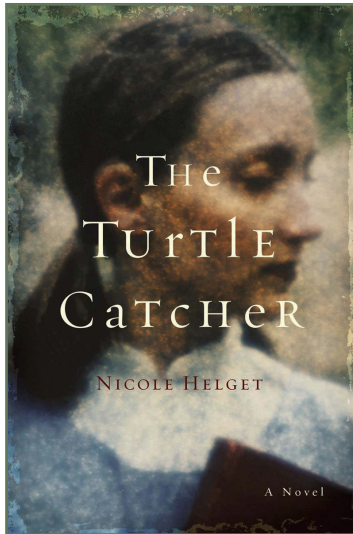


MEET THE CHARACTERS

of
THE
TURTLE
CATCHER



NEW GERMANY, MINNESOTA

Between the World Wars, many German American pioneers lived a life of dual allegiances. To the Motherland and their history. To their new country and their future. New Germany, Minnesota is a fictitious town going through the growing pains of early establishment and identity at the outset of the 20th century. When the German Americans living there are faced with war, with censorship, with bully tactic assimilation, conflicts are inflamed and battle lines are drawn.

LIESEL

The only daughter in a brood of five Richter children, Liesel is the odd one out. It doesn't help that she's rejected by her family, that she's hiding a secret about her body, and that she's naturally shy and has a predilection for more intellectual pursuits than her environment can offer. When she decides to make Lester, the local "slow" boy and resident turtle catcher, the object of her pent-up desire, the plan goes wildly awry when her brothers find out and force Lester's suicide. She needs to be redeemed.

LESTER

He's not right. He's slow. He's soft in the head. He's an idiot, a knave, a fool. Simple judgment of Lester Sutter renders him a sad case. But Liesel befriends this simple man, and upon a more complex examination of him, finds him to have a large heart and a virtuous will. Lester catches turtles for Liesel, and then he catches her attention. He pays with his life for Liesel's desire. His ghost haunts.

MAGDALENA RICHTER

As a young girl in war-clobbered Germany, Magdalena falls in love with a Jewish boy who impregnates her with his child. Social pressures make a consummation of the relationship impossible, and Magdalena sees immigration to America as her best of a poor selection of options. There she meets Wilhelm Richter and fools him into a quick marriage and belief that he is the father of Magdalena's true love's child. What follows for her in America can only be a life of hardship and dead yearning.

WILHELM RICHTER

His folks murdered by American natives when he was but a boy, Wilhelm Richter sets out to make his own family and legacy. When Maggie Richter happens along, fresh off the boat from Germany, the land of Wilhelm's forefathers, Wilhelm is smitten and resolved to make her his. What he doesn't understand is that Magdalena loves another, far away, and that he can never have her heart. Somewhat ignorantly, he sets himself to the task of acquiring land and working the land with his wealth of sons. When Magdalena dies, he is tenderer to her memory than he could have ever been to her person.

THE RICHTER BROTHERS

Benjamin, Herman, Luther, and Otto, the brothers of Liesel, the sons of Magdalena and Wilhelm. Benjamin is the unknowing offspring of his mother's Jewish lover back in Germany, and the thinker of the bunch. Herman is the leader, a burgeoning intellectual whose temper and recklessness keep getting in the way. Luther is the beautiful one, completely wrapped up in vanity but almost superhuman in his strength, baseball-playing ability, and overconfidence. Otto is the baby of the family, a listener and a hope for the future of the family.

The Richters Brothers' Girlfriends – Betty Mathiowitz is the grade school crush of Herman Richter, and the daughter of a doctor. Wise and industrious, she lightens the loads of Herman and his sister Liesel. Pernilla Sutter is a minx-like beauty borne of the Sutter line. Abused by her wicked father, the fiery Pernilla, when she's not beset by hand-raising the tumultuous Sutter litter, dedicates herself to learning sensual tricks to practice on the boys of New Germany, though she only has eyes, truly, for the beautiful Luther Richter. Sonnen Mueller is the girlfriend and future wife of Benjamin Richter, and they start a family that will ultimately save lives.

ARCHIE AND FRIEDA

Archie, the local newspaperman of the German publication *Deutsch Chronik* which reports news from the old country and the new to the residents of New Germany, is a loyalist. He marries Frieda, sister of Magdalena, soon after the girls' arrival from Germany, and spurs the town's pride in their history. Frieda is a woman's rights activist before her time, and an occasional provider of literature and gateway to an intellectual life for her niece Liesel.

HARALD SUTTER

The local leader of the Watchdogs of Loyalty, a group commissioned to stamp out German sympathizers, Harald Sutter has ways of getting what he wants, and those ways are usually down and dirty. The dictator of a house of warring little fledglings who despise their father, as well as Lester, the Turtle Catcher, and Pernilla, Sutter is the thorn in the Richter family's side. He's hungry for power, hungry for violence, and ill-equipped to run a fair operation of anything.

COMMISSION OF PUBLIC SAFETY OF MINNESOTA

Feelings of anti-German sentiment ran rampant through the United States after World War I, and these feelings did not preclude the state of Minnesota, historically viewed as a progressive state. The historically accurate Commission of Public Safety was created to root out all German sympathizers and others viewed as "unpatriotic" to America's cause, and what disappeared as a result was due process and allegiance to laws of privacy, fairness, and support of the many cultures that America would come to promote later in its nationhood. The fictitious John Patterson, a blowhard of epic proportions, leads the Commission's charge.

PHILIPPE LEROUCHE

As a Frenchman fighting for America in the The Great War, LeRoche befriends Herman Richter. A mapmaker, artist, and adroit purveyor of women, LeRoche gets the idea that he will, after the war, travel to New Germany to wed Herman's sister Liesel, whom he has seen only in a photograph.