

Aus Ruinen

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Cast of Characters - 'Aus Ruinen'

Major Roles

Simon	Middle aged British man with consolidated views who finds it more comfortable to sweep some questions under the rug. His grandfather is originally German but Simon holds little connection to these roots except in name. Father of Dolly, husband of Telli. (m)
Telli	Simon's wife, originally from Turkey. She is a strong woman, capable of standing on her own two feet, but not overly militant by any means. (f)
Dolly	Simon and Telli's young child. Endearing, sweet and ever inquisitive – she asks many questions and has the infectious energy of a carefree child. (f)

Minor Roles

(in order of appearance)

Cashier	Working-class German, AfD sympathizer. Holds a civil front until certain matters come up... (m)
News Reporter	Classic Modern-day American radio news anchor. (f)
Radio Host	German man running an English-language radio show from the 90's. Well spoken, harkens something of the voices of old. (m)

The gender of Minor Roles can be changed.

The piece includes two clips of crowds chanting: one a contemporary AfD slogan, the other a chant from the Monday Demonstrations in September 1989. If these can be sources from an original recording and cleared it should be used. If not, a stand-in version should be recorded.

'Bundesrepublik' by Schleim Keim was a punk rock band from East Germany. The specific song is critical of the optimism surrounding West Germany and reunification.

SCENE 1. EXT./ INT. PETROL STATION. DAY.

THE WHIR OF AN AIRCON, KEYS BEING
PUNCHED AT A TILL.

CASHIER: Siebzehn Liter, also... neunundzwanzig, einundvierzig.

SIMON: Uhhh... sorry I-

CASHIER: Oh! Seventeen liters - twenty nine euro, forty one cents.

SIMON: Right - thank you!

CASHIER: Cash or card?

THE ZIP OF A WALLET

SIMON: Cash. Oh and - sorry - d'you have a toilet?

CASHIER: Of course! To your right. €1.75.

SIMON PUTS COINS ON THE DESK ONE BY
ONE

SIMON: Oh, I'm sorry, I don't think I have the exact-

THE CASHIER BEGINS PULLING THE COINS
TOWARD HIMSELF

CASHIER: Kein Problem-

A CHIME AS TELLi AND DOLLY ENTER

TELLi: (clear Middle Eastern accent)

I told you to go sweetie.

DOLLY: But I didn't need to!

TELLI: (to Simon)

She needs it after all.

SIMON: That's okay, I've just asked the gentleman, it's right over th-

CASHIER: €1.75.

BEAT. A SURPRISED SILENCE.

SIMON: But you just-

CASHIER: €1.75. Each.

SIMON: Well, I don't have the coins...

CASHIER: Zahl es oder geh.

A SHORT STANDOFF.

DOLLY: Mum-

SIMON PLACES CASH DOWN ON THE DESK.

SIMON: Keep the change.

THEIR FOOTSTEPS BEGIN OFF. THE CASHIER
PUNCHES THE TILL MACHINE IN QUICKLY
THEN SLAMS IT SHUT.

THE DOOR CHIMES AGAIN AS THE FAMILY
LEAVES.

CASHIER: (under his breath)

Mehr Fordern...

THE FAMILY GET IN THE CAR - DOORS SLAM SHUT, SEATBELTS COME ON AND THE ENGINE IS STARTED AS WE CUT TO:

SCENE 2. INT. CAR. CONTINUOUS.

THE DRONE OF THE CAR AS IT DRIVES - OCCASIONALLY PASSING OTHER VEHICLES, THE SOUND OF BLINKERS, STEERING.

SIMON: Can I get some of those-?

TELLI REACHES DOWN FOR A BAG OF SNACKS AND CHUCKS IT TOWARD SIMON, PERHAPS MORE FORCEFULLY THAN SHE INTENDED.

SIMON: Thanks...

SIMON TAKES A HANDFUL AND CRUNCHES ON THEM.

DOLLY: Mommy, can I have some too?

TELLI: Here you go sweetie.

SHE REACHES FOR THE PACK AND GENTLY EXTENDS THEM. THE GIRL STARTS EATING.

SIMON: Everything alright?

TELLI: Fine.

BEAT.

THE CAR PASSES A SIGN.

SIMON: (playfully, to Dolly)

Bannewitz! 10 kilometers.

