

*The conclusion of the ELF MAN TRILOGY, So Dieter Called Him Elf Man is a dystopian novel set in the near future of 2042 and includes back stories over centuries.*

**So Dieter Called Him Elf Man: A Grass Clan Curse Trilogy**  
By W. J. Hein

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A person wearing a dark cowboy hat and a dark jacket stands on a dark, rocky outcrop, looking out over a vast landscape under a night sky. The sky is filled with stars and the Milky Way galaxy, which stretches across the upper half of the frame. The lower half of the sky shows some light clouds. The overall color palette is dominated by deep blues, blacks, and the warm tones of the sunset or sunrise sky.

A GRASS CLAN CURSE TRILOGY

**SO DIETER  
CALLED  
HIM ELF MAN**

W.J. HEIN

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## **PROLOGUE: THE ROCKET**

**Gerhard Schmidt  
Freiburg Germany  
September 23, 1939**

A Saturday morning, an early fall day. Leaves on the beech and oak trees by the road running south from Freiburg to Horben losing chlorophyl. Gerhard Schmidt, on leave from his military assignment to the Peenemünde Army Research Center, driving his father's Opel, looking forward to a solitary hike in the *Schwarzwald*. A hike he was familiar with from many boyhood excursions. A popular day hike just a short distance from Freiburg. A hike whose trailhead was just a few kilometers south of Günterstal. A hiking trail whose trailhead was at a park near a farmhouse.

War had begun just three weeks prior with the German invasion of Poland. The war was going so favorably for Germany that the head research leader saw no reason to cancel Gerhard's brief leave.

Gerhard was pleasantly surprised. He assumed he would be stuck in Peenemünde. He had gathered up his gear and headed to the train transport station immediately before anyone could change their mind. He was fortunate to board a train filled with military personnel heading south. It was 600 kilometers to Freiburg and with transfers would take him all day and overnight, with the expectation of arriving early morning the following day.

Now, after two cloying days with his parents and a depressing meeting with his older brother, Gerhard was

eager to be alone with his thoughts in the *Schwarzwald*, looking forward to the exertion of a climb into the lower hills of the forest.

The weather was cooperating. He had fished out boots and a backpack from his room, heavy socks, an old sweater and an alpine hat and a walking stick. When he put these clothes on, he felt a bit foolish, the clothing years old and outdated and he was now a man of 27 years wearing a 17-year-old former self's sense of proper hiking attire. No matter, he would be on his own.

Gasoline rationing was now in place with the onset of war, but his father had the foresight to fill up the tank and used the Opel only sparingly. It was a short drive out of the city heading south on the *Schauinslandstraße* and not much petrol would be expended.

Gerhard had carefully filled his backpack the prior night in the privacy of his room. A flask of whisky, two packs of cigarettes, a men's nature magazine and a blue and red box of Pervitin pills. The pills were from the Research Center, widely used to fuel 12-hour workdays, and available to everybody.

Gerhard had grown quite used to popping Pervitin tablets during his year at the base. He wished he had them when he was completing his advanced degree in Engineering at the Universität in Freiburg.

In the morning, his mother had assembled cold sandwiches, and he filled a canteen with water. He told his mother that he would not return until evening.

Despite the weekend, there were few vehicles on the road, mostly trucks fulfilling one service function or another. It seemed the war had made the populace inclined to stay close to home. Gerhard shifted gears as he made his way past Günterstal, the road thickly lined with trees and dense underbrush.

Gerhard arrived at the park and headed to an unpaved lot. There were only a few vehicles and most people seemed to be wandering around the park environs. Gerhard was likely to be alone on the trail. That suited him.

To the right of the park was a farmhouse. The trailhead was approached by walking by the farmhouse and a dirt road alongside the extended property of the farm.

