

Helmut Zell

**Black
Money**
in
Dar es Salaam

This novel is based on the author's experiences in Tanzania and other countries. The events did not occur, and the people are also fictitious. The story, therefore, is a work of fiction. Any resemblance to actual events, places, organisations, or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

The Author

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Rushwa means corruption

ku-ruka - to jump; fly

ku-rusha - to throw

rushwa - a bribe

ku-kula rushwa - to take bribes

Swahili Dictionary, London 1965

For my parents in gratitude

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2 September 2013 - 16 September 2013. A Quick Start

Paul woke up, startled. The digital alarm clock on the sideboard next to him showed it was six o'clock. Light was seeping in through the thick brown curtains. At the nearby intersection, vehicles stopped and started moving again at regular intervals. A bus came to a halt with a loud squeak. The last memories of his dream faded. He suddenly remembered that he would be flying to Tanzania today. A happy feeling rose in him, but was quickly overcast by worry.

This trip would mean a temporary farewell to Katrin. Was she already awake? Carefully, he leaned over to her. She was still sound asleep, buried deep in her pillow. She peacefully lay there. Her breathing was calm and barely audible. He envied Katrin's ability to easily fall asleep at night and to wake up refreshed in the morning.

The previous evening came to his mind. Katrin had put in so much effort to prepare the farewell dinner. But afterwards, she started making plans for their future together, and she questioned him about his ideas. He didn't want to talk about it. From his perspective, their relationship was fine. Why couldn't it just stay the way it was? Every time he had a job, he would be away for months. But in between, they lived together. And they talked regularly on the phone. That was good, wasn't it? Many other couples saw each other even less often and both sides were still happy with the arrangement. Once again, their conversation had taken an inharmonious course.

Now, he looked forward to the upcoming journey. As an international railway consultant, at certain times he would be inundated with jobs. At other times, there would be a slump. One of these slumps came to an end today. Three months before, he had returned from a job in Shanghai. Since then, he had sat idly at home, in his apartment. All his efforts to find a new job had been unsuccessful. Then, out of the blue, he got a phone call from GermanRailConsult, an international consulting company based in Berlin, offering him a contract for a six-month mission to Tanzania, to start as soon as possible.

A few days later, he met with director Doctor Ernst Ziegler in the company's head office in the old villa in Berlin-Zehlendorf, the view through the window showing rows of trees dyed in the colours of autumn and behind them the blue lake, Krumme Lanke. Doctor Ziegler had told him that the previous project manager in Tanzania had suddenly pulled out, which had put the project under great time pressure. For Paul, however, this meant a most favourable fee amount and he had spontaneously agreed.

For six years, he and Katrin had been together, with ups and downs. Katrin now wanted to put their relationship on a firmer track. She wanted children; he did not. She wanted marriage; he did not. At forty-eight, Paul felt he was too old for that. Maybe age wasn't the issue; maybe he just didn't want change. He loved Katrin, but he also loved his freedom. He also had a tendency to be indecisive and he avoided serious decisions. Luckily, for the next few months there would be no more of these discussions with Katrin.

Paul slipped out of bed, showered, and got dressed. Looking at himself in the mirror, he was satisfied with his appearance. At forty-eight, he still looked very young. His dark blond hair showed some grey strands at the temples only. His youthfulness showed in his choice of clothing. He preferred light blue jeans and smooth, checked cotton shirts, for today's journey too. He wasn't interested in

fashion trends, but he took great care in selecting tasteful clothing.

In the kitchen, he switched on the coffee machine. He only wanted a snack. Katrin was still sleepy when she came through the door. With a sigh, she sat down on the wooden kitchen bench and poured herself a cup of coffee. Katrin was thirty-eight, but this morning she looked older. Her face with its high cheekbones looked pale, wrinkled and blotchy. She hadn't put on make-up yet. There were many fine lines in the corners of her eyes. Her cropped blond hair was dishevelled and straggly. Her slim figure was the result of a disciplined diet and many strenuous exercise sessions in the gym. One could see the stress and strain of the past few months. Katrin was ambitious. She made good money and wanted to move up through the ranks at her web advertising agency.

"I have to go," she said urgently. "We have a really important meeting with our main client this morning."

They parted coolly.

As Paul sat alone with his now lukewarm coffee and thought about what he still needed to pack, Katrin weaved her car through the heavy traffic on the city highway. As far as she could see along the lane, the cars had come to a halt. Traffic jam. Sometimes she could drive to the office in thirty minutes. Today wasn't one of those days. She would be late for the meeting. These unending traffic jams – they made her angry. Why had she gone by car? She would have been on time if she had taken the metro. But the waiting on the platforms and the stops made her feel uneasy. Even worse were the crowded compartments, the feeling of being locked up, the noise and smells of the passengers.

