

RANDOM HOUSE  BOOKS

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# Crime and Guilt

Ferdinand von Schirach

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## About the Book

Meet Fahner, the retired small-town doctor who resorts to the garden axe when his patience with his cruel wife runs out.

Meet Patrick, so entranced by the sight of his sleeping girlfriend that he cuts a small piece out of her back, just to see what she tastes like.

Meet the silent assassin who calmly despatches two Neo-Nazi thugs on a railway platform.

A nameless lawyer invites us to read an extraordinary dossier of violent and unspeakable acts. All the crimes have one thing in common: the guilty are never convicted in a court of law. But however heinous the crime, the narrator shows how the human circumstances behind events can tell a different story.

Provocative, shocking and brilliant, these stories may change the way you judge the world.

## About the Author

Ferdinand von Schirach was born in Munich in 1964 and is one of Germany's most prominent defence lawyers. In 2009, his first collection of stories, *Verbrechen (Crime)* became an instant bestseller in Germany, and was published in over thirty territories around the world.

Carol Brown Janeway's translations include Bernhard Schlink's *The Reader*, Jan Philipp Reemtsma's *In the Cellar*, Hans-Ulrich Treichel's *Lost*, Zvi Kolitz's *Yosl Rakover Talks to God*, Benjamin Lebert's *Crazy*, Sándor Márai's *Embers*, Yasmina Reza's *Desolation*, Margriet de Moor's *The Storm*, and Daniel Kehlmann's *Fame* and *Measuring the World*.

FERDINAND VON SCHIRACH

# Crime & Guilt

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY  
Carol Brown Janeway

VINTAGE BOOKS  
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# **CRIME**

The reality we can put into words is never reality itself.  
—*Werner K. Heisenberg*



*Preface*  
**Guilt**

Jim Jarmusch once said he'd rather make a movie about a man walking his dog than about the Emperor of China. I feel the same way. I write about criminal cases, I've appeared for the defence in more than seven hundred of them. But actually my subject is human beings—their failings, their guilt, and their capacity to behave magnificently.

I had an uncle who was the presiding judge over a court that heard trials by jury. These are the courts that handle capital offences: murder and manslaughter. He told us stories from these cases that we could understand, even as children. They always began with him saying: 'Most things are complicated, and guilt always presents a bit of a problem.'

He was right. We chase after things, but they're faster than we are, and in the end we can never catch up. I tell the stories of people I've defended. They were murderers, drug dealers, bank robbers and prostitutes. They all had their stories, and they weren't so different from us. All our lives we dance on a thin layer of ice; it's very cold underneath, and death is quick. The ice won't bear the weight of some people and they fall through. That's the moment that interests me. If we're lucky, it never happens to us and we keep dancing. If we're lucky.

My uncle was in the navy during the war, and lost his left arm and right hand to a grenade. Despite this, he didn't

give up for a long time. People say he was a good judge, humane, an upright man with a sense of justice. He loved going hunting, and had a little private blind. His gun was custom-made for him and he could use it with one hand. One day he went into the woods, put the double-barrelled shotgun in his mouth, and pulled the trigger. He was wearing a black roll-neck sweater; he'd hung his jacket on a branch. His head exploded. I saw the photos a long time later. He left a letter for his best friend, in which he wrote that he'd simply had enough. The letter began with the words 'Most things are complicated, and guilt always presents a bit of a problem.' I still miss him. Every day.

This book is about people like him, and their stories.

FvS

## Fähler

FRIEDHELM FÄHNER HAD spent his whole working life as a GP in Rottweil, 2,800 patients with medical insurance processed every year, doctor's office on the main street, chairman of the Egyptian Cultural Association, member of the Lions Club, no criminal offences, nor even minor infringements. Besides his house, he owned two rental properties, a three-year-old E-Class Mercedes with leather upholstery and air conditioning, approximately 750,000 euros in bonds, and a capital sum life insurance policy. Fähler had no children. His only living relative was his sister, six years younger, who lived in Stuttgart with her husband and two sons. Fähler's life wasn't anything that gave rise to stories.

