

THE RACES OF MAN

Forgotten, disappeared, passed away, tried, forgiven, repaid, lost, concealed, buried, championed, burned, abandoned.

I've been trapped here for two months. Ever since they came to earth, I have sought shelter here. Food supplies have been running out for almost a week, water is scarce, I'm out of toothpaste and razor blades, and the protective walls are becoming unstable as they pound on them with their fists. Or at least with what sounded like a fist. The last time I saw my family was when I fled. They're either dead or they don't care about me anymore. I wait day after day hoping to die before they break through the walls. Hopefully I'll starve, at least I'd rather that than what they do to people. The dim yellow lamp flickered above the table. I have a headache, my stomach hurts from hunger because I have to save my food. I take a pen and start writing on the yellowed page that I had torn from a pad.

"My name is Andrei Popescu, I was born in Suceava in 1947 but grew up in Odessa as the government paid my family to settle in the Ukrainian regions. I studied at the university in Heidelberg as my parents wanted me to I was supposed to study at a German university. There I also joined the resistance, which I still belong to today, but since the war started, I've only been busy deciphering messages. If I'm even halfway successful, I'm currently hiding in Theodorichhafen. I don't know when I'll die, but I just hope they don't get me. I'm less afraid of the draconian torture and mass killings of the officials about what's lurking out there. They say that man is man's greatest enemy, but what does one have to say who doesn't know what's hiding above the sky, what has been with us since the first radio signals overheard from Earth?"

With the last bit of ink I manage to add the last question mark before it runs out too. The sheet was

almost completely written on, and perhaps someone will read what is written on it so that I don't end up in Oblivion. They bang harder...

Red glowing monitors, trenches, carbines, meticulously tailored uniforms, brown walls, the smell of borscht, a massive cosmopolitan city. There are only three headache pills left. The radio is next to me. I turn it on and start tapping military messages. After just less than a minute, I hear a signal.

"Troop Leader Weber here, we're trying to defend the positions. The enemy is in the majority, and the command is supplying us with weapons from the forties, and they're penetrating us with things we couldn't even imagine. Forget everything, "What you've seen in the movies is worse. Not only do they attack you with physical weapons of destruction, any Wunderwaffe has no effect against that. They attack you psychologically and don't let up while they torture you."

I hear a bang in the radio and it went silent for a moment and all I can hear is my exhausted breath, the relentless banging and a static on the radio. After a few seconds the signal returns.

"Our entire squad was swept down by them. New Westphalia has fallen. If you don't allow us to surrender, then all of Germany will be swept away and overrun by them. Forget the old propaganda about Ivan, who will take cruel revenge on the German people if the final victory would not have come. Humanity is not ready for what is coming. And when they understand what this is about, it will already be too late for everyone. It was a mistake to ever go to the moon land, fuck Nazism in space, it's about the survival of humanity. End this war as quickly as possible or they will end it, but it will have a terrible end. I have seen the methods they use, and you you need to know so you can defend yourself against them. The main method they use is brain squeezing, which is basically... They're coming..."

The signal stops. Brain squeezing? What did he mean by that? In the mirror I see a wound forming on my forehead. It looks like a surgeon's precise and professional stitch through the forehead, from the left edge of the left brow to the right edge of the right brow. I don't feel any pain, the wound doesn't seem to be deep. But I have no idea where she comes from. I haven't even touched my forehead since the last time I looked in the mirror.

They break through my defenses.

I have a terrible headache. I want to lie down, but they did it. They've been watching me for months. But why? I am part of the resistance. Am I now a Nazi because I am against the invaders? Maybe it's not a bad thing to let Germany perish and let it enjoy the fruits it has reaped.

One sunset I sit on a bench and look at the reflections on the Neckar. The sun is shining brightly and I have one eye closed to avoid being blinded. My German fellow student is sitting next to me.

"How much do you like it in Germany? I bet it's better than in Romania."

I'm lying.

"Well, I would say it's better. The people are definitely much better."

The people are terrible.

"...In Romania the people are rather unfriendly and stupid, they have no spirit, I feel at home here."

I want to get away from here as quickly as possible and go back home.

"So you're a German at heart?"

No, and I would rather go to Auschwitz than be German.

"In principle, yes, I have always liked Germans more than Romanians."

I have always hated Germans.

Am I German? What is a German? Why do I sound like a Saxon and not how I should sound?

I keep lying. I lie to please her. And I can't stop it.

I got her into bed, but at what cost?

I'm sitting curled up in the living room and they're penetrating me, they're molesting me.

"Accept that you are German. Anyone who speaks German as a native language is a German. Don't try to wage a war against reality."

"Germany is the greatest country in the world. You only hate it because you're a miserable loser who lies to yourself and others to get into bed with a woman you hate. You only hate Germans because they see your follies ."

My eyes wander over the gigantic edifice built by the blood of 40 million people. And here they teach us how no people died on the enemy's side.

My girlfriend comes to me and talks about unimportant stuff. I don't know why I'm with her. Maybe I do know. She is a Nazi, like everyone here. There are also many where I'm from.

"Your home is Germany," she said to me. Can she read my mind? Is she one of them? I jump on her and attack her. After less than two minutes she runs out of breath and dies.

I take the last headache tablet. It's unbearable. The knocking doesn't stop. I have something else. They gave us this capsule during soldier training so that we didn't have to surrender in the Congo campaign. In the end we won the campaign.

I loved her. I still love her because I hate myself. The headaches are prematurely weak. I have accepted that I am German. All people who speak German as their native language, and I do, are German. In front of me is her letter from me, which arrived two days ago and which she

wrote four days ago. I never broke up with her. I hate her. And that's why I hate myself. I know things that she doesn't know, because in two weeks Heidelberg will no longer stand.

I think she knows my lie. But I will never stop lying to her.

I take the capsule, I don't know if it still works but I hope so. The knocking stops. I swallow the pill and my hope is confirmed.

Heil Hitler, death to Germany.