

LEHRER TEACHER

By

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Draft 11

Tuesday, 28 November 2017

FADE IN:

ESTABLISHING - BERLIN

EXT. BERLIN STREET - MORNING

Large apartment buildings rise above the street level. They tower over MARGARET as she walks down the street. The older German-style buildings of brick are painted with colorful murals on the sides. The sidewalk is cracked with every step. Most of the shops on the street level have rollladers, which are large metal shutters that cover windows, covering their windows. Margaret rushes past them.

Margaret, 22, wears high boots and a nice jacket. Her hair is pulled back, but wisps of it escapes. She claws them back. She has a large purse swung on her left shoulder, and she looks nervously at street signs while biting her lip: "Rosestrasse," "Orchideestrasse," "Edelweissstrasse," "Gänseblümchenstrasse."

Stopping for a second, Margaret looks at her phone and reads "Blumenstrasse." She peers left and right before moving quickly again down the street. She pushes past PEOPLE as they walk with headphones in.

EXT. BERLIN U-BAHN STATION - MORNING

The U-Bahn station is busy with many PEOPLE. The platform is off the ground, and the ground and railings are painted yellow. The HORN of the train comes, and people push forward. The yellow train comes into the station, and people push on.

Margaret runs up the stairs with a scared look, and she barely gets into the train.

INT. BERLIN U-BAHN TRAIN CAR - MORNING

The train inside has yellow, hard seats with different colored personal ads posted high. A large map is by the door, and it lights up with the next station.

Margaret is out of breath as she looks nervously at the people around her. PEOPLE stand by the doors and in the aisle. Walking forward, the train jerks forward, and Margaret trips and almost falls into the lap of a STRANGER. Margaret smiles sheepishly at the stranger.

MARGARET
(in broken German)
I'm sorry.

(CONTINUED)

Margaret continues to move forward in the slim train car, and she spots an open seat. People specifically stand around the open seat next to KHALID.

Khalid, late 50's, wears worker overalls with a name plate. His hands are dirty, and there is a smudge of grease on his nose. A backpack sits on his lap. His head looks down at the piece of paper in his hands. Khalid MUTTERS softly to himself.

Margaret stops in front of Khalid and pauses. Khalid glances up. He shifts over in his seat, and Margaret sits down next him.

Khalid glances up, staring to the front of the train, and he MUTTERS softly. Margaret peers over at him, and Khalid glances at her. He swallows and looks down at his lap again. He goes back to MUTTERING to himself.

AHMED, mid-20's, turns to Khalid. Ahmed wears the matching uniform of Khalid with work boots. His hair is put back, and he has a clean face. He throws a wrapper at Khalid, and Margaret jerks out of the way.

AHMED
(in Arabic)
Stop muttering. You look crazy.
(in German)
Hey, how are you?

Ahmed winks at Margaret, and Margaret stares at him, tilting her head to the side. Ahmed watches Margaret, and then he looks away, turning to one of his other friends. Margaret looks forward again. Khalid MUTTERS.

CUT TO:

INT. BERLIN U-BAHN TRAIN CAR - MORNING

Margaret moves through the moving train car, and she holds two large textbooks in her hands. She wears jeans and a nice shirt. Her hair is down today. Her large purse almost smacks SOMEONE in the face, but she pulls it back with a sympathetic smile.

Looking forward, Margaret notices there is only one open seat left open in this train car as PEOPLE crowd around. Margaret lightly pushes forward and sits next to Khalid.

Khalid MUTTERS to himself, glancing up to the front of the train quickly, and then he looks back to the piece of paper on his lap. He does this numerous times.

Ahmed turns to Margaret and smiles.

(CONTINUED)

AHMED

(in German)

Are you new here? Second day on the train. Berlin hasn't scared you away yet.

Margaret watches Ahmed while biting on her bottom lip. Her eyes narrow in on him as she tilts her head. Ahmed turns to Khalid. He throws a wrapper at Khalid.

AHMED

(in Arabic)

Khalid, you look crazy. Don't scare the new girl.

(in German)

Don't worry about Khalid. He's crazy, but he doesn't hurt anyone.

Margaret smiles nicely at Ahmed as she pulls out her own piece of paper and reads over it. Khalid continues on with his head bobbing.

CUT TO:

INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Margaret's apartment is small with barely a kitchen and a small bathroom. Her bed is pressed up against her desk, and an open suitcase waits on the floor. Clothes, books and other personal items are spread out.

Sitting down on her bed, Margaret opens her textbook.

MARGARET

(in German)

I'm sorry. Excuse me. Do you speak English? My German is not good. Can you help me please?

Margaret puts down the textbook and takes a bite of her dinner, which is currywurst and French fries.

MARGARET

(in German)

I'm sorry. Excuse me. Do you speak English? My German-- German is--

Margaret sighs and picks up her textbook again. She studies the page with her finger, and then she takes another bite of her food. A mayo-ketchup covered fry drops from her hand, and it splatters all over her book. Margaret lets out a GROAN and picks it up. She wipes the mixture off of her textbook with a napkin. Margaret continues to read.