Until the thing with Ingrid.

\* \* \*

Fähler was twenty-four when he met Ingrid at the party to celebrate his father's sixtieth birthday. His father had been a doctor in Rottweil, too.

As a town, Rottweil is bourgeois to the core. Any non-inhabitant will be vouchsafed the information, willy-nilly, that the town was founded a thousand years ago and is the oldest in Baden-Württemberg. And indeed you come across medieval oriel windows and pretty antique tavern signs from the sixteenth century. The Fähners had lived here forever. They belonged to the so-called first families of the

town, known for their roles as doctors, judges and apothecaries.

Friedhelm Fähner looked a little like the young John F. Kennedy. He had a friendly face, people took him to be carefree, and things always panned out for him. You had to look more closely to detect a certain sadness, some ancient dark shadow in his expression, not so uncommon in this land between the Black Forest and the mountains of Swabia.

Ingrid's parents, who were pharmacists in Rottweil, took their daughter with them to the party. She was three years older than Fähner, a sturdy, big-breasted provincial beauty. Eyes of a watery blue, black hair, pale skin—she knew the effect she had on people. Her voice, high-pitched and strangely metallic, grated on Fähner. It was only when she spoke softly that her sentences found a melody of their own.

She had failed to complete high school and was working as a waitress. 'Temporarily,' she said to Fähner. He didn't care. In another area, and one that interested him much more, she was way ahead of him. Fähner had had only two sexual encounters with women; they had been more unsettling than anything. He promptly fell in love with Ingrid.

Two days after the birthday party, she seduced him at the end of a picnic. They lay in a hikers' shelter and Ingrid did her stuff well. Fähner was so overwhelmed that only a week later he asked her to marry him. She accepted without hesitation: Fähner was what you'd call a good catch, he was studying medicine in Munich, he was attractive and caring, and he would soon be taking his first exams. But what attracted her most was his seriousness. She couldn't put it into words, but she said to her girlfriend that Fähner would never walk out on her. Four months later, she moved in with him.

The honeymoon was a trip to Cairo, his choice. When people later asked him about Egypt, he said it floated free of the earth, even when he knew that nobody would understand what he meant. Over there he was the young Parsifal, his purity that of a holy fool, and he was happy. It was the last time in his life.

The evening before they flew back, they were lying in their hotel room. The windows were open; it was still too hot, the air a solid mass in the little room. It was a cheap hotel, it smelled of rotten fruit, and they could hear the sounds of the street below. Despite the heat, they had made love. Fähner lay on his back, watching the rotations of the ceiling fan, as Ingrid smoked a cigarette. She turned on her side, propped her head on one hand, and looked at him. He smiled. There was a long silence.

Then she began to tell her story. She told Fähner about the men who'd come before him, about disappointments and mistakes, but most of all about the French lieutenant who had gotten her pregnant, and the abortion that had almost killed her. She wept. Shocked, he took her in his arms. He felt her heart beating against his chest and was undone. She has entrusted herself to me, he thought.

'You must swear to look after me. You can't ever leave me.' Ingrid's voice trembled.

He was moved. He wanted to calm her. He said he'd already sworn to do this at the wedding ceremony in church. He was happy with her. He wanted—

She interrupted him brusquely, her voice rising and taking on its unmodulated metallic sheen. 'Swear.'

And suddenly he understood. This was no conversation between lovers, under the fan in Cairo, with the pyramids and the stifling heat of their hotel room—all these clichés vanished in an instant. He pushed her away a little so that he could see her eyes. Then he said it. He said it slowly, and he knew what he was saying. 'I swear.'

He pulled her close once more and kissed her face. They made love again. But this time it was different. She sat on top of him, took whatever she wanted. They were deadly serious, strangers to each other, and each of them was wholly alone. Afterward, he lay awake for a long time, staring at the ceiling. There had been a power cut and the fan had stopped revolving.