This morning, she felt depressed. She had wished for a nice last evening with Paul. But again, things had gone

wrong. Actually, she had already given up on the issue. It had gone on like this for years with his long assignments abroad. When she spoke to him about it, he always argued that, with his expertise and work experience, he wouldn't be able to find any work in Germany at the age of nearly fifty. By now, she believed that he was just using it as an excuse. He was probably just a loner, who had no desire for a close relationship. However, he had always managed to comfort her. Then, several weeks before, he had started to have ideas about a shared future. He wanted to look for a bigger and nicer apartment. They even talked about marriage! That was new. At thirty-eight, she wasn't too old for a child. Then, suddenly the Tanzania job had got in the way. Now everything looked different again, and the plan for a shared future was one again postponed.

The traffic jam dragged on until Steglitz. Completely unnerved, she tormented herself in "stop-and-go" the few kilometres to the exit. Only at ten did she rush through the glass door of her agency on the second floor. Her boss was already sitting in the meeting room with the two marketing people from the client's firm. They had been waiting for her. She wordily apologized for her late arrival. She hung her jacket over the chair and tried to put all thoughts of Paul aside.

When his suitcase stood ready at the front door, he called Katrin at the office. His attempt at still saying something nice to her failed miserably. She seemed short-tempered and as usual, she was stressed and in a rush. It was actually still too early for the airport, but Paul couldn't stand being at home anymore. It was not quite twelve o'clock yet when Paul pulled his rolling suitcase over the pavement to the nearby Neukölln metro station. Although he had packed only the essentials, his suitcase would probably be over the

weight limit. As expected, he arrived much too early at Berlin Tegel Airport. Driven by an inner restlessness, he passed through passenger and luggage control to his gate ahead of time. He switched off his mobile phone. Nobody would call him now. From the free newspapers on the stand, he took a copy of the Süddeutsche Zeitung.

Finally the boarding call was announced. The Qatar Airways plane rolled onto the runway and punctually at 15:25, it took off into the sunny and clear autumn sky above Berlin. Paul leaned back in his seat, satisfied. Finally out of this city. After all these weeks of restlessness and useless activities, his life had purpose and direction again. In the seat next to him was a man at least ten years older than himself, in a business suit and tie, looking to start a conversation.

“Do you also have business in Qatar? Or will you continue on to a further destination today?”

Paul looked through the window.

“Yes, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.”

“I’m just going to Doha, for two days of business. East Africa – very interesting. I haven’t been there yet. Are you going there on business?”

“I’m on a project on a railroad line. Tonight I’ll catch an onward flight. So we’ll be going the same way until Doha,” Paul muttered.

His neighbour was talkative.

“Do you know that Qatar also wants to build a railroad? Deutsche Bahn is also involved. With high-speed tracks for the ICE. I just don’t know if it makes any sense for such small country.”

“I haven’t had anything to do with Qatar yet. My project in Tanzania has to do with an old route from the German colonial era. From the coast to Lake Tanganyika.”

“Today’s issue of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung reports that the Chinese want to get more involved in East Africa.”

“Yes, the Chinese had also built a railway in Tanzania. That was in the Seventies, under Mao Zedong. The TAZARA connects Dar es Salaam on the coast with Zambia. It still works today, but is in poor shape.”

“I envy you. You have an interesting job”.

“Hmm, I think so too. Tanzania still benefits from Germany’s railway construction a hundred years ago.”

“Yes, then I wish you success in your work.”

His neighbour opened the newspaper on his lap, and the conversation died. A few minutes later, the flight attendants began to serve the meals. Paul chose chicken with rice.

As Paul was looking out of the plane window and saw dawn breaking over the Black Sea, Klaus Kronberg sat on the porch of his bungalow in Kunduchi. An expanse of sparkling, starry sky stretched above him. Kunduchi was a suburb of Dar es Salaam, right on the Indian Ocean some twenty kilometres from the city centre. Kronberg was about five foot seven, and of sturdy build, with a prominent round belly. Since he had grown up in Munich and spent his youth there, he thought of himself primarily as a Münchner and then as a Bavarian. Aged sixty-eight, he looked younger; at least, that’s what he thought. In fact, only a few days before, a couple he was friends with had vehemently assured him of the fact. His hair was completely white and thinning. For his age he was in perfect health.

From the ocean, a cool evening breeze blew across the terrace. From here he had a view of the pool and the wellkept garden. Kronberg was the éminence grise at GermanRailConsult. He had overseen the company as managing director for many years. Three years before, he retired. During his last job in Tanzania, he met Flora, his current wife. Flora was just over fifty years old and came from a village on the slopes of Kilimanjaro. She used to work

as a director at the Ministry of Transport, but had retired early. She was as tall as Kronberg, but much slimmer. She had a friendly face and a lovely nature. The wrinkles around her eyes could only be seen in good light. Her good contacts with the senior management of the Ministry, and her knowledge of the internal decision-making mechanisms had always benefited Kronberg's business.

