

FREMDSPRACHENTEXTE · ENGLISCH

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Paranoid Park

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Reclam

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“Young man,” he went on, raising his head again,  
“in your face I seem to read some trouble of mind.”

*Crime and Punishment*,  
Fyodor Dostoevsky

[Titel] **Paranoid Park**: kleine Parkanlage und Jugendtreff in Portland, Oregon; nicht zu verwechseln mit dem Burnside Skate Park (vgl. Nachwort, S. 205).

3 **“Crime and Punishment”**: *Schuld und Sühne*; 1866 erschienener Roman des russischen Schriftstellers Fjodor Dostojewski.

*For Drew*

*JANUARY 3*  
*SEASIDE, OREGON*  
*(Night)*

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

- 5 I'm here, at my uncle Tommy's beach house. It's about nine o'clock at night. I'm upstairs, by myself. I've got my pen, my spiral notebook. ...

\_\_\_\_\_

I don't know how to start. I don't even know if I can do this. But I will try. It can't make anything worse. ...

\_\_\_\_\_

- 10 Outside it's raining and dark. I can hear the surf crashing in the distance like little bombs going off.

\_\_\_\_\_

2 **Oregon:** Bundesstaat der USA im Pazifischen Nordwesten mit Portland (ca. 560000 Einwohner) als wichtigster Stadt.

7 **spiral notebook:** Spiralblock.

10 **surf:** Brandung.

10f. **to crash:** hier: (gegen die Küste) krachen.

11 **to go off:** hochgehen (Bombe).

All right. Just went downstairs and made some hot chocolate. *Dude, chill out and write something.* That's me talking to myself. I just have to start at the beginning, take it easy, take it slow. ...

5 Paranoid Park. That's where it started. Paranoid Park is a skatepark in downtown Portland. It's under the Eastside Bridge, down by the old warehouses. It's an underground, "street" park, which means there are no rules, nobody owns it, and you don't have to pay to  
10 skate. They say some old-school guys built it years ago, and somehow it's survived all this time.

A lot of the best skaters come there, from California and the East Coast and all over. It's also kind of a street-kid hangout. There's all these stories, like how a  
15 skinhead got stabbed there once. That's why they call it Paranoid Park. It has that dangerous, sketchy vibe to it.

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My first connection to Paranoid was through Jared Fitch. He's a senior at my school. He's pretty insane,  
20 but cool, though, and one of the best skaters at our

2 **dude** (infml.): Kumpel, ‚Alter‘.

**to chill out** (infml.): locker sein, locker bleiben.

4 **to take s.th. slow**: etwas langsam angehen.

8 **underground**: hier: illegale Skateranlage.

10 **old-school guys** (pl.): hier etwa: Skater der ersten Jahre.

14 **hangout**: Treff.

16 **sketchy**: unsicher; hier auch: fragwürdig, zwielichtig.

**vibe** (infml.): Kurzform von *vibration*: hier: Atmosphäre, Anstrich.

19 **senior**: Schüler der zwölften Klasse einer High School.

**insane**: abgedreht, verrückt.

school. He does stuff like skating off the back of a delivery truck going forty miles an hour while someone videotapes it.

That's how we became friends. I was just getting  
5 good at skateboarding, and he would show me stuff. He had videos of things he'd done. He also had other skate videos – stuff you couldn't find at the local mall. He just knew what was up, so the two of us became friends.

Last summer we skated every day. We'd go down-  
10 town to different places, like this old parking garage that was condemned that everyone snuck into and partied in. That's when we really became friends. And other spots, like the famous "Suicide Stairwell" by the river where everybody used to go. Places like that.

15 Like I said, I wasn't on Jared's level yet, but I was learning. And he liked that I was young and eager. He liked being the teacher and showing me stuff.

Anyway, during the last week of summer, we were  
20 downtown one day and Jared said we should check out Paranoid Park. I didn't say anything at first. I had

1 **stuff** (infml.): Zeug; hier: Tricks.