Naturally, Fähner passed his exams with distinction, completed his doctorate, and landed his first job in the Rottweil District Hospital. They found an apartment, three rooms, bath, view of the edge of the forest.

When his things in Munich were being packed up, she threw out his record collection. He didn't realise this until they were moving into the new apartment. She said she couldn't stand them—he'd listened to them with other women. Fähner was furious. They barely spoke to each other for two days.

Fähner liked Bauhaus clarity. She decorated the apartment in oak and pine, hung curtains at the windows, and bought brightly coloured bed linens. He even accepted the embroidered coasters and the pewter tankards; he didn't want to put her down.

A few weeks later, Ingrid told him she was bothered by the way he held his knife and fork. To begin with, he laughed and thought she was being childish. She reproached him with it again the next day, and then the days after that. And because she meant it, he took to holding his knife differently.

Ingrid pretended that he didn't take out the garbage. He persuaded himself that these were merely teething troubles in their relationship. But soon she was accusing him of coming home too late because he'd been flirting with other women.

The reproaches became unending, until he was hearing them daily: he was disorganised. He dirtied his shirts. He

crumpled the newspaper. He smelled bad. He thought only of himself. He talked nonsense. He was cheating on her. Fähler barely defended himself anymore.

After a few years, the insults began. Relatively measured at first, they then gained in intensity. He was a pig. He was torturing her. He was an idiot. Then came the scatological rants and the screaming. He gave up. He would get out of bed during the night and read science fiction. He went jogging for an hour every day, as he had done when he was a student. They had long since given up sex. He received approaches from other women, but he never had an affair. When he was thirty-five, he took over his father's practice; when he was forty, he had turned grey. Fähler was tired.

—

When Fähler was forty-eight, his father died; when he was fifty, it was his mother's turn. He used his inheritance to buy a half-timbered house on the outskirts of town. The house came with a small park, a wilderness of shrubs, forty apple trees, twelve chestnut trees and a pond. The garden became Fähler's salvation. He ordered books, subscribed to specialist journals, and read everything he could lay his hands on about shrubs, ponds and trees. He bought the best tools, informed himself about watering systems, and learned everything there was to learn with his customary systematic thoroughness. The garden blossomed, and the plantings became so famous in the neighbourhood that Fähler saw people here and there among the apple trees taking photographs of them.

During the week, he spent long hours at his practice. Fähler was a painstaking and empathetic doctor. His patients thought highly of him; his diagnoses set the standard in Rottweil. He left the house before Ingrid woke up and didn't return until after nine in the evening. He accepted the nightly barrage of reproaches at dinner in

silence. Sentence by unvarnished sentence, Ingrid's metallic voice laid down animosity after animosity like railroad tracks. She had grown fat and her pale skin had turned pink with the years. Her neck had thickened and begun to wobble, and she had developed a fold of skin at her throat that swayed in time to her outbursts. She became short of breath and had high blood pressure. Fähler got thinner and thinner. One evening when he blurted out that Ingrid might perhaps seek help from a psychiatrist who was a friend, she threw a frying pan at him and screamed that he was an ungrateful pig.

The night before Fähler's sixtieth birthday, he lay awake. He had pulled out the faded photo from Egypt: Ingrid and himself in front of the Pyramid of Cheops, with a background of camels, scenic Bedouins and sand. When she threw out their wedding albums, he had fished the picture back up out of the garbage. Since then, it had found a safe hiding place deep in the back of his closet.

In the course of this night, Fähler was forced to realise that he would remain an eternal prisoner until the end of his life. He had given his word in Cairo. And now, in the bad times, was when he had to keep it; there was no such thing as giving your word for the good times only. The photo swam before his eyes. He took off his clothes and stood naked in front of the bathroom mirror. He looked at himself for a long time. Then he sat on the rim of the bathtub. For the first time in his adult life, he cried.

