

PURIFIKATION

By

MJ Politis, Ph.D., D.V.M.

mjpolitis@yahoo.com

copyrighted, May, 2018

all rights reserved

CHAPTER 1

August, 1945.

The prisoner had nothing to say when brought to the gallows under the already hot and toasting Louisiana early morning sun. He was asked for the second time if he had anything to explain the reasons why he had committed the crime he had been convicted of, and the other countless transgressions against basic human morality that preceded it. He hesitated, then looked over the crowd gathered in front of him. Collectively and individually they all had gathered to see what he had to say, how true he would live up to those words once the rope was pulled over his neck, and of course what his eyes and bladder would say once his body was disconnected from his always misunderstood brain.

They were a mixed lot, these spectators to a man's transition from the known to the unknown. Most of the men, clad in their starched, hot woolen uniforms with heavy boots, stood at attention in various corporal expressions of rigidity. Most of the women, adorned in light cotton dresses complimented by tight fitting shoes, averted any attention from the men present as they were waiting for their own uniformed soldiers to come home to them, hopefully in one piece below the neck as well as between the ears, and, perhaps after being faithful to their marital and other vows. Youngsters dragged along for the event, as well as those who snuck in through the holes in the fence, were curious to see what happened to a condemned man when he departed the land of the living.

Officially, the reason most came was to 'see justice is done'. As for what justice really was, that was a matter which was up to every one of the witnesses to the legally sanctioned and ordered execution. And of course, they came to experience for the last time the 'star' of the show. The prisoner threw stares into every one of the faces looking at him. He paused, then broke into a reflective and self-assured smile, searching deeper into his soul for the words that would make the world understand the why's for everything he had done.

Thankfully, one of the witnesses to the hanging about to take place did remember what started it all, and how it transpired, most of it anyway. Only then did this special observer, in earnest, begin writing the real story of what happened, in his head. He knew all too well that when it came time for him to put it on paper, his death would not be nearly as glorious, or painless. But would be even more necessary.

CHAPTER 2

1943, November.

It was a warm and sunny November afternoon, but despite the sun's getting every opportunity possible to penetrate through the South and Western windows, the room was cold and seemed dark to anyone whose eyes were really open. Yet, this was no time to go to sleep, or to settle in for an early winter's nap. Not for the fat man with the neatly trimmed Clark Gable mustache in the brown uniform on one side of the table or the slim and trim man with graying stubble on his 38 year old still good looking, wrinkle-free mug in the green soldier suit on the other side of the weather beaten oak table.

They stared at each other, yet again, each daring the other to lose his composure and perspective. Outside the tensely silent room one group of men screamed commands at another group of men. That second group of men calmly make jokes about the screamers in a language those barking two legged dogs could not understand. Yet, the matter had to be resolved, by somebody, if the volcano wasn't going to burst for the last and final time, swallowing everyone up with its toxic lava.

"Stealing what isn't yours is both inappropriate and disallowed here, you know," the man in the brown uniform pointed out to the man in the green uniform in the Camp office. "And a commander is responsible for his men's conduct, you know, Major."

"But a man is ultimately responsible for his own conduct first, Major," the officer in the green uniform informed the officer in the brown uniform on the other side of the table. "That includes me of course, and you," he continued, blasting that maxim into his ideological, as well as military, opponent. "The burden of command is always ultimately paid for at the top."

"And lying about the matter at hand is not becoming of an officer," the brown uniformed Major countered. "And for every other lie you tell me, another one of your enlisted men will be put on hard labor for a day."

"Work is good for them" the Major in the green uniform said with a smirk as he leaned back on the chair. "And very profitable for you," he continued, gazing at the safe in the Camp office. "In ways that maybe the men above you will eventually find out?"

"Is that a threat, Major!?" the man in the brown uniform screamed over the desk, his white face turning beet red.

"No, it's actually a warning, Major," the man in the green uniform replied, softly, confidently, and with the kind of compassion his adversary could neither handle nor understand. "From one fellow human being caught in a bad situation to another."

“You mean a war, that YOU started! Against my people,” the man in the brown uniform growled. “The American people!”

“Not intentionally, so I was told anyway, Major Smith,” the man in the green uniform said as he moved his fingers over the insignia that still represented his rank, and the residual decorations on the uniform he hated from the moment he put it on, four long years ago back in Berlin. “And as for those men, my men, who I’m still responsible for, Major.”

“Yeah, I heard it all before, Major Whittaker,” the snide comeback accompanied by an eyeroll from both thick brows. “For every one Nazi there are 20 German soldiers and for every German soldier there are 20 civilians who were drafted into the Army who did everything they could to get out joining up,” Beauregard Horatio Smith barked back, ridiculing Wilhelm Whittaker’s accent and mannerisms. “And you were all just following orders.”

“Not when we allowed ourselves to be captured, thank God,” Whittaker said, after which he crossed himself in the Catholic manner.

“You Fritz’s were captured because our American soldiers were braver, smarter and more moral than you were,” Smith ranted on with an accent that sank deeper into a South Texas drawl with each boast. “Because underneath all of the Supermench bullshit you Krauts yell out at pep rallies for Adolf and his boys, ya’ll are cowardly, yellow bellied, stupid, dumbshit, inferior pieces of shit.”

Smith’s soldiers outside the Commandant’s office were of course holding onto every gun in camp, that overcrowded holding facility surrounded by barbed wire and, beyond, that untold miles of cotton fields and swamps. Whittaker’s officially disarmed men were holding onto the hope that someday they would be reunited with what was left of their families across the Atlantic. The German born, bred and trained professor-doctor who was given the choice of joining up or seeing his family jailed, and half Jewish fiancée sent to the Camps for re-education, considered that, yet again, it was logical to sit and take insults thrown at him. And to go along with yet another set of restrictions Smith put on the prisoners in Camp, as well as extra work detail in the fields and ports outside of the perimeter where three German POWs died of ‘industrial accidents’ and two more had somehow committed suicide in the last month alone.

“Maybe they escaped,” Whitaker dared to consider. “And reporting it would be bad for this Georgia Cracker’s record,” he silently postulated. “I could get him fired. But better the devil you know than someone else,” he continued in his head. “Then again, that’s what we said about Adolf.” “The beef,” Wilhelm Fredrick Whitaker allowed to come out of his mouth, calmly and respectfully. “I do not know how my men and patients, who were grateful for such, got more meat in their stew than yours did. Maybe an arrangement was made behind both our backs? After all, aside from teaching men to dehumanize other men, war teaches all of us to be more manipulative than we would have been otherwise.”

Smith remained silent. It was that kind of quiet that said ‘if you know what’s good for you, you’ll shut yer yap before I shove the barrel of my shotgun into it instead of my fist.’

The tense silence was amplified by a loud ticking of the clock on Smith’s wall, an antique dating back to times when Louisiana belonged to the French in name and culture. One of the many historical pieces the former police chief took into ‘protective custody’ from the Robert E Lee Memorial Museum so it wouldn’t fall into the hands of ‘the Nigger ingrate upstarts’ and their Carpetbagger Yankee officers who let them into the Army, and most particularly ‘Kike Jewish art dealers’ who would swindle him out of well earned stolen booty and Dixie from a reminder of its glorious past and, if he had anything to do with it, to be born again soon, in Jesus’ name of course, future.

“Old Miss,” ticked away, its pendulum pounding its presence and past into Whitaker’s ears. It was soon replaced by Smith’s voice just after it struck High Noon. “Well, it’s about to be showtime,” he said with a warm, and even friendly smile that anyone who didn’t know him would believe was real. He pushed his overweight body onto his short, stubby legs, and waddled to the victrola, putting Beethoven’s Pastoral Symphony on it. He opened the window, and verified that the ‘all is well and wonderful’ music composed by the thoroughly German composer was being played not only inside, but on every outside loudspeaker in the compound. Within 10 seconds, Smith’s soldiers outside stopped yelling at their German prisoners. Ten seconds later, a bell rang from the front gate.

A black sedan pulled into the compound, moving slowly en route to the office door. It came to a slow, uneventful stop. Whitaker looked out the window, noting a white flag on the vehicle with a red cross in the middle of it. A Black American Private approached, opening up the door, bowing to the passenger in the back seat as he emerged.

The Red Cross inspector was clad in shoes rather than boots. He wore a plain suit rather than an insignia-covered uniform, with wire rimmed glasses around his very studious eyes. With those wide open coral blue ocular portholes he took in everything within sight, slowly, at his own pace.

“Welcome, welcome Monsieur LeBlanc!” Smith bellowed out in Cajan French that made the French Swiss inspector cringe at its crudeness, but accept because of its apparent sincerity.

“Come in, please,” Smith continued in that local tongue. “I’ll have my men, and these very willing, well cared for and happy German guests of mine prepare a proper lunch for you. What will you have?”

“The truth,” LaBlanc replied, in English. Then in German. He looked to the American soldiers interspersed with German prisoners around him. “How go things for YOU?” he asked of randomly picked German POWs and American guards. LaBlanc got ‘all’s

good' grins, nods and thumbs up from everyone he made inquires of in the mixed congregation. He then looked into the window from which Whitaker got a full, un-obstructive view of the compound. He knocked on the half closed window, requesting then ordering that it be fully opened.

"And from you, Major?" the Swiss Red Cross Inspector from a country that was, in name and practice, neutral to any political affiliations to Hitler or Roosevelt asked Whitaker in Swiss German. "How are things here? What's the truth about things here?"

Whitaker thought long and hard about how to answer. He considered the guns pointing at his men under the coats of the smiling American guards. The machine guns resting on the top of the guard towers. The swamps outside that could swallow up any body that said the wrong thing, or perhaps a car from an overly informed Swiss Red Cross inspector if it accidentally slipped off the road. The German POWs, whose uniforms covered up both undernourished bodies and whipped flesh. And the good ole boys in Smith's band of specially selected 'hosts' for the German captives, most particularly those who Whitaker suspected of being as fluent in French, German, Italian or even Russian that he could use to privately communicate the truth to this Inspector.

The bookish Inspector LaBlanc was as persistent in assertion as he was unfit for physical military service. "The truth about this place, Major," the Swiss inspector insisted on being told.

"What all of them said," Whitaker finally gave voice to in English and Academic German. "And..." Before Whitaker could say "what they didn't say," in an idiom that was uniquely Swiss, understandable to the Inspector alone, Major Smith politely put papers in front of LaBlanc's face.

"All is well, humane and civilized, As is in every other Camp in the Good Old USA," Smith boasted. "As verified by other very legal and objective parties."

Such was the truth, about the other camps in America anyway. Where German POWs were given rations of cigarettes and meat on par with the average American citizen or GI. Clothing allowances equal to any US soldier. Clean and warm quarters to sleep in. Access to more recreational than labor activities. American cash for labor they did, such as picking cotton, harvesting wheat and rolling tobacco into cigarettes. The opportunity to have 'the time of their lives'. Access to American farm families whose children called them 'Uncle' rather than 'Kraut'. And, most importantly, assurance that they would not be captured by the Russian Army, in whose hands one in three German POWs died, usually after being worked, beaten or frozen to death.

It was the latter point that Whitaker was most thankful for. True, Hitler was the madman who had attacked Russia after signing a non-Aggression pact with Stalin. But there were two things that Whitaker was in agreement with Hitler about. The first was the mystical magic and empowerment of Wagner's music, composed well before the Fuhrer was born, even when played on recordings of American orchestras in recordings done

prior to Pearl Harbor. The second was that Stalin was the devil incarnate, and that as long as there was a single Bolshevic capable of carrying a gun, or even a swather, the safety of his beloved Fatherland of Germany, and the world beyond it, was in jeopardy.

Of course, the item on Major Doctor Whitaker's list that was always on top was the safety of the men under his command, and care. Something he had to be very careful about being assertive with while Horatio Smith and his goons were holding the guns, and censoring every letter going out of Camp. And every word, glance or gesture a German POW would give to a passing American civilian while on labor detail outside the camp, especially if said civilian was within former County Sheriff Smith's jurisdiction, and 'Uncle' Horatio's even more extensive kingdom.

CHAPTER 3

Leroy Robertson leaned back on his chair at the table in the Mess Hall eying with envy the pile of money, watches, cigarettes and perhaps official, or perhaps fake, German Army medals in front of him. He then looked at the three cards in his hand as two more came into his hand. The first was a king, as worthless to his poker hand as tits on a while bull or a copy of Einstein's theory of relativity in the hand of a Black field-hand in Northern Louisiana. He then looked at the second card, a lowly deuce, contemplating what to do with the various possibilities it presented.

"Something wrong there, Private?" Seargent Jackson sneered from his fat lips on his still very white face, that burnt rather than tanned, no matter how much time the Hoosier from Indianapolis spent under the blazing Louisiana sun. "Time ta admit that you've finally been done in by yer betters?"

"And racial betters, Leroy?" Second Lieutenant Steiner added in a heavily accented Prussian accent. "Whose luck perhaps is about to run out?" the 25 year old aristocratic-born Berliner and Harvard trained engineer reminded the 40 something Black Private and all around 'go to' Nigger whose only real experience with weaponry was cleaning the rifles of the White officers above him, and feeling the butt of their stocks in town when he dared to quench his parched dry mouth in a White's only bar when the Colored establishments were closed.

"Come on, show your hand, Boy," half-Cajun, half-Texan Corporal DeLong, and master scrounger, barked into the mix from his station at the poker table that had been emptied by the black field hand three times that night already. "Schnell!" he yelled at Leroy's dark as coal face.

Leroy thought about what to do next. The rules said that anyone could raise the ante at any time. White rules from those who never had full pockets, in part because they were so good at taking, then scrounging, what they needed, and wanted, from Colored pockets. But there was one thing that Leroy had in spades over any of his Cracker, Aryan and Northern Yankee Masters and opponents. Luck and...something else. As for what that something else was, it was time to now show it. Still, Leroy hesitated. Then he put down his cards and pushed into the middle of the table half of what had won that night, then upon careful consideration, the other half of the booty he had stripped from the partially clothed other players in the room.

"You think yer still good with numbers, but eventually the roulette wheel does come around zero," DeLong pointed out to Leroy. "Life eventually does that to everyone." He turned to the German POW. "Ain't that so, Fritz?"

"My name is Hans. Leuntant Hans Steiner, Sir," the Prussian Officer reminded his, officially anyway with an arched back and the pride of a prime breed rooster. "Whose luck was good enough to win this watch from you last night," he said regarding the time piece on his wrist. "And who is confident enough to honor Lady Luck with the courage

to do this,” he said as he took off the watch, putting it into the center of the table. “And this,” he continued, throwing into the pot a Russian hat and Medal of Stalin. “Earned at the Russian front after I strangled the Bolshevik who tried to kill me!”

“Or maybe made in New York by a relative of yours, who’s getting top dollar for replicas of it on the black market?” Jackson offered with a smirk, faining a look of disapproval for the souvenirs.

“Or manufactured by a Jew profiteer,” DeLong added after snubbing the value of the offering. “What else do you have that’s of real value, Herr Lieutenant Steiner?”

“This,” Steiner said after careful consideration. He reached into his pocket and pulled out a sac filled with vials containing medical writing, some in German, some in English. “Doctor Professor Crusader of Lost Causes Whitaker’s private stash,” he said. “Far more effective than Pevitin, Isophan or the commonly available pep pills from Temmler Pharmaceuticals. Whitaker’s secret recipes can make you able to stay even more alert, confident, strong and courageous, and all at same time.” He offered his two Caucasian card playing buds a whiff of the powder.

“And lucky?” Jackson inquired, assessing and sampling some of the magic powder that had appeared, then disappeared from standard military issue when he was in Britain.

“The luck of Irish,” Steiner replied with a lilt of the Emerald Isle in his diction.

“Irish who had the good sense to stay out of this fucking War,” DeLong noted as he affirmed the identity of the potion by smell but not snort. “But how did Major Whittaker get this? And WHY? He always looks tired, miserable and for every ounce of courage he seems to have, even a blind man can see a pound of fear behind his eyes.”

“It’s probably for his patients,” Jackson added. “Whittaker ‘s dedicated to the proposition of torturing himself, for God knows what reasons, and taking care of his patients.”

“Which include prisoners who wear this uniform,” Steiner said, lifting up the lapel of the his Luftwaffe tunic. “And yours,” he continued. “Our mutual jailer, and, if we know what’s good for us, protector, being of course...” The German POW pointed out the window to the private quarters of Commandant Smith, whose silhouette could be seen behind a curtain, embraced and pleased by two very feminine figures.

Buck Private Robertson watched the two White officers and NCO gaze across the moonlit compound at Commandant Smith’s headquarters. He could read their minds as easily as he could count their cards, both skills having been obtained by watching people at the top of the totem pole from an invisible and unwatched place on the bottom. “Yeah, yer gonna pay the piper one day, Major Smith, even though you think he’s workin’ fer you, which for the moment, he is,” Leroy thought behind his servantly stare. “But it ain’t my idea alone,” he rationalized. “The first will be last and the last will be first,” the

Black as spades son of a poor sharecropper and grandson of a horse-whipped slave recalled, and vowed, from his brief time during his adolescence of being a Christian who actually believed in a loving God.

