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Growing up in a Concentration Camp:
Translating Linguistic Development in *Gretel and the
Dark*

By Julie Dohmen

Julie Dohmen

6304206

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Supervisor dr. Onno Kusters

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Abstract

This thesis aims to find the different ways linguistic development is presented in the young adult novel *Gretel and the Dark* by Eliza Granville, and how the various aspects connected with it can be tackled in a Dutch translation. I will make a comparison between *Gretel and the Dark* and Markus Zusak's *The Book Thief*, because the novels both have similar protagonists and settings and are aimed at the same age group. Following this, I will look at the Dutch translation of *The Book Thief* in order to find the translation strategies used by the translator and to see whether these strategies will be useful in translating *Gretel and the Dark*. Finally, I will translate a number of fragments chosen to highlight the issues discussed.

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Introduction

As its title already suggests, fairy tales and stories play an important part in the novel *Gretel and the Dark* by Eliza Granville, and its main character, Krysta, is obsessed with them. *Gretel and the Dark* was published by Hamish Hamilton in 2014, but has not yet been translated into Dutch. The novel has been categorised as historical fiction, since the story takes place during the Second World War. *Gretel and the Dark* actually features two storylines, one of which revolves around Krysta. This storyline is written in first-person, from the perspective of Krysta, which means that the reader has to discover where and when the story takes place by the descriptions that she gives. By these descriptions, but also from the dialogues, the reader can infer that Krysta is about eight or nine years old at the start of the book, and lives in Germany during the Second World War. The other storyline in *Gretel and the Dark* takes place in a completely different place and time period, namely Vienna in 1899. This story focuses on Lilie, a mysterious young woman who suddenly appears and claims to be a machine. Dr. Josef Breuer and his assistant Benjamin try to find out who she is and want to help her. Throughout the book, these two stories are told alongside each other, alternating each chapter, and seem completely unrelated. However, the reader slowly starts to notice some similarities and references between the two stories, until it is revealed at the end of the novel that the ‘Vienna-story’ is actually a story made up by Krysta.

Although it is never explicitly stated, it is clear that the novel comprises several years in Krysta’s life. It starts when Krysta is still living with her father, who works in the infirmary of a concentration camp. When he is killed, the female workers of the camp, who severely resent Krysta for her stubbornness, do not want to look after her and, not knowing who else would want to take her in, decide to put her inside the camp “with the other undesirables” (Granville 138). There, Krysta meets Daniel, who becomes her best friend, and she is forced to adjust to life in the concentration camp. Several years pass, though again, Granville never mentions a date, and ultimately, Krysta and Daniel find a way to escape. The passing of time in the novel is not only evident by Krysta getting taller (Granville 227), but also in the development of her linguistic skills. She starts out by describing phenomena such as ‘blood’ in her own words, because she does not know the right word yet, she omits words from sentences (“Don’t want to” [31]), and tells stories to her doll. As she gets older, however, she learns new words, she uses complete sentences, and understands that fairy tales cannot come true.

In this thesis I will investigate the linguistic development of Krysta and compare it with the linguistic development in Markus Zusak's novel *The Book Thief* (2005), as its story, setting and main character are similar to Granville's novel. The protagonist of *The Book Thief*, Liesel, is quite similar to Krysta. At the beginning of the book, Liesel is nine years old and goes to live with a foster family. Like Krysta, she has never attended school and therefore is unable to read or write. However, with the help of her foster father, Hans, she starts to learn to read, and eventually starts writing her own book. The biggest difference between the two stories is the narration. *Gretel and the Dark* is narrated by Krysta in first-person, while the narrator of *The Book Thief* is Death, who relays Liesel's life story to the reader. Therefore, the childish descriptions that are frequent in Granville's novel are less prominent in *The Book Thief*. Nevertheless, there are enough instances in the book that show Liesel's linguistic competence and her development throughout the story.

After this comparison I will look at the Dutch translation of *The Book Thief* (2005) by Annemarie Lodewijk to try and find a translation strategy for this particular translation problem. Then I will use this strategy to translate some fragments from *Gretel and the Dark*, after which I will reflect on my translation, to see if the translation strategy has worked. The research question that I will try to answer is: How does the linguistic development undergone by Krysta in *Gretel and the Dark* manifest itself and which translation strategies can be used to translate this particular problem?

To get a complete look at the linguistic development of Krysta in *Gretel and the Dark* I have selected three periods of the novel from which I will select a few fragments that I will translate into Dutch. I will look at the period of the book chronicling Krysta's life before she was put in the concentration camp, the period during which she actually lives in the camp, and the period after she escapes the camp. These three periods all deal with a different part of Krysta's life: her life before the camp, when she was about eight years old and still living with her father, which is characterised by childish language and descriptions. Then there is the period where Krysta is living inside the camp, where she is forced to grow up quickly. During this period in the novel, Krysta slowly starts to lose her innocence and childish language. When the reader has reached the third period of the novel, where Krysta is about fourteen years old and has escaped from the camp, she is capable of clearly describing what is happening, without the childish descriptions, which indicate that she really has grown up.

Chapter 1 – Analysis *Gretel and the Dark*

In this chapter I present an analysis of the source text, focusing particularly on the linguistic development of the main character. I offer multiple examples of Krysta's childish speech, choice of words and descriptions, and I also explain how her linguistic skills develop over the course of the book.

As explained before, the two storylines of the book alternate each chapter, and do not seem to be connected. The characters, the settings, and the time periods are completely different from each other. However, as the reader progresses further into the novel, he or she will be able to find some similarities between the stories, such as character names or sentences that are repeated literally. These similarities become increasingly more clear and explicit for the reader. At the end of the novel it has become evident that the Vienna-story is actually made up by Krysta. An example of such a clue is the moment when Krysta is locked in a cell in the camp with the character Hanna, who tells her about her grandfather, Josef Breuer, who was a doctor in Vienna (Granville 289). This is also where Krysta hears about the fact that Breuer had fallen in love with a patient, something she subsequently uses in her story: Dr. Breuer often thinks about his former patient, Bertha Pappenheim, and he realises that he starts to feel the same way about Lilie. At this point in the story, it is also clear why the Vienna-story is told in third-person, in contrast to Krysta's story which is told in first-person, as it is now clear that the Vienna-story is a story that Krysta is telling when she and Daniel have escaped the camp. When *Gretel and the Dark* is read a second time, the reader will be able to find even more clues and similarities between the two stories.

One of the most important translation problems in this novel is Krysta's use of language. It is never mentioned what age Krysta is exactly, but going on her behaviour and language use, she is probably around eight or nine years old at the start of the book. Her story begins sometime in the 1940s, when she and her father move to a new home that is next to concentration camp Ravensbrück, because her father works there as a doctor in the infirmary. Since the reader reads the story through Krysta's eyes, they have to deduce this from just Krysta's descriptions. For example, the first thing that Krysta says about her new house is that there is a big wall in the garden, beyond which there is a big zoo containing "dangerous creatures" that are being watched by guards with fierce dogs (Granville 32). Later on, Krysta describes some more things from her environment, such as the "many red

flags with bendy-arm ‘X’s’ (37), which help the reader figure out where Krysta is living and roughly what year it is. Krysta’s story comprises multiple years, which is shown when Krysta makes a remark about how her friend Daniel has “shot up in height” (227) and that the same thing has happened to her. At the end of the novel, Krysta is probably about thirteen or fourteen years old, which can also be inferred by Krysta’s linguistic development. As said before, the language of eight-year-old Krysta is often childish and naïve, but as the reader progresses further into the story, and Krysta is getting older, her language becomes less childish as well.

An example of this development is the naming of certain things. Young Krysta does not understand a lot of things yet, and thinks for instance that her father works at a zoo (Granville 36). In their book *Style in Fiction*, Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short describe four levels of style: the semantic, syntactic and graphological levels and the phonological effects (96). The semantic level concerns the many different ways in which a single phenomenon can be described. Because Krysta in *Gretel and the Dark* is still a young child, she uses different words to describe certain things than an adult probably would. Consequently, the reader has to infer from these descriptions what exactly is happening. According to Leech and Short, “inference has an important role in [the] comprehension [of a text]” (102). From the example of Krysta’s description of the “red flags with bendy-arm ‘X’s’”, the reader is able to infer that Krysta is living in Nazi-Germany, as she is referring to Hitler’s flags with the swastika on them. Despite Krysta’s use of less specific words, the reader knows exactly what she is talking about. Krysta also does not know certain words, which becomes clear when she describes her father washing his hands with “red paint” (84), and when she describes how there is “scarlet dripping from [Johanna’s] mouth” (93) after she and Krysta’s father have had a row. Even though these things are described in a childish way, the words are effective, because the reader knows what Krysta is talking about, which in this case is blood. Later on in the story, after Krysta and Daniel have escaped the camp, Krysta describes Agnieszka’s “bloody hands” (345). After years of living in the concentration camp, Krysta now knows what blood is, and therefore uses the correct word to describe what she is seeing.

The syntactic level of style, as described by Leech and Short, deals with the different ways to structure a text. This applies to, among others, word order and sentence length, which in turn influence the way the reader perceives a text. By making use of a first-person narrative and childish descriptions, it is made clear to the reader that one of the

stories in *Gretel and the Dark* is (at least partly) told through the eyes of a young child. This is in direct contrast with the Vienna-story, which is written in third-person narrative and void of any childish language, because it is told by Krysta at the end of the novel, when she has grown up. This difference between use of language is yet again a linguistic tool which Granville uses to keep her readers in the dark about the connection between the two stories. Another syntactic variation in the text which shows that Krysta is still a child is the omission of words from certain sentences. Krysta is described by several characters as a stubborn child, and when she does not get what she wants, she speaks in incomplete sentences. For example, when her father asks her to “be a good girl”, she responds with “Won’t. Don’t want to.” (Granville 31). When Krysta is older, however, she does not omit words from her sentences anymore: “I want and don’t want to eat the baby-dove stew.” (344).