\* \* \*

Fähler was working in his garden. He was seventy-two now; he'd sold his practice four years before. As always, he had gotten up at six o'clock. He had left the guest room—in which he'd been living for years—very quietly. Ingrid was still asleep. It was a glowing September morning. The early



mist had burned off and the air was clear and cold. Föhner was using a hoe to weed the ground between the autumn perennials. It was an activity both demanding and monotonous. Föhner was content. He looked forward to the coffee he would be drinking at nine-thirty, something he always did when he took his break. Föhner also thought about the delphiniums he'd planted early in the year. They would blossom for a third time late in the fall.

Suddenly, Ingrid yanked open the door to the terrace. She yelled that he'd forgotten once again to close the windows in the guest room, said he was a total idiot. Her voice cracked—the sound of pure metal fracturing.

Later on, Föhner would be unable to describe exactly what went through his mind at that moment. That something deep inside him had begun to glow with a hard, clear light. That everything had taken on a supernatural clarity under this light. That it was white-hot.

He asked Ingrid to go down to the cellar, and led the way down the outside stairs himself. Ingrid was pouting as she entered the basement space where he kept his garden tools hanging on the wall, organised by size and function, or standing freshly cleaned in tin and plastic buckets. They were beautiful implements, which he had assembled over the years. As she opened the door, Föhner, without saying a word, lifted the tree axe off the wall. It had been hand-forged in Sweden, was perfectly greased and rust-free. Ingrid fell silent. He was still wearing his coarse gardening gloves. Ingrid stared at the axe. She didn't try to dodge. The first blow that cleaved her skull was enough to kill her. The axe, covered in bone fragments, drove itself deeper into her brain, and the blade split open her face. She was dead before she even hit the ground. Föhner had to struggle to lever the axe out of her skull, setting his foot against her neck. With two massive blows, he severed the head from the torso. The forensic expert later identified

seventeen further blows Fähler had required to separate the arms and the legs.

Fähler gasped for breath. He sat down on the little wooden stool that he'd always used when planting things out. Its legs were standing in blood. Fähler felt hungry. At some point, he stood up, undressed himself next to the corpse at the garden sink and washed the blood out of his hair and off his face. He locked the cellar and climbed the indoor stairs to the living quarters. Once up there, he got dressed again, dialled the police emergency number, gave his name and address, and said, word for word, 'I've made Ingrid small. Come at once.' The call was recorded. Without waiting for a response, he hung up. There had been no agitation in his voice.

A few minutes after the call, the police pulled up in front of Fähler's house without sirens or blue flashing lights. One of them had been in the force for twenty-nine years and his entire family were patients of Dr Fähler. Fähler was standing outside the garden gate and handed him the key. He said she was in the cellar. The policeman knew it would be better not to ask any questions—Fähler was wearing a suit but no shoes or socks. He was very calm.

The trial lasted four days. The presiding judge was an experienced jurist. He knew Fähler, over whom he had to pass judgment. And he knew Ingrid. If he hadn't known her sufficiently well, the witnesses provided the necessary information. Every one of them expressed sympathy for Fähler; every one of them was on his side. The mailman said Fähler was 'a saint' and 'how he'd put up with her' was 'a miracle'. The psychiatrist certified that Fähler had suffered an 'emotional block', although he was not free of criminal responsibility.

The prosecutor asked for eight years. He took his time; he described the sequence of events and went wading

through the blood in the cellar. Then he said that Föhner had had other options; he could have gotten a divorce.

The prosecutor was wrong; a divorce was precisely what had not been an option for Föhner. The most recent reform of the code of criminal procedure has dismissed the oath as an obligatory component of any sworn testimony in a criminal case. We ceased believing in it a long time ago. When a witness lies, he lies—no judge seriously thinks an oath would make him do otherwise, and oaths appear to leave our contemporaries indifferent. But, and this ‘but’ encompasses whole universes, Föhner was not what you’d consider one of our contemporaries. His promise, once given, was inviolable. Promises had bound him all his life; indeed, he was their prisoner. Föhner could not have freed himself; to do so would have amounted to betrayal. The eruption of violence represented the bursting of the pressurised container in which he had been confined his whole life by his oath once given.

