

RAISING CAESER
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CHAPTER 1

It was a Camp that never existed, not officially at least. It was the kind of hospital that turned out biological answers rather than healthy patients. And the Third Reich needed biological answers to many questions, no matter who won the War.

The rotating population of 1,200 subjects were well fed, all things considered. Enough to keep a body alive, if indeed 'alive' is what you called a rack of walking bones clanking about the business of digging latrines, irrigation ditches, and graves. But as 'test volunteers', they were treated better than in Buckenwald or Auchwitz, or maybe not.

To qualify for admission for the voluntary medical study camp, criteria had to be met. Candidates had to be a minimum of five feet tall, have at least three functional limbs, and retain acceptable function of sight, hearing and sensing...most particularly the sensation of pain. The main focus of study at 'Block 12's' most funded project was quite "neurological".

If there was any candidate more appropriate for the IQ assessment program and the cortical neurostimulation mapping experiment, it was 10234, otherwise known as Jacob Lieberman. To look at him, he was a prize genetic model of Aryian and Semetic excellence. A dead ringer for a blond Rudolf Valentino, his eyes were deep blue, his cheeks full, his 35 year old face without a tinge of a wrinkle, not a follicle lost to age or a strand turned grey as a result of worry. The Fininaci number principle held true to his body as well, the proportion of leg to arm to torso length fitting the description of 'perfect' in any culture. Yet, no other Jewish 'volunteer' in the camp was as slow in the head, clumsy in the walk and unaware of what the camps were really about. Maybe it was the accident he had as a child. Who knew how far he could have gone if his brains were even one tenth of his looks?

On that eventful day in October of 1943, Jacob was contented as ever, digging the ditch outside the cement-walled hospital ward, a smile on his face, singing "Deutschland Uber Alas" because he liked the melody.

A Guard with a beer gut and sized 12 boots stepped on his shovel, sticking his rifle butt into his neck. "Inside, now!"

"They want me to dig a hole inside the building?" Jacob asked.

"They want YOU inside the building!" the Guard said with a glowing tone. "They need a guinea pig who is stupid enough to chop his own testicles off, and it's you!"

The joke was shared by an SS Corporal and two privates. Jacob smiled, feeling that he actually won something. "What is a testicle?" Jacob asked.

"Something very dangerous for future generations if it were every on you!" the comeback from the Guard, his comrades sharing in the laugh like hyenas in heat. "Why me?" the mascot misfit asked the stone-faced guard as he skipped across the compound, a beat in front of his gun barrel. "I'm not sick, unless the doctor says I am, of course. Because, after all, he should know, he's the doctor."

"Schnell....Schnell!!!" the Guard barked out, frustrated at Jacob's smile, widening with every scream, kick or bootheel delivered. "Schnell, Dumpkopt Jew!!!" the command as Jacob was pushed into the door, and pulled in behind it.

Jacob's compadres knew what Block 12 was all about. The stench of burnt flesh in the air. The cold edge to even the warmest of mornings. The gray sky that never completely rained, nor completely cleared up. The omnipresent sound of the most deadly kind of quiet. The taste of salt on the parched tongues of prisoners who lived in moments of terror that lasted for days, sometimes weeks.

The blackness seemed to be centered around a hidden building in a secret Camp known only to the Highest Level of the SS command. To the prisoners it was known as "The Testing Box". No ordinary prisoners were kept here. Only the best guinea pigs the Concentration Camps could produce, for the deadliest of biological experiments.

"Jacob is going to be famous one day," Jewish "volunteer" subject Hershell Menuind commented to his fellow prisoners, newly arrived 20 year olds thinking that they lucked out by their new assignment. He hobbled his way to the window overlooking the alleyway to The Testing Box, one step on his one good right leg and the next on his nearly useless left one. It was a 'special' limb which had been used to test the latest five wound healing agents which were intended to make the Block 12 doctors and Reichman Pharmaceuticals big money after the War, no matter who won. Four of the concoctions had burned holes through the skin, into the muscle, exposing necrotic bone. But one of the test ointments worked, earning Hershell a photograph that would be published in some scientific journal some day, and survival for the next round of trials. "Make the data look good, Jacob! Make the logic fit whatever they want to see!" he screamed out in Yiddish across the wire, knowing fully well that he was too 'important' to shoot, for the moment.

Hershell's advise was well intended, but fell on deaf ears. Jacob barely knew what data was, and still thought the Camp was a holiday resort, the uniforms being clown outfits, the shaved heads part of a new fashion craze, the Star of David on his blood and urine-stained coat a token of respect. Hershell had an IQ of 146, and envied Jacob's point score of 50. To be intelligent was to know too much. To be ignorant was to know nothing. And 'nothing' was what life was really all about for ALL the inmates in Block 12. Little did Hershell know that Jacob would be the most interesting enemy, and ally, the Nazis would ever have.

The man in charge of The Testing Box, from the inside, was Professor Doctor Heinrick Dieter, who went everywhere in a clean, pressed white lab coat. It brought out the bright blue in his pale-green eyes, hid the sagging biceps on his double-jointed arms, and highlighted the muscles which were conditioned most---the ones between his calliflour ears. He looked more Prussian than Nazi, but Nazi enough to command the respect, or at least obedience, of everyone around him.

When Jacob stood in front of Deiter's oak desk, he was a textbook example of a Jew, according to the Aryan biology books. "Cranial circumference seventeen percent below average", the physician calculated with the tape measure, the assistant noting the size of the brain inside with the craniotomy chart. The rest of the physical exam gave the expected results. Eyes set back with visual assessment index eight percent below normal, ocular reflexes subnormal, withdrawal time on finger pinch delayed, response to auditory stimulus slow, but as for testicular size..."A pair of melons," the helmeted, seemingly faceless Assistant noted as he wrapped the cold measuring cord around Jacob's family jewels. "And probably never used," he mused. "Unless it was with the farm goat."

Jacob nodded 'yes' and smiled. As the town idiot in his home village on the Polish-German frontier, it was his job to make everyone else feel good about themselves, and superior to SOMEone. It was a dirty and thankless job, but someone had to do it.

But Heinrick Deiter was interested in more than just a good laugh. A double doctorate in medicine and physiology, he had the good of the world in mind. An avid reader of Chekov, he had a mind as well as a brain, and a secret desire to cure the body and soul of humanity, as did the Russian writer-physician. Or maybe it was about getting that Chairmanship at the Max Plank Institute that he missed out on when the War started. Or maybe it was just the biological fascination about it all. So many scientists had been swayed from their original intentions in Block 12. Still, this was about Jacob, for now, a prize candidate for the most revolutionary surgery ever performed.

The Camp Clown just sat naked on the cold, steel chair, gazing down at the cockroaches on the floor and the crabs in his crotch, singing happy tunes to them in a language that only he could understand.

"A brain transplant, on THIS one Doctor?" the Assistant intuited.

"Central Nervous System rewiring," Deiter's reply, staring into Jacob's blank eyes.

"You are going to turn a Jewish idiot into a Jewish genius!" the Assistant mused. "Just like Albert Einstein."

"No!" Deiter admonished. "Professor Einstein is a visionary, not a genius."

"And such treasonous talk will get us BOTH put on the other side of the fence, Doctor."

"Yes, I know." Deiter gazed downward, letting his mouth do the talking, but his head do the real thinking. "Albert Einstein WAS one of the most brilliant physicists in the world, and then he became a dangerous one when he challenged the rightful authority of the democratically-elected Third Reich. Is that not so?"

Deiter had been lying so long to save his skin that he was beginning to believe the lies about the Noble German Experiment himself. Or so he let everyone around him believe. Yet, Jacob knew better.

"Doctor. What can I do to please you?" Jacob offered. "You are a good man, an honest man, a smart man. Can I ever become a smart man?"

"All things are possible with determination," Deiter commented, quoting, to his best recollection, "Mein Kampf". But though they may have been the Furher's words, they were also his own convictions. As to what those things would be, Deiter alone knew, and he wouldn't tell anyone, even Jacob.

The equation on the paper in Deiter's ledger locked in the draw was handscribbled in Ancient Greek, "Compassion + Intelligence=Superman." The Professor-Doctor's childhood friends were Plato, Emannuel Kant and Spinoza, and "The Republic" always promised that the Philosopher King would be the best ruler for ANY State. Notes Deiter had put down in all manner of languages in his private diary showed all manners and experimentation of thought, and theory. "A system is only as vicious, kind, or effective as its Ruler," read one. "There IS a superior race, and the Nordic brain IS the most developed in the world, as we know it," another postulated. "Intelligence of the heart is a capacity far more powerful, and everlasting, than quickness of the mind," a quip that occurred to him on the spur of the moment, jotted down between breaks while tending to wounded soldiers on the Eastern Front who begged for death, even though he tried to give them life.

But the experiment of primary importance now was Prisoner Jacob Liberman, not Professor Heinrick Deiter. The technology and Deiter's hidden agenda both demanded a shifting of focus, and the utmost urgency.

"You really think that electrocuting this idiot's brain is going to make him smarter?" the Assistant inquired as Deiter sedated Jacob with the dwindling supply of ether, officially allowed to be used only on the Lutheran or Catholic prisoner-subjects. "You really think it will work this time?"

"We won't know until we try, yet again," Deiter's hopeful reply as his patient faded into stage three level anesthesia, pupils centrally located, trusting the doctor from the side of consciousness where pain is merely experience, not agony. He removed a new batch of specially-prepared electrodes hidden, this time, in a chocolate rabbit.

"We are supposed to be taking brain samples from these people, or burning some of their brains out to see if they can walk, talk or fornicate, not mix one part of the brain with another, Herr Doctor. Isn't that how you figure out what part of the brain does what?"

Dieter remained silent as he drilled the holes into Jacob's skull, large enough to insert the strange looking chocolate-stained implants, small enough to go undetected beneath the half-inch lawn of matted hair which was allowed to grow in over the last two months. It was hardly in the official manual of what was supposed to be done...yet again.

"Are we following orders here, Professor-Doctor?" the Assistant asked.

“Do you want to make history, or be remembered for following orders?” Deiter shot back.

"I want to live through this War, and see if we can actually win."

"And I want what we do in this War to mean something, whether we win or lose."

"And, Herr Doctor, putting batteries into this idiot's head and turning him into someone who can think will make this War mean something?"

"We may actually be able to win it, IF we are successful, and discrete."

The Assistant leaned back, his large, grubby fingers clenching his Sergeant stripes, eager to trade them in for something...more. He watched as Deiter inserted the carefully-designed batteries into Jacob's head. He gloated as each of them hit a bleeder or two before finding their mark. He remembered all the prisoners before who had died, or gone insane, during the days when Deiter was trying to find the right locations for the devises that would draw nerves to grow from one part of the brain to another. He recalled Professor Doctor trying to explain to him that the basis of his theory was to connect parts of the brain that normally don't talk to each other. He contemplated what 'the universal perspective' must have been about, a brain that takes in all sorts of information and puts it where Nature wants it to go. He mused at Deiter's futile attempts to find the part of the brain that dealt with 'intelligence of the heart". He wondered why Jacob was Deiter's prize, and perhaps favorite patient, afforded every courtesy possible to a Jewish prisoner with an IQ barely higher than a shovel or a drunken cockroach. He admonished the physician-gone-scientist with one more warning.

"If this one fails, and the Commandant finds out about it, you go to the ovens, not me, Herr Doctor, Sir."

"This one will not fail," Deiter promised as the last multiwired implantation miniplate went into the Jacob's skull, gazing at his eyes, still seeming to trust the physician at the deepest levels of anesthesia. "No, this devise will make Jacob into a new man, me into an accomplished one, and you, my friend, into a rich one."

"I don't understand, Herr Doctor."

"What is your name?"

"In this Camp, we have no names. We don't exist. In case the War is lost, it's easier to lose oneself behind the Allied or the Russian lines. Only the stupid ones here use their real names, Doctor Deiter."

Deiter smiled, sewed over the incision holes, then put a dressing over Jacob's head.. "A smart man can be a rich man if he wants to be, right Seargent?"

"If he keeps his wealth secret, anyone can be a rich man."

"Are you a rich man, Sergeant with no name?"

The Assistant smirked to himself. "Some gold fillings from their teeth, the jewelry I got from their briefcases, a good price for their hair from a black market wig maker in Munich. I am doing alright."

"Jacob can help you do better. When he gets up, he will be able to make you a rich man. One who doesn't have to be cruel to get what he wants."

"You'll spoil all my fun," the Sergeant smirked.

"Do you want to get rich or have fun!" Deiter shot back in a loud whisper of primal rage that shocked the Assistant.

The double-doctorate physician-scientist's hands shook in a sweatsoaked clenched fist, his eyes breathing out something never seen before. Professor Doctor Deiter was colorful, indignant, egotistical, and the most self-righteous intellectual son of a bitch you could ever encounter, but this emotion? This threatening rage? This ultimatum that dared only the brave to speak boldly, and forced the meek to fade away into nothingness.

"Do you want to get rich, or have fun!!!" Deiter repeated, grabbing the Sergeant by the collar.

"What is your plan THIS time?" the Assistant who had been with Deiter through so many failures and successes asked.

"We let him live, see what happens."

"After you have destroyed parts of his brain with those little cameras you put into his head," the "I see nothing" reply.

"Yes...It's a shame we couldn't put in something that would make his brain grow, something that would take simple thoughts from isolated parts of the brain and merge them together in a way that even intelligent people don't do. It's a shame that we don't do anything more than the Commandant's orders here. It's a shame that we---"

"---Never tell the truth to each other, or ourselves," the Assistant offered in a sobering tone.

Deiter knew above all people what it cost to defy official orders from lower command in the service of unofficial higher command, but this was 1943, and everyone, even Hitler, knew the War was already over. It was just a matter of time, now. Adolf wanted the War to continue so that the Allies would pay. The only plague worse than Hitler was Stalin, and once the Russian

Bear learned to fight back after the siege of Stalingrad, there was no stopping its hunger for vengeance, or its greed for power.

"I want you to do something for me, Sergeant with no name," Deiter requested.

"If I can."

"Give this Jewish imbecile Jacob, my patient, two weeks. If he doesn't make you rich, and me famous, I will go the gas chamber with him myself."

"And if I don't decide to cover up the paperwork, as one last favor, again?"

"I'll kill you myself, in ways that will drive you insane long before the time of dying."

"Your science against my gun?" the Sergeant mused.

"My science MADE your gun," Deiter threatened. "And ultimately, will have to destroy it."

The Sergeant knew it was business this time---a final transaction that had to work according to a timetable only known to Deiter, but, somehow, very connected to Block 12, and the gloriously-disintegrating world around it.

CHAPTER 2

As a confidential member of the most secret branch of the Medical Corp with a joint position with the Ministry for People's Enlightenment and Propaganda, Colonel Heinrich Deiter was exempt from having to carry a gun, having to wear a uniform and even having to do those silly bootlicking gestures that all other officers above the rank of Major had to have mastered. He was also exempt from the censorship laws that afflicted everyone around him, even the Block 12's Camp Commandant.

Featured on Deiter's walls at his State-supported bachelor home were originals of Monet, Cezanne and even Van Gough, defective and culturally-degrading art according to Hitler. Vincent's "Cornfield with Blackbird" held a particular place of prominent above the stone fireplace, even though the Fuhrer ridiculed it as "the ravings of a lunatic". Officially, Deiter was holding on to them so he could study the regressive mind of lesser races and understand how, and why, they produced inferior art. Unofficially, they kept Dieter sane, giving him at least one glimpse of beauty in a world which had turned so ugly.

