

Karl Friedrich May

(The years 1842–1874)



Year	Biographic Notes	Residence
1842	<p>Carl May was born on Friday the 25th February 1842 at 10 PM, and baptized the next day at the Evangelic-Lutheran Church of St.Trinity [St. Trinitatis] in Ernstthal. The Godparents were master weaver Carl Gottlob Planer (1792–1859), Miss Chr. Friederike Esche (dates of birth and death unknown), and the apprentice smith Christian Friedrich Weissflog (1819–1894). He is the fifth child of the 32 years old weaver Heinrich August May and his 27 years old wife Christiane Wilhelmine, born Weise. There was a big misery in the household of the May's family - bitter poverty, many a time even hunger. From his four sisters born only the four-year old Auguste Wilhelmine was still alive.</p> <p>In this year there "was a very dry and hot summer. From the sowing time on there was no rain for six to seven weeks and almost the whole summer the weather brought no rain. General shortage of water appeared so that much of the grain could not be ground and consequently was only cut. ... Live stock suffered extremely and most cattle became emaciated and weak and had to be slaughtered. ..."</p>	Ernstthal, Niedergasse 122 (Karl-May-Haus)
1843	<p>Because of "lack of suitable cattle for slaughter [a] high price of the meat" came about."</p> <p>The situation of the "Weaver's misery" could be compared with the state of affairs at present in the developing countries - ideal conditions for diseases caused by lack of vitamins and infections; this will also be Karl May's fate.</p>	Ernstthal, Niedergasse 122

1844	<p>28th May: Karl May's sister Christiane Wilhelmine was born, the later Mrs. Schöne. In Hohenstein and Ernstthal great hunger is still present:</p> <p>"Yes there in fact happened recently cases here, that people, who were ashamed to beg, literally died from hunger. Because it is not so rare, particularly in families with many children, that often for many days there is not even a piece of bread to consume and a few potatoes cooked in jacket and eaten with salt often represent the only nourishment of these unfortunates. But in quite many families the potatoes are also gone, or are running short, and then is the full suffering from hunger and begging unavoidable ... It is indeed heartbreaking, to observe these pitiful unfortunates with pale and gaunt faces, with troubled deep sunk eyes, from which every spark of liveliness is extinguished, ... to drag themselves like shadows, ..."</p> <p>Lack of vitamin A was the most likely cause of Karl May's disturbed vision - (blindness in diminished light condition, hemeralopia). From now on he was heavily visually handicapped - the beginning of Xerophthalmia threatened his eyesight.</p>	Ernstthal, Niedergasse 122
1845	<p>Karl May's condition got worse: his eye lids are closed and swollen (Blepharitis), an inflammatory Blepharospasm follows. He could not open his eyes for prolonged periods of time. He is therefore blind and forgets to see. He could not remember later his previous visual impressions. Good doctors are out of reach financially, there was not yet any public health insurance in existence. May complains in his autobiography <i>Mein Leben und Streben [My Life and Aspirations]</i> about the 'ruinous quackery' to which he fell a victim. Most probably were his closed eye lids quite ineffectively treated with ointments and eye bandages: the so far small chance to see even though for a short time, was in this way fully undone.</p> <p><i>I could easily feel people and objects, to hear, also to smell; however that was not enough to imagine them in reality and form. I could have only guessed. How a person, a dog, a table looked, I did not know; I could have only made a picture in the inside of them, and such picture remained in my mind. When someone spoke I heard not his body but his soul. Not his outside but his inside came closer to me.</i></p> <p>Karl was in constant care of his grandmother Johanne Christiane May, the mother of his father. She left a deep impression on his way of thinking and the sensual world of the boy with her fairy tales romantic. The following months became the source of May's very rich phantasy.</p> <p>Moving into the house of a weaver Carl August Knobloch. On the 15th August starts a six months midwifery course for May's mother.</p>	Ernstthal, Marktplatz 183
1846	<p>13th February: May's mother sat for examinations in midwifery at the Surgical-Medical Academy (Kurländer Palais) in Dresden with an "excellent pass". The eyes of her blind boy were also successfully attended there by Professors Haase and Grenser - Karl May learned to see.</p> <p><i>For me there were only souls, nothing but souls. And so it stayed, even after I learned to see, from my youth on until the present day. This is the difference between myself and the others. This is the key to my books. This is the explanation to all, what is praiseworthy on me, and to all what is to blame in me. Only who was blind and who regained his sight again, and only who possesses such a deep founded and such a mighty</i></p>	Ernstthal, Marktplatz 183

