

The Path: The Story of a Flight to Freedom by Rüdiger Bertram
German Text: *Der Pfad - Die Geschichte einer Flucht in die Freiheit*, Rüdiger Bertram
©2017 by cbj Verlag, a division of Penguin Random House Verlagsgruppe
English text copyright: Claire Storey claire@cslanguages.co.uk

The Path: The Story of a Flight to Freedom ***(Der Pfad: Die Geschichte einer Flucht in die Freiheit)***

by Rüdiger Bertram, cbt Verlag, part of Random House (2017), 231 pp.

Target age group: 12+

Genre: Historical adventure

Story: *The Path* is a thrilling, fast-paced historical adventure following the journey of Rolf and his father Ludwig – a journalist fleeing Nazi Germany – as they place their lives in the hands of Manuel, a Spanish shepherd boy, to cross the Pyrenees on foot. Once they reach Spain, Rolf and his father plan continue their journey to meet Rolf’s mother in America. But when Ludwig is captured en route, the two boys have to continue their journey alone. Along the way they’ll have brushes with Nazi officers, wild bears and they’ll encounter resistance fighters on both sides of the Spanish border.

Extra Information: The film adaptation of *The Path* was released in Germany in February 2022.

Interested publishers can contact: Foreign Rights contact at PRH Leah Francis:
leah.francis@penguinrandomhouse.de

Translation funding: This book was featured on [New Books in German](#) and therefore has guaranteed funding from the [Goethe Institut](#).

Claire Storey translates from German and Spanish and is co-editor of World Kid Lit. She received funding from Arts Council England in 2021 as part of their Developing Your Creative Practice programme. claire@cslanguages.co.uk @ClaireStorey16 on Twitter

SAMPLE TRANSLATION

The Path: The Story of a Flight to Freedom
by Rüdiger Bertram, translated by Claire Storey

“Who are they?” whispered Rolf’s father, Ludwig.

Instead of replying, Manuel pointed down to the gravel track below them. A military truck rolled into view from the right and stopped a few metres further on. Two officers climbed out

The Path: The Story of a Flight to Freedom by Rüdiger Bertram
German Text: Der Pfad - Die Geschichte einer Flucht in die Freiheit, Rüdiger Bertram
©2017 by cbj Verlag, a division of Penguin Random House Verlagsgruppe
English text copyright: Claire Storey claire@cslanguages.co.uk

of the cab and six soldiers jumped out the back. All eight were armed and wearing German uniforms. The men were too far away for Rolf and Ludwig to hear what was being said from their hiding spot up the hill. Both officers kept gesturing up the hillside, towards the path Rolf, Ludwig and Manuel had just been walking along.

Rolf, Ludwig and Manuel pressed themselves into the ground so the soldiers below couldn't see them. Rolf thought he could feel his father's heartbeat, as if it were being transmitted through the ground to him. It was nonsense, of course – Rolf knew that much; it was his own heart, beating like a hammer.

The soldiers spread out into a broad column and set off up the slope. They moved slowly, as if they had all the time in the world. The officers walked on either side of the group and had to shout to be heard.

“There's no one here. Let's keep going. It's too steep!” called one of the officers.

“Someone was here though,” the other replied. He had reached the path and knelt down to inspect the tracks that Rolf, Ludwig and Manuel had left behind in their haste.

“They're speaking German,” whispered Rolf.

“It's nice to meet our fellow countrymen when we're abroad, isn't it?” joked Ludwig, trying to make light of his own fear.

“Shhhh!” hushed Manuel, without taking his eyes off the soldiers.

The officer who had been kneeling on the ground picked up his binoculars and scoured the hillside with them. Ludwig and Manuel pressed themselves even further into the ground and Rolf tightened his grip on Adi's muzzle.

“It's just some wild goats. Come on, let's turn back.”

“But there are tracks. Someone was here,” his comrade insisted. “We have to go up.”

“Of course there are footprints on the path. But only from espadrilles. It'll be a couple of Spanish smugglers,” answered the other. “We're not interested in them. You show me the footprint of a Berlin brogue and I'll follow you anywhere to catch the chap. But this? Come on, let's go back. It's lunchtime.”

A startled rabbit flew out of one of the burrows and raced off, zigzagging up the hillside. The two officers watched it and laughed. One of them raised his rifle and shot at the rabbit, missing it. The bullet hit the ground a few metres from the animal.

“Didn't I say so? There're animals out here. No wonder there are tracks everywhere.”

The Path: The Story of a Flight to Freedom by Rüdiger Bertram
German Text: Der Pfad - Die Geschichte einer Flucht in die Freiheit, Rüdiger Bertram
©2017 by cbj Verlag, a division of Penguin Random House Verlagsgruppe
English text copyright: Claire Storey claire@cslanguages.co.uk

“You’re probably right. Let’s go then,” conceded the officer with the binoculars, and ordered his soldiers back to the truck.

Ludwig smiled at his son, relieved, and Rolf relaxed his grip on Adi. At that very same moment, a second rabbit shot past their hiding place. The terrier broke free and tore after it, barking loudly.

“Adi, sta...” shouted Rolf, but Ludwig had already clapped his hand over his son’s mouth.

Too late.

The German soldiers had already begun their descent, but at this, they turned around. Two of the men raised their weapons and fired at the dog who was still haring across the hillside after the rabbit; he wasn’t going to catch it. The bullets struck the ground to the left and right of Adi, but still didn’t hit their target. The terrier disappeared between two bushes. They could still hear his bark, but it was getting more and more distant, before it completely faded away.

The two officers were now in agreement: there was somebody up there – the dog must belong to someone! They gathered their soldiers, reformed into a line and once again began to climb. This time, they had their rifles and pistols ready and trained on the bush from which the terrier had come.

Manuel swore quietly in Spanish and Rolf whimpered noiselessly; his father’s hand was still clamped over his mouth. With his free hand, Ludwig reached into the inside pocket of his jacket and pulled out an envelope.

“Here is our boat ticket and the visas we need. Take it and keep going. I’ll follow after you.” Ludwig let go of Rolf and thrust the envelope into his hand.

“But...” sobbed Rolf.”

“Do as I say!” interrupted Ludwig. “I’ll follow after you. I promise!”

Ludwig reached into his pocket a second time and pulled out the tube of toothpaste.

“And make sure you brush your teeth. Understand?”

Ludwig pulled his son tight to his chest and repeated his words in Rolf’s ear, emphasising each syllable. “I’ll follow after you.”

Then he turned to Manuel whose gaze flicked between the father and his son and the approaching soldiers. The officers and their men were now only about seventy metres from their hiding place.

“Take him to Spain. Promise me!” begged Ludwig.

The Path: The Story of a Flight to Freedom by Rüdiger Bertram
German Text: Der Pfad - Die Geschichte einer Flucht in die Freiheit, Rüdiger Bertram
©2017 by cbj Verlag, a division of Penguin Random House Verlagsgruppe
English text copyright: Claire Storey claire@cslanguages.co.uk

Manuel nodded.

“Thank you,” whispered Ludwig. Then he stood up, raised his hands, and walked towards the soldiers.