1 f. **delivery truck**: Lieferwagen.

3 **to videotape s.th.**: etwas filmen, auf Video aufnehmen.

7 **mall**: Einkaufszentrum, Ladenstraße.

8 **to be up** (infml.): angesagt sein.

11 **to be condemned**: hier: auf der Abbruchliste stehen, für abbruchreif erklärt werden.

**to sneak into s.th.**: sich in etwas einschleichen (*sneak – snuck – snuck*).

12 **to party** (infml.): 'ne Party schmeißen.

13 **stairwell**: Treppenschacht, Treppenhaus.

16 **eager**: hier: hochmotiviert.

19 **to check s.th. out** (infml.): sich etwas ansehen; (slang) etwas antesten.

heard of it, of course, but had never thought of going there. I had assumed it was out of my league. But when I said I didn't think I was ready, Jared laughed and said something like: "Nobody's ever *ready* for  
5 Paranoid Park."

So we went. I was nervous, naturally, but I was also kinda psyched. Skating Paranoid. That was an accomplishment. That was something you could tell people about.

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10 We drove over the Eastside Bridge and circled around underneath it. We parked next to an old brick building. I remember seeing train tracks in the street. They were shiny, like they were still in use. As it turned out, they were.

15 The park itself was above us, tucked right under the bridge. You could hear the cars and trucks rattling by overhead. The area around there was mostly industrial buildings – old warehouses and parking lots, falling-down fences and stuff. There was one real office  
20 building farther down the road, so secretaries would

2 **to be out of one's league:** für jdn. eine Nummer zu groß sein.

7 **kinda** (infml.): *kind of*: irgendwie.

**to be psyched** /saikt/: aufgeregt, total begeistert sein.

7f. **accomplishment:** Leistung.

10 **to circle around:** einen Kreis fahren.

13 **shiny:** glänzend.

**as it turned out:** wie sich herausstellte.

15 **tucked:** platziert, eingepasst, versteckt (liegend).

16 **to rattle by:** vorbeirattern.

18 **parking lot:** Parkplatz.

20 **farther:** weiter (entfernt).



drive by every once in a while. They looked a little scared of the kids hanging out there.

We carried our boards up the dirt hill and ducked through a hole in the chain-link fence. We crawled  
5 onto the platform and found ourselves looking out over the whole layout. It was actually smaller than I expected, and also kind of trashed. There were old beer cans around, and garbage, and Cholo graffiti. But there was something about it, a kind of aura.  
10 There weren't many people – a couple guys were skating, a dozen or so more stood along the wall to our right. We watched a scrawny older guy in the bowl across from us nail a lip-grind. He wore brown slacks, cut off at the calf, with black socks and black ragged  
15 Vans. He had two huge tattoos on his arms and a big

2 **(to be) scared of s.o.:** vor jdm. Angst haben.

**to hang out:** sich herumtreiben; (slang) rumhängen.

3 **dirt hill:** hier: Böschung.

3f. **to duck through s.th.:** sich in geduckter Haltung durch etwas hindurchzwängen.

4 **chain-link fence:** Maschendrahtzaun.

6 **layout:** Anlage, Gelände.

7 **trashed:** vermüllt, mit Müll übersät.

8 **Cholo graffiti:** Graffiti im Stil der mexikanisch-amerikanischen *street gangs* aus dem Südwesten der USA, z. B. aus Los Angeles.

10 **a couple** (infml.): *a couple of*.

12 **scrawny:** dürr, sehnig.

**bowl:** Bowl; schalenförmige Skaterbahn.

13 **to nail a lip-grind:** Skaterjargon: einen Lip-Grind hinlegen (*lip-grind:* Trick, bei dem mit der hinteren Achse des Boards über die Kante der Bowl [*lip*] gerutscht wird; *to nail s.th.:* etwas landen, hinkriegen).

**slacks** (pl.): Hose.

14 **calf** (pl. *calves*): Wade.

