

Gute Reise oder eine sichere Fahrt

[Have a Good Journey or a Safe Ride]

A direct connection

“It was like a fairytale, but not 100% made up.” – Bilal

About *Gute Reise oder eine sichere Fahrt*

by Henryk Götze and Fanny Karos

“Once upon a time, not all that long ago, in a land not all that far away...”

A bus is standing at the station. It is waiting for the travelers, and the travelers are waiting for their departure. One after another they enter the bus. They search for their seats. Someone is calling home, another person is checking whether they have got everything they packed. Are tickets and documents still there? Is the visa still valid? Another person is sitting in the wrong seat. They all know what they are leaving behind and why, but they do not know where they are going. Not even a bus driver can tell the passengers. At last, the journey begins – past familiar woods and streets, past border patrols, past traffic jams and petrol stations, road blockages and accident sites. Until the bus finally falls apart and breaks down in the middle of nowhere. An unplanned stop with an unclear duration, a small catastrophe, but also a break to take a breather, to sit down, to swap tales.

Gute Reise oder eine sichere Fahrt encompasses stories that director Serge Okunev and his team collected during their own research trips. They met with social workers, job coaches, a banker, an author, a bus driver, students and theatre makers. Most of them had to leave their home country and want to talk about their experiences. Three of them do so on stage, while the stories of the other interviewees are articulated through recordings, phone calls and in particular through the characters Prince and Wolf. The two of them are sitting in the same bus as the rest of the ensemble and the audience. They, however, are from another world: that of a fairytale. Based on the accounts of the interviewees and the lived experiences of some of the team members, author Nina Moortgat wrote a script that alternates between quotes and fairytale stories, bureaucratic limbo and heroes' journeys. The bus embarks on its journey towards an unknown goal while the words of people who have experienced migration, be they present or absent, pass by. Between Munich and Antwerp, Dresden and Vienna, Istanbul and Jekaterinburg, a play developed that imagines what travelers might have to tell each other, provided they were all going in the same direction.

The Border Game: A Game For Us and You

by Fanny Karos

The Border Game (“Grenzspiel”) takes place during the first half of *Gute Reise oder eine sichere Fahrt*. It addresses the complicated rules and intransparent system of an asylum procedure. Inspired by the Asylum Act of the Federal Republic of Germany, the travelers must make their way through the quests of the rules of paradise to be granted access and allowed to reside there. The following text is meant to give an impression of the complexity and incomprehensibility of this process in Germany and of German legislation. It is therefore not fully translated into English.

„Persons persecuted on political grounds shall have the right of asylum.” (Article 16a Section 1 Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany)

Nach der Ankunft in der Bundesrepublik ist einer **necessary biometric identification registration** durch die Ausländerbehörde oder die Polizei, wobei Angaben von

Name/Name

Herkunftsland/Country of origin

Geburtsdatum/Date of birth

Glaubenszugehörigkeit/Religious affiliation

Sprache/Language

Volkszugehörigkeit/Ethnic affiliation

zu Teil geht dabei einer Fotografie sowie der Abnahme von Fingerabdrücken von Personen ab dem sechsten Lebensjahr, bevor in eins der Länder in eine Aufnahmeeinrichtung verwiesen wird, der Erkennung dienen und mit des Erhalts eines Ankunftsnachweises. Die Pflicht!, einen Asylantrag zu stellen, ist als ein ausgewiesenes Recht, und führen den verfahrenenden Anspruch an eine gekoppelte Mitwirkungspflicht, derer die wahrheitsgemäße und vollständige Auskunftserteilung und gesetzlichen Vorgaben und behördlichen Anordnungen werden befolgt werden, wobei die **observance of all regulations & laws** grundsätzlich ist. Die Antragstellung für Asyl mit der Vorlage des ausgehändigten Ankunftsnachweises neben

