced disasters.

Of course, this is not a task for a whole expensive department, but there is only one man sent by the Inspectorate Administration of Temeschwar. And when I received the order from the hand of the Secretary General, the Honorable of Mannlicher, I have been able to hear that this was done only because a very wealthy and, among other things, very influential merchant with one of his superfactors, and much more a captain of the gendarmerie had disappeared. They were so disappeared that, despite intensive researches the same gendarmerie on the ground could not be traced to a single backdrop from him and his two companions.

At least the last message was that, on the occasion of the inevitable stay in Diemrich, the Lord and his companions had decided to go on a journey from which neither the Lord nor his two companions, nor their steeds, had resurfaced.

It is, therefore, important to classify the whole, and then also in connection with the captain of the local gendarmerie, as very important. Who can be said at every possible level that in the widest environment the robber bands were not to be feared at the moment, yet it was not excluded that honorable guests could still disappear, even under the active protection of the gendarmerie!

Well, I had committed this coachman for my mission with his fast vehicle, and I have even come to Targo Jiu on the other side of the pass of Petrosani. And my map, which I got from the Inspectorate Administration of Temeshwar, has gotten very many handwritten entries on the bare surfaces between the larger spaces. Do you know Orastie? Have you ever been to Geoagiu Bai? I've been to Cincis Cerna and Densus over Hateg. And in Kudsir over that Orastie!

But analogy to the many entries on the map, the yield of information is nothing. No one has encountered the merchant and his two companions on the handsome horses, and has only wanted to find a little bit of them.

And then, in the darkened room of the "Golden Carrier" at the transshipment place of Diemrich, a richly weathered companion brings a tale to the best of the many of the many torches on the walls and the numerous candles of the four iron chandeliers on the ceiling commemorating to legends and faeries as a factual information, as he announces from the guild hall to Eisenmarkt.

I now know Eisenmarkt from my own point of view, but I have not noticed a structure such as that described by the weathered companion.

But I am amazed how the many people in the smoky room seem to be silent. I behave quietly and listen to the excitement.

This guild hall, as the weathered journeyman applies, should not be in Eisenmarkt itself. A castle, outside the old, largely intact walls of the city far east in the steeply rising mountains should be. This castle is said to have eight towers, so it is not exactly small. A small vortex with a masonry tower is also to have it.

My quiet inner question has just been answered.

But the most imposing edifice within the very regular quarter of the castle is the guild hall. The room is to be eighteen feet high! The roof once again has this height. The length is nearly forty-eight feet and the width twenty-two.

This is a really remarkable building! But why do I know nothing about it? Why did the inhabitants of Eisenmarkt never tell me anything about it? Not even the mayor, whom I have been introduced to in the Town Hall of Eisenmarkt, has given me each customer.

The problem is solved by listening. First, the guild hall has received its name from a union of knights and noblemen who once served the heavy duty of securing the still unstable border with the Ottoman Empire. It is nearly 200 years since the "Golden Apple" as Vienna is called of the Sultan Mehmed IV and his Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa Pasha was besieged by the Ottoman Army in 1683, and yet in the Battle of the Bald Mountains by the United Troops of the Empire and the allies from Poland, together with the many borrowed money from the German royal houses.

This castle was once a very important fortification of the frontier. From this base the knights and noblemen had done their patrols, but also trains and expeditions to areas far beyond the frontier.

The knights and noblemen had also arranged themselves very commodious on the castle. Thus the Guild Hall alone shall be endowed with the most glorious, which is conceivable. The floor was covered with the noblest parquet. In front of the tall and narrow windows, with large glass panels of clearest casting, folded red flounces of silk piled up. From the flat-vaulted ceiling of dark stone plates were hung bronze chains in two rows huge solid bronze candlesticks, thirteen in number should have been total. On the respective ends of each of the six curved arms of each stood glass-shaped bowls, each of which carried a talquetum. Each of the chandeliers was fastened to the vaulted ceiling by a hook hidden by a very large shelf. On thick giant carpets from the distant Isfahan and Tabriz there stood, with dark red velvet-covered stools. An orchestra, always filled with fifteen musicians, played with lutes and flutes. A tall, truly graceful statue of Athena leaned out of one of the corners. The vast fields of the walls adorned the most precious paintings of old masters.

