



A Letter to the Family

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A fictional text by Marc Kaiser and Manuel Brombach

Magdeburg, December
1498

My Dear Family

Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was and which is to come! I hope you are still in good health in Münster. We are glad to be alive and I am happy to be able to send you this sign of life. Our journey to Königsberg is exhausting, the deadness of the winter steals our vigour like a thief a warm loaf of bread ? we are at the end of our tether.

On our way to Magdeburg we were all struck with severe maladies. Our coachman John was so afflicted that we had to bed him in our cartload of cloth. Thus I had to take the reins and steer the coach myself.

Just before reaching Magdeburg, we got stuck in a quagmire. We were all so tired and sickened that we could not free our carriage with our combined force.

Suddenly we heard rustling in the underwood. Anxiously we turned arround to be surprised by three young men. Luckily they meant no harm. One of them, a young lad named Martin, offered assistance. Since the three were pupils of Magdeburg's monastery, they could bring monks to help us.

The brothers came and freed our cart. They even offered us shelter and medical treatment in exchange for a small donation and we were accommodated in their monastery. There we got food and some remedies. John could rest and recuperate and the monks repaired our cart. Our stay there took about a fortnight. So I spent much time in the convent's library but sadly could not read much as most of the books were written in Latin. I was frustrated.

In the abbey's cross coat I met young Martin again. He is from Eisenach, son of a councillor named Luther and here to study Latin. I talked to him about the hardships, a traveling salesman has to endure. He advised me to study the Bible more diligently to satisfy God's will.

I told him about my frustration with the Latin books in the library. In my humble opinion, the Holy Bible should be in German, so that a God-fearing man such as I could understand the divine message better.

He laughed and said what a dangerous idea that was. It would be helpful but also heresy, so no one in his right mind would even consider translating the Bible.

What nice fellow this Martin Luther was. Maybe we will meet again on our journey back from Königsberg.

Now at the last day of our stay I am sitting at a small fire writing this. One of the monks says that in a few days a messenger will come who could take along this letter. I hope it will reach you.

It is meanwhile middle of December, and winter will not end until march. Nevertheless we will continue our journey tomorrow. Königsberg is still far away but we hope to return to Münster next autumn with amber from the Baltic Sea.

Either we will come through difficulties to the stars or against great odds, we will reach Münster as wealthy men. Only God knows.

My hope is that there will be a reunion next year in Münster.

I miss you all sadly and pray for your well-being!

*The Lord works in mysterious ways!
I embrace and love you all!*

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