"Art is the creation of the active mind, and the tortured soul," the weary physician-scientist lamented to the photo of his missing, presumed dead, wife Elsa after his first swig of brandy. "It was not supposed to be like this, you know. All of us know this, even 'the housepainter.'"

Elsa's eyes stared back at Dieter, the grey in the photo turning into a warm green, then a piercing blue. Her hair shouted out 'blonde'. Her chiseled cheeks screeched out the unsettled warning in words that Dieter had heard night after night since her clandestine departure nearly a decade ago. "What will he do next?" she echoed into Dieter's head, from the other side of the grave or, the most frightening scenario, the other side of the War. "What will your Fuhrer do next?!!!"

"I don't know!" Dieter yelled back. Ask him yourself!" Dieter's hands sweated bullets, his wrists shaking, his heart split in two as he pulled another painting off the wall and showed it to Elsa. It was an authentic original from a collection that was officially sequestered in a locked vault back in '38. "YOU look at what Adolf painted when he was a starving, homeless artist in Vienna in 1907. YOU tell me what he was trying to tell the world with the bold brush strokes, proud colors, and defiant Promethian themes within the lines that tell the world 'no one will ever degrade me or my people again!' YOU tell me how a young man who sought to liberate the world with art turned into a madman who destroyed it with politics!"

The dialogue between the ghost in the photograph and the 'reality' in front of it continued where it had taken off last night. "My dear Heinrich, we should talk about your proposition again."

"Where were we last night?" Dieter inquired, upping the ante with a stiff belt of Scotch Whiskey obtained from the Irish Ambassador in Berlin.

"The generals are still calling Adolf 'the housepainter' behind his back?"

"More than ever, Else."

"And they still ridicule him for being obsessed with Wagner?"

"We fell in love after we saw Tristan und Isolde, Else."

"But Adolf saw it thirty-four times."

"Yes. The joke goes that maybe he was preparing to play the lead." Heinrich mused.

"And his dearest wish is STILL to 'wander about Italy as an unknown painter'. Is that not so, Heinrich?"

"Yes...He told that to me personally when he gave me some of his personal paintings, the ones he couldn't sell when he was a student trying to get into art school in Vienna. Right here, on this spot, barely 6 months ago, he told me this."

"Yes, I know, " she spoke softly. "I was there, Heinrich. Between your ears, and maybe also in front of your face."

"And where are you now?" Deiter asked, the sun-bleached photograph developing eyes of fire, cheeks of ice and a will of steel.

"We have a problem here, one of right, and wrong, my dearest Heinrich, you son of bitch. German culture is worth fighting for. The Nordic-Greek culture is the most advanced and balanced in the world today. Wagner inspires the passion in any human soul that is truly Alive, or wants to be. Beethoven put feeling and fire into notes more powerfully than anyone before him. No country has produced more artists, scientists and even brilliant doctors with drinking problems than we have, Heinrich. And all of us live, or have lived, for one thing, ultimately---to create art and culture that outlives us."

"I am sure about this, and no one is going to talk me out of it," Deiter shot back.

"What is YOUR canvas, Heinrich. What are YOU leaving for the world to remember you by? What is YOUR reason for existence?"

"He's in the back room!!! Sleeping!!!!" Deiter shouted. He gazed into the next room, through a discretely partially-opened door. Jacob lay sleeping, on a bed with real sheets and a flee-less blanket, for the first time in two years.

"Did you feed him, Heinrich?"

"Yes! I fed him, Else."

"I hope you fed him well. You never did know what hunger was, Professor Deiter."

"And you do!!!!?" the quip back. "I can hear your stomach churning. And I can smell trains around you. And I can hear birds around your head, chirping....Tell me, what kind of birds are they?"

"None that I will tell you about, not now at least," Else bulleted back.

Deiter has never cried since the day Else left on that fateful day of decision back in '34, barely a year after the National Socialist Party took over the German government and started to make the trains run on time again. He had held back the tide on so many other tragedies when friends and colleagues were killed by Russian bullets, or German ones. The grief lay firmly in his chest for nearly ten years.

But now, with Else's ultimatum---a strange sensation, a pain he was grateful to feel. The tears steamed down his face, the lump in his throat preventing him from swallowing his pride. With the last ounce of mental composure he had, one last question had to be asked.

"When will I see you again, Else? When will we together again?"

"When you finish your work with 'the housepainter...and the Jew.'" With that, Else faded back into the netherworld, leaving Heinrick with the stark, cold reality of the world as it is. Or maybe a world he helped to create. His blank stare turned inward, the room felt cold, the walls claustrophobic and the clock counting down time with ticks that grew louder, faster and harder. Then---a knock of finality on the wall next to him.

"What do you want?!!!" Deiter screamed out from a crouched fetal position, his eyes closed, his heart terrified.

"A pillow," Jacob said smiling. "My head, it hurts. Hard head, soft pillow, no pain?"

Deiter caught his breath, and got wind of his purpose. "I'll be in with your medications in a moment, Jacob."

"The ones that will make me smart, just like you?"

"No. The ones that will make you wise, like her."

Jacob looked at Elsa's picture with one eye opened, the other closed, alternating his point of view every ten seconds. It was not so strange a pattern, and all according to plan. Left and right brains were beginning to communicate with each other. The diametric opposites were starting to merge. Compassion and intelligence, cunning and wisdom, logic and intuition. Indeed, association cortices were connecting, or starting to. The implanted 'Promethian bridging units' were linking areas in Jacob's brain that had never been connected in the dim-witted village idiot. Perhaps, if all went according to plan, they would bridge areas never connected in anyone.

CHAPTER 3

"Art is a mission demanding fanaticism," said the motto inscribed over the House of German Art, put there by Hitler himself back in '37. But in '43, affairs of art, propaganda and mass morale had been delegated. For the Aryan evil to remain powerful, yet palatable, it had to be properly packaged, and distributed. No one knew the art of packaging media better than Colonel Johan Steiner, answering only the Josef Geobells himself, who answered only the man, maniac, or puppet who started it all.

It was just another day at the Reich Culture Chamber of Cinema. Just another day of modifying another movie script which would promote Aryan values to a people in danger of valuing nothing at all in a war that seemed to have little value left except survival. Just another day of promoting an actor who the High Command liked, and sending another who may have given the wrong look to the camera to his, or her, final curtain. Just another day of making the lies about racial superiority and German victory all the more real. Yet, the old standbys still held true as five-foot-three Steiner sat behind a five-hundred year old desk acquired from the French Opera House, putting director Karl Neilson on the hot seat in front of him, the chair having a lower seat and a reclining back to make the 'guest' feel both small and non-assertive.

With every red mark on the script, Neilson cringed, to the delight of Steiner, who moved the pen up and down the page like a puppeteer manipulating the hands, feet and head of his prey. It was a game he played with everybody, and it was a game which he always won. But it was still a game he had to play by the numbers. And, ironically, Neilson pegged it.

"So, Herr Director Neilson, your character says there that 'the real controller of the Army is the Sergeant, who advises the Lieutenant, who advises the General'. An interesting line." Steiner puffed on his cigarette, holding it in authoritative Prussian manner, blowing smoke into Neilson's face with the class of a boorish, illiterate factory worker. "Do you really think that you are as

good as an experienced director such as Veit Harlan? Do you really think that YOUR script is as artistic as 'The Great King', and as politically useful as 'Jew Suss'?"

"Yes, Colonel Steiner." Neilson coughed, trying to let on his poor health, his real meaning, and his real ambitions. For all the evil the Third Reich presented, there was also opportunity. The more losses the German Army suffered in the field, the more money Goebbels had to produce movies to inspire the War effort, and prepare the German people for the Final Solution. After all, most of his budget came from Jews who were interned, killed, or worse.

Like all other artists, Neilson balanced the arithmetic of it all, reasoning that one man couldn't make a difference, but maybe the art produced by that one man could. Perhaps his first production could be another "Schiller:Triumph of a Genius", a Nazi-funded film depicting the life of the 18th century German romantic who defied authority, conformity and stagnation in his own time to write works that celebrated the freedom of the human spirit. If that spirit happened to be a German spirit, the message could get through.

But for every "Schiller" that made it through the system, through low profile directors, there was a "Jew Suss", and behind every "Jew Suss", a director with the stature, and cloud, of Veit Harlan, a thinking Party Member and an astute artist.

Steiner saw something of both in the young Neilson. Herein lay a fencesitter, whose ass was very much on the hotseat. The inquiry started with a simple question.

"What did you like about 'Jew Suss'?"

"The way in which Harlan used double exposure of images to show the main character's domination of the other characters was interesting. Although the technique was done far more artistically in 'The Great King' when Frederick the Great's ghost emerges from the grave to scare the shit out of Napoleon, get him out of town, and inspire the German villagers to fight for their freedom". Neilson leaned back, gazed at the window, acquiring the tone of youthful confidence. "I personally think the symbolism in 'Jew Suss' was overdone."

"Portraying Joseph Suss Openheimer as a Jewish financial advisor to Duke Alexander in 18th century Wurtenburg who infiltrated the government, feminized the men in it, and initiating a military coup against it for his own financial gain was overdone?"

"Yes," Neilson offered, his lips quivering. "Artistically speaking."

Steiner paused a moment, letting Neilson sweat a few moment longer for the next trap. "And, artistically speaking, what did you think of Dorothea, the symbol of Aryan women, and the Aryan Nation, being seduced, and raped by Suss?"

"True, she committed suicide after he left, and the vampire-like metaphor suggested that he was a blood-sucker--"

"According to the Fuhrer's own description of the Jew."

--but"

"But what!!! " Steiner barked out.

"But, with respect, Sir," Neilson's lips quivered, then he breathed deeply, delivering his final word on the matter. "I could have made the points far more subtly. And far more effectively. And Goebbells himself prefers messages delivered with subtly and effectiveness. And since we are both serving the same masters, and agenda..."

Steiner maintained cold stone eyes, in keeping with Party policy, and personal temperament. Then, as the tension in the air became thick as a concrete wall, about to collapse on Neilson---a chuckle from the 'little Colonel', appended by a slap on the budding director's non-muscled back. "You are an bright director!" he exclaimed with a smile that was proud, sadistic and calculating, all at once.

"I do my best," Neilson let out amidst a breath of relief.

"And you are an ambitious one too. A real 'hot shot'. Like John Wayne for the Americans."

"John Wayne is an actor."

"We are ALL actors," Steiner said, careful to not let his eyeline roam to the portrait of Hitler on the wall, or the signed copy of Goebbell's hallmark novel "Michael:A German's Destiny."

"John Wayne is a real American, though," Neilson challenged.

"What if I were to tell you that John Wayne was a coward who we BOTH should despise, and admire," Steiner challenged with an inviting smile.

"I would ask what you meant, Colonel."

Steiner poured himself a glass of Napoleonic brandy and offered it to his guest, prey, or whatever else he would turn out to be by the last sip. "John Wayne was a second rate actor before the War. Now, he's a first rate actor. John Wayne is in Hollywood making movies about this war, while the first rate American actors are here fighting it. James Stewart is a pilot, in real planes, dropping real bombs on real people. Gary Copper is in the Army, and even Randolph Scott has enlisted. Hollywood has no heros left in Hollywood, so John Wayne stepped in. He's a coward."

"I suppose he is," Neilson related, hoping that the next question would not be---

"Just like you being given special dispensation from serving in the Army so you can make films for OUR Cause!" Steiner barked out.

Neilson's hand shook, the glass dropping to the floor. With Steiner in his face, there was nothing else to do except the thing least expected. The peach-fuzz faced director grabbed hold of Steiner's glass, and poured its contents down his parched throat, looking his Inquisitor straight in the eye.

Steiner's reply was cold, indifferent, and emotionless. The kind of look a man could read anything into, according to his own fear, hope or courage. "So, Herr Neilson, you are an actor. Or maybe something else...A visionary?"

"Yes," Neilson countered, letting go of his breath. "A visionary in service of the German people."

"A visionary who knows the truth. A visionary that claims that all you need to own a country is a 'mug with distinctive facial hair, a national flag with a bold color scheme and a National Anthem that will make everyone march to the beat of what they THINK is their own drummer."

The quote was real, recorded in an intimate private meetings with other artists that are not spoken about. It wasn't homosexuality that would get Neilson fried. He was well on his way to figuring out the game, and wanted to win it for himself. But, as always, Steiner had bigger fish to fry.

"Tell me, Herr Director Neilson, who is WISE enough to know that making us win on the battlefield is more important than you dying on one, what is your greatest wish?"

"To serve the German people," Nielson replied, with a slight bow and a subtle clickling of his civilian shoe heels.

"And to become rich, famous or powerful? Choose ONE. That is an order."

"I suppose...rich, IF I was ordered to make a choice, Colonel." Neilson waited, tense, anticipating the worst, when---

Steiner burst out in a belly laugh. "That is the correct answer, Herr Director Neilson. The smart ones in this War are in it for the money, not the power. You indeed are one of the smart Seargents, who need the Lieutenants and the Generals to think they are still in charge. But, there is one thing you must remember..."

Neilson smiled, feeling at home, safe, and secure for the first time in months. "What is that I must remember, Herr Steiner?"

Before the young director could say "camera, speed, action" a REAL gun barrel rested firmly on his forehead. And the direction for the scene was given with unmistakable clarity. "Remember, Herr Nielson, that I am the only REAL Sergeant in this Army, and no matter how high I allow you to rise up the ranks, I will ALWAYS be in command!"

The record spoke for itself. In matters of media, no one was more cunning, and destructive, than Steiner. He was in it from the beginning, silently behind the scenes, preferring power to fame, and money.

Steiner had been there in '33, orchestrating the rallies in which music and marching was orchestrated to Hitler coming to the stand from behind the crowd, affirming that he was one of the people. He appreciated the power of using Greek and Roman art as the model for sculptures and painting because it forged pride in a people defeated in War after the 'Great' War and broken by poverty during the Great Depression afterward. He knew that an overdose of Wagner could make anyone live in a dream world of Ancient Prophecies and Unobtainable Dreams. Steiner calculated that no matter who won this war, he, as head Sergeant of the most power branch of the Third Reich, would come out on top. By manipulating art, he could manipulate the Generals, and thus manipulate the country, and, ultimately, the world.

Politics had nothing to do with it. Steiner knew the SCIENCE of media, using his psychology degree to perpetuate evil rather than to understand the workings, and hardships, of the human mind. Perverting pride into power, self-respect into sadism, and yearning for a simpler, noble time into a fanatic need to destroy anything that wasn't a Wagner storybook land---it was easy, and fun.

CHAPTER 3

Deiter understood more about the inner workings of the mind, even the Nazi one, better than the outer workings of the world. No one understood Hitler, perhaps even Adolf himself. If God still existed, perhaps He knew which part of the Fuhrer was victim, villain or vampire. Maybe the Creator knew why so much evil seemed to flow through the madman who loved children and dogs more than his own people. But one question persisted---Why did Hitler order the confiscation of all the paintings and drawings done by his own hand back in '38, just before the War? And why did Deiter get secret packages from Albert Speers with writing in Ancient Greek requesting that the canvases enclosed be hung in a prominent place, and protected from the eyes of people who knew what they were really about?

