

Twilight of the Potential Immortals

by

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## CHAPTER 1

The plateau was on no particular mountain, and every mountain, both at the same time. Trees ranging in species from tropical willow, to deciduous birch to ever-green Douglass fir that had survived eons of climatic changes spoke to each other about their experiences, and who they had witnessed on this plateau of transition that always remained the same, to the human eyes as their bearers were acquiring other ocular sensors. In the center of it was a collection of fourteen rocks arranged in a circle, each of them throbbing their own color. Some of those hues had names on 'planet earth', and some emitted colors which had not been named yet by mortals, as the evolution of the human species regarding its Creative potential was still a 'Work in Progress'.

But it was not so much which color the rocks emitted but the harmonic beats which they emitted light to. All of those colors of course in this porthole between life and what some still ignorantly called death when combined formed a White Light when seen from a distance. That Light was amplified by beams from above which penetrated into the Medicine Wheel, and below. The mantra which this porthole vibrated to was the continuous, thunderous 'sound' of Silence. The music, this 'day' anyway, the Overture from Parsifal.

Human souls about to experience different 'bodies' were guided to this wheel by various messengers. Some of those messengers had hoofs, carrying their riders at a rhythmic gallop that felt just as intense when on the rock hard ground as when it was over clouds which covered the plateau. Other messengers were winged, carrying their cargo with swooping movements that both utilized and created wind currents that opened and closed the 'sky' on their own terms. Still other messengers, on this porthole anyway, were Aboriginal in their former lives, maintaining their various Shamanistic dress, mannerisms and languages. They guided, on this day, mostly visually impaired pale-faced souls to the wheel. Most of the souls delivered to this mountain plateau, and porthole, had self-directed themselves there by absorbing the music of Parsifal, and other pieces written, or rather channeled through, Richard Wagner, which connected them to Spirit, big S. Some insisted that Beethoven's 9<sup>th</sup> be played as they took in their last breath of earthly air. All of them, on this day in 2020 (according to the calendar 'below'), were headed to a 'good' place. Valhalla, Nirvana, Heaven or a next incarnation which promised and delivered better 'life' than their previous one. All were allowed entry into the medicine wheel, passing by an old man with tight wrinkles on his still handsome face slumbering outside the connection of rocks, conducting another piece of music he as composing in the midst of a dream. That man, clad in a large purple beret, a felt coat, satin scarf and colorfully baggy trousers, was the assignment for a well muscled, over experienced and specially assigned Messenger Guide.

Said Messenger's long, black hair was tied back in a long mane, complimenting a fringed buckskin overshirt and leggings. He called himself Omilik, though he accepted being referred to by a hundred other names during his service on earth dating back to Biblical times. And his service in the afterlife relating to people that there was far more to God,

and Spirit, than what was written in the Bible, Koran, Gita, and even his most beloved Torah.

Omilik glanced down at the old man in the large purple beret and over the top flamboyant outfit for ANY century who was sleeping outside the medicine, wondering what he was dreaming about. Whatever it was, it seemed to be an intense dream. The old Bohemian's hands seemed to be conducting an orchestra that was playing the music coming out of the Medicine Wheel. His voice hummed harmonics, then loudly sung complimentary melodies to the Parsifal Overture, which the composer of such had never published in his lifetime. Omilik stared at then into the old Bohemian's wrinkled face, which reeked intensity through a constellation of human emotions, each one of them coordinated with the key changes coming out of the Porthole. "No, it couldn't be," Omilik said to himself, after which he pulled his cell phone from under his deerskin belt. A scan of the dreaming but certainly not sleeping self-absorbed Maestro's eyes, which were open so wide the fire coming in set fire to the brain, confirmed Omilik's suspicions, hopes and fears. Yes, it is Richard Wagner, delivered to this spot a mere 137 years after his soul was liberated from his body due to, ironically, a heart attack. From a man who some say had a heart as big as Valhalla, and other said had no heart at all. And it was time to determine which was the case. With Omilik specially assigned to the case.

"Hey, wake up, time to get up, Richard. Herr Wagner" he whispered to the still conducting composer in Cree, gently shaking his shoulders.

"Maestro Wagner!" the old but certainly not elderly man shot back with half opened eyes. "I'm not finished composing the newest version of my opera yet!"

"Parsifal is already four hours too long," Omilik replied, in German, with rolling eyebrows, voicing the opinions of more than a handful of music, and even German opera, lovers. "It' time for you to be woken up to... the next dimension," he continued with a voice inviting the composer whose music invited listeners to experience infinite and ever expanding horizons with each passage of music that could be the finale on its own terms.

Wagner continued to conduct the new version of Parisfal in his continued dream, with a bolder voice, and bigger arm movements. One of his hands was clenched in a victorious and defiant fist, the other giving the third finger to Omilik.

After considering the options, and the time table his bosses sent on the cell phone, Omilik reached for the leather canteen strapped to his waste, emptying its contents onto the gyrating face of the composer who was embracing the most blissful elements of pain and pleasure.

Finally, Wagner woke up to the 'real' world. The music around him stopped, something Omilik didn't expect, but now had to accept as part of the opera about to happen.

“Where...was I? How long have I been...?” Wagner screamed out as his eyes beheld the mountain plateau in all of its rugged and ever-changing glory, as if he knew every tree, bush and rock on it.

“Sleeping?” Omilik placed the cell phone in front of Wagner’s eyes, showing him the date. “Waiting in limbo...about 150 years, give or take...Or as measured in musical terms, a century past ragtime, 35 years since rock. 55 past Disco. And 5 years since fusion of everything into anything that soul dead distributors and conditioned listeners erroneously call ‘hip’, ‘cool’ and ‘new’.”

“And in political terms?” Wagner asked as he got up on his feet, dusted off his coat, then insured that his hat was securely in place in the oblique manner showing off his ‘good’ side. “And social terms? How long has it been?” the German composer demanded to know from the ‘noble savage’ who he seemed to value as a mentor as well as servant.

“Well, a hundred and ten years past Custer for us,” Omilik replied, gazing with a fond and bitter heart at the fourteen rocks of the medicine wheel, recalling the same arrangements of poles in a circle for teepees that felt more like home for him in three golden incarnations than the mansions he experienced in other lifetimes. “Two world wars on your side of the Pond for you,” he said, recalling the painful moans of agony and the mindless yelps of victory that had preceded them, on both sides battle-lines he had experienced. “And one more war on the way, if we don’t get something settled here,” Omilik continued, gazing down through a hole in clouds which was the ‘ground’ for the mountain into the ‘real material world’ valley of self-destructive mortals below heading to their high paying jobs at union factories and the Army base nearby, blissfully beginning another day of ‘dog eat dog’ economics which they called Free Market ‘Our Country First’ Capitalism. “Here being...” he said, keeping his back turned to Maestro Richard.

“The doorway to Heaven?” Wagner inquired of his intensively pre-occupied guide, as he quietly snuck towards the inside of the Medicine wheel, which was now ten times the distance away relative to his position at his awakening, for reasons he could not understand but had to accept. “Valhalla? Nirvana? The place of final merging with the Infinite that is beyond definition, and any religion, but within all who seek to serve and become it.” Feeling the urge to be more boldly expressive with his humble inquiry, he sung with progressive key changes escalating its way through and beyond C major to his still back turned audience, “Where Sigfried and Brunhilde went when after they defied the old gods who kept humanity subservient. Opened to heroes when Brunhilde rode her horse through the impenetrable walls of the gods to toss their magic ring back to them so humanity, male, female and otherwise, could be liberated. Where Tristan and Isolde can and always have enjoyed the love they were forbidden while being mortals on earth...Where...I can see as well as feel the music that I wrote, and was used as a channel for Spirit that is beyond all theology, so that-- “ The unauthorized entry into the medicine wheel that whisked bold warriors and even braver artists up to Valhalla, and beyond, was halted by an invisible brick wall the Maestro felt with his overgrown nose on his oversized head. Pulling back from it, to see how bad said schnoz was breathing,

Wagner noted a smile on the side of the face of the nameless First Nations Shaman. The stone but certainly not stoned age Porthole Guard maneuvered a few more buttons on the small rectangular beyond 19<sup>th</sup> century device he held in his hand, which when operated with a few effortless maneuverings of his blister-less manicured fingers, lowered the intensity of the light coming down to the circle of rocks. The hard light of ‘normal’ day from the sun revealed a dark, black bottomless hole in the middle of the circle of magical rocks that now appeared as sharp, blood stained, cold stones that reeked of purulent flesh. That image of the abyss alternated with Light from above, closing the trap door to the bottomless pit with solid state ground covered with a thick layer of flower bearing grasses, providing the nose with the most soul-awakening and mind-pleasing aromas.

“Most call me Omilik,” the Messenger replied by way of explanation, and regret, for reasons he kept to himself. “But to you, I’m assigned to be---“

“---The manipulator of this opera that’s playing in my head because I drank the wrong bottle of wine, from one of my competitors who thinks he can make me think I’m crazy, insane, or a soul-dead, overpaid newspaper critic who wants to scare me into Fire and Brimstone Christianity who wants to make me think that I’m---“

“---Dead, Richard,” Omilik replied, showing the disheveled Maestro pictures of his own funeral on the small rectangular hand held device that flashed a different photograph with each swipe of his long fingers. “Dead, at least to the still ‘living’, Great Spirit bless and help them.”

Realizing what had been going on was not due to ingestion of the wrong firewater, or something slipped into a his drink, Wagner addressed ‘the devil’ in the pit while the gateway to his ‘kingdom’ appeared to his blood shot, mind altered eyes. “What the hell,” he voiced, thinking it to be a pun he could use in his next compositions, after which the medicine wheel turned back into its heavenly presentation to the faculties of vision and smell. “Or rather, what the ‘hec’ are You doing?” the Maestro address towards the Heavenly Light pouring down upon the collection of one again, magical stones. “Wasn’t it my music that enabled so many to find this place while still living? And find their way to at the time of dying, or rather...Resurrection, as you promised, pledged and are obliged to deliver?”

“Yes, for some,” Omilik said as he reached out his hand to help Wagner up off the ground.

“For...many!” Richard grumbled back, refusing to accept the guide’s hand, pushing himself back up on his own two, still intact, feet.