	<p><i>inner world that he himself afterwards, when he could see again and for the rest of his life masters his whole external world, only he can identify with all what I planned, what I have done and what I wrote, and only he has the ability to criticise me, and noone else!</i></p> <p>Latest research points to it that in Dresden also the rickets, caused through lack of vitamin D, were treated succesfully. In regard to this May writes in his autobiography: <i>I learned to see and returned, as for the rest recovered as well, home.</i></p> <p>On the 19th March May's mother was engaged as a midwife by the Ernstthal council.</p>	
1847	<p>Karl May was torn away from the world of fairy tales of his grandmother. The rough education methods of his father shook May's psyche as from now:</p> <p><i>On the weaver's stool hung a three times twisted rope, which was leaving blue marks, and behind the oven was the well-known 'Johnny-the birch', especially feared by us children, because father was fond of soaking it before thrashing us in a big pot with warm water, to make it more elastic and painful.</i></p> <p>2nd June: His sister Ernestine Pauline was born.</p>	Ernstthal, Marktplatz 183
1848	<p>Easter: Karl May entered school. The classes in the Ernstthal primary school are overcrowded; one teacher had approximately 90 pupils to teach. What Karl did not learn there, his father hammered into him. The boy should have it better in life. In such way Karl was forced in the following years to read innumerable, partly scientific books, ordered by his father. The spare free time Karl spent with his godfather, the widely travelled master smith Christian Weißpflog, listening to his exotic tales.</p>	Ernstthal, Marktplatz 183
1849	<p>Karl May became a drummer boy with the 7th Militia company of Ernstthal, in which his father served as lance-corporal. His father exercised and drilled him in various war games.</p> <p>9th June: May's sister Karoline Wilhelmine was born, the later Mrs.Selbmann.</p>	Ernstthal, Marktplatz 183
1850	<p>Ferry's "Le Coureur des Bois" [Der Waldläufer] is published, which May twenty-nine years later reworked for young readers.</p>	Ernstthal, Marktplatz 183
1851	<p>Presumably in this year: moving into the house of master weaver Selbmann: Puppet theater in Ernstthal.</p> <p><i>Now came the day in which a world open to me, that never let me go loose again. The theater arrived. Even if only a quite ordinary, miserable puppet show, but nevertheless a theater. They performed in master weaver's house. The best places were three pennies, than two pennies, and the next one penny, children paid half. I was allowed to attend with my grandmother. This cost us fifteen Pfennigs for both of us. They performed: "The Miller's Rose or the Battle at Jena." My eyes burned; I was glowing inside. Puppets, puppets, puppets! However for me they were alive. [My Life and Aspirations, p.55.]</i></p> <p>7th April: Birth of a brother Heinrich Wilhelm; he died already a few months later on the 20th September. On the 30th November died Christiane Friederike Weise, May's grandmother on mother's side, 64 years old.</p>	Ernstthal, Marktplatz 185
1852	<p>16 August: May's sister Anna Henriette was born; she also died much too soon, a few weeks old, on the 4th September.</p>	Ernstthal, Marktplatz 185

