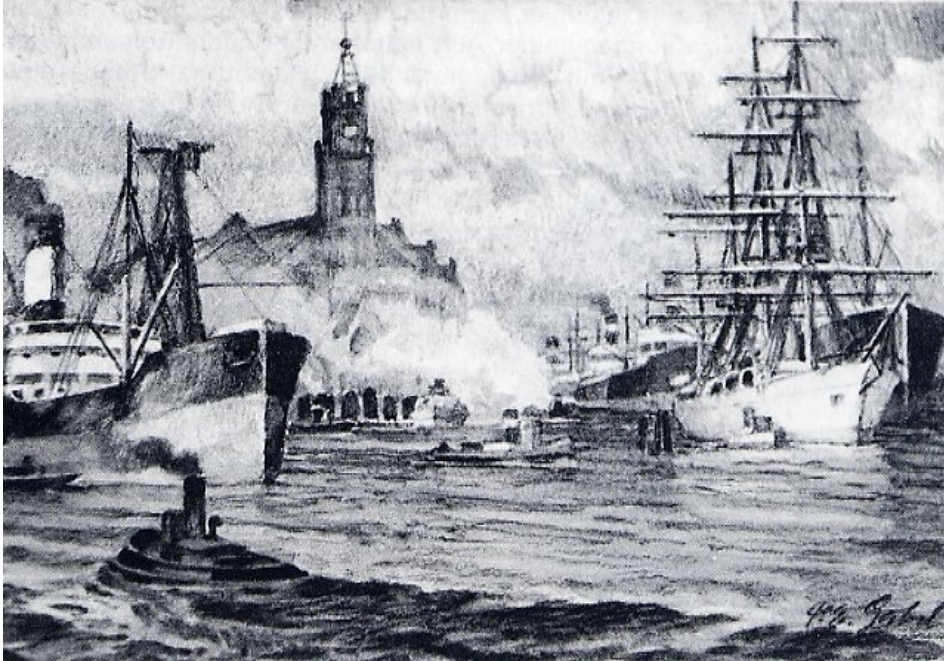


Fictional Character

by Ulrike



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1 Paintings from **Paul Emil Gabel**; Artist from Elbing (1875-1938)

There was a chase and hunt by a death squad, and their rescue, apparently from a group which had never existed in New York City, according to the CIA agents. This formed a sound basis for a sociable relationship between Catherine and Elliot, and then laid the groundwork for a friendship that included Vincent.

On these special evenings, Elliot dropped all pretense, and came out of the crisis stronger.

All the stress, pressure, pain and distress he had to endure during this time, while he had to prove to himself that he could do it, was replaced by a more genuine person.

Consequently, that evening changed his life. His friends convinced him that an isolated life in his tower wouldn't help his heart, so he moved into a spacious brownstone, next door to Catherine and Vincent. He became part of the rejoicing and embraced their daily life as part of his newly acquired family.

"I'll be right back - just going next door to deliver some cake," Catherine called into the hallway as she picked up her cardigan and her keys.

She rang the door, waiting until Rosita, Elliot's housekeeper led her in. Rosita had become the soul of the house.

"Hi Rosita," Catherine greeted her.

"Hi Catherine," Rosita replied.

"I only wanted to deliver some cake for the residents," Catherine explained with a smile.

"Uh, what a wonderful idea, please come in," Rosita answered, letting her in. "I'll take it off your hands".

"Mmh, mmh that smells like fresh coffee," Catherine remarked.

Rosita smiled recognizing and invited. "If you like, you can go ahead to the library. The oven is lit in there. After informing Mr. Burch, I'll serve coffee."

Catherine entered the room, welcomed by the warmth of the soapstone oven. She reached out her hands to enjoy it. After warming up, she started to look around and discovered two paintings which attracted her attention. She moved closer for a better look.

"Interesting," she thought. "It looks like the same place, but they're different."

"Here, is the coffee," Rosita announced. "Mr. Burch will join you when he has finished his phone call."

"Would you keep me company?" Catherine asked.

Rosita poured the coffee and shook her head. "Not today. We can catch up next time. I would be glad to."

She left Catherine alone, who picked up her cup of coffee. She was engrossed in examining the paintings again when Elliot came in.

"Catherine," he proclaimed. "What a nice surprise."

"I came on the fly to deliver some cake," she explained.

"What a wonderful idea. You are pampering us," he answered, smiling.

"You're welcome. New acquisitions?" Catherine asked, pointing to the paintings.

"Yes, they remind me about authenticity. There's a story behind them," he confessed.

Catherine remained silent, waiting for an explanation.

"Would both of you like to come for a cozy visit in the evening? I think the tale would be told better in company of a fiery glow and a glass of wine. We could have supper first. What do you think?" he suggested.

"Thanks for having us. We will look forward to it," Catherine replied.

“Would 8:00 pm work?” Elliot asked.

“Yes, that sounds perfect,” Catherine answered. They said their goodbyes.

Back home, Catherine informed Vincent of the invitation.

“Yes, of course. A good tale is always something to look forward to,” he replied, smiling at her.