The reliefs of Cathedrals, farmhouses and laborers in a field on the wall of Deiter's inner sanctum signed "AH" didn't seem like anything special to the uninitiated observer. With a bit of scraping and scratching, the signature was gone and they looked quite ordinary. But maybe that was the problem. Or maybe that was the solution.

As for the problem of THIS day, however, it was about treating another kind of patient. Jacob babbled incoherently in Yiddish when presented with lessons from the books in Deiter's very private library buried between his greenhouse and the living room of the well-shaded cottage he guiltfully called 'home'. When asked a question, Jacob's face would amplify the rays of sunlight that filtered through the window, with what those less scientifically-inclined would call a halo. He would reply with what seemed to be an answer behind his eyes, but with words that made little sense.

The customized Promethian Bridge Implants which were bridging language regions of Jacob's brain with the visual cortex were too strong, or so it seemed when he started to describe hallucinations that sounded schizophrenic. The plan Deiter had in mind required that Jacob gain at least five IQ points per day, and language deficits would only make matters worse. A special mentor was brought in, with appropriate security measures.

"What is meant by the Categorical Imperative according to Emmanuel Kant, Jacob?" Hershell Menuind asked, his legs shackled to each other in the event that he would attempt to escape, Steiner's trusted no-name Sergeant with a loaded pistol hidden under his coat, aimed at the ex-University scholar's head, a tape recorder to the side as a final referee.

"The what?" Jacob slurred out.

"The ultimate reason why we do all things, Jacob. Why we are here," the drill continued.

"I don't know. But we could ask the Sergeant? Or is he a Lieutenant, or a..yes...a Captain?" Jacob spouted out in a burst of clarity, and gleeful confidence.

"You are the one who answers the questions," the Sergeant blasted out. "I record the answers. And we both answer to the same authority."

"The Moral Imperative, the need for everyone to do what, to them is the moral and right thing, which is different for everyone, but constant in its ultimate morality," Jacob spat out in authoritative German with a warm, Yiddish smile.

Hershell has never heard such an interpretation of Emmanuel Kant, skimming through to pages to see if, indeed, that was the prescribed answer, when---

"There..." Jacob pointed with his finger, to the right page, and passage. "I believe that is what the book says, or should say. Kant can't be right all the time."

Hershell smiled, then chuckled at the joke, and pun. But as for the Sergeant. "Mathematics. It's time for his mathematics lesson," he barked out, looking at the list left behind by Dieter. Yet, the more he looked away, the more penetrating, and compassionate Jacob's eyes lay on him.

"What's he doing?" the Sergeant screamed at Hershell, pinning down the problem at hand. "He's possessed!!!"

"By Life!" Hershell replied, eyeing the miracle from the side.

"And something else, Jacob," he said directly to the Sergeant. "Captain Jacob. Captain Jacob...something."

"Ranselhoff," the Captain, now Sergeant, replied, having been found out. "How did you know?"

"I don't know how I knew," Jacob replied, feeling an engine between his ears experiencing accelerated growth, activity and joy. "But you seemed like a Jacob, a little like me. And the way you walk and talk, when we are alone, you were up the hill, it seems, then something happened that made you lose two steps...I think...or, no I feel. In here. Or maybe it's just something I ate. Or didn't eat?"

Jacob pointed to his gut. Something was kicking in. Something very powerful, and dangerous.

Ex-Captain Ranselhoff felt as if he was in the presence of a genius awakened from a coffin of ignorance and obscurity. Indeed, if marketed right, this idiot-Jew turned thinker could become a valuable asset, assuming that he didn't think too much.

Hershell Leiberman, smelled the sweet odor of freedom, or better still, opportunity. Creation of complex intelligence from simplistic compassion was no less than a miracle, but, as Lieberman remembered from his days teaching at the Yeshiva, "the most important Creation on Earth is a

human spirit that persists in the pursuit of meaningful knowledge and wisdom." At least that was the way he remembered it, after two years of meaningless internment in Block 12. Deiter was the kindest devil he had met in those two years, and better the devil you know, ergo....

"The next books which Professor Deiter asked that we go over are...." Hershell related with a tense pause stuck in the back of his throat. He picked up from the pile, Einstein's lay version of the Theory of Relativity, along with a bootleg copy his "The World as I See It". Then---the sound of a car arriving, Deiter stepping out of it, briskly.. Then, the sound of sleep again.

Jacob's snore was distinctive, particularly with the Promethian bridges. The whistling quality to that snore following implantation of the devises was a warning. "The brain's work day is over when the factory whistle blows," Deiter had warned Hershell, having found out that overstimulation beyond a certain point would fry brain cells. The hypothesis was that an unidentified neurotransmitter released by one brain cell, or association center, would solidify a connection with another one, or destroy it. The identity of that transmitter would have to be determined in the next War, or, if God still willed it possible, the peace between this War and the next one. But for today the lesson was over, save one item of business.

Deiter waltzed in, bringing beef knockworst and sauerkraut. "I can't stay for dinner, Doctor," Ranselhoff said. "I've been called away," he continued, putting on his coat, adjusting everything in the mirror in a manner that seemed uncharacteristically Prussian, aristocratic and final.

"We can change your orders, like we did in the past," Deiter commented. "I thought you wanted to be rich."

"Being rich means nothing if you are not alive to spend it," Ranselhoff commented. "If you were wise, you would stop this experiment. Some things are not supposed to be possible, even for Supermen."

Deiter had never seen such humanity in Ranselhoff's face, and never expected to see them release the tears which he suspected were behind them.

"Goodbye, Heinrich," Ranselhoff said with a tremor in his voice and a heart that seemed, frighteningly, so Alive. No look into the face of the only friend he had left in the German Army. No handshake, no hug, not even a pat on the shoulder. Just a simple "Till we meet again, my friend ", and an exit into the cold winter air, and a harsh shutting of the door behind him.

Before Deiter lay the portrait of Elsa, but she said nothing. Time for the living to speak now. "We have much work to do," Hershell said. "But I have one question first."

"Which is?" Deiter asked.

"What work are we doing here, anyway?"

For Heinrich Deiter, a moment of resolution, a point of no turning back, granted benevolently by Life to someone who, through it all, was trying to do the right thing. It was a dangerous and uncertain thing, but one certainty would make it all happen as it should.

"Yes," Elsa spoke with a smile of reassurance to her now-transformed Heinrich.

"Yes," she repeated as her only set of instructions.

CHAPTER 5

As an Aryan physician and research scientist Deiter was the Third Reich's model success and ultimate failure. Perhaps it was the FACT that he had a Superior intelligence combined with a Universal conscience. Losing ANY battle with ANY man, woman or child made him feel defeat and humiliation. Winning one made him feel guilt. Warfare with God and the devil were equally futile endeavors, victory perverted into defeat or deception so, so easily. Cursed with the healer's

magic and burden, it was Nature that was to thank when things went right, Henrick Deiter to be blamed if anything went wrong, and much that was right had gone wrong in Europe since '39, in Germany since '37, and in his own personal life since '35.

Perhaps it all started with Elsa, the only woman with whom Henrick could dance. Every woman he dated, hated or potentially mated Post-Elsa were patients, one way or another, afflicted with diseases of body, mind or spirit. Katrina had diabetes, Gretchen was a textbook case of schizophrenia and Hilda seemed possessed by witches from both sides of the Danube, and the river of hard reality. He was sure he could cure them, or that by being with them, he would be inoculated by life as it was experienced by the masses so he could find cures for the ailments that kept the people in the masses AS the masses.

Then again, maybe the problem was the Promethian Legend behind the German reality. The Greek who defied the gods by stealing fire back for mankind paid for his crime of courage and nobility by more than having his liver plucked at by crows forever. The penalty for rebelling against the status quo was loneliness, ultimately. And lack of wonderment. The more you understand how a bird flies, the more you lose the wonderment about flight. But maybe this disease would not afflict Jacob. Or maybe this latest patient could cure the physician, or the Country which made that physician who he was.

"So," former prisoner Hershell Menuind asked Deiter across the dining table featuring four dishes, all of which were filled-in by rotted, well-cooked potatoes. "What do we do now?"

"Give the Housepainter exactly what he wants," Deiter's reply to the ex-Yeshiva Professor, cleaned and well fed inside a new suit, a clean shave and a freshly forged identity.

"And the others?" Hershell inquired, helping himself to another helping of stew, hoping that its contents were not of human origin, as had been the case with every other helping of meat soup offered by his captors in the last 18 months.

Deiter looked around him. All were present. The brightest and the most trusted, prisoners rescued from the gas chambers and firing squads with the last of the transfer ordered forged by his once trusted Assistant, ex-Captain Ranselhoff.

There was Erik Reinsdorf, master camera manufacturer who missed the boat to New York in '37 and got stuck on the train leading to Auschwitz a few years later. Once a man with a pot belly the size of Bavaria, he now stood, or rather crouched, a strapping 5-foot-ten, ready to do anything that would give what was left of his life some meaning.

Josef Bloomberg served as a sound man for the Berlin Rallys, a secure position until it was discovered that his wife was Jewish and that he might possibly have more affection for her than obedience to the Masters who paid him. Josef had retained his sense of humor, somehow, but never quite made the transition to laughter. He smiled, but seldom laughed. Yet, his last laugh would be a scream or victory---or so the agnositic-turned-athiest hoped.

Karen Telleman was somewhat fortunate in her dealings with the Gestapo. Had it not been for an interrogator being more interested in her blossoming breasts rather than information about British bombardiers, she would have become food for the worms. Instead, she became feed for vermin, unofficially-renounced as the most desired prisoner-whore in Berlin. Even Colonel Steiner had a piece of her, though the truth about the night of passion would remain in Karen's embittered heart until she was ready to tell it. Two suicide attempts led to deaths of two of Karen's closest friends, encouraging her to perfect her craft, and make prominent her presence.

Hans Klassen had been a veteran journalist since the turn of the century, and had interviewed everyone. Life had given him a prophetic gift of knowing famous people before they became known, or powerful. His interviews with Hitler prior to the "Mein Kampf" period were well documented in his private notes, observations about the man behind the madness which were now either destroyed or hidden. Whoever had those notes would certainly use them one day. Had it not been for Klassen inferring that he had information about the Fuhrer's past that could make SOMEone in the High Command very politically powerful, he would have never escaped into Sweden. Had he not talked to that wide-eyed New York Times cub reporter with her sweet smile and a warm heart, he would not have been found, and smuggled back to Germany for execution, or worse.

The others would come to the dinner table another night, as would the main reason for their being there.

"Where is Jacob?" Hershell asked as Deiter looked over the final plan, prepared to put into words what he had dared not speak of to anyone before. "This plan of yours does include him."

"This plan of OURS," Deiter insisted, stroking his hair, the sweat in his hand mixing with the grim on his unwashed scalp. He passed the folders around, each one with sealed orders for the members of this first, inner circle.

Hershell smirked at the plan. "Impossible. It can't be done!"

"We'll all be killed," Bloomberg exclaimed.

"It can't work," Karen grimaced. "It's too...simple."

"Yet, so necessary," Klassen asserted. "IF we can get him to do it."

"And if Jacob is ready," Hershell warned. "His schooling is ten days behind schedule, and the day is already half gone, and he is still sleeping!"

"Jacob will be ready," Deiter asserted. "And so must we be. The release date of this Opus is in 64 days."

"You seem so sure of this number," Klassen interjected, helping himself to a cigarette, taking a puff out of the Bolshevik tobacco which Deiter kept on hand for guests that needed some fire in their lungs, and a psychedelic kick in the ass.

"I smell something you are not telling us, darling," Karen shot back at Deiter with the soft alluring voice she had learned to fake for so many years. Maybe now she could mean it.

"You have a plan to end the war in thirty days?" Bloomberg asked his host with a mixture of humor and desperate optimism.

"Sixty-four days," Deiter offered quietly and with a compassion-tempered affirmation.

The circle of four looked into each other's eyes. Maybe Deiter was talking about a plan the Medical Corp had to spread anthrax vaccines into the winds sweeping over the British Isles, or maybe the Eastern American Coastline. Maybe another assassination attempt was underway. Maybe it was about the long-awaited, privately celebrated, Allied landing in France, Belgium or even Poland. Or maybe it was just Deiter's own timetable, precision being Heinrich's obsession in matters of politics, policy and medical practice.

It was the latter thought that cued Klassen into it, confirmed by Deiter fondling his Medical Corp insignia on his lapel with a mixture of enormous pride and unrelenting regret. Piecing together the "all you need to do is this" instructions given to him into the whole picture was easy.

"You have treated Hitler as a private physician?" Klassen inquired with the inviting voice that was his trademark and calling. "His VERY private physician?"

"And the Fuhrer is going to become very sick again," Bloomberg surmised.

"Do I get to administer the appropriate medicine?" Karen asked, vengeance behind her beautiful, hardened smile.

"No!" Deiter asserted. "We give the patient what he wants. And our country, or what is left of it, what it needs."

"A movie..." Hershell surmized, the pieces of the puzzle finally coming together in his ever-thinking, oversized, balding head. "Made by us, and starring Hitler himself!!!"

"And directed by Jacob," Deiter added. "A movie that will turn Hitler's head around, put it back straight on his head, and a movie that will turn this country around."

"The premise is against State policy," Klassen noted. "No movie maker has ever been allowed to write a story about the Fuhrer's life. Goebbels intends that he remain a legend, in a class by himself. A god atop the highest mountain."

"Hitler is not a god, nor a legend. He is a man, as weak, strong and potentially human as any of us," Deiter asserted.

"And as able to channel evil as any man Alive," Bloomberg protested. "Maybe you want to team him up with the other Anti-Christ, Josef Stalin. Just like Bob Hope and Bing Crosby. A

comedy team we will all laugh to on our way to Hell! Comedy." Bloomberg's eye caught a glimpse of Elsa, reminding him of his own, wife, sister, and mother, all of whom died the kinds of deaths that no movie could ever portray as the horror they really were.

Something in Deiter snapped. Maybe it was Elsa looking back at him. Maybe it was his own reflection in the glass over her picture, presenting his eyes over her face in a double exposure made so effective by Viet Harlan in *Jew Suss* and so many other beautifully-crafted films which supported ugly ideas. It was all that Heinrick could do but to burst out laughing.

"This is no laughing matter, Professor Deiter!" Hershell asserted, voicing the indignation and discouragement of the congregation.

"On the contrary," a voice rang out with full confidence from behind the Medico Mastermind. "It MUST be a laughing matter," Jacob continued, speaking with a voice that was clear, authoritative, deep and warm. "And this is how we will master the tragedy that has become our World with the humor that will liberate us all." The 110 page documentation of how it would be done fell on the table, dropped gingerly from his hands as Merlin would have placed the Sword Excaliber in the middle of the Round Table.

How Jacob had put together a full-length screenplay from concept to polished first draft in two days was incidental. The medical explanations behind how magnets and batteries had linked up portions of a 50 IQ brain into a 250 plus IQ reservoir of insight and innovation seemed insignificant. The urgency to accomplish the task on time, and according to plan, was unquestionable.