“For several,” Omilik conceded.

“Several million!” Wagner replied, hoping to see some kind of acknowledgment of that wishful posthumous hypothesis in Omilik’s poker face, but seeing nothing. “Who were guided here by my music!” he asserted, recalling, between ‘sleeps’, seeing souls

humming, singing or shaking their defiant fists to the tune of his music on this plateau. Having seen no refuting of the power of his music, nor the people transformed by it at the time of passing, the humble Maestro proudly continued. “Music that made them act more heavenly, more Godlike, and effectively for the common good while still on earth. Do the calculations...Several, no many millions of people...” Wagner pointed to the page-less ‘notebook’ in Omilik’s hand, demanding that he do the calculation, hiding his own fear that it was too bold a posthumous claim.

“Yes...You are accurate, Omilik replied as he punched in the numbers, allowing Wagner sneak in front of over his tall shoulders.

“I knew it!” Wagner proclaimed, his right hand up to the sky praising It, the anxious terror-driven pounding of the heart in left chest finally subsiding. .

“But not completely... right. Or...justified, to your music being the fuel that drives the Fires of Goodness to full expression,” Omilik replied, stealing the words out of Wagner’s mouth before he could voice them.

“What do you mean, justified?” Wagner barked back, feeling for the first time in this cold high plateau on the mountain taller than any other mountains, sweat pouring down his face “Am I going to hell? Where the devil is?” he mused, then considered as possible fact.

“To our people there is no such thing as hell,” Omilik assured him with a sincere voice and, somehow, all knowing eyes.

Wagner looked down at the ground inside the medicine wheel, pondering what would happen next, relieved that one of his nightmares was only a bad dream. Just as he took in a deep breath of air that found its way into a lightened chest rather than one that was heavy and tense, Omilik opened his overshirt, revealing a yellow Star of David on his over his, literally, bleeding heart.

Meanwhile, oblivious to that juxtaposition of cultures and dimensional rules, Wagner ranted on, the deep and dark musical dramatist turning what had that terrified him just moments ago into nearly wetting his Bohemian trousers into the object of ridicule and humor which, came out as a lyrical dance through his lips. “No punishment for sins, transgressions or miscalculations in a burning heap of fire for me then in my constant quest to use story to dispel theological lies and inspire human SERVING actions? No special hotel room for the Promethian rebel down below, hosted by a sadistic taskmaster Lucifer. Or his ‘wife’, the PMS bitch I almost hired to play Venus from Tannhauser, or my first wife, who wanted to sterile everyone’s soul to be just as non-committed to Life big L as her own was? Hmm?”

Omilik took in a deep, reflective breath, averting his eyes, then turned to Wagner, utilizing the gentility of his voice and the sharpness of his words. “For our people, Hell is having whatever you did on earth be discredited, perverted, or forgotten.”

Indeed, the arrow hit a bulls-eye at the Core of Wagner’s soul as he envisioned such happening. “Being forgotten, misunderstood or discredited. The worse kind of punishment for people like...me,” he related, and confessed, staring into space. “But heaven to your people is?” he asked, looking up at the tall First Nations guide with a vulnerability he dared not show any mortal while on earth.

Omilik turned his back on Wagner and the medicine wheel. Meanwhile, Wagner tried yet again to make his way into the wheel to enter the Kingdom of the Enlightened on his own terms. “Something we don’t think about when living, or at the time of transitioning,” Wagner heard from the Old Indian, in a diction that was...yes, Yiddish, with the musicality of that ethnicity which drove Wagner ballistic while he was ‘alive’ “Or heaven for us I suppose is having our Work survive us, the Chosen people. Yahweh help us,”

“Ah yes, your people,” Wagner said, noting condescension coming out of his mouth, which turned into apprehension, then guilt upon seeing the Jewish six sided star on Omilik’s First Nations’ chest. “The Lost Tribe of Israel, according to some, who found their way here. The chosen people,” Wagner replied, trying to transform his disdain for the Yiddish culture into an academic investigation.

“Or, maybe, if we obey the ten commandments and the other ones that came down from Sinai and the other mountains, we can continue our Great Works in a next lifetime,” Omilik, or perhaps ‘Omilikowitz’ replied, with defiance but amazingly, no bitterness “A mitzfa.” The Ancient Indian Jew with the face that never developed wrinkles smiled into empty space.

“Indeed, a mitzfa. A gift,” Wagner replied while taking still another step toward the Heavenly gate, revealing and showing his knowledge of the Jewish culture, to a Jew who, was clearly different than most. Or perhaps any Jew he had met in the flesh, or invented for the stage.

“Or...maybe, sometimes, to rediscover and continue it with a different consciousness and identity,” Omilik shot back.

“An idea I never did put into an opera because, well, Reincarnation...was not believed by everyone in the audience. Or my patrons. Who...” Wagner replied.

Just as Wagner was about to enter the wheel, merging with the Light coming down from below, Omilik pressed another button on his ‘notebook’. That Divine Light went out. The rocks turned into sand. Wagner found himself tripping over himself, falling ass first into a pile of dried buffalo dung.

While Wagner shook and scraped away what he could from his ass, Omilik changed into a three piece suit, the jacket containing a yellow Star of David plastered over the left breast pocket. . 'Before we decide where you go, and what you become, and...can do, there is one question that has to be resolved. One charge. One offense that people from many cultures said you did," Omilik, perhaps, as his Native self, and Omilikowitz said by way of explanation.

"Made my operas too long?" Wagner proposed propping himself up on his feet, noting that the deciduous trees on the plateau were turning color, shedding their leaves no more than two moments afterwards, the clear blue sky taken over by black clouds, each dropping their quota of blowing snow on the ground. "My Flying Dutchman was shorter and more intense and had more soul-liberating visual imagery through music than Beethoven's Fidelio!" Wagner said as the German born and raised composer who loved the coming of winter down below started to shiver. "The Ring, it did take four operas to tell the full story and subtext. And Parsifal, the longer I made the opera, the more money I got from King Ludwig II, that got paid to ALL of the performers, the musicians, and the----"

"---Six million of my people...Who died in the Camps? At the hands of your most fanatical and dedicated patron!" Omilik blasted back at Wagner with primal rage, his gentle brown eyes now beet red with anger as he pulled out a photo from his pocket, ramming it into Wagner's confounded face. "Your most fanatical and dedicated patron! Him! Adolf Hitler!"

"Who seems to be a disturbed, and evil possessed, man," Wagner replied, calmly, and analytically, as he stared at the face of the middle aged man with the strange mustache and possessed look in his oculars.

"Who started a war that nearly destroyed the world! That killed 70 million people! Orchestrated by YOUR music," Omilik shouted into Wagner's face so intensely that the saliva accompanying each word seemed to burn a hole into the German composer' face.

"When, where?" Wagner inquired.

"1933 to 1945. EVERYWHERE, Maestro!"

"I died, according to YOUR calculations, fifty years before this deluded idiot and probably asshole did whatever he did. So, what did I do?"

"According the charges laid against you, by...many. Causing WWII, and possibly World War II!" Omilik presented Wagner with a formal declaration of the offense, in many languages, including German, Russian, English and, in the largest font, Hebrew.

"This is...absurd." Wagner replied, unable to find any other word to describe this 'event' which he knew nothing about. "This is..."



“---history,” Omilik answered, directing fire somehow though his now calm voice than any of his blood curdling screams. “And being responsible for your actions, intensions or...suggestions,” he continued, sounding once again like a Moralist, and overly experience still-justice seeking lawyer.

“I have a right to defend myself,” Wagner stated, crumbing up the paper, throwing it on the ground. The wind blew it back into his face. “I have a right to defend myself!” he screamed at Omilik, the paper, and whatever Fates delivered him to this strange, yet familiar, place.

“Thanks to Hitler and the Nazis being finally defeated, you do,” Omilik’s calm reply.

“Nazis? What or who the hell are they!!?” Wagner demanded to know, finally pulling off the paper the wind had glued onto his face, discovering blood on his cheeks, and hands. Having lost the handkerchief from his own pocket, he yanked the neatly folded one from ‘Omikilowitz’s’ jacket pocket to wipe it off.

“You really don’t know,” Omilik volleyed back, calmly.

“No, I don’t! Where did they come from? These Nazis?”

“Your head, pen and music,” the Jewish Indian Lawyer stated as belief which had found its way into becoming, somehow, historical ‘fact’. “According to...some anyway,” Omilik related, and confessed.

“‘Some’ who I want to clear my name with,” Wagner asserted.

“And HAVE to clear your name, unless you are prepared to go...down there now,” he said, after which he pointed to the black hellish abyss inside the medicine wheel.

“And need to---,” the accused Maestro appended.

Omilik turned around, strolling towards a tree. Another burst of wind comes up. Wagner held onto his flamboyant hat, placing it on his head in defiance of the wind.

“Follow me. Here...,” Omilik instructed. “Gently, quietly. And hatless.” With that, he dissolved into the large trunked tree.

“Of course,” Wagner replied in English, German, French, Yiddish and Cree, the language of the tribe Omilik seemed to have been from. He boldly marched to the tree, singing at the top of his lungs, his hat still on, preparing to negotiate with History. The tree, and fates had different ideas. Wagner hit a brick wall as soon as his real flesh hit the tree. It produced a large, very real, and very hurting, bump on Wagner’s already oversized head.

“I said gently, quietly and...hatless,” he heard from Omilik from ‘inside’ the tree trunk.  
“Out of respect for...”

“I know,” Wagner conceded, leaving his hat behind, gently walking into the tree, then feeling himself transported to another realm which he could still not see. “But I demand compensation for my lost hat,” he was able to voice, just before he discovered he had emerged into----.”

## CHAPTER 2

Wagner emerged on the other side of the tree hatless, feeling a chill on the bald spot on his head. After combing over his hair, so as to not feel embarrassed, or feel the eyes of Higher Beings peak into the hairless porthole on his head, olfactory stimuli overshadowed what came through his peeing blue eyes.