As on many evenings, tonight he was sitting in his wellpadded wicker chair. The wind was just picking up. Then his mobile phone on the table beside him began to ring. He answered with a curt "Hello." Doctor Ernst Ziegler was on the line.

"Good evening, Klaus. This is Ernst. How are you?"

"Oh, it's you, Ernst. Glad to hear from you. Here, everything's fine ... You know, it's always nice and warm here, for days now not a cloud in the sky. I'll do a few more rounds in the pool soon."

"Klaus, you have it good. You can enjoy your life. It's not all that relaxed here."

"What's going on, then?"

"We had a lot of stress today. The state prosecutor is investigating us. Eight people were searching our GRConsult office. Supposedly there was bribery in the Qatar project. I don't know how they got that idea."

Ziegler waited. When there was no reply, he continued.

"But that's not why I'm calling. I'm calling about something that concerns you. Lothar Woerz jumped ship two weeks ago. I haven't seen him at all. He said he got a better offer from a British consulting firm and has paid back the remainder of his fee."

There was silence on the line. Then, Ernst Ziegler spoke again. "Klaus, are you still there?"

"Yes, yes. That's something with the prosecutor's office in the house, and also the thing with Woerz. No one has told me anything."

"I didn't want to bother you with it. But there might be some kind of connection between the two cases."

Kronberg got up from his chair. Agitated, he asked, "What kind of connection? What does one have to do with the other? It was Woerz, after all, who led this project. He would know of such a connection. But what to do now?"

Ziegler was not surprised by Kronberg's agitation.

"Klaus, maybe there's no connection. At the moment the investigation is focusing on our business in Qatar. Don't worry, I have taken action already. Paul Mansfeld takes over. He did a project for us in China, and he has worked in Tanzania once before. Although it's been a few years and it wasn't for us. But he's loyal and reliable. He is the best man for the job. He will arrive in Dar es Salaam tomorrow and take over the office. I just wanted to let you know."

Kronberg answered with hesitation. "Well, let's see then how the new guy manages. I don't know him. You absolutely have to send me his CV."

"You'll get it. I will be grateful if you keep an eye on him," Ziegler said.

"I definitely will. Have you thought of the possible consequences this change can have for our partner, Joseph Kiloko, in the Ministry? However, as always, if there's anything new, I'll call you. Let's just hope that this Paul Mansfeld doesn't mess things up."

Because of the distance of more than 8,000 kilometres, there was a bit of a delay before the answer came.

"Klaus, don't worry. I have everything under control. Paul Mansfeld has been briefed, and I think he understands his task. Greetings to your dear wife."

Kronberg pushed his glasses up onto his forehead, narrowed his eyes, and brought his mobile phone up close to his face. Eventually he found the off-button. With a beep, the connection was terminated. Damn! he thought. He felt an uncomfortable tightening in his stomach. The peace and calm of this day had vanished all of a sudden. No! he

thought angrily. Everything had been arranged so nicely. And now this trouble, only because Lothar Woerz got cold feet. Anyway, I'll fix it. Now this Paul Mansfeld must just play along.

"Who was that on the phone?" Flora called from the kitchen.

"Oh, Ernst called. Business matters. But it's all okay. He sends you his regards."

"Thanks," the reply came from the kitchen.

"Flora, a sundowner for you too? How about a gin and tonic?"

"Thanks. That's nice of you."

At this time of the day, he didn't drink beer. But the evening sundowner had become a ritual for them. Klaus Kronberg rose from his chair with a groan, and shuffled across the stone tiles to the kitchen fridge. His health was fine but he felt his age. It often seemed to him that his movements came with more difficulty each day. On the wooden kitchen table, he mixed two glasses of gin and tonic: one for Flora, with a third of gin and two thirds of tonic with ice. For himself, he chose the opposite ratio, and for once, he tipped an extra sip.

"Here you go, Flora, your gin and tonic."

Kronberg made sure he gave his wife the glass with the right mixture. She had meanwhile made herself comfortable on the chair next to him.

"Thanks. Then let's sit here for a little while longer. And tell me, because I can see that something isn't right."