All parties voted 'yes' to Deiter's proposal with a nod. But one voter chose to abstain, with extreme caution. Elsa's head told Deiter 'no, it can't be done'. But her eyes, and heart, said 'yes, you must try, even if you fail---especially if you fail.' Elsa never spoke ambiguously to Deiter, either in life or from the other side of 'the wall'. She always knew things that Deiter didn't, and would eventually find out. Yet, now, it was Deiter's decision.

"Well," Hershell asked, sensing the most horrifying look in Dieter that any leader could have. "A wrong decision is infinitely better than no decision."

"That sounds profound, Rabbi Menuind," Deiter confessed. "Is that from the Torah?"

"No, it's from here." Hershell pointed out the portion of Jacob's script that so prophetically put was so needed to be said. He continued. "The material in this script is blasphemous, crude and portrays a cruelty that is reprehensible. But in my heart of hearts, and mind of minds, I feel that it is God's will that we do it. Making this movie after the War is over may prevent more Wars, but if we don't stop this one...."

Deiter allowed it to sink in. Elsa shrugged back. Finally, a nod from Deiter to her, and his crew.

Hershell poured the wine, from a Jewish winery, vintage 1913, all things considered, a very good year. Deiter made the toast, Jacob contemplated improvements in dialogue between his ears. And Elsa smiled---for the first time perhaps in a decade.

CHAPTER 6

Born to the sign of Scorpio, Ex-Captain Jacob Ranselhoff yearned for the ocean, but he feared exposure even more. A 'vacation' in Switzerland was his only way out of the War, now that Deiter's "Frankenstein Treatment" was in its first stages. It would be a matter of time until the Commandant in charge of Block 12 figured out that Deiter's reassignment papers were forgeries, and that several prize test subjects had been taken out of the rat cage and data base. It would be a matter of course that Ranselhoff's real identity as an Ex-Uboat commander was detected. It would be a matter of honor that he be castrated, skinned and electrocuted once the daughter of Field Marshall Eichendorf located the father of her Down's Syndrome, bastard child. It would be a matter of legalities that all of those other charges of black market racketeering secrets about weapons and the financiers who funded them would be added to the charges. It was a matter of plain bad luck that the first person that he ran into Swiss borderguard Corporal Gerhard Minsk.

Corporal Gerhart Minsk stood six-foot-four, with Aryan features that would put him on anyone's "A" list for the "Strength Through Joy" posters portraying happy, well adjusted and confident buyers of German products back when they were accessible to the general public. His rifle was clean, spotless and his chest laden with medals conferred upon him by the Alpine, landlocked country that chose, either for profit of some kind of long term wisdom, to remain neutral. He looked at Ranselhoff's papers, stamped in all the right places. He gazed at the brown suit, tattered in just the right places. He gazed upon the overloaded satchel and baggy

socks, and knocked on the accessory box-like accessories on the motorcycle, finding them, not surprising, full.

"What is your business in Switzerland, Herr Linquist?" Minsk asked, his face stone-cold.

"Survival, my friend," Ranselhoff answered in broken German in which he did his best to sound American---and not be noticed by the German guards behind him---who he had just bribed with counterfeit Reichmarks. "I just escaped a Prisoner of War camp, and my life is in danger. Please let me in, now..."

"With papers that show you wearing the same suit in your identity picture as you are wearing now," Minsk commented. "Whoever your escape officer is, he is not very bright. But you do speak very good German. If you wish, I can get an English interpreter---"

"---No! It's alright." Ranselhoff spat out, blowing his cover, and cool.

"You are an escaped Jew?" Minsk asked, gazing at Ranselhoff's crotch.

"No," Ranselhoff replied, face down, realizing that his uncircumcised penis would give him away and that such a test was now routinely done at all border crossings to catch Nazis trying to flee the madness they created, or supported.

"A gypsy, then?" Corporal Minsk pressed on, with sympathetic eyes.

"Yes," the reply, fitting into a lie which was, basically, not that far from the truth.

"With how much money that you wish to invest in the Swiss economy?"

"Four-hundred and twenty thousand Reichmarks, I think. Honestly stolen from the bank of Munich. And it is all real."

This time, Ranselhoff was telling the truth. The money in the satchels, the extra carburetor and the bulges in his hole-ridden, mismatched socks was all real. The German to Swiss monetary transfer system had evolved over the years, some of it at the higher level, and some at the lowest level. But there were some constants that had to be maintained, and the economy of Europe still, ultimately, depended on the stability of the Swiss banks.

"This money is real," Minsk noted, as he examined the watermarks and impression smears. But as for its source. "You are either a master bank robber, or a master businessman, Mister Linquist."

"...Who can be of great use to your country, Lieutenant." Ranselhoff offered.

"I am a Corporal," Minsk asserted. "Serving a country that wants gypsy thieves AND runaway Nazi officers to face justice in their own country." In full control of the borderzone with his civil authority, and the moment with his sidearm, the Aryan-Swiss guard ripped up Minsk's ID. "And

as for your contribution to Switzerland, perhaps you will have better luck at another border crossing. And if God is still Alive, you won't. Good day, Herr Linqvist."

Minsk turned around, marched to his side of the line, and helped himself to a chunk of cheese bearing the name of the Country for which he felt so much pride, and shame.

Ranselhoff looked to the mountains to his right, and to the left. No mountangoat could scale such peaks. Then, to his rear, a detachment of German borderguards in a jeep, guns drawn, prepared to fire if he even THOUGHT the wrong thought, commanded by a Lieutenant with an Iron Cross around his leathery neck, framing a face that was born for his SS command post.

The lieutenant halted the jeep and stepped out, his polished boots stepping on a handful of Ranselhoff's forged Deutchmark notes. With Ranselhoff surrounded by guns on all sides, he inspected the bills, very carefully.

Ranselhoff kneeled against his motorcycle, saying a silent prayer to both the Nordic god Oden and to Jesus, if indeed He was still listening to ex-Catholics-turned-Nazi. The lieutenant smirked. "You insult us, and you insult me! And, whoever you are, you insult yourself by thinking that you can get into Switzerland so easily. Do you have anything to say before we take everything you own, shoot you, and feed your testicles to the my dog?"

"Yes, Lieutenant," Ranselhoff bolted out proudly, with the last ounce of aristocratic Prussian bearing at his disposal. "I want to see Colonel Steiner, in the office of the Ministry of Propaganda, now!"

The Lieutenant laughed. "Why should we bother such an important man as this Colonel Steiner with an idiot such as you?"

"Because he can make all of you important," the claim, bold and audacious. "And because I used to be Captain Jacob Ranselhoff, before my untimely death at sea."

Examination of the real money in the hidden compartments of Ranselhoff's motorcycle seems to give some validity to the claim, appended with the most powerful draw of all from the ex-Naval Captain.

"Beyond what you can see, is what you can obtain." The quote was remembered, or bastardized, from Mein Kampf, but the promise very, very real.

While the enlisted men divided up the loot off Ranselhoff's motorcycle, the Lieutenant passed down his decision. "We take our ten percent finder's fee in the manner of this civil case, and give the rest back to..." he turned to Ranselhoff. "Colonel Steiner?"

"Yes," Ranselhoff conceded, overcome with an emotion he least expected---guilt. The money, one way or another, was obtained from Jews, and would be used by the Ministry of Propaganda to fund more movies that would prime the people of Germany for The Final Solution. Though, bottom line, Ranselhoff was a crook, he was not a sadist. Thus far, he was the sole beneficiary

of his greed, and it didn't take much to keep his habit going. But now he would be part of the machinery, a machinery that had the WORST interest of the German people at heart. A machinery that, very soon, would lash back at the only friend, or family, he still had in this War, Heinrich Deiter.

CHAPTER 7

The questions asked by Colonel Steiner of the prisoner brought before him were simple. The consequences of answering them inaccurately were unquestionable. No matter what kind of heroic crap any German filmmaker put on the screen to inspire morale of their soldiers, when it comes to interrogation, EVERYbody talked, some in five seconds, some in five minutes. For the exceptionally brave and/or deluded, it could take as much as an hour.

The place was Steiner's office, on a bright, sunny day, the birds chirping outside his window. Hardly the basement dungeon which had all manner of electrocution devices, torture racks and blunt instruments that could be wielded so easily to make pain feel like a very, very sharp stick in the most vulnerable part of a man, woman or child.

Steiner knew that Ranselhoff had experienced action in the North Atlantic as a decorated U-boat commander. He also knew, thanks to composite histories and a trail of other informants, that he had been a Sergeant at Block 12. But some things had to be said.

"You were a decorated War hero, Captain Ranselhoff," Steiner noted. "I was one of your biggest fans. I even had one of my writers do a script based on your exploits in the North Atlantic."

"Yes, Colonel," the reply, simple, understated, and regretful.

"I volunteered for duty on the North Atlantic, but was assigned here instead," Steiner noted. "You were one of the real heroes because you DID it."

"No, Sir," Ranselhoff asserted. "You are the real hero, because you tell people about it. You enable deeds of simple people to be immortalized by using your Promethian genius."

Steiner had heard every flattery line in the books, those written and in development, yet he was still not immune from the adoration, and the pain. He was also susceptible to the most painful

dilemma of all in those times---conflict of loyalties. To please his Prussian aristocratic mother, rank and power were everything. His low-born Bavarian father valued bravery and experience above all things. The failure to be top dog at the Ministry or Propaganda would upset his mother, the military record that lacked any experience in action a black mark to his father. Both were dead, now, their parental power only amplified by having deceased. Steiner's eyes were overtaken by a glaze of defeat, humiliation and something seldom shown to anyone...shame.

"Is something bothering you, Colonel?" Ranselhoff asked, gently, and with extreme caution.

"The stupidity of the man sitting in front of me!" he barked back.

"I'm smart enough to still be alive," Ranselhoff countered, calmly. "And to ask to speak with you, rather than Goebbells."

"We can make you talk. You know this, Captain Ranselhoff."

"I also know that you need money to keep your position, and your authority."

"And you have such money?"

"Knowledge is power, Colonel. And if I am allowed to stay alive, I can get you knowledge, money and power."

"From your associates in the Navy? The Swiss Bank? Or perhaps Block 12?"

"Yes, Colonel..." the thought emerged on the spot. "My work in Block 12."

"So, for survival, you will sacrifice what? Your nobility, money or your friends?"

"I have no friends, Colonel, only Comrades. You don't mourn for Comrades, and if they are shot because of your discretion, you quickly move on to the next Comrade."

"So, you are a Communist Bolshevik, with the shifting loyalties of a fortune-seeking Jew."

"If you shoot me like one, you will never get a real answer to that question, Colonel. And Stalin has killed more Jews, officially, than we have--- officially, so far."

Steiner was not used to being blackmailed. It was HE who intimidated people into doing what he wanted. It was HE who dug up or fabricated dirt on clean, wholesome people who would be misportayed in radio, screen, newspapers or art galleries. But this was about opportunity, and a chance to settle the score with a competitor long forgotten, and recently unearthed.

"Professor Doctor Heinrick Deiter. You have worked with him?" Steiner asked.

"A bit."

"I want you to work with him more," Steiner pressed on.

"You have a history with Henrick?"

Steiner wanted to reveal it all, but held back his tongue, mouth and even hid his eyes. "Right now, I have a future with you. And you with me, Comrade."

Steiner toasted the event with Napoleonic Brandy, out of the snifters reserved for the most special occasion. His smile was warm, but his barb sharp. "Work with me, and I'll work with you," the words spoken by the Assistant Minister of Propaganda with a delivery that would fool any audience on any screen. "Betray a friend so that you may save his life," the unspoken subtext.

CHAPTER 8

The Bavarian clock in Deiter's study ticked down the seconds, each one seeming an hour long, passing by with ever increasing urgency. "Sixty-two days," he said to himself while looking over Jacob's revised script on the movie that would fix the reality which the world had become. "Sixty-two days and ten minutes," the reminder as the clock edged to 11:50 PM on a dark, foggy and moonless night, the kind which made Eastern Europe famous for tourists, and dangerous for Visionaries.

"And is Doctor Frankenstein asleep?" Elsa inquired.

"He is still Mister Frankenstein," Deiter's reply to the photo. "And isn't this past your bedtime, Elsa?"

"Not if you keep mixing mushrooms from those Transylvanian wood bogs with that Brandy, my dear."

"Hmmm", his comment smacking his lips. "'My Dear' you call me now. I thought we hated each other."

"We do."

"But weren't we lovers?"

"We are."

"But hate and love, Elsa. They are not supposed to be mixed together. At least with the same person."

Elsa laughed, first gently, then loudly. It sent echoes into Dieter's head, then shivers of terror into his bones. It was all he could do to stop shaking and grab hold of the dog left by the groundskeeper. "You will sleep with me tonight, my friend. I keep you fed, you keep me protected," Deiter's desperate promise as he pulled the dog onto the couch, huddled into a fetal position and repeated Buddhist, Christian and even Jewish mantras, hoping the dreams wouldn't keep him awake yet another night, exhausting him by morning if he dared stay asleep.

Was Elsa his guardian angel, or a witch who had cast a curse on him? Maybe it was both. But whatever she was, 'messenger' certainly matched her role most accurately. The 64 day plot had been conceived of in his sleep, and always ended with a demon blowing up in a ball of flames, and Deiter falling down an abyss towards a Great Light, or was it a Black Darkness? Hell or

heaven couldn't be any worse than Eastern Germany in 1943. And, besides, it was 62 days and counting.

As for the next morning, the fog had cleared and the reports were in, as expected. The circle of four met around the breakfast table, and stage 1 was already set into motion.

"He will be at the Country Cabin by the Lake tomorrow, relaxing his mind and rejuvenating his body, in keeping with Mercury rising on the seventh house of Aries" Klassen related. "His astrologer is a close friend of mine, who owes me some favors. Thank God he was never caught for telling the Fuhrer that the Stars required him to hold back for those two weeks in 1940 when the Storm Troopers could have taken London."

"Good," Deiter related, sipping his coffee, extra caffeine in it for power, eight teaspoons of sugar for energy. He gazed over at Karen, amazed at her beauty as the sunlight illuminated her blue eyes and made her newly-dyed blonde hair glow like an angel, her low-cut red dress showing her ample yet subtly defined cleavage. "You are ready, Karen?" he asked.

All eyes looked to the woman who had slept her way up out of the pit and into...who knew where? There were some secrets Karen never shared with anyone, even this group of Comrades who had become closer than any friend, lover or even child. Her answers to direct questions of the heart were always discrete, and honest, but delivered in 'legalese'.

"I know what he wants, and I know how to give him what he needs," her reply, gazing over the breakfast of sausage and donuts, not touching a bite of it.

"Are you sure this will work, medically?" Bloomberg asked. "A capsule injected into the skin that gives a man severe pain in the joints, muscles and makes his nerves weaken a few days later? It cannot work."

"Oh, it does," Hershell noted, looking with mixed emotions at his host. "What is it called, Professor Deiter? Or is it still classified?"

Hershell knew fully well the effects of Soman 2B, a new combination of acetylcholinesterase inhibitor and miscellaneous mind altering drugs that had mild asthmatic effects a few minutes after injection, and severe neurological deficits a few days after administration. They had decimated several bunks in Block 12, and filled so many others. True, Deiter wasn't the only physician working to improve German science in Block 12. But he should have been the most responsible.

Every word and accusation possible volleyed between Deiter and Rabbi Menuind. Every defense, explanation and excuse. Every thought felt, but none expressed in words.

