

Peter Wurm

The Sky above Mauthausen

For my Grandfathers

Complete darkness. Suddenly the light comes on. You can see a room, about 4 by 3.5 meters wide, 3 meters high, without windows, tiled in white. Several iron pipes on the walls, some shower heads on the ceiling. At the back of the right wall and on the right of the rear wall 2 heavy iron doors with a peephole in their centre. Both doors are locked.

In the room there are 2 people, both male. The older person is in his mid-50s, the younger person is just over 30 years old. Both are shaved and wear striped dark clothes. The older one wears a "Red Angle", the younger one a "Jewish Star". "A" is sitting at the left, "J" is leaning against the right wall.

A: How did you get in here?

J: I came from the Ping-Pong cellar and was wrong about the room number. The hotel is a bit confusing.

A: Is this a hotel?

J: That was a joke.

A: What joke?

J: 'Gentlemen in the bathroom'. By Loriot.

A: Oh ... Where are we here?

J: In Mauthausen.

A: And what kind of a bathroom is this?

J: This is not a bathroom.

A: Oh, so ... Which year do we have?

J: According to which calendar?

A: According to OUR calendar!

J: And which one would that be?

A: The Gregorian!

J: 2020. It is 2020 AD.

A: And how long have I been here?

J: Do the math yourself.

A: Guensche, help me!

J: Since 1945 our era.

A: That would be ... 945 minus 1000 ... 55 plus 20 ... 75 years.

J: Yes.

A: 75 years ... It could have been 1000.

J: Yes.

A: And since when have YOU been here?

J: Since now.

A: Since when, 'since now'?

J: Since now.

A: And how did you get in?

J: I already said that, mein Fuehrer.

A: 'Mein Fuehrer'. How long have I not heard this ...

J: I know, mein Fuehrer.

A: What day are we on?
J: According to which calendar?
A: Guensche, don't joke!
J: I'm not joking, mein Fuehrer.
A: Guensche, tell me what day we have!
J: A 'please' would be nice.
A: Please.
J: Today is April 30th.
A: April 30th?
J: Yes, mein Fuehrer.
A: And what time is it?
J: After what time?
A: After OUR time!
J: Which is it?
A: Where are we here?
J: In Mauthausen, mein Fuehrer.
A: It's in the Ostmark.
J: No, mein Fuehrer.
A: Guensche!
J: Yes, mein Fuehrer!
A: Which Mauthausen is that?
J: There is only one Mauthausen.
A: It's in the Ostmark!
J: No, mein Fuehrer.
A: Guensche! Don't contradict me!
J: As you wish, mein Fuehrer.
A: Where are we here?
J: I already told you, mein Fuehrer.
A: Guensche!
J: Yes, mein Fuehrer.
A: Where are we here?
J: In Mauthausen, mein Fuehrer.
A: Where is that?
J: In Austria, mein Fuehrer.
A: This is the Ostmark.
J: No, mein Fuehrer.
A: Guensche, what is this here?
J: This is hell, mein Fuehrer.
A: Why are you wearing the Jewish Star?

(Silence)

A: Guensche, what is this here?
J: I already told you, mein Fuehrer.

A: Guensche, I can't go on anymore ...
J: I know, mein Fuehrer.
A: Guensche, help me ...
J: Yes, mein Fuehrer.
A: Guensche, please help me.
J: Yes, mein Fuehrer.
A: Why are you wearing the Jewish Star?
J: Why are you wearing the Red Angle, mein Fuehrer?
A: I am wearing the Red Angle? Guensche, what's the point?
J: What's the matter, mein Fuehrer?
A: This whole scenery here.
J: As I said, mein Fuehrer; it is hell.
A: I've been here in darkness for half an eternity. And now you are here all of a sudden. 75 years, you said, was it?
J: Yes, mein Fuehrer, exactly 75 years.
A: How do you know?
J: Do the math, mein Fuehrer.
A: No, Guensche. I trust you.
J: Thank you, mein Fuehrer.
A: How do we get out of here?
J: How did you get in, mein Fuehrer?
A: I don't remember. I was alone here in the dark all the time and suddenly you are here. Where are we?
J: I already told you, mein Fuehrer.
A: What is this here?
J: What, mein Fuehrer?
A: This room, this shower bath here.

(Silence)

A: Guensche, who had this shower bath built?
J: You yourself, mein Fuehrer.
A: Me myself?
J: Yes, mein Fuehrer.
A: I myself had this shower bath built?
J: Yes, mein Fuehrer.
A: When?
J: 80 years ago, mein Fuehrer.
A: 80 years ago? It must have been Speer.
J: No, mein Fuehrer.
A: Who else? Guensche who else?
J: The Reichsführer, mein Fuehrer.
A: Himmler had this shower bath built?
J: Yes, mein Fuehrer.

A: Why?

J: Because you commanded him, mein Fuehrer.

A: I commanded Himmler to build this shower bath?

J: Yes, mein Fuehrer.

A: What for?

(Silence)

A: Guensche, how do we get out of here?

J: It is the responsibility of the Reichsfuehrer, mein Fuehrer.

A: Then he should let us out!

J: He can't, mein Fuehrer.

A: I COMMAND it to him!

J: The Reichsfuehrer has another command, my Fuehrer.

