

SPECTRE AT THE FEAST

Book 3 of the East Berlin Series

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WOLF PRESS

PART 1

Democracy

DAY 1

Sunday

12th June 1994

Kaminsky stood on scaffolding at the end of Alexanderplatz.

One arm raised, fist clenched, saluting the crowds below. He stared out at thousands of faces, at hundreds of placards and banners, flags and flaming torches.

The crowd chanted. *Kaminsky Kaminsky Kaminsky.*

But Kaminsky stood above them all, stock still, fist raised, saying not a word.

The crowd hushed itself, the shouts and chants dying back, murmuring to a standstill.

Only when he had absolute silence did Kaminsky lower his arm and step up to the microphones and cameras.

The government is weak.

The government has lost its way.

They even held a referendum to ask us what to do, but they're still unsure: parliament and Round Tables are bickering.

Our government is paralysed.

But we, the people, we are making history. Right now, all of us here are making history.

And more than ever, in this historical time we need a capable

leader. A leader to steer a steady course for our Republic. We need a leader with strength, a leader of ability and moral fibre. It is time to end the political corruption—but the establishment doesn't recognise this.

It is time to renew our democratic system—but the establishment won't do this.

It is time for real leadership—but the establishment can't provide this!

Again the chant *Kaminsky Kaminsky Kaminsky* swept through the crowd. Kaminsky himself stood back, let the wave of words break on the stage and surge around again.

Look at the Resurgence: just a few weeks ago the government of this country was unable to deal with violence and criminality from skinheads and far-right extremists. The establishment showed itself unable to act.

We, the people, took matters into our own hands.

We, the people, cleared up the mess they couldn't handle.

We, the people, exposed the weakness of the elite!

It is time for us, the people, to take back control.

It is time for us, the people, to take back power.

Because we are the people!

Kaminsky stood back, his fist raised again, smiling and acknowledging the chants of the crowd.

We are the people! We are the people! We are the people!

20:13

Karo

I don't think anyone saw us.

My mate Schimmel was on the street corner, keeping a lookout while I decorated the window with red paint. I'd only got as far as RACIST SCUM before I was overcome by the sour taste of anger that rippled up my throat. *Fuck it.* With the heel of my boot I kicked a cobble loose and levered it out.

I took a few steps back, turned, and lobbed the stone.

The window of Kaminsky's office cracked, the glass hanging for a moment before sliding down, shattering as it went. Schimmel twisted around, shock splashed over his face. I grabbed his hand as I legged past him.

At the U-Bahn station we jumped down the steps as a train pulled in and I sat down, laughing at the dismay on my friend's coupon.

"That wasn't the deal!" he said.

"You feeling sorry for Kaminsky?"

Schimmel didn't answer, and I stopped grinning. It was no fun any more, not with my friend looking so pissed off all the time.

"Oh, come on." I tried again. "He deserves more than a smashed window!"

"He does. But what about sticking to agreements?"

"Fuck off!"

The train was pulling into the next station. As I stepped onto the platform my anger and frustration felt like a kick in the back.

Martin

The police lieutenant limped into my flat on a Sunday evening. He wasn't in uniform and I was just about naïve enough to assume this might be a social visit: *just passing, thought I'd pop in.*

"They let you out?" I asked as I held the door open.

"Had to argue with the surgeon." Steinlein's stick tapped over my painted floorboards.

I offered my visitor the comfy seat, but he preferred the hard kitchen chair at the table. I was about to offer him coffee too, but he lit a cigarette and started to speak.

"I know you're still on leave but I was hoping you could help me with a case. It's sensitive."

The shift in his voice warned me even before his words reached me. This was work. This was police work. I got up, carefully pushed my chair back under the table and stood by the door, pointing out into the hallway.

"You want a cup of coffee, you're welcome. But if you want to get me involved in something ... You know why I'm still on leave? It's not because of this," I touched my bruised panda eyes, the eyebrows that were still growing back, "nor because of this," I pointed at my left knee. "They say it's because I need a rest." I tapped the side of my head. "I think I've had enough of *sensitive*, don't you, comrade Lieutenant?"

"When the fascists attacked me, when I was in hospital, you were the only one to come to visit." Steinlein was still sitting there, hands clasped over the top of his walking stick.

"Doesn't make me responsible for you."

“Think about it. Call me when you’re ready to talk.” Steinlein got to his feet, holding on to the table for support, then tapped his way back into the hall, as slowly as he’d come in. By the time he was at the door, curiosity had got the better of me.

A curiosity I thought long gone. A curiosity I should have known better than to allow myself.

“What is it? What’s so bloody *sensitive*?”

With one hand on the latch Steinlein half turned to meet my gaze. “They want to kill Kaminsky.”