Paul spent the two-hour stopover at the bar in a café at Doha International Airport. Qatar was planning a new and larger airport, but currently passengers still had to take a long bus ride across the airfield. During the day it was unbearably hot, but now in the late evening, the air was not

as oppressive. Inside the aircraft it was cool. At exactly midnight the Qatar Airways Airbus A330 started. Paul was sitting in a window seat. He loved these long night flights over Africa. Over twenty years before, he had flown to Dar es Salaam for the very first time, with Egypt Air via Cairo. He had been young and very enthusiastic about his first major assignment abroad.

He looked out through the cabin window. The flight attendant had turned off the main overhead lights after dinner. Unfortunately, the back of the seat in front of him was being reflected in the window, blocking his view to the outside. He leaned close to the windowpane and at the same time used both hands to block out the annoying light reflections. Above him, an immense, breathtaking starry sky unfolded. Beneath the aircraft's wing, there was complete blackness. At night, Africa really was a dark continent.

Once his eyes had adjusted to the light, he saw little specks of light on the ground. So they had already flown over the Sahara. Now they were above the Ethiopian highlands. The aircraft crept across the monitor, indicating the flight route. Later on, they would be flying over Sudan, then Kenya. He sat like this for a long time, his face pressed against the window. He imagined how people down there were breathing and sleeping in the dark. At one stage he saw in the dark nothingness an illuminated area: perhaps a city with street lighting.

Grasping along the ceiling above him, he turned on the reading light. From the pocket on the back of the seat in front of him, he pulled out the project file that Ernst Ziegler had almost solemnly handed over to him at the last meeting in the office.

"Study these documents carefully, and you'll have the information you need. The rest will then fall into place. You've been in business for a long time now; no need for more explanation."

In fact, Paul had been in business for a long time. But he had never taken over a project on such short notice and without detailed preparation. He opened the folder. On top was the proposal to prepare a study on the rehabilitation of the railway line from Dar es Salaam to Kigoma on Lake Tanganyika. GRConsult had won the contract. There was no doubt that it had been done professionally. His task was to examine the rehabilitation measures they'd need to take, according to defined criteria, and to prepare the documents for the tender for the construction measures. He skipped the many pages of lengthy explanations. Then he found the core of the project: 2.8 million US dollar in total. Paul suddenly realized that he could make a lot of money with this project in the years to come. Follow-up assignments were almost certain. He just had to position himself smartly. But there was another reason for his enthusiasm: this was a project that made complete sense to him. He had been a railway man, with heart and soul, since the age of six when his father gave him a Märklin model train set. It always hurt him to see railroads being neglected, like the railway line, today known as the Central Line, which had been built during the German colonial era.

Finally I can do what I'd always wanted to do, Paul thought. He noticed that he was feeling cold. In the luggage compartment above his seat, he found a blanket wrapped in thin plastic foil and spread it over his legs. He lay back in his seat, getting comfortable. Satisfied with himself and his situation, he switched off the reading light above his seat, closed his eyes, and fell asleep.

When the flight attendants were serving breakfast, he was awakened by the rattling of the trolleys in the aisle. The screen showed the flight data: altitude 9,665 meter, ground speed 945 km/h and tailwind 77 km/h. Then the image changed and now the plane appeared on the monitor as a small icon, with its current position along the route over the continent. Meanwhile the time was displayed: it was only

five o'clock. Even though he was tired and bleary-eyed, he was hungry. Squeezed into the narrow row of seats, he got a plastic tray carrying a sticky bun, a plastic cup, and in the middle an aluminium bowl in which lay an omelette with a soggy, lukewarm tomato on mashed potatoes. He ate with great appetite, but remembered with regret a time when, as a matter of course during his assignments, he was allowed to fly business class. But GRConsult obviously had to save money. Even for this long-haul flight from Berlin to Dar es Salaam he only got an economy class ticket.

On the horizon, the sun rose over the Indian Ocean and illuminated the cabin ceiling with a pale red. His knees ached. Far down below him, the coast now appeared. Through the oval of his cabin window, he had a spectacular view of the long coastline, with a brilliant mountain of cloud. Above him, the seatbelt lights came on with a ping. A few minutes later, the aircraft started the descent and approach to landing. Before him lay Dar es Salaam: House of Peace. Beneath him were the sprawling suburbs, a huge area of houses and streets in a rectangular lay-out. On this morning, the Indian Ocean port city with its four million inhabitants lay there completely peacefully. The landing was gentle too: a small jolt, then touchdown. Paul was relieved. But it wasn't until the engines had roared loudly with a strong recoil and the machine had slowed that he felt his inner turmoil slipping away. That went well again. The turbines thrust again and the plane jolted towards the arrivals terminal.