Of all the truly elevated pieces, however, a crystal glass mirror of the single narrow side of the hall, almost from the ground to almost under the ceiling, was the most striking of a single piece. A stone guardian of immense dimensions in his stone armor to the left in front of the castle has sheltered all these beauties with a stone sword.

The festivals on the castle and in this guild hall were legendary.

Were, as well as very carefully the weathered journeyman everything in an already as transfigured past of itself. For almost 130 years ago terrible misfortunes have occurred. The guild hall and the castle have fallen victim to an enormous fire at one of those great feasts. There were insurgent peasants, who have defended themselves against the desolate occupation and raids of the knights and noblemen, have been there to defend the villages. They destroyed the castle and the guild hall well planned with that fire. And all the knights and noblemen, along with their wives and their attendants, are said to have perished terribly in the raging flames. The stone guardian in his stone armor, with his stone sword, could not prevent it.

The tale is now somewhat confused, however, because the weathered fellow has already poured a few jugs of the beer, which is gladly given to this talented narrator.

For now he tells, accompanied by shouts of horror, which still seem to be very artificial, as if this story were so often given to the best so far, and would still be, from the appearance of demonic beings, who had come out of the glowing hell enclosed by the walls, and attacking the insurgents.

I start to smile inwardly. I hide my impulses. It is obvious that this narrative is the talk of vampires. Vampires, the grotesque creation of a horrifying creature directly from Satan's lap, born from a human corpse, transformed from rotting flesh in yellowish brittle bones to eternally lasting curse before the eternal escape from the all-purifying light of the day. Bloodthirst henceforth determines their further undead existence. People are attacked on wings like the oversized ones of bats, in order to rob their blood and thus their lives.

Bitten by vampires would become vampires themselves. After a tingeful cold-icy death-sleep with a torn-out throat, they would, as the same incantations of hell as their murderers, grow waxy and weathered cracked hard the skin, frightening fangs in their teeth, rise to the same demonic swing into the everlasting night. Like their murderers, they carry from now on the icy coldness of death in their bodies for all time.

I snort heartily inside!

Vampires are the creations of the all-too-powerful imagination of the peoples of very remote countries, born of ideas of absolute overpowering of the awe-inspiring and ancient fears of an imaginable extinguishing death.

I know these tales abundantly in all variations. Especially in remote areas such as this east of Temeshwar, they are still experiencing constant rebirth in the sweet shudder. If, however, the word-violence of the narratives, like the one just heard, translated into the efficacy of the described devil creatures, then the whole region would be swarming with vampires. And not a vigorous trade-route would pass through the otherwise poor and roughly paralyzing solitude. If the exploits of hell had already suffered a renewed and miserable death from hunger and

thirst, it is a matter of irony for me, had the people here as their prey swept off already long ago by their high number.

In even greater irony, in my now severely suppressing smile, it images to me that if the crystal glass mirror, which occupies a whole narrow side of the hall, from almost the ground to almost under the ceiling, had surmounted the catastrophe in the conflagration from a single piece, they could not even look at it vainly. For vampires, according to the old, everlasting legend about the unhappy creatures, are not reproduced in a mirror, whether huge or tiny.

In the most lively applause, the weathered companion ends his terrifying story, and circles his great hat to reap the appropriate wage from the circle of his listeners, who are all ready to listen to him.

I turn to my neighbor, a well-to-do gentleman in a wiggle, and ask him what has happened to the castle with the guild hall, and learn that nothing has happened.

"There has been a curse on the area," he says. The castle had never been rebuilt, let alone the guild hall. At all, not even the wood collectors and hunters would dare to go near the ruins. The border with the Ottoman Empire is now to be found much farther to the east than it was at that time of its edification, and thus such a base as had been dispensable as meaningless.

"The guild hall is in the ruin like a black nasty torso," he laments with a heavy tongue. "The roof is burnt down, but the stone vaulted ceiling is still to exist!"

"Why is it?" now comes from me. "Have not you been there?" "Keep it!" he says, shaking himself in a spasm of laughter. "The Holy Blessings may cause me to never lead my steps to this heartily damn place!"

That sounds hard, but definitely. And I'll leave it at that.

But yesterday I committed the coachman with his fast vehicle to take me this time to the plains far east of Eisenmarkt. The guildhall and the surrounding castle are my untry goal.