It was Jacob who broke the silence this time. He had been in the habit of skipping breakfast, sticking to himself. "The more you know the Truth, the less you prefer, or avail yourself, of the company of people," he noted upon his late arrival at the plate prepared for him. "But I am hungry, and the association cortices of the nucleus compassionatus can't communicate with the

sulcus of intelligensia unless they get their appropriate ration of..." Jacob took a bite out of the sausage. "Beef?"

"Yes," Deiter commented. "Kosher beef, killed according to the ways I best understand it."

"Spicy, and substantial," Jacob noted. "You cook well for a doctor. I supposed it's just biochemistry you eat afterwards, ya?"

The line was not brilliant, but the delivery was. In the time it took to crack an optimistic smile, Jacob had transformed the room from a conference into a cornucopia of good will. Something about his eyes showed an intelligence of the heart, and effective use of the most powerful of languages---laughter.

But would laughter be enough to trick the gods into granting the favors they needed? Could optimistic spirits get Karen in for the most personal kind of interview with the Fuhrer and give him the latest disease in the Deiter medical diary? And would Deiter be the specialist called in to save the day medically? And in the hands of this transforming physician, could the man inside the madman be found, and reached?

Only two knew if the plan would work. God, and Elsa, and neither one would say. As in Wagner's Ring Cycle operas, the fate of gods, mankind and the world now lay in the most precious and most vulnerable creation---mortals who dared to do go beyond their limitations.

CHAPTER 9

The most important thing one learns as a prisoner is to shut down the emotions. The most vital thing to learn upon liberation is to open them up, and the soul to which they were once connected. Hershell insisted on a support cast of Jewish prisoners for Jacob's script. It was either that, or Rabbi Menuind, now clad as an SS Major armed with a revolver and a wiry Himmleresche mustache, would blow the whistle on the whole thing. But even on the car trip to the cottage where the "Chosen Twelve" were shunted, the arguments persisted.

"I know actors and artists who know the art form, the conventions and the tricks," Deiter insisted.

"And this plan of OURS is about more than tricks, Herr Doctor," Menuind shot back, in a bullet form that dangerously matched his new outfit.

"You did that very well, Major Rabbi," the cautiously-delivered compliment.

"Wait till you see what people who have seen the depths of hell can deliver. I guarantee that either I, or Jacob, can turn them into whatever kind of actors we need."

"And if you don't?"

"Then you will," the challenge. "You are the Master race, and we are your subordinates on this Mission."

Deiter noted confidence gone arrogant in Hershell's hard-edged face, the Pacifist Rabbi in him taking a back seat to someone he hardly imagined existed. Or maybe it was someone that Rabbi Menuind couldn't imagine possible either. "Identification with the aggressor to regain dignity, in the quest of freedom," Deiter silently speculated. "Perhaps Menuind would not only be Jacob's assistant and director, but his most powerful star," he hypothesized. "We have seven days to get pre-production completed," he stated. "And if we fail, both of us go to the gas chambers."

The rest of the journey to the Deiter summer cottage was a long, cold ride. There was not only the matter of loyalties, but funding. WWI was a simple war, requiring a painting or a song to inspire the masses to become soldiers and, when it came time, corpses. But this battle for world supremacy was being fought with the most expensive canvas in the world---the silver screen.

Goebells insisted that the movie theatres remain open and well funded. Though he was never able to put his own novel "Michael: A German's Struggle" onto film, there were some notable victories. Nothing, including hellfire from British bombardiers, stop the public from seeing the blazing exploits of Aryan heroes and heroines on the big screen. His Ministry was never short of money, and the Chamber of Film gave out money to eager filmmakers like Adolf handed out candy to children at Christmas.

"When things seem to be going well with minimal effort, that is the time when you worry most," Deiter contemplated when he opened the envelope pre-delivered to his destination point under the two giant pines that had guarded the Dieter cottage since the time of Frederick the Great. When he opened it---shock on his face.

"Is that a smile I see on your face, Heinrick?" Klassen noted, having arrived an hour beforehand to familiarize himself with the rest of the crew, and their training ground.

"You look like you've been touched by an angel, or tempted by a demon," Bloomberg commented.

"Maybe both," the reply. "We have received \$2 million Reichmarks."

"From who?" Hershell inquired.

"A close and trusted friend," Deiter said, hiding the signature at the bottom of the letter and the check. "We have 61 days left, my friends. Let us make them count."

This time, Elsa was not available for commentary, or rebuttal. No, it was someone even more powerful. "Friends who come back to you can be your worst enemies, or strongest allies," Jacob said softly.

"How dare you accuse---" Deiter protested, loudly and irrationally. It was not a moment that made his subordinates feel either confident in his leadership, or purpose. "This is a private matter!!!" he blasted out.

"It is an artistic matter," Jacob noted, pointing to the line in the script. "I was merely playing with the words, the lines, the drama, and the joke."

"And am I a joke to all of you!!!" Deiter screamed. "Anyone who thinks that I am a joke and this a charade, leave now." He pulled Hershell's gun from the holster. "I insist that anyone who wants to leave, go now!"

He shot into the air, disrupting the Silence that had permeated and sustained the Deiter cottage for over two centuries. Never had a shot been fired within ten kilometers of the wooded oasis. Never had guests been terrified for their lives. Never had they had a loaded gun aimed at their heads with the ultimate threat.

"No more lies. If I see anyone lying, with their eyes, mouth or heart, I will shoot them myself. No more lies. No more lies!!!" The montra continued, loudly, then desperately, then through a shaking body dripping with sweat, a face drenched in tears. "No more lies..." the final pledge, Deiter on his knees, praying to the ancestors buried on the grounds that what he had done since '34 would be forgiven, and what he would do in the next 61 days would redeem it all.

CHAPTER 10

Maybe Jacob DID know that former Seargent "No-Name", now Captain Ranselhoff, signed the bottom line on the miracle cheque that would enable his film, "Bright Light", starring Adolph Hitler himself, to be made, seen and distributed. Or maybe he didn't care. Intelligence has given way to intuition, and now clairvoyance. The former village idiot who had spent so little time around people because they laughed at him now stayed in the woods because people were becoming increasingly terrified of him. But there were still other beings in the Universe he could trust, and communicate with.

"Herr squirrel, up in your treehouse," he whispered to a furry stranger whom he desired as a friend in the knarled oak tree between the Black Forest pines. "What do you have to say for yourself this fine morning?"

The squirrel answered in gibberish, emerging from his hole to avail himself of the berries the two-legged visitor took from the room beyond the trees where all the strange fruit grew.

"I see," Jacob said, connecting to a language felt in the innermost mind but not defined in human words. "What else do you have to tell me today?"

The bushy-tailed rodent chirped another tale, relating the meaning with his big, brown eyes.

"Even better," Jacob mused with a wide smile that had become tested by much tragedy, and loneliness. "Do you have a woman you know, who you trust, who you can talk with?"

Even Jacob didn't expect the squirrel to bring out his Frau, but an answer came, delivered straight between the eyes. It was a message the emerging Visionary did not want to hear.

"I know....now," Jacob's sombre reply. "This language that all you four legged creatures speak with each other is more than we two legged ones can understand, for now. But it is my job to try to teach it to them. If you will teach it to me."

The squirrel smiled, finished the sugar-coated blue berries, and scurried back into the tree trunk. But the messages written all over the Old Man oak, was clear.

"Karen will be alright," Jacob whispered to himself. "She will never belong to me, because she has to, for now, belong to another."

As for that other lover...the world depended upon a romance that was deceptively conducted, and honestly meant. Adolf Hitler was to be courted by the Reich's favorite whore, and most powerful enemy. But she had also developed into Jacob's closest friend...somehow.

"She may be able to love me after all of this is over," he reasoned to the sparrows, field mice and overlooking pines that extended their limbs over the forest as protector gods. Yet, as Deiter's brilliant experiment was enabling more connections to be established in Jacob's head, a frightening discovery. "But when Karen is able to love me, will I be able to love her?"

Be it a 'lonely at the top' premonition, or a 'these powers I have will leave me' or simply calculating the odds of Deiter's mad scheme to bring Hitler to his court as his patient, and subject. Either way, Jacob would come out a loser. But, ironically, another thought came to mind.

"The Master Race, according to Viking legend, will fight a final battle for the freedom and dignity of the world. And the fate of the noble warriors is that they will lose," Jacob related, in words this time. He then looked around him, at the flora and fauna, the wonderment of life that took the form of trees, mammals, birds, and even insects that bit you in the back of the neck and

in the most itchy part of your crotch. "Yet, for the sake of such a noble battle, it is you, my friends, who will be preserved, and who will continue."

Jacob sensed the finale of that conversation, or perhaps his tie with the forest creatures as he had known them. He had realized the most painful and redeeming lesson any man, Super Race or Semite, could learn. His ultimate mortality, and the potential to turn that mortality into something Immortal if ended with honor, dignity and the utmost assertiveness.

CHAPTER 11

To the High Command in Berlin, she was known as "Fraulein". To her fans on the silver screen, "Baby Blue Eyes". But to her most adoring and most discrete client in the Alpine Summer Castle simply "Karen".

Karen had know Adolf since the Bohemian days in Vienna, back in nineteen twenty...something. A graduate of the Sourbourne in Paris, she was near the top, directly under the committee who decided who got into Art school. Ex-Corporal Adolf was on the bottom just trying to get onto the main pyramid. Rumors were that Karen was the only established art critique who admired the boldness in young Adolf's color choices and subject themes. Innuendo held that she secretly kept him fed with food, and perhaps other nutrients. Realities were that rumors and innuendo could never be trusted, particularly if they might be true. Yet another proof of that stood in front of Karen as she presented herself to the officer in charge of Castle Security.

"What business do you have with the Fuhrer?" the SS Lieutenant spat out from behind a desk twice his size as a man, and a soldier.

"I brought him a painting," Karen said, adjusting her skirt so it would hide her attractive, and goosebump-covered shaking legs.

"He has too many paintings already," the inquisitor charged.

"Not like this one."

Karen presented the painting, a self-portrait of herself which made her look ten years younger and three decades more optimistic. Politically it was everything a Reich-sponsored painting should be. A tall women, beautiful, strong, reliant, with children around her who looked to be the prize crop for a new generation of Aryans.

One of der Kinder in the painting caught the eye of General Schmit as he passed by, his frumpy, respectfully-dressed wife on his arm. "No, that can't be Hans," he commented.

"Perhaps he is, or perhaps he isn't, General." Karen mused from both sides of the beret fashionably plopped tastefully on her large-haired Olivia de Haven imitation hairdo.

"It does look very much like Hans," Frau Schmit commented. "And you look familiar."

"We all do," the middle-aged bombshell whore-actress replied, looking to the General's worried eyes. "At least that's what the writers in the movies make us say."

"You paint very well, my dear." The unexpected compliment came from the General's wife, an ordinary-looking 50 year old daughter of aging Industrialist Bruno Munchousin with a comfortable, understated rich-girl smile. "May we buy this painting?"

"I am afraid not," Karen related with a warm smile covering a very complex inner agenda, one that had as much white as black in it, as much honesty as deception, and as much right as wrong. "The painting is already spoken for."

"By who?" General Schmit inquired, recognizing offspring of several other children in the bucolic Alpine portrait other than his own, fathered by the highest members of the High Command.

"I believe that he wants to see it," her reply, pointing to 'the door', armed guards on either side, stone cold faces on them.

"The Fuhrer is in conference, Fraulein Blue Eyes" the small Lieutenant at the big desk related. "He needs to be alone," the explanation generously given.

"Could you deliver this note, please?" Karen asked, pulling an envelope out of her perfectly shaped breasts with long fingers highlighted by a tasteful shade of violet on the nails. "Slip it under the door, and if I am not allowed to see him, I will slip out of the room."

"And slip under the covers of MY bedroom, Baby Blue Eyes?" the Lieutenant asked whimsically. He knew that no one disturbed the Fuhrer and lived to tell about it. He acknowledged that taking responsibility for ones actions was the easiest way to be shipped to the Russian Front. He remembered that Karen's reputation off screen hotter than any role envisioned by any writer, or put into action by any director. He looked toward his superior, and fall guy.

"General Schmit?" he asked. "Do I have your permission to disturb the Fuhrer?"

"Yes," Schmit slurred out, caught in a corner, trapped like a rat by a squirmy Lieutenant who was bucking for not only a promotion, but a lay in the hay with the hottest babe this side of Berlin, baby.

After the envelope was slipped under the door, it took 'the Voice' inside five seconds to rant and rave incoherently about being disturbed. It took five more seconds for the door to be discretely opened, then shut, the wandering artist securely behind it, with the most followed, yet least understood, man in Europe.

CHAPTER 12

How Steiner found out about Karen's private conference with The Housepainter was immaterial. Perhaps it was an accident, or just one of those stories that spread around the beer halls and Opera Houses like cheap hookers and bad opium. Still, it was THAT Steiner had discovered Karen's presence with the Fuhrer which worried Ranselhoff as they met at Die Walkurie Cafe, back to back, their eyes firmly directed at newspapers in front of them.

"I have an interesting story to tell you," Steiner opened. "An actress, artist and whore, who spends time with a Doctor in a Bavarian Cottage, takes an auto trip into the country, then gets in to see the Fuhrer with an interesting painting. She leaves an hour later, with the smell of urine on her clothes, and a smile of accomplishment on her face." He dropped a report on the ground, discretely picked up by Ranselhoff while adjusting his worn pant-trousers around his noticeably non-polished boot.

"Such stories aren't unusual," Ranselhoff replied, trying to hold back the laugh at the claim that all was never better on the Ukranian Steppes in black and grey print. "He has an affection for animals, he likes dumplings, he is never without his riding whip, and he has a fondness for young girls half his age. He likes to look up their crotch then asks them to kick him and urinate on him. After they get tired of him, or realize that there ARE other men in the world, they commit suicide. His niece, Geli in '33, the American actress Renata Miller in '35, Mimi Reicht and even Eva Braun, once in '32 and again in '38."

Steiner knew that Black Propaganda about the Fatherland's figureheads was being spread around by the BBC, and suspected that they masqueraded as underground Resistance German

radio stations. A confession by a prisoner revealed a link to the Political Warfare Executive in England, but thanks to the overzealousness of an interrogator who did fake executions with live bullets, the lead was lost. But how could a lowly ex-Captain hiding as a guard for the lowest members of German Society know so much?

"It's simple," Ranselhoff offered, anticipating the question. "While you interview movie stars, artists and British bombardiers, I ask questions of people who USED to be on the top who get pushed down to the bottom. Men, and women, who are about to die are more truthful than those of us who are still alive, tragically." He puffed his bootleg Bolshevik cigarette in aristocratic Prussian manner, first and third finger curled, lips sealed in a tight circle. "You never quite appreciate the holes on the top until you have seen it from the bottom."

Steiner looked at his watch. "Time flies by quickly when we play games with each other's lives, and careers. It's already one-thirty two, and fifty-four days."

Ranselhoff may have known more about the Brass than Steiner, Himmler or even the British Secret Service, but as for one man at the top---

"I have a history with Henry Deiter," Steiner related to the palewhite-faced black marketer. "He owes me a life, and a family."

"I don't understand," Ranselhoff related.

"But Elsa does, or did. Or..."

