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## Among the Elite

A more distinctively old-world setting it would have been difficult to imagine.

To one side of the expansive lawn, a string quartet was playing the "Menuetto" from Mozart's *Serenade in G*.

Waiters attired in fashionable suits made their way inconspicuously among the guests. Silver trays were held aloft by the deft fingers of catering experience, and were laden with truffles and single bites of bread topped with a multitude of colored things and glasses of white and red wine from the Mosel Valley. Many other delicacies adorned various tables spread throughout the garden.

The silently moving waiters were by no means overdressed for the occasion. Most of the men wore tails and black ties, the women long gowns. The occasion had been long awaited. Everyone who was anyone in Berlin was here. Even the Führer was expected, someone had said, though he had not yet made his appearance.

The only men not sporting expensive tails were those in uniform, and more members of the *Wehrmacht* and *Luftwaffe* were indeed on hand than the dozen or two foreign diplomats present were altogether comfortable with. That Germany was rapidly becoming a military power again was certainly no secret, and the look in the faces behind the uniforms was not one to engender a feeling of security concerning the development.

Three or four there were, too, whose eyes revealed an intensity and devotion to their cause which, not many years hence, would produce such panic as to hold an entire nation of their countrymen in terror. Only a year before, the Gestapo had been combined with the SS under the command of Heinrich Himmler. Though the name of the secret police was by now well enough known, the cruel connotations of dread at the very hearing of the word were still in the embryonic stage.

The bright smiles and laughter and setting of cultured serenity that on this day surrounded Gestapo and military officers, as well as the most wealthy and influential from every walk of life in Germany, belied the ominous rumbling of world events as they approached from an ever-shrinking distance. This was Berlin, the eye of the hurricane whence all the windy tumult originated but where none of it could yet be felt. Here were the elite of society, those caught up, though they yet knew it not, in determining the direction history would march, changing the world for all time.

How could they know the facade of ebullience and good cheer for what it was?

They were part of the charade; how could they then recognize its hollow ring? The distant kettledrums of history were beating a faintly discernible cadence, though few of the Berliners in attendance that afternoon were aware of it. All the others—enjoying the quartet's rendition of *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* and the tinkling of champagne glasses, the laughter of gaiety and the faces full of smiles—basked in the self-satisfying glow of importance, feeling the flush all the more after two or three glasses of the expensive wines Otto von Dortmann had brought in for the occasion.

The host, at the moment, was engaged in the perfunctory process of welcoming one with whom he bore a striking resemblance yet whom he seemed altogether nonchalant to see.

"So, Heinrich," Otto was saying, "Your field hands are, ah, able to carry on without you."

"Of course," answered the other with an imperceptible smile. "As well, I'm certain, as your bank without you."

"Ah, but farming and banking are too different to be compared, wouldn't you agree?"

"You are right, Otto, which is why I am content to be a farmer."

Otto forced a smile. "Well, Heinrich, I am glad your fields and cows could spare you long enough to come to the city. . . . But, now, if you'll excuse me, I need to greet my other guests."

Heinrich nodded and watched Otto walk away.

The tight smile was still spread across Otto's face. To him it had been an awkward exchange despite its brevity. In truth, he

did not like it known that Heinrich was his brother. But the state of the family finances demanded that he show him at least the respect of an occasional invitation to such affairs.

The man with whom he had been speaking watched him leave with what almost looked like a twinge of compassionate sadness in his eye. Gradually the sounds of the string quartet and tinkling glasses intruded once more into his hearing.

The "country brother" of the host, however, as Otto referred to him in his absence, Baron Heinrich von Dortmann, was aware of a different strain of music that day than that which emanated from the two violins, the viola, and the cello. And it sent shivers up his spine. As it also did to the few foreign diplomats who were in attendance.

"Ah, Herr Baron, es freut mich sehr Ihnen noch einmal zu sehen," said a man to Heinrich in flawless German.

"The pleasure is all mine, Mr. McCallum," returned Dortmann. "You must let me return your favor and speak to you in *your* native tongue!"

"Favor granted then," replied the other as the two men shook hands.

"And let me add that it is a pleasure to see you once again as well. How are things in the embassy?"