Geburtsurkunden/Birth certificates

Pässe/Passports

Reiseunterlagen/Travel documents

Beweise für Fluchtgründe/Evidence for reasons of fleeing

wie Fotos,

um Gefahren erfolgreich beweisend geltend einreichen zu werden gemacht können,

auszuhändigen die Behörden diese rechtmäßig überlassen. Personalien zu

Wohnort/Place of residence

Schul-/School

und Ausbildung/and training

Sprachkenntnissen/Language skills

Reiserouten/Travel routes

und möglichen Familienangehörigen in Deutschland oder einem anderen EU-Staat

/and possible family members in Germany or another EU state

sind von der Person wahrheitsgemäß, **otherwise you will be deported at a time unknown to you**, erläuterten Antragstellung. Zugangsdaten für Smartphones oder Cloud-Dienste, ist die Sicherung, Feststellung und Überprüfung von Identität und Staatsangehörigkeit, wobei Reiserouten

nachzuvollziehen werden, erforderlich von Seiten derer Antragstellenden. Es gilt die Datenschutzgrundverordnung (DS-GVO). Für eine **SIMPLIF**ication of **comprehensibility**, sprich Simplifizierung, wird einer deutschen Schreibweise von ausländischen Namen, Sprachen und natürlich Schriftarten sind dabei mit- und eingeschlossen, von den Mitarbeitenden werden Umschreibungen der Namen bestimmt. Vor Eröffnung, als die behördliche Gewissenhaftigkeit immer Vorrang vollführt, muss der Überprüfung, wo und wann und zu welchen Konditionen, das heißt mit

Bus/Bus

Bahn/Train

Flugzeug/Airplane

Schiff (Schlauchboot/Nussschale)/Ship (dinghy/nut shell)

oder „zu Fuß“ / or “on foot”

in die EU eingereist sind, ob sie bereits in einem anderen Mitgliedstaat einen Antrag stellten oder Familienangehörige, der Verwandtschaftsgrad spielt dabei eine untergeordnet wichtige Rollen, haben und welcher Staat jeweils zuständig ist, wobei die Zuständigkeit nicht in Deutschland erfolgt, **the transfer or deportation into this corresponding country** zu nehmen war. Doch ist dem nicht so, wird der Termin für eine Anhörung beim Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF) angesetzt um Gründe, welche die Angst vor drohender Gefahr erklären, persönlich gerechtfertigt, und dabei die der Beweislast im Sinne der antragstellenden Person ein Nachkommen empfohlen wird, wenn ein Aufenthalt weiter gewünscht und auf Dauer sollte. **Does something really speak against a deportation?** Diese Frage und Anhörung sind jegliche Fluchtursachen, Verfolgungsschicksal und mögliche Rückkehr-Gefahren, unter der Anwesenheit von Sprachmittelnden, durch Auskünfte, Nachfragen, sowohl erfragt als auch verzeichnet und auf Wunsch, die Mitbringung eines Beistand, welcher und selbst im Krankheitsfall nur mit Unentschuldigungen dem negativ sich auswirken dem Fernbleiben mitsamt schriftlichem Attest vorzuliegen, andernfalls eine Vernachlässigung der Mitwirkungspflicht. Die Entscheidung innerhalb von 6 Monaten schriftlich, und ist die Sicherheit der Lage in einem Herkunftsland aktuell der Abschätzung verhindert, kann die Aufschiebung der Entscheidung zu einer alle 6 Monate nachprüfenden Entscheidung, wobei ein Verfahren nach 21 Monaten zu einem Abschluss kommen sollte, in der Realität möglicherweise sich verzögern könnte. Bei einem positivem Bescheid ist der Erhalt einer **residence PERMIT** für ein bis drei Jahre, die Abhängigkeit ist vom jeweiligen Schutzstatus, und die Zuerkennung der Flüchtlingseigenschaft oder der subsidiäre Schutz und die Asylberechtigung. Andernfalls wird eine „**notice of impending deportation**“ und der Termin, bis wann die Bundesrepublik zu verlassen ist, Beratungsstellen für freiwillige Rückkehr, und ggf. die Abschiebung angeordnet, und innerhalb 1 Woche vollzogen wird, sofern die Zweifel an der Rechtmäßigkeit nicht mittels einer Antragstellung angefochten könnten. Liegen diese nicht vor, wird die Aufenthaltsgestattung eingezogen und die Abschiebung durchgeführt, und innerhalb der angegebenen Fristen

Wider/objec

spruch/tion

eingelegt werden könnte. Es wird in diesem Fall dazu geraten, Rechtsbeistand zu suchen.