The courtroom smelled of aged wood and Ancient Justice, or at least Law. The kind of Law that was determined more by lawyers and Judges than wisdom, or that most valued and necessary of human endeavors, Honor. But entry into this place for Richard was more a matter of honor than survival, even if that survival involved a perceived eternity in the underworld. But to have his Works forgotten, forbidden and misused---this was indeed the hell Wagner feared as much as the individual who would sit behind the perfectly polished brown oak Judge's Bench, its edged embroidered with gold likenesses of some angels and demons he recognized from his reading of Eastern and Western theology texts, and some he didn't recognize, but which felt ominously more familiar. Behind that desk were flags.

To the left of the bench was Britain's Union Jack, which, like the blandness of English cooking, had not changed in centuries. The American flag stood to the right of the large, neck high table and the large, well cushioned judge's chair. It featured fifty rather than the 42 stars which Wagner had remembered regarding the country with big, wide open spaces for anyone to build his, or her, dream into, particularly in its Western regions, during the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Also present was a Red Banner with a yellow hammer and sickle on it, the Cyrillic writing on it indicating it was Russian in origin, yet the bold design reeked of the ideals of Germans Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels, who championed in print a free society ruled by the people where everyone enthusiastically gave according to their abilities and took only according to their needs. Then there was a blue and white flag with the Star of David on it.

In the middle, of the ensemble of national sacred cows which were intended to inspire unquestioning obedience to an ideal, or orders from a uniformed superior to march into battle against those following another flag was the banner which he recalled from 1848, the year of the failed People's Revolution against the Kings, Capitalists and tyrants. Upon seeing that the symbol of unity amongst German people segregated into separate, often warring, states, Wagner felt at home. Particularly when he noted in small print the year of printing of that flag, 2020, and that it was the national flag of his Homeland.

"Gold, black and red," Wagner noted regarding the flag as he felt the strange texture of a new kind of material, yet the familiar feeling of what it symbolized. "A Unified, democratic, enlightened and strong Germany. A worker's socialist paradise model for the world, we envisioned in 1848. And I fought for on the barricades in Dresden in the battle against the tyrannical kings and Capitalists."

"Which you supported, with a pen rather than a sword. Or the sweat of your brow. And certainly not with the blood from any battle wounds," came from Omilik from behind the

defendant's table as he flicked through notes on a six inch high stack of various legal files.

"I did what I could!" Wagner asserted. "With this," he continued, pointing to his still hurting and hatless head. "And got exiled to Switzerland for it. For----"

"---12 years. Which we know already," Omilik acknowledged, dismissively.

"Know, but do not appreciate!" the Maestro asserted, slamming the table in front of Omilik's legal briefs with the palms of his sweat soaked hands, both of them clenched in fists. "Like my wife, Minna didn't appreciate when she was more concerned with maintaining a safe, secure, and sedate life at home. Then dedicating herself to liberating her homeland! Like I did. Liberating it from, lifelessness, boredom, oppression, poverty, injustice and----"

"---Your having to spend 13 MORE years with her instead of other women, many of whom were married, hmmm?" Omilik calmly replied, verifying that fact with a tabbed reference in a large binder.

"Women who weres hackled!" Wagner blasted back, after taking in a big breath of air that reeked of sterility, procedure and lifelessness. "To lifeless husbands and purposeless, non-Creative lives, that were killing them, and their children," he pointed out into Omilik's downturned 'professional' eyes.

Omilik put down his papers, and raised his head, allowing his stare to once again be at the client rather than the case. "So, as your assigned defense attorney, I surmise that your defense of everything you did is based on your passion as a liberator," he said, without prejudice, or Passion with voice as plain and non-expressive as his spotless brown suit with matching shiny shoes.

"Liberation of the body, mind and soul!" fired from his mouth from the depths of his gut, heart and soul. "Which includes women as well as men, and---"

"---Those 'in between' being men and women?" Omilik interjected just as Wagner was about to dive, or be plunged into, into an even deeper place inside his past. The very male lawyer gazed up and down Wagner's expressively artistic attire in the condescending and ridiculing manner that so many straight laced narrow minded and ward-robed men had in his lifetime. "According to some who say you were----"

"---My deeds speak for themselves!" Richard shot back, pulling away from the table, then beholding the lay-out of the courtroom. "Just like I can speak for myself. I don't need you as my lawyer!"

"Because you can pay for a better one, I suppose?" Omilik replied, with a slightly upturned chin, perceptible only to those who are being looked down on.

“Yes. I can,” Richard shot back, arching his back pushing his chest out at the accuser and the accusation. “Indeed, I can pay for a better lawyer and an enlightened judge with---“ The always somehow adequately funded and salaried composer reached into his pockets, finding no more than it would cost to buy a child’s portion of strudel at one of his own concerts. “What happened to the rest of my money?” he asked as he searched each one of his many pockets, the obvious ones made by the original tailors and the secret compartments made by himself, finding nothing except dried up crumbs of what had been the various ‘Maestro to self’ notes he carried around with him. “I was robbed near that medicine wheel when I was sleeping!” he surmised, blasting the accusation into Omilik’s bean counter, ‘professional’ face, which despite the long hair behind it, seemed more like an obedient white office worker than a lifetimes experienced First Nations shaman.

“Yes, you were robbed,” Omilik conceded. “On the plateau. By collection messengers, and angels. To pay off the countless creditors you owed money to many people while you alive because---“

“---I had expenses!” the Maestro asserted to the afterlife simpleton, as he searched for a civil hemlock loaded arrow to deliver from another notebook. “Revolutionizing music, the arts, society and the world cost money. Which I had to burrow, from---“

“---Jewish bankers with small minds and greedy souls,” Omilik retorted using Wagner’s exact words, as printed anyway, spoken in his Native Language with an impeccable Dresden accent. “Who charged me more interest than anyone else...”

“And others!” Wagner pointed out, preparing to list them all on an empty legal pad and a strange ink-enclosed pen he grabbed from Omilik’s briefcase.. “Who were more appreciative of what I did, than those lecherous, money grubbing, superficial, soul-draining---“

“Hebs? Kikes? Christ killers?” Omilik challenged.

The Maestro put down the legal pad and writing 21<sup>st</sup> century implement. He took in a deep breath, with tight lips and clenched fists. After intentionally giving himself three seconds for his mouth to say what his brain was formulating, rather than what his gut wanted to lash out, he declared, calmly and verifiably, “Some of my best friends were Jews. And REAL supporters. Such as----”

“----Those who gave up being actively practicing Jews,” Omilik smirked back.

“For their OWN good! Smart Jews outgrow Judaism and assimilate.”

“And stupid ones who don’t deserve to get robbed, killed and tortured, Maestro?”

“I never advocated, supported, or condoned that!” Wagner blasted back, this time holding nothing back. “Besides...Judaism is a defective religion.”

“Unlike YOUR ‘religion’, whatever it is, that’s---“

“---Spirituality, beyond all religion!,” the Maestro explained with as much restraint as he could muster, and as much determination as he could focus on that most essential of human inquiries. “With, yes, elements of Christianity, Buddhism and, some scholars would even say, Mystical Judaism. That are in my music. And my writings. And my operas. Spirituality that enlightens those with open minds, but..” Laughter overtook Wagner as his intense ethereal mind stumbled on a very earthly reality. With a smirk and smile on his face, he continued, strolling in front of the still empty judge’s bench with large, dancelike strides, not one of his flowing and fluid motions with his hands and arms showing an ounce of restraint. “But...for those with narrow minds, my art and I provided another service. I freely offered myself as a case study. I gave those academic peons and social engineers so many symbols, words and notes that they can use to justify their own defective theories about me, life and themselves.” The dance stopped, as did the play he had just performed for the one non-responsive and non-appreciative audience member he could see, and ten thousand others he could feel. “A dirty job, as the expression goes, but someone has to do it,” the final line of that third act.

Omilik, Wagner’s assigned DEFENSE council, clearly wasn’t entertained by Wagner’s theatrics nor tolerant of any of his boasts. As scripted by another playwright hiding behind the walls, and above the ceiling, another player entered the courtroom stage from the front door, his perfectly parallel footsteps in even more perfect 4/4 time, each not one millisecond out of step with the other. His generic, featureless regulation black hair parted neatly the side matched his plain black. He reeked of pipe tobacco, the only aspect of his aroma or essence that was at all interesting. He carried a briefcase in his hand as if it were the Ark of the Covenant, placing it in front of him on the Prosecutor’s table at perfect right angles to the edges of that surface. “Just as the job you do presumably waking humanity up from its slumber is a dirty job that you have to do,” he said sarcastically with a Russian accent, still averting his eyes from Wagner. “Prosecuting you for the crimes you have committed is a dirty job I have to do.”

Wagner watched to see what this man who seemed to have so much power and influence here would pull out of his briefcase. The contents of such included three times more files than that on the Defender’s table, and spiral notebooks nearly twice as thick. . . Prosecutor, white, Aryan man, well dressed, professorial, with mild Russian accent, walks to his table. Takes notepads and files out of briefcase, then a knife, stained with blood that he wiped off with his handkerchief, then spit on as he tossed it into the waste basket. Anticipating Wagner’s question, he provided the answer. “It is my job, Herr Wagner, to see that ALL of your ‘masterpieces’ are banned, discredited and forgotten, forever. And as for you, that you be hung and,” he continued, grasping hold of the knife again. “Castrated, which, according to the kind of flamboyant of clothing you on more than one occasion wore, and the things you did with Kind Ludwig II to get funding for your operas....maybe you wanted done? Like being circumcised, after you were born, in the Jewish quarter of Leipzig to....”

“.....Someone who was not my father!!!” Wagner spat back at the smug prosecutor who still had not displayed the courage, or courtesy, to look at him, the accused, in the eye.

“Perhaps, perhaps not. But...,” the Prosecutor speculated, after which he finally turned his stare onto Wagner’s face. “We have additional charges against you as well as the main item on the agenda.” Demonstrating his point, the Prosecutor threw Omilik a stack of stapled legal papers, over the head of the Wagner.

Having failed to catch the papers, with the aim of ripping them to shreds or sticking them up either of the lawyers’ asses, Wagner settled for reading them over Omilik’s shoulder, an attempt which also failed due to the Defense Lawyer’s height courtesy of his First Nations genetics, and the two eyes in the back of his head which he had acquired over several lifetimes as a Jew trying to stay one step ahead of well armed and vengeful Christians, Moslems and Aryans.