Another example of Krysta growing up throughout the novel, is her ability to ‘read’ certain people. Throughout the story, Krysta has multiple run-ins with Hraben, the head of the camp guards. From the things he says and does to Krysta, the reader can infer that he has an unhealthy interest in her, but Krysta, who is still a young child, does not see this and keeps trusting Hraben. Somewhere at the beginning of the story for example, Hraben puts his hand under Krysta’s skirt, but Krysta, still naïve in thinking Hraben is harmless, just remarks that he “forgets to take his hand away” (Granville 122). Later on, when Krysta is living in the concentration camp, she is warned about him because he is “not a nice man” (187). At first, Krysta does not understand what Hraben wants of her, but as she gets older and starts to understand more things, she eventually figures out that Hraben is not as nice as he initially seemed. Like the descriptions of the camp as a zoo and blood as red paint, Krysta also describes her encounters with Hraben in less explicit words, but to the reader it is clear what Hraben is up to. An example of this is when Krysta has just been put inside the camp and encounters Hraben, who takes her to his tower. There, he sits her on his knee, asks her to come and sit a little closer, and runs his hand up and down her leg (182). There are several encounters like this, but Krysta remains oblivious, until the moment when Hraben actually rapes her. The scene is described in only a few sentences, but to the reader it is painfully clear what has happened: “‘This is quite normal,’ says Hraben, when I can’t stop crying. ‘Next time will be better.’ . . . My mouth is swollen and sore. Everything hurts” (281).

Later on, when Daniel and Krysta have escaped the camp and are walking through a forest, they encounter a woman who is dressed as a nurse. She tells them her name is Agnieszka, but Krysta immediately knows that she is lying and cannot be trusted: “It’s a lie. I can tell” (Granville 338). Moreover, Krysta keeps referring to Agnieszka as a witch. This shows that Krysta has learned not to immediately trust people, especially after what happened with Hraben. María Martínez says in her article “Rewriting the Fairy Tale in Louise Murphy’s and Lisa Goldstein’s Holocaust Narratives” that this also gives the forest through which they are travelling a double meaning. Like in Krysta’s favourite story, *Hansel and Gretel*, it is a dangerous place, because they encounter Agnieszka who looks and acts like a witch, but it is also “a place of opportunity and transformation” (Martínez 70). In the forest, Hansel and Gretel kill the witch and Krysta and Daniel lock Agnieszka up so that she is not a threat to them anymore. It is also the place where Krysta shows that she definitely has lost her childish innocence and naivety.

Another example of Krysta’s linguistic development is the telling of stories and fairy tales. As a young child, before moving to the house next to the concentration camp, Krysta always listened to the stories and fairy tales that Greet, the housekeeper, used to tell her whenever she was doing chores. Greet’s stories included graphic descriptions of violence and murder, in line with the fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm, and were also used to scare Krysta into helping with the chores. How much of an impression Greet’s stories have had on Krysta is shown by the stories Krysta tells her doll, Lottie. She explains that *Hansel and Gretel* is Lottie’s favourite story (Granville 70), and tells it to her over and over, but with slight differences each time, depending on where she is or what she is doing. For instance, when Krysta is angry at someone, she uses the story of Hansel and Gretel to punish them. She will change the story to fit her own desires, and at one such occasion she puts the women who work in the camp in the witch’s oven (70).

Furthermore, she explains events in real life by using examples from fairy tales. For instance, when she first meets Daniel, who lives in the concentration camp with his little sister, she learns that he is always hungry and is constantly searching for food (Granville 77). Krysta does not understand why he and his family have no food, and she uses the story of Hansel and Gretel to come up with an explanation. She thus believes that Daniel must have been lost for a long time, “though not in a deep, dark forest like Hansel in the story” (82), and that it sounds “as if Gretel’s lost too” (82), which refers to Daniel’s sister, because Krysta has never seen her in the camp. At some point during the story, Krysta

loses her doll, and she believes that all her stories are lost (279). This is a turning point for Krysta, because in losing her doll, she also loses (part of) her innocence. She now knows that telling stories will not help her get revenge on the camp guards in real life, and ultimately, at the end of the novel, she is no longer capable of escaping reality by using stories: “Today I can’t. A door has closed. The ideas have gone. The words aren’t there.” (343).

Thus, there are three main stylistic elements which show Krysta’s linguistic development in *Gretel and the Dark*: the childish descriptions that are being used when Krysta does not know a certain word, the omission of words when Krysta is angry, and the telling of stories. During her stay in Ravensbrück, Krysta grows up and develops her linguistic skills. Ultimately, she does not omit words from her sentences anymore, and she starts using the right words for phenomena she did not know at first, as is the case with the word ‘blood’ for example. She also starts to realise that the stories she used to listen to and the ones she told herself are not real and never will be: “Why bother? It isn’t real.” (Granville 279).

Because the text and its two storylines are so well connected, and the reader is often misled, translating *Gretel and the Dark* will not be easy. Even though a large part of the story is told through the perspective of a young girl, and many things are described in a childish way, the novel was not intended for young children. This is predominantly clear from the serious themes of the book, such as living in a concentration camp and sexual abuse, but also from the little hints that are hidden throughout the book. Firstly, Krysta’s abstract descriptions, such as the red flags with the bendy-arm X’s, have to be understood in order to know when and where the story takes place. Also, the reader has to pay close attention to find all the clues that connect the two storylines. A translator of this text has to be even more attentive to be able to translate all the clues, and make sure that the translation of *Gretel and the Dark* is just as interesting a puzzle as the original is.

Chapter 2 – Comparing *Gretel and the Dark* with *The Book Thief*

The Book Thief starts with an introduction by the narrator, Death, who introduces himself and explains that he will be telling a story about a girl, a book thief. This is not the usual narrative structure of a text about the Holocaust, especially in a book that is aimed at children and young adults (Stephens 40). Death is usually viewed as a rather disturbing figure, but in *The Book Thief* he is actually the opposite, as he functions to “mediate the harsh realities of the novel’s subject matter” (Adams 223). Death continues his introduction by saying that he often thinks about the book thief, and that he has “kept her story to retell” (Zusak 24). This is a reference to the end of the novel, when Liesel is writing her life story in the basement of her house. After the bombing that destroys her whole street, Liesel drops her book and Death picks it up. This shows that the story of *The Book Thief* is actually a retelling, and that the narrator is not the same as the main character. However, even though Liesel’s story is told by Death, it was written by Liesel, so the descriptions, the feelings and the made-up words are all Liesel’s. This is what Roger Fowler calls the “mind style”, which is a “realisation of a narrative point of view” (Leech & Short 151). Accordingly, although the story is told by Death, the narrative point of view is Liesel’s.

The story starts in 1939, when Liesel’s little brother dies on the journey to their foster family. After the funeral, the gravedigger’s assistant drops his handbook about gravedigging. Liesel finds it and takes it with her, despite her inability to read it, because to her, it represents the last time she saw her mother and little brother (Zusak 45). This book then is the beginning of her “illustrious career” as the book thief (36).

After the funeral, Liesel is taken to her foster family, Hans and Rosa Hubermann. During the car ride, it is explained that she secretly hopes that they would lose the way or that the people taking her would change their minds (Zusak 34). When they arrive at the Hubermann house, Liesel refuses to get out of the car. She is scared of living with strange people and does not understand why her mother would leave her there (38). This is an example of a syntactic variation, as described by Leech and Short in *Style in Fiction*. The sentences that express Liesel’s thoughts and feelings underline to the reader that she is still a young child. Like Krysta in *Gretel and the Dark*, there are some words that Liesel does not

understand yet. One example of this is the only thing Liesel knew about her father, which is that he was a communist (38). Liesel explains that she does not understand this 'label', and that she had heard this strange word many times, but whenever she had asked her mother about it, she was told that she should not worry about it (38). She also does not understand why her mother left her with a foster family and where she has gone. One night, Liesel overhears Hans and Rosa arguing about her mother. Rosa then asks "Who knows what they've done to her?" (102), and Liesel wonders who 'they' are. Eventually, she comes to understand that she will never see her mother again (105). She asks Hans if her mother was a communist, because "they were always asking her things", and if Hitler has taken her away (121). Even though Liesel does not fully understand what being a communist means, she does know that it is something that is not tolerated in Nazi Germany, and that her mother was punished for being one.

Where Krysta mostly describes words she does not know or understand, Liesel sometimes makes up words to express how she feels. For example, when she describes how the first few months with the Hubermanns have gone, it is said that Liesel "would nightmare" every night (Zusak 43). "Nightmare" obviously is not a verb, but Liesel still chooses to use it as such in this instant. Furthermore, Hans comes into her room every night to comfort her after her nightmare, and Liesel describes how she slowly comes to trust him, mostly because of his "thereness" and his "not-leaving" (43). These words are explained by Death, who sometimes interrupts the story to comment on something that needs explaining, like some background information about a character or a German abbreviation. This time Death explains that 'not-leaving' is "a definition [that is] not found in the dictionary" and that the term is often used by children (43). Another example of this is the name the children of Himmel Street have given to one of its residents. They call the man who always whistles 'Pfiffikus', because they do not know his real name, and because "you give that name to someone who likes to whistle" (58). As the story continues and Liesel grows up, however, these made-up words and names become less frequent.

In contrast to Krysta, who tells stories and gradually improves her linguistic skills, Liesel learns to read and write, which in turn helps her to express herself and helps her with her linguistic development. At the beginning of the novel, she is "the book thief without words" (Zusak 86), as she cannot read yet. During her first year of living with the Hubermanns, her foster father helps her by reading *The Gravedigger's Handbook* to her and writing out the words. As has been explained above, Liesel comes to trust Hans during

these reading sessions. Her obsession with learning to read thus serves a “dual purpose” (Webb 74), because the reading lessons not only help Liesel to become literate, but they also help her in forming a close relationship with Hans, which simultaneously helps her to come through the trauma of losing her mother and brother (74). The reading sessions continue on throughout the year, until they have read the entire book. When Liesel is at school one day, she picks up one of the textbooks, and finds that she can read every word in it, be it at a slow pace (Zusak 93). Now that she is able to read, she starts to steal more books, but also learns to understand the power of words. Every time she deciphers a new word or pieces together a whole sentence, she feels “an innate sense of power” (154). Death also remarks that ultimately, she will be able to “hold [the words] in her hands like the clouds, and wring them out, like the rain” (86), which means that she will eventually understand the power of words.

Liesel’s linguistic development is thus primarily established by reading. When she starts to write her own book, she wonders when she began to understand that words do not just mean something, but everything (Zusak 37). Webb explains that one reason for this is that Zusak wanted to show how “[t]he powerless become powerful through words [and] language” (78). Liesel’s understanding of the power of words is a recurring theme throughout the novel. Max, the Jew that the Hubermanns are hiding in their basement, also writes a story. His book *The Word Shaker* is written especially for Liesel, and is about “word shakers” (Zusak 452) and the power that Hitler has gained by only using his words: “Without words, the Fürher was nothing.” (525). Max calls Liesel the most powerful word shaker of all, because she understands “the true power of words” (452). According to Webb, the reason that Liesel can understand the true power of words, is because Zusak wanted to create a character “to juxtapose the way Hitler used words” (Webb 72). Liesel is “a stealer of books and a prolific reader” (72). She knows that words can hurt, but unlike Hitler, she also understands the power of words “to heal and give life through stories” (72).