“Sirs,” Leroy finally said to his fellow soldiers. “Is we playin’ poker or gazin’ at a man who deserves his privacy and pleasures?” he continued with a big, wide ‘happy Nigger’ smile, displaying his bright white teeth between his parched lips and black as coal face. “Lady Luck do make the rounds betwixt all of us, and she seem to be smilin’ at you gents, as you all deserves to be----.”

With that, the three fellow players matched Steiner’s antie with mixed forms of currency. “----Call!” Jackson blurted out. “Read em and weep. Two ladies and two jacks,” he proudly proclaimed as he laid out his cards, then reached for the pot on a night where three of a kind happened in maybe one in three hands. “Two Queens and two Jacks!”

“Which eats the dust of three tens,” DeLong added, with a snide grin, displaying what Lady Luck had delivered him.

“But not, I am afraid, three aces,” Steiner interjected. He displayed his cards with hands still attached to an arm containing an artistically-designed swastika-containing tattoo. He reached towards the collection of goods on the table, his lips turning even more upward when his two White buds threw down their cards in frustration and disgust. “And for curiosity, what do you have, Leroy?” he inquired of the dumbshit, confounded Black player who he finally outwitted.

Roberson took in a deep breath and let the words incubate in his mind before they came into his throat. “Well, Sirs,” he said. “All I gots is...well.”

Robertson looked at the four deuces in his hand, two delivered by Lady Luck, one whose arrival was mathematically predicted and another he acquired by slight of hand. He stared at the quartet of lowly deuces, contemplating that when they were all gathered together, they could beat out three queens, kings or even aces. A metaphor about life that would soon materialize, in its own time of course. When the other players in life on top of the totem pole were ready for it.

“Well?” Steiner barked out. “What do you have?”

“Besides a mouth full of uppidy white teeth on your Colored face?” DeLong pressed.

“A Nigger face,” Indiana born and bred Jackson sneared, using that uniquely Southern term for the inferior race for the first time. “A face that’s maybe---“

“---ain’t been cheating, but just observin’,” Robertson self observed himself reply with a smart assed grin, which he didn’t hide this time. “Lady Luck seems to like Black boys this year, Sirs,” he continued as he laid down his ensemble of four deuces.

Steiner's Master race Aryan mug turned into that of a common white sharecropper who lost his bait, fishing line and footing on his overturned boat to the likes of a lowly catfish. Jackson cursed the God he offered hymns to in Church every Sunday. Delong cursed in elegant Cajun French, providing a musical accompaniment to the Satisfaction Symphony formulating in between Robinson's big, black elephant ears.

The grandfather clock bearing the likeness of Lord Robert E Lee struck five minutes to midnight. Such was the agreed upon time which the very private game in the Mess Tent was supposed to end. And required to end, as all of the men in the room were supposed to be on duty elsewhere five minutes later.

Leroy collected the booty, observing the officially-issued sidearm on the two American soldiers at the table, He envisioned the daggers and perhaps pistols the German POW had access to, unofficially. Something in him said that it was time for the meek to inherit the earth, ahead of the Lord's schedule. A Lord who, according to the pictures and paintings on every church in the Parish, was White.

Maybe there would be hell to pay later, but for now, it was Heaven on earth for Robinson. And, assuming he would be generous with the booty, the other deuces on the bottom of the totem pole.

CHAPTER 4

“I got something for ya,” Beauregard Horatio Smith smiled at the nurse behind the reception desk at the hospital from behind a big, white Santa beard. “Early Christmas present from Santa! Brought here by Rudolf himself!” he proclaimed as he hauled in, himself this time, a large sac which had been attached to the saddle of his horse.

“Ya’ll been too generous to the kids, patients and staff here already,” Head Nurse Sally Jane Johnson insisted as her younger, and much more pretty, subordinates, unloaded the bag. “Yer spoilin’ them.”

“It’s my job to spoil children of all ages,” Santa Smith proclaimed. “Specially ones who’ve been good girls, and kind women, and still emanate their inner beauty, Miss Sally.” He presented the over the hill 40 year old very ex-beauty queen bearing a sagging prematurely wrinkled face a special package from under his suit. “Santa wants you to open it now.”

“But it ain’t Christmas, Major Horatio,” Sally said.

“Please, open it now, as a special gift to Santa, Nurse Sally,” Smith asked, and pleaded with a warm smile that erased all of the wrinkles from her face, and reversed every wrong turn Nurse Sally did since she was crowned Miss Louisiana way back in the roaring 20’s, when Prohibition made smart men rich, and Adolf Hitler was still a struggling artist experimenting with a political career.

Sally Jane opened the triple wrapped box, as asked and instructed, She couldn’t believe her eyes when they beheld its contents. “It’s...it’s....”

“Beautiful,” Horatio declared, and hoped was true regarding the dress with the floral print and low neckline, whose color matched Sally’s eyes and lines, according to the woman at the most expensive clothing store in town, flattered the best features of the figure that Sally was burdened with. “Like the special gal whose gonna be wearing it at the Dance next week.”

“All of yer gals are special to you, Horatio,” Sally Jane replied. “That’s what you tell them anyway.”

“Cause I mean it,” he declared.

“At the time and the morning after?” her reply with a raised eyebrow.

“The older the violin, the sweeter the music,” his lyrical reply, realizing after the words came out that he could have chosen, or invented, a more appropriate cliché.

“So, yer sayin’ I’m old?” Sally said as her girlish grin turned into a sour mug.

“No, just...hmm...” Santa Horatio blurted out.

“Experienced?” a man in a buck private’s uniform behind Santa Horatio interjected in a German accent. “What Santa Horatio means is that he enjoys women with depth, experience and----“

“---Who are still young enough to be interested in a real man, like you maybe?” she said of the European gentleman, with whom she felt an instant connection of Soul.

“A real doctor,” Santa Horatio added, putting his shoulder around Major Whitaker. “The best in the county, and the state. Who is another one of my gifts to this hospital for the day, and the week if you need him.”

“By his choice or yours, Horatio?” Head Nurse Sally asked the Commandant.

“Both of ours,” Whitaker replied, bowing his head.

Nurse Sally eyed Whitaker from head to toe, then from feet back to head again, making a detour that stopped with the eyes. She lingered there. “I suppose we can use a real doctor Now that Doc Olds is, well,....”

“Making more mistakes than right choices?” Horatio interjected before Nurse Sally would state what a Nurse never says about a Doc. Especially one who is prone to overmedicating himself with booze or mind numbing elixirs. And whose mind was already being eaten up by Alzheimer’s disease. And whose reputation as a younger man and his old family money would prevent ANY medical board from retiring him, no matter how many patients unnecessarily died on his shift.

“So, it’s settled!” Smith bellowed out in a baritone Santaese voice. “Santa’s donating this Swiss doctor to you. For you to use any way you want, or need, for the next three days.”

“And whatever salary we pay him goes to you?” Sally inquired. “Like the rest of the help who volunteered to help us?”

“It’s donated to the Cause, Madame,” Whitaker said, again with a bow, nearly slipping into clicking his heels at attention at the same time.

“It’s Nurse Sally, Doctor---” she replied.

“--- Rabinowitz,” Smith interjected. “A Jew doctor,” he boasted. “Lord knows that they make the most vicious lawyers and richest bankers, but also the best docs.”

“What’s this ‘Swiss Jew’s’ first name?” Nurse Sally pressed. “Here in the South, doctors we fear are called by their Surnames. Docs we like, and trust are called by---“

“Johan,” Whitaker blurted out. “Like Johan Sebastian Bach. Or---“

“John will do,” Nurse Sally replied. “Who can maybe dance as good as Johan Sebastian composed?” she continued, looking at the dress, then throwing an inviting smile into Whitaker’s face.

Whitaker felt both promoted and enslaved, as such were, in the end, the same thing in a world where the system rules people rather than the other way around. How he yearned to ask Sally what Smith was really all about. And how he dared not ask, for fear of finding out answers he didn’t want to know, or would not believe. Particularly when Smith was enthusiastically greeted by three pediatric patients, one of whom had a death rattle louder than any voice in the room, another whose legs were barely attached to her twisted torso, and another whose eyes were covered by bloody patches. He embraced them all with as much compassion and caring as any Santa imaginable, and with as much love as the Commandant and former police chief had for the steed outside who bore reindeer antlers.

“Hitler likes kids and loves animals,” Whitaker pondered to himself regarding the ‘daddy’ of all good Aryan children and the vegetarian who didn’t allow any hunting on his Estate. “But---“ he continued in his ever investigative mind, wondering if maybe beneath the bad in Smith there was more good than he imagined, or could handle.

After regaling the needy (and needing) children with very expensive and useful presents, complimented by tall tales of the North Pole, the most feared, liked, obeyed and misunderstood man in the Parish, or perhaps the entire state, adjusted his Santa beard, then mounted his horse. He bid the congregation a hearty ‘High Ho, Silver’ that sounded more like a cowboy Superman than a fat fuzzy Saint from the North pole and galloped off into the horizon. Such left Whitaker with the honor, and challenge, to fit into ‘Doc John Rabinowitz’s’ shoes as effectively and discretely as possible. In a profession where ‘above all do no harm’ often came with ‘above all never tell or reveal the truth’. The safety and functional well being of his fellow POWs back in Camp, all of whom, so far, were still of lower rank, depended on such. Of this he was certain, as ghosts from his own past did their best to re-emerge into his ambivalent present.

CHAPTER 5

Officially, the hospital was run by Doc Bill Olds, a physician who had served the Community for four-three decades with the most dedicated work ethic imaginable. When looking at the effectiveness of that care, Whitaker realized all too quickly that it was three years too long. “Yeah, we nurses sort a run this hospital ourselves, and hope that Doctor Bill doesn’t get a hold of them before we do,” Nurse Sally said of the rows of patients with limbs that stunk of rotted flesh, bedsores on diabetic patients whose blood sugar hadn’t even been checked, gout in WWI vets who were told to eat more meat rather than less, and cancer victims who were told that prayer, exercise and antibiotics would get them up dancing and singing again. “Santa Smith gave Doctor Bill an all expense paid fishing trip off Cuba. And as for the replacement Doc that Doctor Bill insisted on filling in, a his spoiled brat nephew who faked his medical records so he could avoid getting drafted, well, he didn’t show up. Thankfully.”

Whitaker looked at the charts, the bodies of the patients, then their faces. Some were rich, some were ‘waiting for their economic ship’ to come in. But all of them were White. Such didn’t surprise the Prussian Aristocratic born and racially conditioned Doc. But, underneath the commonly hued skin, they were all people in need. And people who were in need of quality care that was fast, and discrete.

Doing his best imitation of a Jewish born, Tulane trained, convertible to Christianity very civilian Swiss Doc, Whitaker got many extra tips from his new patients for his proficient medical skills, his honesty, and his compassion. Such included watches, all manner of jewelry, telephone numbers of the most marriable Southern Belles in town, inside info on the best horse to bet on at the local track, stock tips, as well as, of course, cash. As for the latter, it was not unusual for ‘good Germans’ to get some extra busquits, boiled eggs or real American dollars for doing labor for American crop growers they were farmed out to. On occasion, one could hide those gratuities from Smith’s goons. Whitaker certainly could have been a comfortable man by American or European standards with the tips he was given here, a rich one if Santa Smith wasn’t confiscating all of his legitimate pay. But with every thank you donation of monetary value, cash in hand, or potential fortunes in the bank, Whitaker asked the givers to donate them to Sally’s Santa fund. “For those in more need than us.” Sally was all too happy to comply of course, never revealing where the money was to really go.

Nurse Sally and Doctor Whitaker had saved three infected legs that Doctor Bill said were destined for the amputation saw. Patients with diabetes got more treatment than just another wrap of bandage around their nearly toeless feet. Tumors on three savable cancer patients who were finally removed, leaving only two patients with lingering lumps and bumps inside of them which were inoperable. As icing on the cake, Doctor John and Nurse Sally saved the life, and maybe the uterus, of a nameless high society woman who had an illicit fling with her husband’s business partner while he was away on business in Memphis.

Finally. the night ended. Whitaker washed off the blood from his hands, face and, to the best of his ability, fingernails, in Doc Bill Olds' surgical suite. A white-walled room filled with so much antiquated equipment that had been overused, and so much appropriate material supplied by various 'anonymous funders', some of them bearing the name of more upscale facilities, had been underutilized. The moon outside the single window escaped from its hiding place behind the clouds, blinding Whitaker for a flash.

"You did good work today, 'Doctor 'Rabinowitz'," Nurse Sally said with a congratulatory tone and a tired face that revealed more hard life experience than merely another long, hard day doing the work of ten doctors and not getting any of the credit for it. "Is there anything else I can do for you. Anything you want?"

Whitaker considered that question very carefully. After considering all options and possibilities, he answered her with four well chosen and comprehensive words. "I want...to do great work," he said to himself, the fates, and Nurse Sally.

"Which is exactly as I wanted, and expected after seeing what you did here today," she replied with pride. "And tried to do," Sally continued as she glanced at the charts of three cancer patients who she knew would not survive another three days in the hospital, if they were lucky.

Whitaker was treated to a dish of homemade apple pie, mashed potatoes and authentic Kentucky fried chicken while Sally drove down paved streets, then gravel roads, then dirt paths that were more potholes than drivable surface. 'She's of the few vehicles that was manufactured during the war in the America for civilian use', she boasted proudly of the black as coal vehicle whose black, unwashed hood was indistinguishable from the black sky and the dark brown woods. "A gift from a really rich patient with really small medical problems who, well, won't miss it, too much," Nurse Sally said regarding the luxury sedan as she turned the corner into an even more non-luxury swamp road with a proud smirk.

The moonlight on her face illuminated to Whitaker the overgrown nose of an elderly fishmonger, crow's feet around her tired eyes that made her seem like the oldest chicken in the hen house, and skin that seemed more like wrinkled leather than human flesh. But somehow Whitaker could see and feel in her the beauty queen that she once was, two decades, three over bearing bosses and thirty pounds ago.

"If anyone asks, you stayed at my place last night, in the guest bedroom, alone," she said from the side of her double chinned mouth, reading Whitaker's mind, and soul. "Or if you prefer to say it was my bedroom, and we were not alone, well..." the prematurely aged Nurse smiled at the not yet old German Doc, becoming a year younger every second in his perception of her. "Do you have a wife at home?" she inquired. "A sweetheart? A girlfriend who is waiting for you? Or maybe, because there is nothing wrong with it by me anyway, a special man who you, ya know?"

Whitaker thought long and hard before answering that question. The real truth would get him killed. A convincing lie was what circumstances called for. But Sally seemed like someone who had been lied to so much that her radar against it was as well developed as Whitaker's ability to smell out Nazi Party snitches amongst new prisoners.

The proposal, proposition and possibilities to acquire War stories Whitaker could use to tell his sons and potentially literary grand-daughters back home would have to wait, as the car screeched to a jolting stop. "Work time before play, or fantasy time, Doctor John," Sally said by way of explanation as she got out of the car, but not before grabbing a large sac from the back seat, throwing it into Whitaker's arms. "And whatever happens here, stays between us," she warned him as he emerged from the passenger seat. "Or else---"

Sally pointed to a tree limb, to which was attached a rope with a noose at the end, its threads covered with blood, human skin engrained in its fabric. "Doc Nathan thought that doing the Right thing for those in the greatest need was doing God's work. He was bright, smart, kind, and a lot more handsome than any other Colored man I ever met. But when he wanted to do too much of the right thing, the wrong men caught up with him and..."

The rest of the story got stuck in Nurse Sally's throat, as she told the rest with a stream of tears pouring down her face. Whitaker reached out to tear down the rope, but Sally held him back. "No, Johan, John, or whoever you really are," she said. "If anyone takes down that rope, those 'good, God fearing Christian men' in the white sheets with the black hearts, and very legal badges, said that there would be three more nooses up there for anyone who continues to help promote the welfare or propagation of the inferior races."

"And in the meantime?" Whitaker asked.

"We continue Doc Nathan's work, the best way we can." She pointed to an old dairy barn that had been converted into a hospital. It stunk of pus, intestinal lumens, blood and misery. But there was still a lingering aroma of cow and pig dung in the weatherbeaten wood that covered up some of the stench. It brought Whitaker back to the 'good old days' of being a young medic in the trenches during the First World War. A walk in the park relative to the misery of the Second one.

The facility was tended to only by Nurses. By the looks of how they carried supplies and themselves, they had barely set foot in a nursing school, and by their proud expressions of grammatically incorrect English, they most probably never finished High School. But these Nurses of Color tended fastidiously to patients, who were all Colored, who were shedding blood that was just as red as any Caucasian American, or 'pure bred' German.

Nurse Sally lead Whitaker to the row of patients laying on make-shift cots made of scrap wood, metal and tightly-bound rope in the filled beyond capacity first Ward.. "This is Doctor Rabinowitz," the Lily White ex-beauty queen announced to the all black faces,

Faces which had lost whatever beautiful features they once had to diseases, hard life or beatings of one way or another. “He’s a Jew. A good friend of Doc Nathan who---“

“---is lookin to get lynched just like he did?” an old woman with a limp, malformed right arm with one eye covered with a bloody patch shot in.

“Or use infected instruments to repair our busted legs so they can saw them off afterward, and give the bones ta their huntin’ hounds?” a ‘young buck’ with a purulent stump of perhaps still viable tissue below his left knee growled.