**ragged:** zerschlissen.

15 **Vans** (pl.): Markenname eines Sportschuhs.

scar across his stomach. His deck was some weird old thing, totally beat to hell, but he killed. He was great.

The other guys there were the same. Not only could everyone skate, they all had their own “look.” I had  
5 seen hard-core skater guys here and there downtown. But I had never seen them all in one place. This was *their* place, I realized. The center of the true skate universe. Or at least that’s what it felt like to me.

Jared dropped in and rode up the bowl across  
10 from us. I got nervous watching him. Like I said, he was one of the best skaters I knew, but that was nothing compared to those guys. I dropped in, too, and went around a couple times and managed not to make an ass of myself. It was sweet, though – the  
15 adrenaline rush of it. You were in the big leagues at Paranoid.

---

This was the last week of summer vacation. It was also the week Jennifer Hasselbach first called me. She was this girl I’d hooked up with at the beginning of the

1 **scar:** Narbe.

**deck:** Brett.

**weird:** seltsam.

2 **beat to hell** (infml.): verschrammt, heruntergewirtschaftet.

**he killed** (infml.): er war umwerfend.

5 **hard-core skater:** Vollblutskater.

9 **to drop in:** Skaterjargon: einen Drop-in machen; d.h. von der oberen Kante aus mit dem Brett in die Bowl fahren oder springen.

14 **to make an ass of o.s.:** hier: saublöd aussehen, sich völlig blamieren.

15 **to be in the big leagues:** etwa: bei den echten Könnern sein.

19 **to hook up with s.o.:** mit jdm. eine Beziehung anfangen.

summer. She had been a camp counselor all July and August, so we hadn't seen each other. But now she was back, and she really wanted to hang out. She called me three times that week.

- 5 I wasn't that into it. I mean, she was cute and everything. But when I tried to tell her about Paranoid Park, she didn't get it at all. She was like, "Why would you want to hang out at some dirty place if you could go to Skate City?" Skate City was where all the local Preps  
10 skated. It was this lame indoor park behind the mall. If she couldn't see the difference, what was the point?
- 

- Another thing, and I guess this is important: All that summer, my parents were fighting and talking about separating, so there was a lot of stress about that. My  
15 little brother Henry was throwing up all the time. My mom almost moved out, and then she didn't, and then my dad started staying at my uncle Tommy's. It was a bad time; the whole summer was kind of a disaster. I think this was another reason I hung out more with  
20 Jared. He was so "out there" that when you were with

1 **camp counselor:** Betreuer(in) in einem Ferienlager.

3 **to hang out:** hier: zusammen rumhängen.

5 **I wasn't that into it** (infml.): etwa: Ich war nicht so sehr mit dem Herzen dabei; ich stand nicht so sehr darauf.

**cute:** süß, niedlich.

9 **Prep:** Kurzform von *preparatory student*: Schüler einer privaten Vorbereitungsschule für die Hochschule oder das College.

10 **lame:** öde, langweilig, lasch.

15 **to throw up** (infml.): kotzen.

18 **disaster:** schreckliches Unglück, Katastrophe.

20 **out there** (slang): aufgedreht.

him, you forgot about everything else. That was also the appeal of a place like Paranoid Park – you got the feeling no matter how bad your family stuff was, those guys had it worse. Those guys were true out-  
5 casts. Some of them probably lived their whole lives on the streets. You had nothing on them.

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Anyway, so school started. It seemed fun for about a week and then it sucked as usual. Jared and I just got more into skating. We decided to go to Paranoid  
10 again. We planned to go on a Saturday night. That Saturday was September seventeenth.

We had it all planned. I told my mom I was going to sleep over at Jared's so we could go early to the Winter Sports Expo. And since Jared's mom was going to  
15 Las Vegas that weekend, we would be free to do whatever. We could stay out all night if we wanted.

The only bad thing was that Jennifer Hasselbach wanted me to come out with her that night. She was being really flirty at school, and hinting that she would  
20 do stuff. It was tempting. But I really wanted to check out Paranoid. I figured I could hang out with her another time.

