

## Literary Proposal

### *The Stories of Mr G*

by Marc Wagenbach

Volume I

# Something True, Something Cruel, Something Real – The Stories of Mr G

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*The Stories of Mr G* follows the journey of Max Grünbaum – a dreamer who has lost the ability to dream and longs for a new truth.

## 1. Synopsis – Volume I

Max Grünbaum returns with his partner Hieronymus from a long journey to the old family estate Ekeby in the Dutch countryside. What was meant to be a refuge turns into an archive of pain. Old wounds resurface: Max hears voices, sees ghosts, while Hieronymus throws himself into a new job. As Max sinks deeper into midlife crisis and solitude, a stranger arrives – Lea, searching for her grandfather who went missing during World War II. The summer on the estate unfolds into a web of intimacy, proximity, and anger. Max's friends enter the scene: Leander, the sharp-tongued queer cynic; Hanna, with her mystical ancestral visions; Hieronymus, ambitious yet concerned for Max. On Midsummer night, a body is discovered beneath the old walnut tree – and the story reveals its dark core.

As Albertine's guilt slowly emerges – the aunt who once lived at Ekeby with her nephew Jozef from the Dutch East Indies – the boy's diary draws Max and Lea into the pull of a buried past. They are drawn deeper into a vortex of dreams, guilt, and entanglement. And above them all hovers Mother Holle – not as a fairy-tale figure, but as an overwhelming drag queen and righteous judge.

The novel ends at Christmas, during the mystical *Rauhnächte* – the twelve nights between years, when fate is measured anew. All that remains is Mother Holle's laughter. A laughter echoing across the land. A laughter at a world long gone.

*Something True, Something Cruel, Something Real* is conceived as a standalone novel and at the same time the opening of a planned trilogy about Max, Hieronymus, Hanna, Lea, and Leander – and their search for an *Archive of Forgotten Dreams*. A fragile, poetic book: part séance, part autofiction, part historical flashback, part queer road movie. A story about guilt, memory, intimacy, forgiveness – and about the dream of another world.

## 2. The Trilogy – Key Themes and Structure

The trilogy interweaves themes of guilt and memory with the power of storytelling, family and colonial history, queer identity, and the longing for both individual and collective transformation.

- **Volume I:** *Something True, Something Cruel, Something Real* – return, memory, guilt, Ekeby as mirror of the past
- **Volume II:** *Something Bright, Something Dark, Something Gold* – fragmentation, trauma, control, conflict
- **Volume III:** *Something Holy, Something Evil, Something Other* – Ekeby as site of transformation, forgiveness, new narratives

A multiperspectival narrative in which motifs echo across historical time layers, carried by mysticism and poetically condensed language.

### 3. Target Audience & Market Positioning

#### Comparable authors:

- Ocean Vuong (*On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*)
- Max Porter (*Grief is the Thing with Feathers*)
- Jenny Erpenbeck (*Go, Went, Gone*)
- Rachel Cusk (*Outline*)

#### For readers seeking:

- Experimental literary prose
- Atmosphere-driven, emotionally resonant texts
- Stories that challenge conventional narrative forms

### 4. Market Potential

*The Stories of Mr G* engages with current international debates on memory, queerness, and transgenerational experience. The novel is positioned within German-language and international literary discourse and opens strong perspectives for international reception.

The trilogy is also part of the extended artistic project *Archive of Forgotten Dreams* – a hybrid of literature, installation, and public performance. This living archive invites communities to co-create their own narratives within the fictional world of Mr G. It merges literary storytelling with performative and participatory practice – becoming a space where new narratives can be negotiated and dreams of another world can be explored.

### 5. Status & Materials

- Complete German manuscript of Volume I available (ca. 70,000 words)
- Complete English translation of Volume I available
- Working draft of Volume II completed, concept for Volume III finalized
- English synopsis, series concept, and pitch materials available on request

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