A brief cloud passed over the American's countenance, though it lasted but a moment. "These are . . . uh, difficult and . . . occasionally troublesome times, Herr von Dortmann," he replied, casting an unconscious glance at one of the prominently placed Nazi flags that stood at each side of the entryway into the house as twin reminders of the times. "But then the life of a diplomat in a foreign capital is always one fraught with the unexpected and the perilous, you know!" he added.

He attempted a laugh. It was not as light in tone as that of the society ladies all around them. His laugh and the glance at the flag that preceded it were not lost on the brother of the host.

"I think I know what you mean," said Dortmann. "Please, Mr. Ambassador, you do not have to guard your words with me. I am not a Nazi, and I have few sympathies with them."

"Then in a setting such as this, Herr von Dortmann," said the other, keeping his voice low, "it seems that prudence would suggest that you do not advertise the fact."

"I'm sure you are right. I am learning that I must choose my words carefully."

The other did not speak. In truth, Thaddeus McCallum was not the ambassador, but the assistant ambassador to Germany from the United States, and he was one who knew well when to hold his tongue. His wife was dead. He had lived in Berlin with his one son for the past four years.

"Ah, here's my son—Matthew," he said, turning and drawing in a nice-looking young man of seventeen who was sauntering toward the conversation, several items from one of the food trays in hand. "Matthew, I'd like you to meet Herr von Dortmann."

"It is nice to meet you, sir," said the young man, offering his available hand.

"The pleasure is mine, young McCallum," replied Dortmann. "You seem to be raising another young diplomat to follow in your footsteps," he added to the boy's father with a smile. "My daughter—" he said, glancing around, "my daughter is here someplace. She's about your age, I would think, Matthew—oh yes, there she is with her uncle. Neither of you go away—I'd like you both to meet her."

Dortmann turned and hastily bumped his way through Otto's well-dressed and highly placed guests. Matthew busied himself with the contents of his hands, while his father shook hands with several nearby acquaintances, including the German ambassador to Washington, who was home for a month.

In a minute or two, the baron returned with a young lady on his arm who was nearly the prettiest girl Matthew had ever seen.

"Mr. McCallum . . . Matthew," said Dortmann, beaming with pleasure and obvious pride, "may I present my daughter, Sabina."

"Fräulein von Dortmann," began the assistant ambassador. "*Ich bin—*"

The baron interrupted with a laugh.

"My daughter speaks better English than I do, Mr. McCallum," he said. "And if I know her, she will be excited for an opportunity to use it!"

"Forgive me."

"Think nothing of it," replied Sabina with a musical laugh.



Her English was perfect, just as her father had noted, but yet held a delicate and charming Germanic accent.

"Miss von Dortmann, I am Thaddeus McCallum."

"I am pleased to meet you," she said, extending her hand.

"And this is my son, Matthew."

The two young people shook hands. Neither said a word. Their eyes locked for the briefest of instants, then both looked away.

It had been enough.

They had seen inside, and each knew it.

Before the moment had a chance to prolong itself to the point of becoming awkward, however, the little party of four suddenly became five.

"I say, McCallum," sounded a thickly embroidered and punctilious English accent, "jolly good show these blooming Nazis put on if they stop their *Zeig Heils* long enough."

"A first-class shindig all right, Worchester," replied the American, laughing. "But you'd better watch what you say—the baron here speaks better English than you do!"



## Conversation on the Lawn

As the diplomat introduced the baron to Lord Percival Worchester, Britain's new special envoy to Berlin, the two teenagers began talking between themselves.

The young man, Matthew McCallum, was of medium build, well-proportioned of physique, though not large or bulky. A healthy crop of light brown hair was just sufficiently windblown and scattered to indicate that he was not overly preoccupied with appearance, though his light grey suit, navy tie, and polished black wing tips fit in admirably with the high-society surroundings of the festive Berlin garden party. Five-nine or so in height, his lean, seventeen-year-old face gave hints of a dawning sophistication, both in the ways of the world and in knowledge and insight into people and relationships, yet it retained enough of the eagerness of youth to reveal a hunger to learn—the most

hopeful sign to be looked for in any face—and to promise another inch or two in growth as well. There was surely an athleticism in the muscles and limbs of his frame, though if physical activities had been among his pursuits, they had likely been of an individual variety. He carried neither the muscular heft nor overall height or size to have shown himself imposing on a football field, and the determination revealed by his high cheekbones and the set of his triangular jaw spoke of an intensity to push himself toward his own goals rather than the fierceness necessary to triumph on the field of the game. In his eyes glowed a passion, yet unknown even to himself, for the pursuit of individual rather than group excellence. A straight Roman nose below deep-set light grey eyes gave further corroboration that beneath them was housed the intellect of a thinker whose faculties still awaited their full awakening. That here stood an individual of fiber there could be little doubt, though it would take the cauldron of life's fires to purify and strengthen the mettle. And only by his own sacrifice would it be transformed into the shining gold of selflessness and eternal character.