With a rumble, the passenger's boarding bridge was docked to the cabin. It was a few minutes before the door was opened. Tanzania is making progress, thought Paul. In the past, one still had to walk over the hot asphalt of the airfield and through scorching heat to get to the exit. Inside Julius Nyerere International Airport it was pleasantly cool. Only in the customs clearance outside the air-conditioned area did the hot and humid tropical air engulf him. He quickly took off his sweater. Then along the long and empty

corridor to the immigration area. A great rush among those who had arrived: experienced travellers to Tanzania knew that those who were the first to fill out the immigration form and hand it, along with their passport, over to the officers, were the first who could leave the airport. Paul noticed that too late and found himself at the end of the queue. He put the fifty-dollar note for the three-month tourist visa in his passport.

The immigration officer greeted him. "Good morning, Sir. Welcome to Tanzania."

Swiftly his passport was checked and his visa stamped in one of the pages at the back. Paul had expected a lengthy procedure. That's why he said in amazement, "Everything is going very fast today." He had switched to English, automatically and quite effortlessly.

The custom officer laughed. "Yes, that's right, the procedure used to be longer. But we're making progress."

Paul took his suitcase from the conveyor belt, put it on a luggage trolley and rolled it through the customs control, without being stopped. One after another, the passengers hurried to the exit, hauling their mostly heavy suitcases behind them. Only a few of the arrivals were black; whites outnumbered them. Many of these whites, the wazungu, were easily recognisable as tourists because of their clothing with its well-known outdoor and globetrotter labels. Some of the younger tourists wore large backpacks in the currently fashionable colours and with lots of side pockets. Along with friends and relatives waiting behind the barrier were employees of tourism companies and hotels, holding up large name-plates, necks stretched out as they were looking for guests. For a moment Paul wondered if someone from the Ministry of Transport would pick him up. But he had not announced his arrival. He couldn't find his name on the signs. Numerous taxi drivers stormed at the arriving passengers. Those who didn't resist fiercely enough saw their suitcases in the hands of a taxi driver who would drag

them to his taxi. Paul knew that some taxi drivers were trying to charge tourists absurdly high rates. A well-built, middle-aged taxi driver approached him.

“Do you need a ride into town? I take the official rate of twenty US dollar.”

That made quite an impression on Paul. It still seemed expensive but he quickly agreed. “Okay, then please take me to the Sunrise City Hotel.”

The driver took his suitcase from his hands and rolled it out of the airport’s great lobby and across the parking lot to an old white Toyota Corolla. When the luggage was stowed in the trunk, Paul sat in the passenger seat. The stuffy, hot air in the car immediately drove the sweat out of his pores. The car had obviously been standing in the morning sun for a long time. The digital clock on the dashboard showed nine o’clock. According to Paul’s wristwatch it was only eight. It was an hour later here than in Berlin. Paul adjusted the time on his wristwatch by an hour. The driver started the engine and switched on the air-conditioning. When they had passed the turnpike at the exit, they were casually waved through by a female uniformed officer. She knew the driver.

They turned right towards the city centre, onto the four-lane Pugu Road that led through the urban industrial area. To the left and right were high, red brick walls, with several chimneys and the rusty corrugated iron roofs of ancient factory buildings and warehouses towering over them. With their large glass facades, a few modern buildings stood out among the old ones. Not much had changed here since Paul had driven on this road about twenty years before. This industrial area had not experienced an economic boom. When they reached the junction with Nelson Mandela Road, the traffic light turned red. There was a traffic jam. But behind the intersection, cars had started moving again, little by little. In both directions the vehicles were tightly packed: trucks, buses, taxis, limousines ... mostly Japanese brands. Many of them had seen better days. But there were also

shiny luxury cars, their dark-tinted windows blocking the view into the interior.

“This traffic is really terrible. Is it always like this?” Paul testily asked.

“That’s always the case, around this time. It just gets worse later in the day. What do you think it means for my gas mileage? At a walking pace from the airport to the city, always in a traffic jam, and the air conditioning always running.”

Only when, coming from Nkrumah Street, they passed Mnazi Moja Park, the cars started moving faster again. To keep the conversation going, Paul asked: “Have you been driving a cab for a long time?”

“For about two years, now. Before that I worked as a driver for a Danish consulting firm. But they closed their offices two years ago. Since then, I have been driving a taxi.”

“And how’s business?” Paul asked.

“Good on some days, bad on others. It depends a lot on the season. On very bad days, I’ll be standing at the airport from morning till the evening and not get even a single passenger.

There was silence until they reached the city centre. It had been a long time, perhaps twenty years, since Paul’s last stay in the country. He couldn’t remember the exact year, but he recognised the city. The same streets, the same buildings, but many more people and much more chaotic bustle on the streets. Some modern skyscrapers had been built and with their huge marble facades and tinted glass panes, they stood in peculiar contrast to the neighbouring colonial-era buildings with their crumbling paint. Street sweepers – many of them women – in red-orange safety vests used brooms and shovels to clear the street edges and pavements of rubbish and sand. When they had passed the congestion in the city centre, things moved a little faster. Soon they turned into the hotel’s palm-lined driveway.