“Or be sure that fixin’ our uterus when we have woman problems involves seein’ that we can’t ‘pollute the genetic pool’ with any more black or half black babies?” a young woman said from under a blanket covered with blood, and smelling of purulent pus. “We don’t need no more doctorin’ from one of your kind,” she yelled into Whitaker’s face.

“He’s not one of them. He’s one of us,” Sally assured the patients in the overcrowded ward, in which every space of floor around them was occupied by old or broken hospital equipment. Equipment which would challenge Whitaker’s medical abilities far more than any diseases he was commissioned to treat using state of the art medical tools. “One of us who---“

“---Will guarantee that I can help, or at least not make anything any worse,” Whitaker pledged.

“And wit what he gonna do dat?” the most probably illiterate old woman with the limp right arm, and most experienced soul challenged Whitaker. “He gonna pray to the Jew God that’s gonna make everything better fer us?”

“I’ll negotiate with Him,” Whitaker pledged to himself, and the old woman. “And do my best.”

“With these,” Sally said, after which she opened the bag of goodies in the Santa bag she had dumped into Whitaker’s arms in the car.

“And this!” Whitaker added, noting the paucity of supplies relative to the medical demands and number of patients around him. “And this,” he continued, pointing to his heart, looking at the old woman, straight into her eyes.

The negotiation between Whitaker and the Old Woman involved languages of the heart, mind and gut that the Berlin, Harvard and Oxford trained physician was far from fluent in. But, for reasons of desperation, or sheer will, the old black hag’s stern face eased into a trusting smile, then an affirmative nod.

With that, Doc Johan and Nurse Sally tended to the sick in Ward 1 then Ward 2, then whoever was in Ward 3. Whitaker found that his determination to do more with less was matched by Nature’s willingness to, for the most part, deprive the Grim Reaper of

more victims. And to do far more than just 'doing no harm' to the living. For the medical miracles that were channeled through his fingers, he was given special tips from the patients. No money, watches, or stock market tips, but smiles of appreciation that were deep. And prayers they offered to the Christian God for the well being of the 'crazy Jewish idealist' who, perhaps, would come to Jesus soon.

The night was long and intense.. It drained both the supplies of medicinals and surgical equipment Nurse Sally could steal from Doc Bill's hospital, as well as whatever energy she and her new Comrade in Arms in the War against misery and bigotry had. Yet, there was one patient left as the clock struck 4 AM. She hid in the corner of Ward 3, away from the other patients, under a blood soaked blanket. Her moans seemed to come from maladies of the body and soul.

"Who is she?" Whitaker asked Sally.

"Someone in the kind of need that, I don't think even you can help, Billy Bob," Sally replied, softly and discretely. "Or maybe should."

If Whitaker was thinking with a clear head, he would have given careful consideration to how Sally had found out that his first name was Wilhelm, and his second was Fredrick. But his overextended, and not so innocent heart won out. "Everyone should give according to their abilities and take according to their needs," he replied.

"A quote from the Communist Manifesto that she read, believed and is paying the price for," Sally answered.

"Also a Christian principle and I believe an American value?" Whitaker shot back into Sally's face. "And yours," he continued as he walked towards the woman.

Whitaker sat down next to the woman. She was crying, sobbing and moaning in pain under the blanket. Before he could introduce himself by voice, Sally put her hand over his mouth. "This is Doctor John. He's here to help you. Will you let him help you? For me?"

The woman under the blanket turned around into herself, her fetal position even more tight and unwindable. In the process of doing so, her left arm slipped out from under her coverings. On the wrists were slash marks. Above them, fresh bruises and lacerations. All surrounded by White skin. "I don't want to see anyone! I just want to die!" she pleaded.

"Doc Nathan doesn't want you to die," Sally said as she laid her arm gently on the white woman's shaking torso. "Not after all you did for and with him."

"For the Cause, Comrade," the still-staunch anti-Boleshevic German Doctor interjected. "Which still needs you," he pressed.

Nurse Sally looked his way, shaking her head with an affirmative and consternating 'no'. But the woman lowered the blanket, revealing scared blue eyes around a white face covered with fresh bruises.

"Who did this to you?" Whitaker asked her gently.

"My husband," she confessed, rather than related.

Whitaker examined the rest of her battered, bruised and no doubt painful body under the torn, semen-smelling upscale clothing. "Why?" Whitaker pressed, putting his agenda in front of a still affirmative yet silent Sally, whose white face turned beet red with anger. She turns away, leaving Whitaker to his own demise, and fate. "Why did your husband do this do you?" he asked again, gently yet firmly.

"Because he loves me?" the reply from the woman. Such forced Whitaker to look into a mirror he had been avoiding for a long time. "Yes, because he loves me," she concluded with eyes that stared backwards onto a tortured and polluted soul behind it. "Because I deserve the pain," she continued with a blank stare taking her away from reality more each day. "As much pain as I can get."

"I don't think you do," Whitaker replied as he reached for the nearly empty jar of morphine Sally had smuggled into the facility as a prelude to irrigating the wounds, cleaning them out, and sewing the tattered skin on her arms, legs, torso but not face, not yet anyway, together. "I am sure that you don't deserve the pain."

"Or maybe Olivia does deserve the pain, and more?" came from behind, from an old voice, a Black one, and an angry one. Behind her were faces of young and old, half but of them agreeing with the condemnation of the young White woman from the elderly Black one.

How and why the old woman in Ward 1 limped her way to Ward 3 was a question to be answered later, and how she knew the demoted White woman's name. But for the moment, it was the issue of repairing the wounds with or without pain. At least in Whitaker's agenda.

"You heard them," Olivia replied, pointing Whitaker's attention to the increasing number of black faces looking angrily at her white one. "We've been outvoted," she continued, pointing to the suture material, tossing the vial of morphine to the old Black woman. "But want, need, and require an extra ingredient from you, Comrade."

"Which is?" Whitaker asked.

"Love," Olivia said, after which she snuggled next to the good Doctor, very loudly. "Which I know you feel for me, too. And will give us both a reason to live, somehow, after tonight."

Whitaker dedicated himself to being a servant of humanity, but now, he felt to be a servant of his passion as well. Or so Comrade Olivia needed to believe if she was to not tear out the sutures Doctor John would so painfully use to sew her up. Olivia kissed Whitaker on the lips. He responded with as much love as she gave him, matching gesture for gesture, kiss for kiss, caress for caress with mathematical precision.

“Now, show me how much you really love me by making what you have to do as painful as possible,” she smiled.

There was no shortage of witnesses to the loving, hurting and feeling between Doctor John and Olivia. And no shortage of witness to everything that was being done, and felt.

CHAPTER 6

“Why shouldn’t I personally inspect the implementation of the De-Nazification program I started?” the wrinkle-faced, grey haired, hunched back old woman demanded to know of the three younger, stronger and very verile men on the other side of her reconditioned oak desk.

“Because your husband, and this country, already hired people to check on it for you,” Senator William Olson replied with a courtly bow, so as to hide his condescending eyes.

“And all official reports say that the de-Nazification of German POWs in those camps where your program is in place is a success story already,” the one star General Wesley Vanderhoof added with a five star attitude. “The prisoners are well fed, paid for their labors in and outside of camp, are allowed to go into town to see how free and happy Americans really are, and even have their own newspapers, where they can print anything they want.”

“As you can see by the latest edition on your desk, which my staff delivered personally,” Secret Service Supervisor Norman Iakoka added, pointing the old woman’s attention to the journal in question. “They’re writing very American stories, in German, for their fellow prisoners,” he boasted.

“And the ultimate censors of those newspapers applaud these Germans’ support of democracy, and are no doubt ecstatic about how they also oppose Socialism,” the old woman pointed out to the younger man. “A system, which when applied democratically, has one principle underlying all laws. That each give according to their abilities, and take according to their needs. No matter what their religion, skin color or----”

“----gender, we know, Madamme First Lady,” Olson interjected. “But deNazification, and sending German prisoners back home who will carry with them American values so we can win the War and rebuild a New Germany, takes time.”

“And special skills of a man, of course,” Eleanor Roosevelt sneered back at the men. “Not the whims and weakness of will of the ‘fairer’ sex, whose most important job is to produce babies, cook meals, and laugh at any joke a man makes, no matter how ignorant, racist or vicious it is,” she continued, staring into each of them. “Did I miss anything, ‘gentlemen’?”

The three advisors looked at each other, taking a silent vote amongst themselves as to who would be the first to stand up to the Iron Lady whose husband was the most powerful man in the Free World, perhaps excluding J Edgar Hoover.

“Well, gentlemen, of the braver, stronger and more powerful gender. Speak your minds, and your hearts if you have the stones to do so,” the once beautiful high born socialite

and now homely highly stationed battleaxe said to the men, both in unison and individually.

"It's too dangerous for you to visit the POW Camps," General Vanderhoof offered, sheepishly. "An accident could happen."

"Like the accident that DIDN'T happen when I flew with the Colored pilots of the Tuskegee Squadron in Alabama when they were out on maneuvers, then made the White officers in charge of the base accept those Negro patriates as being more brave, skillful and deserving of respect than most White skinned soldiers in uniform, General Vanderhoof," she blasted into face of the Georgian born descendant whose pedigree boasted decorated heroes in the Revolutionary War, the Civil War and the Spanish American 'conflict' of 1898.

"Yes, and as I recall, the Tuskegee airmen are doing a bang up job sticking it to the Germans in Europe," Minnesotan Senator Olson added, working his way up the ladder with the First Lady by stepping on the back of Vanderhoof, whose military career was a second choice to him being a member of Congress. "A credit to their race," he added.

"Which I trust you mean the HUMAN race, Senator?" Lady Eleanor shot back, leaning back on her chair, faining a ladylike submission manner, for now. "Fighting in an army that is fighting for equal right for all, but is still segregated."

"Soldiers function best when they are with their own kind," Vanderhoof proposed. "There are scientific studies that proof this," he asserted.

"Studies which I do not believe as being well designed, nor truthful," the First Lady replied, eager to reopen the arena for a fight which she was determined not to lose. Not to any racist. And certainly not to any man.

"But, studies which your husband seems to think are valid," Olson pointed out.

Eleanor paused, averting her eyes so that her real thoughts would not be read. "Franklin and I are...actively talking about such things," she finally stated.

"And other things, such as his health, Madamme Vice President?" Secret Service Agent Iakoka interjected, softly, with a humble bow. "I've spoken with Doctor Casey, who---"

"---I know," Eleanor blasted back. She she raised her hand, silencing the man whose assigned job was to protect her from bullets shot by potential assassins, and whose embraced Mission was to protect her from her own Passions and excesses.

Everyone in the room reviewed in their minds the real story about who was running the White House in their head. How the newsreels and photos in Life Magazine showing President Franklin Delanor Roosevelt as the tough talking, hard drinking, fearless leader of the America, and after the inevitable defeat of the Nazis after their defeat at Stalingrad,

the Free World were in reality as false as George Washington's wooden teeth. How any day now, FDR's inability to walk was progressing rapidly to his inability to see, hear or breathe, or perhaps speak and think coherently. How Eleanor Roosevelt, as the representative of her husband's most noble intentions, was essential for not only victory in the War against Fascism, but the fight against so many other insidious forms of evil at home. And how if Queen Eleanor was to ever be seen sitting on the throne, she would lose all of her power in the still male dominated kingdom of America the instant her backside hit the cushions. In an America where even though women finally had the vote, and officially, those of Color did, in some states anyway, those of the weaker gender and inferior races still voted according to the wills and whims of their White, Male, Christian Masters. Masters who, to be sure, were still counting the ballots.

"Perhaps it is workable for you to visit the German POW Camps," Agent Iakoka finally offered the First Lady. "But under strict supervision," he continued with a waving index finger. "One camp. For the sake of Franklin, the country and you."

"To be picked at random!" the over-educated battleaxe blasted out. With that, Eleanor Roosevelt shifted gears. The most powerful woman in America, a country still ruled by men, pushed her still strong torso up with her boney legs, and served tea to her guests, complimented by cookies and cakes. Thereafter, she turned conversation to the menu for the upcoming visit from the British, French and Russian ambassadors. Then to how the families of the three 'gentlemen' in front of her were doing.

Eleanor smiled vicariously at the mention of their families' good fortunes at home, the medals and war brides their lads were acquiring abroad, and of course giggled at the gentlemen's jokes. All the while, of course letting them do the talking, while she did all the listening, telling the gullable but still powerful know-it-alls absolutely nothing about her real agendas.

CHAPTER 7

The new prisoner to the Camp sat in front of Smith, his back arched with more pride than any man the American Commandant had seen, even himself in the mirror. His face was cleanly shaved around his meticulously trimmed mustache, the medals on his uniform spit polished to the point of blinding anyone who looked at them if the sun hit them right. Though he had been on countless trains, boats and buses that were anything but clean, tidy or even on time for a month or more, he seemed every inch a victor rather than one who had been at all defeated.

There were many questions Smith had to ask this SS Captain who, due to accident or intension by higher ups, had been delivered to his charge. The questions formulated themselves in Smith's head. "Why if you're so decorated a soldier of the Reich did you allow yourself to get captured?" "What dough-head or sadist at HQ sent an SS officer to a Camp which is officially one of the de-Nazified facility South of the Mason Dixon Line?" "Are those medals real, and if so, what can I really get for them on the black market?" But there was one inquiry that had to come first from this an officer who resembled Whitaker in face, and by half of his name. "So, Captain Hermann Whitaker-Schneider, what can you tell me about Major Doctor Wilhelm Fredrick Whitaker?" Smith asked the SS officer.

"A disappointment, and a disgrace," the reply as the Captain puffed on the American cigarette issued to him, holding onto it with his thumb and index finger just like the German interrogators did in the movies Smith had watched on American screens. "And potentially very dangerous," the Captain Scheider continued with a smirk that said 'you get nothing more out of me till there is something more in it for me than a lousy American cigarette, an overcooked chicken leg, and a cheese sandwich made with easily compressable white bread that's more air than grain.'

"A disappointment, disgrace and danger as what?" Smith pressed, pushing into Captain Schneider's reach two thick Bavarian sausages, and hearing his still rumbling stomach. "The highest ranking German officer in this Camp."

"We Germans have our own means of ranking ourselves," Schneider replied, sniffing the sausage, then pushing it back to its sender. "Both in the Army, and out of uniform."

"The sausage. Something wrong with it?" Smith inquired. "You think there's truth serum in it?"

"Worse," Schneider replied with a confident and humor infused smirk. "That authentic Bavarian sausage smells like it was cooked by Black Field hands who can barely read the label on the bottle of spices they grab from the shelves. Or worse, Jewish knish makers who try to trick your tongue while poisoning your belly."

"I know the feeling," Smith said after sharing the smile, and the joke. "When I was in New York, at a café that was supposed to have Cajun cuisine, I asked for catfish with

spicy cream gumbo sauce and got flounder smothered with bland and probably canned mushroom soup that---“

“---Enough about filling our bellies, and filling out our military service records,” Schneider interjected, glancing at a picture next to Smith’s blotter. “Tell me about her.”

“And I should do this because?” Smith inquired of the new overly-decorated prisoner who he feared as an adversary, admired as a soldier and envisioned as a drinking buddy.

“She reminds me of my Else back home, actually my brother’s Else until...” Schnieder stopped, putting out his hand.

Smith looked around the room, then into out the window at the compound. He closed the blinds to the latter, then locked the door to the former. On route back to his chair, he reached into his pocket, pulled out a wad of rolled bills, and slapped a Jackson into the arrogant yet admirable SS Officer’s hand. “Go on,” he said. “What else about the good Professor Doctor Major Whitaker can you tell me?”

“That he was not always so good,” the reply, with downturned eyes.

“Not so good, in what way?” Smith pressed as he pulled out the stack of money again, waving one, two, then three more twenties in front of the once rich Captain, who but for the initial twenty dollar bill, was penniless. “Tell me how Doctor Whitaker was not so good.”

“A pleasure, honor and moral necessity to do so, Major,” the Captain said. “But only after you tell me about her,” he pressed, pointing to the picture of the smiling blonde woman with the kind, warm eyes on the Commandant’s desk.

“What do you want to know about her, Captain?” Smith asked.

“Her name, to start. And...”

“Olivia,” the reply, with anger and disappointment in the Major Smith’s voice. “A beautiful bride who became an uncontrollable bitch. Crazy to boot. Who after she read books that no God fearing Christian should even know about, wouldn’t keep her Bolshevik, Nigger and Jew loving, bleeding heart mouth shut when we men do things that we have to do, in order to keep the world safe. Safe from...!” Smith stopped himself, having realized that he had, yet again, talked more than he listened.

“Safe from Red Communists who would destroy the world? Safe from Inferior Races who would plummet the world we worked so hard to build, for us and them, into chaos and disorder?” the Captain offered. “And safe from idealistic and deluded demons like Major Whitaker?”

Smith felt now like he was the one being interrogated. This time, it was the SS Captain whose plot inside his head was the one that seemed inevitable to be implemented. But was it a plot that could fit into Smith's design for the Camp, the Parish, and the world? Or maybe one that could only amplify it.

"Friends and Allies should not steal from each other," the SS Captain said to the American Major, after which he handed back the twenty dollar bill. "Or try to bribe them with counterfeit money."

"What do you want?" Smith asked Schneider.