All this, however, yet lay dormant in the youthful and still developing countenance of Matthew McCallum, as the niece of the host took in the face and overall bearing of the young man to whom she had just been introduced.

"How long have you been in Berlin?" Sabina asked him.

"Four years. It's just my father and me," replied Matthew.

"Your mother?"

"She died eight years ago."

"I'm sorry. That must make it hard for you."

"I suppose so. It was hard when I was young, but my father and I are good friends."

"I am very close to my father as well," said Sabina, "so perhaps I understand."

A brief silence followed. It gave Matthew the opportunity to take in the young lady he had suddenly found himself alone with. From the moment his eyes had first beheld her approaching with her father, he could hardly imagine a more thorough picture of German beauty. The girl was positively stunning!

Yet within seconds, he began to realize the shallowness of his reaction. There was a quality to this young lady, something in

the way she carried herself, about her smile, her laugh, her voice, the attentive manner in which he could tell she was probing beyond surface appearances. When their eyes met, he had seen past mere looks. In that moment he knew he had touched something deeper and more personal, though he could not put his finger on what exactly it was.

"I saw you with those others over there," said Matthew, after a moment. "Are they friends of yours?"

"My cousin Brigitte is one of them. I was speaking with her."

"Do you want to join them again?" said Matthew. "I won't mind if you—"

"Not for a minute!" interrupted Sabina with a merry laugh. "The son of the American ambassador is far more interesting than my cousin and her companions. I could not have been more delighted that my father rescued me from their company."

"Son of the *assistant* ambassador," corrected Matthew.

"No matter. You could be the son of Berlin's garbage minister and I would still find you more interesting!"

As they spoke, Sabina glanced over at Brigitte, dressed in a gown designed for a much more mature woman, trying to look older than she was, blinking her long lashes and flirting with the men around her, one of whom she knew to be a friend of Herr Himmler's nephew. A look of mixed pity and annoyance came over her face, and a small unbidden sigh escaped her lips. Matthew was puzzled by the look on her face, but intrigued to know more of what was behind those lovely eyes.

On his part, Matthew found himself noting the face of the man dressed in plain clothes rather than Sabina's cousin. He judged him between twenty-eight and thirty, maybe thirty-one. He wore a look Matthew had already seen many times in the German countenance, especially in young men—a look that reminded him of steel. Rigid, frozen, emotionless. Not even the smile on his face, which gave all the signs that he was beguiled by the girl's attentions, could erase the cold heart of stone which one sensed lay beneath it all. Somehow, Matthew thought, the Nazi programme seemed to remove or desensitize the human hearts of those who embraced it.

As they stood for a second or two observing the scene,

suddenly it dawned on Matthew what his subconscious mind had been trying to figure out about Sabina.

*That* was the difference he had seen in her almost the first instant!

Every girl he'd ever known—American or German—who was even halfway attractive seemed so preoccupied with and cognizant of it and behaved as though trying to impress the fact upon those around her. You could see it instantly, in everything about their carriage—from tone of voice to body language to a dozen tiny mannerisms—whether outright flirtatious or not. But Sabina, as pretty as she was, seemed utterly oblivious to her looks and completely unconcerned about what others might think of her.

"I'm surprised you're here talking with *me*," Sabina said after a moment. "As you can see, every other young man at the party is in a circle around my cousin."

"Maybe I've got different tastes than the rest of them."

"Well, I'll take that as a compliment. I like you already!"

*This girl is certainly one to speak her mind!* thought Matthew. Most Germans did nothing but talk about the weather the first time you met them. Getting personal with a stranger, or expressing personal thoughts or feelings, was not something Europeans did. Yet here was someone speaking openly and frankly almost immediately.

"Would you . . . uh, like to go get something to eat?" he asked, trying to say something to divert the conversation away from himself.

"Sure, that would be nice," she answered.

