

## German Literature in Bessarabia 05—Rudolf Weiß

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[Note: Comments in square brackets in the document are those of the translator.]

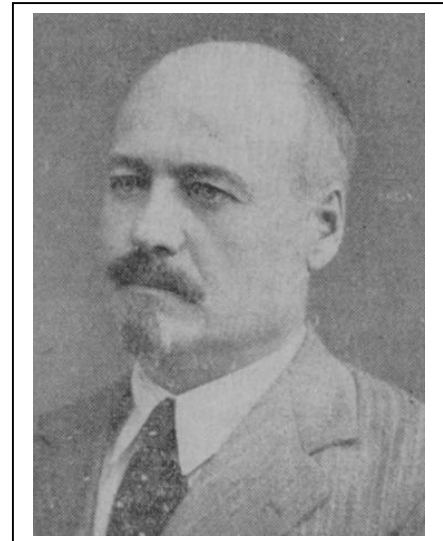
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[Translation Begins]

### Rudolf Weiß

Born on 11 April (old calendar) of the year 1887 in Friedenstal. The father, Gottfried Weiß, was a teacher. At the age of 14—entered the Werner School. 1905-1909—Village school teacher. 1909-1913—at the Russian Pedagogical Institute in Tbilisi. Then 2 years teacher at the Werner School. 1915-1917—at the war. 1917-1920—Central School teacher in the Chersson (Hoffnungstal). After returning from Russia, he worked for the *Deutsche Zeitung Bessarabiens* for several years. Merchant since 1925. Currently in Akkerman.

At the age of 18 (1905, as a young teacher) correspondent of the *Odessaer Zeitung*. As compensation, a free copy. Attending the Teachers' Institute distracted me from writing. My longing for German education and German school had awakened. In 1914, the first story *The Fruit/Vegetable Garden Watchman* (Der Baschtanwächter). I got the inspiration from Ernst Schroll (Samuel Keller), 1915: *One does not Check the Mouth of a Gift Horse* (Einem geschenkten Gaul guckt man nicht ins Maul) a humoresque, the manuscript of which has



been lost. 1917—*Comrades Among Each Other* (Kameraden unter einander), story in several sequels, made public in the *Odessaer Zeitung*. Some dramas were also written at that time: *The Jealousies* (Die Neidische). Stage-play for children, performed in Arzis and Teplitz. *The Price Change* (Die Preisveränderung), in 3 acts, published in 1921 in the *Deutsche Zeitung Bessarabiens* as a story: (pseudonym: B. Zognitt). *Corrupted – Died* (Verdorben – gesterben), drama in 4 acts, performed in Arzis and in Gnadental (anniversary). Further stories: the story *The Confession* (Die Beichte), in the *Volkskalender—1923*, *Lise’s Curtains* (Lises Vorhänge), Christmas story in the *Deutsche Zeitung Bessarabiens*. In 1924: *The Way of John* (Der Johannesweg), in the *Heimatkalender—1925*. In 1929: *The Secret of the Stone Quarry* (Das Geheimnis der Steingrube), novel supplement of the *Deutsche Zeitung Bessarabiens*. In 1933: *The Egg Business* (Das Eiergeschäft), in the *Kalender—1934*. Various short stories, especially at Christmas, have often delighted our readership.

[Two Stories by Rudolf Weiß]

### **a) The Small Sailing Vessel (*Barke*) by Burnas**

Anyone who knows Bad Burnas knows her too. Like a good guard at the feet of his master, it lies about 40 meters [131.2 feet] from the shore, opposite the outskirts of the place. Only the snout peeks out of the water, sniffing and scouting, while its mighty body is hidden under the surface like an aquatic animal.

It is the favorite of the Spa guests. Mothers like to let their children bathe near her. For beginners in swimming, it is the goal of their aspiration and longing. Whoever reaches her for the first time achieves the best of his ability in swimming. The victor then proudly rises on her crown and lets himself be admired from the shore. In good weather, several human figures are constantly crouching on her planks. The small sailing vessel willingly takes everyone in and gives them a short rest. Never before has a bather or swimmer drowned near her.

However, the small sailing vessel also has its moods, which depend on the weather. In stormy weather, she suddenly becomes a wild animal. She then resembles the chained dog who, lying next to his master’s house, notices the approach of a strange man. She seems to want to rise from her place, where she is securely fastened. Sometimes her whole back is visible. She foams, she squirts geysers. And the higher the waves rise, the wilder she behaves. Steeple high, the foam then sprays up into the heights. The collision with the waves is like the distant thunder of cannons. Serious trouble to the one who dares to come near them! He is crushed like a little mussel shell!

The people then stand reverently on the shore and watch the activities of the small sailing vessel. A murmur then goes through the rows of spectators: The small sailing vessel fights; the small sailing vessel does her duty. But what sense do these words have in relation to a dead object? What is the purpose of the struggling of the small sailing vessel with the great army of waves?

Oh, the faithful small sailing vessel knows well what she is doing. Her tireless struggle, which she has been waging for many years now, has a specific purpose. To note, the success of this

heroic struggle was particularly evident in the summer of 1930, which had followed a stormy spring.