“I have a right to know what I’m being charged with!” the Maestro grunted out after several failed attempts to read the charges. Turning his attention to a small figure walking confidently in black robes, back turned, approaching the bench from behind, followed by a, head bowing Bailiff, the only thing visible or notable about him being the back of his bowed, hooded head. Wagner continued to the judge, with a sociable tone as he saw both lawyers stood at attention. “Your honor, as one man to another, you have to tell me----”

“----As your first wife, who you walked out on, I don’t have to tell you anything, Richard,” the black robed Judge replied as she sat down on her chair behind the bench, feeling as much at home as in control of the proceedings.

“So, God is now a woman, Minna?” Wagner said as the judge turned his way, displaying a smirk of superiority on the young face he fell in love with as a young man, with old eyes he learned to distrust then despise as a middle aged one.

“This has nothing to do with God...But you,” the small framed, still under 30 year old proper society beauty said with a voice, and bitterness, which matched what Minna Wagner had become after hitting the downward end of 60, alone.

“You mean us,” Wagner said to the composite young woman and old hag who were all, in their own ways, very much the Core of his thankfully divorced wife Minna. “You, a non-artist, and me, being an artist...Who...is supposed to be judged by a jury of his peers?”

“Impossible,” Minna spit back, shaking her head, looking down at Richard, and turning her chin upward. “Because you always thought yourself above all other artists. And people,” she continued, pointing accusingly at her ex-husband with her index finger, no doubt conjuring up the ghosts of her supporters behind her.

“Minna,” the Maestro who wrote so many tender, sincere and intense musical tales about love pleaded to her, and the vitality-sucking ghosts which held her soul hostage in life, and now apparently as well, in the afterlife. “If you have a special gift, insight and ability, you are obligated to us it!”

“But not abuse it, Richard,” Minna pointed out. “Which...you did.”

Wagner took in a deep breath, trying to recall that Great Spirits really DO encounter violent opposition from mediocre, ignorant and self-destructive minds. Choosing his words as carefully as his tone, he replied. “Because I am a...special case.”

Wagner’s attempt to display humility, and truth resulted in a backlash from the ‘masses’ this time, Minna leading that charge.

“Who said you were special anyway?” she challenged getting up from her seat, yelling the accusations downward to the accused from an even higher vantage point. “Venus from the Underworld?” she said, mockingly acting out the gestures of the ‘special’ actress who played that role in Tannhauser. “Elizabeth from Heaven? Senta, whose heart belongs to the Flying Dutchman more than you?” she continued, ridiculing the performers in Richard’s past and his operas so much so that the Prosecutor laughed in delight, and Omilik’s tight lips went up, holding his appreciation of the humor intact. “Brunhilde, the shield maiden from Valhalla whose Viking helmet you put horns on, and whose breasts you put--“

“The most angelic music every put on stage!” the ridicule-fearing, and truth be told, always self-doubting, Maestro asserted. “Empowering! Truthful! A truth beyond the duality of good and evil.”

“That I never understood,” Judge Minna replied, with dead seriousness. The vitality of vicious satire having left her, she properly sashayed back to her throne behind the bench. “Or wanted to! Or were required to, so that our children could eat instead of wait for you to come home from overtime rehearsals. Or from...Cosmina. When she was still married. The one who you wrote this for, as a Christmas present.” Mina’s mouth was stopped by something she smelt. Following her nose, she saw smoke coming from under the hood of the Bailiff. Grabbing an apple from behind the bench, she threw it at the Bailiff, getting his attention, then motioning for him to take the hood off. Upon doing so Wagner noted a happy go lucky long haired lad in his twenties, smiling like a village idiot in his forties, wearing a Viking helmet, enjoying something coming from the inhalation end of a small strange smelling cigarette. The simplton lad/man or man/lad offered Richard a drag from the cigarette.

Just as Wagner was about to voice a ‘thanks anyway, but Creative madness is enjoyed and attained faster without pharmaceutical help’ to the court ‘guard’ who seemed to not have neither the ability nor temperament to protect anything, especially his own dignity, Minna cleared her throat, then motioned for her all brawn, all boy-man and no brain assistant to take out a device from a compartment in the desk. Upon pressing a button on



it, Wagner heard, Sigfried's Idyll. The dissonant, mystical, un-danceable to music took the stoned modern day Balif Viking into his own Valhalla, the Prosecutor to a bottle of aspirin to relieve his headache, Omilik into a fond memory of most probably his First Nations past. Judge Minna opened a notebook of her own, reading..."Scientific studies show that the mind warping effects of this 'music'---"

"---Siegfried's Rhine journey," Wagner proclaimed, proudly and fondly, vicariously travelling with his favorite male opera character, and becoming him. "As he traveled from the place of his boyhood and training in the woods to become the hero who awakened Brunhilde and the hopes of the world. With key changes that takes the listener through all of the human emotions, to a theme and tome. A journey of the collective music soul that was and still is about---"

"-----13 minutes too long," Judge Minna shot out to the two lawyers, with enough masterful delivery to make the Prosecutor laugh, and Defense Attorney Omilik seriously think about. She then threw another apple at the Bailiff, wakes him out of his trance, then motioned with a flick of her long, fingernail painted fingers to stop the music. The spear bearing Village Idiot reluctantly complied, to the delight of the Prosecutor who hated the music, and deep regret of the Messenger. Judge Minna then turned to the lawyers, saying with utmost respect "Gentlemen". Then to Wagner with a mocking lisp, "Richard". Having obtained the attention of all who mattered, she continued. "We have a guilty version to prove with a fair trial, and several more trials on the docket" thumbing through her most probably her long list of other defendants destined for the same verdict.

"Of course," Maestro Wagner replied, prepared to be defeated, but not without inflicting extreme harm on his enemies first.

With Judge's back turned, Wagner threw the Stoner Bailiff a coin, then pointed to tape player, signaling him to put it on. The tape player blasted out Flight of the Walkurie, as big and bold as any conductor Wagner recalled doing it, startling the Bailiff into a new state of alertness, and, he hoped, consciousness.

"No more of those diminished vibrato, offensively triple fortissimo 'chords'," Minna commanded the Bailiff. But each time the equipment-dumb, people naïve Bailiff tried several times to shut music off, but each of his attempts just made it louder. Such irritated Judge Minna to no end. The Messenger at the Defense table hummed along to it, The Prosecutor whipped out more notes, affirmatively and confidently, with a winning smirk on his plane face.

"And other demonic musical tricks, science now, says shuts off the faculty of reason and correct assessment of real world Reality," Minna shouted at the Bailiff.

"But inspired---" Wagner proclaimed..

"---Brain dead, brain washed kids to JOIN the gut toting and gun shooting Marine so they could go to Third World Countries to decimate villages and other populated places," the

Prosecutor interjected, delivering the figures supporting it to the Judge's bench, and the Defendant's table. "After seeing the helicopters in 'Apocalypse Now' that blew up a village of 'lesser races' Vietnamese civilians while two American soldiers shot the curl with their surfboards. As Robert Duvall said 'I love the smell of napalm in the morning. It smells like victory.'"

"Your honor, the use of Flight of the Walkurie music was intended as satire," Omilik quickly pointed out as he rose to his feet.

"To discourage people from entering or allowing slaughters that were shown in those productions!" Wagner added, assuming that they had something to do with the stage, or some modern two dimensional representation of such.

"But the 'Enlightenment driven' Maestro's music which actually boosted recruitment into the Marines," the Prosecutor continued, while transporting papers documenting that fact to the Judge's bench and the Defendant table. "Just like it, along with the great looking uniforms, brought peace loving, intelligent people into the Nazi Army. And let's not forget the use of Flight of the Walkurie music glorifying the Ku Klux Klan's grand plan to destroy the inferior black races in the 1915 film Birth of a Nation in America. Which led to the Nation of Nazi's in Germany---"

"Again with the Nazis!" Wagner bolted out, self observing that the rhythm of those words was more Slavic Yiddish than Aryan German. "Who I never knew, advocated or—"

"---Your honor," the Prosecutor interjected, assertively and rudely, as he pulled out yet another ink bearing parchment which he handled as if it was written with the accused blood. "A line about Wagner's music from another contemporary movie, which we all liked and admired. 'Annie Hall'."

"Movie? What's a movie?" the 19<sup>th</sup> century Maestro asked.

"A play you put on a flat screen," Omilik informed his client, after which he turned to the judge. "But Your honor, this new claim by the prosecution is inadmissible, and wrong."

"I quote, directly," the Prosecutor said, paper in hand, rolling his Slavic r's as sharply as the stick he was preparing to jab into Wagner's heart.. "City wise cynic Woody Allen in the record store with his rurally-raised optimistic girlfriend, Diane Keaton. 'Wagner's music. It makes you want to invade Poland'."

The entire congregation laughed at the joke, including Omilik. All except, Wagner and as he noticed, the still 'out of everything' despondent, nearly asleep, Bailiff.

"Who's Woody Allen?" Wagner inquired of Omilik, the Bailiff, and finally the Prosecutor, getting no answer with the mouth or the eyes.

"Someone who you could have learned a lot about comedy from, Richard," the Judge

said, in the most condescending, ridiculing tone Wagner had ever heard from his wife Minna, or for that matter, any woman, or penis bearing critic during his century.

“I did write a comedic opera,” the Maestro countered. “Die Meistersinger. The one about Hans Sacks, and a contest about colorfully dysfunctional Singers who---“

“---Never sung a single note that made ANYone laugh,” the Prosecutor smugly declared. “Not in THIS century anyway. Unless they were...”

“---Stoned on Viking Mead?” came from a distant naïve voice. Or King Arthur Parsifal Breweries Ale, man?” the spear holding Viking helmeted Bailiff replied, his smile so big that it both drew any ‘normal’ observer in and elicited your distrust his at the same time.

“So, YOU thought Meistersinger was interesting and funny,” Wagner asked the Bailiff as he boldly strode towards him more like a lawyer than a defendant.

“Yeah..sort of,” the lad-man/man-lad slurred out of the larger portion of his smile, then gazing upward, seeking...something bigger than himself or his two syllable vocabulary. “It was still really really, really...like totally....”

