

## ERKLÄRUNGSNOT

(EXPLANATION-DISTRESS)

Literally, distress at not having an explanation. This would be the perfect way to define what a partner might feel when they are caught watching porn or are spotted in a restaurant holding hands with someone they shouldn't. More grandly, *Erklärungsnot* is what we feel when we realise that we don't have any explanations for the big questions of life. It is a word that defines existential angst as much as 'shame'.



## FUTTERNEID

(FOOD-ENVY)

The feeling you have when you are eating with other people and realise that they've ordered something better off the menu, something that you would prefer to eat yourself. Perhaps you were trying to be abstemious; now you're just in agony. The word recognises that we spend most of our lives feeling that we've ordered the wrong thing. And not just in restaurants.



## BACKPFEIFENGESICHT

(SLAPPING-FACE)

A face that is begging to be slapped. Generosity towards others is key, but the German language is bracing and frank enough to acknowledge that there are also moments when it is simply more honest to admit that we have come face-to-face with a dickhead.



## FREMSCHÄMEN

(FOREIGN-SHAME)

A word full of empathy that describes how we cringe when witnessing somebody else's embarrassment, misfortune or failure. The capacity to feel *Fremdschämen* is a high moral achievement – and is at the root of all kindness.



## LUFTSCHLOSS

(AIR-CASTLE)

Literally, a castle in the air or a dream that is unattainable – a word that suggests that German culture is deeply indulgent about big dreams, but also gently realistic about how hard it can be to fulfil them.