“Burnas has no beach!” they suddenly said. The enemies of our German Spa triumphed: “Burnas is dead; Burnas is finished. Nobody travels to Burnas!” — That was the cry of victory. The slanderers were right, but only partially. In one place, except on the sandbank, a considerable strip of beach remained, wide enough to accommodate a few hundred bathers. And this only strip was opposite the small sailing vessel.

Then a light dawned on the inhabitants of Burnas. “The small sailing vessel saved our Spa. We owe the beach to the protection of the small sailing vessel!” was stated in general. There was no end to the praise for the small sailing vessel, and one almost went so far as to erect a monument to her on the beach.

The owners of Burnas are crafty. Soon they had reasoned ingeniously the following principle: “To save Burnas; to put a stop to the desire to conquer the sea; in order to protect not only the beach, but also the steep shore wall from the impact of the waves, so that it is not washed out and washed away, — you have to come to the aid of the small sailing vessel. You have to drive in a row of posts near the shore, which breaks the force of the waves.” Thought...Done...Since then, Burnas not only has a more beautiful beach than all other Spas every year, since then the shore has receded only very slowly, hardly noticeably.

Truly, the owners of Burnas and the many guests who seek pleasure and healing here every year have every reason to be grateful to the Burnas small sailing vessel.

But how did the rescuer get here? Who sank her here on the Black Sea beach? — Perhaps the most correct answer to this question is: she came on her own. She came at a time when there was no seaside resort in Burna.

It was in 1912. Where the sandbank begins, there was then a landing place for small sailing vessels, which were towed by larger ships, anchored here and loaded with grain. In stormy October of that year, another small sailing vessel was anchored here, and the tugboat sailed on. It took three days until the small sailing vessel was fully loaded. The tugboat could come immediately and haul her out. But then a storm arose. The small sailing vessel fought for hours against the house-high waves. But when the anchor chain broke, she was tossed back and forth like a sports ball on the surface of the sea.

Several people were on the vessel, several simple sailors, who were left by the ship’s crew to supervise it. The unfortunate people were preparing for inevitable death; for the end of the gruesome game was foreseeable. It did not last long, so the small sailing vessel was already stuck in the sand, and the waves rushed greedily over it.

The sailors were no longer seen. They found their death in the surging water. Who were they? Where was their homeland? No one knows today; no one knows their names; nobody—except the small sailing vessel with whom they are united in death.

An incident leads us to conclude that the sailors who died in the accident are also among the protectors of Burnas today. A couple of lovers went for a walk on the beach one late evening last summer. It may have been around the bewitching hour. Then they saw a figure in sailors' clothing scurrying back and forth in the pale moonlight on the beach, some distance in front of them: out of the water onto the beach and back again. It drew up, so it appeared, sand out of the surge and poured it onto the beach.

"Hello! Who's there?" the high-spirited young man called out, pulling his bride tighter to himself. Then the figure fell to the ground, so that it snapped like the crack of a whip and remained lying down. The lovers were terrified, and they hurried up the high bank with rapid steps. The next morning, a wooden pole was found on the beach, in the same place where the lovers claimed to have seen the sailor carrying sand. It was one of the posts that stand for protection against the waves not far from the shore. The stray pole was picked up and returned to its old place.

Since then, the posts in the water have been viewed with awe by visitors to the resort; for one sees in each and every one of them a dead sailor from the small sailing vessel stranded here.

### **b) How the Snow was Formed. A fairy tale.**

It was a long, long time ago. Autumn had come, and the sun drew back to the south in the usual way, so that its rays warmed the earth only weakly. The earth, which was annoyed every year about this infidelity of the sun, was once again quite dissatisfied.

"If only I could create the light for myself," she said, "I would not need this unreliable and conceited sun anymore. I could then feed my humans and animals myself; and my grasses and herbs would not have to die every year."

This was heard by the cunning clouds, which have always been the enemies of the sun, and which cover it as often as they can. "Dearest friend," they said flatteringly to the earth, "you know our resourceful art; we dispense the fertile rain, we enrich your children, the plants, with the morning drink in the form of dew. If you agree to renounce the old friendship of the unworthy sun, we will create a light for you that will completely replace the faint glow of the winter sun. We want to stop for you, even at this time, the hail that causes you much grief, which we send only when your friendship with the sun is the most intense."

"Agreed!", said the earth and was happy about the rapid fulfillment of her wish.

Thousands and thousands of tiny stars poured out of the clouds, all shining, and it was not long before the earth shone as if in full sunshine. People and animals looked at the wonder with squinting eyes. But what a strange phenomenon! All living beings soon hid in their hiding places and did not want to go to work anymore. The grasses and herbs had completely disappeared as they were covered and suffocated by the snow. Only the trees towered up as if seeking help.

It was then that the earth realized that it had been deceived by the clouds; for they had given her a light which shone but did not warm, yes—which increased the winter cold.

She became angry by this and called the wind, which threw the snow furiously back and forth, creating a tremendous snow drifting. When spring came, the earth restored the good relationship with the sun. However, as soon as the sun retreats to the far south, the clouds repeatedly make use of the right once granted to them by the earth and send down their bright but cold snow.

[Translation Ends]