"She is still alive!" Ranselhoff let out, allowing his head to turn toward Steiner.

"She will be reunited with her beloved, IF---"

The rest didn't have to be said, but needed to be confirmed. "I tell you what we are fifty-four days away from."

"You may be greedy, crude and stupid, and have Jewish blood hidden in your genetics, but you are not stupid. Even Hitler can see the value of a Jew with some brains and a healthy amount of greed."

"I don't know what will happen in fifty-four days, Sir," ex-Captain Ranselhof's terrified reply.

"But you will find out."

"He didn't tell me the whole plan."

"This is what Deiter would do. He thinks he is so superior to everyone else, and that no one can appreciate his full vision." The rant from the innermost core of Steiner's pain, and perversions, continued. "He cost me a field command, a career in the Medical Corp and a position of influence in the Ministry of Science and Culture, so I..."

"Took his wife."

"She is in a safe place, and will return to him when---" He stopped. "When?" the tease.

"When I let you in on the riches of his plan, and insure that Heinrich Deiter takes responsibility for the debt."

"He enjoys feeling guilty. Without that, he'd face the worse realization of all, MAJOR Ranselhoff."

"Which is what, Colonel?" the inquiry though a rosy thought that all rank, status and power could be restored for the sake of helping to end a mission which was doomed to fail anyway. "What is Heinrich Deiter's most terrifying realization?"

"That he is just like the rest of us, Major Ranselhoff. And that he is not God."

Ranselhoff held his breath, praying to a God he had abandoned, denied and betrayed countless times since the day he shouted out the "Heil" which channeled the Evil into his deluded soul. The prayers were sincere, silent and solemn. Did Steiner know about Jacob? Did he know that the improbably brain growth experiment finally worked? Would Steiner move in and acquire Deiter's Frankenstein and turn him into a monster by whatever means possible and available? Was Steiner about to test the hypothesis that cruelty and greed is more powerful than compassion and intelligence combined? The answer---

"Yes," Steiner related with a sadistic smile. "I think we understand each other."

CHAPTER 13

By day 52, 'Bright Light' was already ten days ahead of schedule. Klassen had the distribution system in place for the movie that would correct the world. Karen had snuck Adolf the capsule of clandestine biological weapons which would give him the kind of disease only Henrick Deiter could cure, and calls were already coming in requesting the good doctor's presence for yet another hush-hush malady afflicting the Fuhrer. Bloomberg had the backdrop and art work just right. Ex-Rabbi Menuind had promoted himself to creative director of the project, retaining his SS uniform and his cover to get top performances out of his cast of ex-prisoners. Deiter found himself talking to Elsa more and more, and relating less and less to anyone else about her, entrusting his old Seargent-confidant with the financial affairs of the endeavor. But central to the project's forward progress now was the least likely individual.

Jacob's IQ skyrocketed above the charts for any test printed or creatable by contemporary science. He communicated with the world with the written word, giving the notes to Karen as she visited him in his new cabin, a hastily-constructed yet ingeniously designed dwelling he had built for himself in the thick of the woods during an afternoon of reflection.

"You want us to put this in the script..." she asked.

"Yes" he nodded, with his head, then appended by a Hindu-like bow, hands clenched together, eyes turned to the ground, heart open to the sky, and whatever Karen could bestow upon his isolated, tormented soul.

"Cruelty is not the presence of evil, but the absence of feeling. Cruel people do bad things to others because they do not feel the pain that they inflict, not the pain inflicted upon themselves by others."

Karen had known more men than any woman would ever want to, and she knew the value of dulling the senses so you could interact with the might-is-right world. But as for cruelty being the complete absence of feeling, ignoring the omnipresent presence of Pure Evil..."Hitler was once a man, now he IS a monster. I still don't know if he channels evil, or creates it, but---"

"----Shhh" Jacob interrupted. He referred the matter to a pair of sparrows up in a tree, chirping away. He listened, considered, and asked Karen to share the lesson the bird were channeled from above.

Then, another scribbling from Jacob's pencil, the fifth pencil he had been through that day.

"Countries ultimately control people by making them think that mischief is revolution. Make the masses think that dancing on Saturday evening, getting fornicated on Saturday night, and getting drunk on Sunday morning is rebelling against their Masters. They will wake up on Monday morning realizing that their souls are still enslaved". Karen smiled. "So, Madness and enlightenment are best enjoyed without drink, drug or even...the comfort of a lover's passion."

Karen had read St. Paul's discourse on the benefits of celibacy for men and women, particularly for Spiritual Pilgrims who sought to be Revolutionary Leaders. She hoped it wasn't true, but if Jacob discovered it, then it must be. He was right about so many things. Had he only been able to be wrong about this one.

Karen knew that genius involved eccentricity, be it from those who use it for good or evil, but this was bizarre to watch, and painful. Jacob's mission still lay in the world of man, and his heart seemed to yearn for the realm of woman, yet his soul was now Possessed by an Energy that needed no power to be expressed. For lack of any better, word, God.

"I didn't think I'd be playing Mary Magdeline," she found herself thinking, referring to her role in the movie, and the drama that had become her real life orchestrating the production of 'Bright Light'.

Jacob smiled, then reproduced his Star of David, the one he had kept from his stay at Holiday Camp in Block 12. He folded it up, placed it in her hand, and kissed her wrist.

"Thank you," she said, moving in for a hug. But Jacob retreated, pulling back into the woods, pointing to his reddening face.

Yet, it as Karen who cried this time. "You are right, Jacob. I'm poison to you now. But if I get these notes of yours into Bright Light, and the ten novels which you have written this week..."

Jacob smiled. "Yes" he said with his eyes, hoping that the madness would allow him some human pleasures before he would meet face to face with the Intelligence that was God, or the Madness that may be the Devil, or perhaps both at the same time.

It was all a work in progress, with no time to lose. The 'whys' about doing it were lost five novels and three days ago. "You can only find real rest in motion itself," one of the chapters in those Opus' destined to save the planet from WW 5 or maybe 6 read. Jacob's brain was exploding, no room left in it for more connections, synapses and neural wiring. Yet, still, one more connection was made when the previous one had been confirmed and used. And there was the pain. The referenceless Universe in which Jacob now lived had no boundaries, and even the

Freest Revolutionary needed some boundaries and frame of reference. Boundaries defined rebellion, and baseline levels of mediocrity helped tell you how far you had advanced the sphere of human knowledge and perspective.

Yet, there was one pain which Jacob could not outsmart or think himself around. Some pain could not be overcome by doing more work, even though that work was now 200 years ahead of its time. The gripping feeling in the chest, the choking of the throat, the feeling that his whole body was being pulled into a fetal position saying 'help me'---these could not be denied. Neither was the vision of Nordic beauty which left the forest.

"Goodbye, Karen," Jacob said to himself as he eyed her long, blonde hair, her slender legs, and her musically-maneuvered ass as she walked back to the Main House. "I will see you on the other Side," his final words to her, and, he feared, himself.

CHAPTER 14

Elsa was the only person who never lied to Deiter. But was she lying now? And to the tune of the most naive composer of them all on the loudspeakers, Mozart, the Jupiter Symphony.

"So," she said inside Deiter's head from behind the photo he carried with him constantly. "It's day forty-five, and you look like you've been through a thousand years of shit."

When Deiter looked into the mirrored windows of the greenhouse near the yard that had been converted into a Midevil Period studio, he saw she was right. His beard had grown out, in a pale white bush that was neither biblical nor gruffly-eccentric. "Does it look like I've been drinking?" he asked with a slurred voice.

"It was always your weakness, Heinrick."

"I had many weaknesses. Maybe that's why you used to love me so much. Or was it sympathy?"

"You pitied me for being so realistic about the world, I sympathized with you for taking every opportunity to take leave of it. It was an even trade," she mused, a smile coming to her cheeks. "But there is one reality you must attend to," the stern appendum.

When the phone rang, Deiter knew who it was, and what he had to do.

"I had better shave," Deiter said as Rented Convict #10 picked up the phone and answered in a harsh, lisped Prussian accent, in keeping with his new role in White Light as 'Johan the homosexual storm trooper'.

"It is for you, Doctor." Johan yelled out in his Native Polish. "He needs to see you, right away."

"Tell him that he has to come here!" Deiter yelled back.

"But...this is---"

"---A very sick man, who will receive the best of care, with specialized equipment, in the strictest of confidence, here," the good doctor rudely interrupted. "Tell him that. On my orders! And Karen's!"

Johan related the command, slowly and carefully. Deiter looked to Elsa for comfort, but knew he would never get it.

"The Furher has killed messengers who relate such commands."

"And he'll try to do worse to the one who gave the commands," Deiter said slyly, with an arrogance based in an inner faith that, somehow, everything would work.

"But what about Karen?" Elsa interjected. "And me."

Deiter had been given word that Elsa was alive, somewhere. But as for it's reliability---"My good friend 'Ranselhoff' says you are alive, and that he's working on getting you home. He's working through a partner, an intermediary who wants to be the major stockholder in 'Bright Light'."

"Does he know that Bright Light is about honor, not money, Heinrick?"

"Everything in this Godforsaken war is about money, Elsa."

Then, the ultimate question. "If it was a choice between me and Bright Light, which would you chose to save?" she asked.

"We will speak of this matter later," Deiter said from the part of his mind that he could always hide from the world, and even Else. "I love you, Elsa, very, very much," his whispered response as he opened the door to the barn which he converted into a laboratory, and clinic.

"He's coming tomorrow, at two!" Johan yelled out.

Heinrick waved affirmatively, in a gesture that felt very much like the Seig Heil salute which had so moved him to unbridled confidence so long ago. If it only could move him now. Remorse did not always have to be so internally depressive and self-effacing. But for now, it was all about drying his belly of Irish whiskey, and filling his gut with hell-fire.

'Bright Light' was more than the run-of-the-mill lampoon of the Third Reich. It was constructed with subtlety, using the most advanced techniques in story telling, dialogue metaphor, visual juxtaposition and musical melody composition. Josef Goebell's master formula had been stolen from Hollywood and Moscow, then reconstructed into a magic potion for adopting the Party point of view, no viewer could resist. The Reich Formula for propaganda art was logically constructed from American researcher BF Skinner as well as classical concepts laid down by Professor Pavlov, still stuck, or hiding, behind Stalin's skirt tails in Russia.

Jacob was given a crash course in German filmmaking way back when his IQ was at the 170 level, subjected to Jew Suss, Frederick the King, Infantry and even American masterpieces of historical perversions such as the KKK-sponsored Birth of a Nation. Revealing the tools used by masters Veit Harlan and DW Griffith to the world was easy. Satirizing them in Bright Light was harder, and more politically dangerous.

Such were the concerns of Hershell Menuind, director of drama, assigned that task at the strict instructions of the simpleton who had now evolved past the point of reason, logic, or even reliable intuition. For appearances of the location, Hershell retained his rank as SS Major Muller, a role which, to his constant concern, found its way into the script. But as director of drama, he had to take orders from above, the chain of command being Jacob on top, and, on a sober day, Deiter on top of him.

Day 48 in Prof Doctor Deiter's 'experiment' was a scorcher, the wool midevil costumes made to look the ancient Aryan leaders for the liberation of Ancient Rome both Wagnerian and effeminate making everyone hot under the collar. Still, rehearsals had to be done, and insert scenes had to be shot, the firm and open eye of Bloomberg behind the bootleg 16 mm camera. The entrance of the conquering heros used a skipping action that simulated a goosetstep, with a catchy tune that even Bloomberg couldn't resist, followed by the heros of the North falling upon themselves, then into a pile of mud made to look like flatulent expressions.

"Mmmm, chocolate!" was the next line, the actors rubbing their tummies as they gulped the brown puddles on the ground, which were actually the best brand of chocolate mystery funder Ranselhoff and his secret partner could provide.

Everyone laughed, and Jacob even smiled. But when it came for scene 12B, agreement was less obvious. "The viewers will be confused at all this jibberish, and it will work against us. Some truths are too dangerous to tell, even if they are true." Menuind pointed out to the scene, a page he would not share with anyone, even Bloomberg. "I cannot direct this, and will not shoot it."

Jacob pointed to the script, angrily, then to the camera, with a wide grin.

"I think our producer disagrees," Bloomberg stated.

"I think he is going crazier, and that when we are caught, we will feel the pain," Menuind warned. " And he will be so much in his own world that---"

Jacob slapped Menuind in the face, three times. Then across the chest. Then, another kick into the groin, in a manner that seemed all too familiar.

"The guards at Block 12 hit and kicked us like that," Menuind noted. "Not as hard, but in the same way." He turned to Jacob. "Where the hell did a dog like you learn to kick back like that?"

Jacob pointed to the script, ramming the narrative and dialogue into Hershell's face, then gave a folded paper, drenched in sweat, to Bloomberg.

"I won't do it!" the protest from Menuind's mouth, first with Jewish outrage, then with Aryan anger in a cascading change in mood that ended in---"I won't do it, for you, for them, or for anyone else."

"Say the words of the devil, in the ultimate service of God," Bloomberg read from the note.

Jacob stripped off his shirt, then initiated the action with a kiss on Menuind's lips, a pull on his crotch and a stroking of his nipples under the SS uniform so neatly pressed and proudly worn.

Menuind shook. "No" he said with his quivering face, knowing that once the next step would be irreversible.

"Please," Jacob gently uttered, the first words he had uttered for weeks. "For all of us, who have died and who want to be Alive." The next words were incantations, forbidden phrases from the Kabala, into Menuind's ears.

Then, from Menuind's mouth, as Jacob's touch felt cold, distant and like the hand of death itself---"Raus!" Menuind found himself yelling. "Juden Raus!" the next command, in rhythm with the direction he had received in Block 12 from those who casted him in the final scene of the Reich's own Deathsong.

Bloomberg rolled the camera, Prisoner 9 operating sound. The rest of the crew, shunted Albanian conscripts who were only told that they were being used for 'day work' followed the lead. The words were all according to script, and according to plan, filmed in glorious black, and blue.

"I hate the happiness you have inside you!" Hershell screamed as he gave Jacob a mock hit into the stomach, which hit its mark very hard. Though it was a move made real by Jacob, it felt even more special to the ex-Rabbi Pacifist, affirming a perverted emotion which he was becoming dangerously familiar---enjoyment. "I hate that YOU were chosen to be so special", the next line, his kick landing firmly, and assertively, into Jacob's ribs. "It was US who were supposed to be the Master Race!" the next phrase written in the text, delivered with a kick in the teeth, the bag of blood in Jacob's mouth breaking as he bit into it.

Jacob uttered phrases that seemed understandable only to himself and Menuind. Jacob's Aramaic was in a language of compassion. Menuind's reply was an ancient tongue that even he

didn't recognize, but one which he could speak amazingly well, with an Aryan accent NO one on the set had heard from his mouth, even in the harshest of sessions as Herr Director.

"Cut! Cut!" Bloomberg yelled out, the scene as written being completed.

"Good idea!" Hershell grunted. He pulled a knife from his pocket, the real one, and chopped off a locke of Jacob's hair, at the level of the scalp. "You stole what was supposed to be mine! Mine!"

Jacob motioned for the cameras to keep rolling, and, on even this set, orders were orders. then, according to plan, with an impact he never expected---

A stab in the chest from the prop knife placed into Hershell's boot. Then, in the neck, then the leg, in the places where all the stabs had been placed into Hershell in Block 12. "Now it's my turn to be Master, Slave, Dog, Vermin!!!" the rants continued.

