



I'm Dan, and I'm a third-year student studying German with Beginners' Chinese at Warwick. I am currently part-way through my year abroad in Germany, working as an English Language assistant in the Rheingau.

I felt that this project would be a good opportunity to try something new, whilst also practicing my German. My main inspiration for writing this story stemmed from my own desire to travel, and feelings of frustration after being stuck indoors over various lockdowns with no opportunity to do so. As a result, I felt it could be interesting to explore these feelings from the entirely different perspective of a character living in Germany, the country which I desperately wanted to travel to at the time of writing the story.

10. Lockdown in Frankfurt (KS4 & 5)

Dan Richardson

Two years ago I was living a typical life. For twenty-three years I had been married to my wife, and although I must admit that I no longer loved her, our marriage was quite all right. My wife and I were more good friends than lovers. My life was not particularly exciting, but it was orderly and I was content.

But suddenly my world was turned upside down. In March 2020, Chancellor Angela Merkel announced a nationwide lockdown due to the imminent threat of the coronavirus. My wife and I lived in a small flat on the outskirts of Frankfurt. On the whole, we were quite content in our flat, but during the pandemic we were locked in for weeks and had no way to leave. The pandemic, the lockdown, the insecurity - all this put

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a lot of strain on us, and all of a sudden we started arguing several times a day. It became quite simply impossible to sit together in one room.

But then our situation got even worse. Since the death of her husband, my mother-in-law had been living alone. She had sold her house and moved into a small one-room flat. During the pandemic, she could not visit friends and since we were her only relatives, my wife decided to invite her to live with us temporarily. We had a small guest room where she could sleep. I understood that my wife wanted to help her mother, but since our marriage, my mother-in-law had done everything possible to put as much strain on our marriage as possible. By inviting my mother-in-law, we literally brought the devil into our house.

One day, all three of us - my wife, mother-in-law and I were sitting together in our little kitchen. We were eating our lunch - tarte flambée - and apart from our slow chewing, it was as quiet as a mouse. Then, for no reason, my mother-in-law muttered: "Real German food! Not like the Turkish filth from that man at that stall on the market square! It's those foreigners' fault that we have this virus here in Germany! They" That was the straw that broke the camel's back. My mother-in-law was an AfD voter and thought foreigners were responsible for everything bad in Germany. I was fed up with the racist remarks around me: "I can't take it anymore! I've been sitting here for a fortnight and have to listen to your racist comments while my wife just nods in agreement. I just want to get out of here!"

My mother-in-law and wife froze. I left them in their shock and without a word went into the bedroom and packed a suitcase. As I opened the front door, I looked back into the kitchen

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where my mother-in-law's spiteful eyes were staring at me while my wife just looked sadly into space. This sight haunted me as I wandered through the streets of Frankfurt. I had no destination in mind and didn't know what to do - but I felt liberated and free for the first time in years. That was good.

Translated with www.DeepL.com/Translator (free version)

QUESTIONS:

- 1) What particularly caused the relationship between the main character and his wife to change?
- 2) Do some research on the AFD. What is this organisation? Why does the principal character fear it?
- 3) Continue the story: what do you think happens next?