“...Intense,” the procedural worshiping, security-seeking Prosecuter noted. The guardian of status quo ‘moderation in ALL things’ repeated that word as an accusation rather than a praise to the Maestro..

“Intensity was, and is, my life,” Wagner proudly proclaimed. “And intensity, when expressed `artistically, against self imposed or socially oppressive wall, is Life. Beethoven was intense.”

“Yes, but intensity is,” the Judge remarked, as she pulled a thick book with gold writing on its cover that Wagner didn’t recognize. “Well, a criminal offense in this century. It’s so...what’s the word I’m looking for?”

“Jarring?” the Bailiff exclaimed as if he figured out the riddle to an Easter Egg hunt orchestrated by a Quiz Master who was chauffeured around by 8 reindeer when the roads were closed by snow.

“Disruptive to normality” Omilik asserted, his real meaning of that accurate word as hidden as what a three dollar hooker was thinking while entertaining a three thousand dollar client.

“And something that disables people to be simply...happy,” Judge Minna explained to Maestro Wagner in the same manner in which she had tried to gently offer him common sense warnings about heading off to fight the Kings’ and Capitalists’ cannons and bayonets in 1848 armed with philosophical books and esoteric operas.

“My music and operas are designed to disable people to be happily simplistic, Your

Honor,” Wagner replied to the Judge, in the same tone and familiar manner he had addressed the always law abiding Minna before her posthumous promotion to administering that set of rules based in convenience rather than fluid justice. “And to prevent their souls from becoming lifeless. Boring, sterile and...procedural,” he continued, addressing not only Judge Minna, but the mass of humanity she was charged to protect, or contain. “I gave you all I had, and what did you do with it?”

“What I wanted to and could,” Wagner heard from a strangely confident, complimentary and mad voice behind him from a new player in the courtroom who had arrived...quietly. Upon turning around, the Maestro saw a three dimensional manifestation of the picture Omilik had shown him on the plateau. The short, black haired, under-muscled yet handsome, somehow, dictator sporting a short mustache under his nostrils had a moderately attractive somewhat younger woman attached to his arm, her face seeming familiar to Richard. “Master Maestro,” Adolf Hitler said with the most reverent of bows. “Allow me the honor of introducing you to your grand-daughter, Winifred. Born in England to your, some say effeminate, son, Siegfried.”

“Sensitive boy, and man,” Wagner replied, his faculty of keeping secrets behind half-truths working at full steam.

“Winifred visited me, most every day, in jail when I was writing Mein Kampf,” the Fuhrer exclaimed with pride, and the most profound gratitude.

“After Adolf had seen and was inspired by your opera Lohengrin, 37 times, grandfather!” replied the more than slightly rotund young woman with long, brown hair that made her Wagner nose seem only moderately rather than three times the appropriate size for her face, with a joyful smile that made Richard feel immense sadness, and anger. “He really connected to the music, and the messages hidden within the lines of the opera.”

“But never really listened to the music, or understood the life PROMOTING and KINDNESS conferring libretto,” Maestro Richard spoke into the face, and hopefully the soul, of the grand-daughter who grew up to be something he never imagined possible for his progeny. “I was just trying to...suggest a better way to life, to those bold enough to consider it.”

“Ah, you underestimate yourself and your effect on history, Herr Maestro,” Adolf said to the man who, until now, had seldom declined compliments regarding his power, influence and irresistible genius. “I bow to you in gratitude and humility,” the Supreme leader of the Third Reich said with yet another subservient bow.

Wagner didn't know how to respond. Winifred offered an interesting, yet horrible suggestion.

“You're supposed to do this to him,” she said, after which she extended her right hand outward with an extended palm, clicking her heels at the same time. “Sieg Heil!” she

screamed out. Such popped the Nazi dictator back into an upright position, feeling entitled to the same salute from his idol, Maestro Wagner, awaiting his just and required reward. Adolf and his date got a lecture instead.

“That ‘salute’,” he commented with a subdued chuckle. “A gesture that some Buddhists use when trying to feel the Heavens? That knights, like Rienze, Lohengrin and Parsifal, of old did to the sky when dedicating themselves to fighting for Right rather than Might.”

“Adolf and I are waiting for your Sieg Heil,” Winifred informed her grandfather.

“For me to let him and his capitalist, fascist henchmen steal my music, and words, and make it their own!” Wagner blasted into his grand-daughter. “What are you doing with this...deluded moron?”

“B...bbbut,” the Fuhrer stammered like one of the inferior race, weak willed simpletons he no doubt allocated for medical experiments, or worse. “You were my inspiration back in 1933!” he muttered from face that now spouted tears.

“And you are my albatross now, in whatever this year is,” Wagner delivered at, then into Adolf’s confused, then terrified eyes. Having locked Hitler in a ‘special room’ inside his demented head, Wagner then turned to his granddaughter, taking her left hand gently just before her fingers pulled into a tight fist. “Winifred. All the music training, poetic schooling and love your father gave you in life, and me while you were the apple of his eye for this ...this wannabe who steals as well,” he continued, grabbing hold of the swastika on Adolf’s shaking arm. “This symbol of Spiritual Bliss and Wisdom from India to make it his own.

Wagner ripped off swastika from Hitler’s arm. Such awakened him from his catatonic state, converting the reality-sedated lunatic into a raging bull just about to bolt out of his cage. Winifred literally held him down, bravely acting as an intermediary between bull Adolf’s horns and Maestro Richard’s chest, neck and testicular tissue that was responsible for her very existence, and perhaps Adolf’s re-activated political Calling. With the firmest of stares, the Judge ordered the Balif and the two lawyers to continue not interfering with the family ‘reuninon’.

“Adolf,” Winifred pleaded of the enraged dictator, unable to put her loving arms around Hitler, but somehow preventing those fisted appendages from putting her grandfather into another afterlife. “Remember. My grandfather is old now. A little off in the head, but his music was so right in the Heart. Remember what happened. Adolf, the last time you got angry? You invaded Poland, then Russia, then---“

“---Got your ass kicked, all the way back to Berlin. To your own Twilight of the Aryian gods,” Omilik interjected. “Three defective girlfriends who accidently disappeared and twenty golden showers later. During which time you killed six million of MY people,” he continued, surprisingly not eliciting a ‘say one word and I’ll tear your vocal chords out

of your throat myself' stare from the now very empowered, and delighted, Judge Minna. "Six million of MY people died because of you, Mister Hitler."

"And ten times that number of my people, in the Soviet Union alone!" the Comrade Prosecutor bitterly asserted. "Inspired musically by---"

"---But," Wagner heard from the Bailiff, from whatever universe the humming music from his mouth had put him into. "I heard that, like, Adolf was a vegetarian. And, totally, an animal lover."

"Who killed his own beloved dog, when the Russians invaded Berlin. Isn't that right, Adolf," Judge Minna added, accusingly staring down at the specially permitted witness for the Prosecution.

Adolf turned his anger from others back to himself. His clenched right fist, sharp fingernails and seldom photographed teeth converted his left forearm into a blood soaked appendage. "Yes, I did that. I did that. And more. I'm, bad, bad, bad!" he ranted on, with tears flowing down his face that soaked through his broken skin, underlying thin muscle and bits of exposed bone. Winifred pulled away, running out of the courtroom. The Judge ordered everyone else to not interfere with Hitler's argument with and within himself. Especially Wagner himself, who found himself oscillating between wanting to comfort the self-destructive lunatic and yelling a confession out of him.

The Bailiff pointed to Adolf, then the door, asking for permission of the judge for something that Wagner could sense was beyond his normal duties. Judge Minna finally gave him nod of approval, with a bit of resentment for having to do so. The Bailiff, with his strong arms and gentle voice, approached Adolf with a surprising degree of proficiency, separating Hitler's mutilated left arm from the torrent of self hatred possessing the rest of his body. "Hey, come on, Fascist Lunatic Vegan dude. Time to check you in with some real nice Docs at the Walkurie Hotel and Spa. With Uncle Wotan, Cousin Loki and Nurse Brunhilde. A happy place, yes?" he offered, rather than pushed.

As Hitler was being taken away, the Afterlife Judge answered the question which was so much on Wagner's mind that it never reached his mouth. "Adolf is going to a happy place for breaking down and confessing his sins," she declared, after which she retrieved yet another thick book, opening it up. "He was born and baptized Catholic, Richard. In exchange for them apologizing for rain when alive, Catholics get to heaven if they confess all of their sins during the last aria of the life opera. But you..." Judge Minna closed the book so hard that it woke her ex-hubby Richard out of the fog he had faded into. "You're...not Catholic," she said to his shocked face. Leaning back, in the superior manner the short woman had in life, from the high position she now had in the afterlife, she continued, twirling a pencil as if it was a knife, ready to stab it into Richard's heart at a moment of HER choosing. "You're, some say a Buddhist Christian. Some say a Christian Buddhist. Some say an Atheist. Your deluded fans say a Spiritualist'. Your baptismal certificate says you're a Lutheran. But we all know you are---"

“---Different!” Wagner self observed himself discovering, and declaring. “Different than ALL of you!” he said to all four of the still remaining ‘real’ people in the courtroom, and the ghosts that seemed to linger behind them. “I’m a Promethian. Promethious being of course, the Greek god who gave humanity the ability to read, create fire and, he projected, have the wisdom to use both for the Common Good, against Zeus’ orders, and paid the price for that Noble Deed. Like Brunhilde, who was a born a god, but who, in the service of liberating humanity, defied the gods, and her father, and paid the price. Put her into an agonizing slumber on a mountaintop surrounded by fire, by her “Good” Father, Wotan. No Liberating deed goes un-crucified, you know.”

“And no blasphemous thought, or deed, goes unpunished,” Judge Minna noted, and declared as she opened what seemed to be an appointment book, flipping though the pages so quickly that Richard could not decipher the any names or dates on it. “So until this court reconvenes tomorrow---“

“---Because your slow, ‘logical’ and non-creative ‘minds’ need time to ‘process’ what I told you today,” Maestro Wagner challenged. “Through my mouth, and my music!!!!

The judge hesitated, placing her fingers under her chin while leaning back on her now even larger chair. The undulations of her facial muscles indicated that she was considering many options, and indeed processing something. Perhaps, processing the truth. Something which Wagner read, and on a lucky day, believed would set you free. Finally, she leaned forward, looked at and perhaps into Richard. Then just as Richard experienced something real from her, she turned to the Bailiff.