"Roll, Roll" Bloomberg motioned to the cameraman.

"Yes! Yes!" Hershell screamed out. "Yes!" he finally uttered pulling out Jacob's heart, clenched in his hand.

"Magnificent! Cut!" Bloomberg screamed out. Applause erupted from the cast and crew, until it was time to congratulate the star. It was his last performance.

"I didn't mean to..." Hershell confessed to the body of the man who he had just killed, with the collapsible knife he thought was fake--or did he really know it was real?

Shock overcame the set. Remorse overtook Hershell. He knelt down, falling upon the body of the only friend he ever had. The tears were real, the feelings genuine, the evil in him that had been awakened very, very real. "What did you make me do..." he wept. "Why did you awaken the devil in us? Why did you let us live, and not kill the evil in us."

The cast and crew were in shock. Who slipped a real knife into Menuind's boot? And who knew that the key to killing Bright Light was eliminating its creator? All eyes looked to others, with the suspicion that would live on between everyone, even after the War was over.

But Bloomberg saw the significance of it all. It was in the cards, and on the page. He took to the camera, shooting the scene that Jacob has scripted, word for word. The remorse that would follow the War, and the evil that would create the next one(s) was both revealed, brilliantly acted by a Prisoner who had identified with the Aggressor, then had found himself. Still, one question needed to be answered---

CHAPTER 15

"Why did Jacob commit suicide?" Deiter read over the grave that would have to remain unmarked, even if Bright Light was the success it was intended to be. "Perhaps he had advanced beyond this world. Or, perhaps, if the singer has no more songs in him, the singer must be no more. Part of the cycle."

The words were not Deiter's, but Jacob's, from one of the twenty novels the village idiot had written as he evolved into a universal genius. Everyone reacted in their own, private, way, giving homage as they had to in the moment of silence that permeated the forest around the congregation with a hush that echoed inside everyone's heavy head and touched soul.

Bloomberg said a prayer to the Catholic God who he had not spoken with since the fall of Warsaw. The request was for nothing specific, but a communication that, somehow, he felt had to be re-opened.

Karen had bobbed her hair, her long, golden lockes in the six-foot grave with the man who awakened her mind, possibly connecting it to a very special place in her soul. Adolf loved Karen's long hair, but more important to honor the departed than humor the living.

Klassen had seen death many times, in more countries than even Deiter could recite. But this one---a mystery. "Certainly self-inflicted", he thought to himself. "Like Hemingway will do to himself one day," the prediction. "Or me, if I know too much about the way the world should be, rather than the way it is."

But the underlying truth to the matter at hand was between the lines of Menuind's chanting, delivered with a clear voice, and purpose. It was his call to break the silence, to define the meaning to it all. "It had to be this way," he emoted through the libretto from Wagner's "Siegfried", the words in Nordic German, the fondness in unspoken Yiddish. It was a request that Jacob had made himself. One of a list of 11 and a half commandments he left in his last manuscripts. But at the top of the list was one mission---Bright Light must be done, so the others Visions could be seen, in years, and generations to come.

It was a simple request, with a detailed script and musical score, but with one unexpected problem.

CHAPTER 15

The Furher never traveled alone, but Deiter always could trust the arrogance or ignorance of his body guards. Security in the Reich since Stalin's retaliation for the invasion of Russia was always an illusion, and anyone could be bribed with enough money, power or promises of a safe escape to New York or Geneva. But one reality stood firmly in the head jeep as it pulled into the Deiter Health Clinic compound.

"Hello, Heinrick," Steiner nodded to Deiter from behind a corporal's uniform burrowed for the occasion at hand. Though he had shaved his mustache and cropped his wavy hair, he was by no means a grunt.

For Deiter, it was about history. Things said, not said, and meant to the core. It was about turning in Steiner for mind manipulation experiments on young recruits who killed their fellow soldiers, then themselves. It was about black market trading of Jewish and Gentile girls to sheiks rich in oil and lucrative with greed. And, it was about Elsa.

"She is well, drinking camel's milk, and having an olive-skinned Arab drink hers," Steiner muttered under his breath as he offloaded the suitcases and security gear that always preceded the car the carried the boss of bosses. "And I've trained her to like it," the coda.

"And Ranselhoff?" Deiter asked.

"Romania," the answer, terse and final. "He was in Romania."

"Alive?"

Steiner broke out into laughter. No laugh could have sounded more sadistic, or more painful. Deiter wished Ranselhoff dead on more than one occasion, and had predicted that he would dig his own grave at one time or another. But there was an emotion Deiter had not anticipated. One which accompanied so many other deaths of people he both loved and hated.

"Relief," Steiner said, noting the expression on Deiter's face. "That is what he felt, too. They said he didn't ask for a blindfold, and that he didn't wet his pants either. The son of a bitch made me lose a bet. For that, you owe me a hundred and sixty Reichmarks."

"Collect it in hell," Deiter spat out.

"Where do you think we are?" the reply as the main convoy pulled in behind him. "And the devil is here himself."

When Hitler stepped out of the car, his feet shook, he arms trembled. His pupils whirled around in circles, as if his inner eye was seeking to find himself again.

"It is interesting that he has come down with a neurological condition that you can cure," Steiner noted. "And which you have caused in some of the inmates at Block 12. Under orders, of course."

Deiter didn't realize that he had told Ranselhoff so much about medicine when he was the no-named Seargent acting as his assistant, the only assistant who seemed to have any brains, or vision. Yet, Steiner was so good at making people tell him more than they would tell their closest friend, or even themselves.

"You have the cure?" Steiner asked.

"Two vials of it, and the electrostimulator unit is prepared to go," the good Doctor said as he saw the carrier of world evil being helped to the tack shack which had been converted into a clandestine VIP guesthouse. All manner of thoughts went through Deiter's mind, and, as always, Steiner was ahead of him.

"It wasn't Karen who told me," the answer given by Steiner to the question Heinrick dared not ask. "It was me. I figured it out."

"What else have you figured out?" Deiter asked, looking at the setstage for Bright Light, anticipating the worst, hoping for the best.

"Nothing that I'm going to tell you, or anyone else here, yet," Steiner sneered as he dismissed himself in advance of a Lieutenant from Hitler's escort guard approached Deiter.

Deiter took another look at the man who he had met on so many other more gentle occasions, before the Invasion of Poland, before the Spanish Civil War, and even before Mein Kampf. Back to the days in the trenches, literally. A man who now was a neurological mess, stumbling and mumbling as he was brought into a 'safe' room in the cottage.

"The Fuhrer says you were with his platoon in WWI," the Lieutenant noted. "Is this true?"

Deiter cracked one of those smiles that could mean everything and nothing, both at the same time. "What the Fuhrer says is always true, yes?"

"Of course," the reply, stone faced, expressionless, and cold. "Come this way, please," the 'request', given with a bootheel click, a bow of the head, and the proximity of several rifles within one second of being lowered at the good Doctor's swelled head.

The science said it would work. If Deiter was smart enough to come up with a unique neurological disease for Hitler, he was certainly able to whip up the cure. As for the former, it was a modified insecticide combined with a reversible opioid that created the first signs of Parkinson's syndrome with vestibular signs. A metabolic thyroid hormone analog combined with thiamine and a reversal agent, combined with electrostimulation of the basal ganglia and frontal lobe that would deliver the wonder drug to the afflicted areas. All function would return function to normal, Deiter even getting the right to put his name on the antidote, as long as he didn't reveal the name of the physician who devised the toxin.

"But what is normal?" Deiter found himself asking as he stood above the patient with eyes that read "possessed", barking out one command, with an underlying tone of vulnerability.

"Cure me, Heinrich," Adolf mumbled from a cot in Deiter's very private guest house in a voice that sounded like 1916, not 1943. "Like you did in the trenches France. If not for you, I would have died."

Deiter remembered the time when he urinated on his handkerchief then stuck it on young Adolf's face when the mustard gas cloud blew in the wrong direction. Activation of the recussitation acupuncture point under the nose did the rest, and as for the side effects between the ears, Nature seemed to take care of that...or did it? Adolf never seemed the same since that mustard gas attack. Maybe it was the gas, maybe the bullets, maybe the bloodshed around him which could only be dealt with by shutting down his soul and surrendering it to the demons of rage, or worse, indifference.

"Professor Doctor," the Lieutenant who had escorted Adolf into the now locked room muttered behind Deiter. "What should we do?"

All the thoughts flashed before Deiter's eyes. A bullet through the head, KCl into the arm, the gentle lifting of the pin on the grenade of the private next to him which would solve everybody's problems. But this was about a larger vision, and purpose.

"Hold his arm down," Heinrick commanded as the bodyguards held down the right arm that moved the world. "This will hurt."

"So will this," Adolf warned, lifting his left arm, a loaded pistol in it, aimed at Heinrick's head.

"This will work, Adolf," Deiter said.

No Aryan man born of German woman ever called the Master of the Reich by his Christian name and lived. How dare this doctor refer to the Aryan god by a human name, and one so familiar? How dare he think himself so close to the leader that he is immune from the law? How dare he think himself so powerful in a world where so many, including Hitler's General Staff, felt so powerless?

"Herr Doctor," the Lieutenant warned, the guns cocking behind the physician's head.

"Heinrick," the Fuhrer pleaded, his eyes overtaken with confusion, his body shaking, his exit from this life so much out of his control. "Give me back my life."

"I will," Heinrick assured. "I will indeed give you back your life." The magic elixir went into the veins, the electrodes implanted on the appropriate parts of the head, and the medical miracle that could never be published was underway, once again.

Within two minutes, Adolf's feet held steady. A minute later, the arms stopped shaking. Then the eyes came to mid focus. After that, the mind connecting to the brain, then the body, and a snap up out of the bed, to a brisk stand of attention.

He was back, in all his glory, and horror. The devil had been resurrected, again. And when he asked Heinrick what he wanted for his medical fee....

"Allow us to immortalize you further, Mein Fuhrer," Deiter asked,. With that, he handing Adolf the screenplay for "Bright Light", the version marked with blood on the corner, which Jacob intended to put into Hitler's hands only.

"The Fuhrer does not go in front of a camera as an actor, Herr Doctor" the Lieutenant informed, recovering from observing the miracle cure faster than anyone else around him. "It is State Policy."

"But this role..." Adolf interjected. "Karen said that I should be an artist just once more before it is our time."

"Time for what?" everyone in the room thought. Was the whole war an orchestrated event in Hitler's head for a private Wagnerian Opera that the German people were SUPPOSED to lose? Would the gods of Valhalla or the God in Heaven come down and forgive everything that had gone wrong at the dusk of the last battle fought by the last German Warrior? Everyone knew that the inmate WAS in control of the asylum, yet the system seemed to work so well that way, somehow. But all of that seemed so threatened when out of the Fuhrur's mouth when reading the pages of Bright Light---a laugh.

"This is brilliant!" he exclaimed. "The man who wrote this is a genius!"

"And the lead requires a Visionary," Heinrich offered. "A man who is more of an artist than he dares to imagine himself to be."

They were the words used by Karen during the private session at the Castle, prompting the man who fronted absurdity to feel self-doubt and introspection, in the presence of others. He read the first page, then the second, then the third, then the fourth, again and again. It took all of three minutes, but it felt like three years, ending with intense anger in Adolf's eyes as he remembered the artist he had been, and what the world around him had become. Yet, he was a god now, and there were different rules for gods than men.

His final word on the matter. "Yes, Heinrich. Yes. Two days." He gave the 'this is off the record' signal to the historian who was always kept within listening range. He grabbed a glass from the shelf and poured two brandies. He toasted an old friend who had turned into his worst enemy.

"To old friends," Adolf toasted. "And silently made movies," the pledge.

The boss had spoken, but the underbosses were not pleased. Keeping the General Staff in the dark about something you had going on with Hitler was even more dangerous than pissing off 'the housepainter' himself. Adolf's eyes said "I trust you" to Heinrick. All others said "we will kill you and do worse things to people you care about if this goes wrong".

CHAPTER 16

Maybe it was the toxin, maybe the antidote, or maybe Karen's persuasion in the urine and feces sado-masacism fest that brought Hitler to do something no one thought possible.

"You really think I look better without it?" he asked Karen in the heavily-guarded make-up trailer guarded by troops who thought it was just another routine movie set designed to convince more Germans to sign up for special duty on the Russian Front.

"Yes," her reply. "You've been hiding behind it, and everything else, for too long."

"But..." he protested with a boyish squeak.

"Trust me, Adolf," she whispered. "This part of lifetime demands courage and sacrifice from both of us." She moved the razor up his neck, then to his mouth, then with a slash, made the fateful swipe.

Shock overcame the dictator's eyes when he saw the result of the surrender that was not supposed to happen. "That was my mustache!" he lamented as the hairs slipped down the make-up bib.

"And this is your face! Your eyes!" she exclaimed. "And my appreciation for what you are doing for the Fatherland, and me." The kiss lay firmly in the lip, moving ahead to the upper lip. Its tone was still wavering, the color in the face still off just a bit. The Deiter antidote, designed to have secret psychoactive side effects of its own, would last another day, maybe two.

Karen only imagined what the housepainter saw in his own eyes now. Was it the chisel-faced Nordic hero of old who fostered the Master Race with might strokes of his broad sword in battle and a poke of his volcanic penile cannon during the celebration afterwards? Was it Hans Sachs, Miestersinger Elder who knew the wisdom of the notes from the only Wagnerian Opera that attempted the most bold dramatic theme of all---comedy? Or was it something completely different, a figure buried in his past who he admired, respected and feared, yet worshipped above all creatures living or dead.

"Your mother, Adolf. It is only appropriate that YOU play her on the screen," she prodded. "The script demands it," she gently suggested. "And so do I!" she barked, appended by a the riding whip snapped at his thigh, inches from the most overestimated penis in Europe.

The limp sausage between his legs turned into a walking stick. The hell-fire in his eyes dulled to a possessed passivity. The lips turned upward into a boyish smile, which were accentuated by the appropriate framing.

"See," Karen noted, putting the first layer of ruby red lipstick, ironically confiscated from prisoners at Auchwitz. "You must represent the Motherland, and Fatherland." The wig, fashioned from a three-foot mane belonging to a horse that had taken a flatulent dump an hour earlier, completed the arrangement.

He stood up, seeing before him something distorted. Karen could only imagine the backdrop behind visualized in the pupils that seemed to be orienting themselves with frantic oscillations towards things in the mirror that were not there. His legs lost the rigidity, his hips juggled, and once could say that there was a musicality, a dance to his step.

During the moments Adolf looked at the Adolfa manifested, the knife again. Karen tore the buttons from the shirt, the zipper from the trousers. Then, the finale. "Put these on!" she commanded, taking off her clothes, and putting on his.

It was for Karen's eyes alone to see Adolf Hitler put on a bra, a slip, garters, stockings and heels and enjoy it. It was her pleasure, and honor, to adjust the frilly blouse, the tight, restrictive shirt, and put the embellishment on the eyelashes and eyebrows. It was her private moment of laughter to see him pump up the flesh on his chest into something he thought was a well-endowed expression of Aryan mammarian bounty. But it was her responsibility to get "Hildagard" onto the set, to be sure that the lines were delivered as written, and that the director call a wrap just as the magic elixir was wearing off.