They made their way toward one of the nearby tables. Matthew picked up another two or three of the miniature sandwiches and a glass of fruit juice, Sabina a glass of sparkling water. They walked casually across the expansive lawn. A small goldfish pond lay in front of them. Most of the other guests remained clustered around the patio of the summerhouse and refreshment tables.

"Are you and your cousin friends?" asked Matthew, curious to find out more about this young lady. This was not the kind of girl you fell in love with, but the kind of person you simply found yourself wanting to *know!*

"No more than any two cousins, I suppose," replied Sabina. "We have known one another all our life, and we played dolls together when we were young. But close . . . I would not say that."

"How are you and she related?"

"My father and her father, my uncle Otto, are brothers. They both grew up where we live in the country, but Uncle Otto preferred the fast pace of the city. Brigitte is just the same. She loves the city and crowds, parties and bright lights, ballrooms and fancy dresses."

"And you, what do you love?" asked Matthew.

"I am almost embarrassed to tell you."

"Why?"

"I don't know. There's no good reason. It's just that so few people our age understand."

"People like your cousin Brigitte?"

"Yes," laughed Sabina. "She *doesn't* understand."

"Well, try me, and see if perhaps I can."

"All right then, I will. Let me see . . . I love the country. I love wide open spaces where I can be alone."

"Already you sound much different from your cousin!"

"You do not think I sound too countryish and old-fashioned?"

"Of course not."

"Do you like the country?"

"Yes, but we've lived in the city so long I can hardly remember what it's like," replied Matthew.

"Oh, I wish I could show you my papa's estate!"

"Tell me about it," he said, smiling with pleasure at her obvious excitement.

"I love it so much."

"Why?"

"There is so much to do."

"For instance?"

"Oh, riding by horseback through the fields and woods, or all the way to the sea sometimes—do you know the Baltic?"

"My father took me to see it once," replied Matthew. As he listened, he continued to observe Sabina's sparkling eyes as she

spoke about her enjoyment of the out-of-doors. She was so full of life and enthusiasm!

"I relish walking along the seashore and listening to the waves on the sand and the sounds of gulls—oh, and have you gone to the Alps?" she went on.

"No, we haven't been that far south."

"Oh, but you must go!" exclaimed Sabina. "There's simply no place on earth like Interlaken and the region of the Berner Oberland and Luzern and hiking in the mountains near the Jungfrau! Once we were walking from Wengen around the Lauberhorn to Grindelwald. We hiked up over Wengernalp and to Klein Schneidegg. And then from out of the clearest blue sky came a dreadful thunderstorm. Within moments we were positively drenched! Then the sun came back out again, and by the time we were halfway down the other side to Grindelwald we were dry again—oh, but listen to me! I am going on and on, and you probably aren't interested in the least! It's one of my worst faults. I always talk far too much!"

"Please, don't say that," laughed Matthew. "I would love nothing more than to hear about the whole adventure from start to finish."

"You're probably just saying that so that I won't feel foolish," Sabina said, smiling, "but I appreciate it all the same."

"I promise, I meant every word."

"Thank you. You're very kind. But truly, I do love the Alps. I think it is the single place on earth most like what heaven must be like."

"Heaven?"

"Yes, don't you wonder what it will be like?"

"I suppose I never thought much about it."

"But aren't you a Christian? I thought all Americans were Christians. How can a Christian not think about heaven?"

"You mean, do I believe in God? I suppose so."

"You *suppose* so? Don't you know?"

"I guess I do. It never really mattered before."

"Don't you and your father talk about such things?"

"You mean like God and heaven?"

"Yes. My father and I talk about God all the time."

"My father's too practical for all that. All he has time for is politics and diplomacy."

"My father is practical too. But perhaps in a different way. He's the most levelheaded man I know, though I think Brigitte and Uncle Otto consider him a country provincial. I don't think they care enough about us even to despise us. I'm sure they all chuckle amongst themselves whenever we leave after a visit."

"Do you really think so?"

"The rest of the family considers us odd. But Papa and Mama and I don't mind. We love our life in the country, whatever they may think of it."

They had reached the small fishpond and now sat down on the garden bench beside it.

"So tell me more about your life in the country, as you call it," said Matthew.

"We have milk cows—Papa loves the cows—and lots of horses—do you ride?"

"Not much."

"Oh, but you must do more of it then. There's no better way to see the country than on horseback!"

"It's not so easy to do when you're stuck in the middle of Berlin. What else?"