“Holding cell 12. Balif, escort the ‘liberator’ to his holding cell, so he can---“

“---- Like, find out, totally, what, ya know, happened,” the zoned out, oversized, over-haired boy-man replied, searching for his words with a very illiterate mind. “Since he, like, ya know---

“--Died! Of a heart attack,” Wagner filled in, in rapid and affirmative speech. “Because--“

“---We all know,” Judge Minna replied with a condescending eye-roll that filled her the entire expanse of her forehead. “Because ‘Your heart was too big for ordinary morality, because it was expressive and vulnerable’,” she mused, to the entertainment of the Prosecutor, and the distress of the Wagner’ assigned defense attorney, whose face read ‘lost another one, like I was supposed to’ in every crease and wrinkle. “Take the Maestro away!” Minna ordered the Bailiff. “Dramatically of course, since for him ‘real life’ is merely an illusion.”

“Already, like, eons ahead of you there, Judge, ya know,” the Bailiff’s reply as he pressed a knob on tape player, which blasted out two solemn drum beats, in ominous succession. Then, of course, Siegfried’s Funeral Music. The young Bailiff pulled Wagner

away by his coat, which the old man resisted. The struggle did severe damage to the Maestro's fragile, flamboyant clothing, his hurting and now aching arms, and his hopes for coming out of the trial with anything resembling redemption or innocence.

While listening to the music that honored the hero Sigfried, whose death occurred because he was betrayed by those he came to trust, Wagner thought about what would happen to his body, Judge Minna already, or course having an answer for such. "Putting you, Richard, on a Viking boat that gets set on fire is for later!!!"

"And for now, your Honor?" Omilik asked, extreme concern in his voice.

"We go home," the Russian born and raised Prosecutor said while packing up his legal papers, and various props, the identity of which he hid from Omilik. "Have a comfortable meal, Do NOT discuss the case with friends, lovers or family, or," he continued point to the sky, "Him. And come in with fresh,clear, logic driven minds tomorrow, so we can serve Lady Justice."

"By being intimidating Judges and manipulative lawyers?" Omilik asked, his eyes welling with guilt.

"You know the rules of this game," the Prosecutor replied with a confident smirk on his face and a packed briefcase in his, to the eye anyway, bloodless clean hands.

"Yeah, I do," Omilik replied, his head down, his eyes seeing above and below him both at the same time. "Heaven watches, and earth works."



## CHAPTER 3

“There are three situations where you find out who you really are. Where you discover if you’re wired to be a hero or coward, a channel for empowerment or a slosh-bucket of weakness, someone who is made stronger by adversity or pulverized into the muck by it,” Wagner slurred out of his dry lips and salty-tasting tongue as he gazed at the small ball of light swinging above him. “Combat,” he gave voice to, “which never found its way to wherever I was dwelling no matter how many times I opened the door. The stage, when you forgot your lines or found out the rest of the ensemble was working off one libretto and you another in front of an audience of powerful critics or, worse, good friends. And...of course this. This being...”

“Jail?” the Bailiff replied from the free side of the bars, while munching on a carrot, his helmet embellished with long horns, his spear by his side, gazing at images on a small screen, the base of which was on his lap..

“Yes, indeed, jail,” Maestro Wagner noted, as he glanced once again at the walls enclosing him in on three sides, oscillating closer into him each time he dared to lose his stare into them. “But there is something else,” he said as he noted those walls contracting and mildly expanding to the beat of a hard, constant drumming with a melody that he did recognize. “Beethoven’s 5<sup>th</sup>, performed as ‘disco music’ you can dance to, but not think with or be inspired by,” Richard noted with regret at hearing that powerful symphony deflated by loud regular intervals of artificially sounding instrument he didn’t recognize, complimented by hypnotic, soul-sedating images on the screen which flashed by so quickly they were unrecognizable. “What did they, and you, do to MY music?” the Maestro inquired, terrified of the answer.

The Bailiff pulled a carrot from his lunch bag, munching on it like a rabbit rather than a person. “Which I can show you in living color with the next icon, Doc,” he said in a bold voice and diction not recognizable.

“Icon?” Wagner inquired.

The Bailiff showed the Maestro what that term meant, pressing on it with something he called a ‘mouse’. Appearing on screen was a moving cartoon likeness of a cheerful, well conditioned silver rabbit identified as ‘Bugs’ by the subtitles, and a struggling, sweating, and out of breath human hunter named Elmer Fudd whose shotgun hit trees and rocks that delivered blows to himself rather than his prey. Still, the frustrated, linguistically challenged human hunter kept singing ‘Kill the Wabbit, Kill the Wabbit,’ the tune, tempo and intensity of a well orchestrated version of Flight of the Walkurie. To the Bailiff’s surprise, and Wagner smiled, liking it.

“Not bad,” the Maestro said regarding the two dimensional, cartoon character casted opera. “It has an edge to it.”

“And this,” the Bailiff said, quickly pressing another set of knobs on the keyboard at the base of the screen. “Marvin Martian and Bugs,” he continued, while a small, black helmeted Alien chased the rabbit.

“Interesting,” Wagner said with a big open smile, and even chuckle when hearing the Pilgrim’s theme from Tannhauser being sung by Bugs, the lyrics being ‘Become my love’. The Maestro’s smile turned secretive when he noted the Bailiff glancing at him, particularly when Richard saw----

“Bugs dolled up as a Viking chick,” the Balif noted. “Who----“

“ ----looks ridiculous in that...helmet with horns,” Wagner blasted out, averting the Bailiff’s curious eyes. “Like you do in that...helmet!” the Maestro disapprovingly blurted to the Bailiff, as his fingers somehow found the off button on the keyboard, sending Lady Bugs and Marvin Martian out of sight and mind.

“Vikings wore helmets with horns,” the matter of fact reply from the dumbfounded Bailiff.

“Who said so?” Wagner asked.

“You, man,” the reply. “Life imitates art. And imagination creates reality. You said that.”

“So,” Wagner said after taking in yet another deep reflective breath, something his lungs had been doing far more in death than when breathing air when he was alive. “Because I at the advice of my promoters put horns on helmets on my mythical characters at Beyreuth in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that means Vikings wore them in 8<sup>th</sup> AD.”

“Like, yeah, man. Sort of a retro time warp fit.”

“Of course,” the Maestro conceded. “And what universe did you fall down from? Or still think you’re flying around in?” he added, absorbed into his own misery as well as whatever ability he had to express satirical wit.

With downturned eyes, and even more downturned spirits, the Bailiff bowed his head, then pushed his horned helmet off his head, into his shaking lap. “Yeah, the universe where, ya know, no one notices me. No one listens to me. And, no one believes me when I say anything that’s the truth, ya know.

His conscience awakened by something Inside of himself that he could not deny, or repress, Wagner, laid his hand on the Bailiff’s trembling shoulder. “Yeah...I do know. We all have to be...who and what we are. Even if we do it...inappropriately.”

Bailiff wrapped his large, muscular, sweat-soaked arms around Wagner's small back, out of gratitude. The Maestro was uncomfortable with it, but somehow felt bonded to the Bailiff. "Thank you, man," he said. "You really do have a kind, loving heart.

"A...functional one," the Maestro replied, as truthfully as he could, and dared.

"One that couldn't have done what's in here," the Bailiff said, after which he pulled away from Wagner, then pulled out a biography bearing his name in bold, Bavarian-Nordic font. Frantically thumbing through to pages to find something very specific.

"On Wagner'," the Maestro read on the cover, followed by a perusal of the author's name. "By someone who wasn't me, and who I didn't know," he noted with a dismissive tone.

"Someone who says that the creepy, icky, 'deceptively vicious' Mime in The Ring Opera is the stereotypic Jew," the all of a sudden literary Bailiff said, pointing to the passage with his finger.

"One man's MISinterpretation," Wagner shot back sitting on the cot in his cell, his gaze lost inside the wall, once again. "Misinterpretation of a character who represents the universal greedy capitalist who has workers and artists by the balls," he continued, recalling the heroic Revolution of 1848 like it was yesterday.

"And," the Bailiff pointed out as he thumbed quickly to another page in the book with his left hand, his right Professorial Paw flexed with the index finger pointed upward. "That the petty, overbearing mayor Beckmesser in Die Meistersinger is 'a clearly slanderous representation of autocratic Jewish bankers and industrialists'."

"Beckmesser is a no talent wannabee gatekeeper!" Wagner volleyed back, turning his angry head towards the wannabe scholar and afterlife life-inexperienced everything else. "Who lets idiots and assholes into 'social acceptance' and keeps expressive, intelligent and dedicated artists OUT of their deserved place on the world stage. Not someone who..."

"...Like other Jews, is 'incapable of artistic expression neither in his outer appearance, his language and less of all through his singing'"

"Which I did write," Wagner admitted, confessed and realized. "And..which...was true for virtually all of the practicing Jews I met," he related, after which he rose to his feet, looking straight at the Bailiff, who still seemed to prefer to become an expert in what others said about Wagner rather than what Wagner had to say about himself. "I was spit on by so many practicing Jews in Paris in 1840," he grunted through the bars on the cell, and, he hoped, into the thick, white washed, wall of ignorance around the Bailiff's brain, and in absentia, whatever moron wrote the biography. "These 'Chosen People' looked at me like I was an untalented 'crude' non-French, non-Jew inferior who was not allowed into their 'club'. Idiots and assholes who kept all other Expressive Germans out of their

‘refined’ and superficial Realm they called ‘artistic society’. When in reality, those, yes people, who snobbishly called themselves Jews, could not do art, but only imitate it.”

“And did, like, maybe, a better job at imitating art than you did while doing it,” the Bailiff said in a ‘drunkards’ vocabulary, but with a scholarly and even wise tone.. He put down the biography and turned to the controversial Maestro it claimed to clearly explain. “Like, ya know, Bob Dylan coming out with really great lyrics but no one hearing them till they came out of a mouth that could sing on key, and that could please the audiences who---“

“---Deserved better than to have their minds entertained and their souls sedated by ‘refined’ and ‘easy listening’ imitators,” Wagner replied, having been shown several of Dylan’s songs through the Bailiff’s speakers and screen prior to hearing about how Beethoven’s works were being interpreted, remembered and carried on. “The times they are a changin’, and if I had a hammer to club the idiots who think that they can regulate the answer that’s blowing in the wind,” Wagner talk-sang in what felt like a perfect imitation of Maestro Dylan.