Föhner’s sister, who had asked me to take on her brother’s defence, sat in the public gallery. She wept. His former head nurse held her hand. Föhner had become even thinner in prison. He sat motionless on the dark wooden defendant’s bench.

With regard to the practicalities of the case, there was nothing to defend. It was, rather, a problem of judicial philosophy: what is the meaning of punishment? Why do we punish? I used my summation to try to establish this. There is a whole host of theories. Punishment should be a deterrent. Punishment should protect us. Punishment should make the perpetrator avoid any such act in the future. Punishment should counterbalance injustice. Our laws are a composite of these theories, but none of them fitted this case exactly. Föhner would not kill again. The injustice of his act was self-evident but difficult to measure. And who wanted to exercise revenge? It was a long summation. I told his story. I wanted people to understand

that Fähler had reached the end. I spoke until I felt I had gotten through to the court. When one of the jurors nodded, I sat down again.

Fähler had the last word. At the end of a trial the court hears the defendant, and the judges have to weigh what he says in their deliberations. He bowed and his hands were clasped one inside the other. He hadn't had to learn his speech by heart; it was the encapsulation of his entire life.

'I loved my wife, and in the end I killed her. I still love her, that is what I promised her, and she is still my wife. This will be true for the rest of my life. I broke my promise. I have to live with my guilt.'

Fähler sat down again in silence and stared at the floor. The courtroom was absolutely silent; even the presiding judge seemed to be filled with trepidation. Then he said that the members of the court would withdraw to begin their deliberations and that the verdict would be pronounced the next day.

That evening, I visited Fähler in jail one more time. There wasn't much left to say. He had brought a crumpled envelope with him, out of which he extracted the photograph from their honeymoon, and ran his thumb over Ingrid's face. The coating on the photo had long since worn away; her face was almost a blank.

Fähler was sentenced to three years, the arrest warrant was withdrawn, and he was freed from custody. He would be permitted to serve his sentence on daytime release. Daytime release means that the person under sentence must spend nights in jail but is allowed out during the day. The condition is that he must pursue a trade or hold a job. It wasn't easy to find a new trade for a seventy-two-year-old. Eventually, it was his sister who did this: Fähler worked as a greengrocer—he sold the apples from his garden.

Four months later, a little crate arrived at my chambers, containing ten red apples. There was an envelope enclosed and in the envelope was a single sheet of paper: 'The apples are good this year. Fähner.'

## Tanata's Tea Bowl

THEY WERE AT one of those free-for-all student parties in Berlin. These were always good for a couple of girls ready to get it on with boys from Kreuzberg and Neukölln, just because they were different. Perhaps what attracted the girls was an inherent vulnerability. This time, Samir seemed to have struck it lucky again: she had blue eyes and laughed a lot.

Suddenly, her boyfriend appeared. He said Samir should get lost or they'd take it out onto the street. Samir didn't understand what 'take it out' meant, but he understood the aggression. They were hustled outside. One of the older students told Samir the guy was an amateur boxer and university champion. Samir said, 'So fucking what?' He was just seventeen, but he was a veteran of more than 150 street fights, and there were very few things he was afraid of—fights were not among them.

The boxer was heavily muscled, a head taller, and a good deal more solidly built than Samir. And he was grinning like an idiot. A circle formed around the two of them, and while the boxer was still taking off his jacket, Samir landed the toe of one shoe right in his balls. His shoe caps were steel-lined; the boxer emitted a gurgle and almost doubled up with pain. Samir seized his head by the hair, yanked it straight down, and simultaneously rammed his right knee into the boxer's face. Although there was a lot of noise on the street, you could hear the boxer's jaw snap. He lay bleeding on the asphalt, one hand over his crotch, the other

over his face. Samir took a two-step run-up; the kick broke two of the boxer's ribs.

