

MICHELLE KRABINZ

# DRIVING MADNESS



**Michelle Krabinz** was born in Cologne in 1994 and has been drawn towards the art of writing since her early years of puberty. Even though she wrote a lot of short stories and fairy tales, she never thought about becoming a professional writer until she was in her early twenties.

Since then she has discovered not only a love for all kinds of art, but also the wish to share her numerous stories and fantastic worlds with other people.

“Driving Madness” is her first novel which is written in English and was partly written during her two months travel through the United Kingdom. But even though she has fallen in love with the Scottish landscape, the story is placed in a small town in Germany – so don’t be surprised that people are driving on the right side of the road.

Michelle Krabinz would also like to add that this is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents either are the product of the author’s imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events or localities is entirely coincidental.

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*For Jörg and Sabine,  
who always made me feel safe  
when I got into a car*

## **New girl in town**

“Did you already hear about her?”

“About whom?”

I turned away from my car to face the guy who was currently trying to fix the engine.

“About this freak they let out of the nut house?”

“There are many freaks getting in and out of madhouses everyday - and even more walking around, not being caught. Which one are you talking about?”

“The girl who went nuts in one of her driving lessons and killed her own driving instructor.”

Sam cast a meaningful look into my direction and my eyes flickered to the sign on the top of my school car. *Just because I am a driving instructor doesn't mean that every lunatic in the world will be coming for me ...*

“So what? Has she declared that I will be next or why are you telling me this like it is the most important thing in the world?”

Sam eyed me with a disapproving look. I could guess that he had hoped for a bit more concern on my part.

“She hasn't 'declared' anything yet. They just let her out a week ago. But I've heard some rumours that she and her lone mother will be moving into our town.”

My eyebrows showed a little bit of astonishment and Sam acknowledged it with an approving nod.

“Yes, you've heard right. It's nothing official of course, but a friend of mine knows the mayor of the town where she was locked up and it's been said that he gave our own mayor a little warning about her.”

I contracted my brows and tried to cope with this new information. *If it's true ... Yeah, what then? They won't just*

*let her drive like that, right? She might never be allowed to touch the steering wheel of a car ever again ...*

“Well, thanks for the notice,” I finally answered and turned my concentration back on the engine of my car.

In the back of my head my brain still tried to understand what this information might mean for me and the driving school of my father. He had been a driving instructor as long as I could remember and I bet that he had already heard about this, too. *Maybe he just didn't tell me, because it's not a fact yet. Why should he bother to worry me with uncertainties ...?*

The part of my brain that was watching Sam noticed that he had now finished his work and was signalling me to start the engine, so that he might see if everything was back to normal again.

When he was satisfied that everything worked, I followed him into the little shop and tried to ignore the curiosity that was building up in my mind. When I had paid and waved goodbye, I drove home as quickly as I could without crossing any speed limits. The black Merc of my father was standing in the garage as always and I repeatedly told myself that everything was just as normal as ever. Still my heartbeat refused to calm down and I opened the front door with the brooding feeling of awakening disaster.

“Dad? Are you home?”

The call was unnecessary – *where else would he be while his car is here?* – but I still sighed in relief as I heard his familiar high voice sounding out of the living room.

“I'm here, son. Did you stop by at Sam's place like I told you?”

“Yes, I did,” I answered while I took off my jacket and boots and finally stepped into the living room. “He repaired it within a few minutes. Just a loose cable in the engine.”

“I see.”

The grey haired head turned towards me as I stepped into the room and the light blue eyes gave me a scrutinizing

look. I had always hated it when he watched me like this – up to my twentieth birthday I felt guilty at all times, even if I wasn't – but now I looked into the old eyes with gratitude and actually felt happy to witness this attitude of his once more.

*Like I am going to die any second ... Absolutely stupid!*

"Is everything all right, son? You look a bit worried."

Observing as always. But today I loved him for it.

"Actually, I am a bit confused about a matter Sam told me about."

I didn't have to say anything else. Thorben Vogel was the best informed person when it came to any car incidents around town and certainly the mayor himself had warned him about the potential thread.

"I guess Sam told you about this lunatic that is running free again – the one killing innocent driving instructors for sport."

"Yap. He didn't put it like this, but that's the one I'm concerned about. Who told you?"

"Mayor Jenkins."

"I thought so."

"He wanted to give all the driving schools a little heads-up, so that we might decide for ourselves if we want to take the risk of teaching such a lunatic or not."

My eyes bulged in horror.

"No way! They are going to let her drive again?"

"Yes, if anyone is crazy enough to accept her at their school."

"But how could they approve to let someone like her behind a wheel? This is insane!"

"Probably. According to her doctors she is back to normal again. Her psychiatrist has given an official report in which he states that she has been completely cured for one year and didn't have any relapse since then."

"But this is ... I don't know. I'm not sure if she should be trusted with such a high responsibility if there is even the



slightest chance for a relapse.”

“I totally agree with you, son. But it’s what the doctors said. As long as nobody accepts her at a driving school we might still have a chance to keep our streets safe. I’ve already spoken to a few of them and nobody really wants to have her. So I think we can relax for now.”

“Uh-huh.”

I wasn’t quite convinced, but there was nothing I could do, so I just sat down on one of the leather armchairs and stared into oblivion, trying to get a clear head.

“Why did she kill her driving instructor in the first place?” I finally asked and turned to look into the testing old face.

“I’m not quite sure. It’s been on the news a few years ago, but all you can find now is rubbish. Nothing of real significance. The only thing I know from the report of her psychiatrist is, that she stated to have been attacked by aliens and thus crashed the car into a tree on the side of the road.”

“And only her driving instructor died?”

“Yes. It’s actually not quite clear why he wasn’t able to prevent the accident. He died on the spot and she herself endured some serious injuries.”

“Serves her right,” I mumbled under my breath.

“And there was a third person in the car.”

“Really? Sam didn’t mention that ...”

“It’s not a well-known fact. I’m not sure why they kept it from the public, but there was a driving examiner in the car, too. He suffered severe injuries. I haven’t heard anything else about him.”

“You mean the incident took place during her driving test?”

“Yes. The examiner is supposed to have said that everything was going pretty well and that she seemed to be in real control over the car. The accident happened so suddenly that even he didn’t see it coming.”