“I’m with you there, man,” the Bailiff said with a fond and bonding smile. “Jewish chicks I knew partied with us rowdy Gentiles, but always married one of their own,” he said, bringing Wagner back to analogous memories of his own two centuries earlier. “And told their kids that they were the Chosen people, who deserved special perks today, because their ancestors got fucked around in the past. Like..”

“Me,” the Maestro self observed coming out of his mouth, despite what his brain was trying to not reveal. “Who...was born as a Jew, to a father who...” This time, no words came out of Wagner’s mouth, as song, spoken verse, or even hushed whispers.

“To a father who...Fucked off? “ the Bailiff said, gently stealing the words out of Wagner’s parched, salt-tasting mouth.

“Yeah,” Wagner replied after a tense, angry and, as it evolved into, reflective pause. “But, about that Jewish issue,...it’s...”

“...Complicated...Like your case is, man,” the Bailiff replied, as if he was a mind reader, fortune teller, unknowing channeler of Ancient wisdom, or any combination of the aforementioned. “But, it’s too complicated For me to give you any advice about,” he continued, as a very non-knowing mortal, shrugging his shoulders. “Except to say...”

“...Good luck? Break a leg?” Wagner offered.

.The Balif replied with a hearty belly laugh, that baffled the Maestro, followed by abrupt silence, then...”“Be who and what you are. Even if you do it ...inappropriately.”

“Using my own words against me,” Wagner said with a self assessing chuckle, after which he recalled events that no biographer would ever know about, or get right. “A trick done by so many of my enemies. And my friends, and supporters, many of whom were Jews.” Wagner took in a deep breath, feeling something of a new discovery about to slither up his spinal cord and find its way into his oversized, physically and otherwise, head. Delivery of whatever that realization was halted by a visitor into the hall outside the cell.

“None of those supporters and friends are waiting for you, and us in the courtroom,” Omilik informed Wagner. “Which is reconvening now.” The Bailiff opened the cell door at Omilik’s nodding.

Feeling the need to walk to his crucifixion rather than be carried to it, Wagner gets up on his two now very arthritic feet. He looked back at Bailiff, inviting him to follow. “You coming, friend?” Wagner asked.

“No, not this time,” Defence Attorney Omilik said to his now even more disappointed client. :”But he’s-----“

“---Rooting for you from below, man,” the Bailiff interjected, though only given permission to do so. “Mazeltof,” he said with a bow, with a Yiddish diction.

“And good luck to you to,” Wagner replied with a thankful bow. With that, the Maestro turned to a slowly opening door in a dark hallway leading to the well-lit courtroom. Slowly, he let his feet take him to this no doubt final judgment.

## CHAPTER 4, and 5.

The events leading to Wagner being on the witness stand faded into oblivion. All he knew now was that the Slavic Prosecutor, who considered the German Artist as inferior as some of Wagner's Aryan friends considered Russians, stood on firm feet in front of him, looking straight at and into the Maestro's soul. As to who the jury was, perhaps it was the judge herself, or the ghosts behind and within her. In any case, humanity was watching the Maestro who always had fancied himself as a changer of Fate rather than one of its many victims, and servants.

"So, Herr, Maestro Wagner," the Prosecutor said with as much theatrical flare in his flaying arms and boisterous voice as Richard had displayed at any after-show party, investor meeting, or rehearsal for operatic actors who needed to see what they should do rather than figure out how to do it themselves. "Who was and IS responsible for the deaths of 20 million of my fellow Soviet Comrades, 50 million more worldwide, and 6 million of the Defense Attorney's fellow Jews."

"Objection, Your Honor," Omilik said as he rose to his feet.

"Overruled!" Judge Minna barked out. "Continue," she instructed the smirking Prosecutor. "But get to the point. We can't waste the court's time on the obvious. We have many souls to still process."

"Of course, Your Honor," the Slavic Lawyer said with a courtly bow. "The prosecution-  
---"

"---Who gets a kickback payment for every soul it sends to an eternity in hell," Omilik interjected to the consternation of the Judge and an unapologetic nod from the Prosecutor. "Or a series of incarnations in New Jersey, prematurely," he continued, as if forcing a joke about a location Wagner knew nothing about, yet wanting to, perhaps as the fodder for a satirical opera aimed at an American audience.

But the prosecutor had no appreciation of Omilik's attempt to lighten the mood, or shed light upon the Truth. "The prosecution seeks to add the charge of Fanatical Nationalism to the charges already raised against the accused. German nationalism," the Prosecutor proclaimed.

"Which in 1848, was about uniting the fragmented German people into a united, democratic republic," Wagner asserted. "With freedom for all, to achieve their full potential and acquirable destiny."

"Except for those who aren't German," the Russian Prosecutor countered.

"Freedom to preserve and OFFER the world the Greatness that is in the collective German soul!" Wagner declared. "The Enlightenment of Beethoven, Goethe, Bach, Emanuel Kant, Schopenhauer!."

“And Wagner?” the Slavic lawyer shot back with a condescending eye-roll.

“We are taking turns in passing on the Torch of Enlightenment,” the Maestro replied, motioning for Omilik to allow him to speak for himself.

“Enlightenment being, of course, only a German Phenomenon?” the Prosecutor offered, to Minna’s delight. And Omilik’s consideration.

“No!” Wagner screamed out, after which he took center stage in the courtroom, stepping out of the witness box, so that all the people and ghosts in the courtroom could get a better look at him. “Every culture expresses a different kind of Enlightenment! The Greeks. You Russians. Even, if they don’t force it on the rest of us, the French and the Jews. And...the so called primitive First Nations on the other side of the Atlantic, such as in Texas. Who WE GERMANS value more than any of you other Europeans. And ennobled in print through the writings of Karl Mae.”

Omilik smiled with gratitude at the mention of Karl Mae, and the Germans two century who migrated to Western America when he was an “Injun” there. As seen through the corner of his eye, when she wasn’t aware of being watched by Wagner, Judge Minna stroked her chin with her slender fingers, taking into active consideration what he had said.

“Karl Mae, who Hitler admired, and liked, is that not correct?.” The Prosecutor proposed to the Maestro, then the judge, and whoever else was watching above the ever lowering ceiling.

“Objection! Irrelevant!” Omilik asserted.

“Over-ruled,” Judge Minna interjected with a scolding voice.. “The accused will answer the question. Which is..”

“...I know, Minna,” Wagner said, with husbandly affection for the wife who he once, loved, then tolerated, then, somehow felt responsible for, from a distance. “Hitler admired and liked Karl Mae’s writings about Indians,” the Maestro noted with fluctuations in his voice and bobbing of his head that, ironically, felt more Yiddish than German. “I suppose he did in his time. But in MY time, the German Freethinkers, like me, who had to flee our beloved homeland after we lost the People’s Revolutions of 1848 were the only ones who kept their treaty with North American Indians, which were never broken.” He then turned to Omilik. “Correct?”

“Right,” Omilik replied while sitting behind the defense table, with a sincere and grateful nod, recalling behind his memory-possessed eyes perhaps the only golden time he had with palefaces while a ‘redskin’ on planet earth.

“Whatever,” Judge Minna offered with an exaggerated eye-roll.

“And NO artist is responsible for misinterpretations of his works during his lifetime, or afterwards,” Wagner proposed. “Correct?” he asked Omilik.

“In some instances, yes,” came from the overly-experienced agent for justice and well being as a mortal and an ‘angel’, averting his eyes and thoughts.

Wagner’s jaw dropped, his teeth shattering, wondering where Omilik’s real sympathies lay with regard to this current, assigned case. Forced to forge ahead at full speed, even though it may be heading for a cliff with a long drop into the depths of hell, Wagner continued. “And what a dedicated Artist Revolutionizing the world and Serving Humanity has to do in that noble quest, behind closed doors, should be kept behind closed doors, as it is what someone does rather than what they are that matters.” Once again, the German Maestro turned to the Jewish-Injun defense attorney. “Yes?”

“Yes,” the supportive and affirmative reply from Omilik, after a reflective pause from him, a tense one for Wagner.

“But not in this case,” the Prosecutor said as he rose, walking toward, then pacing around the accused in an ever closing in circle. “Because history does judge us. As a dedicated Prosecutor, serving history, Maestro, it is my job, duty and honor to not hide the fact that Beethoven in his obsessive desire to have a son, made life hell for his involuntarily adopted nephew, Casper.”

“Who was a sick child before he came to Ludwig,” Wagner asserted regarding his musical inspiration, posthumous mentor and always present friend.

“And that Socrates’ sons disowned him for being more concerned with Educating the World than taking care of them at home,” the Slavic Lawyer shot back.

“Because his wife was a jealous, unappreciative, ignorant bitch!” Richard pointed out, not caring if Judge Minna could pick up that he was referring to her as well. “Who wanted him to spend ALL of his time as a stone mason, or most of his time spreading superficial, money making, mindless, easy-listening ‘philosophical propaganda’ rather than the hard, honest and essential truth, so she could show wear the latest Athenian fashions at her cheese and olive coffee clutches with ‘proper’ society women.”

“And Albert Einstein, who gave his wife no credit on the theories they both worked on together so ‘they could get recognized’ faster, and who had one son who was schizophrenic, and another who disowned his humanitarian serving father,” the Prosecutor countered.

“Albert who?” Wagner asked.

“A ‘relativity’ relevant question, Maestro,” the reply, delivered with a snide ‘in the know’ smirk..



The Judge and Defense attorney giggled at the joke. Wagner felt left out. He threw his hands up in the air. Then he marched towards the door.

“The Prosecution wishes, and must, bring in another witness, who....Maybe you recognize, Maestro,” Wagner heard from behind him in a crisp, aristocratic Russian accent, to which he gave a crude Dresden third finger salute. “King Ludwig II of...” Wagner heard.