Furthermore, Liesel uses the power of words to describe her experiences in often very poetic words. When Liesel is finally able to read, these poetic descriptions occur more frequently throughout the book. An example of this is when she describes the weather to Max. Instead of saying that it is a sunny day with just a few clouds, she tells Max that the sky is blue with “a big long cloud [that is] stretched out, like a rope, [and] at the end of it, the sun is like a yellow hole” (Zusak 259). Max is amazed at this description, and realises that only a child could have come up with a weather report like that (259). Death also

points out her poetic ability when Liesel is reading to her neighbour, Frau Holtzapfel. The woman had just heard that one of her sons had died in the war, and Death comments that when he imagines Frau Holtzapfel's kitchen from Liesel's words, he does not see a stove or anything like that, but "the Russian winter and the snow falling from the ceiling" (474).

In conclusion, there are several similarities between the characters of Krysta and Liesel. The most prominent one is the fact that both use stories to develop their linguistic skills. Where Krysta mainly uses oral storytelling, Liesel learns to read and write, and ultimately understands the true power of words. Krysta mostly describes words she does not know yet, but Liesel has to make up new words to express how she feels. However, as she learns to read and write, and subsequently reads more and more books, she becomes able to express herself, often in very poetic language. The various ways in which Krysta and Liesel's linguistic abilities develop offer a number of acute translation problems. In the case of *The Book Thief*, these have been approached in various ways by Annemarie Lodewijk, and her strategies may therefore offer useful parallels for developing strategies for my own translation of *Gretel and the Dark*.

Chapter 3 – Translation Strategies in *De boekendief*

After analysing *Gretel and the Dark* and *The Book Thief*, I will now look at the translation of *The Book Thief* as translated by Annemarie Lodewijk, in order to try and find the strategies she used in translating the problems discussed in the analysis. I will use Andrew Chesterman's classification to categorise the translation strategies.

In the scene in which Hans consoles Liesel after her nightmare, Zusak uses a couple of made-up words. Liesel explains that she would “nightmare” but that she would trust Hans because of his “thereness” and his “not-leaving”. Lodewijk has translated “Liesel would nightmare” as “Liesel nachtmerriede” (Lodewijk 40). This is a literal translation (Chesterman 155), as the word ‘nachtmerriede’ also does not exist in Dutch. The same strategy is used when translating the phrase ‘not-leaving’, which she translates as “niet-weggaan” (Lodewijk 41).

Although there are almost no made-up words in *Gretel and the Dark*, like there are in *The Book Thief*, there is one particular compound word that Granville created for this story. After Krysta expresses her excitement about visiting the ‘zoo’, the camp guards laugh at her and explain that there are no animals in this zoo, only “animal-people” (Granville 36). As shown above, Lodewijk translated the made-up words in *The Book Thief* literally. I have partly followed this strategy by translating this compound as “mensdieren”. The most literal translation of this compound would be something like ‘dier-mensen’, but I eventually chose for ‘mensdieren’, because this, in my opinion, most reflects the view of the camp guards. They see the Jews more as animals that just happen to look like people, rather than as actual people. Furthermore, a few sentences after this, Hraben jokingly says that these animal-people will eat Krysta, which is more of an animal trait than a human trait. Furthermore, I changed the order of the words, and thus, like Granville, created a non-existent word in my translation.

However, Lodewijk has not been entirely consistent in using a literal translation in translating the made-up words. Her strategy becomes more complex when looking at the translation of “his thereness”, which has become “zijn *zijn*” (Lodewijk 40) in Dutch. Firstly, Lodewijk has added emphasis by using italics, which makes the sentence less ambiguous, but she has also used a different strategy. Where earlier she used a syntactic strategy in translating literally (Chesterman 155), this time she has used a semantic strategy, namely a paraphrase (164). The explanation could be that there is no fitting Dutch equivalent for the

word “thereness”, except something along the lines of ‘daarheid’. This does not fit entirely in the context of the text, because Liesel is not only comforted by Hans’ presence, but also by his personality and his behaviour. The Dutch word ‘zijn’, on the other hand, can also be interpreted as ‘an existence’, which covers the complex meaning of the word and is more fitting in this context.

The name Pfiffikus is maintained in the Dutch translation, but there is something noticeable about the translation of the explanation of the name. Whereas Liesel in the original text explains that Pfiffikus is a name you give to someone who likes to whistle (Zusak 58), Lodewijk has made this explanation somewhat more explicit: “Hij werd alleen Pfiffikus genoemd omdat je die bijnaam geeft aan iemand die graag fluit” (Lodewijk 55). Instead of staying as close as possible to the source text, Lodewijk chose to state explicitly that Pfiffikus is a nickname, even though this is already clear from the rest of the sentence. Here, Lodewijk has again changed her strategy. Changing the explicitness of the word ‘name’ in her translation is a pragmatic translation strategy (Chesterman 168).

I have also changed the explicitness of a word or phrase a couple of times in my translation. An example of this is a scene between Krysta and Hraben. Krysta says something to Hraben, but “[her] voice is so faint [that she] is not sure that he heard [her] the first time” (Granville 277). When translating this particular sentence, I decided that the meaning of the sentence would be clear enough in Dutch without the addition of “the first time”. Therefore, I have chosen to translate the sentence as follows: “... mijn stem is zo klein en zacht dat ik niet weet of hij me gehoord heeft.” Immediately after this sentence, Krysta repeats what she said, which inherently explains that Hraben probably did not hear her the first time.

One of the themes of *The Book Thief* is Liesel discovering “the power of words” (Zusak 452). This phrase occurs multiple times throughout the novel, so it is important that Lodewijk is consistent in her translation of this particular phrase. She has translated it as “de macht van woorden” (Lodewijk 152), which shows that she has put some thought in her translation. The word ‘power’ can be translated into Dutch in many different ways. She could for example also have chosen to use ‘kracht’, which is often used when talking about the power of something or someone. However, ‘macht’ also implies influence over something or someone, and this fits the meaning of the word in this context perfectly, as Zusak writes about words that hold a power over Liesel and influence her linguistic development.

Liesel also often uses poetic language to describe something. A good example of this is when she is giving a weather report to Max. She describes a cloud as a stretched out rope and the sun as a yellow hole (Zusak 259). Lodewijk has translated “it’s stretched out, like a rope” as “die helemaal uitgerekt is, als een soort touw” (Lodewijk 257). As in previous choices, Lodewijk has used a literal translation, except for the insertion of the words “helemaal” and “soort”. The source text only mentions that the rope is “stretched out”, which can be translated into Dutch as ‘uitgerekt’. However, Lodewijk has chosen to add an adverb before the verb, which gives the phrase more emphasis. The addition of emphasis is again a semantic strategy (Chesterman 164). The second part of the sentence, “the sun is like a yellow hole”, has been translated as “de zon, als een groot, geel gat” (Lodewijk 257). Again, Lodewijk has added a word, this time “groot”, which also gives more emphasis to the phrase “geel gat”. In addition to this, the alliteration of “geel gat” has been given more emphasis by adding the word “groot”.

In *Gretel and the Dark*, Krysta often describes certain things in her own (childish) words. As she does not know what a swastika is, for example, she describes what she sees on a flag in town as “bendy-arm ‘X’s” (Granville 37). As the adjective “bendy-arm” cannot be literally translated into Dutch, I have chosen to translate this phrase as “kruizen met geknikte armen”. This way, the information that the original phrase conveyed has nevertheless been kept in the translation.

Instead of staying as close as possible to the source text, and thus always translating literally, Lodewijk used different kinds of strategies, varying from syntactic to semantic to pragmatic, depending on the word or context. This corresponds with what Diederik Grit argues in his article “The Translation of Cultural-Specific Elements” (“De vertaling van realia”), in which he claims that translators often combine several translation strategies in order to get the best result (193). As explained above, the example of the translation of “zijn *zijn*” showed that in not translating literally, Lodewijk produced a more desirable result. Like Grit, Gideon Toury also claims that even the most adequate translation will contain some shifts between the source text and the target text (Toury 324). In general, it seems that in translating *The Book Thief* into Dutch, Lodewijk chose to make an “adequate translation” (324). This is apparent from the many instances in the text where she has used a literal translation, in which she tried to maintain the tone and choice of words from the source text, yet the target text is still grammatically correct (Chesterman 155).

In my translation of the fragments of *Gretel and the Dark*, I will also, like Lodewijk, translate as much as possible in a “conservative” way (Holmes 186), staying as close as possible to the source text by means of literal translations and the retention of German words and phrases. Similarly to *The Book Thief*, in the fragments that I have chosen to translate, there are some German “culture-specific elements” (Aixelá 197), like “Pfennig Riesen” (Granville 278) and German words like *Mädchen*, which underline the fact that the story is set in Germany, and it would not make sense to translate these particular words to a Dutch equivalent, because it would not fit with the setting. Furthermore, the reader knows what is meant, as the context explains what a “Pfennig Riesen” is, for example. Therefore, I will not translate these German words into Dutch. It is important that it is clear to the reader that the story is set in Germany and that the characters are all German.

Consequently, I will also retain all the character names in my translation. In addition to underlining the fact that the story is set in Germany, the names will probably not raise any problems for Dutch readers, except maybe for the name “Margarete” (Granville 38). The Dutch equivalent for this name would be something like ‘Margaret’ or maybe ‘Margriet’, but I decided not to change it, because this name actually refers to a real person. As explained in the introduction, Granville’s novel consists of two storylines, one of which takes place in Vienna at the end of the nineteenth century and focuses on Dr. Josef Breuer. Breuer was a real doctor, and he had a daughter named Margarete. Using this name in the Krysta-storyline is one of the many clues that point to the two storylines actually being one big story. In addition, all German words and phrases in the text are in italics, with the exception of “Negerkuss” and “Pfennig Riesen”. The reason for this could be that these words refer to brand names, while the italicised words are all used in dialogue. This was also the case in *The Book Thief*, and Lodewijk kept the italicised words in her translation. I therefore will do the same thing in my translation.