1853	<p>The aggravating education mistake started by May's father, to hammer the "knowledge" into his son, may have in this year reached the first high point. Karl May writes in the so appropriately named chapter "Without Youth" in his autobiography:</p> <p><i>He brought all possible so called learning material together, without being able to make a choice or to set an orderly line to follow. He brought everything my way what he found. I had to read this or even to copy it, because he thought that in such way I could remember it better. What had I to go all through! Old prayer books, arithmetic books, biology writings, scientific treatises from which I did not understand one word. A German geography from the year 1802, over 500 pages thick, I had to transcribe in order to remember better the data. They of course were no longer valid! I sat whole days and half the nights long, to cram these useless, unnecessary stuff into my head. It was an overload and excessive load unparalleled. [My Life and Aspirations, p.53]</i></p>	Ernstthal, Marktplatz 185
1854	<p>Karl May is getting privately language tutoring, which he must finance himself. Twelve years old by now, he has to work as a skittle boy in the neighbouring Hohenstein in a pub Engelhardt - sometimes until midnight! There he hit upon the lending library: "Rinaldo Rinaldini, the Chief of Robbers" - "Himlo Himlini, the Chief of Robbers in Spain ..." - "Sallo Salini, the Most Formidable Chief of Robbers ...", are the names of his heroes who became his imaginary idols.</p> <p>5th May: Birth of his brother Karl Hermann, who dies already on the 15th August.</p>	Ernstthal, Marktplatz 185
1855	<p>3rd July: May's brother Karl Heinrich was born; this child also dies after a short time on the 30th October.</p>	Ernstthal, Marktplatz 185
1856	<p>Flight from reality!</p> <p><i>The book, which I read, had the title 'The Robber's Den in Sierra Morena or the Angel of All the Outcasts'. When father came home and then went to sleep, I got out of bed, sneaked away from the room and got dressed. Then I wrote a note: 'You don't have to work out your hands until they bleed; I am going to Spain, I bring help!' I put this note on the table, stuck a piece of dry bread into my pocket with a few pennies from my skittle job, went down the steps, opened the door, took once more a deep and sobbed breath, but quietly, quietly, so that noone could hear, and went then with subdued steps down the market place and the Niedergasse out, the Lungwitzer way, which led over Lichtenstein to Zwickau, towards Spain, into Spain, the land of noble robbers, who helped those in need. - - - [My Life and Aspirations, p.79]</i></p> <p>Karl did not go far, his worried father brought him home. <i>I have never felt more clearly as then, how he really loved me. [p.93]</i></p> <p>Palm Sunday, the 16th March: Karl May was confirmed.</p> <p>Michaelis. 29th September: He became a Proseminarist at the Teacher's Institute in Waldenburg.</p> <p><i>The lessons were cold, strong, hard. Any trace of poetry was missing. Instead of making one happy, to inspire, it repeed. The lessons in religion were such that one could not have become enthusiastic about them in the least. [p.95]</i></p> <p>On the 22nd November Emma Lina Pollmer was born, May's</p>	Ernstthal, Marktplatz 185 Waldenburg

	first wife, in Hohenstein; her mother died on the 4th December because of puerperal sepsis.	
1857	<p>Karl May fell in love with the fifteen year old Anna Preßler from Ernstthal. He composed words and wrote music for a love song, which he played for her on a guitar:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Away from you, I am with you And wherever you are, You are with me.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>To let go off you, this I can not do, 'cause you are my everything, you are the light of my life!</i></p> <p>21st November: May's sister Maria Lina was born; she died on the 13th December.</p>	Waldenburg
1858	<p>In July the sixteen year old Anna Preßler marries a shopkeeper Carl Hermann Zacharias, by whom she expects a child. The grief stays deep in Karl May, he will never get over it.</p> <p>May writes his first Indian story and sends it to the "Gartenlaube" magazine. Ernst Keil, the editor, rejects the - today lost - early work.</p>	Waldenburg
1859	In November May is on duty responsible for lightings at the Teacher's Institute in Waldenburg. At this opportunity he embezzles six candles, which he intends to use for a X-mas tree in the wretched parent's house. On the 21st and 22nd December this affair is investigated by the director of the Institute, Schütze.	Waldenburg
1860	<p>28th January: Expelled from the Teacher's Institute.</p> <p>4th March: May's sister Emma Maria is born; she died on the 5th August.</p> <p>6th March: Supported by Ernstthal parish priest Schmidt, May submits a plea for mercy to the Saxonian Ministry of Education. The director of the Institute Schuetze, who in the meantime regrets his harshness, supplies a positive recommendation.</p> <p>4th June: May is allowed to continue with his education at the Teacher's Institute in Plauen. There he suffers, as many of his school mates do, from the spying system of the school directors; they are interested in the intimate sexual life of the students.</p>	Ernstthal, Marktplatz 185 Plauen
1861	<p>9th, 10th. and 12th September: May completed his final examinations.</p> <p>13th September: His leaving certificate had the final mark "passed".</p> <p>May is active as a temporary teacher only from 7th October until 19th October in Glauchau. It came to a jealousy scene with his room landlord Ernst Theodor Meinhold. The businessman surprised May, as he kissed his nineteen-year old wife Henriette, whom he was giving piano lessons. Meinhold reported this romance to the superintendent Carl Wilhelm Otto - Karl May was dismissed on the spot.</p> <p>His next teacher's position became May's undoing. In Altchemnitz, where he worked from 6th November as a</p>	Plauen Glauchau Altchemnitz Ernstthal,