“Bavaria!” entered the Maestros ears, from someone who he clearly identified when turning around. Indeed it was King Ludwig, hailing from that beloved, yet isolated Kingdom that was one of the last to join Germany in the First Reich under Kaiser Wilhelm. The Monarch, sporting a big, amorous smile, stroll-danced his way from the door into the main stage of the courtroom. He was just as flamboyant and effeminate as he was in life, clad in white stockings, gold pointed shoes and two flowing gowns covering his overly medaled military uniform, which had never seen battles outside the all male bedroom.

The incarnation of Wagner’s major funder, and biggest fan, took the Maestro’s hand, kissing it, then maneuvering his frail body around Richards to kiss his lips. Wagner tried to his mutual feelings for Ludwig, but...couldn’t. “I came as quickly as I could,” the King said to his former lover, and patron as he gently pulled away from the embrace, at Richard’s reluctant request.

“Who called you here?” Wagner inquired of this latest visitation from his past.

“No one who I see here now,” the Bavarian Monarch said, looking around the room.

“Was it the Nazi’s?” Wagner asked, after which a gallows humor joke found its way to elicit a laugh from the Maestro. “To discredit me?” he asked Judge Minna. “Who maybe I should have acknowledged so they could consider me a degenerate? And acquire someone else’s music to accompany their slaughter-fest?”

“It WOULD have been an interesting strategy,” Judge Minna noted, again scratching her chin. “But...” She said, turning to the surprise witness. “King Ludwig, is it true that you funded most of Wagner’s later operas?”

“Because you loved the music?” Omilik enquired.

“Or maybe the composer?” the Prosecutor asked in an accusing manner, like the Constable who gives you a choice between being culpable or guilty of something he has deemed a civil offense, or crime.

“It was a combined package,” the dashing, handsome and some would say beautiful Monarch informed the Judge, Prosecutor and Defense Attorney with a very loving smile, his back to Wagner.

Wagner shook his head 'no' to the Attorneys and the Judge. Until he noted the Bailiff, entering the courtroom from the side door, clad in a female shield maiden's outfit, complete with red lips, elongated eyelashes, seashell earrings, long flower braided blonde hair, knee-length leather skirt slit on the side, size perfect breasts and not a hair on his body other than eyebrows and top knot . When seeing the cross-dressed Bailiff, Wagner was forced to nod 'yes' the relationship between him and Ludwig being about the music and the love. Just as the 'man's man' Aryan Maestro felt a three ton weight lifting from his shoulders, the Bavarian King turned around and kissed Wagner.

"Is there anything else?" King Ludwig asked the judge after pulling away from Wagner, according to the timetable of the third soul that yet again formed between the two men.

"Yes, you can go now," Judge Minna said, extremely procedurally.

As Ludwig turned around to exit the courtroom in his long, flowing robes, Wagner tried to sneak out with him, making himself small enough to hide behind them.

"But not you, Richard," the Judge said just when the Maestro thought he could make his getaway. "There's still a woman who you have had history with, other than Cosmina and me, and..." The Judge pointed to another door, through which an attractive long haired woman of no more than 35 years with beautiful and intelligent brown eyes, wearing an academic's dress that featured tastefully dignified late 19<sup>th</sup> century Victorian fashion, but with bold colors and curving lines that suggested artistry rather than propriety. She boldly walked to the witness stand and sits down. The Prosecutor approached her. Wagner looked to Messenger asking with his silent speaking mouth and kinetic hands she was there. Omilik shrugged his shoulders, his eyes clearly admitting no knowledge of it.

"Will you state your name, please?" the straight laced, brown suited Prosecutor asked the artistically, but still legally, clad woman

"Judith Guatier," she stated humbly, and colorfully, with a Parisian accent.

"And do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. So help you God?" the Prosecutor asked, bypassing the cross dressed Bailiff.

Judith raised her hand and turned her eyes to the Judge above her. "I do, so help me God, and," she continued, this time gazing at with a warm, knowing golden glow that seemed to compliment her dark brown hair. "Spirit beyond any false image we delude ourselves into thinking is God."

Wagner and the Messenger both shared at the spiritual reference. The philosophical remark baffled the Prosecutor.

“That means yes,” Judge Minna informed the Prosecuting Attorney. “She will tell the truth about----“

“---What you did, when you were still alive?” the Prosecutor inquired of the witness, back on his game.

“Poet, Oriental Scholar, and Singer,” Judith replied without an ounce of regret, or false modesty.

“And who you were, to Herr Wagner?” the Prosecution pressed.

“His lover, for a magical time, in 1876,” Judith answered, accurately and fondly..

Wagner allowed himself to recall the memory of that time, the best parts of it anyway.

“While he was married to his second wife Cosmina,” Judge Minna pointed out. “Who he--“

“---Married legally!” Omilik asserted.

“With whom I had a mutual understanding, Minna,” Wagner informed the Judge.

“If you say so, Richard,” Judge Minna conceded dismissively with a roll of her swelled and no doubt vengeful head. “And did Cosmina know about the other woman in your life. Especially, hmmm...” she continued, finally unleashing her sharpest arrow into the inner ring of the Maestro’s bulls-eye. “the woman inside yourself?”

“Who I couldn’t let you meet, Minna,” Wagner somehow had the common sense and courage to say, after 160 years, “Because---“

“---You were embarrassed, and ashamed,” Judge Minna blasted back with triple fortissimo condescension and ridicule. “But, you should be thankful for me not blackmailing you for it.” She then picked up a pen, scribbling large font letters in a monarchly fashion on the scroll sitting on the middle of her bench. “Though I am adding it to the charges that God will punish you for doing. A crime that---“

“---Was a creative and biological necessity!” Wagner asserted to the Judge, and whatever jury was watching the proceedings. “I needed to wear that satin clothing. And that less than manly attire that could have gotten me arrested.” The cap to the volcano of Truth having been removed, or destroyed, the Maestro decided to let the lava flow, so it would not smother him, once again. “And yes, many of those dresses custom I ordered for myself, with Judith’s help, and confidentiality. So I could see and feel the world as a woman as well as a man. God help me!”

Omilik places his assuring hand on Wagner’s re-strengthened yet still shaking upright shoulders. assuring him that he did the right thing. “Great Spirit PRAISE you, for

acknowledging. That you were a person of spirits,” he said, converting that gesture into words. “A healer of the collective human soul who, like our own Male shamen. Who were required to live as woman for a time before they could become effective understanders and healers. And, as you assess modern history, great and/or unforgettable artists like Howard Stern, Marlin Brando, Frank Zappa and Steven Spielberg invoked cross dressing as part of their creative process.”

“But if history finds this out about me,” he said to Omilik, not caring if anyone else was listening. “And these proceedings get recorded for history.”

“The world will have more channelers of Humanity,” Judith said from the witness stand, in a rhythm which was far more poet Truth than plain-prose fact. “A Humanity that’s beyond gender, Spirit that is beyond religion, and Energy that transcends all barriers and limitations, and restrictions on expression of love.”

With that, Judith excused herself from the witness stand and kissed Wagner tenderly, as a man. Then patted him in the ass.

“Now pretend it means something,” French Poetess Judith said, in the manner of a male German Maestro. “Because it does,” she continued to Richard, with the most connected of looks. Just as Wagner was about to understand the dynamics of this now elevated posthumous connection between himself and Judith, she then turned to the Shield Maiden Walkurie Bailiff. “Right?”

“Like totally, yes,” the Bailiff said through ruby red lips that in a voice that both challenged the Ancient Truths and honored them. With that, the, visually anyway, female schlep Bailiff turned to each of the lawyers, and the Judge, as their Enlightened supervisor. “Right?” he asked each of them.

After careful consideration, and a clear understanding of the real power structure of the courtroom, the lawyers both agreed, as did the Judge. The Bailiff then sent them all out with a flick of his fingernail polished hands, then requested with a bow, for Judith to depart the courtroom. The Bailiff then looked to the ceiling, walls, and thick fog that had permeated the chamber from the first time Wagner catapulted into it. “All of you can go now too, with the thanks of the court, and the Truth is charged to maintain.”

Wagner noted, and felt, the fog in the courtroom vanish, beams of light of various colors in the wake of the departed ghosts, and principalities. Then music filled the clear air, from above. His music. Lohengrin.

“Played with more heart, intensity and intelligence than I ever heard it played in my lifetime. Or remember putting on the page,” the Maestro noted, and confessed.

“It’s the way of chanelers who are not supposed to know who or what they are, or, sometimes, not know what they are doing,” the Bailiff noted, while gazing in the mirror,

primping himself up to look more feminine. For a mirror that, when Wagner looked into it, showed no reflection at all for himself or the Bailiff.

“So,” the now clearly postmortem but clearly not dead Maestro said, preparing to say the obvious in words, something he hated in simplistic composer’s operas, and, he hoped anyway, he didn’t put into his own. “As it seems that you are behind all of this, what happens now?”

“ have a great degree of influence as to where you go next,” the Bailiff replied in a voice that sounded both male and female, somehow, and beyond both genders. “But...there is the matter of karma, law of cause and effect, and dharma, your Calling and...” The still externally female yet internally male Bailiff sized Wagner from head toe. “What you still can do in the service of Humanity, Animal kind, and...”

“---You? “ Wagner rudely, but by necessity of the moment, interjected.

“I’ll be in touch, on the inside anyway...and in the meantime...I’m not supposed to do this, but as one Promethian to another, your next lifetime assignment.” The still nameless Bailiff looked around, hiding from a bright, golden Light coming in from above. He snuck Wagner a folded piece of paper from the pocket of his skirt.

“A gifted, talented, and prolific writer/composer whose Works----“ Wagner read.

“---Won’t really be recognized till after death, Like Bach, Van Gogh, and a whole lot other others because she’s black-listed by gatekeepers who are...Jews, and others.”

“She? I’ll be a she?” Wagner gasped in shock, terror, then... gratitude

“Fringe benefit and tool I sort of snuck into the arrangement, which starts,” the Bailiff said, looking at his watch. “In three more measures.”

The music continued, Wagner hummed, then sang to it, then dissolved into the light, with a higher register voice. Profound Silence then filled the room, as Posterity awaited its next set of Enlightened discoveries, and accidental Promethian accomplishments.