Samir felt he'd played fair. He hadn't kicked the guy's face and, most important, he hadn't used his knife. It had all been very easy; he wasn't even out of breath. He got angry because the blonde wouldn't take off with him, just cried and fussed over the man on the ground. 'Fucking whore,' he said, and went home.

The judge in the juvenile court sentenced Samir to two weeks' custody and obligatory participation in an antiviolence seminar. Samir tried to explain to the social workers in the juvenile detention centre that the conviction was wrong. The boxer had started it; it was just that he himself had been quicker. That sort of thing wasn't a game. You could play football, but nobody played at boxing. The judge had simply failed to understand the rules.

Özcan collected Samir from jail when the two weeks were up. Özcan was Samir's best friend. He was eighteen, a tall, slow-moving boy with a doughy face. He'd had his first girlfriend when he was twelve, and had videoed everything they got up to with his mobile phone, which earned him his place as top dog forever. Özcan's penis was ridiculously large, and whenever he was in a public lavatory he positioned himself so that everyone else could see. The one thing he was determined to do was to get to New York. He'd never been there and he spoke no English, but he was obsessed with the city. You never saw him without his dark blue cap with NY on it. He wanted to run a nightclub in Manhattan that had a restaurant and go-go dancers. Or whatever. He couldn't explain why it had to be New York, specifically, but he didn't waste any time thinking about it. Özcan's father had spent his whole life in a factory that made lightbulbs; he had arrived from Turkey with nothing but a single suitcase. His son was his hope. He didn't understand the New York thing at all.

Özcan told Samir he'd met someone who had a plan. His name was Manólis. It was a good plan, but Manólis 'was nuts'.

Manólis came from a Greek family that owned a string of restaurants and internet cafes in Kreuzberg and Neukölln. He had passed his high school diploma and started to study history, with a sideline in drugs. A few years ago, something had gone wrong. The suitcase that was supposed to have cocaine in it turned out to be full of paper and sand. The buyer fired at Manólis when he tried to flee in his car with the money. The buyer was a lousy shot, and eight of the nine bullets missed. The ninth penetrated the back of Manólis's skull and lodged there. It was still in Manólis's head when he collided with a squad car. It wasn't till he was in the hospital that the doctors discovered it, and since then Manólis had had a problem. After the operation, he announced to his family that he was now a Finn, celebrated the sixth of December every year as Finland's national holiday, and tried in vain to learn the language. Besides this, he had moments when he was completely out of it, so perhaps his plan wasn't really a fully worked-out one.

But Samir still thought it had some potential. Manólis's sister had a friend who worked as a cleaning lady in a villa in Dahlem. She was in urgent need of money, so all she wanted from Manólis was a small cut if he broke into the house. She knew the alarm code and the one for the electronic lock, she knew where the safe was, and, most important, she knew that the owner would soon be away from Berlin for four days. Samir and Özcan agreed immediately.

The night before the break-in, Samir slept badly, dreaming about Manólis and Finland. When he woke, it was two in the afternoon. He said, 'Fuck judges,' and chased his girlfriend out of bed. At four o'clock, he had to be at the antiviolence class.



Özcan picked up the others at 2:00 a.m. Manólis had fallen asleep, and Samir and Özcan had to wait outside his door for twenty minutes. It was cold; the car windows misted up. They got lost and screamed at one another. It was almost three o'clock when they reached Dahlem. They pulled the black ski masks on in the car; they were too big, they slipped down and scratched, and they were sweating underneath them. Özcan got a tangle of wool fluff in his mouth and spat it out onto the dashboard. They put on latex gloves and ran across the gravel path to the entrance of the villa.

Manólis punched in the code on the lock pad. The door opened with a click. The alarm was in the entryway. After Manólis had fed in a combination of numbers, the little lights switched from red to green. Özcan had to laugh. 'Özcan's Eleven,' he said out loud. He loved movies. The tension eased. It had never been so easy. The front door clicked shut; they were standing in darkness.