Another important aspect of Granville’s novel is the relationship and interactions between Krysta and Hraben. Even though Krysta is oblivious to Hraben’s intentions in the first half of the book, there is a reluctance whenever he is touching her. This is apparent in the way she describes how she “pull[s] away” (Granville 36) or “back[s] away” (277) after he touches her. It seems that subconsciously she knows that she should get away from him, but she has no reason to mistrust him at this point in the novel. However, these phrases show an active decision to physically remove herself from him. I have maintained this urge to get away from Hraben in my translation, by also using active phrases such as “Ik trek

mezelf los” and “Ik deins terug”. These sentences stand in direct contrast to what Krysta says, because she keeps treating him like he is actually her uncle. At one point in the book, Krysta describes how putting ‘uncle’ in front of someone’s name made her feel safe (276), but not long after she says this, does she understand what kind of man Hraben really is.

As I explained in the introduction, the book covers several years in Krysta’s life. The fragments I chose to translate all comprise a different period in her life. The first fragment occurs when Krysta is still about eight years old, which is reflected in her childish speech. The last fragment however, details the events that happen after Krysta and Daniel have escaped the camp, and when Krysta is around fourteen years old after living in a concentration camp for a couple of years. In addition to the change in use of language, I also tried to reflect her growth in the register that she uses. That is why Krysta in the last fragment will talk more like an adult than a child.

Chapter 4 – Annotated Translation *Gretel and the Dark*

The fragments I have chosen to translate are all from a different period in Krysta's life: her life before the concentration camp, her life inside the camp, and the events that occurred after she and Daniel have escaped. This shows the linguistic development that Krysta undergoes throughout the novel.

4.1 Fragment 1

Iedereen kijkt hier serieus, maar Oom¹ Hraben blijft altijd lachen. Hij lachte zelfs toen hij de poesjes aan de kant schopte. Johanna zegt dat hij erg knap is, maar lang niet zo knap als Papa. Op mijn verjaardag geeft Oom Hraben me een Negerkuss². Ik eet hem heel langzaam op: eerst de chocolade buitenkant, dan de marshmallowvulling, en dan het koekje. Daarna strijk ik de wikkel glad en wrijf er met mijn nagel overheen totdat het een zilveren glans heeft, en hij maakt er voor mij een ring van.

‘Waar neemt je vader je vanmiddag mee naartoe, mooie Krysta?’ vraagt Oom Hraben terwijl hij de achterkant van mijn nek streelt. Ik trek mezelf los.

‘Hij zegt dat het een verrassing is.’

‘Ah. Dat snap ik. Maar waar hoop je dat jullie naartoe gaan?’

Ik ren naar het raam en wijs naar de hoge muur³. ‘Naar de dierentuin. Greets oom, die matroos is, ging naar eentje in Amerika. Hij zag er een ijsbeer en een giraffe en...’ Ik val stil, overweldigd door de opwinding en verwachting, voordat ik op gedempte toon verderga ‘... en ze lieten hem op een olifant rijden.’

Oom Hraben brult van het lachen. Een paar van zijn vrienden komen naar ons toe en hij herhaalt wat ik heb gezegd. Zij lachen ook. Uiteindelijk droogt hij zijn tranen en vertelt me dat er helemaal geen olifanten, beren, giraffen of apen achter de muur zitten.

Ik doe mijn ring af en stop mijn duim in mijn mond. Het brengt ongeluk als je huilt op je verjaardag.

¹ The words ‘Uncle’ and ‘Papa’ are also capitalised in the source text, even though it is uncommon in English to do so. Therefore, I have chosen to do the same in Dutch, because the capitalisation almost makes it seem as though Krysta uses these words as titles.

² The German words underline that the story is set in Germany. Furthermore, the English text also used these German words.

³ Earlier in the novel, it is said that the wall of the camp is in the backyard of the house. It would therefore make sense that Krysta can see the wall through her window and point directly at it, instead of in the direction of it.

‘Zo’n soort dierentuin is het niet, *Mädchen*.’

‘Deze is voor een heel ander soort beest,’ verduidelijkt de man met het strohaar en ogen met de kleur van regen in de winter. Ze lachen weer.

‘Wat voor soort beest?’ Ik stamp met mijn voet, maar hierdoor moeten ze alleen nog maar harder lachen.

‘Mensdieren.’

Er zijn inderdaad dieren die op mensen lijken. De oude vrouw die naast ons echte huis woont, heeft een schnauzer als huisdier, en het is de dikste hond die ik ooit heb gezien. Greet zei dat ze na vele jaren op elkaar begonnen te lijken: ze hebben nu allebei grijs haar⁴, een snuit die ze in andermans zaken steken⁵, een kort lontje en een keffende stem, en ze hebben allebei het figuur⁶ van een wijnavat. En ik hoorde Greet ooit ‘*Männer sind Schweine!*’ roepen naar de man die het brandhout had gebracht. Bovendien had Papa ooit een vriend met grote, gele tanden die hem op een rat deden lijken.

‘Toch wil ik ze zien.’

‘Het is te gevaarlijk⁷,’ zegt Oom Hraben. ‘Ze eten fatsoenlijke, kleine mensenmeisjes, vooral de mooie meisjes. Hap, slik – goed doorkauwen en je bent weg⁸.’

Toen Papa terugkwam⁹ van de ziekenboeg ging hij toch eerst zijn handen wassen, ondanks dat hij had beloofd dat we meteen zouden gaan. Terwijl hij zijn nagels stond te schrobben met het kleine borsteltje vroeg ik of we naar de dierentuin zouden gaan, voor het geval dat Oom Hraben een grapje had gemaakt.

‘Nee.’

Ik kijk hem boos aan. ‘Je zei dat ik mocht kiezen.’

Papa droogt zijn handen en bekijkt zijn vingers zorgvuldig. ‘Wil je niet liever met mij naar de speelgoedwinkel gaan? Ze hebben daar iets dat je misschien mee naar huis wilt

⁴ Even though ‘salt and pepper hair’ usually means black hair streaked with grey, I did not think it necessary to explicitly state this. It is more important that the dog and the woman have the same hair colour, rather than which colour it is exactly.

⁵ ‘Je neus in andermans zaken steken’ is a Dutch expression. That is why I left out the ‘private’ part, but because the comparison with the dog is important, I changed ‘neus’ to ‘snuit’.

⁶ When talking about body shape, the Dutch use the word ‘figuur’ rather than ‘vorm’.

⁷ Even though Hraben just says “Too dangerous” in the ST, I wanted to show the difference between the child Krysta and the grown up Hraben. That is why Hraben uses a complete sentence here.

⁸ “Hap, slik, weg” is a Dutch expression which indicates something that is eaten whole in one bite.

⁹ The rest of the text is in the present tense, yet this scene is in the past tense. This can be explained by the fact that Krysta is most likely looking back at this particular moment when she and her father were on their way to the town. This claim is supported by the fact that the text changes back to present tense when Krysta is describing the town.

nemen. En daarna kunnen we een ijsje gaan eten bij de ijssalon¹⁰.’ Hij draait de kraan weer open en pakt de zeep.

‘Erdbeereis?’

‘Aardbei, chocolade – welke smaak je ook maar wilt.’

De stad is levendig, met bloemen voor de ramen en heel veel rode vlaggen met kruizen met geknikte armen erop die rustig in het briesje wapperen. De mensen die buiten een café zitten lachen naar ons, sommigen staan op om naar ons te zwaaien, en als we de speelgoedwinkel binnenlopen, laat de winkelier zijn andere klanten voor wat ze zijn om Papa te helpen.

‘Aha, dus dit is de verjaardags-Fräulein. Alles Gute zum Geburtstag!’

Hij pakt iets onder de toonbank en haalt twee dozen tevoorschijn. In elke doos zit een mooie pop. Eentje heeft donkerbruin, gekruld haar en een rood jurkje aan, de ander is blond en gekleed in het blauw. ‘Gefeliciteerd namens ons allemaal. Kijk eens hier. Je papa¹¹ wist niet zeker welke je het leukst zou vinden.’

Ik kijk naar Papa. Hij knikt. ‘Welke wil je hebben?’

‘Mag ik ze niet allebei hebben?’

Papa schudt zijn hoofd. ‘Nee.’

‘Wil allebei.’ Ik schop tegen de koperen stang die langs de onderkant van de toonbank loopt. Ik probeer er nog een traan uit te persen, maar die wil niet komen. ‘Niet eerlijk. Waarom kan ik ze niet allebei hebben?’

‘Je mag er ééntje hebben,’ zegt hij met een vermoeide stem. ‘Als je niet kunt kiezen, komen we wel een andere keer terug. Wil je dat? Nee. Schiet nou op en kies er één voordat al het ijs is gesmolten.’

‘Niet eerlijk,’ zeg ik nog een keer, maar ik weet al welke pop ik mee naar huis zal nemen.

De winkelier schuift de bruinharige pop onopvallend naar voren. Ze lijkt een beetje op Greet, behalve dat haar ogen de verkeerde kleur hebben, maar de geelharige pop lijkt op een sprookjesprinses. ‘Die.’ Ik wijs en de winkelier slaakt een kleine zucht en haalt de bruine pop weg. ‘Hoe heet ze?’

¹⁰ A café in the Netherlands usually means a place where you can drink (and sometimes eat) something. It is not common to get an ice cream at a café. You get an ice cream at an ‘ijscobar’ or an ‘ijssalon’. Seeing as ‘ijscobar’ is usually a mobile van, driving around town, I have chosen to use ‘ijssalon’ here.

¹¹ As the shopkeeper is speaking here, ‘papa’ is not capitalised. Only Krysta uses the word as a title, so I have chosen to follow the source text, and not capitalise it either.

‘Je wilt de blonde. Goed zo.’ Papa kijkt heel tevreden terwijl hij het etiket leest. ‘Er staat “Charlotte”, maar je kunt haar noemen zoals je wilt.’

‘Ik ga haar Lottie noemen, behalve wanneer ze stout is geweest,’ zeg ik. Ik herinner me hoe Papa ‘Greet’ naar ‘Margarete’ veranderde wanneer hij zich aan haar ergerde. ‘Dan noem ik haar Charlotte.’

In de ijssalon haal ik Lottie uit haar doos om naar haar onderbroek te kijken. Een kloddertje aardbeienijs valt op haar blauwe jurkje en maakt een vlek, maar ik hou mijn vinger erover zodat Papa het niet ziet.