Gerhard remembered the name of the farm. The Grass farm. When he was a child, his father would buy eggs and sometimes a chicken. He would not look when old man Grass slit the chicken's neck and his wife or the son plucked the feathers. He remembered his father telling him he didn't care for the Grasses. *Weißer Schlucker*, he said. As he approached the farm, he heard hens clucking.

When Gerhard walked by the Grass farmhouse, he saw two boys who looked like brothers playing with toy bows and arrows. They were sturdy boys, perhaps ten or twelve years old with reddish brown hair. The boys noticed Gerhard but did not wave. They looked surly and suspicious, so he ignored them and walked on.

The boys went back to their play acting and he overheard them shouting about firing their arrows at Jews and Poles. Gerhard shrugged, glad he was not in the Wehrmacht and directly in the war, happy that his engineering degree had

saved him from that fate. Yes, he was subject to all the army regulations and restrictions at the base, but he was still considered a civilian employee under scientists and engineers who reported to Werner Von Braun. That afforded a great deal of latitude not enjoyed by army personnel.

There was something foreboding about this farm and the property. Gerhard could not put his finger on it. It was almost like coming off the Pervitin pep pills, losing a high that often devolved to a sense of anxiety and lassitude.

There was a strange sense of dread creeping in. He did not understand why. The sun was shining, and it was about as perfect a day as one could expect, but there was also a strange lowering of light beyond the property, not in the direction of his hike, but off in the distance, disturbingly *there*. Gerhard chose to ignore it. He reached the trailhead, took a swig of water from his canteen, and began a gradual ascent into the forest.

The trail was a very gradual and deliberate winding upwards, with no switchbacks and few declines, just an easy walk up the mountain to his destination, perhaps six or so kilometers to the clearing he remembered from childhood. The birch and beech and oak soon gave way to spruce and pine, the fir trees that were the reason for the name of the Black Forest. An underlaying of ferns and dark moss. The higher Gerhard climbed, the denser the fir trees, occasionally obscuring the sun and the sky.

Midway to his destination, Gerhard halted and rummaged through his pack for the Pervitin and swallowed a pill with



a drink. He wanted the boost and adrenaline to kick in by the time he was in the clearing.

He tapped his pack of Juno cigarettes and lit one with his zippo lighter. The lighter was emblazoned with a swastika, handed out to everyone at the research facility. Now that the war was on, Hitler's anti-smoking campaign had ground to a halt. In the uncertainty of wartime, everyone was smoking again.

In a short time, he was at the clearing. The sunshine provided warmth against the colder shadows of the forest. He looked around to make sure he was alone, and then he found a secluded spot where he would be the first to see anyone approaching. He was high now, feeling alive and alert.

He lay down in the grassland of the clearing, and he took out his naturist magazine. There were many photographs of men and women in athletic poses, many of the men stripped down, the red flags of the Reich often in the background for the outdoor activities. Gerhard was only interested in the men. He always was only interested in men.

He was excited now, and he quickly removed his pants and underwear. A light wind caressed his legs. He fixated on one man who appeared in a few pages, muscular and beautiful. He finished faster than anticipated. He dressed and moved to a more open part of the clearing.

Now he was spent, with a brief wave of guilt followed quickly by fear. There was little tolerance for homosexuals in the Reich. He knew there were those that had been

arrested in bars and bath houses. For many prison awaited, with a pink triangle on their prison garb.

To be a homosexual in prison or a concentration camp, you were the lowest of the low next to Jews. They were beaten and often killed. Gerhard had to struggle to suppress his attraction to some fellows at the Research Center, men that sometimes showed inclination by word or comments of a similar bent. Dangerous, even surrounded by highly educated scientists. After all, the military counterpart to the scientists permeated the Center as well, a rough sort in general. Being alone here in the woods was one of the few outlets he had.

The drug and the exertion had accelerated his appetite, and he ate both sandwiches his mother had made, followed by a chocolate bar. The Pervitin was starting to wear off and Gerhard decided that rather than another pill, he would alleviate the drug with some whisky and another cigarette. The whisky and the nicotine eased the jitters.