They couldn't find the light switch. Samir tripped on a step and hit his left eyebrow on a hat stand. Özcan stumbled over Samir's feet and grabbed his back for support as he fell. Samir groaned under his weight. Manólis was still standing, but he had forgotten the flashlights.

Their eyes adjusted to the darkness. Samir wiped the blood off his face. Finally, Manólis found the light switch. The interior of the house was Japanese—Samir and Özcan just didn't see how anyone could live this way. It took them only a few minutes to locate the safe—the description they'd been given was a good one. They used crowbars to pry it out of the wall, then dragged it to the car. Manólis wanted to go back into the house—he'd discovered the kitchen and he was hungry. They argued about it for a long time, until Samir decided it was too dangerous. They could easily stop at a café on the way back. Manólis grumbled.

They tried to open the safe in a cellar in Neukölln. They had some familiarity with heavily armoured safes, but this

one resisted them. Özcan had to borrow his brother-in-law's high-powered drill. Four hours later, when the safe opened, they knew it had been worth it. They found 120,000 euros in cash and six watches in a box. And there was also a small casket made of black lacquered wood. Samir opened it. It was lined with red silk and inside was an old bowl. Özcan thought it was hideous and wanted to throw it away, Samir wanted to give it to his sister, and Manólis didn't care—he was still hungry. Finally, they agreed to sell the bowl to Mike. Mike had a little shop with a big sign outside. He called himself an antiques dealer, but basically all he had was a small truck, and most of his business was clearing out apartments and dealing in junk. He paid them thirty euros for the bowl.

As they left the cellar, Samir clapped Özcan on the shoulder, said 'Özcan's Eleven' again, and they all laughed. Manólis's sister would get three thousand euros for her friend. Each of them had almost forty thousand euros in his pocket, and Samir would sell the watches to a fence. It had been a simple, clean break-in; there wouldn't be any problems.

They were wrong.

Hiroshi Tanata stood in his bedroom and looked at the hole in the wall. He was seventy-six years old. His family had left its mark on Japan for many hundreds of years; they were in insurance, banking and heavy industry. Tanata didn't cry out; he didn't wave his arms; he simply stared into the hole. But his secretary, who had served him for thirty years, told his wife that night that he had never seen Tanata in such a rage.

The secretary had a great deal to do that day. The police were in the house, asking questions. They suspected the employees—the alarm had certainly been switched off and there was no sign of forced entry—but their suspicions hadn't yet focused on anyone in particular. Tanata was

standing up for his employees. The forensic investigation wasn't producing anything much, either. The technicians found no fingerprints, and there wasn't even a question of DNA evidence—the cleaning lady had done a thorough job before the police were called. The secretary knew his employer very well, and his answers to the officers were evasive and monosyllabic.

It was more important to get word to the press and the leading collectors: should the Tanata tea bowl be offered to anyone, the family who had owned it since the sixteenth century would pay the highest price for its return. In such an instance, all Mr Tanata would ask would be the name of the seller.

The hairdresser's on the Yorckstrasse had the same name as its owner: Pocol. The shop window displayed two faded advertising posters for styling products that dated from the 1980s: a blonde beauty in a striped sweater with too much hair and a man with a long chin and a moustache. Pocol had inherited the shop from his father. In his youth, Pocol had actually cut people's hair himself, having learned to do this at home. Now he ran some legal gambling joints and many more illegal ones. He kept the shop, sat all day in one of the comfortable tilting chairs, drank tea, and conducted his business. Over the years, he'd grown fat—he had a weakness for Turkish pastries. His brother-in-law owned a bakery three doors down and made the best *balli elmali*—honeyed apple fritters—in the city.

Pocol was short-tempered and brutal, and he knew that this was the capital he traded on. Everyone had heard the story at least once about the café owner who'd told Pocol he should pay for what he ate. That was fifteen years ago. Pocol didn't know the café owner and the café owner didn't know Pocol. Pocol threw his food at the wall, went to the trunk of his car, and came back with a baseball bat. The landlord lost the sight in his right eye, his spleen, and his