CUT TO:

INT. BERLIN U-BAHN TRAIN CAR - MORNING

Margaret makes her way down the train car aisle, clutching her purse. Her sneakers and t-shirt does not fit in with the PEOPLE in suits around her.

Margaret sits down next to Khalid, who is again MUTTERING to himself. He has more grease on his face than usual. He runs his hand back through his greasy and whitening hair, and then he shakes his head.

Margaret pulls out her textbook and reads again.

CUT TO:

INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Coming into her apartment, Margaret steps out of her wet shoes and onto the cold tile floor. She pulls her wet hair into a ponytail, and she puts on a baggy sweatshirt that reads "University of St. Louis."

Margaret pulls out three hard rolls from her large bag and then some pasta. She sits down on her bed in her small apartment and pulls out her textbook. She reads.

MARGARET

(in broken German)

How are you? What is your favorite movie? Do you know-- know where the police station is? Do you speak English?

Margaret rips a bite off of her hard roll and reads.

CUT TO:

INT. BERLIN U-BAHN TRAIN CAR - MORNING

Margaret pulls her jacket around her body tightly as others do so. People's shoes SQUEAK against the floor. She pulls out a textbook out of her wet bag. Khalid has a paper flattened against his lap, and he stares directly forward. Margaret opens the book.

The U-Bahn train jerks to an immediate stop, and both of them rocket forward. Khalid's papers falls to the ground. People GROAN around them. Khalid reaches forward for his sheet. She picks it up, and it is soaking wet. Khalid looks sadly at the piece of paper.

(CONTINUED)

MARGARET
(in German)
I'm sorry.

KHALID
(in German)
Everything is good.

Khalid takes the piece of paper and flattens it against his lap again, his holey backpack getting wet too. He squints at it. A lot of the writing is blotched now.

Giving up, he crumbles up his piece of paper and places it next to him. Khalid stares outside the window at all the buildings that past.

Margaret goes back to reading her textbook.

KHALID
(in German)
Can I get out?

Margaret watches him, and he stares at her. Khalid stands and tries to walk past her, and finally Margaret moves. The train jerks to a stop, and Khalid exits.

A MAN steps beside Margaret and motions for her to move in. She does. A piece of paper CRUMPLES as she sits on it, and Margaret picks it up and reads it.

CUT TO:

INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Margaret takes off her wet jacket and shoes, and she pulls out her textbook from her big bag and her dinner. Walking over to her bed, Margaret sits down and pulls out a notebook. She opens the textbook to reveal Khalid's piece of paper, which is now dry but is blotched from the water. Carefully Margaret writes on a new piece of paper what Khalid had written.

CUT TO:

INT. BERLIN U-BAHN TRAIN CAR - MORNING

Walking down the train car aisle, Margaret wears a sweater while other PEOPLE on the train wear heavy jackets. She notices the open seat next to Khalid, and with a shy smile on her face, she sits down next to him.

(CONTINUED)

Margaret pulls her bag closer to her as Khalid stares down at his new sheet of paper. She carefully glances over his shoulder to see that it barely a quarter full. Margaret pulls out the sheet she created for him, and she placed it on her lap.

MARGARET
(in German)
Excuse me.

Slowly, Khalid turns to her.

MARGARET
(in broken German)
Yesterday your sheet was wet. I
made you a new one.

Khalid takes the sheet from her outstretched hands and looks over the sheet of paper. A smile crosses his face.

KHALID
You know English?

MARGARET
(in broken German)
I am American. My German isn't very
good.

KHALID
English is not good. Thank you for
this.

MARGARET
I added a few things on there.

KHALID
Thank you. Why are you here?

MARGARET
University.

KHALID
(in German)
I tell Ahmed all the time he should
go to university, but he doesn't
listen. We come to Germany for a
better life, and he doesn't even go
to get it.

Margaret watches him very intently, her eyes on his lips, with her head tilted to the side. Khalid's eyes become wide and his mouth opens. He holds up his new piece of paper.

KHALID

Thank you. You study German?

MARGARET

Yes. I try.

KHALID

You help me with English, I help you with German?

MARGARET

Yes.

KHALID

(in German)

Let's start.

Margaret pulls out her textbook, and Khalid pulls out more of his sheets of paper. An excited smile is on his face as he points to a thing on his sheet, and Margaret looks over his finger.

CUT TO:

INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Margaret takes off her sweater and removes her shoes. Sitting down on her bed, Margaret takes out her dinner and then she takes out her textbook. By passing that, she takes out a fresh sheet of paper with Khalid's writing on it.

MARGARET

(in German)

I have that thing, do you want it?
I like Germany because it is beautiful and the people are friendly. My favorite place is the Tier Garten. In my opinion, I think that that is a good idea. My German is good if you give me a minute to answer.

Margaret leans over and takes a bite of her currywurst. She waits until she is done chewing before she moves back over to Khalid's sheet to read aloud again.

FADE OUT: