

Text of German original:

<http://www.ndrinfo.de/programm/sendungen/muttersschatten102.pdf>

**OST (= original soundtrack)**

**Mother on answering machine:**

Hello, Mother speaking. I'm still absolutely lost, no idea where I am. But Nurse'll tell you. (*Rustling noise, nurse in background unintelligible*) Well, he knows where I am. She just told me so. But I haven't heard from you. Do give me a ring! Still trying to figure out how I ended up here, I just haven't a clue. Bye!!!

**Announcement:** Mother's Shadow. Clean-Sweeping the Parental Home.

A documentary by Lorenz Rollhäuser.

**Atmo: outside, then key, footsteps in the house...**

**OST L:** My parents' house... Everything's dark... Must switch the light on first... The living-room... It always looked like this...

**Speaker:** Nothing's the way it used to be. Dark and quiet, this house in Münster: Father died four years ago, Mother has been staying at a nursing home since her stroke.

Only the furniture is there, as usual staring at me gravely and gloomily, heirlooms from my maternal grandmother, attempting to bear witness to classy descent and old money: the huge Baroque cupboard presiding over the living-room and next to it the Gothic vestry cupboard, the immense value of which Mother never failed to point out to us.

***Atmo: inside, sound electric blinds***

**OST L:** The blinds are down. I'll pull them up first thing...

**You:** Those last few years when it was impossible to ignore that all this would end soon, Mother kept asking uneasily, what you planned to do with these family treasures once she was gone. Your answer was always as prompt as it was hurtful:

**Speaker:** Sell it, Mother! Sell it!

**You:** She used to swallow hard then - and turn silent. You begrudged her trying to keep control beyond death. Not realising that her power would end once and for all.

***Atmo cupboard-door***

**Speaker:** Under no circumstances did she want to go to a nursing home. She was adamant. Although in the end she was virtually blind, wobblier and wobblier on her legs, and ever more timid. Her old confidence was barely enough for keeping up appearances. Even during the day she started to lock the doors in the house. Always afraid of burglars, dreadfully worried about all those precious items she had to safeguard. In the end it wasn't a burglary but a stroke that broke her domestic routine.

***Atmo knocking, rummaging: Visiting Mother***

**OST Nurse:** Hello?

**OST L:** Hello Mother!

**OST Mother:** God! I'd almost given up hope.

**OST L:** You were going to get up?

**OST Mother:** Yes, I was. Want to dress and leave.

**OST L:** Where do you want to go?

**OST Mother:** Well, that's the question. Either stay at this hotel or go to another one.

**Speaker:** Visiting Mother. She can't walk, during the day she sits in her wheelchair. Not even physiotherapy will get her out of it now. And she has realised she cannot go back to her house. Once, in a clear moment she

mentioned wanting to move to Berlin, close to me.

**You:** You were surprised, taken aback at first, but then you gave in.

**Speaker:** That's what happens when parents get old.

**You:** And you'd already found a nursing home and put a few pieces of her furniture in her room. Still, she desperately looks for the key.

**OST Mother:** I won't manage.

**OST L:** Well, to open a door all you usually have to do is press down the handle.

**OST Mother:** True enough, but apart from that.

**OST L:** But nothing's locked up here.

**OST Mother:** It is. The door is locked.

**OST L:** The door here has never been locked. And it won't ever be.

**You:** Sometimes you find her totally insecure. Nothing left of her old power and domineering ways.

**OST Mother:** Well then, I haven't noticed it.

**You:** You find yourself in the new role of trying to calm her.

**OST L:** But it upset you anyway.

**OST Mother:** Yes, very much so. And I've been fiddling with it, for two days now, and I can't make it work.

**OST L:** Opening the door?

**OST Mother:** Yes.

**OST L:** But there's no key here, Mother.

**OST Mother:** Yes, there is.

**OST L:** No.

**OST Mother:** No?

**OST L:** You think you're in Münster?

**OST Mother:** I don't know...

**OST L:** Yes, yes, yes.

**OST Mother:** No, no, no, I don't think so.

**OST L:** But you know where you are?

**OST Mother:** (Laughs) At this moment I do.

**OST L:** Where then?

**OST Mother:** In, er, Berlin.

**OST L:** Yes, that's right.

**OST Mother:** That's almost always the right answer now.

### **At the house**

#### ***Atmo cupboard door***

**OST L:** Cupboards, full, vases, china, glass...

**You:** Change of roles, change of places. Suddenly you have to take care of the house in Münster that you never wanted anything to do with.

#### ***Atmo cupboard-door***

**Speaker:** For decades the picture was the same whenever I came to Klausener Street: Father was sitting on the left-hand side of the light-coloured living room suite, cigarette in hand, the newspaper beside him, each time a bit more slumped down.

**OST L:** Locked drawers...

**Speaker:** Mother lying on another part of the sofa, under a warm blanket. Opposite them the inevitable TV set, louder from year to year.

**OST L:** Anyway, at least you can open the door now occasionally...

#### ***Atmo terrace door***

**You:** On entering the house you were always overwhelmed by the urge to throw open the window. To let in fresh air. Your parents didn't

understand. But it was rather symbolic anyway.

***Atmo cars from afar***

**Speaker:** Now nobody complains about a draught. I can move about undisturbed, without Mother's eyes in the back of my neck, her footsteps behind me, her notorious questions: what did I want to eat or drink; how was the journey; and of course how long I'd stay? Which of course was never long enough.

***Atmo footsteps***

**Speaker:** Just the sound of my footsteps.

**You:** Eery?

**Speaker:** Perhaps a little.

**You:** Sentimental?

**Speaker:** Hardly that. Rather chilly. I never felt at home in this house. My parental home maybe, but more my parents' house. In 1966, when we moved in, I was thirteen, and even back then I felt drawn away from it, to other places. Not because a veteran from the war had established his private regime of terror like in some friends' families. But I felt the pressure of the performance expectations, the parental ideas about education and good manners, caught in the narrow directives of a bourgeois culture that claimed unlimited validity until 1968.

***Atmo fountain, city...***

**Speaker:** I withdrew, became a refugee. By fourteen I spent whole afternoons in the city, aimlessly loafing.

**You:** Nobody told you not to...

**Speaker:** At Radio Hüffer's looking for the latest albums...

**You:** ... for which you didn't have any money...

**Speaker:** ... warming up in Karstadt's furniture department with their big Carrera Track, heading to the snackbar to play table football or just hanging out somewhere...

**You:** ... smoking your first cigarettes.

**Speaker:** The best place for hanging out then was right in the city centre: the Lamberti Fountain, in the shadow of the iron cages, in which a few centuries ago the Bishop of Münster exhibited the rebellious Anabaptists after their execution. Replicas of those cages still hang high on the steeple today as a warning to all who don't submit to order. In the late sixties the fountain became the refuge for those who couldn't stand it at home; who resisted order; who hadn't any plans, just dreams.

***Atmo fountain, street***

**OST Le:** The loafers' fountain was the meeting point, wasn't it?

**OST G:** There were no cafés...

**OST Ma:** After school...

**OST G:** ... there were lots of churches...

**OST Ma:** ... dead sure off to the fountain...

**OST G:** ... and only the fountain.

**OST Le:** ... because you could get pot there, of course, and you met girls there, too.

**OST J:** Going home after school to mother with her silly dinners and such wasn't where the action was, right?

**OST Ma:** That's why you knew terribly many people, because they all came together there.

**OST Axel:** A network of people that's really rather neuronal. That happens in the heads. That happens via music. That doesn't spring from, let's say university education and such, but that came from – fuck it! – smoking joints together.

***Music Hendrix: Have you ever been (to Electric Ladyland)***

**OST H:** The first bloke I slept with was also from the fountain. I thought he looked as beautiful as a dream and somehow I managed (laughs) to get to know him... and then it happened at night on the meadows of Lake Aa... There were other people there, too, and someone might have tripped over us, and we could bare ourselves just enough to make sex possible (laughs) ... But then, when we met the next time on a Saturday at the fountain, he slipped me a package with the Pill... which I didn't understand, because we already had had sex, but he probably didn't know any better, and then I saw he had a very pretty blonde by his side, and then I thought: okay, that's it then. Hm. That's the way it went. (Laughs)

***Music Hendrix off, atmo fountain, street, bells in the background***

**Speaker:** The fountain still bubbles today, unchanged, the lime tree is also still next to it, and so is the colonnade that sheltered us from the rain. Even the small stamp shop has survived. But no one meets at the Lamberti Fountain today. No more than at the Tchibo coffee shop around the corner, where with all those pyjamas and lingerie there's hardly any room left for bar tables. Even at the episcopal shop under the colonnades everything has changed: Where devotional objects used to be offered for sale in gloomy chambers, sandwich boards now advertise the concerns of the Catholic Church in brightly lit rooms. Making an effort to present themselves as modern and cosmopolitan.

**You:** It was different in those days: You only had to let your hair grow long enough, dig out an ancient coat of granny's or grandpa's and slip into garish trousers. Or go barefoot. Or as a girl, smoke in the street. That drew scowling looks. And comments. And you could feel so different from all those silly squares. Nice trap.

**OST P:** Anyway, this hanging outside, standing outside, that was a scandal per se. Well, walking through Münster today, everything has seating provided by some restaurant proprietor or other, it's nearly impossible to sit down anywhere in Münster without somehow having to order a coffee. Back then it was simply scandalous just to hang out in public for any amount of time.

#### ***Atmo staircase in the house***

**OST L:** Now one can go upstairs here ...

**Speaker:** Now I've got everything to myself: a detached house, all brick, framed by a lawn, two storeys inside, cellar, loft, crammed full of things, with memories, junk.

**OST L:** And here's even more stuff... A huge old wardrobe...

**Speaker:** Nobody's tidied up here for decades, not cleared anything out.

**OST L:** Huge piles of old bed linen...

**Speaker:** One wonders how many little houses in this country look like this?

**OST L:** Pillow-slips... (Wardrobe door screeches.)

**Speaker:** The traumatic years of war and hunger made messies out of hundreds of thousands of Germans. Clearing out is the next generation's job.

#### ***Atmo wardrobe door ...***

**Speaker:** To rummage around in everything, to be confronted with our past and always having to decide – out with it or keep it – that's our job now. But

my brother lives abroad and can't come until a couple of weeks from now.

**OST L:** (Open door) My mother's room... I never entered it... (Open wardrobe) Skirts, dresses, full! ... (Clattering) Yikes ... (Clattering)

**Speaker:** My mother also liked hanging out in the city, though not at the fountain, but in the pertinent shops. The bargain-hunter's logic: if shoes only cost 98 instead of 149 marks, she's saved more than 50 marks. That's how these wardrobes were filled.

**You:** You were completely opposed to this. You wanted old shabby gear, no ready-mades off the rack. You were anti-consumerists, anyway.

**OST L:** (Sliding door) ... Jackets, blouses...

**Speaker:** Perhaps we just guessed the disappointment behind consumerism becoming a pastime, what lack of love and love of life.

**You:** You felt superior.

**OST L:** Yet more soap. My God, why did she collect so much soap? ... (Atmo rummaging...)

**Speaker:** In any case, no one was supposed to look too closely behind the bourgeois façade. Not at our home either. Or else one might have wondered about the separate parental bedrooms, all that whisky with which Father kept his spirits up and all those pills Mother popped; one might have seen the unadmitted sadness in their eyes behind their confident appearance. After all we were fine. Whatever that was supposed to mean.

**OST L:** My mother's underwear... (Clattering, rummaging, ticking of alarm-clock)

**You:** Early memory:

**Speaker:** When I was little, about four or five, my mother often asked me to give her a massage.

**You:** Eventually you started to find it embarrassing.

**Speaker:** I also remember she later occasionally mentioned having career plans for me:  
I was to become a gynaecologist.

**You:** You found that embarrassing, too.

**Speaker:** Only very late it dawned on me how lonely she was in her heart. And that she  
confused a few things in her loneliness.

### **Young man with his mother**

**OST Mother:** Today a strange young man came. Washed me. And put cream on me  
where it was necessary. That's a municipal service, I suppose, that has  
everybody washed regularly. I didn't know that. And he did it very  
nicely...

**OST L:** Someone about to burst in here all of a sudden?

**OST Mother:** Yes. Someone in white. And very friendly. I thought it must be okay.  
(Laughs) I didn't know him after all. And then he started to undress me.  
Somehow it does feel funny, but I'm used to it by now. God, well, what  
does he get to see? Old women! Nothing exciting. Those days are gone  
for good I suppose.

**You:** You're only too happy you're not stuck looking after her. Because ever  
since your childhood you only had very limited physical contact, hardly  
more than a little hug when you met.

**OST Mother:** What are you up to?

**OST L:** I've got my microphone here, I want to record you once again.

**OST Mother:** I see!

**OST L:** Yes.

**OST Mother:** Before I've turned into a vegetable.

**OST L:** I don't think you're turning into a vegetable.

**OST Mother:** Well, okay. But I do.

**OST L:** Do you? Why?

**OST Mother:** Well, all this being alone all the time. And having nothing reasonable to do... (Rustling) What's this?

**OST L:** Those are ginger sticks. Would you like one?

**OST Mother:** Yes, please.

**OST L:** I'll get one out for you then. (Rustling...)

***Change of atmo: inside the house***

**OST L:** (Wardrobe door) Yikes. Nothing was ever (door clatters) thrown away. (Door screeches) Drawers, 6, 7 drawers, ties. neck-ties, silk neck-ties ... (clattering, rummaging, rustling) ... scarves...

**Speaker:** Mother was strictly achievement-oriented, did her doctorate in biology, but then submitted to convention and devoted herself to the children and housekeeping. While Father pursued his university career, she suffered from being a housewife, always remained tensed up and restless. No sport or activity helped. She used to complain incessantly about insomnia, backache, headache.

**OST L:** Even more silk cloths...

**Speaker:** I remember how my brother once interrupted her litany at dinner quite wryly with "Why don't you have them freeze you!" I'll never forget the following seconds of bewilderment, the deathly silence at the table. Until my father regained control and gave my brother a dressing-down.

**OST L:** (Clattering) Belts, woollens... full, too. (Clattering, sliding door) There was this craze... If you've got enough wardrobes...

***Atmo doorbell, auctioneer arrives***

**Speaker:** Until my brother comes, I'll start clearing out the house... And now down

to serious business.

**OST L:** Good day!

**OST auctioneer:** Good day, Mr Rollhäuser!

**OST L:** Do come in!

**Speaker:** I've hired an auctioneer.

**You:** All the things she cherished until the end, which were never appraised, you want to turn into cash.

**OST Auctioneer:** Perhaps we could just tick everything off, go through everything and then we'll do a tabula rasa. Okay?...

**Speaker:** He's allowed himself half an hour to get an overview.

**OST Auctioneer:** Starting here, I can always do it like this, opening drawers and so on, that's important. (Opens cupboard) Right, spring lock, okay ...

**Speaker:** His expert eye wanders here and there, a lot of things he just ignores. And indeed he only has to shoot a quick cold glance, and the things reveal their market-price. A little less than an hour is all he needs for the whole house.

**OST Auctioneer:** You skim over it, but I notice what's relevant.

**OST L:** What about it?

**Speaker:** The huge vestry cupboard dating back to the 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> century he hardly deigned to look at...

**OST Auctioneer:** Built from old parts. There might be a few old pieces among them...

**Speaker:** ... two carved female figures on the sides, the door panels depict pilgrims in prayer...

**OST Auctioneer:** Such a panel as this one could be older, this one here... okay, okay, okay...

**You:** ... your old-age insurance...

**OST Auctioneer:** Even these aren't old...

**Speaker:** ... considered an imitation. It's not worth hundreds of thousands, only just about a few hundred euros...

**OST Auctioneer:** Okay, but I'll just open this as well...

***Atmo cupboard door***

**Speaker:** Just as well my mother will never know.

**OST Auctioneer:** Well, well, nothing old. The figures are older, the figures I'd date back to around 1860. Mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

**Speaker:** So Grandfather was cheated...

**OST Auctioneer:** ... in early Gothic style...

**Speaker:** ... and ever since the legend of the Gothic treasure has gone around in the family. The auctioneer doesn't want this treasure at any cost.

**OST Auctioneer:** 1880, 1890.

**OST L:** Okay.

**Speaker:** And all the other stuff? No treasures here either. Ten years ago the old furniture would have fetched double the price. However, along with the educated middle class a whole era of period furniture peters out, the market is inundated with so-called antiques that obviously aren't in demand any more: one surrounds oneself with other things. Who wants to let one's life be overshadowed by dark cupboards? Who still hangs up Delft plates on the wall? Or etchings of cities? All that serious representative art the bourgeoisie likes to surround itself with.

**OST Auctioneer:** All stuff is yesterday's vogue, today it's nothing in particular...

**Speaker:** Under the auctioneer's unbribable gaze the value of the expected inheritance melts away like snow in the tropical sun.

**You:** Actually it's only fair. Weren't you the ones who were longing for the end of the bourgeoisie, who declined to take its self-stagings seriously? Who only saw the square, the hypocrisy, the arrogance? Remember your parents cancelled their silver wedding because you wouldn't relent from wearing a worn smoking jacket over a pink wool sweater. Which they -- not without justification -- considered a mockery of their values.

**OST Auctioneer:** The whole clientele has changed, er, the whole market has changed.

It's just that these are typical things, these households like this one, there are masses of them, we belong to the generation of heirs, so much is being left, and the next generation, for which your brother and you are an example, you don't want these things any more.

**You:** However, in the back of your head you've speculated on windfall wealth.

**OST Auctioneer:** It's another taste today! A different group of buyers! Quite another awareness! They move through the world in a different way, have a different outlook on these things... No, there's nothing left.

**You:** Anyway, wasn't your whole revolt in the sign of the security that your parental home promised you? Wasn't your whole life-plan a product of the 70s, when you could live your life carefree from economic pressures, formed in the knowledge that you couldn't ever really slip?

**OST Auctioneer:** Talk it over with your brother, I've seen the things, when you know what you want, just give me a ring, we'll talk about it and make the necessary arrangements.

**You:** And you should have enough social awareness left to understand the essence of inheriting: to secure the unjust distribution of social wealth

even to the next generation. Meaning exactly what you always were opposed to.

### **On the train with brother**

#### ***Atmo train***

**OST L:** We're on our way to our parents' house, Brother – how do you feel?

**Speaker:** A few weeks later my older brother and I are going to Münster.

**OST A:** Pretty mixed. I only lived in this house for about three years, but all this time it's been a touchstone for me. There were our parents, there was our parents' home, there was also the knowledge that if something went wrong. I've got people there who may not understand me, but who'd always stand by me in some form or other. Who'd support me. No matter what. That's gone forever. It weighs me down.

**Speaker:** We've taken a few weeks off to clear the house, clearing, disposing and selling off what the auctioneer didn't take away. Not since our childhood have we spent so much time with each other.

**OST A:** I think we'll manage if we handle each other carefully. Anyway, I feel a lump in my throat just thinking about the time we're spending in Münster now. There's some sort of cramp in my throat. And, um, that I'm touchy. Perhaps it'll all be easier than I imagine just now, I don't know. I'm rather curious. But true enough, I'm a bit frightened.

***Atmo announcement German Railway: ... Wir verabschieden uns von unseren Fahrgästen, die aussteigen und danken für die Reise mit der Deutschen Bahn, auf Wiedersehen! Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for travelling with Deutsche Bahn, good bye!***

**Speaker:** I'm still not afraid. But I want to make good use of the time in Münster, re-thinking my rebellion against the parental home. My wild years from 15 to 20.

***Atmo sound door-handle ... Footsteps in the hall: Seeing Gertruden Street***

**Speaker:** Münster. Gertruden Street. Four names on the top nameplate. Obviously a commune.

***Atmo door falling shut behind us ...***

**OST Mo:** It's still exactly the same, eh? Don't you see? Unchanged?

**Sound Going upstairs**

**Speaker:** One of the names I found in the directory and I phoned beforehand. The young man on the phone said: No problem, you can drop in and have a look at the flat.

**OST Mo:** That always used to be dirty... (Footsteps)

**Speaker:** I brought two friends from those days.

**OST L:** Hello... (Footsteps.)

**OST Michael:** Hello!

**OST Mo:** Hello. Elisabeth...

**OST Martin:** Hello...

**OST L:** May we come in?

**OST Michael:** Certainly.

**OST L:** Super.

**OST Mo:** Oh, the long corridor. Oh! (Laughter)

**OST Michael:** How long ago is it now?

**OST Mo:** 40 years.

**OST Martin:** Almost 40 years. Yes...

**OST L:** You live right in the back?

**OST Michael:** I do, right in the back...

**OST L:** I see, okay.

**OST Mo:** You're practically in the hippie room...(Laughter) You didn't know that, did you?

**OST Michael:** No, I didn't. (Laughter)

**OST Mo:** The political scene was here. Really hardcore.

**OST Martin:** Sunny lived in this room. And next door Ecki and, um, ...

**OST Mo:** Stiebitz.

**OST Martin:** Rüdiger Stiebitz, yes.

**OST Mo:** Then the hardcore politicians ... were a little sequestered.

***Music Can (in the background): Mary So Contrary***

**OST Martin:** In the flat next door a students' commune used to have a room. Where really awful debates were going on...