DOLLY: Is this where grandpa is from?

SIMON: No, grandpa was from Berlin. East Berlin.

TELLI: East Berlin?

SIMON: Yeah - saw the wall fall and everything.

DOLLY: Which wall?

SIMON: There used to be a big wall in the middle of the city. Until people knocked it down.

DOLLY: Then why did they build it in the first place?

SIMON: To divide the people living there.

SHE THINKS ON THIS FOR A MOMENT.

DOLLY: And are they building another one?

A SWEET PARENTAL LAUGH FROM SIMON

SIMON: No, don't be silly darling. They're not building another one.

DOLLY: Why not?

SIMON: This was a long time ago darling. Right mum?

NO ANSWER. BEAT.

DOLLY: The orange man on telly said he'd build a wall.

A STRESSED EXHALE FROM SIMON.

SIMON: How 'bout some radio!

HE FLICKS IT ON.

NEWS REPORTER: Following the January inauguration of President Trump-

SIMON: Oh for-

TELLI: No, don't.

SIMON: Really?

TELLI: I want to listen to it.

NEWS REPORTER: Michelle King, a top official at the Social Security administration has stepped down following her refusal to give access to sensitive records to the Musk-lead DOGE. This, the latest in a series of resignations, as the new administration has already removed more than 200 White House employees.

SIMON: Do we have to?

TELLI: Yes, we have to.

NEWS REPORTER: The market remains volatile as the world navigates the new tariffs, cut off from Russian oil. The U.S. retail gas price stands at an average of \$3.12 per gallon.

TELLI: How much did you pay?

SIMON: We're in Germany!

TELLI: Really Simon? Really?

THE VOICE OF TRUMP COMES ON THE RADIO.

DOLLY: That's the orange man!

SIMON: Okay!

HE FLICKS THE RADIO OFF

SIMON: That's enough of that. And anyway, we're almost there.

THE MUFFLED SOUND OF A LARGE GROUP OF PEOPLE CHANTING INCREASES IN VOLUME, GETS CLOSER AND CLOSER. CARS HONK.

SIMON: Oh, now what?

SIMON ROLLS DOWN THE WINDOW TO STICK HIS HEAD OUT. THE CROWD BECOMES CLEARER.

CROWD: Mehr Fordern, weniger Fördern! Mehr Fordern, weniger Fördern! Mehr Fordern, weniger Fördern!-

TELLI: Are these those AfD lunatics?

A WHISTLE PIERCES THE AIR.

DOLLY: Ooo - are they gonna fight?

THE WINDOW GOES BACK UP. SIMON SHIFTS GEARS, REVERSES, TURNS AND DRIVES OFF.

SIMON: Not waiting to find out. Christ, if only we could just-

CUT TO:

SCENE 3. EXT. HOUSE. LATER.

THE CAR ENGINE COMES TO A HALT. SIMON GIVES A RELIEVED SIGH.

SIMON: Finally-

CAR DOORS OPEN, THE FAMILY GETS OUT.
BIRDSONG IN THE BACKGROUND, SUBURBIA.
THE BOOT OPENS AND THE FAMILY TAKE
EMPTY BOXES OUT. THE CAR BEEPS AS ITS
LOCKED. KEYS RUSTLE, DOLLY RUNS AHEAD
AS THE PARENTS FOLLOW BEHIND.

TELLI: (impressed whistle)

Big garden.

SIMON: Old man did alright for himself.

TELLI: With a flagpole...

SIMON: He was a patriot... *but* - more importantly - there's the swing he used to push me on.

DOLLY'S EXCITED JUMPS

DOLLY: Daddy - daddy, can I go on it?

SIMON: Maybe a little later darling.

THEY REACH THE FRONT DOOR, KEYS
RUSTLE, LOCK TURNS AND THEY ENTER. AN
ECHO IN THE ROOM.

TELLI: (looking around)

A patriot, huh? This place is gonna take forever to pack.
Where should we start?

SIMON: I mean-

(he grunts as he kneels down)

This room is as good as any. Can you pass me some of the boxes?

TELLI DOES SO, CALLING FROM OUT BACK.

TELLI: What did he do?

SIMON BEGINS OPENING DRAWERS, PULLING
OUT WADS OF PAPER.

SIMON: Accountant, I think.