4.2 Fragment 2

Ik heb Daniël al twee dagen niet gezien. Uiteindelijk, ook al wil ik uit het zicht blijven, moet ik hem wel gaan zoeken. Het magere schepsel¹² blijft nog steeds dicht bij hem, zwijgend, maar Daniël wil me maar niet aankijken. Er is iets met zijn gezicht. Iedere keer als ik voor hem ga staan, draait hij weg.

‘Wat is er aan de hand?’

Hij houdt zijn hand over zijn mond waardoor zijn stem gedempt wordt. ‘Ik ben gevallen, oké?’

‘Doe niet zo stom. Wat is er nou echt gebeurd?’

‘Bemoei je met je eigen zaken.’

Ik trek aan zijn handen.

‘Laat los.’

Zijn mond zit vol bloed en hij heeft een paar tanden verloren. Ik voel me opeens heel misselijk. ‘Het was Oom Hraben, hè?’¹³

‘Bedoel je die *Arschloch* met het gele haar en de grote, zwarte hond? Degene die altijd lacht – zelfs als hij je schopt? Hij is je oom niet, dus waarom noem je hem dan zo?’

‘Papa zei dat ik hem zo moest noemen.’ Op de een of andere manier voelde het altijd vertrouwd als ik ‘Oom’ voor iemands naam zette. ‘Wat zei hij?’

¹² In an earlier chapter, Krysta remarks that Daniel is being followed by one of the children in the camp. Throughout the story, she refers to him as “the creature” (Granville 268).

¹³ The tag question ‘wasn’t it?’ is not so easily translated into Dutch. Dutch has a few ways to translate this particular phrase, such as ‘nietwaar?’ but I have chosen for one that is often used in informal speech, and one that children would more likely use.

‘Niks.’ Maar hij verraadt zichzelf. ‘Je moet daar niet naartoe gaan. Ga alsjeblieft niet. Beloof me dat je niet zult gaan.’

‘Ik zal niet gaan.’

Daniël pakt mijn arm vast. ‘Nee. Ik meen het, Krysta. Zweer dat je niet meer teruggaat.’ Hij probeert zijn tranen te bedwingen. Zijn neus begint te lopen en hij veegt het snot af aan zijn mouw. ‘Zweer het! Zwéér het! Alle anderen zijn verdwenen. Hebben me achtergelaten. Als jij ook... weggaat...’

Hij staat me aan te staren, en ik hoop dat hij niet kan zien wat ik denk, want ik weet dat ik naar Hrabens toren moet gaan voor precies dezelfde reden waarom hij me vraagt het niet te doen. Daniël is mijn enige vriend. Ik denk aan de Prins van het Duister, met zijn grote tanden en kwaadaardige ogen. Hij doet precies wat zijn baas hem opdraagt. Ik denk niet dat Oom Hraben de hond zal opdragen mij te bijten, maar hij zal niet aarzelen om Daniël te laten opeten.

‘Doe niet zo stom. Ik zal nooit weggaan¹⁴.’

‘Beloof je dat?’

In het huis naast de dierentuin waar Papa en ik ooit woonden, hing een plank met cowboy- en indianenboeken van een vrouwelijke schrijver¹⁵ die May Karl heette. Een paar daarvan gingen over Old Shatterhand, die de bloedbroeder werd van Winnetou, een Apache indiaan. Ze beleefden samen vele avonturen en dapper vochten ze zij aan zij tegen hun vijanden. Ik trek mijn mouw omhoog. ‘We kunnen bloedbroeders worden.’

Daniël schudt zijn hoofd. ‘Dat is iets voor kinderen. En we hebben niet eens een mes.’ Hij trekt zijn neus op als ik een scherpe steen vind. ‘Beloof me nou dat je niet teruggaat.’

‘Ik beloof het,’ stel ik hem gerust, maar ik zeg niet wat ik heb beloofd.

Mijn voeten zijn grote, zware blokken geworden die ik de trap naar de toren op moet zeulen. Ik loop zonder te kloppen naar binnen en Oom Hraben lijkt erg blij me te zien. Hij geeft me twee Negerküsse op een klein bordje. Ik eet de eerste in zijn geheel op en eet in

¹⁴ This is a reference to what Daniel said previously, so I repeated part of the sentence that I used in the translation.

¹⁵ This is an example of Krysta’s childish ignorance, because she mixes up the first name and the surname of the writer. Karl May was actually a male writer, but as May is a name usually used for females, it’s easy to see where Krysta went wrong. Even though Dutch has a specific word for the translation of ‘lady writer’ (‘schrijfster’), I have chosen not to use this, because Krysta also sounds childish in the source text, when she’s talking about ‘a lady writer’. I wanted to maintain this tone in the translation, so I translated this phrase literally.

kleine hapjes de chocolade van de marshmallow van de tweede. Daarna gaan we naar de kast. Ik haal er een van mijn mooiste jurkjes uit en houd het tegen me aan. Lottie wijst me op het feit dat het degene is die ik droeg toen ze met me mee naar huis kwam. Je ziet meteen dat het veel te klein is.

Oom Hraben zit aan zijn bureau en steekt een sigaret op. ‘Ik wil dat je vandaag iets heel speciaals voor me doet, mooie Krysta¹⁶.’

Ik deins terug. ‘Wat dan?’

‘Kun je het niet raden?’

Ik schud mijn hoofd. ‘Nee.’ Maar mijn stem is zo klein en zacht dat ik niet weet of hij me gehoord heeft¹⁷. ‘Nee.’

‘Dat kun je vast wel. Probeer het maar.’ Hij leunt achterover in zijn stoel, lacht naar me en blaast rookkringen. ‘Ik heb het je al eens eerder gevraagd. Je bent het toch zeker niet vergeten?’

‘Wil je dat ik bij je op schoot ga zitten?’

‘Alles op zijn tijd, Krysta. Eerst nog iets anders.’ Als ik niet antwoord, zegt hij heel zachtjes: ‘Ik vroeg je me iets te noemen. Weet je het weer? Ik vroeg je me Papa te noemen.’

‘Wil ik niet.’

‘Ah, maar dat moet je.’

‘Wil ik niet,’ zeg ik weer, en ik zet nog een paar stappen terug. Er staat een stoel achter me en ik kan niet verder.

Oom Hraben lacht en gooit me een Pfennig Riesen. ‘Ga zitten, Krysta, en denk er maar over na terwijl ik dit afmaak,’ zegt hij, en wijst naar een stapel papierwerk. ‘Dadelijk wordt het weer tijd om *der Fürst der Finsternis*¹⁸ voor zijn middagwandeling uit te laten. Ik weet zeker dat je voor die tijd tot inkeer zult komen.’

Er staat een klein tafeltje naast mijn stoel met een halfopen la waar wat schrijfgerei in ligt. Nadat ik het karamelblokje in mijn mond heb gestopt, pak ik stilletjes een pen en een klein flesje met watervaste blauwe inkt, en schrijf dezelfde nummers die Daniël op zijn arm heeft staan op die van mij. Als we geen bloedbroeders kunnen zijn, dan worden we

¹⁶ Hraben says the exact same thing here as he did in the first fragment. I have made sure to use the same translation here.

¹⁷ I did not think it necessary to translate ‘the first time’, because it is already clear what is meant by the rest of the sentence.

¹⁸ It is explained in an earlier chapter that this is the German name for Hraben’s dog.

maar inktbroeders. Mijn nummers zijn niet zo netjes als die van hem: het topje van de pen staat scheef en de inkt loopt wat uit. Een paar nummers zijn vertroebeld –

‘Wat ben je in godsnaam aan het doen?’ roept Oom Hraben en hij pakt mijn pols vast. ‘Wat is dit?’ Hij wacht niet op een antwoord en wrijft zo hard met zijn zakdoek over mijn arm dat de huid rood wordt. Toch gaan de nummers er niet vanaf. Als hij ziet dat ik lach, pakt hij Lottie van mijn schoot en gooit haar uit het raam, voordat hij het met een klap dichtslaat¹⁹. ‘Het wordt eens tijd dat je volwassen wordt, Krysta. Ik heb je gegevens eens bekeken en ben erachter gekomen dat je een stuk ouder bent dan je eruit ziet. Grote meisjes zouden zich met iets veel beters moeten bezighouden dan met vieze, oude *Spielzeuge*.’

Ik verbijt mijn woede en tranen. ‘Zoals Pythagoras?’

Oom Hraben kijkt me vreemd aan. ‘Het is vrij makkelijk om de dingen te onthouden waarmee jongedames zich bezig zouden moeten houden – bepaalde pleziertjes, dan *Kleider* natuurlijk, en daarna *Kinder, Kuche und Kirche*. Soms zijn de oude gewoontes het beste.’ Hij pakt de hondenriem van de muur. ‘Heb je dat begrepen?’

‘Ja.’

‘Ja, *Papa*.’ Hij glimlacht naar me en rolt de riem om zijn hand.

‘Ja, *Papa*.’ Ik pers de woorden door mijn op elkaar geklemde kaken. Oom Hraben slaakt een diepe zucht.

‘Dat is al beter.’ Hij geeft een tik op mijn billen. ‘Ga maar, Krysta, en kom morgen terug²⁰. Ik zal Prins niet voeren, gewoon voor het geval je het vergeet. Hij is een woeste hond nu, zelfs een beetje gevaarlijk. Dat moet hij wel zijn, om iedereen te beschermen.’

Daniël staat onderaan de trap op me te wachten. Het schepsel is nergens te bekennen. ‘Je had me beloofd dat je daar niet naartoe zou gaan,’ zegt hij verwijtend.

‘Dat heb ik helemaal niet gedaan. Waarom volg je me?’

‘Dat doe ik altijd. Beloof me dat je niet meer teruggaat.’

‘Oké dan.’ Ik begin de grond onder het raam af te speuren.

¹⁹ I decided to add ‘met een klap’ to add more emphasis to the action of slamming the window shut.

²⁰ If I had kept the same structure as in the ST, I would have to insert the particle ‘maar’ again in the second sentence to make it run more smoothly (as Van der Wouden claims, “without particles, Dutch is incredibly stiff” (20, my translation)). Then I would have the word ‘maar’ twice in a short time. In order to avoid this, I decided to combine the two sentences.

‘Als je je pop aan het zoeken bent, dan heb ik die hier.’ Daniël opent zijn handen. Het enige dat over is, is een hoopje grijs-rose stukken. Een hand. Een voet. Geen gezicht. Zelfs haar ogen zijn weg. Ik slik.

