Martin Luther was a monk, a theologian, a professor, a husband to Katie Luther, and a papa to his kids. Dr. Luther was largely responsible for starting the Protestant Reformation, which led to the Evangelical (Good News) church that today bears his name—Lutheran. Throughout the story, adapted quotes from Luther have been placed to add to the story. Look for them where a † symbol has been placed.

Katie Luther (Katharina von Bora) was sent off at the age of five to live in a monastery after her mother had died. Later on, she became interested in the Reformation movement, but needed help to leave the monastery. A few years later she married Martin Luther and started a family. Along with caring for the family, Katie was responsible for breeding cattle and brewing beer, two jobs that provided money for the large Luther family.

Johannes (Hans) Luther was the oldest of the Luther children. He is twelve when we first meet him in this book. He is a hard worker and loves his family.

Magdalena (Magda or Lenchen) Luther was the second oldest child in the Luther family. She is smart and clever, although her brother often irritates her.
MARTIN LUTHER, JR. (LITTLE MARTIN OR MÄRCHEN), PAUL LUTHER, AND MARGARETE LUTHER ARE THE OTHER LUTHER CHILDREN IN THIS STORY. THEY ARE 7, 5, AND 3 YEARS OLD WHEN WE FIRST MEET THEM.

FREDERICK THE WISE (FREDERICK III, ELECTOR OF SAXONY) WAS A PRINCE OF SAXONY, A REGION WHICH IS NOW A STATE IN MODERN GERMANY. FREDERICK WAS AN ELECTOR, ONE WHO HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF ELECTING THE HOLY ROMAN EMPEROR. FREDERICK PROTECTED LUTHER DURING THE TIME WHEN LUTHER WAS CONSIDERED AN OUTLAW.

JOHANN VON STAUPITZ WAS THE VICAR GENERAL (LEADER) OF THE AUGUSTINIANFriars in Germany. He was also a theologian and preacher at the University of Wittenberg. He played an important role for Martin Luther during a difficult but important time in Luther’s life.
Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor was elected when he was only 19 to rule over the Holy Roman Empire, which covered an area in Europe a little larger than the size of Texas. Charles V ruled when Luther was tried for heresy in Worms, Germany.

Johann Tetzel was a priest known best for offering indulgences in exchange for money. These were guarantees for people that they (or their relatives) would have to spend less time in purgatory after they died. Luther spoke against indulgences, and the documents he wrote largely fanned the flames of the Protestant Reformation.

Pope Leo X (the tenth) was the leader of the Roman Catholic Church at the time of Luther. He used much of the money from the indulgences he sold through Tetzel and others to fund the building of St. Peter’s Basilica which still stands today in the Vatican (Rome).
Well... what a nice table you've set, children. Katie, my bride, would you be so kind as to say a word of grace?

Bestimmt!

The eyes of everyone look to you, our loving God, and you give us our food in due season. Thank you for life!

— Amen.

Remind me tomorrow, would you Katie, my dear? I need to remember to clean the spade...

1 Certainly!
First, my children, you must understand why Tetzel was raising money in the first place . . .

It all had to do with the building of the Basilica in Rome. The Pope needed money to build it—after all, the construction workers didn’t work for free! To raise money, he decided to sell lots of indulgences.

Tetzel was a money-raiser. The problem was he was promising something that was false—that people could buy their salvation—and that of their loved ones who had already died—by simply giving the church money!

This had been going on for quite some time, but I had finally had enough, when that fall I sat down and wrote out a list of 95 complaints, or theses!
When the day finally came on October 31st in 1517 to stick my list of 95 complaints and corrections up on the door of the castle church in Wittenberg, it was windy!

It was as if God was in that cold October wind, warning me what was to come. I thought that I was only taking the church to task with the bad things going on. But . . .

. . . it turned out to be something that would shake the foundations of the world.
I hope I didn't worry any of you, Papa... Professor Melanchthon is an interesting, fascinating man. You did worry us! Especially your sister!!

Yes, yes, later, Lenchen. About my friend... Well, let's just say our efforts in reforming God's church wouldn't have gone as far. But—what happened to you, Hans?

... without Professor Melanchthon's skill in writing and his sharp, theological thinking...

Märchen, Paul, Margarete... come with me. Come warm yourselves at the fire, you two. I need to continue my story!

Er—I just got tied up speaking with the good professor is all...
I was just beginning to tell your sister about a certain cardinal, Cajetan, who the Pope gave the task of challenging my claims . . .

My son . . . I did not come to argue with you. I am ready to forgive your error.

I'm not the one in error. The love and grace of God is free. The Bible says so!

Nearly a year after I had posted my list of complaints and corrections on the Castle Church door in Wittenberg, I was called to travel to Augsburg, a lengthy journey to the south, to appear before Cajetan. At first, he tried to be nice . . .

That tactic didn't prove to be very effective!

Unless you can show me with holy scripture—and not with something you invented to raise money—I believe the path to God is clear: God makes us right through Jesus Christ, period!

Several times in my life, I thought I would have become just like one of the logs you see there burning in the fire! But I trusted in God's promises . . . no matter what.

You, I'm afraid, are wrong! The teachings are clear—simple people need a simple path to God and we have given it to them!

I refuse to argue any more with you . . . you crazy German monk!!
A human being is not only responsible for what he or she says, but also for what is not said!

Martin Luther . . . Here we are again. This is all very simple. Do you recant of the works set before you?!

These writings have all sorts of different things I say. In some of them, I might have said what I wanted too harshly, I suppose that’s my German temper.

But what I believe is a different story. Collecting money to forgive sins is wrong, and the abuses of the Church are too great for me to say nothing.

Unless you can convince me with the word as it stands in the Bible—or by simple logic and reason—what I say is captive to the Word of God. My conscience tells me I am right.

I cannot go against God, and I cannot go against my conscience. I cannot and I will not recant!

Here I stand. God help me.