The pleasure of the wilderness was fading. The sun was now covered by clouds and there just might be a rain shower on the way back, so he gathered his gear, put his pack on, and began a descent. It was late afternoon.

As he walked, Gerhard considered his year at the Research Center. The faculty at the Universität had heard about the Center but the Nazi command had cloaked the projects with a tight lid. Nevertheless the faculty assumed special weapons research was going on. A few of the faculty were acquainted with Werner Von Braun who was known to be at Peenemünde and knew about his work in rocketry.

There was an assumption that rocket research would be harnessed for the war. Von Braun was obsessed with space and a rocket journey to the moon. It followed that Von Braun would use the military as a steppingstone for his obsession. For the military, long-range artillery in the form of missiles was enticing.

For that Gerhard Schmidt seemed a perfect candidate with an advanced mechanical engineering degree and a few years of work on engines for the military. The professors did not consider Gerhard a genius like they did his older brother, whose work in eugenics had made him very well received in the Reich. It fit in perfectly with Hitler's views on races. Yet Gerhard was capable. It was not a surprise that he was chosen. After all, thousands of engineers and scientists were needed.

The year at Peenemünde made Gerhard realize just how much more work was needed to produce a successful rocket, let alone mass production as a weapon of war. The logistics of a massive rocket lifted into near space and loaded with a bomb that could cause widespread destruction was beyond daunting, seemingly impossible in the short term.

After all, *rakaten* development was in its infancy. Only small rockets launched by Goddard in the United States. It seemed that decades of working out theoretical problems, followed by implementation of engineering of daunting complexity would be needed. As much a genius as Von Braun was, overnight solutions appeared inconceivable. That much Gerhard had gathered as preliminary work ensued at Peenemünde.

Halfway down the trail back to the park, Gerhard took another Pervitin. A habit developing. There would be a clash of drug and alcohol. Gerhard needed a high again. After all this was his brief time on leave. Before he knew it, he would be back toiling in twelve-hour days in the shops along the windswept Baltic Sea. The gray depression of winter was approaching, and the loneliness. Little comfort there in the foreseeable future for certain.

The day was vanishing, speeded by increasing clouds, and as he reached the lower elevations, there was mist and fog. Visibility was decreasing.

Gerhard thought of his childhood and how his older brother delighted in scaring Gerhard on the *Schwarzwald* hikes. He filled Gerhard's head with tales of grotesque dwarves and woodland witches and their desire to abduct young boys and girls and steal them away forever.

Gerhard halted and tapped his pack of Junos for another cigarette and resumed walking at a quickened pace. He made out the outlines of the farmhouse property, and the vague shape of the farm itself, with a few lights dimly flickering. He realized he was both high and a bit drunk and would have to sober up for the drive back in the darkness.

Despite the drug, or maybe because of it, Gerhard became aware of another presence, an instinctive awareness kicking in and his consciousness alerted to someone or something out there.

A small figure (a small man?) arose out of the fog, a defined form in the mist. The person approached Gerhard, covered in a cloak with a hood. Gerhard thought he got a glimpse of

strange eyes but maybe it was just his fevered imagination, He held his walking stick out, a potential weapon.

Frozen in fear and apprehension, he saw the small figure holding something, but it was not a weapon, so Gerhard put his walking stick down. The little person in the black cloak walked quickly to Gerhard, saying nothing, nothing at all. Not a word.

The figure handed him a packet and disappeared into the gloom. The moment of delivery was electric, an eerie sensation. The being didn't seem human. Not in the manner in which he approached, nor the way he evaporated in the darkness. He was gone before the full realization of what had occurred could register.