	<p>factory teacher at the Firma Solbrig, he had to share his living quarters, a room and a bedroom, with their book-keeper Julius Hermann Scheunpflug.</p> <p><i>He had until now both this to himself; and now I was to lodge with him ... Because of that he lost his comfort ... He got from his parents a new pocket watch. The old one, which he now no longer needed, hung unused on a nail on the wall. It was worth at the most twenty marks. He offered it to me to buy, because I had none; however I declined, because if I wanted to buy sometime a watch, it would have to be a new, better one. Of course this was far in the future, as I had to pay off first my debts. Now he himself made a proposal to me to take his old watch, when I go to school, as I was obliged to be punctual. I agreed and was thankful to him for that. At the beginning I hang the watch, as soon as I came back from school, immediately back on the nail. Later it was postponed for a while; I kept it for hours in my pocket, because to show all the time, that it does not belong to me, seemed to me not diligent, but ridiculous. In the end I took it even when I went out and hung it only in the evening, after I came home, in its place and position. A really friendly or even cordial relation never eventuated between us. He tolerated me because he had to and let me from time to time deliberately notice, that he does not like sharing the flat. [Life, p.103f.]</i></p> <p>The X-mas holiday started. On the 24th December May hurries directly from school to the railway station and travels home; he takes the watch with him. There he is arrested. He is supposed to have stolen the watch, a tobacco pipe and a cigaret holder from his flat mate. May is dismayed:</p> <p>"I started foolishly to deny the possession of the watch; however it was found after a search. So the lie destroyed me instead of saving me; that she does every time; I was a - - - thief!" [p.107]</p> <p>May's description is credible. Through the intrigue of the book-keeper innocent in custody - professional career ruined! This 'event had an effect on me like a blow, like a blow on the head, under which force one breaks down. And I collapsed!" [p.109]</p>	Marktplatz 185
1862	<p>May was most probably - the proceedings have not survived - sentenced because of "unlawful use of someone else's possession" according to Art. 330, Abs. 3, [German Law]. The highest punishment was imposed: six weeks imprisonment. Clemency petition was refused.</p> <p>From the 8th September till the 20th October: Stay in prison at Chemnitz.</p> <p>According to the present interpretation of law May would not have been imprisoned. This fatal blow resulted in permanent ban on becoming a teacher.</p> <p>6th December: May was called for military service examination and found "unfit for service".</p>	Ernstthal, Marktplatz 185
1863	<p>May performed at "music - poetic evening entertainments" in Ernstthal. His living he made by private tutoring. On the 12th February he was reported because of this to the teacher's college; the school inspection found out about this through a letter of Ernstthaler's priest Schmidt from 20st March.</p> <p>20th June: May's name was removed from the list of the Saxonian teacher's candidates. To give private lessons was explicitly forbidden to him. His civilian existence was destined</p>	Ernstthal, Marktplatz 185

to fail.