"The same thing you do," Schneider replied. "A world where peace, law, order and the Natural hierarchy of things is maintained. Which, as you know---"

"---requires breaking some laws, in the service of Justice." Smith replied as he looked out the window. "I know," he continued as his heart wrestled with doing the reprehensible, and his mind set itself firmly on what was necessary.

CHAPTER 8

Private Leroy Robertson felt both unworthy and unwilling to be Santa for the Colored Hospital, but when Major Smith commands, you obey. Failure to do so for a White man means losing his job, and for a Black one, the connection between his head and his neck. But, the world was changing, and perhaps Horatio Smith was as well. Such were Leroy's thoughts when he was allowed to drive a functional Army jeep equipped with tires that actually had treads, and brakes that stopped when you pressed on them, as well as red garlands over its freshly painted green doors and hood. And tied to the back, presents for the good Colored kids and obedient adults.

Clad in a red Santa suit and white beard that made his black skin seem even darker, Leroy decided to take the scenic route to the converted dairy barn, a road shaded from the heat by trees but guarded by misquitos that said 'halt' to anything wanting to get through them. "Get away from me!" Leroy said to the most recent and hungry pack of flying 'guard-dogs' as he approached 'the downstairs gentleman's club', a maze of swamp and quicksand. The story told to money spending tourists and gullable wannabe novelists was that 'the club' had gobbled up no less than ten Yankee Carpetbaggers during Reconstruction after the Civil War, five G-men from Chicago who wanted in on local bootleggers bringing in Mexican and Cuban rum during Prohibition, and at least three German POWs who had tried to make a getaway from Smith's Camp with plans to blow up the White House on their way back home to the Fatherland. The reality was far more scary, of course, as the haunted bugs whose buzzing sounded more like human voice to Robertson confirmed. "Getaway from me, Uncle Joe, and Aunt Polly!" he said to two of them who seemed to be mating on his left forearm as he moved his Grandad's good luck bandana over his mouth so he wouldn't swallow another mouthful of flies and dirt. "Ain't my fault that you got caught doin' the right thing!" he told them through the 'outlaw mask' that got him arrested by Deputies, then 'pardoned' by then Police Chief Smith on more than one occasion when wearing it over his mouth in town. "Shoulda learned that pretending to be honorable and honest goes a lot further than actually bein such, fer us Coloreds. Maybe for everyone else." He turned to the collection of 'wedding guests' above the two large and boisterous bugs, helping themselves to another meal of Leroy blood. "Ya'll agree?"

The mosquitoes said nothing as they moved their way under the Santa sleeve. "Hey get out there!" Leroy yelled out to them as he pushed his sleeve up to his shoulder, noting a surface that was more bumpy bites than skin. Leroy scratched his arm raw, making him look more like a Black leper looking for a place to bunk in for the night rather than a Negro Santa delivering a Christmas good will package from future Governor Smith to his Colored constituents, as there actually were some Negroes in the Louisiana backcountry who could read well enough to pass the 'litracy' test to enable to vote.

Finally, the cloud of mosquitoes went on their way, replaced by an oncoming wind. A wind that was hot rather than cool, which smelled of burnt wood, and flesh. Turning the corner, the stench embedded into Leroy's large nostrils got stronger, no matter how many layers of bandana he put over them. Three potholes later, it was appended by smoke,

then ash that put a grey covering over the windshield, on both sides. After clearing the windshield with wipers from the front, and his Granddads' good luck bandana from behind, Leroy's eyes beheld something he had not thought possible in North America, or even the Deep South.

The front and back door to the hospital, as well as all of the windows, were locked closed. The 'weather-seasoned' brown walls were toasted to a black charcoal crust. Inside, bodies of men, women and children lay on the ground, their Black and Mollato arms caressing each other, or holding onto their own throats. A can lay next to the building, with a pump leading to what had been the inside of the burnt barn. It reeked of cyanide. There was one witness was outside the building, leaning on tree. Her eyes were still open, her hands tied behind her, her vaginal port very violated.

"So, Miss Olivia, what the hell happened here?" Leroy asked his boss's wife, as if she was still alive. "And why!!!" he screamed at her, then to the sky, to the Lord who was supposed to deliver Colored Christians into the gates of heaven on His time, not their earthly master's. "Why!!!" he blasted out, looking to Olivia, the only White Woman he ever knew who, other than Nurse Sally, who REALLY looked at a Colored Woman, and Man, as an equal. Leroy stroked her face, pushing the hair aside from her eyes, hoping to find an answer. To his dismay, and anger he did. On her lifeless forehead was carved, in English script that looked more Old World than new, 'Nigger loving Jew and Communist'.

A closer look at the building next to her revealed more writing. "Necessary extermination," it read.

It wasn't the first time Leroy had read explanation notes from Klan members as to why they did what was necessary for the 'common Christian good'. But it was the first time he recognized the writing. To confirm it, he reached into his pocket, at the vials of medicine he had won in the Poker Game, that special elixir that allowed common men to become supermen. To not have to eat, sleep or be afraid of bullets on the battlefield, blows in the bar, or billi-clubs in police interrogation room. Major Whitaker's private stash, the instructions as to how much to take in his handwriting. Handwriting that matched the carvings on 'Comrade' Olivia's head, the explanation sign for the mass gassing and burning at the barn. A mass killing that would have involved Leroy as well, if he had not taken the scenic route to the hospital on his assigned Colored Santa delivery run.

Converting his good fortune into good deeds, Leroy reached into the Santa bag where he ironically found a camera. Using all of the film he could, he took photos of the victims and the crime scene. Then he gathered the dead into a single pile, centered around Olivia. "These all were innocent folks, Lord," the agnostic said to the Creator whose existence he had written off. "Coulda been good folks ifn they wasn't so 'tested' by life here. All of them. Or..." Leroy eyed the faces, or what was left of the faces, of some of the departed. "Most of them anyways," he concluded. "But in any case, You owe it to us and Yer reputation ta look after them now. And You owe me the chance to get the first

digs into the bastard, German Nazi who did this!” Leroy withdrew a festively decorated carving knife from the sheath strapped to his waist. A cooking implement that was intended to cut up Christmas ham. Now something that he was determined to use against the only German he really liked, and trusted.

The Colored trickster who didn’t have the heart to slaughter a hog, and whose fist had never pounded into anyone’s flesh than his own, imagined it cutting into Whitaker’s guts, chest, then eyes. Slowly and painfully. But only after the ‘Good Doctor’ was tortured between the ears, and in his sadistic black heart.

CHAPTER 9

“I had nothing to do with this,” Major Whitaker assured his fellow prisoners from atop the elevated platform in the middle of the compound. “And I was on special assignment doing medical procedures for two discrete clients!” he asserted as he looked straight into Smith’s face. “Your companions who----“

“----Do not remember you being with them,” came from one of the prisoners, a Captain whose SS insignia had been removed from his uniform, his tattoo identifying him as a member of that elite Corp covered with actor’s make up and fake blood. “And as for Major Professor Doctor Whitaker’s story about being with any of us Germans at the time of the killings, Major Smith, such is, cowdung?”

“Bullshit!” Whitaker blasted back at the smart assed Captain, whose rank and manner of carrying himself now made him the new commander of the Germans who had been under his command, and care. “All of this is bullshit!” he said to the American soldiers, most of whose lives he had improved, medically, psychologically and/or financially, one way or another. “All of this is lies!” the good doctor barked in German to his troops, particularly the ones who looked better fed than the others. “All of you know who and what I am.”

“Or maybe we don’t?” the new Captain asked the deposed Major, with a calm and caring tone.

“Maybe not,” Whitaker conceded, gazing down to the ground, then up to the sky, then into himself. After taking a deep breath through lungs that were wrapped by, interestingly, only four broken ribs incurred during his containment by Private Robertson, Whitaker stared into the eyes, and soul of the new Captain. “You don’t know who I am, perhaps. But we all know WHAT you are Captain!”

The tense silence between the brothers in arms and half brothers in blood filled the air, permeating into everyone nostril breathing it. It lingered like an early morning Bayou fog or late afternoon high pressure wave of hot humid air moving in from the Gulf of Mexico. The German prisoners grunted curses at their former beloved ‘father doctor’, edging their way to the platform. Neither their Captain nor Major Smith’s men stopped them. Whitaker braced himself, resolved to his fate, though still protested it. Until the proceedings were broken by a gunshot, from Private Robertson.

The bullet went into the air. The Black Man who was always on the bottom of the totem pole rose up to the top of it, proclaiming his Commands like his ancient Grand African Chieftain ancestors. “He gets a fair trial, then he gets hung!” Robertson command. He turned to the woman next to him. “Right, Miss Sally?”

The Nurse who remained stoic and functional, as well as caring, throughout the deadly Spanish flu after the Great War, countless mass accidents in lingering days of Prohibition and every manner of personal and medical challenge during the Great Depression that

this next War buried rather than eliminated said nothing. Her face was blank. But her eyes were angry. She looked up towards Whitaker, took in a deep breath, growled like a banchee. Before she could tear Whitaker apart, something he seemed to welcome, Robinson held her back. Finally, she broke down, burying her face into his strong chest. As this kind of anger and grief was contagious, Robinson's face shed a river of tears. Major Smith came around, accepting a willing Sally into his arms. "I'll take over from here, Mister Robinson, Sir," he said. "Thank you."

It was the first time Robinson had been called 'Mister' by Smith, the first time any White Man had called him Sir. And the first occasion in a long time that anyone of any color had said 'thank you' to him.

Meanwhile, Whitaker was taken to a holding cell at the far end of the compound, protected from the fists, boot-heels and concealed weapons from his own men by American soldiers. Soldiers who promised that he'd get far worse from them than he'd get from his fellow Germans. But, as one of them said, "nothin' next to what the Devil in hell has in store for you."

With that, Whitaker was pushed onto the cold, hard floor of the cell, the door locked behind him. What would happen to him now didn't matter, somehow. He just hoped that somehow in whatever future he had left, he could resolve the 'miscalculations' he did in his past. Or, failing that, suffer the most agonizing punishment possible for making them.

CHAPTER 10

“Black is the color of my true love’s hair,” Wilhelm Whitaker self observed himself singing to himself in his isolated, steel bared music studio. The good doctor and now ex-Major recalled the soul-infused blues version of that tune which was so melodically expressed by the nearly toothless old man in Colored Hospital hidden in the wood whom Whitaker saved from the clutches of death from bacteria, inflammation and progressive cancer. But the very non-musical voice of ‘good’ the doctor now convicted of killing him and many other patients echoed against the walls of the cell, reminding him not only of how off key her really was, but how appropriately he described his beloved by the reference to a long, black mane.

Whitaker tried to picture what Else looked like that day when he saw her last beyond the feature he remembered most easily. That day when her green eyes were so vibrant that they could light up any room, even if was showered with sunlight. That day when on her lips was rose colored lipstick which complimented the red dress made by a Red Jewish tailor that she had worn on their honeymoon in London during the warm summer of ‘38 where she initiated no less than three spontaneous swims in the Thames which washed away the hold science and technology had on Wilhelm’s soul. That day in the fall of ‘39, when the Police came and took her away for routine questioning regarding her husband’s worthiness to be promoted in rank and research budget. That day when Else took her own life with a cyanide capsule, leaving behind a note professing her love for convicted Bolshevik Jacob Weinburg and his Cause, and her hope that Wilhelm would be saved by the monster incubating in his brilliant yet spiritually dying soul.

Outside the dark cell, the band in the brightly-lit Rec Hall broke into yet another Glen Miller favorite, “Pennsylvania 6-5000.” Fortunately, it was not played with the precision that the ‘have to get it exactly as it is in my head and nor yours’ band leader insisted on when he was conducting. The loudest of the voices were from Major Smith and Captain Schneider. Both sounded happy, enthused and very drunk, as the numbers were sometimes inverted and when they were voiced, the consonants were not clearly enunciated, if pronounced at all.

It was a very celebratory affair, reminding Whitaker of the kind of international revelry that happened on the night of November 11, 1918. The German Fritzes, Yankee Doughboys, British Tommies and French Frogs decided to finally give the third finger salute to their officers and celebrate the official end of the War with the enemy in a still standing French tavern rather than linger in the Trenches for a solemn prayer of thanks led by the Company Chaplin.

Whitaker considered that maybe this was what was being celebrated. Certainly, if the War was over, prisoners would be the last to be told about it. Particularly in Camps where Major Smith continuously would say that the ‘semi-voluntary occupants’ should do something to earn their board and keep. Perhaps the women who seemed to be in very attendance at this unusually celebratory dance, had told not only the prisoners, but the guards who lived in fear of Smith’s wrath, that the legally sanctioned unleashing of all

manner of cruelty and immorality called 'War' was over. No doubt both the perhaps widowed or perhaps still married women and the men stationed far away from their loved ones at home would not pass up the chance to have a last fling with someone 'exotic' who made them feel young again, before they had to go home to those they would grow old with, starting with perhaps the second day after their arrival.

"And then there's Else," Whitaker said to the cockroach who had become his favorite six legged cell mate, diversion from sensory deprivation and, if he listened hard enough, life coach. "Whose face I tried to forget, but can't. So, decided to remember again by what I painted on here," he continued, pointing to a red image imprinted onto a dark grey wall. "I know, it would have been easier for you to see her real features if I had some chalk, a paintbrush, or hmmm." He glanced at his the cut in the tip of his finger, which had closed up. He reached for a jagged piece of metal, then cut open the scabbed over flesh, extending it into a bit of healthy tissue. "I know, Gregor," he continued to the roach who he envisioned as the main character in Kafka's Metamorphosis, a book he had observed in flames and in its own way help to burn on many a 'cleansing' fire in at least four cities at home, three times that number in countries that had been brought into the New Germany, for their own good of course. "Smith, Schneider and even my own men, me and even Else, would have liked me to slash my wrists with this sharp piece of metal. Or ate the sandwich made with real, non-air filled brown bread it was layered into by whoever prepared it to me from the Mess tent. And God, if He still exists for me, knows that I deserve such. But there are times when you have to make final statement. One that is personal, and not-political. And very much overdue," he muttered as he continued drawing the portrait of Else, as best and painfully as he could remember her face.

After a few bold strokes, then many introspective ones, he leaned back to look at his work. "I know, Gregor. It doesn't look anything like who she really was. But it's an hmmm.... An abstract. An impressionist---"

"---piece of shit," Whitaker heard from a female voice, whose owner walked into the room from a door that had opened so quietly, that he didn't hear it. "That I suppose sells as Art in important and perverted neighborhoods in New York, London or Berlin," said Nurse Sally, clad in a very off-duty pokadot dress and red heels accessorized by real pearl earrings and an imitation pearl necklass noted topped off with a head of big, blonde hair, unable to determine exactly whether she was experiencing awe or terror. Still, the artwork that repulsed every aspect of her White Bread American upbringing held her stare hostage. "It's got a certain madness to it though. A certain passion of sorts," she said, anticipating, yet again, Whitaker's inquiry. "A kinda primal, Life infused Fire that, well, no one I know could stoke up no matter how many logs, charcoals or dairies you don't want yer ex ta getta hold of."

"And which, if we don't recognize and use for Creative purposes this time, will emerge as a volcano that will destroy the world from the inside as well as the outside, now that the War is over," Whitaker added. "It is over. The Wr that is, isn't it?"

“What makes you say, or even imagine that?” the woman whose testimony was the nail in the coffin at Whitaker’s trial blurted out.

“That celebration in the Rec Hall. Prisoners drinking with the guards. And most of the guards not even knowing they have firearms slung on their backs or strapped to their waist,” Whitaker said. “Like that one!” He pointed Sally’s attention away from the painted dedication and confession to his Else, and everyone else’s Else whose death he was directly or indirectly responsible for. His stare and hers lingered on the details of a sleeping guard on the other side of the cell door who emanated snores from a mouth that was fixed in a carefree ‘happy’ shit eating grin.

“Oh, Sam Preston,” Sally said, pointing to a ring on the fourth digit of her left hand which Whitaker had not seen before. “I told him I was too married, too old, and too dedicated to work instead a play, but one swig of happy juice can make even me look like Cinderella, I suppose. Two swigs, and he’s enjoyin’ a roll in the hay with that dream woman he met with he was 19 who probably don’t even remember his name now,” she continued regarding the stoic Church going Baptist Seargent whose sprouted third leg between his trousers was stainted with a flow of love juice. “And three swigs---“

“Went into the punch at the Rec Hall?” Whitaker interjected as he peered out the window and saw the gates to the compound open. Men were arm in arm with women, and men arm in arm with each other. All were stolling, dancing or laughing without a care in the world. “You have to give me your moonshiner’s recipe. I was an expert in devising drugs that turn catatonic cowards into heroes, and heroes into supermen. But turning killers into dancers, or saints? I’d kill, kill myself that is, to steal that elixor from Mother Nature, the gods who ruled from Mount Olympus, the Heavenly father who still hasn’t woken up from his lunch break, or----”

The discourse between the stoic man blessed with a body that didn’t age and a romantic woman whose features all did ended with Sally throwing a bag into Whitaker’s hands. “Balls of compressed white bread, beef jerky and Goober’s peas for your belly,” Sally said by way of explanation for the peanuts, meat and baked goods in the first compartment of the bag. “Money and some jewelry that was cluttering up my closet. Some real, some counterfeit, in case you need to buy a train ticket, get on a bus or hop on a boat,” she noted regarding the component of the second compartment said with averted eyes. “And finally, this.” She whipped off her pokadot dress, throwing it into Whitaker’s face.