THROWING DOWN FOLDERS ONE AFTER THE
OTHER.

SIMON: "Benzin 1989", "1990"

HE FLICKS THROUGH THEM

SIMON: 49.50 DM. 59.40 DM.

TELLI: Wait, what was the difference?

SIMON: I don't know like...-

DOLLY: Ten!

TELLI: Hmm. Twenty percent.

SIMON: Oh, not this again. Come on-

WE HEAR DOLLY SCURRY OFF TO A
DIFFERENT CORNER OF THE ROOM.

SIMON: Could we please stop with the doomsday talk? What's gotten into you?

TELLI: What's gotten into me is that-

DOLLY: Woah, what's this?!

BEAT AS THE HEADS TURN. SIMON GRUNTS,
GETTING UP AND WALKING OVER, ALL TOO
HAPPY TO DO SO.

SIMON: *That* - is a cassette player.

TELLI, ANNOYED, KEEPS PACKING IN THE
BACKGROUND.

DOLLY: Woah - cool! What does it do?

SIMON: It can play like songs and things. Think it should have a
play button on it somewhere...

DOLLY: Maybe this!

SHE HITS THE NAIL ON THE HEAD.

'BUNDESREPUBLIK' BY SCHLEIM KEIM
STARTS BLASTING AT FULL VOLUME. IN THE
BACK, TELLI DROPS SOMETHING, SIMON
FALLS TO HIS REAR IN RECOIL. DOLLY GIVES
A SHRIEKING LAUGH.

TELLI: Oh-!

SIMON: Christ-

HE FLICKS IT OFF. DOLLY BOUNCES IN
EXCITEMENT, INFECTIOUS.

DOLLY: Another, another!

SIMON: Alright, I'm sure there's another one.

HE PULLS OUT A DRAWER, BEGINS SORTING
THROUGH CASSETTES, LIFTS ONE OUT.

SIMON: D-D-R.

A BOX ANGRILY THUDS ON THE GROUND
BEHIND.

TELLI: Detusche Demokratische Republik.

AN UNCOMFORTABLE BEAT. SIMON CLEARS
HIS THROAT.

SIMON: Right-

HE INSERTS THE TAPE.

SIMON: Let's just, reduce the volume-

HE HITS PLAY.

THE LOW RESOLUTION VOICE OF A MALE
RADIO HOST WITH A SLIGHT GERMAN
ACCENT COMES ON.

RADIO HOST: You are listening to Radio Europe! It is Tuesday, 7th November. Prime Minister Willi Stoph has announced his resignation along with 2/3 of the Politburo. This, the latest in a series of events started by the Pan-European Picnic and the demonstration in Leipzig in September.

THE RECORDING CUTS TO A CROWD
CHANTING.

CROWD: Wir Sind das Folk! Wir Sind das Folk! Wir Sind das Folk!-

TELLI: Sounds familiar.

SIMON: Don't.

DOLLY MOVES AROUND AS SHE BEGINS TO
GET RESTLESS, BORED.

RADIO HOST: More have followed in Alexanderplatz, expressing concern for the economy, only made worse by rumours of a document submitted by Gerhard Schührer suggesting no Soviet aid can be expected to help the national debt. The question of oil-

TELLI: You have got to be kidding me! You can't tell me you don't see it!

SIMON: You only see what you are looking for.

TELLI: What I'm looking for? Was I looking ot be boxing up the house of some dead German accountant, who's grandson doesn't so much as speak a word of his language while I translate for him then get abused-

SIMON: What are you attacking my grandpa for now? Is this about him not coming to our wedding! Are you still mad about that?

TELLI: That's got nothing to do with this.

A PAUSE. UNCOMFORTABLE.

DOLLY: (sheepish, sensing the tension)

Mommy...? I'm hungry...

BEAT. TELLI TAKES A DEEP BREATH.

TELLI: Let's get you something to eat sweetie.

THE LITTLE GIRLS SCURRIES OVER TO HER MUM. SIMON RISES.

SIMON: Yes. I think we should all get something to eat.

NO RESPONSE.

SCENE 4. INT. KITCHEN. LATER.

KNIVES AND FORKS, PLATES, CHEWING. A
COUPLE SECONDS OF UNCOMFORTABLE
SILENCE, ROOM TONE. SIMON GOT TO TAKE
A DRINK.

