



Thomas Hettche, *Herzfaden*

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The HEARTSTRING is the central string of a marionette, explains puppeteer Walter Oehmichen to his daughter, Hatü (Hannelore), because it connects the puppet with the heart of the spectators.

Thomas Hettche may have taken this to heart: Before he tells the story of the Oehmichen family, which has gone down in German history—and undoubtedly touched our HEARTS— as the inventors of the Augsburger Puppenkiste puppet theater, he describes the fantastic encounter a little girl has with—sorry!—those who have won our hearts in the Augsburger Puppenkiste, i.e. Jim Knopf and Princess Li Si, Urmel from the ice, tomcat Mikesch, and of course the ever grumpy Kasperle. In a miraculous way, they all come to life and meet our girl in the attic of the theater. In addition, she meets Hatü, a lovely old lady from another century, who tells the girl her life story without being asked.

And to make it clear what was past and what is now, Hatü's story of her father is printed in blue, while the story of her heart from the present, that is, the one with the living puppets, is kept in red. The father returned home from the Great War with his first marionette, and although he remained head of the Augsburg City Theater during the Third Reich, he presented Saint-Exupéry's *Little Prince* to dissidents and regime victims at his home in a self-built puppet theater. A haven of innocence and magic.

A thoroughly interesting German family history and a story about the career of one of the most important puppet makers in our country—which Hatü later becomes—and a magical attempt to make visible, in an Alice in Wonderland episode, the guilt from which she could not escape as a child in the Third Reich.

Katharina von Uslar