Whitaker uncovered his eyes, to discover upon seeing that Sally had worn another dress, a weather worn brown sharecropper’s hand-me-down ensemble that went down nearly to her ankles.

Sally’s hair had instantly changed as well, the mound of thick, long, blonde lockes on her head replaced by a shorter mop of thinning brown mixed with grey hair. “This too,” she said as she threw Whitaker the blonde wig she had come into the cell with. She threw a large scarf over her head in the manner of the old Babuka’s in Russia and, as Whitaker so

painfully recalled, dangerous female criminals in back home who were stripped of their seditious books, access to arms they could use against the Fatherland, and most of their hair.

A large sized handbag was next to be thrown into Whitaker's startled face. It contained a razor, make up, and large sized pumps.

"I observed you do some good things, and heard about you doin' some real bad ones. And I know that you ain't told me, or maybe any other woman, what and who you really are, but... I'll ask ya just two things," she said by way of explanation. "No, I demand three things. First, shave well, walk softly and speak in whispers, only when spoken to once you get out those gates."

"Of course," Whitaker slurred out, envisioning an escape route as well as dealing with feelings about the 'woman inside him' which he felt by the touch of the wardrobe and accessories. Feelings that few men ever had the need, or opportunity, to address. "And thing two?"

"Remember this," Sally walked up to Whitaker, hugged him as tightly as she could, and kissed him on the lips.

"Always," Whitaker smiled.

"And above all," Sally said with a wide, warm grin that turned into an angry sneer Whitaker recognized no more than a second before she punched him in the stomach. "Never even think about seeing me after all of this is over. Or that will be a knife in yer belly steada' just my fist. Fer both our sakes."

With that, the gracious ex-beauty queen smeared black paint on her who snuck into the cell shuffled out of the cell as a field Negress. The German Doctor-Professor Major who carefully weighted every decision he ever made found himself smashed between a past that had crept behind him, and a future that pulled him into improvising everything on the spot, including questions of who, what, where and even 'why'.

CHAPTER 11

“This appears to be an odd way to decide what POW Camp I visit to assess the effectiveness of my, AND Franklin’s of course, deNazification program,” Eleanor Roosevelt said to Senator Olsen, Secret Service Agent Iakoka and General Vanderhoof on the other side of the still not reconditioned desk in her West Wing office that she insisted not be.

“You said the Camp was to be chosen at random, Mrs. Roosevelt,” Secret Service Agent Iakoka said regarding the handsome, middle aged gentleman with long braids in a plain black suit artfully shuffling cards while standing at the side of the desk.

“You pick three cards from the deck, at random. A queen is a one, and a king is a zero, Ma’am,” General Vanderhoof added with an exaggerated bow regarding the well-groomed First Nations card dealer who by no stretch of the imagination could be called a ‘dirty Indian’ or a ‘smelly Injun’.

“And this dealer wielder of the White Man’s cards from the money-hungry whose eyes seem to be anything but White, or money hungry?” Eleanor asked as she peered into the middle aged Yaqui who spoke only with his life-tested eyes, and with a language that the First Lady trusted. “People from whom we stole land from in the last century, and who in this century, most ‘red blooded’ Americans West of the Mississippi seek to steal their dignity from as well?”

“Who was picked at random,” Senator Olsen assured the First Lady. “And, so it seems, presents an opportunity to develop a good liason between our people and his, in a world where everyone gives according to their ability and takes according to their needs, despite any difference in Color, Religion or gender, Comrade Eleanor?”

No one had ever addressed the present First Lady as ‘Comrade Eleanor’ except for dignitaries from the Soviet Union, a powerful and essential enemy against Hitler and the Japanese. And of course members of the Right Wing press, the KKK and the Capitalist caste who valued the welfare of rich, white, Christian Americans above everyone else. Indeed, Christian newspapers and gossipers at Church socials had deemed Eleanor a ‘Socialite turned Socialist’ witch, who had cast a spell on her husband so that he initiated the New Deal, considering the ‘hand outs’ to hungry and out of work Americans as instruments of the devil who, of course, had his headquarters in Moscow.

General Vanderhoof and Agent Iakoka smirked with satisfaction when Olson cringed in his chair, awaiting consternation from the kindly First Lady who could turn into a tyrannical queen if provoked. But, Eleanor let the ‘Comrade’ comment from Olsen slide, as it felt sincere. Meanwhile, the Indian shuffling the cards stopped his motion, offering the First Lady a pick for the first number.

“Thank you, Sir,” she said with a bow to the Red Skinned man who most probably hadn’t been called Sir by any White Woman, but would be if she had anything to say about it.

The first card was a three. The second, a seven. The last one, a Jack, registering no number. "Which means we draw again for a third number?" Eleanor asked the three gentlemen hired to protect her from herself by whoever was really in charge in DC. She pointed to a third card. "A king," she noted as her gaze was held hostage by the face of a man wearing a crown whose eyes seemed defeated, dying and about to close forever. "Which means..."

"...a zero," according to the rules of this random selection," Olsen said, after which he took the cards into his hand, shuffling them himself, less skillfully than the previous dealer, who still remained standing. "And 370 means where, General Vanderhoof?" the Northerner Senator asked the Southern born and bred General.

"Louisiana," Agent Iakoka said, noting the location on the map for the Camp Chosen. "Midway between Baton Rouge and New Orleans."

"Which means a far distance from anywhere civilized, given the swamps, the people and the 'Dixie charm' of 'cultures' where they still call the War to Free the Slave, the War of Northern Aggression," Olsen offered.

General Vanderhoof's white face turned beet red. Clearly he was formulating yet another defense for his Southern ancestors who for the most part, didn't own slaves, and who he claimed were kinder to those who were slaves than Yankee factory owners who indentured, overworked, underpaid and eventually killed by exhaustion and humiliation millions of unassuming immigrants as well as poor American born Whites. But before the Civil War could be resurrected, Eleanor took the cards into her hand.

"Five card draw, gentlemen," she commanded. "For FIVE players," she graciously asserted, requesting that her White, handsomely paid butler get a chair for the Red Skinned dealer.

"And what are we playing for?" the one star General asked the First Lady.

"The non-competitive pleasure and honor of each others' company," the proclamation, and hope from the First Lady.

CHAPTER 12

“So, what’ll ya’ll have?” Horatio Smith, clad in civies that made his fat gut seem even larger than the size extra large US Army tunic made it appear, inquired of his special guest at the Gator Emporium and Eatery. “Or who?” he continued, pointing to the five beauties dancing on stage under the rotating red lights, dressed in nothing but their birthday suits. “I know them all, ya know. And by their real names.”

“And their bacterial friends who inhabit the bedroom with you?” Captain Hermann Schneider politely inquired, inhabiting a suit that, in his younger days, Smith could fit into. “And besides that, do you really want to infect your genetic pool with defective blood?” the Aryan German Captain said regarding the multi-colored collection of Exotic Dancers. “They all look half, or at least a quarter, non-White, do they not?” he continued, smoking his cigar like a European monarch rather than puffing on a stogy like a down home good ole boy, as if he would do anything to reveal himself to be different, or better than them. “Yes, these women have genetics and mannerisms from inferior races.”

“That’s the spice in the soup,” Horatio boasted as he feasted his eyes on the women who provided visual variety with a different wig every night, and sensual satisfaction with new ways to satisfy his manhood, and yearning to find a woman he could really love like the way his wife Olivia used to be. “White women are for the most part more bitch than babe. Either that, or they’re boring. And if not that, they become....too dangerous to keep around. Then after you ask them to shut up about business that ain’t yours, and they betray you too boot...” Smith retreated into himself, but noticed that his new business partner was about to peak inside his head, yet again. Smith turned his attention to the multicolored peelers again. “Besides, don’t you German MEN get sick of making love to German women who don’t wear any make up? And whose muscles are strong, like men, steada curvy like huggable and lovable women?”

“The Fuhrer’s orders, which when applied, produce an orderly world, and a powerful country, Major.”

“One that don’t know how to have any fun, even after you’ve conquered every carnival in town, I’d suggest, Hemann.”

Schneider was not dumb enough to insist on being called ‘Captain’, as he had on so many other occasions, at least in public. And he was smart enough to look around, sensing what others were thinking rather than revealing his hand. Such was a crafty man worthy of Smith going into business with him, as a fellow Swiss banker, investment broker and textile buyer of course. A Swiss partner who knew more about the black market in Louisiana and the rest of the Deep South than Whitaker knew about medicine, or even ancient philosophers. A Black market that worked out of internationally neutral ports in Spain, Ireland, Sweden and a few countries South of the Rio Grande. Countries which, like people whose identity remained very discrete, still had in place bets on both a Fascist and Allied victory, with guaranteed profits no matter what the outcome.

Out of all the business partners involved with farming out prisoners, selling them, or extorting money from their families while they were in captivity for Police Chief and now Commandant Smith, Schneider was now the top on the list. The German POW who 'conveniently' got captured, and sent to his Camp, Schneider was always reliable, always honored his financial word, and always proposed an even more profitable deal after the last transaction was concluded. He was a business partner who was always in control. But, as Smith knew all too well, the best way to tell what a man really was required seeing him when he was out of control.

"So, ya'll gonna drink that?" Smith said of the elixir specially formulated at the bar for his guest that had still only been sipped. "It's an insult to the host if you leave a glass three quarters filled, and, well, if goods you want to ship out to your people in Europe, and to my people here in America are gonna be transported without delay or complication, Billy Roy, who runs this establishment and everything that goes up and down the delta in front of it ain't gonna be happy. Versteh?"

Schneider wised up. He smelled the drink in the nearly filled glass, yet again.

"Here, take mine," Smith offered, sneaking over his ¼ filled glass over Smith's way, taking into his hand Schneider's. "Bottom's up!" Smith said, after which he downed the lion's share of his partner's un-swallowed drink. As Billy Roy was now watching, Schneider polished off the remaining contents in Smith's glass, then gave his host a hearty thumbs up with a good ole boy from Geneva smile.

"That drink wasn't so bad once you committed to it, was it?" Smith asked Schneider. "And there isn't any alcohol in it, just like I promised."

"No, I suppose not," Schneider's reply.

Billy Bob send over his most attractive waitress, clad in a doctor outfit with a stethoscope that oscillated like a pendulum across her two sized perfect exposed breast. Her Caucasian genetics seemed to meet all of Schneider's standards. She put another pitcher of the punch onto the table. "It's a hot day, and you gentlemen are workin hard. Gotta hydrate. Doctor Penny's orders," she said through a high pitched hushed voice with an German accent while stroking Schneider's left cheek. A cheek which, Smith observed, did begin to sweat. As a third leg popped up at attention in his groin.

"Step and, and two," Smith thought to himself as Schneiders eyeline followed Doctor Penny's wiggling ass sasheeing back to the bar. He poured Schneider a full glass of vodka spiked punch, sneaking water into his own.

It seemed to be the first time that Schneider drunk real booze. He became a very talkative drunk, particularly when Smith asked him about his family back home. And his business partners everywhere else. Armed with an ability to remember any name, phone number or address that went into his ear (and a liver that neutralized any excess fire water

that would soften his head) Smith's brain took long and accurate dictation on Schneider spilling the beans about what he knew, where he had been before the War, and what he planned to do after the War. All very useful and connected information that seemed by reason and intuition to be very real. All until, after revealing all Smith wanted to know about his new partner, one comment was delivered by Schneider in a sober, direct and no-nonsense tone. And in accentless English.

"You didn't ask me about my experience as an actor, and I can assure you that it is top rate. Superior to any of your tricks of thinking you can get me drunk, or serve your agenda. You and your people may have won the War, but me and my people will win the Peace afterwards. And it is YOUR people who will listen to mine, or else..." With that, Schneider drank another full glass of vodka spiked punch, emerging from it with neither sweat on his face nor or any kind of passivity in his determined. "Now, if you will deliver to my quarters, tonight, Doctor, or rather Nurse Penny, I will return her to you and your friends safely and well satisfied tomorrow morning. That is, unless I find out that she is Jewish, in which case, well..."

Smith knew enough to not ask any more details. And to listen to his junior partner who now seemed to be in control of the ship. A ship that now had a completely different destination to its travels than the mere nickel and dime black marketeering of a Bayou bully and bushwacker who had bitten off more than he could chew, and now had to remain for the whole meal.

CHAPTER 13

Three changes of clothing, four alterations in gender, and six personae later enabled the most Wanted fugitive in Louisiana snuck across the border into Texas. Knowing that it was impossible for anyone North of the Mason Dixon line and anyone on the other side of the Pond to imitate an kind of authentic Southern American accent, Whitaker kept trying to pass himself as a foreign born traveler, at one point claiming his origin being the country of New York City, and its neighboring suburb, Boston. It has been an adventure of sorts, changing hair color, life story and sense of identity for the always-planning Whitaker who had been conditioned to even more routine by being a POW for 3 years, but it felt liberating. Liberating and scary. Indeed, Whitaker felt so at home in his improvised personae, that he hated to give them up. But as the wanted posters in the post offices bearing his likeness found their way to the grocery stores, then every newspaper Whitaker picked, he knew it was time to leave.

As for those newspapers, the newsprint ink smelled just as fishy as the printed material in Germany smelled false. Wilhelm Whitaker, aka Billy White, perused a discarded day old copy of the Dallas Gazette on his way to points further West on the freight trains that, according to the other hobos, too old to enlist and too misunderstood to be accepted by their estranged families, would stop briefly at the depot just midnight. One could never believe any journalist's account of the War, the only thing that could be counted on as fact being baseball scores, showtimes for the latest John Wayne film in the local Cinema, and accounts of who departed the realm of the living, maybe 94% of the time.

While waiting for another freight train to pull into the portion of the city that no one knew, or cared about, Whitaker recalled the ranting, ravings and legacy left to him by Professor Bloomberg. Bloomberg had been the very temporary head of the History Department at the University of Munich back in 1921, during the hungry yet golden era when the Fatherland was in the process of refinding itself after the Great War. "Current news is always about what we want to believe about ourselves, want others to believe about us, or do for us," Bloomberg would say before, after and during every lecture he presented. "The real study of today lies in what happened in the past, and is still unfinished," he would prophesize, particularly with regard to the failed Artist who found a new Calling as a grass roots leader for National Socialism.

Whitaker's ever racing mind indulged in a pit stop back in the lecture hall that smelled of old oak rather than the railway stop that reeked of garbage. His recollection went to a particular lecture that Professor Bloomberg tried so hard to turn into an interactive discourse. It was about the relationship between the United States and Mexico, contrasting what was written in the American history books and what was recorded in those published South of the Rio Grande. A history in which Mexico, a conscience and commitment oriented country that had abolished slavery a century before it was outlaws in 'the land of the free and the home of the brave', had lost its first large plot of Real Estate to the US when slave owning Texan 'heroes' whopped Santa Anna at the Plains of San Jacinto in 1835. Ten years later, Mexican War, considered immoral and illegal by Americans ranging from US Grant, to Henry David Thoreau, to a budding lawyer from

Illinois names Abe Lincoln, resulted in the Americanization of California, Arizona, New Mexico and the lion's share of Colorado. American colonization of the 'grease backs' to the South was then waged by Gringo Industrialists who owned most of the country's economy till they were tossed out during the Mexican Revolution in 1912 which, for a time anyway, gave the land owned by aristocrats back to the peasants who worked hard and died painfully on it. In retribution, BlackJack Pershing was given permission by the White House to invade Mexico with an Army of 5,000 men, which came back without the head of Socialist Anarchist bandito Pancho Villa and a plethora of saddle sores.

Sometime around 1915, it was said that the Kaiser in Berlin offered to give Texas back to Mexico in exchange for lending various kinds of non-combative support to the German Cause. Assuming that this British based story was true, and not merely a ploy to get America into the War, the Mexican government would have probably accepted the offer.

As for the present, Mexico and the US were still enemies, culturally anyway. With a rumbling stomach, trying to access whatever food in a dumpster had not been eaten by rats or other hobos, Whitaker recalled the multitude of cafes, bars and general stores that read 'No Mexicans or Spanish speakers allowed' with print just as big, bright and angry as those disallowing Coloreds from accessing Whites Only public bathrooms, eateries or hospitals. There was also no shortage of Latino farm workers who offered the on the lamb Whitaker a chance to share the food donated to them by their fat Gringo bosses, stay dry from the rain under their make-shift tents, and indulge in songs which were as artistically performed as any in Europe with three times the quality of heart. The only thing these hard working and self-educated, very literate, Mexicans hated were the Devil, and fat cat Gringos.

Though Whitaker's knowledge of Spanish was as poor as his ability to make himself understood through the related languages of Italian and French, Mexico seemed to be a logical choice as a next destination. It was, according to his best knowledge, a country that was for the most part Pro-German, certainly Anti-American and, most importantly for his integration there short of long term, anti-Communist.

Whitaker finished off the remaining portion of a discarded side of ham retrieved from the dumpster, throwing every third bite to two freight yard dogs who he hoped to keep quiet and who he prayed was not owned by one of the Policemen patrolling the yard. Law enforcement officers who were handsomely paid to put stray hungry hobos in jail, Mexicans into a privately owned chain gang and escaped German POWs into the ground. Two trains approached, one heading South, the other West. "To be a singing Cowboy or a Mariachi trumpet player, that is the question," Whitaker said to the dogs in his most accent-less English.