It was as if I had brought home from the prison cell in which I spent six long weeks, a whole crowd of invisible criminal characters, who made it their business to settle down with me and make me one of them. I did not see them; I saw only the darkest, sneering main figure from the domestic swamp and from Hohenstein's trash novels; they talked to me, they influenced me. And when I struggled against, they became louder to stun and wear me out, in order to loose my strength to resist. The main idea was for me to take revenge, revenge on the owner of the watch who reported me, only to get me out from his flat, revenge on the Police, revenge on the judge, revenge on the Government, on humankind,altogether on everyone! I was an exemplary person, white, pure and innocent like a lamb. The world cheated me out of my future, my life happiness. How? By remaining what they have made out of me, namely a criminal.

This was what the tempters inside me asked me to do ... I resisted as much as I could, as far as my strength lasted. I gave to all, what I wrote at that time, in particular to my village stories, an ethical, a strongly law abiding, a faithful-to-king tendency. I did that to prop up not only others, but also myself. But how hard, how endlessly hard it was for me! When I did not do as the loud voices inside me asked to do, I was overwhelmed from them by scornful laughter, by swearing and curses, lasting not only for hours, but for half days and whole nights long. I jumped from my bed, to escape these voices, and ran out into the rain and snowstorm. [Life, p.117f.]

That May really suffered from considerable psychological disturbances, ran out at night in the rain, shows his from that time originating poem:

*Do you know the Night, descending on Earth,
With hollow wind and heavy deluge;
Thick Night, through which starshine is given no berth,
No eyes see through the weather's dense wall?
Even if this Night is gloom, in morning there is refuge;
O lie down in rest and sleep without fear!*

*Do you know the Night, descending on Life,
When Death tracks you down in your last camp;
The call of eternity sounding close by,
And fear stops still your heart's pulsing call?
Even if this Night is gloom, in morning there is a refuge;
O lie down in rest and sleep without fear!*

*Do you know the Night descending on your Mind,
Which cries in vain, Salvation!
Night's serpent slithers into memory
And a thousand demons spit in your brain?
O keep away in sleepless consternation,
Because this is The Night that has no morning!*

At first May struggles successfully against these "thousand devils". He writes for the Ernstthal's choir "Lyra" a whole series of his own musical pieces.

1864	<p>May is registered to stay in Nausnitz near Dresden. Nothing is known about this time. In the second half of the year he most probably trails a theater group through Saxony and maintains as well amorous relationship with a ballerina from the theater - and ballet group H. Jerwitz from Leipzig. Nearly 21 months passed since May's six-week detention in Chemnitz. Now he lost his composure:</p> <p><i>This night [in my soul] was not completely dark, it had twilight. And strangely it reached only the soul, but not the spirit. I was sick in my soul, but not in my mind. I had the capability to reach logical conclusions, to solve every mathematical problem. I had the most acute insight into all what was outside myself, but as soon as this came close, to enter into a relation, the understanding ceased. I was not in a position to look at myself, to understand myself, to guide myself and to manage. [Life, p.111]</i></p> <p>The "thousand devils" led Karl May on the 9th July to Penig. There he called himself "Dr. med. Heilig", "Eye doctor" and "previously with the military" from Rochlitz. He had pieces of clothing made to measure and disappeared without paying. Before that he wrote a prescription in Latin for a young man with sore eyes.</p> <p>16th December: In Chemnitz May emerges as "Seminary teacher Ferdinand Lohse" and rents in a hotel "Zu goldener Anker" two interconnected rooms. There he had delivered various ladies furcoats. He takes them into the next room to a "sick Director" and disappears then with the furs.</p>	Naußlitz near Dresden
1865	<p>28th February: In Gohlis May lives at a steelworker Schule. On the 20th March he looks up, as "Coppersmith Hermes" the Godfather of thieves and merchants, the furrier Friedrich Erler and relieves him from a castor fur. A day later May pawns the fur with an unsuspecting broker in Leihhaus. During an attempt to collect the proceeds May was seized on the 26th March in Rosenthal, a park area between Gohlis and Leipzig, when a hatchet "under his jacket was seen to glitter."</p> <p>At the office room he is "quite motionless and apparantly lifeless and also, after the Police doctor was called in, he did not speak." Such an apathy recorded on files makes one think! Some time passed until May reacted to talking to and confessed all.</p> <p>8th June: Karl May was sentenced by district court in Leipzig "because of repeated frauds" to four years and one month in penitentiary. On the 14th June he was delivered to the prison "Schloß Osterstein". May is now a prisoner "No. 171". He was detailed to an office, failed however such duties because of psychological weakness.</p> <p>19th September: May's fairy-tales-story grandmother dies 85 years old.</p>	Gohlis Zwickau, Schloß Osterstein
1866	May is detailed to making money- and cigar wallets.	Zwickau, Schloß Osterstein
1867	The supervisor Friedrich Göhler discovers May's music talent. May advances to trombone player and becomes a member of the prisoner's church chorus. Presumably towards the end of the year he is named a "special clerk" to the Inspector Kreil and transferred into an isolation block. The voluminous prison's library changes his <i>imprisonment time into a study time.</i>	Zwickau, Schloß Osterstein