2 **appeal:** Reiz, Anziehungskraft.

3 **family stuff** (infml.): hier: Probleme, Zoff mit der Familie.

4f. **outcast:** Ausgestoßene(r).

6 **You had nothing on them:** etwa: An sie kam man nicht ran.

8 **it sucks** (infml.): es ist ätzend, beschissen.

14 **expo:** Kurzform von *exposition*: Ausstellung, Messe.

20 **to do stuff** (infml.): hier: sich sexuell einlassen.

**tempting:** verlockend, aufreizend.

So that was the plan. I would get my mom's car. We would stay at Jared's. And we'd go to Paranoid and see what was up.

---

But then there was a problem.

5 All that summer Jared was into this weird college girl, Kelly, who worked at the Coffee People by his house. She was supposedly a sex freak or something, but everyone said she was psycho. Jared had tried to get with her all summer, but it never worked out. But then,  
10 that night, she called him from her college. She was bored, and she wanted him to come down to Oregon State and party with her. Needless to say, he said yes.

When I got to his house he was packing for the bus trip. I was so pissed. But there was nothing I could do.  
15 Jared figured this was a sure thing, and he wasn't going to pass it up.

I sat on his bed and watched him stuff condoms in

3 **what was up** (infml.): was abging.

5 **to be into s.o.** (infml.): auf jdn. scharf sein.

6 **Coffee People:** Kette von Kaffeegeschäften mit angeschlossenen Cafés in Oregon, die fast alle von *Starbucks* aufgekauft wurden.

7 **supposedly:** angeblich.

**sex freak:** Sexsüchtige(r).

8 **to be psycho** (infml.): durchgeknallt sein.

8f. **to try to get with s.o.** (infml.): bei jdm. landen wollen.

9 **to work out:** klappen.

11f. **Oregon State:** *Oregon State University*.

12 **needless to say:** selbstredend, natürlich, klar.

14 **pissed** (infml.): stinkig, angefressen.

16 **to pass s.th. up:** sich etwas entgehen lassen.

17 **to stuff:** stopfen.

his pocket. I said how lame it was that he would blow off Paranoid for some weird girl – especially one who'd denied him all summer. He shook his head. He was sure he would get laid. He said I should call Jennifer. She seemed to want me – what was I waiting for? We could skate next weekend.

But I wasn't that into Jennifer. What I really wanted was to go to Paranoid Park.

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I drove Jared to the Greyhound station. He kept talking about how laid he was going to get. I didn't say much. I remember feeling sad when I dropped him off. I remember wishing I had better friends.

That was the thing about my high school. The normal people were boring and the few people that were cool, like Jared, were too crazy. They were fun to hang with, but they could never follow through on anything. You could never count on them.

When I dropped Jared at the bus station he gave me the key to his house, so I could still stay there. The house would be empty, so I still had everything covered. I could call Jennifer or play video games or whatever. I still had the whole night to myself.

1 f. **to blow s.th. off:** etwas sausen lassen, abblasen.

3 **to deny s.o.:** hier: jdn. ignorieren, auflaufen lassen.

4 **to get laid** (infml.): Sex haben.

9 **Greyhound (Lines):** 1914 von Carl Wickman gegründetes Unternehmen für den Busfernverkehr in den USA.

11 f. **to drop s.o. off:** jdn. (mit dem Auto) absetzen.

16 **to follow through on s.th.:** an etwas dranbleiben, etwas durchziehen.

20 f. **to have everything covered:** alle Möglichkeiten haben.

I pulled out of the bus station and drove around. For the first time, it felt like fall that night; the air smelled like burnt wood and had that dry foggy taste to it. Other high-school kids were out, driving around; you could feel the excitement in the air of a new school year, new fashions, new music on the radio.

Eventually I got bored of driving. I still had my skateboard in the backseat, and I thought about going to Skate City. But that would suck too much. I thought about checking out Suicide Stairwell but remembered they locked it at night. And they'd fenced off the big parking garage. ...

