

Post Scriptum and Research to

*DETECTIVE IN NEW YORK—Old Shatterhand Dime Novel*

This is a work that features two *Erzgebirgische Dorfgeschichten* (Ore Mountains Romances). The framing story is adapted from a 19th century dime novel. The work itself is a story within a story, for Karl F. May already in 1893 made Old Shatterhand's detective adventure in New York an integral part of the *Winnetou* trilogy, by simply mentioning it, and creating continuity between the individual parts of the disparate three volumes of his *Winnetou*.

At the conclusion to volume I of the *Winnetou* trilogy, the blood-brothers must separate: *Winnetou* follows the trail of the murderer Santer, and at the start of volume II the reader finds out that Old Shatterhand, young Charles May, embarks on a ship on his way home to Germany, but the vessel falls victim to a hurricane in the Gulf of Mexico. Charley escapes and with two other survivors is washed up on the Tortugas, where the commander of Fort Jefferson takes them in and organizes passage on a vessel to New York for Old Shatterhand. Because all of his belongings, including his money, went down with the ship, Charley is penniless, and must find paid work. He gets lucky when the famous boss of a just as famous detective agency, Josh Taylor, employs him. For several months, he solves many small cases in New York, the success of which prompts Mr. Taylor to send Charley south, to find a deranged poet, the abducted son of a New York businessman.

Karl Friedrich May has not left more than those few words about Charley's time in New York to posterity. However, one or two remarks allow the timing of the New York adventure to the second half of 1863—just after the Draft Riots, and while the Russian Atlantic Fleet is anchored in New York harbour.

A detective in New York...where to begin? Of course! With the 'squillions' of New York Dime Novels at the time, which were first called 'Story Papers' and 'Pamphlet Novels' (the pulp fiction of 30 years later was heavily influenced by the Dime Novels) also called 'Ten Cent Novels', the style of the New-York-detective novel with Old Shatterhand was assured.

The first dime novels appeared just before the beginning of the American Civil War; in England, they were known as 'Penny Dreadfuls'. Initially, their plots were about American Indians, but when the indigenous inhabitants were placed on reservations, the readers' interest focussed on other themes. Beadle and Adams, in 1860, published the very first Dime Novel: a short story entitled *Malaeska, the Indian Wife of the White Hunter*, written by Mrs. Ann S. Stephens.

Karl F. May's 'Ore Mountains Romances' came later, from around the mid- to late-1870s. They were published in weekly or fortnightly instalments in the local newspapers, and are related to Dime Novels, Story Papers, Pamphlet Novels, Ten Cent Novels, Penny Dreadfuls, and the later Pulp Fiction publications.

May's tales were set inside a small region in south-eastern Saxony, while American Dime Novels had a larger stage on which the plays were acted out: from the Wild West to New York, and also had a broader range of staffage.

In several novels, and in a number of his early romances, Karl F. May features the local German singing club's get together locale, usually a tavern, inn or other such 'homely German setting', as a starting point for the plot, or a valid and required point for plot continuity (even the song *Winnetou* asks the singers to sing just before his death in Volume III of *Winnetou*, was one of

Charles' compositions for a singing club in a German community in Chicago, "under Director Balding").

During most such get-togethers, the merry members of these music clubs also tell stories to entertain; in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, entertainment had to be created by those who wanted to amuse themselves, if there was no option to visit an opera, concert or other such event.

The German diaspora around Yorkville on Manhattan Island was a small settlement, mostly farms, and probably called Yorkville only by a few in 1863; officially, Yorkville had its name printed on the first map only a few years later. Some of Karl F. May's Ore Mountains Romances were reprinted in American German-language newspapers, and it may be safe to assume that they had also made their way to Yorkville at some point. In my fictional *Winnetou & Shatterhand* universe, expanded from Karl Friedrich May's, after Charles May returns to New York, and finds employment with Josh Taylor as a detective, he also makes the acquaintance of folk in Yorkville, fellow countrymen, friends of poetry and prose coming together once in a while, and over a beer tell a few old tales from the woods in the Ore Mountain ranges along the Bohemian border.

The framing story of *Detective in New York—Old Shatterhand Dime Novel* is a genuine New York dime novel detective story, suitably adjusted for incognito Old Shatterhand. The detective in the original, a Wild West character, actually a former outlaw, turned detective, was named Mr. Fergus Fleming. I'm sure it is his undercover name, and thus I'm not at liberty to divulge more; the 'clews' are inside.

Both, the opening and the concluding romances are love stories; a young maiden and a dashing young man fall in love, overcome the hurdles, and live happily ever after. But while the opening romance has at its centre a lost inheritance, a 'treasure', and a humorous thread, the concluding romance deals with crime and attempted murder.

The lost treasure in the first romance is a substantial find of so-called *Laubthaler*. They were silver coins minted in the 1700s in southern Germany and Switzerland.

*Samiel* is a colloquial variant of 'Samael', who is an Archangel, often associated with grim and destructive chores.

#### Opening Romance

##### The Lost Treasure

*Die Laubthaler* is a story about Franz Halbermann, who ventured out from Potschappel, as a journeyman baker, to wander from place to place, find work, and accumulate experience in his profession. He came to Cottbus, in the neighbouring state of Brandenburg, where he fell in love with another baker's daughter. But her father is set on marrying his daughter to a wealthy older suitor, because he needs the money.

The first printing of this romance, titled *Die Laubthaler* occurred in 1878 in the journal *Weltspiegel* by publisher Adolph Wolf in Dresden, Germany.

#### Concluding Romance

##### Samael's Dark Glen

*Der Samiel* is one of May's earliest romances. Hermann Landauer, a young man from a small town in the Ore Mountains fell in love with the daughter of the local forestry and game warden. However, a mysterious

poacher is killing the deer in the warden's district to discredit him, and have him dismissed from his post. He suspects Hermann of the villainous deeds, and sets out to catch him.

The first and only printing during Karl F. May's lifetime of this romance in this format, titled *Der Samiel*, occurred during 1877/78 in the magazine *Das Buch für Alle. Illustrierte Familien-Zeitung zur Unterhaltung und Belehrung. Chronik der Gegenwart*, by publisher Hermann Schönlein, Stuttgart, Germany.

[Note: in the German version, hardly anyone had a name; the characters had descriptive nicknames, such as 'The Paddock-farmer'. In the expanded version, which was later incorporated into a much larger work, everyone had a name; I've borrowed some of those names for both protagonists and antagonists for the translation of the short original version.]

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