TELLI: You can't tell me at the petrol station it wasn't obvious.

SIMON: He was a prick. I'm not debating that.

TELLI: And *why* d'you think he was a prick?

SIMON: You don't know that.

TELLI: Don't I, Simon? Because when I walked in he was still smiling at you.

SIMON: You don't know that. Could've been for any number of reasons. Maybe you reminded him of someone.

TELLI: Oh, I'm sure I did!

SIMON: This is the problem with you! You're always looking for an enemy.

TELLI: Was I looking for an enemy when your grandfather didn't turn up to our wedding?

SIMON: There we go! I knew it was about this. What has that go to do with anything that's happened today?

TELLI: Because I never feel welcome, Simon!

BEAT.

TELLI: I never feel welcome. I did nothing, I tried my best to get him to like me, I learned his damn language - and he still rejected me. Just because.

A SILENCE.

TELLI: And now we're living in a world that gets more fucked up by the minute and you're refusing to see it. Because it's uncomfortable.

SHE CLAMS HER HANDS ON THE TABLE. A SHAKY EXHALE. SHE BEGINS TO CRY GENTLY. SHE GRABS OUT A TISSUE AND BLOWS HER NOSE.

SIMON: I was just...

TELLI: Save it.

SHE JUMPS UP FROM THE TABLE.

TELLI: Come sweetie - let's get you on that swing.

WE HEAR THEIR FOOTSTEPS BECOME DISTANT AS THEY REACH THE FRONT DOOR. TELLIE SHUTS IT BEHIND HER, GOING INTO THE GARDEN.

BEAT.

SCENE 5. INT. HOUSE. CONTINUOUS.

THE CREAKING OPEN OF A DOOR.

A SOMBRE MUSIC DRONES THE SCENE.

SIMON CLEARS HIS THROAT, FLICKS ON A LIGHT SWITCH AND STEPS INTO THE ROOM. HE KNEELS, PULLS OUT THE DRAWER AND TAKES A CASSETTE OUT. THE CLICK AS HE INSERTS IT INTO THE PLAYER AND IT STARTS TO PLAY.

RADIO HOST: You are listening to Radio Europe! It is Tuesday, 2nd October. Our last broadcast. With the ascension of all 5 states to the FRG the country will be reunified. With the Mauerspechte chipping away at the wall we break our way into a new world. And if you'll allow me a personal note: may it never change. May the crumbling of this wall be the start of a freer, more unified world. And may any dust of it that remains remind us to never again allow arbitrary separation of loved ones, no matter what the forces speaking from atop the rubble say. Because that is what we are: loved ones. Neighbours. People.

THE TAPE CARRIES ON BUT SIMON TAKES A DEEP BREATH. HE RISES UP, OPENS A WINDOW.

A GUST OF AIR COMES IN AND WITH IT: THE LAUGHTER OF A CHILD. DOLLY, SWINGING ON THE RICKETY SWING IN THE GARDEN.

DOLLY: Higher Mommy! Higher!

A BEAT. WE JUST LISTEN.

SCENE 6. EXT. HOUSE. CONTINUOUS.

THE DOOR OPENS. WE STILL HEAR DOLLY'S SWINGING BUT IT SLOWLY STOPS. SIMON TAKES A BREATH IN, WALKS TO HIS WIFE.

SIMON: I'm sorry.

BEAT.

SIMON: I'm sorry. It's- ... I don't know what it's like. To be you. And when I- look around I- there's a feeling of... what can I do, y'know.

TELLI: I know.

THEY KISS.

TELLI: But we have to do better than this. You have to do better. Surely. For her.

BEAT. THE SMALL SOUND OF THE SWINGING STARTS BACK UP AGAIN AS DOLLY PUSHES HERSELF.

SIMON: I know. I will try. Really try. For her.

BEAT.

SIMON: It's getting cold. Should we go inside?

TELLI: Yeah.

(to Dolly)

Come on sweetie.

THE SWINGING STOPS AS DOLLY HOPS OFF. LANDS IN GRASS AND RUSHES OVER TO THEM. TELLI GIVES A GIGGLE AND SIMON GRUNTS AS HE PICKS HER UP.

SIMON: There you are you monkey!

BEAT. WE LISTEN TO THE SOFT WIND.

END.