**OST Mo:** I wasn't allowed to come.

**OST Martin:** And then things were supposed to be serious, Volker refused to listen to music, that led to a huge row, he freaked out and hurled a candle onto the record-player... (Laughter)

**OST Mo:** That's something I never heard of. We usually just went to Ike's room, see? (Footsteps) ...

**Speaker:** The pothead scene met in 1969 in this attic room. Nearly everyone still lived with their parents, and who really felt like standing at the fountain till your legs went numb?

***Music slowly increasing volume***

**OST Mo:** The kitchen, yes... I see.

**OST L:** You live where the commune used to live.

**OST Mo:** Münster's first commune.

**OST Michael:** I see.

**OST Mo:** It wasn't all that big, was it?

**OST Martin:** Tiny.

**OST Mo:** Dear me, what a tiny room! The scenes that were played here! ... I suppose it was crammed every day, eh?...

**OST Martin:** There was a circle of mattresses, and then everybody sat down. (Laughter)

**OST Mo:** Exactly. And the important thing was listening to music, eh?

**OST Martin:** Right on.

**Music free choice, accompanied by atmo people: talking, laughter ... then music fading away.**

**Speaker:** I became part of the pothead scene in the spring of '69. That was three months after Jimi Hendrix's live performance in Münster.

**You:** Wild Hendrix, what a wonderful contrast to your proper little world.

**Speaker:** I'd gone to Holland on the backseat of a friend's Vespa, two days over Easter, to the seaside. On the way back we stopped in Amsterdam. There I ran into some superficial acquaintances from the fountain.

**You:** You let the others return without you and stayed.

**Speaker:** We spent the night at the Paradiso, in a church that had been rededicated to a concert hall and now served as a meeting point for the growing hippie scene. I smoked my first joint with a lightshow and psychedelic music. At night we slept in the Dam, Amsterdam's central square, at the foot of the memorial to the Dutch victims during World War II.

**You:** But you didn't give a damn about history then.

**Music Can: Mary So Contrary**

**Speaker:** Back in Münster I started visiting Gertruden Street. I was fifteen, everything was dead exciting. I remember covered-up windows and candlelight, music by Bob Dylan and Can, jasmine tea and joss sticks.

A new vocabulary came into use then, to put the new experiences into words: flip out, turned on, freak out, mad, crazy, awfully and horror...

Now we're in the same room, feeling strangely moved:

**OST M:** It was occupied by politicians and hippies, like.

**OST Mo:** And we wanted it peaceful. But we also helped the students once, during this night-time raid, when we had to stick all those little bills up: "Destroy what destroys you!" That was a raid that originated from here, then they were stuck all over the place.

*Music free choice and ending, then footsteps in the hall, knocking at mother's ...  
Italian*

**OST L:** Hello!

**OST Mother:** Aaaaahhhh! A cry of joy!

**OST L:** Hello Mother!

**OST Mother:** Everything's a mess here. Topsy-turvy.

**OST L:** Really? Why?

**OST Mother:** Quite awful. Well, I kind of got engaged to an Italian in the meantime, but I'll call that off. And then we'll see about a wedding and what wedding and so on. Not a clue.

**OST Mother:** And then, eh, (breathes) well, it's not really a bad thing, nothing in particular, but for me it's still a huge step in life.

**OST L:** I agree you getting engaged to an Italian is a major decision.

**OST Mother:** So it is. (Laughs). Financially he's quite well off. He owns a shop for men's fashion, in Modena, I believe, and, um, he travels a lot. I haven't a clue what to do. All at once I was so alone.

**OST L:** Yes, and now you're not so sure any more.

**OST Mother:** Yes, absolutely.

**OST L:** I can understand that. (Giggle)

**OST Mother:** Even at my age one does such stupid things.

**Speaker:** First Mother was totally down because she could not bear to depend on

help from strangers, now her humour is shining through again.

**OST Mother:** Rubbish.

**OST L:** Well, I'll say, I'm going to fetch the nurse to help you get up.

**OST Mother:** Yes.

**OST L:** Okay?

**OST Mother:** That's what he usually does. And he washed me today. Well, I'm clean. Actually I don't need anyone. I'd changed and then I'd snuggled in here again. What am I to do?

**Speaker:** Now it dawns on me that she has incorporated the friendly male nurse with the Italian Christian name into her dreams.