He looked West, imagining that the Karl Mai books so popular in Germany with everyone, even Adolf Hitler, about the West were right. That if you went far enough West, and high enough up the Rockies, that you'd find wild horses you could ride, buffalo to eat and Indians who would welcome you as a friend no matter what you had done in your past. Then his gaze turned to points South. Such offered a chance to maybe

get a boat to go home, and make right what he had done so wrong there. Something that would be extremely hard as the once-Nazi who helped build Hitler's Germany was now intent on destroying it, an impossible task that would cost him not only his life, but probably his honor, yet again.

As always, be it out of habit or conscience, Whitaker took the hardest choice.

CHAPTER 14

The crossing into Mexico was easy, as the Rio Grande was more of a flowing mud puddle than a real river. The fence on the American side of that neandering body of cloudly water was as intact as the average German soldier's conviction that there really would be a new offensive on the Russian Front that would enable them to march into Stalingrad and Moscow unopposed in time for the next Octoberfest. On the other side of the border lay more desert vegetation that somehow thrived in the absence of visible water but seemed to be covered in patch fog. Once the sun came up, more factories and cantinas appeared in the distance. Such would hire anyone who would work for the lowest wage. Upon entering them during the quietest and earliest time of the day, and Whitaker saw something he never expected to see driving around in the streets, and on what looked like very official business.

The motorized caravan was well armed, the men in it overloaded with medals on their uniforms. Thankfully, the Mexican Aztec Air Squad and their American Army buds were either hung over, or still enjoying the tail end of a night of heavy drinking and no doubt intense whoring, as they passed by Whitaker, void of any disguise now, without knowing or caring who he was. A glance of the destination the long line of open jeeps and covered trucks were heading to was a military base that flew the Stars and Stripes as well as the more ornate flag of the Republic of Mexico at equal heights.

"Yes, our enemies neighbors to the North are now are friends," a man behind Whitaker voiced in heavily accented English. "But I wonder what's going to happen after the War, when you Gringos outlive your use for us as soldiers and go back to underpaying us to mow your lawns, build your mansions, clean your toilets and raise your babies so your wives can gossip with their friends, or perhaps, invite the mailman in for more than just a cup of coffee, hmmm?"

Whitaker slowly turned around, noting that emerging from the shadow of the man was a large, straight projection which seemed to be the barrel of a long shotgun, or a short rifle. The shadow of the weapon turned into a shovel. The small framed laborer behind it spoke with the deep baritone voice, belying an education that was clearly well in advance of his wardrobe.

"I'm not a Gringo," Whitaker said to the man in his best Spanish. "I swear to God," he continued in English, after which he crossed himself in the manner of his Catholic upbringing.

"But you're running away from something North of the border," the reply from the heavily mustached old man whose muscles were firm and fingertips well blistered. "But whatever it is, it seems that God has forgiven you. Or you're still asking him to. Which makes you one of us now."

"And that is?" Whitaker inquired.

“A Gringo,” he smiled back. “Who looks hungry, tired and smells like river sludge. And who....hmmm.”

Whitaker felt himself being looked at from head to toes, then penetrated with X-ray vision, the same way he had assessed every POW who came into the Camp after his semi-voluntary capture by the Allies in Northern Africa. He felt to be the victim of fear rather than someone whose wits were fed from it, for the first time since his escape from Smith’s Camp. Whitaker’s thoughts went to Sally, then Else, then the fellow Germans who he had protected from Smith and who were now at the mercy of Captain and half brother Schneider, a manipulative and party line Nazi who, by sheer ‘accident’ had been sent to the Camp where he was interned.

Finally, the self or perhaps government assigned inspector passing himself off as a common laborer completed his assessment. He reached behind his back and threw Whitaker a small shovel. “This morning, we dig. This evening we talk. Tomorrow, you go on your way, or remain with us on OUR terms. Comprende Gringo?”

“Si,” Whitaker replied, not knowing what he was agreeing to but fully realizing that just as on the civilized side of the Atlantic, ‘he who asks too many questions gets too many answers’. But he did have to ask one question. “What is your name, Sir?”

“Pedro. You can call me Pedro, and you are?”

“Billy,” Wilhelm replied. “Billy Bob Jones.”

“Of course,” the comeback delivered with a wince of disbelief, but acceptance.

CHAPTER 15

When Eleanor Roosevelt asked for the morning paper, she requested at least three different publications. Five if she needed to smell deeper between the lines of the various lies to get at the truth. “Somewhere between Pravda and the Wall Street Journal is the truth” she told her fellow diner at the breakfast table after perusing the fourth journal that promised ‘The truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth’ under its title. “Just like somewhere between the love letters Franklin wrote to his mistress when he was trying to get elected and the denials he told me about writing them is the truth about what’s really between him and me now.”

“Of course,” General Vanderhoof said as he sipped his coffee, motioning to the Black servant to put in another two scoops of sugar.

“And the rumors about me and Lorena Alice Hickock sharing more than just a love of literature, are also based in some fact,” the First Lady noted to the second guest assigned to be at the table in her husband’s absence, turning to the next newspaper.

“Which perhaps, one day, will allow women not only the right to vote as they please, but marry who they love rather would be the most affluent co-provider for her adopted children,”

“Perhaps,” Secret Service Chief Iakoka offered with a bow of ultimate civility as he helped himself to another English muffin.

“And when I decide to run for President, perhaps I would introduce a bill to the Senate and Congress demanding that money comes out of YOUR private overstuffed pockets to pay for programs to feed the poor, protect the discriminated against, subsidize housing for refugee Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals, Martians, and ghosts who have died and can’t find new bodies to reincarnate into,” ‘Comrade’ Eleanor continued.

“With, I am assuming, private contributions from the President’s salary as well?” Senator Olsen inquired.

“Yes, indeed, Senator,” Eleanor Roosevelt pledged to the only one of the three men in front of her who were really listening to what she had to say, or had the courage to address it. “But, there is one question I would like an answer to, which I think can be addressed without worrying about classification categories or sharing valuable information with our enemies, both domestic and foreign.” She looked up to the Negroid butler as she pushed her mostly uneaten plate of eggs, bacon and hash browns away from her. “I do not mean to be ungrateful, or rude, but would like to know if there’s a change in the cooking staff. This breakfast tastes ‘off’ somehow.”

“Perhaps you’re developing a cold, Mrs. Roosevelt?” Iakoka said as he gobbled up the remainder of food on his plate. “This tastes good to me. Bland but, free of hemlock, cyanide or, worse for a woman who has to watch her blood pressure, salt. Especially

yours,” he continued as he sampled the half eaten meal provided to the woman whose life he valued more than his own, or that of his own children.

“Wholesome food,” General Vanderhoof noted. He wiped the remaining yolk of yellow from the plate with a bisquit and stuffing it into his mouth. “Better than any chow line I ever experienced, or made my men endure.”

“And food that, I suggest, is good for you,” Olson offered the First Lady. “And like my wife tells our kids, an empty stomach makes for an empty head. And a brain that thinks in reverse, if at all. Breakfast, the most important meal of the day. Especially for the most important woman in Washington.”

“Yes, I suppose so. And know so!” The woman who ate to live rather than lived to eat, or drink, like so many men in DC (including her husband) endured more eggs, hash browns and ham, swallowing them without chewing. With each bite of food she could feel something going up into her brain. Or she imagined it. She self observed herself ranting on to her three fellow diners about the affairs of State in language that was somehow more poetic than practical. A youthful clearly non-presidential stream of consciousness from her apparently very feminine emotional center to her mouth that seemed to have no need to be filtered by anything. But, after all, all work and no play makes Jack, and even more importantly Jane, a dull and ineffective public servant.

CHAPTER 16

The fingers that Doctor Whitaker had used to masterfully put together flesh that disease or trauma had separated acquired a layer of blisters the first day at the construction site for the new jeep manufacturing factory owned by ‘silent partners’ North of the border. By the end of the week, the wrists and arms attached to them were aching, sprained and went into spasms if he used them the wrong way. But the fate of others at the site was far worse.

“Let it go, Senior ‘Jones’,” Pedro warned Whitaker as yet another worker fainted under the early afternoon sun, her leg trapped under a maze of pillars. A young woman this time, who looked to be Indian, with a new life incubating in her womb. “Doc Wentworth will look after her.”

“You mean Doctor Death,” Whitaker grumbled as he saw the well groomed Bostonian blue-blood slowly and ‘professionally’ stroll into the pit where the other women and emaciated men were told to continue working by the overweight foreman. “Carrying more death juice in his medical bag. Or life-promoting medications he won’t use unless he gets overpaid for them, under the table.”

“And a saw, Senior Jones,” Pedro commented, pointing the Gringo’s attention to an assistants behind the not so good, great or perhaps even real Doctor

“That he won’t use to chop off her leg, like he did to the others this week!” Whitaker blasted through gritted teeth as he threw down his shovel and grabbed hold of a crowbar. “Not on my shift!”

“Your shift as what?” Pedro said, putting his arm in front of Whitaker’s beating chest. “Someone who’s looking to get himself shot? Or hung slowly for revealing who and what he maybe really is, or was North of the Rio Grande or elsewhere?” He pointed Whitaker’s attention to very White Security goons around the trapped woman as she was getting attended to, instructing her fellow Indian and Negroid wage slaves to get back to work with racial slurs. “Someone who, if he’s smart, will not fight battles he can’t win.”

“But can’t lose either,” Whitaker growled, pushing off Pedro’s arm with all of his might. He ran with utmost intensity and alacrity towards the woman, grabbed the saw from the assistant who was about to chop off the tourniqueted leg, and snatched the medical bag from ‘Doctor’ Wentworth’s lily white, blister-free hands.

With the help of nothing except his own tenacity Whitaker, pulled the woman away from the wreckage that the foreman said she would have to pay for. He removed the loose pieces of metal from the Yaqui mother’s leg along with the infected gauze left in from ‘Doc’ Wentworth the last two times she slipped and fell. Using whatever was in Wentworth’s bag, Whitaker cleaned what he could, aligned what was still joinable, and sewed it together. He got a round of applause for his tenacity and courage from the

workers. Grunts of frustration from Wentworth and his goons. And a loving hug of appreciation from the still two legged pregnant woman, who asked Wentworth his name, so she could give it to the unborn child in her womb.

“Wilhelm, or Fredriko” he said with a proud smile. “And if it’s a girl, Else.”

“No, Charles! And if a girl, Carlata!” Wentworth blasted into the woman’s face in badly accented mixed Spanish and English, pointing to himself. “That hybrid I told you to take care of , you seductive, manipulative cunt tease,” he grumbled under his breath, in Bostonian English audible and understandable only the Whitaker, the man who, so it seemed, was about to be the godfather of the life . “But...”

Before the embarrassed and boisterous Doctor Wentworth could utter another word, he found Whitaker’s fist rammed into his jaw. Then another jab into the belly, another to the chest, to a specific point that knocks the wind but not the life out of the receiver of such. Whitaker’s already sore wrists a hands hurt a lot, but it was not without reward. The ‘above all do no harm’ German doctor felt the rush of bashing someone else’s face in. For the first time in a long time. And in ways that felt more empowering and liberating than ever. But as no good deed, liberation or empowerment goes unpunished, there were consequences.

CHAPTER 17

Whitaker's knowledge of Mexican jails was hardly the reality he experienced. Zane Grey books, dime novels by lesser known authors, and undiscovered gems such as *Revolutionary Blues* portrayed these holding facilities as enclosed rooms where the blood of the previous prisoner coated the floor, the stench of urine permeated the hole-ridden cot where he was tied into, and the brown hue on the prison uniform issues was half dye and half caked on human feces. Such was the case, with the added feature of musical accompaniment of tortured prisoners in adjoining cells echoing through the walls, and the company of rats as big as cats, and roaches as large as mice. Particularly in private facilities like this one, constructed especially for anyone who dared to defy government backed Gringo Industrialists such as Charles Wentworth.

"This Gringo Wentworth. He must be a big deal here, Wolfgang," Whitaker commented to the rodent nibbling on the worm-infested hard as rock 'bread pudding' which was featured as the mid-day meal. "I don't know what's going to happen to me, but I'm reasonably sure what's going to happen to Lord Wentworth. IF he survives the justified beating I gave him, it will be a life without teeth, an eye, or a face that he can use to charm a board room into handing him over more money he can squander or more slaves he can work to death. Or, most importantly, more women he can trick into thinking he loves them."

Whitaker sat back, feeling his own jaw going into a painful yet needed smile. He thought about how the woman he saved from death, or an abortion of the bastard child she had learned to love, would continue on. And how that unborn child who she pledged to name after him, would have the opportunity, or misfortune, of coming out of the womb and grow up to use the intelligence of his, or her, godfather for the Cause of Good, before using it for the Cause of 'political necessity'.

Once again, Whitaker pondered what he had done in life, and hoped that this final act of contrition and defiance would balance the books. As a reborn Catholic, such was of course always possible. He had confessed his sins, or rather 'moral miscalculations', in pre-War Germany to 'Father Rat', and heard in his head the chirping of 'go and sin no more' from the oversized and aged rodent. And if God was a Protestant, the act of saving then defending a woman of the Inferior Race, and expendable caste, certainly would demonstrate Whitaker's willingness to, as his former American captors would constantly say, 'put his money where his mouth was'. Yes, Wilhelm Fredrick Whitaker was prepared to die, finally.

But, all plans of mice, men and overgrown rats are always subject to rebuttal by Life. The door to the cell opened up. Two well armed and overly mustached guards came in. One unshackled the irons around his ankles. The other threw him a bag of fresh clothes. A third man entered, proudly wearing a white suit with balloon like pants and a jacket with oversized lapels and shoulder pad smiled. "My apologies for not coming to get you out earlier, Herr Doctor Professor Whitaker," he said. "A car is waiting for us. The driver will take you wherever you want to go."

“Why?” a shocked Whitaker asked the sure of his plan Zoot Suit liberator.

“Because not all of us support the degenerative Communist agenda of the present Mexican government, who still suck on the teat of the Americans and their Jewish minions” he said in German, delivered with a heavy Mexican accent, including an annoying but authentic lisp to the s’s. “Especially we Gold Shirts!” he boasted, after which he removed his jacket, revealing a gold shirt under it. The armband on the shirt explained it all.

“Yes, there are many of us Nazis, both here in Mexico, and North of the Rio Grande,” Whitaker’s liberator explained as he proudly stroked the swastika wrapped around his upper arm. “Who still can win a workable peace for the Fatherland, before the Soviet Army takes over all of Europe and the world. Especially with anti-Communist men of your stature, breeding and expertise helping us. Which now is very, very possible, now that we stumbled on you by coincidence, or Fate.”

Whitaker felt like informing his earthly liberator that he declared himself divorced from the Nazi Party in 1940, though he still felt compelled to fight for the Fatherland and to save as many of his fellow non-Nazi citizens from death who were wearing the Nazi uniform. Telling this Mexican Nazi to fuck off, or open his mind to the real facts about the Reich would have been the noble thing to do. But intuition trumped nobility, for now, as Whitaker smelled an opportunity to once again infiltrate and change from within. An experimental method which he was determined to get RIGHT this time. Particularly as he exchanged whispered but enthusiastic ‘Heil Hitlers’ with the Gold Shirt liberator.

“Where there’s life there’s hope,” Whitaker thought to himself as he walked out of the holding cell on death row, clad as a guard. “But also the possibility of more destruction,” he feared, yet would not allow. Somehow.

CHAPTER 18

After a much wanted bath, and required shave, Wilhelm Whitaker sat down in a chair whose surface was a soft cushion rather than splintered wood. At the request of his host at the Five Star hotel, he finished the fourth course of a meal that featured Bavarian Brokwurst, freshly made sour kraut, brown bread containing more grain than air, topped off with Black Forest cake made with the best chocolate available on the uncivilized side of the Atlantic. Finally, it was time to read the report that the regional Gold Shirt commander had placed on the table, written in English in handwriting which he recognized as his half brother's. When reading it, Wilhelm could hear Captain Schneider's voice echoing in his head, along with echoes of once alive souls who were now, no doubt, vengeful ghosts.

"Though the subject was of the inferior race, when he ingested the drug he experienced feelings of euphoria, then what seemed to be a lack of censorship. Any thoughts that came into his deviant mind came out of his mouth instantly, without filtering. He ceased being careful regarding what he said, and became careless, revealing faults in his own racially defective ancestry and so called liberal agenda. After revealing all of the cards he was secretly holding, so to speak, the crafty and usually diplomatic manipulator went into a state of deep depression which paralyzed his ability to do anything, including putting himself out of his, and our, misery," it read.

"And how was the subject given the drug?" Whitaker asked his host.

"The Nigger upstart won it in a fixed card game," the very White, blue eyed, but still dark haired Emilio Gonzales said with a wry grin. "His Aryan and American opponents convinced him that the drug you developed before your unfortunate but perhaps planned from a higher level capture would make him 'more powerful than any White man he ever met, or could imagine becoming.'"

"And where is the subject now?" Whitaker inquired, putting on the face of the man he had been during the 'Golden days' of his career as one of the most funded, respected and liked research scientists in the Third Reich. "I would like to examine this 'Private Robertson'," he continued, reading the name of the patient.