A: Of whom, Guensche? By whom!?!?

J: Of you, mein Fuehrer.

A: Of me?

J: Yes, mein Fuehrer.

A: And what is this command?

J: You should know that, mein Fuehrer.

A: Guensche, what is this command?

J: "Return Undesired", mein Fuehrer.

A: That must be a misunderstanding.

J: No, mein Fuehrer.

A: Guensche, why are you wearing the Jewish Star?

J: Why are you wearing the Red Angle, mein Fuehrer?

A: Are you a Jew?

J: Yes, mein Fuehrer.

A: You are joking, Guensche.

J: No, mein Fuehrer. That's the truth.

A: What is the truth?

(Silence)

A: Are you circumcised, Guensche?

J: Yes, mein Fuehrer.

A: This is treason, Guensche! This is the worst betrayal of all!!

J: No, mein Fuehrer.

A: You Jew!!!

J: Yes, mein Fuehrer.

A: The most loyal of the loyal, Guensche!

J: Yes, mein Fuehrer.

A: Who betrayed me, Guensche? Who was the traitor?

J: Nobody betrayed you, mein Fuehrer.

A: Then why am I here?

J: You commanded it yourself, mein Fuehrer.

A: WHO did I tell it to, Guensche?

J: I already told you, mein Fuehrer.

A: Himmler?

J: Yes, mein Fuehrer.

A: Then I just withdraw the command!

J: That is not possible, mein Fuehrer.

A: Why?

J: You know that, mein Fuehrer. Command is command.

A: What are we doing now, Guensche?

J: Do you regret, mein Fuehrer?

A: I have no regrets!

J: As you wish, mein Fuehrer.

A: I only regret that I let Churchill escape in Dunkirk.

J: As you wish, mein Fuehrer.

A: Where's this Churchill now?

A: Churchill is in heaven, mein Fuehrer.

A: In heaven ...?

J: Yes, mein Fuehrer.

A: And where is this heaven?

J: Churchill's heaven is in Britain, mein Fuehrer. You can drink and smoke there.

A: There is no heaven!

J: As you wish, mein Fuehrer.

A: Paperlapapp! There is a sky. I just can't see it from here. There is no window.

J: There are two peepholes, mein Fuehrer. One in every door.

A: I don't see anything there, Guensche. It is pitch dark outside. What's behind these doors?

J: We came into here through the first door, mein Fuehrer.

A: What about the other one? What's behind the other door, Guensche?

J: We go out through the other door, mein Fuehrer.

A: WHAT is there? What's behind that door, Guensche?

J: Behind this door is the crematorium, mein Fuehrer.

A: The crematorium?

J: Yes, mein Fuehrer.

A: What happens to us, Guensche? What happens to us?

J: What has happened so far, mein Fuehrer?

A: So far I've been here alone. But now you are there.

J: Do you know what day it is today, mein Fuehrer?

A: You already told me, Guensche. April.

J: Yes, mein Fuehrer.

A: April 30th.

J: Yes, mein Fuehrer.

(Music starts playing)

A: What is this?

J: This is music, mein Fuehrer.

A: What music is that, Guensche?

J: This is the 'Benedictus' of Missa Solemnis by Ludwig van.

A: I want to get out of here.

J: Yes, mein Fuehrer.

A: Can you fulfill this wish for me, Guensche?

J: Yes, mein Fuehrer.

A: Thanks, Guensche.

J: You are welcome, mein Fuehrer.

A: Then let's go.

J: That's not possible, mein Fuehrer.

A: Why not, Guensche? Why not?

J: There are rules we have to follow, mein Fuehrer.

A: And what are the rules?

J: There are laws, mein Fuehrer.

A: My commands are law!

J: Yes, mein Fuehrer. Your commands apply here.

A: And what is the command?

J: I already said that, mein Fuehrer.

A: What?

J: RU.

A: Return Undesired?

J: Yes, mein Fuehrer.

A: And what does that mean?

J: You should know that, mein Fuehrer.

A: Court-martial?

J: No, mein Fuehrer.

A: Death by hanging?

J: No, mein Fuehrer.

A: What else, Guensche? What else?

(Silence)

A: Cyclone B?

J: Yes, mein Fuehrer.

A: I'm gassed?

J: Yes, mein Fuehrer.

A: Why, Guensche, why?

J: Command is command, mein Fuehrer.

A: And when?

J: Do you really want to know, mein Fuehrer?

A: Yes, Guensche. I want to know.
J: In 8 days, mein Fuehrer. On May 8th.
A: And what happens then?
J: You should know that, mein Fuehrer.
A: I will be ashed.
J: Yes, mein Fuehrer. You will be ashed at midnight.
A: And what happens then?
J: You should know that too, mein Fuehrer.
A: I go out through the chimney.
J: Yes, mein Fuehrer.
A: And what happens then?
J: You should also know that, mein Fuehrer.
A: I don't know, Guensche.
J: Do you really want to know, mein Fuehrer?
A: Yes, Guensche. I want to know.
J: You go to heaven, mein Fuehrer.
A: I'm going to heaven?
J: Yes, mein Fuehrer.
A: And then I stay there?
J: Yes, mein Fuehrer. Then you stay there. Return Undesired.

(The light goes out. The Missa Solemnis plays to the end. The emergency light stays on.)