**OST Mother:** I didn't see a chance of looking for a job here or such like.

**OST L:** And you don't have to look for a job, Mother. How old are you?

**OST Mother:** (breathes) How old am I now? Born in 22 ... meaning?

**OST L:** You tell me!

**OST Mother:** Just do your math!

**OST L:** No, you tell me.

**OST Mother:** I can't.

**OST L:** Just roughly – how old do you think you are?

**OST Mother:** Early forties or so.

**OST L:** No, no, no, you're 85, Mother!

**OST Mother:** 85?

**OST L:** Yes.

**OST Mother:** Oh dear me!

**OST L:** And do you know where you are?

**OST Mother:** Yes, I do. In Italy.

**OST L:** No, you're in Berlin.

**OST Mother:** That's right, I'm in Berlin. That's what I keep telling myself. During the

day. When I'm in the city or something.

**OST L:** I think you were dreaming just now, quite a lot. About Italy. Okay?

**OST Mother:** No, that's been going on for days.

**OST L:** With that Italian?

**OST Mother:** Yes... But there's no commitment emotionally. Not at all. Well, you'll see him later... Money he's got enough. Or so he says. I don't know. But he doesn't work much. More often than not he's got time.

**OST L:** Well, isn't that nice.

**OST Mother:** Yes, it is.

**OST L:** Yes, I suppose you dreamt a damn lot, Mother.

**OST Mother:** Possibly.

**OST L:** But now I'll bring you back to Berlin a little.

**OST Mother:** Yes.

**OST L:** Yes? Even if it's not as beautiful as Italy, I can see that.

**OST Mother:** Yes, no, just do it! We mustn't lose sight of reality.

**OST L:** No ... Okay? Fine, I'll fetch the nurse to get you ready.

**OST Mother:** Yes. (Leaving, door...)

**Dealer**

**OST Telephone collage :** (Ringing) Yes, hello! – This is Lorenz. – Lorenz? Hello. – Hello Lorenz!

**Speaker:** While my mother jets off to Italy, I keep on travelling back to my past.

**OST Telephone collage :** Do you remember me? – You do? That's amazing! - Yes.  
- Hello! – How are you? – Yes, I remember you. – Well, what a surprise. – Is it really you? – Are you in Münster? – You are in Münster? - Yes, but how do I get there? How

did you get the number? – You're in Münster? – Well, I never! I just thought I couldn't trust my ears! (Laughs) As you can probably imagine.

**Speaker:** I left Münster in 1979. Now I meet people I haven't seen since.

**OST L:** What do you remember about me?

**OST G:** (Laughs) Ah, you once sold me a joint...

**You:** Some parts of your adolescence are still embarrassing for you.

**OST G:** Well, when you rang, that was the first thing I remembered, and I was really quite young then. I was about 16, on Lake Aa, I still remember that, but I didn't exactly know how much it was, it was about the price, wasn't it? And you said: Well, how much do you think it is? And then I just said something, hm, and then I paid 12 marks or something, didn't I? Because I said it was three grams. You kind of laughed so much afterwards, didn't you? I'm not exactly sure any more, but I suppose it might have been a lot less. (Laughs) ... Sort of. That was about the first thing I remembered. You.

**Speaker:** The bourgeois child turned into a little hash dealer. Absent-minded at school, without any interests in anything but demimonde, music and girls. That went on for a few years. But I never got involved with the police.

**You:** Perhaps, your parent's status protected you.

**Speaker:** Above all I wonder what my parents thought about it. How they could tolerate that I quite obviously had gone off the straight and narrow path?

**You:** Perhaps it was like this: they just didn't know what to do. How to get through to you. And they were busy with their own lives.

**Speaker:** And on drugs themselves: Father drank too much, Mother took her pills.

## Drugs

### *Sound drug blister-pack ...*

**OST L:** Exelon ... Bellergal ... Optipect ...

**Speaker:** We find pharmaceuticals in every drawer, box and carton. From every era since the fifties. My mother loved pills. A great fan of the pharmaceutical industry. Eventually we'll carry six boxes full of blister packs, little tins, salves and droplets to the chemist's.

**OST L:** And what on earth is this? "Perfect Harmony". Seems to be a condom.  
Oh no, it's not... (Laughter)

**OST A (distant):** Why are you laughing?

**OST L:** There was a little bag here inscribed "Perfect Harmony". And I took it for a condom. But it's a tea-bag...

**OST A:** I see.

**OST L:** I'll put all the old chocolate here for you, okay?

**OST A:** I'll have a look.

**OST L:** The half-eaten one, too? The one that's unwrapped?

**OST A:** How old is it then?

**OST L:** You can't tell. It's a loose piece of chocolate. I mean, you don't like throwing away stuff.

**OST A:** I mean if it's really white on the outside.

**OST L:** Nope, it's still brown...

**Speaker:** Piece for piece we rummage through the past.

**OST L:** Look here!

**Speaker:** My brother was the only one to never touch drugs.

**OST A:** Oh, isn't this a real beauty. Red flag! Proletarians of the world and oppressed peoples – unite! Central Organ of the Communist Party of Germany/Marxist-Leninist. Hands off North Viet Nam!

**Speaker:** He became a sober communist instead:

**OST A:** 29 March 1971, I turned 21 years on that day. I must keep this, sure. Coming of age, like...

**Speaker:** By bourgeois standards the off-spring were totally wayward: a pothead and a communist.

**OST A:** Oh, here are quite a lot of things, they're all mine! Oh dear, I must go through these...

***Atmo sound of smashing preserving jars ...***

**Speaker:** This time travel never ends. In the cellar there's a whole cupboard full of preserves from the seventies: cherries, strawberries, red cabbage. One never could tell if one wouldn't need it some day. Now it all lands in the bin in front of the door.