"Fields and fields of wheat and rye and barley—oh, and the most fabulous garden in all of Germany. I wish I could take you through it right now. It's nothing like these potted and cut flowers of Uncle Otto's."

"He's got lots of nice plump goldfish," said Matthew with fun in his tone.

"You're right. And this pond is larger than any of the small ponds in our garden. But I'll trade goldfish for trees and hedges anytime. It's a *real* garden . . . people get lost in it!"

"Lost? Are you kidding?" laughed Matthew.

"No, it's enormous. I tell you, people lose their direction and can't find their way back to the house!"

"I would like to see it. That sounds like a challenge I'd enjoy taking."

"Are you fond of flowers and plants?" asked Sabina.

"No more than anything else. They're OK, I suppose."

"Oh, I love them . . . especially roses. Papa's rose garden sits

right in the center and is the best part of the whole Spring Garden."

"I don't know much about roses, though they're pretty and smell nice."

The look on Sabina's face was almost one of shock. "That's all you have to say about them!" she replied.

As she spoke, her hands and eyes, even her feet were in constant animation accompanying her words. *Does she ever sit still?* he wondered.

"They are the most magnificent of all the flowers," she went on. "The more you know of roses, the more you cannot help loving them. And the more you know of roses, the more you discover . . . well, about life and God . . . and everything. They are one of the most special things God has made in all his creation."

They fell silent and found themselves staring at the slow-moving orange fish in the pond in front of them. It was the first lengthy break in the conversation.

Matthew found himself positively enchanted with this vivacious young German. She was so alive, it could not help but be contagious. He felt that he was being exposed to a whole new world by her way of viewing things, things he realized he had never thought much about before.

Unconsciously he began tossing crumbs from the unfinished piece of bread in his hand into the pond, then watched as the fish swam up to nibble at them.

"Are you interested in politics and current affairs?" Sabina asked after a minute or two.

"Yes, actually I am," replied Matthew. "That's what *my* father talks about. But you're not, are you?"

"Why do you say that?"

"Girls rarely are."

"You're not lumping me in with everyone else, are you?" laughed Sabina.

"How could I! No, you're about as different as they come."

"How am I supposed to take that?" she said with mock affront.

"Entirely as a compliment, I promise. But are you?"

"Am I what?"

"Interested in politics and the world?"



"A little. Not near so much as you, I would think, with what your father does. Are you going to follow his footsteps when you're older?"

"I'd like to go into politics, maybe even run for office someday. Or maybe I'll be a diplomat like my father, who knows? But I do want to work for my government in some way."

"You must really like it."

"You talk about loving the sea, the mountains, the out-of-doors. I love the thrill of events, everything happening right in front of you, being part of them while they're going on, watching important decisions being made. It's stimulating and exciting!"

"You must know a lot of important men back in your country."

"I don't know, I've never thought about it. I did meet FDR after my father's appointment."

"FDR. What does that mean?"

"FDR—Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He's our president."

"You've actually *met* him?"

"Not such a big deal. You could probably meet your president too."

"Hitler? I'm not sure I'd want to. Papa has met him. He said he shivered when they shook hands."

Suddenly a voice sounded behind them.

"Why, Sabina, *dear*—why haven't you introduced me to your friend?"

They both turned, then rose from the bench.

"Hello, Brigitte," said Sabina in a gracious tone, speaking in their native language. "This is Matthew McCallum. He's from the United States."

"I'm happy to meet you," said Matthew, also in German, standing up.

Brigitte held out her hand daintily, apparently expecting Matthew to kiss it. Matthew took it briefly, ignoring the girl's coquettish smile and attempt to catch his eyes, then let it go without raising it to his mouth.

"Wouldn't you like to join us, Mr. McCallum?" said Brigitte in a throaty tone, still working her smile and eyes to maximum effect. "My friends and I were just talking about what foreign

men find attractive in German women. I'm sure Sabina is boring you with all her plebeian talk of life on the farm. Besides, we need the opinion of a handsome American like you, who can tell us what *you* find desirable in us."

With her final words she smiled him such a voluptuous invitation to pursue further intimacy as few men could resist.

"*Danke, Fräulein von Dortmann,*" Matthew replied. "I doubt I would be much help to you."

"Ple-e-ase," she said in a drawn-out, pouty tone, puckering her lips.

