

MARTINA FREY

*An extraordinary
daughter*




DRYAS

barns, along a small slope up to the church. At the highest point, two major roads crossed. Moritz knew that these roads had already been used by the Romans. Almost forty years ago, Napoleon's armies had also marched along.

Strolling strolled along the street, Moritz finally stopped at a two-story house with white plaster. Recently, his father, an independent physician from Wiesbaden, had this house built in Holzhausen with ducal permission. The hipped roof was covered with slate. A high entrance with a small gable and bright stone pillars on its sides decorated the front of the building. The windows featured blue wooden shutters, closed in the evening. The house seemed simple in its design, but in Moritz'

opinion it wasn't really part of the rural scene. Through the open windows, he heard someone playing the pianoforte.

That had to be his sister, Eugenia, who sat at this instrument every day to improve her dexterity. Moritz entered the house and went into the living room, where he found his sister as expected.

Eugenia Hentschel was sitting upright in front of the instrument and was playing a few short pieces without showing any passion or great pleasure. She wore a crimson gown, embellished with white laces to the tight short sleeves as well as to the high-cut neckline. The usual corset emphasized her slim waist. Moritz suspected that it must have been rather uncomfortable to sit on the bench so laced in. Eugenia's

hair was tied to a neck knot. While the fingers were flying over the keys, corkscrew curls were bobbing up and down at her temples and framed a full, perfect face. The lowered eyes were hidden under thick lashes, while Eugenia was concentrating on the piece of music.

Suddenly the intensive playing ceased.

"I hate it!" she said quietly with a suppressed tone of weariness.

Moritz got closer. "I like the piece." "I don't mean the music." Eugenia stared unhappily at the keys.

To check whether his walk had left stains, Moritz looked down at his bright pantaloons, which were in pleats at the waist and reached down to the floor and even covered the black shoes. But everything was all right. Pleased with

himself, he sat down next to his sister on the bench and watched her grumpy face from the side. "You are exaggerating," he said.

The corkscrew curls swirled around when Eugenia shook her head. "I do not. Have you looked at this village? Half-ruined houses, people in rags, who are even thinner than the straying dogs in Wiesbaden." She turned to her brother. The pale rays of the spring sun fell through the high windows and got caught in her hair, which was shimmering golden at this moment.

Moritz laughed, forbearing with his sister's bad mood. "Even Goethe raved about the Taunus. It is picturesque. You overpeer the meadows and forests and you can think up romantic stories in the

country.

"Pah! Stories about girls becoming frustrated in the country."

He pushed her gently in the side. "You are unjust. You know why we have moved to the country. Mother is already feeling better."

Eugenia looked remorsefully aside. Her brother's words obviously caused her feelings of guilt. The change of her mother was obvious. Moritz thought that her condition had substantially improved within the last weeks. Color had returned to the usually pale face and mother seemed more active, so as if the calmness, which seemed boring to Eugenia, did her good.

"Yes, that is true." She sighed. "I am unfair. Even the few weeks here have