Of Fairytale Heroes, Travelers and Their Stories

by Henryk Götze

We tell stories to entertain and to teach, to cheer up or to calm down, by the campfire or before bedtime, on long bus trips or during periods of waiting. Orally transmitted stories are a constant in all cultures and are therefore studied not only by literary scholars but also by anthropologists, theologians and historicists with respect to their structures, their similarities and their differences.

One of the best known models for the typical structure of a story is Joseph Campbell's description of the hero's journey. Based on different myths, fairytales and legends, he created a framework for the so-called monomyth: He describes the hero leaving the known world, crossing the threshold to the unknown, mastering various fights and challenges and meeting with archetypical characters before their final triumphant return. Campbell maps the typical steps on the quest of lonesome protagonists à la Han Solo, Frodo or Odysseus. Nowadays, Campbell's work is being viewed critically. The concept of a universal hero's journey as the only possible narrative structure is used to hold up the western canon as a benchmark, limiting diversity in narrative perspectives. That is why it is important to break the monopoly that the monomyth has on storytelling in order to create room for alternative narratives that center values such as creativity and community building instead of celebrating heroic individualism.

Gute Reise oder eine sichere Fahrt focuses on the form of the fairytale. Originating as an orally transmitted, entertaining tale without a specific author or temporality, the genre term of the "Volksmärchen" [folk tale] emerged in 18th century Germany and was later picked up by the brothers Grimm. They took the folksy character of the fairytale as a reason to study it as a cultural and historic artefact. This project led to the publication of their collection of folktales from 1812 to 1858, the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* [Children's and Household Tales]. Their goal was not only to entertain but also to construct a German national identity. Representing only one moment in an oral tradition, the Grimm's tales bear the traces of the time during which they were put to paper. Critical readings from modern perspectives showcase problematic elements: patriarchal structures, eurocentric beauty standards, discriminatory portrayals of people with disabilities and antisemitic stereotypes.

These patterns are not exclusive to the genre of the "Volksmärchen", on the contrary – they spread over to all different kinds of stories. Many anthologies that were published in Germany such as the 2021 Reclam edition of *Die schönsten Märchen aus Afrika* [The Prettiest African Folktales] – are colonial products. They are based on collections that were curated during the German colonial period (from about 1884 to 1919). Tales from territories that currently are part of e.g. the states Burundi, Namibia, Kamerun, Ruanda, Togo and Tanzania were collected, selected, and adapted to German tastes and ideologies. These texts, too, reproduce existing power structures and cater to the longing for both exotic settings and familiar patterns. This tendency is reflected not only in the (re-)writing of stories but also, as exemplified by the hero's journey, in the ways that they are received and discussed academically. When a story is told in the same way too many times, it reinforces the impression that there is no alternative.

Gute Reise oder eine sichere Fahrt compiles numerous stories that director Serge Okunev and his team experienced themselves or collected during their research trips. Drawing on diary entries, cassette recordings, old chat logs, and fresh memories, they shared their experiences with one

another. But how do you tell all this to your child, to a stranger, to a theatre audience? During rehearsals and in dialogue with the ensemble and the interviewees, author Nina Moortgat attempted to find a language somewhere between reality and fiction – one that blends, distorts, reassembles, and connects individual life stories.

When stories break out of established structures on stage and fairytales meet reality, the inadequacy of the hero's journey as a template becomes clear. The longing for the familiar morphs into a longing for connection; the heroes' trials grow increasingly absurd, and the final triumph is suspended indefinitely. The characters of the Prince and the Wolf seem out of place at first within the exhausted makeshift community of a long-distance bus ride. They have strayed from their intended (hero's) journey and yet they speak of experiences that are highly present: of flight and hope, of being trapped in the limbo of German bureaucracy, and of being a stranger in a new country. They are joined by additional performers who share their own tales, music recommendations, and favourite quotes with the audience. The play raises the questions of who is telling whose story, and how the act of retelling it on stage can continually shift one's perspective. It was like a fairytale, it was like a movie, but in truth it was also entirely different.