***Atmo Sound smashing preserving jars ...***

**Speaker:** It's rather like exorcism: All of a sudden there's air to breathe again, the feeling of anxiety, of constraint disappears. I also discover the beautiful aspects of the house: the terrace, the garden, the lake nearby. A pleasant ghetto of propriety.

While we clear the house and sell off what is too good for the bin, a few things stay in the family after all. My brother is dead set on taking a large part of the furniture with him.

**OST L:** You'll eat from the same table, you've got the same cupboard beside you, a chest of drawers, you surround yourself with essential pieces of the same furniture, meaning that you step into a very bourgeois household. I find this a bit amazing. That you're doing this of your own

accord. That leads to a certain life-style. I wouldn't do that. I prefer to distance myself from that, if you please.

**OST A:** Granted, but I'm more part of the tradition, especially Father's. And I haven't got all that much against the life-style... Could be because of my long stay abroad, because I came to feel that some of these traditions really have something good that I can live with.

**Speaker:** Mother doesn't hear any of this. She never asks about it either. We don't talk about old times. Just occasionally.

**To Mother**

**OST L:** Since you're not so well, you've become so meek.

**OST Mother:** (Laughs a little) Meek?

**OST L:** Yes.

**OST Mother:** Yes?

**OST L:** Yes. That's fine.

**OST Mother:** What's the difference?

**OST L:** You used to be so strict in your beliefs and statements.

**OST Mother:** Yes, that's true.

**OST L:** And now you aren't any more.

**OST Mother:** Actually more pleasant for your vis-à-vis.

**OST L:** Yes. (Laughs a little)

**OST L:** Oh well. (Sighs)

**Speaker:** This peace does us both good. And quite slowly we're getting a little closer. Now and then I comb her thinning hair, wipe a bit of jam out of the corner of her mouth, stroke her hand or put my arm around her meagre

shoulders. But I reach my limits all too fast.

**OST Mother:** Now I want to go somewhere. How do you do it at your place?

**OST L:** You just do it... you're wearing another nappy, so you can just let it go.  
The nurse will come and take care of it later.

**OST Mother:** I see.

**OST L:** You needn't make an effort.

**OST Mother:** But I can make an effort.

**OST L:** No, but you needn't. You can't get up, Mother. That's the problem.

**OST Mother:** Perhaps I can.

**OST L:** But you mustn't! Mother!

**OST Mother:** But how can I go to the loo?

**OST L:** Just as I told you: You've got a nappy, so just let it happen.

**OST Mother:** Yes, but not here!

**OST L:** Yes! In the nappy!

**OST Mother:** Sitting down?

**OST L:** Yes.

**OST Mother:** And it won't seep into the chair?

**OST L:** No, it won't.

**OST Mother:** Funny, though.

**OST L:** That's just the way it is.

**OST Mother:** Comes in handy. I'll let it go then.

**OST L:** Yes.

**OST Mother:** It's quite quick.

**OST L:** Yes.

**OST Mother:** And it's like that everywhere?

**OST L:** What do you mean by everywhere?

**OST Mother:** At the theatre, at friends'.

**OST L:** When you wear a nappy, it's the same everywhere.

**OST Mother:** So the nappies aren't made, um, selective. That you may use some pieces of furniture, but not others.

**OST L:** No.

**OST Mother:** That doesn't happen?

**OST L:** No.

**OST Mother:** Well, that's good. Comes in handy.

**OST L:** Yes, very handy.

**OST Mother:** And men also use this?

**OST L:** Yes.

**OST Mother:** Hmhm.

**OST L:** I don't yet, because I...

**OST Mother:** Exactly, if you don't need it, you don't use it.

**OST L:** You don't have to worry about anything at all.

**OST Mother:** It's quite nice. Because it doesn't irritate my skin. I sat all day in it once. And I didn't get a rash or anything. Right... Some people complain. Because I'm so... how do you say? Immobile. They ask, why don't you wear a nappy? I say, well, I'm not accustomed to it yet. They say: It's your own fault.

## **Party**

### ***Atmo party, music Velvet Underground: Venus in Furs***

**OST Axel:** Christa!

**OST Christa:** Wow. Yes!

**OST Axel:** How nice to see you! ... Ey, how cool to see you all! ... Who else is there? Come on, tell me your names!...

**Speaker:** The house is almost empty now, there's still some furniture in the living-room, including the light-coloured seating unit. We still need it, because I

decided to celebrate my leaving Münster with a party. Clean sweep at the parental home, with people I knew when I still lived here.

**OST Mo:** Hey, you, we really haven't seen each other for 30 years, hm? 40 ...  
(Laughter)

**Speaker:** With a little effort I managed to find rather a lot of the in-crowd back then. And that's why Martin, who used to frighten the good people with the longest hair in town, sits in my father's place now, correctly dressed as befits a psychotherapist. Next to him Viola, who makes her living as a teller of fairytales, as bizarre looking as ever.

**OST M:** But you're not in the city any more?

**OST Axel:** I'm right in the city centre.

**OST M:** Yes, but where?

**OST Axel:** Nice to see you, Martin,

**OST M:** Tell me! Where do you live? ...

**Speaker:** Even Axel has come, an ex-rock singer and a good soccer player. His red curls have fallen off. Bald-headed and emaciated, marked by multiple sclerosis, he sits in a wheelchair and tries to enjoy his performance.