## **Chapter 14**

### **Gerhard Schmidt Journal**

#### **The Rocket (found in Schmidt's personal papers, undated)**

*The construction of the Rocket in the most terrible war in human history clearly signals the eventual destruction of the world. What more proof needed than the events of this past week? Was the Elf Man impatient to get to this point in time? From the blueprints of the Elf Man to this year, a mere blink in time.*

*And I was there at the beginning. And only I know the accelerated source of the foundational instruments of destruction. No doubt humanity would have found the technical expertise to develop the delivery of nuclear warheads, but then again, the alien had his own timetable. For in fact I now know that the alien, called the Serpent Man by the local Indian tribal members, was the creature that handed the packet to me (would "handed" be the correct term?) on that day by the farmhouse on the road to Horben.*

*I write this to tell you I was the hapless fool in rocket history. A puppet of the alien, and I have danced on his string ever since that most evil event in the park by the Grass farm in Germany.*

*First a puppet of my times and the place of my birth of course. For they say there is the accident of birth, the randomness of it that places you haphazardly in space/time, but I now know there is no accident of birth for anyone. We are all puppets and for me it was Hitler and Nazi Germany that first made me that prisoner of fate, but then again there*

*was no randomness for Hitler either. We all march to the unknown forces that sets the universe in motion along a predetermined path. That is true of the alien as it is for all of us. He had to be there at the appointed place and time.*

*"A screaming comes across the sky". I heard the screaming of the Raketen, many times. After the initial failures and the explosions on the test pads, at last the success of liftoff; the sixty-five seconds of propulsion lifting the enormous Raketen, followed by Brennschluss and a ballistic trajectory of a missile at supersonic speed. Oh, the marvelous technological achievements of all of it, from the first closed circuit television and ground-controlled Doppler, the analog computer of Holzer (actually described in the packet by the alien), the advanced guidance system and so much more. The mind of man is great.*

*I was able to deliver the alien's packet to the office of Von Braun through an inter-mail delivery system at the Research center without my presence being known and I made sure I witnessed the delivery, and I saw Von Braun idly opening the packet, his eyes widening as he looked at the documents therein with increasingly visible excitement. I removed myself from his reflexive scanning of his surroundings. Who delivered this and where did it come from?*

*I waited days for announcements and revelations, but they never came. I waited for conferences and hurried meetings with the military heads, but that never happened. I then realized that Von Braun would most likely be sharing the documents, piecemeal only, with his close circle of scientists.*

*It was too dangerous to involve the military counterparts because they would set off a frantic search for the source of*

*the packet. The search would explode at the highest level of German intelligence as they would examine what must be a huge intelligence failure. Surely this secret weapon, the rocket, must be in more advanced stages than Germany, in some facility in the United States or Great Britain. Heads would roll at the intelligence failure. The search for the unknown spy who obtained the packet would permeate through every level and would result of course in failure.*

*For Von Braun, opening this can of worms to the higher ups would be a huge mistake. Von Braun cared nothing for whether it was the United States or Britain as the source. He was obsessed ultimately in space exploration. He looked only into the future. The documents would only add to his mystique for he would make himself the source of the documents. He would be the genius that would distribute formulas and equations slowly until all of the Rakaten plans in the packet would see the reality of day. Von Braun understood all of the equations and the blueprints. It would have taken him years to work through all of it with his scientists. This was a gift from the Gods, for Von Braun believed in the hand of God and that he was the instrument of God.*

*Within two years the scientists and engineers had perfected the primary technologies; liquid fuel rocket, aerodynamics for supersonic speeds, missile guidance systems and advanced rudder systems. I breathed a sigh of relief that there would be no investigation that could have led to me and probably to my imprisonment and death.*



*I was to spend the entire war in the service of the Rakaten. I will not bore you with details. I worked on engine components for two years under Doctor Thiel. The first successful test flight was in October 1942. Thiel was among hundreds of us killed in a bombing raid by the RAF in late 1943. After that the decision was made to move production facilities out of Peenemünde. The SS took over and slave labor was used to construct underground tunnels to protect us from allied bombing. Slave labor built thousands of rockets. The Rakaten was named V2 for Vengeance. By then our cities were being bombed mercilessly.*