Biographies

Team

Serge Okunev

Direction and Video

Serge Okunev was born in Yekaterinburg. He studied directing and acting in Russia, and is currently doing a master's degree in Stage Directing for Spoken and Music Theatre, Performing Arts at the Bayerische Theaterakademie August Everding. In 2024, he created his documentary play *Oder kann das weg* as part of his studies in Munich, collaborating with Nina Moortgat, zhenya efros and Fabian Blum. It was most recently shown at the Spielart Festival 2025. In addition, he worked as a dramaturgic aid and researcher for Jan-Christoph Gockel's *Wallenstein* at the Münchner Kammerspiele, in which Okunev also performs on stage.

zhenya efros

Stage Design and Video

zhenya efros (he/him) was born in St. Petersburg, where he began his studies in scenography and theatre studies. Due to the war in Ukraine, the increasing hostility towards queer people, and rising antisemitism, he left Russia. After a year of migration through Finland, Austria, Germany, and Israel, he arrived at the HfBK Dresden, where he continues to study Stage Design and performance in Barbara Ehnes' class. In 2024, he received the DAAD Prize for international students and completed an Erasmus semester in Nina von Mechow's scenography class at the Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien. As a theatre maker and performance artist, he engages both practically and academically with themes such as war, the body, identity and equality. He lives in Germany and works internationally.

Paula Schlagbauer

Costume Design

Paula Schlagbauer was born in Regensburg. She studied stage design at the Berlin University of the Arts and directing at the Otto Falckenberg Schule in Munich. She worked as an assistant with, among others, Ersan Mondtag, Stefan Pucher, Barbara Ehnes and Julia Kurzweg. Her text *Chickenfilet mit rose* premiered in 2021 at the Cammerspiele Leipzig and was invited to the Treffen junger Autor:innen and to the "Nahaufnahme" of the International Literature Festival Berlin. She has directed productions at the Volkstheater Munich and at the Münchner Kammerspiele. Her final project *Bavarokratie* was invited to the Körber Studio Junge Regie.

Fabian Blum

Composition and Sound Design

Fabian Blum was born in Siegburg near Bonn and has been studying composition at the University of Music and Theatre Munich with Moritz Eggert since 2019. He has received several awards, including at the Carl von Ossietzky-Kompositionswettbewerb, and won the Leonhard und Ida Wolf-

Gedächtnispreis of the City of Munich. His works have premiered at several festivals, including the Ars Electronica Festival in Linz, the aDevantgarde Festival, the Transparent Sound New Music Festival in Budapest, and the Intersonanzen Festival in Potsdam. He composes music for theatre productions at the Bayerische Theaterakademie August Everding, the Staatstheater Nürnberg, the Residenztheater Munich, and the Spielart Festival.

Leon Zmelty

Composition Assistant

Leon Zmelty was born in Lahnstein and studied composition with Gordon Kampe, Moritz Eggert and Yair Klartag. He has received numerous awards and scholarships, including the “Junge Kunst / Neue Medien” scholarship and a residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris. His first full-length opera *Einladung zur Enthauptung* (libretto by Sören Sarbeck, directed by Maria Chagina) premiered in 2024 at the Bayerische Theaterakademie. Zmelty’s compositions are characterised by dissolving genre boundaries. Music theatre and the exploration of his social responsibility as an artist hold a special place in his work. He is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Music and Theatre Munich.

Nina Moortgat

Text

Nina Moortgat studied Literature and Linguistics in Antwerp, English Literature in Brussels, and Writing for Performance at LUCA School of Arts in Flanders. She also attended workshops at the Salzburg Summer School under Mette Sterre and completed a semester abroad at the Bayerische Theaterakademie August Everding. She has appeared as a performer at the Studiobühne in Munich and completed internships at the Münchner Kammerspiele for Jan-Christoph Gockel’s *Oh Schreck!* and *Wallenstein*. Her directing project *Hola, Bonjour, Salam!*, a piece developed with young people with migrant backgrounds, was performed at Het Paleis in Antwerp; with her solo piece *escapeescape* she most recently appeared at the 2025 UWE:festival in Munich.

