

A
LETTER
FROM
Munich
A JACK BAILEY NOVEL

MEG LELVIS



Black Rose Writing | Texas

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For my sister, *Carole*
&
In loving memory of our mother, *Renate*

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MacDonough, Giles. *After the Reich*. Basic Books, 2007.

Sunstein, Cass R. "It Can Happen Here." *The New York Review* 28 June 2018: pp.64-65. Print.

Munich Documentation Center for the History of National Socialism. Munich, Germany.

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OTHER BOOKS BY MEG LELVIS:

BAILEY'S LAW

BLIND EYE

More than kisses letters mingle souls.

~John Donne~

Letters are among the most significant memorial
a person can leave behind them.

~Johann Wolfgang von Goethe~

TODAY

Without the letter they never would have known. The letter discovered by accident. Or was it meant to be found?

Addressed to their father, delicate vellum, crinkled, musty. Postmarked München 14.7.46. Stuffed in the frayed cardboard box, hidden within long-forgotten war relics. Did he forget to destroy it so many years ago?

Pale blue, nearly white, scalloped edges, translucent. Flowery script with sufficient English words so he could understand.

Who can answer the questions of fairness, decency, good faith? Better to unravel the truth and hurt some? Or lock the truth in your soul and deny others a right to know?

Then again..... 'No legacy is so rich as honesty.'

And it was all about the legacy, wasn't it?

Germany, 1930s

The horror crept toward us slowly, stealthily. Unnoticed, it emerged through shadows of green forests, lakes, even lilacs. Soon it transformed from beauty, health, strength, power. Campfires, songs, but most of all pride. Only Papa knew. He knew, and it cost him his life

At first our awareness began with him. Then our friends. Then the schools. Then the girls camp. We lived under a deepening shadow. But we didn't know.

We were the Schröders, an ordinary German family, two boys, two girls, Papa a dentist. We lived near Munich in the peaceful village of Dachau.

Flowers bloomed in every yard on our street. Oh, the blue cornflowers were exquisite. And the lilacs. Their perfume filled the air.

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I am Renate. I was only five when it began. My best friend, Judith, lived down the block in a big two-story home. We played with our dolls, went on picnics, swam, and rowed in her father's boat on Karlsfelder See. Her dolls were nicer than mine. My sister, Ariana and I had one Kestner porcelain doll. Judith had five.

Judith's father was our doctor until one day Papa said we had to find a new one. *But why can't we keep going to Dr. Friedman?* Papa didn't answer. After that we had to go to Dr. Schmidt, whose office was farther away past our school and across Meer bridge. But we still played with Judith, so I didn't think much about it.

Until later.

CHAPTER 1

Munich, June 2012

Jack Bailey did not believe in fate, but the invitation to visit Germany could be an omen. A silent voice niggled at his brain. *You must investigate the letter.* The letter he thought would remain a secret he and his brother would take to their grave.

He arrived in Munich with his friend, Karl Scherkenbach, nicknamed Sherk, whose extended family lived in the area. Jack had jumped at the chance to accompany him on his yearly trip overseas to visit his relatives. He would tell Sherk the real reason later.

The next evening, Jack had recovered from jet lag and was settling in for the night. Cool summer air floated through an open window of the comfortable guest room in Sherk's family vacation home. After he popped a couple Ambien to avoid insomnia that plagued him for years, he lay on the bed's overly firm mattress staring at stark white walls offset by two Georgia O'Keeffe-type large prints of purple and yellow flowers. Colors blurred as he let his thoughts drift back in time.

• • • • •

Two months ago, Jack had abruptly quit his job as a detective with Chicago's Police Department, after coping with a difficult sergeant and frustrating, never-ending bureaucracy. However, he could well afford the Germany trip, thanks to a recent windfall from his former father-in-law's estate. Do him good to get away. Besides, Sherk had been his loyal partner in the department for two years, a burden not everyone could bear. Jack, described by many as a rugged Liam Neeson look-alike, had not mellowed with age. He'd often overheard co-workers mumbling to Sherk. *Don't know how you put up with Bailey, man.*

Last month Jack phoned his older brother, Tommy. "I'm going to Munich with Sherk. We leave in June for a couple weeks."

Tommy had nodded, paused. "You gotta do it, Jack. As long as you'll be in Munich, take the letter. It may be our only chance."

Now the time had come. He was counting on Sherk's fluent German to help unravel the decades-old question posed in the letter. But he'd have to tell him about it first.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Meg Elvis grew up in northern Minnesota and taught English and psychology in Houston and Dallas. Her fiction and poetry have won awards from Houston Writers Guild and Houston Writers House. Her first novel, *Bailey's Law*, won the 2017 Maxy Award for best mystery. Meg's second Bailey novel, *Blind Eye*, won Maxy Award's second place for best mystery in 2018.

A Letter from Munich is her third novel. Meg resides in Houston with her husband and two dogs.

NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

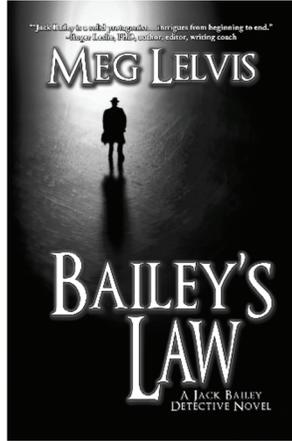
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Thanks!

Meg

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Bailey's Law by Meg Lelvis



“An intelligent, immersive police procedural that will leave you pining
for another Jack Bailey novel.”
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