Then I pulled a U-turn and drove toward Paranoid Park. I don't know what I was thinking. I wasn't ready to go there by myself. I wasn't good enough. But for some reason, that's what I did.



I circled underneath the Eastside Bridge like Jared had done, but it was so dark and deserted I didn't want to park. I didn't want anything to happen to my mom's car. I drove back over the bridge and parked in the nice part of downtown and then rode my skateboard across.

I found a rusty metal staircase that went down from the bridge. As I walked down, I could see the

1 **to pull out:** herausfahren.

7 **eventually:** schließlich.

11 **to fence s.th. off:** etwas abzäunen.

13 **to pull a U-turn:** wenden.

18 **deserted:** verlassen.

23 **rusty:** rostig, verrostet.

entire park spread before me. It was crowded on a Saturday night: rad skaters, hot chicks, people partying, goofing around, hanging out. I felt my heart pounding in my chest as I jumped down off the stairs.

5 This wasn't some high-school beer party. This was a serious scene.

I came up with a plan: I wouldn't skate at first, I'd sit and watch and not do anything stupid. Maybe I wouldn't skate at all; maybe I'd just scope things out for when Jared came back.

10 That's what I did. I found an empty spot along the big cement wall and sat on my board like I was waiting for someone. It totally worked. Nobody bothered me and it was totally fun. I could have sat there all night, watching the skaters and the girls and all the stuff going on. The only bad thing was, I started thinking about other things. Like my parents. My dad had supposedly moved out, but he kept calling the house and bugging us, and my mom was not handling it well. And my poor brother Henry – he was thirteen, and he would get so worried about stuff he'd throw up his dinner. He was like that. He couldn't handle stress at all.

I also thought about Jennifer. She'd seemed pretty determined for us to be together. I mean, she was nice

2 **rad** (infml.): saugut, krass.

**hot chicks** (infml.): etwa: scharfe Bräute.

3 **to goof around** (infml.): herumblödeln, rumalbern.

4 **to pound:** heftig pochen (Herz).

7 **to come up with a plan:** sich einen Plan zurechtlegen.

9 **to scope things out** (infml.): etwa: die Sachlage checken.

19 **to bug s.o.** (infml.): jdn. nerven.

**to handle s.th. well:** mit etwas gut umgehen können, mit etwas gut klarkommen.



and everything but did I really want to go out with her? Also, she was a virgin, which meant she'd want to "do it" at some point and then things would get all serious. I mean, worse things could happen. I just  
5 wished I liked her more. I wished we had more in common –

"Hey," said someone behind me.

I turned around. A creepy guy was sitting on the cement wall above me. He was with another guy and a  
10 girl. The two guys stared down at me. The girl lit a cigarette.

"You gonna use that board or you just gonna sit on it all night?"

I shook my head. "Nah, I'm waiting for someone."

15 "Mind if I use it? While you're waiting?"

"I'd rather not."

"What kind is it?"

I told him. He admitted he didn't know much about skateboards and asked me about it. I told him what  
20 kind of deck it was, what kind of trucks.

He asked to borrow it again. "Just for five minutes. One time around. C'mon. If I don't come back, you can have the girl," he said.

25 The two guys laughed but the girl didn't. She was younger than them. They had beer and cigarettes and probably other stuff. The two guys were borderline

2 **virgin:** Jungfrau.

5f. **to have s.th. in common:** etwas gemeinsam haben.

8 **creepy:** höchst seltsam, gruselig, unheimlich.

20 **truck:** Skaterjargon: (zum Lenken dienende) Achse (des Skateboards).

22 **C'mon** (infml.): *Come on*: Komm schon.

26 **borderline (case):** Grenzfall.

gutter punks. They were dirty and had that hard look about them. Jared called people like that “Streeters.”