Henryk Götze

Dramaturgy

Henryk Götze is from Dresden. He first moved to Bayreuth to study Theatre and Media Studies (BA), then spent a semester abroad in Bradford. Alongside his studies, he worked as a radio host and participated in independent film and theatre projects. Internships led him to the Medienkulturzentrum Dresden, the Staatstheater Nürnberg and the Düsseldorfer Schauspielhaus. Since 2024, he has been studying Dramaturgy at the Bayerische Theaterakademie August Everding in Munich. In the 2024/2025 season, he worked as a dramaturg for *Lightyears Beyond the Expected* (directed by Meret Mareike Behschnitt). In the 2025/2026 season, he is working on *Gute Reise oder eine sichere Fahrt* and *KI essen Seele auf (ORPHEA)* directed by Katja Wachter, while continuing his collaboration with Meret Mareike Behschnitt.

Fanny Karos

Dramaturgy

Fanny Karos was born in Munich. After training at the International Munich ArtLab, she completed a bachelor's degree in Applied Musicology and Music Education at the University of Eichstätt in 2024. Alongside her studies, she travelled to Berlin, Cottbus and back to Munich for internships and assistantships at the Bayerische Staatsoper, the Kinderopernhaus of the Staatsoper Unter den Linden, and the Staatstheater Cottbus. Since autumn 2024, Fanny has been studying Dramaturgy at the Bayerische Theaterakademie August Everding. In the 2025/2026 season, she is working on the productions *Lazarus oder die Feier der Auferstehung* (directed by Martina Veh), *The Addams Family* (directed by Malte C. Lachmann), and *V0ICES//B0D1EZ*, a co-production with the Munich Biennale (directed by Amy Stebbins).

Janina Schreier

Assistant Director

Janina Schreier grew up between Landsberg and Munich. She completed her bachelor's degree in Theatre Studies and Art History at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich. She also completed several internships at film production companies in Munich, writing concepts and screenplays for the Bayerischer Rundfunk. She participated in a screenwriting programme and worked for two consecutive years as a production manager and assistant director for the playwrights' and opera workshop Playlist. In March 2026, she will begin her bachelor's studies in Stage Directing for Spoken and Music Theatre, Performing Arts at the Bayerische Theaterakademie August Everding.

Ensemble

Marlon Bienert

Marlon Bienert was born in 1996 and holds a Bachelor of Arts in Architecture from the Technical University of Munich as well as an acting degree from the Otto Falckenberg Schule. Before attending drama school, he played the lead role in the film *The French Flamingo Fucker*, which was invited to the Max Ophüls Festival in 2023 and won a major award. During his acting studies, he performed at the Volkstheater Munich, the Münchner Kammerspiele, and the Thalia Theater Hamburg, working with directors such as Paula Schlagbauer, Dennis Duszczak, Malte Jelden and Gernot Grünewald.

Jamal Braun

Jamal Braun was born in Munich in 1994 and is a freelance actor, director and stage combat choreographer. He trained at the Yorick Theatre School and also studied mask performance and Commedia dell'arte, his artistic home and the foundation of all his stage work. He has performed at the Freies Theater München (FTM), has been a member of the multilingual Commedia dell'arte group I Piselli since 2019, and since 2022 has toured Germany and Austria with the crime dinner *Zimt und Zyankali*. In 2024, he played Filch in *The Threepenny Opera* in Immling. He also works in

street theatre and multilingual projects. He has appeared in film and television, including in the comedy series *jerks* and the crime series *Hubert ohne Staller*.

Bilal Ahmad Samir

Bilal Ahmad Samir is 19 years old and comes from Kabul. His native language is Persian. He gained his first acting experience at Theater Grenzenlos in Munich, where he is currently performing in the production *Liebe* in Munich and Burghausen. He is looking forward to developing his craft and exploring the stage more deeply. His favourite poet is Rumi (مولوی).

Tendo Mutungi Kibumba

Tendo Mutungi Kibumba was born in Kalangala in 2008. He currently attends school in Munich and has been performing at Theater Grenzenlos since February 2025, where he appears on stage in *Liebe* in Munich and Burghausen. Acting is one of his hobbies. He enjoys listening to The Weeknd.

Aref Noori

Aref Noori was born in Faryab in 1976. Before coming to Germany in 2021, he worked as a travel agent, head of human resources and finance manager, among other roles. He has been married for seven years and has three children. Aref has been making music for more than ten years and particularly loves folk music because to him, it reveals a lot about different cultures and their people. He currently works in the hospitality sector.