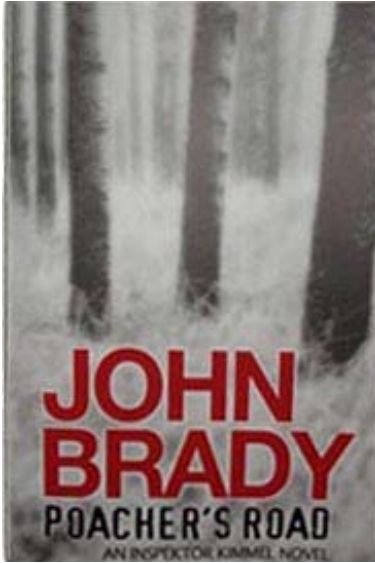


## Wildererweg / Poacher's Road



*This is the first in a series featuring Felix Kimmel, of the Austrian Gendarmerie. Felix works and lives in rural Styria (Steiermark), southernmost province of Austria known as 'The Green Heart of Austria.'*

It has been a long winter here in the hills of southern Austria. Inspektor Felix Kimmel, officer with the Austrian Gendarmerie, is now staring at two bodies on a path in the woods. The *Kripo* (central detective bureau) from Graz soon takes over. Experts though they may be, and higher in the firmament than the Gendarmes who patrol such parts of rural Austria as Felix, they want his help: he is a local man who knows the area and its people.

Felix's mentor, the old hand Gebhart, warns him to beware of the lead detective Speckbauer, as he and his sinister-looking partner, Franzi 'have background'.

The dead men's identity remains unknown. They are thought to be *ausländers* from somewhere in Eastern Europe - *tshuschen*, as the highly derogatory word is used. An autopsy reveals a small tattoo on one man, and a small diamond in the digestive tract of the other. Speckbauer tells Felix that this tattoo suggests membership of a Croatian paramilitary gang.

The following day, the family whose call to the Gendarmerie led to the discovery of the bodies, perishes in a house fire. Felix becomes drawn further into this arson, and murder. He senses that Speckbauer's attitude to him has altered. Speckbauer hints that whoever set fire to that farmhouse may want Felix next. Maybe they believe Felix knows something? He is surely known locally as the son of the popular Gendarmerie Hauptmann Felix Kimmel Senior, is he not, who died in that tragic accident?

It doesn't take long for Felix to sense that he is not trusted, and that and his own father's death, along with the tangled histories of the Kimmel family are part of this. When he finds old maps that his father had hidden, he believes that secrets no-one discusses in the Kimmel family need to come out into the light.

Yet Felix has some loyalty to his own. He determines to visit his loathed grandfather Kimmel, to discover what the old man knew, or did, before Speckbauer does. Felix sets out again on that narrow, winding road that climbs up the mountains toward the remote village of St Kristoff.

The ancestral Kimmel farm is where history collides with politics, where a shard of the global crime wave that is sweeping across Europe crashes into the Kimmel family. Austria, crossroads of Europe, is returning to the place it was almost a century ago when a Serbian student raised a revolver and started two world wars, and then an era where peace only meant the threat of another war postponed.

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'... along a border that effectively divides modern Europe from a facsimile of its former self, Brady creates him as a solitary guard along paths busy with criminality and, potentially, terror..... The historical context and modern dilemma, the joy of characters both common and extreme, the inner workings of an isolated community, the easy flow to this man's prose and the keenness of his intelligence, makes *Poacher's Road* a novel to be recommended and read. Inspektor Felix Kimmel is a fresh hero to be welcomed onto the scene and followed. This series should enjoy a long, honoured run. (Globe and Mail)