I didn’t want to lend him my board, but I didn’t see how I could avoid it. He must have seen this in my  
5 face. He hopped down off the wall. “C’mon, bro, five minutes,” he said.

“My friend will be here any minute,” I said.

“Bro,” he said firmly. “Five minutes. And then I give it back. Scout’s honor.”

10 I gave it to him.

He looked it over and took it to the lip. A girl on the other side was waiting and he waved for her to go first. He made a big show of it. “No, after you, I *in-*  
15 *sist*,” he told her, waving his hand dramatically. He was kind of a character, I realized. He had a theatrical way about him.

He dropped in. He wasn’t technically a great skater. All he could do was ride. But he had style. He wound his way around the park, almost falling several times.  
20 Other people laughed when they saw him. “Hey, Scratch!” someone called out. Other people whooped and yelled. He was like the local clown or something.

1 **gutter punk:** Punk, der auf der Straße lebt (*gutter:* Gosse).

2 **streeter** (infml.): Kid von der Straße, Straßenkid.

5 **to hop down:** herunterspringen.

**bro** (infml.): Kurzform von *brother:* Kumpel, ‚Alter‘.

9 **Scout’s honor:** etwa: großes Pfadfinderehrenwort.

14 **dramatically:** theatralisch.

14f. **He was kind of a character:** etwa: Er war irgendwie ein Unikum, so was wie ein echter Typ.

18f. **to wind one’s way around:** sich herumschlingeln.

21 **to whoop:** johlen.

22 **to yell:** laut schreien.

But also, people were a little scared of him, you could tell.

Meanwhile, his friends introduced themselves. I don't remember the guy's name. The girl's name was Paisley. The guy asked me if I came around there often because they had never seen me before. I said just one other time. I remember I didn't really want to look at the guy, but I kind of stared at the girl. She was so young – younger than me, maybe fourteen. Scratch and his friend were both older. The whole situation was pretty sketchy.

“Check out Scratch,” said the guy. Scratch had lost his balance and was making a big show of it, waving his arms around, sort of mocking the more serious skaters. He really was like a clown.

After exactly five minutes he came back. He shot up the side of the bowl and caught the board with one hand. He gave it back to me.

“Thanks, friend,” he said.

“No problem,” I said. I noticed he was missing a bottom tooth, right in the front of his mouth.

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Until that moment, I'd been planning my getaway. But once I had my board back I felt safe, or at least safe enough to hang out a little longer. I was curious, I guess, about Scratch and his friends.

We talked. I sat on the wall with them. Scratch and

14 **to mock s.o.:** sich über jdn. lustig machen, jdn. veräppeln.

21 **bottom tooth:** Zahn im Unterkiefer.

22 **getaway:** Abgang, Flucht.

the other guy kept up their banter; they wanted to impress me, I guess. The girl never talked. I kept watching her. She had a homemade tattoo on her wrist and black nail polish and this kind of cave-woman shape to her face. I wondered where she came from, what her family was like, if she even had a family.

Scratch talked the most. He asked me questions about skating stuff, treating me like I was an expert, and always saying how much he loved the philosophy of skateboarding and the rebel nature of it. It was a loner sport, he said. It was like being a samurai but with “boards instead of swords.”

I asked him about Paranoid Park, like about the skinhead who got stabbed. He told me the whole story – how the skinhead didn’t really get stabbed, and he wasn’t really a skinhead, and the whole thing had been wildly exaggerated over the years.

It was fun talking to them. I kept meaning to leave, but I had nowhere else to go, and it was kind of a thrill being there, talking to someone like Scratch. He had

1 **to keep s.th. up:** mit etwas weitermachen.

**banter:** Geplänkel, Scherz.

3 ff. **She had ... this kind of cave-woman shape to her face:** Ihr Gesicht hatte etwas Höhlenmenschenartiges.

3 **homemade:** selbstgemacht.

4 **nail polish:** Nagellack.

10 **the rebel nature of it:** das Rebellische daran.

11 **loner sport:** Sport für Einzelgänger.