I cannot interpret what his obvious fear conceals in his eyes.

He also makes a condition with me that he would bring me to a certain crossroads, but then would be quickly dismissed by me.

Strange, it seems to me. Because the day is beautiful and the sun is warm from the slightly cloudy sky. There is no danger visible. And the swiftness of the carriage with its closed box promises a speedy approach to throw a terrifying glance at the ruins.

I feel bitterly, however, that the agreed crossroads seem to be very far from the coveted goal, for neither the mountain which is described as very striking and the castle which is also very striking nor still somehow the merlons of the still standing eight towers above the tops of the

pinces and beeches standing like walls along the way. Above all, nothing is to be noticed of the possible vortex with its half-built tower as described.

"You'd rather go with me, sir!" I almost suppose I hear a pleading from the mouth of the coachman.

But my decision is firm. I hope, with the slightly unusual goal of closing this last gap on my card, and on this spot, too, to say that the search for the merchant and his two companions had been unsuccessful.

The sun has sloped down from its zenith. The pocket watch on its long chain shows the third hour. I have already several times deposited the high hat with its broad band and the buckle down on the stump, and wiped the perspiration from my forehead and neck with the great cloth from the pocket of the mantle.

I set a high pace as I proceeded. The almost knee-high boots with their close-fitting cuffs have been designed not only for excellent rides and the comfortable promenading in salons. These are the boots of the English country knaves, the model for the boots of the K.u.K. - inspectors have confessed. On these boots, the English land knaves have established the legend of the seven-mile boots from the fairy tales, for they have explored the country on foot. In doing so, they wore the same clothes as we did. On the left side, as now also on me, a thick leather knapsack over the right shoulder, dangling from the right shoulder, with everything that is needed in order to gain effective knowledge of the territory that has been committed. In the right hand, the English geometer had a claw-folded and locked circle of ash-wood with sharp iron tips at its end, which the fingers twisted rapidly during the rapid running and anew the tip, which projected forward, into the ground again; Now the rear end raised again for the swing forward from the ground, and quietly murmuring the numbers of the swings continuously.

Well, I do not lead a wooden circle with myself, even though I had already done the geometry in the first years right after the completion of the teaching on behalf of the Inspectorate Administration. I have kept the rapid and expansive step from this time. We inspectors are nimble on foot.

The temptation is great to pull the tin bottle with the wonderfully cool water from the pack.

I am thinking about the coachman, who is very fearful startled at the end. He promised to wait for me tomorrow in the same place where he left me. I should not be too late either, he sharply insisted. He would not wait any longer than the moment when the sun would touch the line of the mountains beyond the dense thickets of the spruce and beech trees. I do not ask what he now very clearly shows his fear. But I did not plan to return beyond this time.



Suddenly, the firs and beeches have opened like a wide clearing, giving a clear view of a huge tower. As I approached, I recognize a low, about ten-foot-high building was added to the tower. On the building there is a saddle roof covered with weathered brown roof tiles. On the tower are the remains of inwardly built rafters, which had given the tower in former times a high pointed roof. The structure, like the tower, is made of coarse and irregular blocks of a gray-brown stone. The tower has six very regularly protruding corners.

This must be the little vortex with its masonry tower, just as the weathered companion in the smoky guest room in the "Golden Carriage" at the transshipment place of Diemrich.

The woodwork at the top of the tower seems to have been muddled, and as if the stop to the masonry had been lost, it seemed to be a little inclined to the side. On the left side, a narrow gorge, like a giant column, gapes in a narrow plank, which is still standing on the steep ramp of the tower.

Why do I have to think of a construction site intensively? Because the tower and its subsequent structure seem as if they were simply abandoned during the construction from one hour to the next. I can even see high up the remains of a crane beam with its winds and blocks.

As I approached the building more and more, it seemed to me that the side of the tower, which was turned away from me, had only been built up to half the height of the front.

I must now bend my neck backwards so that the view can grasp the tower in its entire height. The tower is probably at the 64 feet high! And the beams of the unfinished structure, which are already very slanting from above, act as if they were to fall upon me at any time.

Unconsciously, the step strikes a direction that will lead me far to the left of the tower.