1868	<p>Literary draft appears: the Repertorium C. May. 2nd November: May is, because of good behaviour, "as the result of the very most clemency", released from jail 253 days earlier than originally anticipated - with a certificate of trustworthiness. At home he finds out about the death of his fairy-tales-story grandmother. This news disturbs again his psychological equilibrium.</p> <p><i>The previous suffering started again, the previous torture, the previous struggle with incomprehensible forces, which were even more dangerous as I could absolutely not discover, if they were parts of myself or not. ... they demanded as before, that I should take revenge. Now even with a right to revenge myself, for the lost, precious time in jail!</i> [Life, p.157]</p> <p>May tries to escape these "incomprehensible forces". He writes for the Dresden's publisher Münchmeyer some texts which today are lost.</p>	<p>Zwickau, Schloß Osterstein</p> <p>Ernstthal, Marktplatz 185</p>
1869	<p>About the beginning of the year May gets to know a housemaid Auguste Gräßler from Raschau. From this acquaintance develops a love affair.</p> <p>On the 29th March May conducts a search in Wiederau as a "Police lieutenant from Wolframsdorf at Leipzig" at shopkeeper's Carl Reimann premises for counterfeit money. Allegedly finding some, he takes Reiman for "Interrogation" to an inn and disappears then without a trace.</p> <p>10th April: May searches again for counterfeit money at the house of a rope-maker Krause in Ponitz. The action fails. May gains a standoff with an unloaded double barreled pocket pistol and resorts to "flight across a field." He keeps always disguised and wears false beards. In Ernstthal he gives the impression that he emigrated to America.</p> <p>From the 3rd May to the 5th May he is in Jöhstadt; there he visits in the evening of 3rd May the theater.</p> <p>Whitsuntide, 16-17th May: In Schwarzenberg May meets for the last time his sweetheart Ausguste Gräßler. On the 27/28th May makes the Eisenhöhle [a cave in the forest], north from Hohenstein, his place where he stays. With a pram (!) he transports odd objects in there, which he was supposed to steal from his godfather Weißpflog.</p> <p>31st. May: In Limbach May takes a set of billiard balls from the restaurant of Victor Reinhard Wünschmann and departs to Chemnitz to sell them, however this failed due to alertness of two policemen.</p> <p>3./4th June: In a stable in Bräunsdorf May steals from the owner of the inn Schreier a horse together with a snaffle, riding crop and neck straps; then he rides off. A few hours later his attempt to sell the horse to a slaughterman fails.</p> <p>15th June: In Mülsen St. Jacob May puts an appearance as the "Deputy of the lawyer Dr. Schaffrath in Dresden" and entices the baker Wappler to go to Glachau in a matter of inheritance. Meanwhile May introduces himself to his wife who stayed home as a Policeman and confiscates 28 Talers as "counterfeit money."</p> <p>At the end of June May steals from the bowling alley of the restaurant Engelhardt in Hohenstein a towel and a cigar pipe. On the 2nd July, at night at 3 AM, he is discovered there sleeping and "after a short struggle" overpowered and taken to jail in Wiederau.</p> <p>5th and 15th July: Confrontations at Wiederau and Mülsen St.Jacob. 26th July: On the way to a further confrontation at</p>	<p>Ernstthal, Marktplatz 185</p> <p>Eisenhöhle</p>