As if it were his personal estate, the driver proudly announced, "This is the Sunrise City Hotel, one of our best in Dar. You will feel good here."

The driver brought the taxi to a stop directly in front of the entrance. When his suitcase was standing in the foyer, Paul handed the driver the agreed amount, in dollar. He liked the driver and had felt safe and relaxed in his presence. He spoke good English, and he had not tried to charge Paul an excessive fare.

When the driver had already turned to go, Paul called out to him, "Could you please tell me your name, and do you have a business card?"

"My name is John, and, yes, I have a business card."

"John, I have a proposition. I'm going to check in here and rest for a bit, but I have to go to my office this afternoon. My name is Paul Mansfeld. Could you please drive me again?"

John looked at him in astonishment.

"Yes! Definitely. You can call me anytime."

"But I have another problem. I have a German mobile phone. Could you get me a local number and SIM card?"

"No problem. As a provider, I suggest Airtel. But I'll need another twenty dollar for that."

Paul looked a little sceptical. But without hesitation he paid for the ride and handed over another twenty-dollar bill for the card. "Please, pick me up at two."

He emphatically added, "And don't forget the sim card!" Well, he thought, that could also go wrong. Maybe I'll see neither the card nor the money.

The check-in at the Sunrise City Hotel went without a hitch. GRConsult's travel department had already made the reservation from Berlin. The receptionist at the front desk was attractive and not very young anymore. Her smoothed hair was pulled back tightly and she wore a tight black skirt and a white blouse. She swiped his credit card. The bell-boy picked up his suitcase and took him by elevator to his room on the third floor. At the window was a desk overlooking

some old houses from the German colonial era. He wondered if the trees in the gardens had been planted at that time too.

After the heat of the city, he appreciated the cool air in the room. The air-conditioning hummed softly. On the sideboard there was a small flat screen, along with its remote control. He unpacked his suitcase, stacked his five shirts carefully in the closet and with just as much care hung his suit on a hanger. In the closet, he found a small safe with an electronic lock. The instructions were enclosed in a plasticwrapped user manual, which was easy to understand. Nevertheless, Paul did not succeed in locking the door. Then he saw the reason: the battery compartment was empty. Here it's still Africa, he thought. Exhausted, he lay down on the bed. The long night flight had had an effect on him. After resting on the bed for an hour – he couldn't sleep – he called the GRConsult office. The phone rang twice before Joyce Malima, the office manager, picked up the phone. Paul announced his first visit to the office today at half past two.

At exactly two o'clock Paul came down to the hotel reception and placed his room key on the counter. John was stretched out in one of the oversized chairs in the seating area at the entrance. He hastily put his newspaper aside and got up.

"Hello, Mister Mansfeld. Have you rested? Are you well?"

"Everything's fine."

John held a small cellophane-wrapped envelope out to him.

"Here's your SIM card."

Paul looked somewhat helpless.

John let him hand over his mobile phone and installed the SIM card. Soon after, he declared it a success.

"It's working. Please try calling my number."

It rang. John was visibly proud. Paul put the device in his breast pocket. "Thanks," he said.

When they stepped from the climate-controlled hotel foyer into the open, they were assaulted by a blazing sun and tropical heat. John had parked his taxi directly in front of the hotel.

As he opened the passenger door for Paul, John asked, "Where would you like to go?"

"GermanRailConsult. The office is in Bibi Titi Mohammed Street, at the junction with Maktaba Street."

"I know where that is."

In the car, John switched the air-con to its highest setting. With a flourish he turned from the hotel exit into Garden Avenue, which wasn't frequented much at this time of day. As they were approaching the centre, the traffic increased. At Ohio Street they battled ahead among overloaded minibuses, honking taxis, tall SUVs, the three-wheeled motor rickshaws known as Bajaji and motorcycles, coming from both directions with only a few centimetres distance between them. Shrouded in gasoline and diesel fumes, the mostly young street vendors tried loudly to display their wares. Coming now from this side street onto Ohio Street seemed hopeless to Paul. But with passionate gesticulating and begging with his hands, John managed to seamlessly get his car into the column of traffic. At the intersection John found Random House, where GRConsult's rented office had to be. Daringly veering and making a turn off Bibi Titi Mohammed Road against the oncoming traffic, John brought his taxi to a halt at the entrance to the building. All of the parking spaces were occupied. John waited at the car.