‘Lottie bewaarde al mijn verhalen voor me zodat ik ze later op kon schrijven. Nu zijn ze weg.’

‘Je kunt toch nieuwe bedenken?’

‘Nee. Ik zal nooit meer een verhaal vertellen. Nooit meer.’

‘Zeg dat nou niet.’ Daniël kijkt geschokt. ‘Hoe kunnen we anders wraak nemen?’

Ik haal mijn schouders op. ‘Waarom zou ik? Ze komen toch niet uit.’

‘Misschien wel als we het heel graag willen.’

‘Daar hebben we magie voor nodig.’ Ik besluit om Lottie in de volièrte te begraven, waar ik de bonen heb geplant. ‘En magie bestaat ook niet.’

Daar had ik Cecily al naar gevraagd. ‘Magie zit in de verbeelding, lieverd,’ had ze gezegd, alsof de zaak daarmee afgedaan was.

‘Bedoel je dat als ik mijn verbeelding hard genoeg laat werken, het kan gebeuren?’

Cecily lachte. ‘Misschien,’ had ze gezegd, maar ik kon zien dat ze ‘nee’ bedoelde.

Daniël kijkt nerveus om zich heen. ‘We moeten hier niet blijven rondhangen.’

‘Kom.’ Ik sjok naar de volièrte, waar we alle stukken van Lottie in de koude, harde aarde stoppen. ‘Gij zult tot stof wederkeren²¹,’ zeg ik. Dat is het enige dat ik me kan herinneren. Ze zijn allemaal verdwenen: Mama, Papa, Greet, en nu ook Lottie.

‘We hebben elkaar tenminste nog.’ Daniël knijpt in mijn hand. Ik had niet gemerkt dat hij hem vasthield. ‘Wij zullen nooit gescheiden worden.’

‘Als jij me nooit in de steek zult laten,’ zeg ik, een beetje gerustgesteld als ik me realiseer dat ik me Greets verhalen nog kan herinneren, ‘dan zal ik jou nooit in de steek laten.’

²¹ ‘Ashes to ashes, dust to dust’ is a Bible verse. This is part of the official Dutch translation of this phrase (statenvertaling.net). There is no indication in the novel that Krysta is religious, but it is implied that Greet is Jewish, so it is possible that she taught Krysta some Bible verses in addition to her stories.

4.3 Fragment 3

Wanneer ik terugkom bij het schuurtje, hoor ik de heks over Poolse steden vragen. Ze wil een rustig plaatsje waar je makkelijk werk en een plek om te wonen kunt vinden. Daniël zit in elkaar gezakt tegen de muur. Zijn ogen zijn dicht en hij zegt een tijdje niets.

‘Jedwabne,’ zegt hij terwijl hij rechtop gaat zitten, plotseling alert. ‘Je kunt zeggen dat je uit Jedwabne komt. Het ligt in het noordoosten, vlakbij Białystok.’

‘Jedwabne?’ De heks fronst haar wenkbrauwen bij het horen van de naam. ‘Ik weet zeker dat ik ervan heb gehoord. Is het een bekende plaats? Is daar iets gebeurd? Ben je er al eens geweest? Beter gezegd, is het een goede plaats om te wonen?’

Daniël knikt, maar ik zie dat hij zijn vuisten balt. ‘Jedwabne was ooit een weefstad. Mijn opa en oma woonden er. In de omgeving liggen prachtige bossen en de zomers zijn er lang en warm. Er zijn zoveel mensen... *weggegaan*²²... in de laatste jaren dat er een hoop huizen en winkels leegstaan.’ Zijn mond staat strak. ‘Ik denk dat je er wel bij past. Het enige dat je hoeft te weten is *Pochodzę z Jedwabnego* – Ik kom uit Jedwabne.’

‘Nu kunnen we eten,’ kondigt Agnieszka aan, blijkbaar tevreden met dit vooruitzicht. ‘We zullen een feestmaal hebben. De jongen zal Poolse liedjes voor ons zingen. En daarna kun jij’ – ze kijkt naar mij – ‘mijn haren knippen. Dan zal ik jullie over mijn nieuwe idee vertellen.’

Maar voor het feest moet er eerst een bloederige moord plaatsvinden. Terug naar de toren.

Het begint te schemeren en de duiven gaan op stok. Stamp, stamp, stamp, zo klinken de voeten van de heks als ze de ladder opklimt – iene, miene, mutte – en de grote, houten ratel die ervoor zorgt dat de balken rond de centrale pilaar kunnen draaien, kraakt en kreunt. Een aantal duiven vliegen naar buiten, de meesten klapperen met hun vleugels onder het dak, en een paar proberen zelfs Agnieszka’s botergele hoofd aan te vallen... maar de moeders duiken alleen maar dieper ineen en spreiden tevergeefs hun vleugels in een poging hun jongen te beschermen. Het maakt allemaal niets uit: de heks zal ze stuk voor stuk vermoorden, en als het moet zou ze zelfs de volledige duivenpopulatie op aarde uitroeien. Haar grote handen graaien, smijten de moeders tegen de muur en grijpen de jongen. Knak! en hun nek is gebroken. Plof! De kleine lijfjes landen in de uitgespreide rok van mijn jurk. Ik probeer te doen wat ik altijd heb gedaan – ontsnappen naar die geheime

²² It is not common to italicise words like this in Dutch. However, in this instance, the italics indicate more than emphasis: it is an understatement, because the inhabitants of the town had no choice in leaving.

plek waar ik door magie of heldhaftigheid dingen anders laat lopen en een robot achterlaat, een machine zonder enkele emotie – maar vandaag lukt het niet. De deur is dicht. De ideeën zijn weg. De woorden willen maar niet komen. Misschien is dit wat er gebeurt wanneer je een verhaal binnen een verhaal bedenkt, die dan ook nog eens binnen een sprookje bestaan: het komt op een afschuwelijke manier tot leven.

In de tuin legt de heks opgewekt de jonge duiven op de grond om ze te tellen. Ze hakt de vleugels af met haar verpleegsterschaar, draait en trekt totdat de hoofden loskomen, plukt de dunne veren van hun borst – dat ze daarna van het karkas rukt, en gooit de rest weg. We klimmen de keuken binnen waar ze een *Jungtaube*-soep²³ in een versleten ketel maakt, op smaak gebracht met kruiden uit de tuin. Wanneer het pruttelt en over de rand van de ketel²⁴ spettert, laat Agnieszka me even alleen.

‘Blijf daar en let op dat het niet aanbrandt,’ roept ze over haar schouder. Van de geluiden die erna komen, kan ik opmaken dat ze over het puin in de andere kamers aan het klimmen is, maar ondanks dat ik graag wil zien wat ze van plan is, ben ik meer geïnteresseerd in een pan die de heks stiekem aan de kant duwde toen we binnenkwamen. Als ik het deksel optil, beseft ik dat de dingen niet in de juiste volgorde gebeuren, want Grietje vond de edelstenen pas toen de heks al dood was. Daarentegen was Grietje niet zo nieuwsgierig als ik, of zo slim. Bovendien zitten er gouden horloges, ringen en broches, parelkettingen en gouden tanden in de pan in plaats van sprookjesjuwelen.

Ik wil wel en niet de babyduivensoep eten. Het smaakt heel anders dan de soep die we gewend zijn. Uiteindelijk lukt het me een paar lepels naar binnen te werken en Daniël schrokt de rest naar binnen. Er wordt naderhand niet gezongen of gedanst, en er worden geen haren afgeknipt: Agnieszka is te ongeduldig en wil ons haar gewijzigde plan vertellen.

‘Nee.’ Daniël schudt al met zijn hoofd voordat ze is uitgepraat. ‘Nee. Dat kan ik niet. Dat wil ik niet. Ik ga nog liever dood.’

‘Dat zal waarschijnlijk wel gebeuren, in dat geval,’ zegt de heks opgewekt. ‘We hebben niet veel tijd meer. Slaap er maar een nachtje over.’

‘Waar heeft ze het over?’ fluister ik als we ons nestelen op de hooibalen. ‘Hoezo hebben we geen tijd meer? Wat weet zij dat wij niet weten?’

²³ Although ‘stew’ is not the same as ‘soup’, the ST later mentions that they are eating soup, so I decided to use ‘soep’ everywhere it says ‘stew’ in the ST.

²⁴ An oil drum is not the same as a cauldron, but it makes more sense in this context to use the same translation as before.

Daniël is zo lang stil dat ik denk dat hij in slaap is gevallen. ‘Misschien gaat er gevochten worden,’ zegt hij tenslotte. ‘Het kan me niks schelen. Zoals ik al zei, ik blijf liever hier om dood te gaan dan dat ik doe alsof ze mijn moeder is.’

‘Als ze ons kan laten zien waar we naartoe moeten, maakt het dan uit wat je moet zeggen?’ vraag ik. ‘Wat maakt één leugen meer nou uit?’ Hij geeft geen antwoord. ‘Zeg dan dat ze je boze stiefmoeder is. Kun je dat doen?’

Hij snikt. ‘Misschien...’

‘Je moet wel. We blijven niet hier, en we gaan niet dood.’

‘Maar mijn moeder –’ Zijn stem stukt.

‘Niet doen.’ We hadden elkaar beloofd hier niet over te beginnen totdat het allemaal over is. ‘Luister, je heb nooit een stiefmoeder gehad, dus het maakt niet uit of je doet alsof. Trouwens, Agnieszka, of wat haar echte naam ook is, zal niemand voor de gek kunnen houden. Hoe kan iemand geloven dat ze ooit honger heeft geleden met zo’n grote, dikke kont?’

‘Lelijke, vette koe. *Dziwnka. Suka. Kurwa.*’ Hij noemt ieder scheldwoord dat hij kent voordat zijn stem langzaam door uitputting wegsterft.

‘Dus je zegt dat ze je –’ Maar Daniël slaapt nu echt en zijn maag rommelt, verrast dat hij een keer vol zit. Als ik zelf niet meer wakker kan blijven, droom ik dat ik weer in Ravensbrück ben, in de ziekenboeg, en door eindeloze witte gangen ren, roepend om Papa. En daar is Agnieszka. De heks komt van links en rechts tevoorschijn, met bloederige handen die stukken rauw vlees vasthouden of hele benen, soms met veren eraan en die soms nog schoenen aanhebben.