**samurai:** japanischer Krieger.

13 **like:** wie zum Beispiel.

14 **to get stabbed:** abgestochen werden.

17 **wildly exaggerated:** stark übertrieben.

18 **I kept meaning to leave:** Ich wollte eigentlich immer noch gehen.

19 **it was kind of a thrill** (infml.): es war irgendwie aufregend.

lived up and down the West Coast and hopped trains and slept in bus stations and stuff. He said he got in a fight with a cop in San Diego last summer, so he couldn't go there anymore so he was going to crash in  
5 Phoenix for the winter and start a band with a friend. It was pretty wild stuff. Especially hopping trains. I always loved trains. I always wanted to hop one.

After a while they ran out of beer. And they needed cigarettes. Scratch said he'd go. Did I have any money?  
10 I figured they would eventually ask for money, so I said I didn't, but then when everyone else had a five, I found a five in my jeans pocket and gave it to them. Scratch asked if I had a car, and I was glad I had left it on the other side of the river. I said I didn't, that I had  
15 taken the bus.

Scratch volunteered to walk down the road to a supermarket. It was kind of far, did I want to walk with him?

No. I wanted to hang out. But then the other guy  
20 looked at his watch. "Hey the ten-twenty's going to come," he said. "You guys can catch it."

"Hey," Scratch said to me. "Wanna hop a train?"

1 **to hop trains:** illegal auf Zügen mitfahren, bahn-, zugsurfen.

2 **and stuff:** und so.

3 **San Diego:** Stadt in Südwestkalifornien, an der Grenze zu Mexiko.

4 **to crash** (infml.): vorübergehend unterkommen, pennen.

5 **Phoenix:** Stadt im US-Bundesstaat Arizona.

6 **wild stuff** (infml.): wirres Zeug.

8 **they ran out of beer:** ihnen ging das Bier aus.

10 **to figure** (infml.): sich denken, sich vorstellen, glauben, ahnen.

16 **to volunteer to do s.th.:** anbieten, etwas zu tun.

17 **kind of far** (infml.): ziemlich weit, ganz schön weit.

I looked up at him. I kinda did. “What sort of train?”

“The ten-twenty. It comes right through here every night. We can ride it all the way to Safeway.”

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They talked me into it. Or I agreed. I don't remember,  
5 exactly.

The other guy and the girl offered to watch my board, but I said I would take it with me. Scratch said it would get in the way, but I insisted.

We left Paranoid through the hole in the chain-link  
10 fence. I followed Scratch, sliding on my ass down the dirt hill. I watched the back of his stubbly head and hoped I wasn't doing something stupid. He wouldn't rob me, would he? Or take my board? But whatever. I sort of didn't care at that point.

15 At the bottom of the hill, we dusted ourselves off. That's when I heard the train horn blare. I could feel the rumble of it under my feet.

“That's it!” shouted Scratch, and he broke into an excited run. I ran with him, my whole body tingling

3 **Safeway:** 1915 gegründete amerikanische Einzelhandelskette.

4 **to talk s.o. into s.th.:** jdn. zu etwas überreden.

8 **to get in the way:** stören, hinderlich sein.

10 **ass** (vulg.): Arsch.

11 **stubbly:** stopplig, borstig.

13 **to rob s.o.:** jdn. bestehlen.

**but whatever:** aber egal, und wenn schon.

15 **to dust o.s. off:** sich den Staub abklopfen.

16 **train horn:** Signalhorn (Zug).

**to blare:** laut hupen, tuten.

17 **rumble:** Beben.

19f. **to tingle with anticipation:** vor Vorfreude kribbeln.

with anticipation. I couldn't believe I was doing this. *I was going to hop a train!* Jared would be so jealous. It served him right!

We ran through the old buildings, until we came to the train tracks. The train was really there, it was really coming. The single front headlight shone directly at us.

"Get back," said Scratch when we reached the gravel track bed. "You can't let them see you."