Paul couldn't find GRConsult on the list of company signs at the entrance. The lift signalled its arrival on the ground floor with a short ringing tone. The doors opened with a rattle and the passengers got out. Paul hesitated for a moment. Should he really subject himself to this unsteady thing? He decided to be brave, got in and pushed the button

with the number 2 on it. The sliding door slowly closed. The old lift hesitated for a moment; then, with a jolt, it started moving. On the second floor, at the dark end of the passage, Paul found a glass door with GRConsult's logo on it. He entered. A narrow, long reception room with a small seating corner, further back a humble table against the wall, on it an electric kettle with packets of coffee and tea. Across from it stood a bookshelf overloaded with files, as well as a copier and a desk. A woman in her thirties, wearing an elegant business suit, quickly got up and approached him.

"Good day, Mister Mansfeld?"

"Good day. And you must be Joyce Malima. I called earlier. How are you, Ms Malima?"

"Ah, good to see you; I've been expecting you. Did you have a good trip? Are you accommodated well at the hotel?"

"Everything's fine. I'm glad to see you. I've already heard that in the past weeks you've managed our office excellently by yourself."

"Yes, there wasn't that much to do. Should I make you some tea? Then I'll show you the office."

The fact was that Joyce had been quite bored in the previous few weeks. Some conversations with the GRConsult head office in Berlin, monthly statements, many private calls – mostly with her husband. Joyce proudly showed him the best-kept office. From the connecting room where she sat, a glass door led to a larger room. The office didn't have an Intercom – it was superfluous, since one could talk through the connecting door without any trouble. The walls were unadorned except for a calendar poster from the year 2012. Here stood a wide desk with a state-of-the-art computer, a printer and a high-backed office chair. The wide window offered a view of the four-lane Maktaba Road, from where the noise of the traffic reached up to here. This had been the workspace of his predecessor Lothar Woerz. Now it was his. Paul placed his briefcase on the shelf. Joyce brought a tray with two cups and a large thermos flask filled with hot

water. The next hour was spent getting to know each other a bit and discussing the tasks at hand. Paul then had John take him back to the hotel.

After dinner in the Sunrise City Hotel's restaurant, Paul went to sit on the night terrace. As far as they could reach, the spotlights lit the rich colour of a neatly cut lawn of as even and immaculate a green as that of a manor in the rainy central part of England. In front of him lay the hotel garden with its exotic shrubs and trees that directly bordered the neighbouring Botanical Gardens. Paul ordered a Kilimanjaro beer, a brand of Tanzania Breweries. The waiter wore an elegant uniform consisting of black trousers with straight creases, a dark shirt with the colourful logo of the Sunrise City Hotel and a subtle neckerchief. Within minutes he served the beer on a tray with a glass. The bottle's surface was covered in a film of moisture. Little by little, drops formed and first flowed together in rivulets, then gathered in a puddle on the shiny tabletop. Even though he took care while pouring the beer into the glass, it foamed and threatened to overflow. Paul took a sip of what was more foam than beer. The beer was light and ice cold. He liked it like that.

From the next table two pretty, young, fashionably dressed women with their hair smoothed and shaped into ringlets gave him a friendly greeting. He felt flattered. He returned their greeting with a nod. "Do you know me?" he asked irritably. But that could hardly be, since he had just arrived. No, they were prostitutes looking for clients. And he had obviously been targeted. When he sat at the bar and ordered another beer after the meal, one of the women turned to him.

"How are you?"

"Fine, thank you."

Paul kept his distance. After some brief, polite small talk, the conversation died.

The next morning, Paul entered the breakfast room on the ground floor shortly after seven. A buffet with countless offerings awaited him: tea, coffee, orange juice, tropical fruit, muesli, fragrant buns, baked beans, bacon, pink-red sausages, eggs prepared in different ways, and much more. The fact that one was in Africa was visible only in the abundance of fresh tropical fruit like mangoes, papayas, pineapples and guavas. Only a few tables were occupied. After breakfast he paged through the Daily News. Floods, drought, mismanagement and overly ambitious and completely unrealistic development projects by the government. On the front page there was an announcement for an anti-corruption conference that would take place the next week in the city's most expensive hotel, the Palm Tree.

Suddenly he remembered Katrin. He had forgotten to call her immediately after his arrival. It took a while before she answered as usual with a short "Hello".

"Hello, Katrin. Good morning. I've arrived safely. How are you?"

"Nice of you to get in touch. I thought you were lost along the way."

"No, everything's fine."

"Why haven't you called earlier?"

"Well, you know," he stuttered. "With the mobile phone it takes a while. But now I have a local number where you can always reach me."

"Isn't there a telephone in the hotel then that you could have used to call me?"

Paul felt the anger rising in him. He had actually wanted to be nice to her after the failed last evening in Berlin. But she really made it difficult. He didn't take the bait.

"And are you well otherwise? How's work?"