**OST Axel:** God, you look great!

**OST G:** Yes, you're the best-looking bloke in the neighbourhood.

**Speaker:** Now 50 to 60 year olds remember their youth – a strange picture.

**OST Mo:** And then I took over the warehouse. Warendorfer Street. It was hell!  
(Laughter)

**You:** Anything but glorification. The enjoyment of life we shared soon became almost completely reduced to sharing drugs.

**OST Mo:** You'd open the living room door, ten blokes are sitting around you, and they all are completely stoned. And day after day, too. Oh, the times I

went through! (Laughter)

**Speaker:** For some this phase ended with death, because they started on hard drugs. Others landed in the nick or the madhouse. It was a tightrope walk, even if back then I didn't feel about it that way.

**OST Axel:** Sigi!

**OST Su:** He knows all the names.

**OST Mo:** Really, Sigi, you look awfully good!

**Speaker:** In the early seventies, we went our separate ways. That doesn't make recognising everyone easier:

**OST Holli:** Nope.

**OST L:** I'm Lorenz.

**OST Holli:** Oh, really? Oh sure, sorry!

**OST L:** Doesn't matter. No problem...

**OST Gaby:** One has to think really hard!

**Speaker:** I'm trying to guess what we still have in common apart from memories: perhaps being sceptical of the world of beautiful goods. And the urge for freedom. Hardly anybody became a member of hierarchical structures.

**You:** Shouldn't one call that fear of commitment?

**Speaker:** Or was refusing to work the most important bond?

**You:** Exactly that, and the drugs fitted in well...

**Speaker:** Nobody had a proper career.

***Atmo party***

**Speaker:** But doesn't that also imply that even as adolescents we make decisions without realising they shape our whole life afterwards? And that the paths we don't choose will be barred for good? Though youth deludes itself into believing there are such things as trial periods in life?

**You:** For eight to ten years you were only busy boycotting your parents'

expectations, anything but a bourgeois life! Anything but education! Anything but a career! You had to reach your mid-twenties to slowly come to your senses. This way you didn't become a gynaecologist as your mother dreamt nor a solicitor like your brother, and no popstar either.

**Speaker:** I never wanted to commit myself, I didn't find a viable way until late.

**You:** You could have done better.

**Speaker:** I'm punished with a meagre pension, if I'm to believe the threatening letters from the pensioners' insurance.

**You:** That's your life.

**Speaker:** A concept of the sixties, seventies, when one could afford the luxury of not thinking about money and the future.

**You:** A life in Mother's shadow.

**Speaker:** Perhaps. But isn't it always like that?

**You:** The constant rowing with your mother proves that you never stopped fighting for independence. And that you are more like her than you wanted to admit. You recognise her in your own impatience, your bossiness. Ask your spouse! Ask your children!

***Music end free of choice , then quiet***

**Speaker:** Only Mother's dementia made something like peace possible. That's not a happy ending, but for that it must be too late.

***Music: Brahm's Intermezzo***

**Speaker:** But we're getting closer.

**OST Mother:** I feel how little by little I'm lost to the world. That's for sure. Well, how old am I now?

**OST L:** 85.

**OST Mother:** Quite an age... Understandably one feels a certain world-weariness. Soon you'll feel that way too.

**OST L:** (Laughter) Yes, I will.

**OST Mother:** Not very kind to say that to someone, but...

**OST L:** Well, perhaps I've still got a few years.

**OST Mother:** Yes. (Laughter)

***Atmo rustling***

**OST L:** Yes, Mother, I'll be on my way soon.

**OST Mother:** So will I.

**OST L:** Where do you want to go?

**OST Mother:** Home.

**OST L:** This is your home.

**OST Mother:** In Klausener Street.

**OST L:** Berlin's your home now. And we are in Berlin.

**OST Mother:** Yes, so you keep telling me. But emotionally I'm still at home in Klausener Street.

**OST L:** I can relate to that... (Rustling) But for today you're staying here.

**OST Mother:** Here at your place?

**OST L:** You're not at my place now.

**OST Mother:** I am. (Laughter) Emotionally. I didn't really want to, I actually meant to go home.

**OST L:** Yes, but you're at home here.

**OST Mother:** Yes, to my new home.

**OST L:** This is your new home.

**OST Mother:** Newest.

**OST L:** This is your newest home.

**OST Mother:** Right.

**Music: Brahms's Intermezzo**

**Signing-off:** Mother's Shadow. Clean-Sweeping the Parental Home.

**OST Mother:** Okay, as you wish. I can stay here, I can go back again.

**Signing-off:** Featuring Linda Olsansky and Tonio Arango.

**OST Mother:** I think I'd like to stay here.

**OST L:** Good.

**Signing-off:** Script and realisation: Lorenz Rollhäuser

**OST L:** That's what I wish, too, that you stay here. Okay?

**Signing-off:** Editor: Ulrike Toma

**OST Mother:** Well.

**OST L:** Okay?

**OST Mother:** We'll try and see.

**Music end**

**Signing-off:** A Norddeutscher Rundfunk production, 2008.

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*Courtesy of Lorenz Rollhäuser and Norddeutscher Rundfunk*

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