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to research the linguistic development of Krysta, the protagonist of *Gretel and the Dark* by Eliza Granville, and translate a few fragments of the novel. This was done by comparing Krysta's linguistic development with Liesel's, the protagonist of Markus Zusak's *The Book Thief*. As shown in chapter one, the linguistic development undergone by Krysta manifests itself as describing things she does not know the correct word for, using incomplete sentences (particularly when she does not get what she wants), and telling stories, hoping they will come true. During her stay in the concentration camp, she gradually starts to lose her innocence, and over the years she develops her linguistic skills. At the end of the novel, she is capable of naming the things she did not know before, she does not omit words from her sentences anymore, and she knows that the stories she has been telling will never come true.

When Krysta's development was compared to Liesel's in chapter two, it became clear that there are several similarities between the two characters. Both girls use stories to develop their linguistic skills; Krysta mainly relies on oral storytelling, whereas Liesel is obsessed with books. At the beginning of Zusak's novel, Liesel uses made-up words to express how she feels, and cannot read or write yet. After several reading lessons with her foster father, her obsession with books begins, and she truly becomes the book thief. By reading the books she stole, Liesel slowly begins to understand the power of words, and is ultimately able to use this power to express how she feels, which often happens by the use of poetic language.

Following this, I looked at the Dutch translation of *The Book Thief* in chapter three, in order to see what translations strategies have been used in translating Liesel's linguistic development. Using the comparison made in chapter two and Andrew Chesterman's classification for translation strategies, I looked at the parts of the novel where Liesel's linguistic development was most prominent, and tried to deduce which translation strategies Lodewijk might have used. This analysis showed that she has used several different strategies, varying from syntactic to semantic to pragmatic. However, I did find that Lodewijk mostly used the literal translation. Furthermore, her translation was what Holmes calls "conservative" (Holmes 186), which means that Lodewijk made sure that the reader knows that the story is set in Germany. Seeing as *Gretel and the Dark* has a similar setting, with characters sometimes using German words and phrases, I chose to follow

Lodewijk's example and made an "adequate translation" (Toury 324), while also retaining the italicised German words to underline the fact that the story is set in Germany.

In the fourth chapter, I translated three fragments from *Gretel and the Dark*, which span Krysta's life throughout the book: the part before she gets put in the concentration camp, the part where she actually lives inside the camp, and the part after she and Daniel have escaped. By choosing these different fragments, I tried to show Krysta's linguistic development throughout the novel. In translating the three fragments, I used a literal translation where possible, but there were quite a few sentences where I decided to use a different strategy, to make sure that the Dutch text would flow naturally. Ultimately, I believe using mainly a literal translation provided satisfactory results. Whenever translating literally did not result in a grammatically correct or a natural text, I changed my strategy, and chose to change the explicitness of the sentence, for example.

The research into this particular novel can be expanded to the connection of the two storylines in the book, for instance. This thesis only briefly mentioned the importance of the references between the stories, but it would be interesting to look at the translation problems this specific part of the novel creates and in what ways this can be translated. In addition to the similarities between the two storylines, future research can also look into the characters of Krysta and Lilie. As explained in the introduction, the reader only realises at the end of the novel that they are one and the same person. Krysta grows up and develops her linguistic skills throughout the novel, until she is roughly the same age and at the same linguistic level as Lilie, who mostly remains the same throughout the book. This again shows Krysta's development: at the beginning of the novel, Krysta is only about eight years old and does not resemble Lilie at all. At the end of the book however, Krysta has grown up and has developed her linguistic skills, so that it is believable to the reader that she was actually telling Lilie's story all along. As said before, it requires multiple readings to uncover all the clues that Granville has hidden in her book. If this novel does get translated in the future, the translator should therefore also make sure that the Dutch reader will want to go back and read the book again.

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Appendix: Fragments Source Text

Fragment 1

Faces here are mostly stern, but Uncle Hraben never stops smiling. He even smiled when he kicked the kittens out of the way. Johanna says he is very handsome, but not nearly as handsome as Papa. On my birthday Uncle Hraben gives me a Negerkuss. I eat it very slowly, first the chocolate shell, then the marshmallow filling, then the biscuit base. Afterwards I smooth out the wrapper, rubbing it back with my nail until it shines like silver, and he makes it into a ring for me.

‘Where is your father taking you this afternoon, pretty Krysta?’ asks Uncle Hraben, stroking the back of my neck. I pull away.

‘He says it’s a secret surprise.’

‘Ah. I see. But where do you hope you’re going?’

I run to the window and point in the direction of the high wall. ‘To the zoo. Greet’s uncle, who’s a sailor, went to one in America. He saw a polar bear and a giraffe and...’ I pause, overcome with excitement and anticipation, before continuing in a hushed voice ‘... *and they let him ride on an elephant.*’

Uncle Hraben bellows with laughter. Some of his friends come over and he repeats what I’ve said. They also laugh. Eventually he dries his eyes and tells me there are no elephants, bears, giraffes or monkeys behind the wall.

I take of his ring and put my thumb in my mouth. It’s bad luck to cry on your birthday.

‘It’s not that kind of zoo, *Mädchen.*’

‘This one’s for a different kind of beast altogether,’ explains the man with straw hair and eyes the colour of winter rain. They laugh again.

‘What sort of beasts?’ I stamp my foot but this only makes them laugh more.

‘Animal-people.’

There *are* animals that look like people. The old lady who lives next door to our real house has a pet schnauzer, the fattest dog I’ve ever seen. Greet said over many years they’d grown alike: now both had hair sprinkled with salt and pepper, both with snouts poking into other people’s private business, both with bad tempers and yappy voices, both the shape of wine barrels. And once I heard Greet shout, ‘*Männer sind Schweine!*’ at the man who

brought firewood. Also, one of Papa's friends had big, yellow teeth that made him look like a rat.

'I still want to see them.'

'Too dangerous,' says Uncle Hraben. 'They eat *proper* little human girls, especially pretty ones. Snip, snap – one bite and you'd be gone.'

When Papa came back from the infirmary he still did all the hand-washing, even though he'd promised we'd go straight away. While he was scrubbing his nails with the little brush I asked if we were going to the zoo, in case Uncle Hraben had been joking.

'No.'

I scowl. 'You said I could choose.'

Papa dries his hands and looks carefully at his fingers. 'Wouldn't you rather come to the toyshop with me? There's something there you might like to bring home. And afterwards we can have ice cream in a café.' He runs fresh water and picks up the soap.

'*Erdbeereis?*

'Strawberry, chocolate – whatever flavour you like.'

The town is bright, with flowers at the windows and many red flags with bendy-arm 'X's on them fluttering very gently in the breeze. People sitting outside a café smile at us, some stand up to wave, and when we go into the toyshop the shopkeeper leaves all his other customers to serve Papa.

'Ah, so this is the birthday *Fräulein*. *Alles Gute zum Geburtstag!*

He reaches below the counter and brings out two boxes. Each contains a pretty doll. One has dark-brown, curly hair and a red frock; the other is blonde and dressed all in blue. 'Yes, many happy returns from all of us. Here we are. Your papa wasn't sure which you'd prefer.'

I look at Papa. He nods. 'Which one would you like?'

'Can't I have both?'

Papa shakes his head. 'No.'

'Want both.' I kick at the brass rail running along the base of the counter. I try squeezing out a tear, but it won't come. 'Not fair. Why can't I have both?'

'You may have *one*,' he says in a tired voice. 'If you can't choose, then we will come back another day. Is that what you want? No. Then hurry up and decide before all the ice cream has melted.'

'Not fair,' I repeat, but I already know which doll I'll be taking home.

The shopkeeper almost imperceptibly pushes the brown-haired doll towards me. She is a bit like Greet, except that her eyes are the wrong colour, but the yellow-haired doll looks like a fairy princess. ‘That one.’ I point and the shopkeeper gives a little sigh and takes the brown doll away. ‘What’s her name?’

‘You want the fair one. Good.’ Papa looks very pleased as he reads the label. ‘It says “Charlotte”, but you can give her whatever name you wish.’

‘I shall call her Lottie, except when she’s been naughty,’ I say, remembering Papa changing ‘Greet’ to ‘Margarete’ when she annoyed him. ‘Then she will be Charlotte.’

In the café I take Lottie out of her box to look at her knickers. A tiny blob of strawberry ice cream falls on to her blue frock leaving a mark, but I keep my finger over it so Papa won’t notice.

Fragment 2

I don’t see Daniel again for two whole days. In the end, even though I want to stay out of sight, I have to go and find him. The skinny creature is still keeping close to him, saying nothing, but Daniel won’t look at me. Something’s wrong with his face. Every time I get in front of him, he turns away.

‘What’s the matter?’

He’s got his hand over his mouth so his voice is muffled. ‘I fell over. All right?’

‘Don’t be stupid. What really happened?’

‘Mind your own business.’

I pull at his hands.

‘Get off.’

His mouth is bloody and he’s lost a couple of teeth. I suddenly feel very sick. ‘It was Uncle Hraben, wasn’t it?’

‘You mean that *Arschloch* with yellow hair and the big black dog? The one who’s always smiling – even when he’s kicking you? He’s not your uncle, so why do you call him that?’

‘That’s what Papa told me to call him.’ Somehow, putting ‘Uncle’ before someone’s name used to make me feel safe. ‘What did he say?’

‘Nothing.’ But he gives the game away. ‘You mustn’t go there. Please don’t go. Promise me you won’t.’

‘I won’t.’

Daniel grabs my arm. ‘No. I mean it, Krysta. Swear you won’t go back.’ He’s trying not to cry. His nose starts to run and he wipes it on his sleeve. ‘Swear! *Swear!* Everyone else has gone. Left me. If you should... go away...’

He’s staring at me now, and I hope he can’t see what I’m thinking, because I know I’ll have to go to Hraben’s tower for exactly the reason he’s asking me not to. Daniel’s my only friend. I think of the Prince of Darkness, his great teeth and wicked eyes. He does just what his master commands. I don’t think Uncle Hraben would tell the dog to bite me, but he wouldn’t think twice about letting it eat Daniel.

‘Don’t be stupid. I’ll never go away.’

‘Promise?’

In the house outside the zoo where Papa and I used to live, there was a shelf of cowboys and Indians books by a lady writer called May Karl. Some of them were about Old Shatterhand, who became the blood brother of Winnetou, an Apache Indian. They had many adventures together and bravely fought their enemies side by side. I pull up my sleeve. ‘We could be blood brothers.’