"We have saved all of the body parts, of course, and as for the brain," Gonzales said, pulling out a jar containing the grey matter between the elusive but always respected Black private that, somewhere in an unidentified locus, still contained his soul.

Whitaker could feel that soul talking to him somehow through pulsations he imagined the brain undergoing in the jar. Begging him to do something not only honorable, but significant and effective with the rest of his life.

"The brain is, no doubt, smaller than the one of the next subject who we need to deal with," Gonzales continued. "And with a few modifications on the D ring on your drug, adjustment of the dose, addition of the appropriate hormones as cofactors, perhaps it will

produce the desired and required effect on the current real head, and brains, of the so called free world in America.”

“And what do you want Mrs. Roosevelt to do, or be made to do?” Whitaker inquired, enforcing on his tortured soul the mindset of a linear sequential spiritually dead scientist.

“Well, if you can, which I am sure you will be able to do,” Gonzales smiled. “Open up her mouth so she spits out her complete political agenda and plan, thus destroying it. Then after she has revealed her cards, her Jewish-bred insanity, her lack of emotional control over her lower instincts, put her into the kind of depression where she will kill several others in the White House and Pentagon, then turn the gun on herself.” Gonzales pulled out a stack of research papers with a courtly bow. “After reading your brilliant papers on modifications of neurotransmitter receptors, supplemented with new data from other labs that you were not able to access during your internment, I and the Fuhrer are confident that you can make this happen. IF you want, we can do a few trials on other subjects first of course.”

Whitaker considered the option. Indeed, he was responsible for developing a drug which would make defective, morally degenerative geniuses go mad, force them to expose their madness, then go into a depression in which they would kill a few expendable people around them, then themselves, the former done of course so they or their Cause would not be martyred. It was a dream plan that Whitaker thought of using on Hitler himself before his capture, which really WAS accidental, and (so he hoped, in the long run) fortunate. Perhaps the table could still be turned, as long as no one saw what was really going on under it.

Whitaker’s next stop was a laboratory in the hills just outside of El Paso, Texas, where laboratory rats awaited him, as his request. He lacked for nothing in scientific supplies, creature comforts or subjects to test his molecular concoctions on. He insisted on rats rather than Mexican laborers from Juarez or Black chain gang prisoners from Mississippi as the results could be more quickly obtained, and he could have more n values.

Molecularly, ‘Miracle Doc Wilhelm’, as local Ku Klux Klan Wizard and legal magistrate DeForest ‘Justice’ Johnson called him, had golden starting material. Whitaker had created ‘Wotan 5’ during the closing years of the First World War to prevent or possibly cure shell shock, claiming that men turning into catatonic, fear possessed ‘cowards’ was a function of their brain chemistry, not the result of moral or spiritual weakness of character.

The young doctor’s top secret wonder drug had reduced the incidence of shell shock at the front in German soldiers by four fold. The rate of suicide when these men were taken to the rear or went home on furlow dropped to to a fifth of what it had been, relative to the placebo groups. Turning cowards into functional men was hard during and soon after the First War was hard, scientifically and otherwise.

Turning functional men into conscience-lacking killing machines that could survive the worst of combat conditions for days at a time without food, sleep or a warm place to regroup between skirmishes during the Second War was easy. Especially when run of the mill chemists threw on a hydroxyl or nitrogen group to Wotan 5, testing it on unlimited number of human subjects, coming up with numerous official derivatives such as Pervitin which became standard issue for every German Soldier on the Russian Front.

“I hope ya’ll got some overdue credit fer developing Pevitin,” Justice Johnson said to Whitaker after being given the person honor of injecting the last rat in the test group. “And that this here truth-serum, crazy-producing suicide potion of yours will stay in our hands, so we can bind up the paws of the Nigers, Spiks, Jews, Chinks, Injuns, Queers and Commies,” the Bubba bellied Grandpa of thirty grandkids by three White ‘breeding bitches’ bellowed out in a musical lilt that, if set to 2/4 time background music and strumming cowboy guitar, would make the cleansing of America sound and feel like a happy necessity rather than a Racial chore. “What’s this new batch of drug supposed to do? It don’t seem to be doin’ very much,” the Wizard said as he inspected the depressed rodent, taunting it with his finger. “Nope, the new batch of drug you developed is ain’t doin’ nothin’.”

“It will,” Whitaker assured him.

“When?” the accusational comeback from the well armed Klan representative to the unarmed former POW scientist.

“About...now, I’d say,” Whitaker said, after which he blew a whistle.

The rat went into convulsions, during which it clawed at its non-injected roommates, then bit off the better portion of Justice Johnson’s index finger. A digit which pointed the way to the Pen for hundreds of free young men who would die in captivity as old ones, and which sent untold members of the Black race in the dead of night to early graves at the end of a rope.

Justice Johnson’s screams brought in an audience of on lookers. Most enjoyed seeing the ‘pull yerself up by the bootstraps or die in the gutter’ braggart cry like a baby. Others marveled at how ‘Nancy Boy’, the sedate rat, turned into a killer who then bashed his own head against the walls of the cage. Still others gathered around Whitaker while he told them the scientific narrative about the discovery of Wotan 5, and war stories about how it and its derivatives made the German Army the most feared fighting force in the world. Whitaker hoped, and prayed, that no one was watching him when he re-labeled the raw ingredients which were to be used on the Final Version of Wotan 5, so they could not be used in the Final Solution.

CHAPTER 19

“There’s no way that Eleanor Roosevelt is gonna eat that birthday cake, Captain Schneider,” Horatio Smith said to the new commander of the officially de-Nazified German POWs at the Camp kitchen. “Not without her Secret Service taster getting a bit of it first.”

“Of course she will, Major Horatio,” Schneider snidely assured the American Major as he smelled the lemon cake with vanilla icing, decorated on top with red, white and blue frosting in the likeness of an American flag. “She will have the first and biggest bite out of this cake, made by my men, your de-Nazified Germans, without Secret Service tasters, just like she flew without a parachute with the Black pilots in the Tuskegee Air Squadron to prove that they were as good or better than the White Officers who wanted to keep them on the ground digging ditches and cleaning engines. Where you and me know they still belong, right?”

“Of course,” Smith acknowledged as he noted a German POW cleaning pots, alongside one of his own American Corporals washing the floor in the kitchen. Washing off blood that was spilt by yet another man who knew too much, and whose name joined the many others who were not officially in the list of the Camp’s prisoner, nor the roster of guards. Whose remains were customarily eaten by the pigs in the Smith’s various hobby farms when the Camp was under his command, but now were diverted into the stew eaten at the Camp and sold for a handsome profit to civilians who wished to supplement their meat rations soon after Schneider became the ranking POW German officer.

Smith didn’t much like playing second fiddle. But he did know that if the orchestra failed to deliver, it would be at him that the audience of life would throw the first rotten tomatoes, call back hook and hanging noose. When looking at the rest of the meal being prepared for the First Lady’s visit, Smith had to ask one question of the man who was once his prisoner, but who now was clearly his jailer. “The special ingredient that’s supposed to go in here. When is it coming in? I didn’t see it.”

“You weren’t supposed to,” Schneider sneered as he lit up a cigar under the No Smoking sign. “And it did arrive. After my personal agent at the lab was sure that there was absolutely no mix up as what was supposed to go into it. No matter what my brother, the very legally prosecuted murderer of your wife, and those poor Negroid children at the hospital, thinks he can do about it.” Schneider blew a whiff of smoke into Smith’s face, then proudly marched away, gleefully singing ‘Tomorrow Belongs to Me,’ the Hitler Youth song that wooed so many Germans into becoming Nazis, and when put to American lyrics and background music, would do the same for so many red blooded Americans.

Horatio Smith had considered every possible escape route from his Camp. With the exception of Wilhelm Whitaker on a night when the entire Compound was drunk and

drugged, NO one got out of the Gates without Smith's permission, unless it was in a body bag. Such was one option Smith considered with regard to escaping from his own jail. But now that Schneider was unofficially in charge, that method had been halted on at least three occasions, with deadly consequences to a homosexual Berliner Private, a communist poet from Munich and an American Sergeant who felt his Patriotic duty was to report what was really going on in the model de-Nazification camp to the press.

"No," Smith said to himself on a dimly moonlit night as he looked at the garbage truck and ambulance leaving compound. Its contents were assessed by guards who now hailed from both sides of the Atlantic with their eyes and the business end of sharp bayonettes. "I gotta be more creative than that," he told himself. "And as some, including me would say, more degenerate," the now clean shaven Commandant said as he did a final mirror check in his office. Seeing that the dress he was wearing made him look voluptuous rather than fat, the wig was on straight and the make-up under it was alluring but not over the top. And, most importantly, the Darkie hooker who he acquired said paraphernalia from was sound asleep on his semen stained 'duty cot', clad in his field jacket, fatigues and cowboy hat.

A covered jeep eased up next to the back door of the office. "Ophelia," the Georgia Cracker whispered through the open window. "Time to skedaddle. Whether you got paid or not," Corporal Willy Bob McDougall sneered.

Smith put another layer of dark make up on his face and hands, slipped another sip of a spiked Mickey between Ophelia's big, black kissable lips, checked that the front door was locked from the inside, and adjusted the 'Do Not Disturb unless you want KP for a Month and Furlows cancelled for the rest of this war and the next one' sign on the back door. The model of Southern American Manhood walked as gently and ladylike as he could out the door, down the steps, and slithered into the back seat of the jeep.

As always, McDougall asked no questions of the woman behind him, nor of the Master she had serviced. As always, he drove out to a darkened portion of the barbed wire fence, down a sage brush covered decline, and through a camouflaged underground tunnel that no one else knew about. Or so Smith hoped.

Several bumps, two verses of Dixie, and a cowboy rendition of the even catchier tune of 'Tomorrow Belongs to Me' later, McDougall had reached the assigned destination, the end of a dead end road surrounded by swamps on three sides. "This is where you get off bitch. Major's orders," he yelled back to the half vanilla half chocolate girl toy as he checked the map left by Major Smith. "Unless you want to make a little extra money on the side," he said as he flew a twenty dollar bill in the air as if it was bait for a hungry catfish, or a banner to inspire young men to charge to their deaths so they would not have the burden of growing up into becoming old men, like Smith. "What I want and require for this is...hmm."

Before McDougall's continually growing fantasies and fetishes could be verbalized, Smith had rolled out of the jeep, into the bush, and disappeared into the black night.

McDougall looked all over for Ophelia. After a good ten minutes the direct descendant of the Klan's founder back in 1867 finally gave up, announcing to the elusive Ophelia that he was 'hankering for a real meal of fresh white meat tonight anyway instead a dark left overs.' In truth, as was well known by Smith alone, McDougall's impetus to skedaddle was precipitated by gators strolling into his direction, said creature evoking more fear into the Georgia Cracker than even accidentally pregnant ex-girlfriends with Sheriffs as Daddy's who showed up at his door.

Once McDougall was gone, so was Smith. The boat he had stored in the bush was still intact, as the quiet but powerful outboard motor. All of its supplies, with the exception of a few bottles of moonshine, had not been stolen by vandals, eaten by mice, nor shit on by a birds. Bidding the gators he baited to say 'howdy' to McDougall a good night, Smith shone a flashlight he had hidden under his dress onto his compass and then looked at the map of the Bayou waterways. Said map of the water routes that connected REAL Louisianans to each other was always imprinted behind his eyes. It never changed, no matter how many roads the Hyway Department, Yankee resort moguls and FDR's New Deal construction companies tried to bury them or dry them out.

CHAPTER 20

“You look different without your mustache,” Wilhelm Whitaker said to the black faced visitor who knocked on the window of his hotel room just outside of Baton Rouge shortly after 3 AM, reeking from a combination of swamp water, rancid beer and cheap perfume. The good Doctor upped the volume on the radio so as to drown out any microphones that may have been listening in, then the corrupt Major two towels. “I assume that you want to take a bath before you have me arrested and brought back to Camp as your ‘date’,’ he mused, winking his eye then slapping ‘Ophelia’ Smith on the padded ass under his dress. “But I warn you, I may kiss on the first date, but anything else will have to wait till we get to know each other better, Sugar.”

Smith refrained from punching the well dressed upstart German Professor-Doctor in his smug mouth, and resisted the temptation to draw the pistol strapped around his waist. But he held nothing back with his eyes, which now were a window to everything the Commandant in very convincing ‘Nigger drag’ was thinking and feeling.

Whitaker poured himself a drink of local ‘thank ya’ll’ moonshine the hotel owner left in the four rooms the Swiss-Mexican Oil Executives paid ten times the going rate for, with the proviso that the other five rooms would be vacated of their usual, sometimes paying guests, and that no questions would be asked regarding the contents of the three enclosed transport trucks in the parking lot. He thought of asking how Smith had found him. Or what HIS experience of trying to pass himself off as another gender was. Or why the King of the Bayou was hiding out as a fugitive in his own backyard. It was a ‘when’ question that Whitaker felt the need, and want to propose.

“When are you due back in Camp?” the well-fed, well-clad and well-groomed Doctor asked the ragamuffin AWOL Commandant.

“Soon,” the answer. Smith nervously looked at the clock on the wall ticking down the hours till dawn.

“And as what?” Whitaker inquired in the manner of a seasoned Freudian psychologist. “The murderer of your wife Olivia? For the crime of knowing too much about what you were doing and realizing what you should be doing? Because she was a traitor to your White Supremacy Cause? Because she knew too much about your illegal and immoral means of making yourself rich in a country that’s still fighting for its own survival? Or because...hmmm...Maybe she told you she loved me more than she ever loved you?”

Doc Whitaker took another sip of his drink, awaiting Smith’s answer. His silence said yes to all of the aforementioned charges and motivations for such, but there was another question Whitaker needed to have answered. Grabbing Smith by the collar of his dress, he pushed him against the wall with his left hand, twisting the testicles under it with his right. “Whose idea was it to murder all of those Colored patients and staff in the hospital?” he growled. “Men, women and children! Burnt alive, most of them! Like in the ovens used for population control that---”

“---Captain Schneider said should and will be used here! To keep America racially pure! To stop those Communist-indoctrinated Negroes who got rabble-raised by the Yankee Jews from trading plowshears for swords, and destroying everything and everyone in America! Including themselves!” Smith pushed through a half closed throat. But with what felt like remorse. Confirmation of such were tears streaming down the Commandant’s face, washing off the make up caked on his cheeks. “And to be sure there were no witnesses to see what I did to Olivia.”

The rest of Smith’s confession got lost in a flood of tears that flowed down his face, then onto Whitaker’s shoulder as he allowed the fallen demon to rest his head on it.

“What else does Schneider have on you?” Whitaker pressed.

“He knows more judges in this country than even I do, or did anyway,” Smith muttered.

“And no doubt my brother knows the whereabouts of relatives still in Germany for every POW in the camp. Along with the whereabouts of relations living in Nazi occupied Europe for hundreds of influential Americans,” Whitaker added. “Or maybe thousands?”

Smith’s sobbing escalated, confirming a ‘yes’ to that inquiry.

“I know, we’re both in this together now,” Whitaker voiced on behalf of Smith and himself. “God help us. No matter who wins the War, or the ‘Peace’ afterwards.”

Whitaker had already devised a plan to sabotage Schneider’s plan to transform ‘birthday girl’ Eleanor Roosevelt into a politically self-destructive zombie, then a killing machine who would eliminate the movers and shakers in DC, most importantly, her husband the President and his hard working, peace loving, Nigger loving understudy, Vice President Harry S. Truman. Would a transformed Smith help or harm that plan, that was another matter. But one thing was certain. The snake of Fascist evil that had infiltrated into the land of the free and home of the brave had to be decapitated, at the head, and quickly. As for who that head really was, that was still as unknown as the neuronal circuitry that made Adolf Hitler the most powerful man in the world. And the true nature of the Madness in him that lay, one way or another, dormant in every man and woman in the world, no matter what flag they paid homage to every morning.

Thoughts and speculations about the why’s of all of it vanished in Whitaker’s mind when there was an abrupt knock on the door. “Professor Doctor Willy, it’s Fred Linquist. I hate to interrupt your ‘late night conferencing’ with that girl toy whose silhouette I saw in your window. But there’s something I have to talk to you about. That contract you said you’d sign,” he said in a very American Yankee accent, probably from Wisconsin or Minnesota.

“Better let Senator Olson in,” the AWOL American Commandant warned his former POW German prisoner in a soft whisper. “Sign whatever he asks, and above all, do not let on that you know anything about his Klan affiliations here in the Bayou, or his financial connections on Wall Street,” Smith continued as he slithered out the window, disappearing into the night as abruptly as he appeared, leaving behind a sealed, thick, envelope on the ledge which Whitaker pocketed as quickly as possible.

“Interesting bulge there,” ‘Mister Linquist’ said, gazing curiously then accusingly at the contents of Whitaker’s right front trouser pocket, as if reading Whitaker’s mind, yet again.

Whitaker saw his life pass behind his eyes, then a paralytic terror emerging which felt identical to victims of shell shock. It escalated, Whitaker hearing nothing but his heartbeat until the well armed visitor to his room cracked a smile, then a hauntingly cordial chuckle.

“I thought you Aryan scientists were aroused by eloquent equations, not big breasted women from inferior races, But..hmmm...was she that good?” the moonlighting Yankee liberal Senator continued, eyeing the figure of a woman getting into a boat and motoring off into the swamp.