Then I stand in front of a closed, double-winged gate, which, like the one between round slender square pillars with a circular ball hanging on it, consists of strong rods with upwards projecting pointed ends in two horizontal irons. The iron is strongly rusted, remnants of a dark color hang like flat crumbs on it. The foot of the gate wing is covered by high-pitched grass. A chain rusted like the iron holds the wings together. Behind the gate I recognize the plant of a wild park. Surprised, I perceive that on the right side of the park, between the many lowly willows and ash trees, a masonry bank marks a remarkably large lake.

I had to learn that water is scarce in these areas. Not for nothing is always called for certain use of the precious wet. All the more surprising I am now to find this precious wet in such an abundance.

Until now, I have never realized that a skilful version would have taken place which would make a meaningful use of the undoubtedly pointing waters.

But maybe I just overlook something. Especially in Eisenmarkt, with its tolerably beautiful buildings, in the embraces of the still powerful walls, I would have to become a researcher, and the dun of art would already prove itself.

But the question is, why is it not long ago that the striking eight towers of the castle, with the huge structure of the Guild Hall, are visible in its embraces over the tops of the firs and beeches. To the left of me, their outlines would have to be recognizable. From the lake, on the left of me, the terrain gently rises, to become undoubtedly steeper a flat mountain.

At least the path at some distance from me curves to the left into the ranks of the pines and beeches.

What am I tired of, like a hearty yawning out of the open mouth. Both hands clenched with firm fists, rubbing their sleep from the eyes. A feeling is in me as if I have just awakened from deepest slumber.

To my surprise, I find myself leaning back against the rough-bodied trunk, leaning in the deep-shining shadow of a sprucing pine. Stunned, I perceive that on the shoulders, and on the front of the mantle dried-up needles are whisked down from the tree.

Anger creeps into my still sleepy mind as I climb up and straighten my legs, which are all too hard. A dizziness takes hold of my senses, so that I can stagger to the rough-bodied trunk, and the protruding hands with the inner surfaces in front.

The breath is heavy and the high and tall hat lowers over the forehead. The eyes blink as the hat shifts down from the forehead to the narrow nose. Somehow I do not perceive that the hat on me falls before the trunk down into the dense needles.

As the breath rushes in and out of the lungs, it seems to me as unacceptable that I have indeed sought the cooling shadow of the forest chamber, in order to keep an untroubled nap. But I cannot explain the frenzy of the now really strong swindle. As if I had slept more than an hour, and I would be frightened by the deepest slumber.

Uncomfortably it comes into my senses how freeze and almost stiff I feel.

I get up and pull the heavy pocket watch out of its fold at the brass chain on the belt. It comes to me like a consolation, that the ratio again takes hold of my mind.

The watch is already showing up in the fifth hour. My sleep which I have now classed as an involuntary sleep cannot have lasted more than half an hour. A feeling resonates in me as if this half an hour had the width of days.

The state of the sun has also changed significantly to the horizon.

The left arm reaches down and holds the big hat, the buckle of which looks at me just as helplessly, as this must result from my eyes. As in a mechanic, the right hand now grips and knocks the brim with heavily prone fingers, so that the many adherent needles of the spruce trickle out of it dry.

The hat is again set up, as is the case with a K.u.K inspector of the Inspectorate Administration in Temeshwar. And Jan Hellenbaum, in spite of the deaf stiffness, stretches himself in his body, and also takes the attitude expected by an inspector from the Inspectorate Administration from Temeshwar. The body is high up on its long legs, the chest forward and the stomach flat.

More than ever, the icy colds in the stiff body make me feel deaf.

Then my gaze seems to obscure as I see the goal set for this day to grasp is right in front of me. I have probably turned a little to the left, so that I think of looking into a truly elevated alley of high pine and beech trees on both sides of a clearly recognizable winding path.

Eight towers show themselves in their unapproachable shadow blackness above an equally unapproachable black-shaded masonry quite high above the present level. It is a castle, and it is very large. And in its black-shadowiness the massive unclearly recognizable in the encasement of the black-shadowed walls can be discerned as that described in the tales of the weathered companion in the smoky guest room of the "Golden Carriage" at the transshipment place of Diemrich.

I arrived! This is the guild hall to Eisenmarkt!

Banned from this view, I move slowly on the clearly recognizable, tortuous path. The light behind the high tops of the spruces and beeches cast a wide shadow over me.