We both ducked behind a loading dock. We crouched there, watching, breathing hard.

The locomotive came even with us. I couldn't believe how big and powerful it looked.

After it passed, Scratch leaned forward. He studied the different cars, watching them pass. Then he picked one and started to jog alongside it.

"Come on, run!" he shouted over the noise.

I clutched my board and dashed after him in the darkness.

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The train didn't seem to be going very fast – until you tried to run alongside it. We both had to sprint to keep

2f. **It served him right!:** Es geschah ihm recht!

7f. **gravel track bed:** geschottertes Gleisbett.

9 **loading dock:** Laderampe.

**to crouch:** sich niederkauern.

11 **to come even with s.o.:** auf gleiche Höhe mit jdm. kommen.

14 **to pick s.th.:** sich etwas aussuchen, sich für etwas entscheiden.

15 **to jog alongside s.th.:** langsam neben etwas herlaufen.

17 **to clutch s.th.:** etwas packen, unter den Arm klemmen.

**to dash after s.o.:** hinter jdm. her rasen.

20 **to sprint:** sprinten, rennen.

20f. **to keep up:** Schritt halten, mithalten, dranbleiben.

up. Scratch ran after a metal ladder on the side of a grain car. He jumped for it, caught it, and pulled himself up until he stood on the lowest rung. He pointed for me to do the same.

5 I still had my skateboard, which was in the way. But I switched it to my left hand and grabbed the ladder on the next car. Still holding my board, I crawled up enough to swing my feet into the bottom rung.

Scratch gave me a thumbs-up when he saw that. I  
10 had proved myself to not be a total idiot.

Now we were on the train. We were riding it. Scratch yelled stuff to me over the noise. He said the train went another quarter mile or so to a train yard. We'd jump off there and walk to Safeway.

15 I was so psyched. I couldn't believe I was riding a train. I imagined telling all my friends, even telling Jennifer. I secured my skateboard in the rungs of the ladder and hung out as far as I could. Scratch was doing the same. He was a real hobo. The whole thing  
20 was so awesome. I wondered if we could ride it the

2 **grain car:** Getreidewaggon.

3 **rung:** Sprosse (einer Leiter).

3f. **to point for s.o. to do s.th.:** jdm. zuwinken, ein Zeichen geben, etwas zu tun.

6 **to switch:** (rüber)schieben.

**to grab:** packen.

8 **to swing:** schwingen.

**bottom:** unterste(r, s).

9 **to give a thumbs-up:** den Daumen heben (um einen Erfolg anzuzeigen).

10 **to prove o.s.:** sich (als jd.) erweisen.

13 **train yard:** Rangierbahnhof, Verschiebebahnhof.

17 **to secure:** sichern; hier: einhängen.

19 **hobo:** Penner, Pennbruder.

20 **awesome** (infml.): super, krass, geil.



other direction, too. Maybe you could ride it all the way across town.

Unfortunately, after a couple minutes, the train started to slow down. Scratch shouted that we should hop off, the train yard was coming up.

I regretted that my little ride had come to an end. But I had done it. I had hopped a train! I lingered there for a moment, hanging out as far as I could.

10 Then Scratch began waving frantically at me. I couldn't tell what he was saying. At the same time, he wriggled farther up his ladder and tried to squeeze himself behind it. He looked like he was trying to hide. I didn't understand.

15 Then I saw the car.

There was a private security car parked on the gravel up ahead. It faced the train, its headlights shining directly onto the freight cars as they passed. Standing beside it was a man in a security uniform.  
20 He had black gloves on and a black nightstick in his hands.

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7f. **to linger:** verweilen, bleiben.

10 **frantically:** wie verrückt, ganz wild.

12 **to wriggle up:** sich hochwinden.

**to squeeze:** quetschen.

16 **private security car:** Auto eines privaten Sicherheitsdienstes.

17 **to face s.th.:** einer Sache zugewandt sein.

18 **freight car:** Güterwaggon.

20 **nightstick:** Schlagstock.