Daniel shakes his head. ‘That’s just for kids. Anyway, we haven’t got a knife.’ He turns up his nose when I find a sharp stone. ‘Just promise you won’t go back there.’

‘Promise,’ I agree, but don’t say to what.

My feet have become big, heavy rocks that I have to drag up the stairs to the tower. I walk right in without knocking and Uncle Hraben seems very pleased to see me. He gives me two Negerküsse on a little plate. I eat the first one whole and then carefully nibble the chocolate off the marshmallow of the second. Afterwards, we go to the cupboard. I take out one of my special frocks and hold it against me; Lottie reminds me that it’s the one I wore the day she came home with me. Anyone can see it’s far too small now.

Uncle Hraben sits at his desk and lights a cigarette. ‘I want you to do something very special for me today, pretty Krysta.’

I back away. ‘What?’

‘Can’t you guess?’

I shake my head. ‘No.’ But my voice is so small and faint I’m not sure he hears me the first time. ‘No.’

‘I’m sure you can. Try.’ He leans back in his chair, smiling at me and puffing smoke rings. ‘I asked you to do it once before. Surely you haven’t forgotten?’

‘You want me to sit on your knee?’

‘All in good time, Krysta. Something else comes first.’ When I don’t answer, he says, very softly: ‘I asked you to call me something. Do you remember now? I asked you to call me Papa.’

‘Won’t.’

‘Ah, but you must.’

‘Won’t,’ I repeat, taking another few steps backwards. There is a chair behind me and I can go no further.

Uncle Hraben laughs and throws me a Pfennig Riesen. ‘Sit there, Krysta, and think about it while I finish this little lot,’ he says, pointing at a pile of paperwork. ‘Soon it’ll be time to take *der Fürst der Finsternis* for his afternoon walk. I’m sure you’ll come to your sense before that.’

There’s a small table to one side of my chair with writing materials in a half-open drawer. After I’ve crammed the toffee in my mouth, I quietly take out a pen, together with a tiny bottle of permanent blue, and write the same numbers that Daniel has on his arm all down mine. If we can’t be blood brothers, then we’ll be ink ones. My numbers aren’t as neat as his: the nib’s crossed and the ink runs a bit. Some of them are blurred –

‘What in God’s name are you doing?’ shouts Uncle Hraben, seizing my wrist. ‘What’s this?’ He doesn’t wait for an answer, but rubs my arm so hard with his handkerchief that the skin turns red. Even so, the numbers don’t come off. Catching me smiling, he snatches Lottie from my lap and throws her out of the window, before slamming it shut. ‘It’s about time you grew up, Krysta. I’ve examined the records and found you are quite a bit older than you appear to be. Big girls should be thinking about something more interesting than filthy old *Spielzeuge*.’

I bite back the rage and tears. ‘Things like Pythagoras?’

Uncle Hraben gives me a strange look. ‘It’s easy enough to remember the things young ladies should be concerned with – certain pleasures, then *Kleider*, of course, and after that, *Kinder, Küche und Kirche*. Sometimes the old ways are best.’ He takes his dog leash from the wall. ‘Is that understood?’

‘Yes.’

‘Yes, *Papa*.’ He smiles at me, coiling the leash around his hand.

‘Yes, *Papa*.’ I squeeze the words out through my clenched teeth. Uncle Hraben lets out a long sigh.

‘That’s better.’ He pats my bottom. ‘Off you go, Krysta. Come back tomorrow. I won’t feed Prince, just in case you forget. He’s a fierce dog now, a little dangerous. He has to be, to keep everyone safe.’

Daniel is waiting at the bottom of the steps. There’s no sign of the creature. ‘You promised not to go there,’ he says reproachfully.

‘No, I didn’t. Why are you following me?’

‘I always do. Promise you won’t go back.’

‘All right.’ I begin searching the ground underneath the window.

‘If you’re looking for your doll, then I’ve got her here.’ Daniel opens his hands. All that’s left is a jumble of greyish-pink pieces. One hand. One foot. No face. Even her eyes have gone. I swallow hard.

‘Lottie kept all my stories safe for me until I could write them down. Now they’re lost.’

‘You can make up new ones.’

‘No. I’ll never do another story again. Not ever.’

‘Don’t say that.’ Daniel looks horrified. ‘How else can we get our revenge?’

I shrug. ‘Why bother? It isn’t real.’

‘It might be if we want it badly enough.’

‘We’d need magic for that.’ I decide to bury Lottie in the aviary, where I planted the beans. ‘And magic isn’t real either.’

I’d already asked Cecily about that. ‘Magic is all in the imagination, my dear,’ she’d said, as if that was an end to it.

‘You mean, if I imagine hard enough, it might happen?’

Cecily laughed. ‘Perhaps,’ she’d said, but I could tell she meant no.

Daniel is looking around nervously. ‘We shouldn’t hang around here.’

‘Come on.’ I trudge towards the aviary, where we put all the bits of Lottie into the cold hard earth. ‘Dust to dust,’ I say. It’s all I can remember. They’ve all gone: Mama, Papa, Greet, and now even Lottie.

‘At least we’ve still got each other.’ Daniel squeezes my hand. I hadn’t noticed he was holding it. ‘We’ll never be parted.’

‘If you won’t ever forsake me,’ I say, comforted a little by realising I can still remember Greet’s stories, ‘I won’t forsake you.’

Fragment 3

When I return to the shed, the witch is demanding to know about Polish towns. She wants a quiet place where it would be easy to find work and somewhere to live. Daniel’s slumped against the wall. His eyes are closed and he doesn’t answer for a long moment.

‘Jedwabne,’ he says, sitting up, suddenly more alert. ‘You could say you’re from Jedwabne. It’s in the north-east, near Białystok.’

‘Jedwabne?’ The witch frowns over the name. ‘I’m sure I’ve heard of the place. Is it famous? Did something happen there? Have you been to the town? More to the point, would it be a good place to live?’

Daniel nods, but I notice he’s clenching his fists. ‘Jedwabne was once a weaving town. My grandparents lived there. It’s surrounded by beautiful forests and has long, warm summers. So many people have... *left*... in recent years that there are plenty of houses and shops standing empty.’ His mouth tightens. ‘I think you’d fit in there. All you have to learn is *Pochodzę z Jedwabnego* – I come from Jedwabne.’

‘Now we will eat,’ declares Agnieszka, apparently pleased with this prospect. ‘We’ll have a feast. The boy will sing Polish songs for us. And afterwards you’ – she looks at me – ‘can help cut off my hair. Then I’ll tell you about my new idea.’

But before the feast there must be bloody murder. Back we go to the tower.

Evening’s drawing in and the doves are coming home to roost. *Thump, thump, thump*, go the witch’s feet as she mounts the ladder – *Fee fi fo fum* – and the big wooden ratchet that allows the arms to turn round the central pillar creaks and groans. Some of the doves fly outside, many more flap and jostle beneath the roof, a few even try mobbing Agnieszka’s buttercup-yellow head... but the mothers only crouch lower, spreading their wings in a vain attempt to protect their babies. Nothing makes any difference: the witch will kill every last one if she has to, she’ll wipe the entire dove population from the face of the earth. Her big hands lunge, dashing the mothers against the wall, snatching up the

squabs. *Snap!* and their necks are broken. *Thud!* The small bodies land in my outstretched skirt. I try doing what I've always done – escape into that secret part of me where by magic or heroism I make things turn out differently, leaving behind an automaton, a machine with no feelings whatsoever – but today I can't. A door has closed. The ideas have gone. The words aren't there. Perhaps this is what happens when you invent stories inside stories that are themselves inside a fairy tale: they become horribly real.

In the yard, the witch gleefully lays the young doves out for the count. She hacks off their wings with her nurse's scissors, twists and pulls until their heads come free, plucks the sparse feathers from their breasts – which she then tears from the carcass, throwing the rest away. We climb into the kitchen where she makes *Jungtaube* stew, flavoured with garden herbs, in a battered cauldron. When it's bubbling and spitting over the oil drum, Agnieszka leaves me for a few minutes.

'Stay there and make sure it doesn't burn,' she yells over her shoulder. From the noises that follow, she's climbing over rubble in the rooms beyond, but although I'd like to see what she's up to I'm more interested in a certain pan the witch surreptitiously pushed out of sight when we came in. On lifting the lid, I realise things aren't happening in the right order, because Gretel didn't find the precious stones until after the witch was dead. There again, Gretel wasn't as curious as me, or as clever. Also, there are gold watches, rings and brooches, pearl necklaces and gold teeth rather than fairy-tale gems.

I want and don't want to eat the baby-dove stew. It's very different to the soup we'd grown used to. In the end I manage a few mouthfuls and Daniel gobbles the rest. There is no singing or dancing afterwards, and no hair-cutting either: Agnieszka is too eager to present us with her revised plan.

'No.' Daniel is shaking his head while she's still talking. 'No. I can't. I won't. I'd rather die.'

'You probably will, in that case,' the witch says pleasantly. 'We're running out of time. I'll give you tonight to think it over.'

'What does she mean?' I whisper as we curl up on the sacks. 'How can we run out of time? What does she know that we don't?'

Daniel is silent for so long I think he's asleep. 'Perhaps there's going to be fighting,' he says at last. 'I don't care. Like I said, I'd rather stay here and die than pretend she's my mother.'

‘If she can show us where to go, what does it matter what you’re forced to say?’ I demand. ‘What does one more lie matter?’ He doesn’t answer. ‘Say she’s your wicked *stepmother*, then. Could you do that?’

He sniffs. ‘Maybe...’

‘You must. We’re not staying here, and we’re not dying.’

‘But my mother –’ There’s a catch in his voice.

‘Don’t.’ We promised to stay silent about these things until it was over. ‘Look, you never had a stepmother so it doesn’t matter if you pretend. Anyway, Agnieszka, or whatever her real name is, won’t fool anybody for long. With that great big bottom of hers who will believe she’s ever gone hungry?’

‘Ugly fat cow. *Dziewka. Suka. Kurwa.*’ He recites his entire stock of bad words, his voice slowing and fading as he runs out of steam.

‘And you’ll say she’s your –’ But now Daniel really is asleep, his stomach gurgling with surprise at finding itself full. When I can’t stay awake any longer, I dream I’m back in Ravensbrück, inside the infirmary, running down endless white corridors calling for Papa. And here’s Agnieszka. The witch emerges from doors to the right and to the left, her hands bloody, clutching pieces of raw flesh or whole legs that are sometimes feathered, sometimes still with shoes attached.