Suddenly, the light of the sun takes off as the glowing ball dips into a depression between two peaks covered with spruce green. The almost icy coolness now reaches very sensitively over my legs and penetrates into my already quivering body. The more than unnaturally cold stiffness makes my hands lame.

High above and far in front of me, the eight towers seem to want to seize the last tittle of the dwindling daylight, as they suddenly shine brightly, and indeed show the masonry in all its details.

But as I once more before and far up look, it is as I have seen it first. Shades black the outlines have become again, the openings of windows protrude high at the towers. Draw also the outline of the loops of such windows on the crowns of the walled-out black-shadows. I mean to see on a part of these loops a second set of such overlapping.

Only the structure in it is closed black shadow, not a single opening can be seen. Did not the well-to-do gentleman, too, say in the smoky guest room of the "Golden Carriage" at the transshipment place of Diemrich that the hall structure would behave like a great black torso in the midst of the surrounding walls? That not only the mighty walls with their high openings in the windows would have come into the courtyard, but even the flat stone vaulted ceiling above it?

It must be so. And as I get nearer and nearer to the tortuous path, I can also see, like dull tips at the ends of the mighty torso, the outlines of weathered gables, rising above the upper edge, with the empty window openings clearly visible from this nearness.

The roof burnt down, so the confirming, gruesome customer. Only the weathered gables protrude into the ever darker sky. The sun has already glowed red under the skies of the hills and mountains. Very quickly the light falls as in a gap behind. Venus appears bright and bright, and gradually the other sparkling stars on the now dark, clear black firmament.

Very close, I have already come to the site, I suppose that the way will lead directly to a right turn. Suddenly the step follows, because the ears hear something which does not fit perfectly to this, despite its manifold glittering starry sky now gloomy place.

Music I can hear! Yes, really, it sounds as if set by flutes, accompanied by the mild strings of lutes. And I am astonished that a warm, bright glow of hundreds of talquetums in the glass panes of many chandeliers penetrates through the darkness from an unannounced flat half-bend, pointing upwards.

The step has now finally come true, still the body fluctuates slightly back and forth, while the view from the wide-open eyes wants to hold on to the incredible scenario.

I can see it clearly! There is a feast in progress!

But how is that possible? It has always been the case that in this place the legendary festivals have been lost since 130 years with the castle and the guild hall.

But what is seen here is true. I would never be able to lie to myself!

And I guess the roof of the guild hall stretches from the gable stumps to the right and left. In the light of the stars I also see the light brown roof tiles. The entire roof appears to be transparent, as if illuminated by a mysterious light from the inside. Above the gate with its flat arch is a dwarf house with a sharp return. Two windows with colored glass shimmer from within as well as from warm light.

To the left of the dwarf-house with the return, a light-gray stone figure crouches with steeply upwards stretched wings. Like an angel, this figure seems to me. As in a melancholy, the head bends into the arms that hold him, the angel seems to give himself in grief.

Then I realize how much further to the left of the brightly lit gate, with its flat half-arch, the stone guardian in his stone armor, with the stone sword stuck in the ground, appears in the darkness of the walls.

And then people emerge from the gate, many people with as many torches and lights in their hands. They are waving to me, as if I meant that they want to light the way for me.

Slowly settles on a step after the other the boots the body like a mechanical construct in a gently wobbling movement toward them.

I hear them calling, they are cheerful voices. No more doubt that the calls are mine. And that they are waving, that I should come closer to them.

People are both men and women. They wear a special clothing that looks like the ones on the pictures from longer times ago. In women, the wide-spread robes stand out from under the tight-fitting tops with their arms snapped open. Gloves made of the finest shiny satin range from the tips of the fingers to far above the elbow. The men as well as the women wear all the finest, carefully powdered wigs. The wigs of the men have a graceful, steeply downward braid with a fixed large dark loop.

They look at me in a very friendly manner, from white powdered faces, and carefully painted with black in the line of brows and eyelashes, and rouge on their cheeks.

They guide me steadily through the gate with its high flat half-arch.

In the hall behind the gate warm light is waiting for me. As right guessed, the bright light shines quietly from hundreds of talquetums in the glass panes of many chandeliers.