When Hildegard walked out of the trailer, one set of eyes gazed upon her with carnal lust that would not take 'no' for an answer. "That bitch is mine, after this movie is over," Steiner commented to Deiter. "She looks familiar," the comment.

"They all do," Heinrick mused. "But she's mine. If you want her, you'll have to fight for her."

"I fight for nothing," Steiner's comeback as the driver 'requesting' his departure honked. "But I will be back, and whatever profit you make from this experiment of yours, it is mine, CAPTAIN Deiter."

"The profit and the glory will be yours, General Steiner."

"And what do you want, besides the bitch in the red heels and black dress?"

"The satisfaction of a job well done, and finally accomplished." The gaze behind the eyes was deep, personal and impenetrable. But one demand was certain. "I want to do one thing before I die."

"Which is?"

"To tell Elsa that I love her. You can arrange this?" the gentle and desperate inquiry.

"I will do my best, if you do yours, Heinrick." He turned and saw the rehearsal of the first scene, Hildagard subjecting herself to a spanking at the woodshed by a comical Chaplan-esche actress in riding britches and a cowboy hat. "Why you are making decadent movies in a corrupt world, I don't know. But Ranselhoff said that making it could change the course of the war."

"You want us to lose the war, or win it?"

"I want to be on the winning side. And if I'm not, you and everyone you still do care about will lose."

Steiner walked back to the transport truck in Corporal's boots, but it was an Officer's walk, a stride that said 'no compromise' to anyone who stood in his way. "Thirty-five, days" he said in Yiddish, understood by Hershell, Deiter and everyone else who knew that Deiter's plan was already counted down to 36 days.

The trucks pulled out, only two remaining. The sworn duty of the civilian-clad Elite Guard was to keep the cabin containing the Fuhrur protected from all intruders and observers, upon strict orders from Deiter. No one was to disturb him during his convalescence.

As the dust of the main convoy, certainly containing a Hitler double to show the world if and as needed, Deiter only hoped that thirty-four days was enough time. It had to be.

CHAPTER 17

When the footage was developed and cut in the barn that been converted into a film lab, even Deiter laughed at the private screening for the inner circle of four. Adolf was still Adolfa, heavily under the influence of a long-acting estrogenic drug directed at the yin portion of his brain. The dictator was last seen asleep on hit hospital bed, fondling his chest and, according to Bloomberg, erecting his cannon at full salute with ejections of enough sperm to overpopulate the Fatherland for ten generations to come. The porno-perversions acted out by Hitler/Hitlera fit perfectly into Jacob's 'Bright Light', making it a movie that would satirize the tragedy of this War, and maybe even prevent another one.

Karen, Klassan, Menuind and Deiter sat spellbound at the rough edit Bloomberg sliced together in preparation for the release dates arranged by Klassen in four days, under the title "Nordic Illumination". They hummed, sung and strummed songs which they each imagined as the ideal sound track, and munched on rations of beans and bacon that had been saved especially for this special occasion, in celebration of the most hastily constructed and ingeniously-designed movie in the history of German filmmaking.

But there was one problem. "It's not quite British to do this," Karen commented. "Whitehall Street was never happy with the picture of the Fuhrur with leiderhosen masturbating with an enlarged penis that the PWE distributed, and my supervisors said that if Britain used Black Propaganda to win the war, it would be a hollow and degrading victory for the British people."

"So now you tell us that you are a British agent," Bloomfield interjected, hurt, dejected and cautious.

"We are all working for someone else in this War, or we are working for them," Karen lamented.

"And 'them' is us," Menuind confided. He gazed down at the blood under his fingernails, still fresh from the killing that was very real, and captured for posterity at the climax of the cinematic Opus. "Where is Jacob?" he wept.

"Here," Klassen offered. "In this image we see on the screen that will change the course of the War."

"And in us," Deiter said. "Who will change the course of history." Karen heard the tone of madness in his voice. Menuind smelled fear in his sweat. Bloomberg saw the lure of unobtainable possibilities in his eyes. Klassen turned the projector off and stated the situation in clear journalistic words that left no room for comfortable interpretation.

"Doctor Deiter's drugs can keep him under our control for another 24 hours. Orders that he left, before he became what we wanted him to be, was that he be picked up and brought to the War Room in Berlin in 32 hours. Colonel Steiner will be in the detachment to pick him up. Someone will require answers."

"The next generations, unless we do something final," Menuind vengefully vowed, recalling the face of every man, woman and child he saw die, remembering the horror both individually and collectively, both equally as soul-numbing.

"But what of the next one?" Bloomberg offered, recalling his place of origin, and perhaps most original sin. "If Stalin wins this War, he will be three times more brutal than Hitler is. In 1932, he starved one in three people in the Ukraine, to death! Jews, Christians, Moslems, anybody! You tell this to the War Tribunals when they ask me and the others why we welcomed the German Army when they invaded our homeland, and why we fought with the Nazis."

"We can put Stalin in our next movie," Menuind cynically offered. "When we find another mad doctor who wants to ease his conscience for being on the wrong side of the next war!" the rant leading to---

"I did not know!!!" Deiter screamed. "I didn't know!!!"

"We all did," Karen solemnly stated. "And didn't.."

All manners of accusations and innuendo followed, all talking, no listening, and few solutions. The hows, what's and where's were all up for grabs, solvable by only one party...

Elsa's picture had been placed on one of the benches in the improvised film house. In her eyes the main question and answer lay, and it was delivered to the most unlikely recipient.

"If love is the highest form of self interest, and intelligence is the highest form of intellect, all we have to do is make him even smarter." Karen's eyes had a glaze over them, as if possessed. Even her voice sounded different, distanced and profound.

"Elsa is speaking through you now?" Menuind mused.

"No closer bond exists than the one between two women who want the same man," Bloomberg offered, looking toward the guilt-ridden Deiter.

"This is true," Klassen offered. "There have been many studies of this. The statistics are very real."

Deiter looked at the photo of his distanced wife. "Elsa, I didn't want to tell you about the night Karen and I had together". He turned to Karen. "Did I?"

"What difference does it make?" Menuind barked.

"We have kidnapped the most powerful man in the world, and the most powerful Army in the world wants him back," Bloomberg warned.

"And it is up to us to do something significant," Klassen summarized, adding that profound last-word sting that was his passion, pleasure and perversion.

"And it must be smart," Karen stated with ultimate clarity. "If it worked with Jacob, it could work with..."

"That monster in the hospital bed is not Jacob!" Menuind screamed out.

"Every man is Jacob," Deiter offered, finally spoken to by Elsa. "And every man is Hitler."

"If he finds out what we are doing to him..." Bloomberg warned.

"He will be the first to thank us," Karen noted, her downturned eyes remembering a man who was once possessed by artistic Passion rather than political Power.

Unsaid policy amongst the group was that decisions were to be made unanimously. But Karen's departure swayed the vote. To the proposition of inserting electrodes into Hitler's head to make him smarter, and, therefore, more compassionate, one hand rise, then another, then another until it was decided. Still, one vote had to be cast.

"Elsa?" Deiter asked the ghost inside the photograph on the wall. "Your opinion?"

The reply was distanced, ambiguous, yet firm. "I still love you, you son of a bitch", Elsa's reply to Deiter's tortured soul, still in control of a mind and technology that could change the life of a man who could change the course of the world.

Science to Deiter was always about being in control, but devising concoctions of untested mind-altering neurotransmitter blockers and electric field designs to increase IQ by five points an hour bordered well over the impossible.

With four able-bodied, and well motivated, assistants, Deiter did what he could, but when elixirs and wiring patterns in the stimulator unit were prepared behind accelerated times of expectations, 'please, thank you, and I appreciate it' turned into 'Now! Schnell! Move, you Moron!'"

Menuind's nerves were shot, his hands shaking as he hastened to bring over the final component of the growth-promoting substrate that would be injected into the Fuhrur's right ventricle, so that the corresponding intuitive hemisphere would grow more synaptic connections than the overbearing right side, under the influence of appropriate electro-stimulation to distribute the substrate. But as for the time required to grow those connections between brain cells, thoughts, pattern recognitions, and mini-visions---

"He's not responding," Bloomberg noted.

"His eyes look faded," Klassen's comment as he upped the juice on the electrostim unit.

"And tired," Karen noted. "Turn it down."

"And be patient with us!!!" Klassen screamed, a tone he never revealed to the circle of four. "Time is master of us all," the gentle appendum.

"It wasn't for Einstein!" Deiter protested as he took over the four-personed outpatient surgical procedure with his two overburdened, sweaty and shaking hands. "Mass becomes energy if it moves fast enough, and therefore..."

The test-tube fell on the floor out of his hand, but they hypothesis was not disproven, when he stated---

"Field A-23 merged with ten milligrams, and five volts, not twenty...Five...Five...Five."

Deiter edged his way over to the sometimes-working-sometimes-notworking farm generator that had been converted into something far more advanced than it's time, appropriately named. "Come on, Prometheus. Give me that fire from the gods."

The logical mind couldn't get the lights to fire and the fuses to deliver, so with a kick to its belly. "You goddamn technology gods will NOT rule us. We rule you! We rule you!!!"

Karen did her best to restrain the mad medicine man in mid mania, but his mind was transformed, his spirit fired. He pulled away from her gentle hands, and Menuind's strong arms, keeping the whole group at a distance. All that was left was him, Prometheus, a fading patient babbling incoherently, and his ultimate advisor.

"God! Give me the strength to take away the Power! Give me the intelligence to turn perversion into passion! Take the devil out of this man, your servant! Take the devil out of him!!!" the rant continued, the sparks from Prometheus bolting through Deiter, then into his patient, creating a spark of light hotter than fire, more forboding than a burning bush on Sinai. "Take the devil out of him!!!"

"And put the devil into us?" Menuind said to the allies who had become friends, perhaps more. Then, a spark of warmth from inside, from a place, he thought dead, and gone forever. It's authority was unquestionable. "Man can't kill evil," the conclusion. "We must be strengthened by it."

"And destroy it!!!" the coda from Deiter with upping to switch to maximal level.

Sparks led to a blinding flash, velocity converted into acceleration, the wood shack into a blazing inferno. Deiter fell upon Prometheus, as it burst into flames. "The fire stays with US. With ME! Me!!! Me!!!"

Karen was the first to reach for Deiter. Menuind, the first to pull her away before she dematerialized in the wave of sparks that blinded, the light that took everything in its path and converted it into something of some other world, a realm perhaps beyond heaven or hell.

Deiter extended his hands out, his limbs turning into flames, his body vanishing into the flame, then the smoke. "Give the fire back to US!!!" the plea, prayer and celebration, all merged into the same gesture.

"Heinrick!" she screeched. "Come back!"

"He's gone," Menuind pulled her back, as the roof caved in.

Then, the final retribution, its Apocalyptic form seen first by the religious atheist himself. "Trucks, and armored cars," Klassen noted. Machine-gun fire decimated whatever crew and cast was still on the grounds. And leading the assault---Colonel Steiner.

"We must get the film!" Bloomberg ran toward the shack, slipped out the back, and mounted a horse, galloping away at full speed.

Steiner's unofficial detachment for the mission advanced at full pace on the rescue mission that would never be recorded. Bullets flew everywhere, clouding all but the space between the shot at and the place the bullets would deliver them. But for Karen, one concern remained.

"Jacob's books...He hid them in the forest," she muttered, noting the direction of the tanks coming in directly in line with the wooded sanctuary in which Jacob had found so much solace, and wisdom. Her left leg was broken, her back nearly broken. Crawling was the best she could do, yet it had to be done. "I have to get the books."

"We have to get out of here. Now!" Klassen bolted, noting a small hole in the barn, a motorcycle parked next to it.

"The woods! The books! The fifth tree beyond Old Man Oak."

"Saving your life is more important than saving those damn books, Karen."

"No!" he protested, putting her on top of his back.

"Yes!" she asserted, grabbing a knife, slitting her throat, falling onto the floor, giving Klassen no choice as to his options. "Fifth tree, Old Man....", her last words as Steiner's storm troopers poured into the cottage compound, converting it into a mass of rubble.

Klassen had never believed in God, or, at best, thought Him to be a severe underachiever, a sadist on a bad day. But prayers to all manner of Deities were made when he jumped on the motorcycle, revved it up, and roared into the woods, under the cover of smoke just ahead of the fire that set ablaze the Promethian experiment that had been Heinrich Dieter's dream, and nightmare.

As for the patient slated for a compassion-implant into his cranial vault, the bed was empty, a hole in the back of the shack. He had gone away, into the woods. History would record Adolf appearing the next day at the War Room. It was business as usual, merely three days missing in the official log of where Hitler was, photographers banned from any functions or meetings.

But though it was business as usual for the Third Reich, one more order had been left, the plan initiated.

Ten days after Bright Light had been shot, a bomb went off in a cottage in the woods, placed there under a table. The explosion failed to kill the officiator of the meeting, Hitler having escaped death with severe injuries which required another doctor to put right.

Terror reigned supreme in the ranks, every General, including Romel himself, questioned for involvement in the attempted assassination. But it was all according to plan, outlined clearly and prophetically in a book entitled "Bunker".

CHAPTER 19

In the safety of a Swiss chalet, Klassen did find Jacob's books, and could not understand them. "For future generations to interpret, and appreciate. A hard sell," his conclusion upon reading them. Yet, strict orders inscribed with blood on "Bunker" said simply...."For the housepainter's hands only."

Delivery of the book to the Bavarian Summer Castle insured on Tuesday ensured that the housepainter, during his convalescence, rounded up the man named as the responsible party by Wednesday. Colonel Steiner was demoted to a corpse before he could say "Blitzkreig". The

private note delivered posthumously from Deiter to Steiner by way of explanation read "For Elsa". Indeed, Heinrich did have a plan B, one which he should have initiated years ago.. Finally, Elsa's request was granted. Somewhere, they she and Heinrich were smiling together.

The firing squad was instructed to scrape Steiner's face off his head and feed it to the Fuhrer's dog. It was very tasty, so the private diaries inferred.

It was Klassen's honor, and duty, to become inspired by Jacob's writings, which he published under the titles "Beyond the Light". Few copies were sold, but all that were had been well read, and kept.

"Bright Light" the movie did reach the OSS, to the desk of Will Bill Donovan, Bloomberg being wise enough to avoid the British Secret Service. The screening was a dual affair, between Donovan and a very trusted woman brought in specially for the occasion.

"No one will believe it was real, Elsa," the director of the future CIA commented to the very real blood and flesh woman sitting next to him in his private projection room. "We don't have to discredit Hitler anymore. Even I shut down my own investigator of the man. The war is about our factories outproducing their factories now."

Elsa wept as she saw Deiter's picture on the screen, wondering how many times he had looked at hers. She was grateful for the rescue from the Arabian sheiks who were now under American command. She was thankful that someone remembered that she was still alive, and fighting. She was mostly appreciative of one fact. "Deiter did 'Bright Light'. He saw and became the Light."

"And that vindicates everything else he did in the service of the Reich?"

"Yes, in the end, yes." Her smile was slight, her laughter all on the inside. "Someday," she reflected inside the deepest part of her. "Someday everyone will get the real joke to all of this, and master its pain. Someday it will be seen that this redemption ended the War, and prevented at least one other one."