*I was put in the position of overseeing engine production-quality testing at Mittelwerk. It was there whatever faith I had in humanity was lost. The SS killed some 12,000 slave laborers to produce the Rakaten, more than what the Rakaten actually killed in the name of vengeance.*

*We worked them to death with little food, twelve-hour days, with no sleeping quarters or places to piss and shit. They slept where they fell exhausted from their labor. We hung them whenever we discovered the slightest malfeasance to our orders, or any intentional disruption to production. We gave them slop buckets for elimination and slop for food and lice ridden filthy blankets and we exposed them to the frozen cold of winter in the tunnels, and typhus and dysentery.*

*We would make them remove the bodies of their fellow slaves, and they would be shoved into shallow trenches and we would make them build more trenches for the next day. The laborers withered away until they collapsed. I grew inured to all of it. I lost all emotion. I was addicted to methamphetamines, and I grew thin and malnourished*

*myself. My supervisor forced me to go through withdrawal and regain my weight.*

*The rockets were launched from mobile launch sites spread over Germany and eastern France. By then (late 1944) the Americans and Brits had liberated Paris and Antwerp. These became targeted cities as well as London.*

*We all knew the missiles were too few and too late. We were clearly losing the war. All of it proved pointless. A terror weapon killing civilians primarily. We had not perfected trajectories and were unable to pinpoint targeting. The V2 would be only within kilometers of designation. Indiscriminate killing was all it was. But then so was the firebombing of Hamburg and Berlin by the allies.*

*We built the V2 while our families were burned alive or blown to bits in our homeland. But then again, we had bombed London during the Blitz. So we all became killers from a distance and that made it easier, or we killed the untermenschen who were not real humans, and that included homosexuals, which I was secretly as well. It was all insanity and all madness, and it would continue until the war burned itself out with the last embers of destruction.*

*The V2 achieved supersonic speed, so those killed by the warhead would never hear the scream of the rocket preceding their own death. Death would come with no warning, unannounced. One of our V2s hit a crowded movie house in Antwerp. The Cinema Rex. There were 1100 people watching "The Plainsman", an American western. Half of the audience killed and half of that allied serviceman.*

*Now watching a movie is rightly called an experience where time is suspended in the darkness, and the film itself is in*

*effect a stoppage of time at a place in the past, and eternally so.*

*Those who died were also suspended in time unaware, (most of them). And besides never seeing the end of the movie, as the movie was forever held in abeyance possibly at the point when Gary Cooper rescues Calamity Jane in the Cecil B DeMille distortion of history.*

*And it's also possible that Hitler himself saw the movie, an illusion of reality in all its manifestations, because he was a fan of Westerns, especially the Karl May books, which made him plan to duplicate the American experience of manifest destiny, meaning removal of inferior untermensch. A reversal of direction compared to Americans for Hitler to the east (Soviet Russia) for lebensraum for the German people.*

*And I might add, my own brother, Wolf Schmidt, helped make the rationalization and justification for it based on the quackery of the false science of eugenics for which Wolf was recognized and honored in Nazi Germany. And my brother built his Germanic themes based on the popularity of eugenics in the United States, so we go round and round in a feverish loop. And here I live in 1962 in California, the former epicenter of eugenics, but I have learned that ironies abound once one begins to connect the dots. And it's not paranoia my friend but you'll realize that later.*

*So it went that Von Braun wisely for him sold his services to the United States, and the Americans ignored Von Braun's complicity in the Nazi war effort, for one is assumed to be loyal to his country, right or wrong, correct?*

*It mattered not if he was aware of the slave labor- slow extermination to produce his rockets, though he surely had*

*to be aware. Well, you can't let a gift horse go to the Russians, could you, and the Nazis were way too advanced in rocketry to let small matters like slow extermination of thousands delay the technological future and future security of the United States.*

