

## **Auszug aus „No-man’s-land – Right up to the surrender of identity“**

**von Tamara Pirschchawa**

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The moments when he was drunk increased. That was accompanied by extremely aggressive behavior. I started counting the beer bottles before leaving his apartment, checking also the ones in the basement, in order to evaluate his alcohol consumption, and did the same when I returned to see him. After having not been there for three days, eleven bottles were missing. His breath already had the smell of alcohol when I arrived at noon. If I confronted him with it, he pretended having drunk alcohol-free beer. He did not have any at home at all. One Saturday, while I was in the living room and he was watching TV in the bedroom, he went to the kitchen a couple of times. I did not mean any harm. A while later I folded the laundry I had done and wanted to put the dishtowels in the kitchen cupboard. When I opened the door, I smelled beer and saw several empty bottles. Stefan had drunk secretly and hidden the bottles from me. It couldn't be denied any more – he was an alcoholic. His driving license had already been revoked three times because of drunken driving. This fact spoke volumes. As many alcoholics do, Stefan got aggressive very quickly, yelled and fumed at the smallest trifle. As he had already drunk two bottles of beer before I used to arrive he did not take long to provoke a quarrel, which "entitled" him to drink two more bottles. Next he went out of control. Once he was dead drunk and turned the radio volume up to the maximum although it was the middle of the night. I asked him to have regard for the sleeping children. And what would the neighbors say? He only got aggressive and had none of it. I turned the volume down, he turned it up again. The seesaw went on for a while. Then Stefan left the living room, mad with anger. I followed him to the kitchen, where he emptied the rest of his beer in one gulp and threw the bottle with full force on the kitchen floor in front of my feet. It shattered into a thousand pieces. I did not want to provoke him and asked him only to sweep away the shards, saying that otherwise the children might step on them the next morning. He said that he did not care. He wanted to take another bottle of beer out of the fridge. It was the last one. But I got there first, took the bottle and dropped it out of sheer desperation. It broke and the beer spilled out all over the floor. It seemed to be the only sure way to stop him from getting even more drunk. However I had not considered what it means to take the last "stuff" away from an alcoholic. He went completely out of control. Obviously out of his mind, he swung at me, first in the kitchen, then in the hall where he had pushed me, continuing to flail at me till we landed in the living room. He knocked me to the floor and sat on me. He laid his hands around my neck and started to strangle me. I thought he was going to kill me. But suddenly he let up on me, and it took all my strength to get this tall heavy man off my body. I only succeeded because he was dead drunk. I stood up and ran away, he followed me. I sought refuge in the bedroom and locked the door. Next I ran to the window, opened it and jumped outside from the raised ground floor. I ran along the street till I saw a house with lit windows. I rang the door bell. Although it was the middle of the night, the people opened the door and let me in. I called my friend who joined me immediately.

We went together to Stefan's apartment because I wanted to get my son out of there. We found Stefan totally sobered, just sweeping the shards away. He apologized and said that it had suddenly come over him, that in retrospect he was totally shocked at having committed violence against me. He begged me to forgive him, affirming it would never happen again. I answered that I would wake my son up and go home

with him. He asked me to let the child sleep as it was already so late. After a while I yielded to persuasion and stayed until the next morning, however demanding that I sleep in the living room. This incident did not make me leave Stefan. He never beat me again, but kept lying and betraying me, and his constant high alcohol level made him treat me very aggressively or condescendingly. This kind of violence also hurts a lot and burns into one's soul.