"Terrible, as you know. My new boss is still in his acute profiling phase. He has no clue but consults me in

everything.”

After talking about some trivialities, the conversation came to an end. Both parties seemed to be happy about it.

When Paul entered the hotel foyer shortly after eight, John was waiting, ready to take him to the office.

In the days that followed, Paul started to develop something of a work programme with Joyce. Soon he had installed himself in the office, set up the computer and looked over the work of his predecessor, Lothar Woerz. When he was done and had the idea of getting an overview of the project’s current status, he asked Joyce to arrange a meeting with Joseph Kiloko. As director in the Ministry of Transport, Kiloko was the contact and cooperation partner for the study. After some to and fro with Kiloko’s secretary, Joyce reported success. The meeting was set for the following Wednesday at ten.

At the hotel, Paul dressed for the occasion in the dark grey suit he had brought with for such cases and put on the better one of his two ties. Finely attired like this, he first went to the office, where Joyce complimented him on his look. The Ministry was down at the harbour only a few hundred meters from the office. Because of the congestion in the city centre, John had insisted on departing half an hour before. On his way to the exit, Paul went into the bathroom and brushed his hair. Then he shot another glance at the mirror. Splendid: this was what a professional expert with international experience looked like. In stop-and-go fashion they pushed ahead in the direction of the harbour, in an endless column of traffic. Time was getting tight and Paul nervous. It was already ten o’clock when they drove into the parking lot at the Ministry. Since there was no roof over the courtyard, John had to park the car in the bright sun. John dealt with the security check: the name of the

person being visited, the name of the visitor and the car registration had to be written in the visitor's book.

Paul was received by a secretary. Joseph Kiloko made an appearance more than twenty minutes late. Tall, slim and dressed in an elegant dark suit, he wordily begged his pardon while he led Paul into his modern office and invited him to take a seat at the meeting table. Paul quickly got onto the subject of the project, gave his impression thus far and enthusiastically presented his suggestions for the next steps in the study. In his reply, Kiloko used many words to emphasise the importance of the project but did not in any way respond to the suggestions made. Paul was disappointed. He had expected more engagement and especially more concrete support. Kiloko seemed to notice this disappointment. Maybe that was why he suggested that they meet for dinner in the following days.

"I'll show you Dar es Salaam by night. We have good restaurants here. Do you like beer? We have good beer here. Kilimanjaro, Castle, Safari, Tusker, Serengeti, Ndovu and German imported beer too. You'll be amazed."

Paul laughed. "Yes, as a matter of fact I like all beer, no matter what label. But yesterday I drank Kilimanjaro. Very good."

Kiloko frowned and thought hard.

"Let's go out of the city. Do you know the Slipway on the Msasani Peninsula? There we can further discuss everything. Let's meet there at the Waterfront Restaurant. The day after tomorrow is Friday. A good day to start the weekend. Shall we say six o'clock? Your driver will know the restaurant."

"That's an excellent idea," Paul agreed, very happy with this suggestion.

The next work day was quiet. Paul made important telephone calls that Joyce put through for him in her polite and winning manner. Later in the afternoon he asked Joyce to tell John about the appointment with Kiloko in Slipway. Before the meeting he still wanted to look for some reading

matter for the long evenings. The bookstore was very close to the restaurant.

John was on time for the job. Unfortunately, at this time there was heavy end-of-work traffic. The cars were piling up from the city centre and over Ali Hassan Mwinyi Road for as far as he could see. Many high, massive four-wheel-drive vehicles, mostly of Japanese or Korean make. Paul was a friend of the railway and an enemy of cars. Annoyed, he turned to John: "It seems to me that the cars here are bigger than in Germany."

John laughed. "That I don't know. But they are definitely too big. My little Corolla is perfectly fine for the city traffic. But out there in the country, the streets are often very bad. There you need a four-wheel-drive."

"But," John continued, adding a gesture of helplessness, "the government officials like these cars. Especially Toyota Land Cruisers. It's a matter of power and prestige."

Just then, one of these government vehicles pushed past them in the right lane. An elegantly dressed man in suit and tie sat in the passenger seat. For a moment their eyes met.

"In one of these big vehicles you can look down on others," John said.

"In the past, only the experts from abroad had cars like these. Times have changed."

Paul looked at him.

"But with your old jalopy we get everywhere."

Paul didn't like cars at all. In Berlin already he got angry about the growing number of SUVs in the urban traffic, which now also increasingly shaped the Dar es Salaam cityscape.

After a pause he turned to John.

"How satisfied are you with your car?"

"As you can see, it still runs. But all these repairs are expensive. That's why I'd like to sell it and get me a new one. A second-hand one, of course."

"Have you saved money for it?"