*A spectacular feat of landing on the moon owes its achievement to Adolph Hitler. So what else is new? ICBMs come along with it by the thousands armed with nuclear payloads all aimed at you and me. Did you know that the Nazis and Von Braun had constructed the Peenemünde site with the concept of long-range missiles that would reach the U.S? Advanced thinking and planning, have to hand it to we Germans.*

*An American. That connotes freedom, Yet my emigration to the United States was anything but free. I went along with all the other scientists and engineers engaged in the development of V2 Rockets because it was either Americans or Russians. The chances of me melting into obscurity in post war Germany were slim.*

*Most of us were in the future Soviet Zone and we were ordered out of the zone and transported to the American zone. In the meantime, American forces were swarming over the V2 rocket plans to ship everything of research value to the United States.*

*We boarded transport planes in late 1945, many of us dedicated former Nazis who spent the war effort trying to kill Americans and their allies from long distance. We only failed because we ran out of time.*

*Americans become friends and their friends become enemies. It is the nature of power struggles. Their calculus was a*

*rational one. We had knowledge they did not possess, and the past was increasingly the past, of little value in the currency of geopolitics.*

*The Americans plucked 1600 scientists and engineers, the cream of the German scientific intelligentsia. I was one of them. We all were sent to Fort Bliss Texas, where we refurbished, assembled and launched rockets from all the rocket parts taken from Germany.*

*What an appropriate site for the expiation of my sins, the desert. The Chihuahuan desert that envelops Fort Bliss and the city of El Paso, an inhospitable and foreboding terrain, the desolate Franklin Mountains rising steeply over the city.*

*The desert scrubland, mesquite and grassland, flat and ominous heading north to the White Sands missile ranges. The summer heat shimmering in waves as we drove from Fort Bliss. We tested the rockets there. We Germans, cast out of the Fatherland, living among Americans, some strange breed of naivety and brutality these Americans, innocents and killers, old testament soldiers who loved their children. They could not fathom our efficient and systematic genocide, but American history was rife with it, with primitive genocide.*

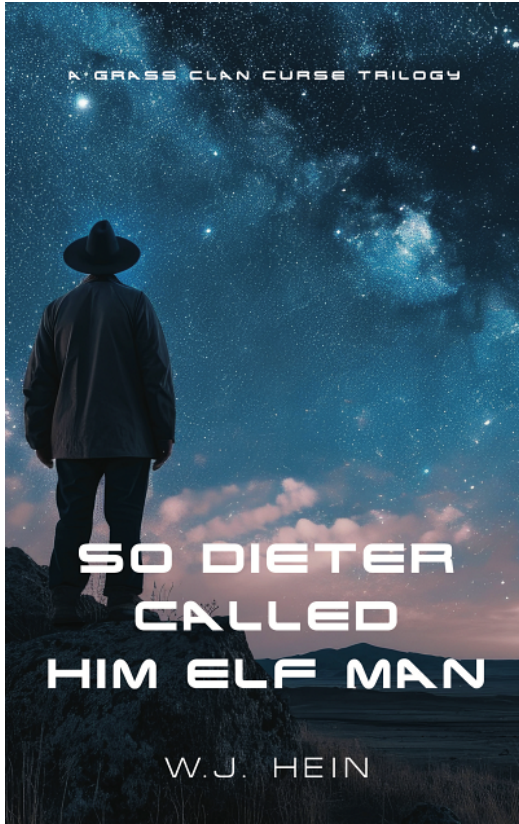
*The first atomic device exploded in White Sands, the first mushroom cloud. It worked said Oppenheimer. The brilliance of the light, the shock waves. Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.*

*And now for a delivery system, missiles. Missiles capable of attacking the new enemy, Soviet Russia. A race against the Communists. Operation Pinclip versus Operation*

*So Dieter called him Elf Man*

*Osoaviakhim, German scientists now pawns on both sides of the Cold War.*

**(Journal excerpt ends here)**



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