	<p>Braeunsdorf May escapes his guard ; he should have broken his "iron handcuffs." Despite a big search action in the forests of Hohenstein on the 6th and 7th August May stays at large.</p> <p>In late summer he emerges in Siegeldorf by Halle. He introduces himself as "Writer Heichel from Dresden", later as the "natural son of the Prince von Waldenburg", and meets the housekeeper Malwine Wadenbach, whom he might have known from before. Further May's presence is known at Ellersleben, Plößnitz and Coburg.</p>	
1870	<p>4th January: At Niederalgersdorf (Bohemia) May is seized as a tramp in a barn. He calls himself "Albin Wadenbach", landowner from Orby on the island of Martinique, West Indies. A photograph had him convicted.</p> <p>14th March: May is brought into jail at Mittweida. On the 13th April he is sentenced by the district court at Mittweida: "by him deserved, because of simple and cunning thefts, frauds, and frauds under aggravating circumstances, also for repeated unlawful theft and falsification, in due consideration of him being a habitual offender, sentenced to a jail term of 4 years and repayment of the investigation expenses."</p> <p>As the respected legal expert Professor Dr. Claus Roxin established, it could not be excluded, "that May suffered from disturbances of consciousness, which would exclude his criminal responsibility in the sense of paragraph 51 StGB [German Law] or at least considerably decrease his responsibility." [Karl May: Criminal Law and Literature, Tübingen 1997, p.47.]</p> <p>Following a medical study by Dr. William E. Thomas, an Australian physician, May suffered from <u>Dissociative Identity Disorder</u> and was therefore not legally responsible for his actions.</p> <p>The psychiatrist and neurologist Edgar Bayer (from a clinic in Guenzburg) made an assumption of an "asocial personality disorder" during the drifting period in May's life, resulting therefore in a diminished responsibility.</p> <p>Whatever the emotional state of Karl May could have been, the damage which May caused by his offences, reached altogether not even 1000 (one thousand) Marks. "May had later, when he earned money, given away to the needy many thousands Marks, and also earnings and income from his books was left to a Foundation for writers with no monetary means. Also the honest content," as Claus Roxin points out, "of his books as a basic thought - does not correspond with the previous accusation.</p> <p>3rd May: Commencement of jail term in penitentiary Waldheim. May is now a prisoner "No. 402" and comes into isolation. At least for 13 hours daily he works as a cigar maker. Probably at first "No. 402" does not fulfil his work assignment, as he is presumably because of this disciplinary punished by reduced pay.</p>	<p>Bohemia</p> <p>Mittweida</p> <p>Waldheim</p>
1871	<p>A literary work by May is according to the prison rules at Waldheim fully excluded! "Writing material will be granted to the prisoners in each individual case in the necessary quantity by the Institution on receiving of payment, as will the envelope, in which every letter must be included. To bring more writing material is forbidden. Every prisoner has to return back so much paper as he was given, written on or clear, as well as ink and pencils." [Paragraph 50]</p>	<p>Waldheim</p>

	Indications for a prison's psychosis of May in connection with his term in isolation, as mentioned occasionally in the secondary literature, do not exist. Such an event would have to resemble in his works; this however is not the case. May suffered not from the isolation, it was to him even pleasant.	
1872	The prison's catechist Johannes Kochta became May's fatherly friend. Meeting with Catholics left in May a lasting impression; he discovered himself. 29th April: May's 25 year old sister Ernestine Pauline dies in Ernstthal.	Waldheim
1873	Even if a Lutheran, May plays the organ at Catholic mass-services.	Waldheim
1874	May is until the beginning of March occupied in the prison library. 2nd May: Release from prison. May is put for the next two years under Police supervision. Reflections in his later writings point at him working at first as a blacksmith's helper at his Godfather Weißpflog. In summer he writes <i>Die Rose von Ernstthal</i> .	Waldheim Ernstthal, Marktplatz 185

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