

GIVE & TAKE: WINTER IN FRANKFURT

Feature Drama | One-Page Synopsis | Written by Susan N. Guggenheim

Frankfurt, January 2026. **PERSEPHONE**, a thirty-seven-year-old Black German supermarket worker, holds together a household of five daughters while concealing the heroin use that structures her days. Her eldest, twenty-one-year-old **JASMIN**, is preparing to leave for Ghana to work with a women's agricultural collective.

Persephone's closest companion is **LINDEN**, her dealer and fellow outsider. When fentanyl-contaminated heroin kills him, Persephone tries and fails to revive him. Grief and exhaustion expose how precarious the family has become: Persephone misses eight-year-old Poppy's school pickup, and Germany's Jugendamt gives her four days to produce a credible safety plan or risk temporary placement of her four younger daughters.

Persephone's adoptive parents offer their home, but she refuses. Her adoptive father raped her at thirteen; her adoptive mother concealed that Jasmin was Persephone's daughter by raising her as her sister. Jasmin finds another possibility: a Frankfurt women's shared house governed by consensus, where care is recorded as work and responsibility is distributed rather than assigned to one mother.

The household does not demand abstinence. Aylin, Ruth, Mariam, and the other women require truth, boundaries, and another adult accepting responsibility before Persephone uses. Persephone and her younger daughters move in. Jasmin leaves for Ghana, where she works but cannot yet vote and discovers that the broker Mensah controls transport, cold storage, and access to buyers.

Both collectives are tested. In Frankfurt, Persephone relapses behind a locked door. The women protect the children, temporarily remove her from sole responsibility, and make the failure visible instead of punishing it in secret. Persephone learns that another girl, Nadia, was also abused by her adoptive father. She confronts her adoptive mother with the larger betrayal: she kept bringing girls into the house after Persephone's abuse.

In Ghana, Mensah slashes the price for the collective's crop, then offers Jasmin private money and a room in Accra if she works for him. Jasmin refuses. The women pool resources, hire women drivers, trace Mensah's buyers, and build direct trading routes. Their first independent delivery succeeds - imperfectly, but on terms they can now negotiate themselves.

At the Hilfeplan review, the Frankfurt women demonstrate that collective care is protecting Persephone's daughters; Jugendamt keeps the children with her under a monitored plan. Persephone, Nadia, and other survivors go publicly to police. Her adoptive mother will not name the abuse or confirm it. But before her husband can sell her Bornheim building to finance his defense, she takes it off the market and signs it over to the women's collective. She gives no explanation.

Jasmin earns full membership in Ghana, with an equal income share and vote. Persephone asks that shared responsibility remain even when she is stable, refusing the old ideal that one mother must carry everything alone. She and her daughters choose the matrilineal name **KORECHILD**. As women and children move into Bornheim and Jasmin works Ghanaian soil, winter gives way to spring: in two places, women have withdrawn labor, loyalty, and dependence from patriarchal authority and built structures capable of holding them instead.