Imposing, the building is located within the very regular quarter of the castle. The trained eye of the geometer measures eighteen feet in height to the hall! The length is about forty-eight feet, and the breadth twenty-two.

The weathered companion from the smoky guest room from the "Golden Carriage" at the transshipment area of Diemrich had described it correctly. The knights and noblemen have arranged themselves really very commodious on the castle.

Really, the guild hall is equipped with the most magnificent, which is conceivable. The floor is covered with the finest parquet. In front of the tall and narrow windows with large glass panels of the clearest casting, folded red flounces of silk are piled up. From the flat, vaulted ceiling of dark stone plates hung bronze chains in two rows huge solid bronze candlesticks, actually number thirteen. On the respective ends of each of the six curved arms of each one there are shells formed of glass, each of which carries a softly flickering sounding light. Each of the chandeliers is fastened to the vaulted ceiling by a hook hidden by a very large shelf. On thick giant carpets from the distant Isfahan and Tabriz stands with dark red velvet-covered stools. On a half-sided side of one of the narrow sides of the emplacement of powerful oak beams, fifteen musicians play with the lutes and flutes. A tall, truly graceful statue of Athena slopes out of the corner. Most precious paintings of old masters decorate the wide fields of the walls.

It is also one of the most truly elevated parts of the crystal glass mirror, which is also most accurately described, and occupies the other narrow side of the hall, from almost one floor to almost under the ceiling.

On the parquet floor, following the melody of the flutes and lutes from the semi-lofty gallery of oak beams turn and tilt elegantly the couples in the forms of an ancient Gavotte.

Confused is the fingers of my hands tie at the big white bow around my neck as a random look on my belly that the white pleated shirt under the lilac brocade vest in the bright light of the many talquetums dark spots as from blood on the breast as arising from a considerable injury on the neck. The fact that this injury, which has not occurred to me in any case, has already taken place in the longer term, since the bloodshed in large, terribly many spots over the shirt has dried up as it has been for a long time sepia-colored clammy. Can the trembling fingers begin to feel that on the left side of the neck is a really terrifying wound, and that the hard edges are frayed.

The cold, damp, and stiff, the sepia-colored fabric of the pleated shirt is about to be placed around the breast. On the palms of the hand, cold, greasy spots of sepia are also visible. As the skin of the hands is growing more puzzling, pale and more than withered, it is almost cracked like a dead man!

Again and again I have before me the gently and benevolently looking glances of the many people in their peculiar robes and clothes and the whirling whiskers. Does one or the other of the gentlemen, with a measured movement of the outstretched arm, say to me a quiet call to participate in the joyful dance of the couples on the floor.



But for a long time my eyes no longer stare at the parquet or at the couples who are turning on it, let alone the swaying stairs in front of the velvety red silky flounces of the high windows, for on the other narrow side of the hall from a single piece of glass, almost from the floor to almost under the ceiling.

Exquisitely, the huge mirror reflects a delicate image of the hall. On the floor is to be seen the finest parquet. Toss the red pleats of silk in front of the high and narrow windows with their large glass panels of clearest cast iron. Hanging on the bronze chains in two rows the giant solid bronze chandeliers from the flat vaulted ceiling of dark stone plates is actually also thirteen in number. On the respective ends of each of the six curved arms of each one are the shells, formed of glass, which each carry within them their softly flickering talquetums. Each of the chandeliers is fastened to the vaulted ceiling by its hook, concealed by a very large shelf. On the thick giant carpets from the distant Isfahan and Tabris are the stools, covered with dark red velvet. Is also the half-sided on the meandering side located behind me to recognize from powerful oak beams. The high, truly graceful

traffic statue of Athena tends to emerge from the corner. The most precious paintings of the old masters adorn the wide fields of the walls.

Only where the many people in their peculiar dresses and robes, reminiscent of distant times, and their white powdered wigs, with the men's braids, steeply down and with a dark bow, must be portrayed, there is nothing! If the delicate surface is simply empty!

Slowly, the trembling body trudges on his boots, which now seem too heavy. Stare the wide-eyed eyes at the gently gleaming huge surface.

The arms with their stretched hands protrude. The coldness of the body, as like in death, makes the whole body stifle.

A cry of boundless horror, in the knowledge of what is happening, is going to be whimpering in the throat, which is burning like a fire.

For I too cannot be seen in the image of the mirror!