"I am quite content with the conversation I have at present."

"Sabina hasn't been boring you with her talk about gardens and animals, has she?"

"Not at all. I haven't been bored in the least."

"Do you not find European women attractive, Mr. McCallum?" Brigitte asked in an oily voice.

"Probably not for the reasons you and your friends are discussing."

"I would so like to hear what you think. Perhaps you and I could—"

"I really must decline, Fräulein," said Matthew. "Your cousin and I were not through with our conversation. I'm afraid you'll have to excuse us." He gave her a diplomatic smile.

He motioned his head toward Sabina and led her across the lawn and around the fishpond, leaving Brigitte incredulous where she stood staring after them.

"Pushy, isn't she?" said Matthew with a chuckle as soon as they were out of earshot.

"She'll never forgive you," said Sabina.

"I'll survive," he added.

"No, I mean it. She can carry a grudge longer than anyone I know. Believe me, she'll find some way to get back at you. She does *not* like to be made to look foolish."

"She doesn't need my help for that!"

Sabina could not help laughing.

"Sometimes I can hardly stand what she makes me feel inside. I know she's my cousin and that I must be nice to her. Oh, but she tries my patience and goodwill when she acts like that! It doesn't matter who or what it is, if she sees me enjoying

something, she always tries to take it away from me. It's been like that since we were little girls."

"You have nothing to worry about on my account, let me tell you. I would rather spend a minute in conversation with you about life on the farm, as she put it, than an hour with her and her friends!"

"Just promise me you'll watch yourself if you have occasion to run into her again."

Matthew laughed lightheartedly.

"Promise me," repeated Sabina. "You don't know her like I do."

"All right, I promise," said Matthew, still chuckling and glancing toward her. As he did his foot tripped over one of the large stones bordering the pond.

He stumbled, losing his balance, and fell toward the water. Sabina quickly reached out to help him.

He grabbed for her outstretched hands, trying to steady himself, but only succeeded in causing her to lose her balance on the uneven footing as well.

He toppled over sideways, half a glass of juice splattering over his suit as it left his hand, and fell with a splash into the water, his clumsy descent coming to a stop when one knee and one hand were resting a foot underwater on the bottom of the fishpond, with his other arm and leg straddled precariously over the edge on the lawn.

Sabina struggled to keep on her feet, though one of them plunged into the water before she then fell backwards onto the lawn, plopping unceremoniously onto her back, one wet shoe still dangling over the edge of the pond.

"Good grief, I can't believe I did that!" muttered Matthew in disgust.

"Are you all right?" said Sabina, sitting up, then rising. Seeing the position he was stuck in, she began to laugh.

She stepped into the pond, stooped down as best she could manage while trying to hold her long dress out of the water, took hold of one of Matthew's arms, still laughing, and helped him crawl out of the water. In another moment they were both lying on the grass. Half of his suit was soaking wet.

"I really can't believe it!" he repeated. "I don't usually do things like that!"

Sabina was laughing hysterically, though trying to keep from making too much noise. In another few seconds Matthew had joined her.

"Won't your cousin love this?" said Matthew sardonically. "Maybe I can sneak out of here!"

"Too late!" said Sabina, trying to stop laughing. "You made too much noise. Everyone heard the splash!"

Matthew glanced toward the rest of the party. All the guests, from the topmost levels of German society, had stopped what they were doing and were now staring directly at the two of them lying on the grass with the water of the fishpond all over them.

For a moment there was silence as all beheld the scene, then he saw Brigitte begin to titter, then laugh outright. All those in her small coterie followed suit, and within a minute most of the other guests were likewise enjoying the unexpected entertainment. Only the fellow Brigitte had earlier been talking to did not seem to enter heartily into the joke. The hint of a smile played upon his lips, but it was not a smile of humor, only chilly tolerance for the boorish amusements of those beneath him.

When word began to circulate that the fop was an American, the joke gained even more favor, and the expression of merriment continued for some time.

Matthew buried his face on the close-clipped green lawn in humiliated mortification.

"Good grief!" was all Sabina heard him mutter to himself.



## Baron Heinrich von Dortmann

**A**n excursion to Berlin, whatever the occasion, put Sabina's father through a wide range of inner emotions.

Driving into the capital city was usually accompanied by a certain churning of discomfort in the pit of his stomach. The anticipation of his time in the hectic metropolis was normally less than enthusiastic.