“She’s got possibilities,” Whitaker replied, averting his eyes so that he would not reveal any more secrets about his past, and plans to redeem it in the very near future.

CHAPTER 21

The entire POW Camp was on its best behavior as the caravan taking Eleanor Roosevelt pulled into the front gate. The American flag was raised to full mast, German prisoners and American guards stood at attention in the yard, all saluting Old Glory as the head car pulled into the middle of the compound. They held their salutes firm, and keeping their patriotic smiles at full open. When the First Lady's car pulled in front of him, the American Commandant marched up to the door, opened it for her, and saluted her. "Welcome, Madam First Lady. It is a privilege and honor to welcome you to this Camp."

"And an un-anticipated pleasure seeing Nazi soldiers enthusiastically saluting our flag," Senator Olson noted.

"An expected result," Eleanor Roosevelt countered, seeming to be genuinely impressed with the first look see. "As most of the Fascist Army is composed of Germans, not Nazi's. Germans who----"

"----Support your husband, the President and, no doubt will campaign for you if one day you decide to run for that Office," the American Commandant proudly and respectfully interjected. As will the White and Colored American soldiers here, who as you can see, are all equally well clothed, and interspersed in formation as they are integrated in their various duties, and pleasures afterwards."

Eleanor sized up the American Commander, giving him the once over from head to toe, then back again, three times. With a 'pleased as punch' smile, she saluted the integrated American soldiers, who belonged to an Army that was still officially segregated, and then the German prisoners, alleviating them to finally lower their no doubt hurting and sweat soaked arms. She then saluted the Commandant, pulling back any facial expression of satisfaction. "Before we engage in the 'surprise' birthday party I heard you organized for me, there is one question I must ask," the First Lady asked the American Commandant.

The Commandant shook in his boots, anticipating what would come out of the mouth of the woman who knew more about the inner workings of Washington than 96 percent of the men there, and who emanated from that oral orifice verbiage that was always carefully chosen, and, in the end, effective for her own political and moral agendas. Finally, she let loose with the inquiry. "What is your name?" she inquired.

"Like the nametag on my uniform says, 'Smith', Ma'am," the reply.

"No!" she interjected, breaking into a wide smile. "As we are all Comrades in the War against Fascism and cruelty at home, and abroad. I want to know your REAL name. Some, who erroneously think that America has to be a country with one religion, call it your Christian name."

“Horatio,” the reply with a courtly bow

“My name is Eleanor,” the First Lady said, finally breaking out into a wide, unbridled smile. “And I am very hungry,” she continued, bending her elbow, offering the Commandant the opportunity to escort her to the banquet.

“Well then, ya’ll come with me,” the American Commandant bellowed out with a big time Southern hospitality smile as he escorted the Yankee born and bred First Lady, functional president and perhaps future holder of that office to the Mess Tent, along with a camera crew and press corp working for the highest placed news agencies in America. Past the Cinema with posters of the upcoming John Wayne movies as well as copies of anti-Nazi films that had been smuggled out of Germany. Past the library, which featured fresh editions of the pro-democracy newspapers the German POWs published on their own accord to be read in English in America and at home in German, after being dropped behind enemy lines. Then past the windowless oversized outhouse and showering facility, where Schneider had imprisoned the real Major Smith, whose identity he stole with such ease and authenticity.

CHAPTER 22

Whitaker had very mixed feelings about the tunnel leading from the woods outside the camp into and under the Mess tent as he traversed its small but sturdy passageway. The wood beams along the way were old, rotting but still intact. The rail and pulley system which could self transport a man from one end to another, with three places for passing, seemed to be a wonder of clandestine engineering. The German ex-Major and still Doctor ran through the list of prisoners under him who could have built the structure without his knowledge or permission, then used it for an escape. But clearly that escape would have been short lived, as it was Smith's envelope that informed Whitaker about the tunnel's existence and vulnerabilities.

One of those weaknesses was the roof at the intersection between the North wing and Western extension. The other was the precarious curve taken to avoid shoveling dirty directly under the Commandant's private quarters. The third was a double L diversion under the bunk where Whitaker slept most nights, directly next to the operating table where he saved countless German and American patients from both the jaws of death and a lifetime of disease (or humanly) induced suffering.

Why Whitaker's most loyal men had learned to trust Smith, and now were forced into obeying Schneider, were peripheral issues now. As Whitaker approached the curve in the tunnel leading to the mess tent, 'why' questions turned into 'what's'. What was really in that first piece of birthday cake that Eleanor Roosevelt would be ingesting in front of everyone else? Was it a mild upper, with as much kick and diversionary capabilities as American Coca Cola mixed with a splash of Russian Vodka which Whitaker had secretly concocted and labeled as Wotan 6? Or was it Wotan 6 for real, an elixir formulated by one of Schneider's goons in the lab, according to Whitaker's private notes. A drug which, according to all of the rodent data, could turn the most tight lipped intellectual politician into a rambling moron, then into a catatonic shell-shocked zombie, then, after being taken home for R and R, a raving lunatic who would kill anyone and everyone close to her, shooting herself in the head afterwards before anyone would even think of examining her blood for toxins, or brain for mind altering substances.

Despite the warnings on the pulley system, in English and German, warning the passenger on it to proceed slowly, Whitaker pushed the railway system to full speed as he heard the crowd gathering above him on the mess tent. Fritz Ranselhoff took to the piano, delivering a Beethovenian variation on a theme to the Star Spangled banner. Whitaker pressed further and harder. The ground under Whitaker's feet trembled, the roof above him answering back with rhythmic pound as above him, Fritz eased into a ragtime rendition of Happy Birthday. Two collapses of the tunnel behind him later, Whitaker heard Happy Birthday being sung with German and American accents, as the dirt roof in front of him transformed itself into a cloud of dirt that blinded his eyes, then knocked the flashlight out of his hand.

The next sound Whitaker heard in the dark cubical was blowing of candles, then applause. Knowing all too well that once the applause ended, the cake would be cut and

eaten by the honored guest, Whitaker rolled over onto what he hoped was the ground, and kicked up at what he prayed was the doorway leading upward.

A light penetrated through the black roof above his head. Whitaker grabbed hold of a rope that had somehow survived the underground avalanche he had caused, and somehow survived, and pulled himself up onto the mess hall floor. The first face he saw was none other than the First Lady's, about to take a large bite of birthday cake in front of twelve photographers and four movie cameras. "No!" he screamed as he pushed the fork out of her hand, knocking her onto the floor. "No!" he said while assertively wiping the frosting off Eleanor Roosevelt's mouth before her tongue could ingest it, cutting her lip in the process. "No!" he yelled out again while pointing to the rest of the large piece of cake she was about to eat. To make his point clear, Whitaker pulled a pistol from the holster of an American Sergeant, who he recognized as being none other than Rudolf Manheim, a young German corporal conscripted while a seminary student whose gullible mind was moldable as Mississippi mud. "Nobody move!" Whitaker commanded the men in German uniforms, some of which were American, the men in American uniforms, many of which were Germans, and finally, Senator Olson. "Lay down your guns, and your cameras," he continued, ordering the photographers and cinematographers to cease shooting while protecting Eleanor Roosevelt, pulling her towards the door. He motioned for the driver of the main car to pull around, and throw him the keys. Which he did.

"Kidnapping the First Lady is a big time crime," Senator Olsen offered, motioning for one of the deNazified German POWs to translate for him. "Punishable by more than a month in the cooler. Right Major Smith?"

"Put the gun down," Whitaker heard from an all too familiar voice behind him, in German, the business end of a pistol pointed at his head.

"Or else you'll kill me, brother? Which is what I wanted all along anyway?" the still good doctor said to his brother in German. He broke into a sardonic chuckle, then mad laughter. "This is not Major Smith," Whitaker said in English and German. "He is an SS officer. A mass murderer back home!" he continued to the Germans. "And an even more dangerous killer of innocent people here," he said to the Americans. "And he is, sadly, my brother, with whom I share the same blood, genetics and---"

"---Delusions?" Schneider answered, in completely accent-less English, in a voice nearly identical to Smith's as he lowered his gun.

"Yes, he clearly is..delusional," Senator Olsen added.

"Put down the gun," Schneider calmly requested in a very convincing Smith voice. "And the lady, and we'll talk. Just you and me. You being the prisoner who escaped my Camp, and me being---"

"---the one to take a dose of your own medicine, so all the rest of us can have healthy lives," Whitaker asserted calmly with ultimate finality. He gently entrusted Eleanor

Roosevelt into the arms of the most trustable set of American eyes he could find, and, still with gun in hand, walked over to the uneaten large slice of birthday cake. He smelled it, confirming his worst suspicions. "This birthday cake. Delicious smelling. Just like the allure of Fascism, cruelty and blissful ignorance. But once eaten...Hmm. Toxic. Isn't that right, SS Captain Schneider?"

Whitaker quickly grabbed his brother's wrist, preparing to push up the sleeve that would reveal the SS tattoo which he had sworn to never remove, revealing his true identity to the cameras, the American guards and, most importantly, Eleanor Roosevelt. Maybe it was seen, or maybe it wasn't. All Whitaker knew was that two punches later, he was in an all out brawl with his brother, winner take all. A jabbing and eventually stabbing match that led Schneider into a pool of his own blood on the floor, and a winded Whitaker still able to feel and use his legs. But not before tasting something deadly in his mouth that found its way into the stomach. "My own medicine, the most potent poison known to man or woman kind, perhaps like its creator," Whitaker said to himself as he felt entire contents of Mrs. Roosevelt's piece of birthday cake enter his stomach, and being unable to vomit it up. Then seeing the rest of the perhaps drug infused cake, uneaten and uncut.

"Nobody touch that cake! Please!" Whitaker requested of the remaining souls in the room he could trust. "Except you and the rest of your kind," he said to Olsen, inviting him to join him at the table, setting out two plates. "Who will join me, right?" Whitaker pulled Olsen by the arm and threw him into the chair. The now mad Doctor slapped a slice of birthday cake next to the one chosen for Eleanor on his plate, a fork into his hand, and brought the gustatory toxic delight up to the Senator's mouth.

"Do something, Agent Iakoka," Olsen demanded as the cake went closer to his mouth, and his trousers got a spring cleaning with a fresh outflow of urine.

"You did say this man is delusional, didn't you?" Iakoka replied.

"Yes he did," Eleanor Roosevelt said, seeming to smell something truthful in the ethers. "With too much certainty and very little data," she added. "Eat up, Senator," she commanded Olsen.

Whitaker smiled with delight as Olsen ingested the birthday cake, as well as the remainder of what fell onto Whitaker's face during the final battle with his brother. He envisioned Olsen losing control of his mouth, revealing with pride and uncensored carelessness, everything he had done against his country in the service of the KKK, the Third Reich and of course himself. Before unveiling his own past transgressions against humanity, Whitaker began asking Olsen some questions. Questions about the powerful racist Fascist network in America which would take over the country no matter who won the War in Europe. But before the first name could spill out of Olsen's mouth, it was silenced by a bullet delivered from an unexpected party guest. He then shot several rounds into the awakening Captain Schneider, just as the SS officer was about to grab hold of a pistol and empty its chamber into the First Lady's head.

The real Major Smith, clad in prison fatigues, was arrested as a German POW, then appropriately identified. The cameras surrounded him, hailing him as a hero. Whitaker was taken away, and chained to a hospital bed. The last thing he recalled as himself was seeing a tape recorder laid on the table next to him. And recalling the first question, asked by a reporter whose essence seemed familiar, but whose face he didn't recognize. "Tell me about how it all started. And about your family."

"My brother?"

"Or, maybe, your wife, or almost wife?"

The rest came out of Whitaker's mouth uncensored, but apparently well recorded, as he found out when he awoke in a locked cell some time appreciably later in Baton Rouge with a 24 hour security guard and suicide watch over him. As for what had happened between the birthday party given to Eleanor Roosevelt on a day she let everyone think it was the commemoration of her coming into the world, the headlines on the newspapers read by the guards was all the intel Whitaker got, needed, and wanted to know. As for the details, they were torn up and tossed to him as asswipe, very sparingly of course.

Amongst the headlines, with little explanation for the real story: Senator Olsen had resigned his seat in Congress after a sex scandal involving three under-aged young ladies, two of whom were Colored. FDR had died, replaced by Harry S Truman, who had two prime agendas. One was to bring all of the boys home from the War to victory celebrations. A second was to see that the new war for democracy and freedom against the Soviets would be fought by a US Military where segregation of men, and women, according to skin color or religion was strictly outlawed. Sneaking into the wings was a war against poverty.

But the most important news was that Whitaker's home town, and the various towns where he enjoyed his youth and discovered his manhood in the Fatherland were now liberated by the Allies. Three of them contained those 'holiday' camps reserved strictly for Jews, Gypsies, Homosexuals and other miscellaneous deviants. Every German was required to see the footage of the emaciated souls who had somehow survived and haunting remains of the very many who didn't, and Whitaker was no exception.

"Yes, we were capable of that, as are you and everyone else," he told the lawyer assigned to represent him after a very private screening of the footage he had to see three times in a locked office three floors up from the cell block.

"So, ya'll admit to being guilty of the charges against you?" the still wet behind the ears JAG Captain sporting a peach-fuzz mustache inquired. He took out a pen and pencil. "I need to know what you did. It's just between us, as I'm assigned to be your defense attorney. I just need to know, in confidence, Sir, what you have done."

“Whatever came out of my mouth after my arrest,” Whitaker said. “As I stated. Whatever I stated.”

“The recorders of that confession said you were drugged, Doctor Whitaker” the inexperienced lawyer informed the over-experienced scientist/physician.

“Which is all the more reason to trust that whatever I said, I did,” the reply, as Whitaker tried to remember everything he had confessed doing, coming up with only the face of Else when she was taken away by the Gestapo as the only image left of his crimes against humanity, done directly or indirectly. “But I suppose it was what I enabled people to do that I’m most guilty of. Giving fire to those who have no warmth in their heart, being the most unforgivable crime of them all.”

The young lawyer yawned behind his desk, clearly due to exhaustion. From what, Whitaker was not sure, though by his unkempt appearance and paper loaded desk, there was a critical exam coming up soon. But he was sure by the whiff of the pill the aspiring next Supreme Court judge put in his mouth that it wasn’t Wotan 5, but related enough to that drug to be a gateway to empowerment without Enlightenment.

“I’ve become the Pandora box that has to be annihilated,” Whitaker offered. “Just as Openheimer, the mastermind behind the A-bomb, I have become death. And it is time to make that official before I confess any more scientific miracle formulas that, well...perhaps can be given to humanity when it is ready for it, and not on Promethian time.”

“Promethian time, Doctor Whitaker?” the young lad still struggling to get his higher education certificates asked the once young man who had acquired too many of them.

Whitaker thought about explaining the tale of Prometheus, who gave fire to humanity against the mandate of his boss Zeus, only to have the mortals use it to burn cities during summer conquests more than warm houses during cold winters. He took in a deep breath, trying to connect mind, soul and brain. Opened his mouth so as to trust those three muses and mentors, then has it shut by the door opening.

“Time’s up Counselor,” a baritone voice rang out from an over the hill Sergeant who smelled of cheap booze and reeked of a regrets.

“Indeed it is,” Whitaker said with a relieved smile, knowing that it would be up to someone else to come up with wonder drugs that could unlock the door to the 98% percent of the human soul that was still inaccessible to most humans, thank God.

CHAPTER 23

August, 1945

“Y’all got any last words to say to the world?” the newly elected County Sheriff atop the gallows asked in a tone that reeked of official indifference. “Or anything to confess before meeting your Creator?” inquired the Catholic Priest, the Military Court Ordered clergyman.

“Nothing more than I already told you all,” Whitaker said as he looked over the crowd of onlookers as the sun emitted yet another bolus of heat down upon the parade ground in the POW Camp which was to be converted into a holiday resort after the last of the prisoners. Some were to be released onto boats heading back to what was left of Germany. Some into the arms of American women who consented to be their husbands. And of course some into the custody of FBI agents who would put them in real jails till they figured out how they could be used in the new Cold War against Communism. Whitaker could only speculate as to who fit into what category. But he did know one thing for certain. The story of who he was, what he had done wrong, and how he tried to make that and so much more Right would be recorded by one man who now knew him better than anyone else. Whitaker gazed into the crowd, fixing his stare onto an onlooker in the back row wearing jeans, a cowboy hat, and a pink shirt complimented by a lavender scarf, asking him with his eyes whether he was up to the task he had spoken to him about the night before.

Horatio Smith, who had self promoted and demoted himself from Major and Kingpin to title-less (and clandestinely pardoned) common hard working citizen, nodded ‘yes’ to the proposition.

Whitaker smiled, feeling Right about himself and life. It was a golden moment, one that was both Blissful and Eternal. A few moments later, his experiment in applied morality and Promethian expansion ended, or perhaps was just beginning in absentia or in another bodily form which would allow many other kinds of explorations.

Such was the dream I had last night, and many nights beforehand. Which my Uncle Horatio said was really as it happened, truly. As true as my name is Else Sally Smith, born December 3, 1946. Else Sally Smith, Ph.D., M.D., whose most elegant scientific studies in brain chemistry will be published only in very selected journals, and libraries, when the time is right.