Before Vincent, Catherine, and Elliot moved into the brownstones, a substantial renovation had taken place. Elliot had studied ancient construction plans of historical buildings. A system of secret passageways, secret doors and priest holes, including a direct access to the tunnels below, were created in the houses, a real challenge, and one which opened new perspectives to him. Elliot once dreamt of building the highest skyscraper, but now he found new challenges in implementing environmentally-sustainable architecture.

Thanks to these renovations, Vincent and Catherine could reach Elliot's house unobserved. After they had said their hellos, they took seats and enjoyed a wonderful meal in good company. Then they finally settled into the library, and everyone was provided with a glass of red wine. Vincent studied the paintings.

“Interesting. Where is the location?” he asked.

“Hamburg port, Germany,” Elliot replied.

“It's a big port, isn't it?” Catherine asked.

“Yes, it is. You know that I went to sea in my younger years,” Elliot said.

“You had a thirst for adventure, a younger edition of James Fenimore Cooper,” Catherine stated.

“Maybe, in a way. The conditions were cramped, but I had to break the boundaries. As a result, I didn't have a family any longer,” Elliot revealed. “You have to pay for everything; nothing is free. There is always a downside.”

Elliot sighed, dwelling on his thoughts. Catherine and Vincent didn't urge him to continue.

He remembered his guests and continued to tell his tale.

“The paintings represented a special place within the port, named “Kehrwieder”. The term may mean something like “return home”. Originally it's called “Kehrwedder” in Low German. The verb “wiederkehren” is similar to “to come round”.

“When you visit Hamburg port, you can take a harbor tour. It's really impressive. Besides the places of interest, those tours can be unforgettable if the captain is able to spin yarns. Naturally, they do so. One of the tales goes like this:

“It is reported that the name originated with the people of Hamburg and, above all, the women, who left their sea-going men with the desire to “Come round!” - meaning the tip of the Kehrwieder Island, which lays at the exit of the harbor into the river Elbe.” Elliot paused.

“What a wonderful story”, Catherine exclaimed. Vincent remained silent, guessing that this wasn't the whole story.

“Yes, it is,” Elliot confirmed, fetching an antique postcard.



"It's a postcard from 1958," Elliot added and handed the card to the couple.

"But how could this story remain?" Catherine asked.

Elliot gave her a weak smile and continued. "In fact, the name "Kehrwieder" in North Germany is an expression for a dead end. Before the "Niederbaum bridge" (1880) was built, one had to turn back on this narrow island back to the "Brooks bridge".

Catherine looked startled.

"The first story – and artwork - belong to the sphere of wonderful myths. It's a charming and adorable fiction.

"The second one belongs to the matter-of-fact. Unadorned, unemotional, and definitely not the stuff that dreams are made of similar to reality.

"But Stosh Kazmarek had dreams, he wanted to build more than sand castles. So he broke his chains and left home and family. I had to realize that Stosh Kazmarek was a real person, so his dreams couldn't come true.

"Therefore, Elliot Burch was born. For him nothing has been impossible. He has the world at his feet.

"When you create a fictional character, in the beginning it seems to be fine. You can hide your own uncertainty behind the mask. It seems easy to slip into a new role, to separate one person from the other. But over time the fictional character leads a life of its own, and you have to carry the burden of two in one - Elliot and Stosh. Both are struggling for primacy and it could happen, that one gets lost. I had become a fugitive soul and I was losing myself. Nobody was there to rescue me from ruin, to keep me grounded.

"So as Heraclitus says; "We rise into the same river and yet not into it, we are it and we are not. "

"These stories and those two artworks remind me about authenticity. It means one has to be of undisputed origin and not a copy; genuine," Elliot confessed.

"No, Elliot," Catherine disagreed, jumped up to her feet, hugging him. "That's what friends are for. To prove that you are genuine."

Vincent nodded in agreement, rose and embraced Elliot too.

"Catherine is right, that's what friends are for," he stated.

Two souls, alas, exist in my breast,

One separated from another:

One, with its crude love of life, just

Clings to the world, tenaciously, grips tight, 1115

The other soars powerfully above the dust,

Into the far ancestral height.

(Goethe Faust I)

END

- i <http://www.aefl.de/ordld/Gabel/gabel4/gabel4.htm>

Blick auf die Kaiserspeicher und die Kehrwiederspitze in Hamburg, Mischtechnik
(Aquarell/Kohle/Papier), um 1930, 16 x 21 cm, sig. u. r.

View to Kaiserspeicher (Building former warehouse within former Hamburg warehouse district; today Hamburg Elbphilharmonie) und tip of Kehrwieder (former island and part of former Hamburg warehouse district) in Hamburg
misch technique, aquarelle, coal, paper) 6,3 l x 8,27 i

- ii <http://www.aefl.de/ordld/Gabel/gabel5/gabel5.htm>

Hamburg - Hafen und Kehrwiederspitze, AK nach einem Original-Gemälde von P. E. Gabel,
Hamburg, Atelier Neuwall 40, nach 1930, 10,5 x 15cm, sig. u. r.

Hamburg Port and tip of Kehrwieder from P.E.Gabel, Hamburg, Atelier Neuwall 40, after 1930,
4,13 i x 5,91 l

Kaiserspeicher A 1875 and 1963



Elbphilharmonie 2013



Elbphilharmonie with tip of Kehrwieder



2016



