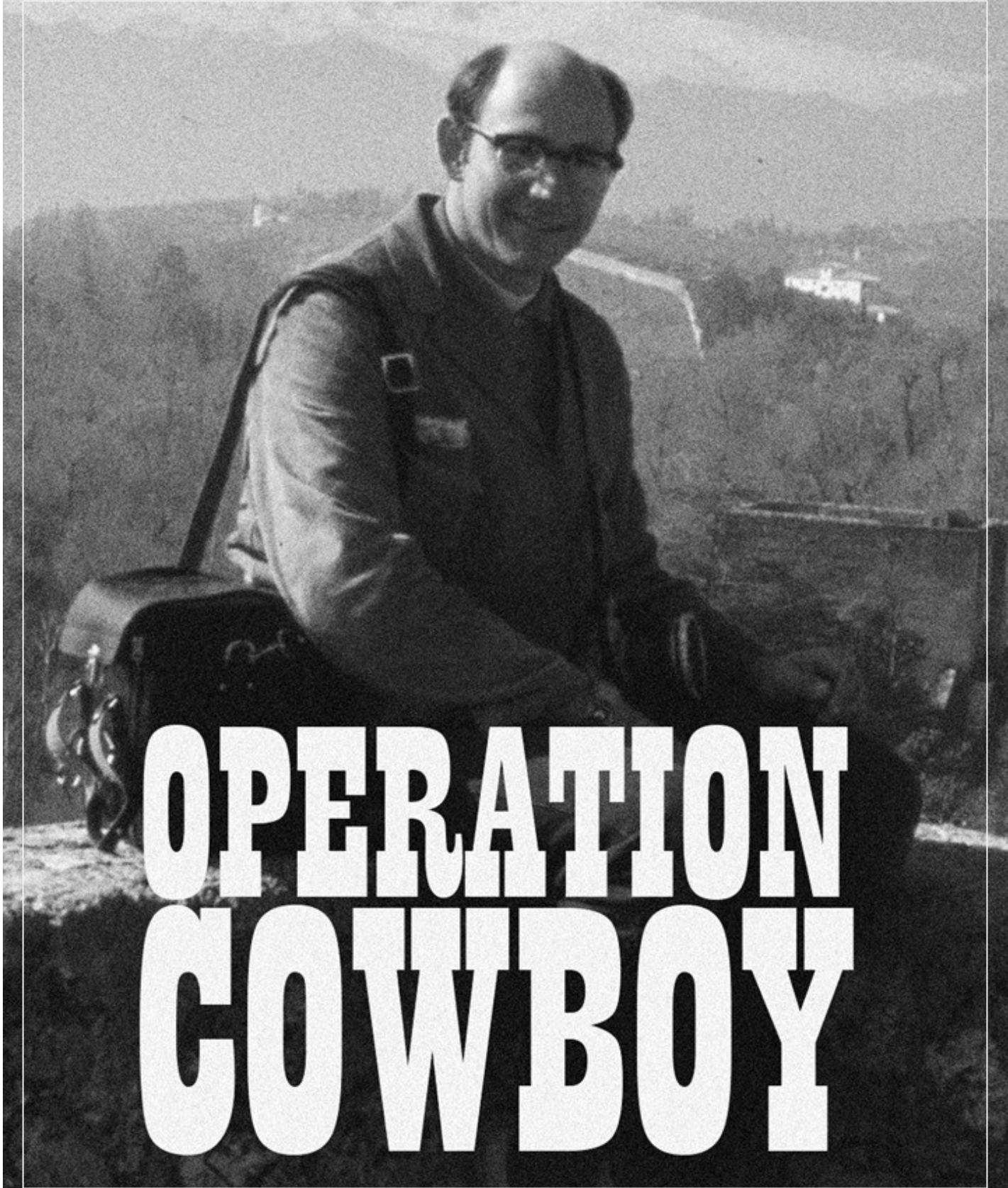


- EDWARD F. BERGER -



**OPERATION
COWBOY**

**Books by Edward F Berger, Ed.D.
(aka C Descry)**

Many titles are available as **free** PDF downloads at
www.millennialbooks.com.

The Spirit of the Sycamore

The Spirits in the Ruins

The Spirit of the Estuary

Ravens Chance

Cut Off: When Illusions Survive

Crow Canyon: Pioneering Education and Archaeology
on the Southwestern Colorado Frontier. Second edition

Crow Canyon: The Early Years

Insights Into the Ancient Ones

Edited by Edward F. And Joanne H. Berger

Unscrewed: The Education of Annie

Vital Lies: The Irrelevance of Our Schools in the Information Age

Transcending: The Life of a 20th-Century Man

Human Competence

Human Competence: Imperatives

Operation Cowboy including:

The Daughters of Onoto

The Brothers Shikoku

The Fallout Solution

The Spy Who Never Would

Copyright © 2023 Edward F Berger
All Rights Reserved.

Berger, Dr. Edward F. 1939—

Operation Cowboy

1. Education—2. Adventure—3. Thriller—4. Travel—5. Commentary—
6. Action Adventure—7. History

PREFACE

"Please believe me. I am not a spy. I'm not connected in any way with any governmental organization. I am a teacher on sabbatical leave traveling the world studying the way different nations educate their children. I have learned things I never imagined. I have been used by governments and forces competing on levels I cannot fully fathom."

In 1969, 54 years prior to this publication, a young man of 30 years set out on a quest for knowledge. His idealism energized him and he believed that if one studied the educational programs provided for the youth of each Nation, he could predict the future of nations.

In the fall of 1970, he returned to the USA after visiting and analyzing schools in 22 nations from the Far East to Europe. He had traveled to fill in the gaps in his head about governments, cultures, learning, and effective teaching. He sought knowledge to better prepare himself for the educational research program he was building in southwestern Colorado near Mesa Verde

After a year of constant stimulation and adventures he realized that it would take time before he could accurately analyze, internalize, and implement the information he had gathered. He organized his letters which journaled his adventure, and created field programs for students where he could apply and test what he had come to believe.

PROLOGUE

The trip to CIA, Langley, took three hours, two more than usual. Eighteen inches of freezing slush ground to the color of last year's garbage tied-up traffic crawling along the beltway. The car's tires groaned against ice buildups in the wheel wells. Dan Hill pulled over, climbed out into the fog and sleet and kicked the black icebergs into the street. Back in, his glasses fogged. Holding them over the defroster vent, he almost tail-ended a bread truck. It was that kind of February morning. A Monday. What could be worse?

As he turned onto the down ramp and entered the parking garage he tried to brake. The car slid. The bundled security guard jumped out of the way. Hugging himself and stamping his feet to keep warm, the angry gatekeeper waved him through without checking his credentials.

"I'm a terrorist! You just let in a car full of explosives."

He can't hear me with the windows up.

Condensing air and exhaust fumes almost obscured the barrier in front of his parking section. A sign drifted in the vapors:

AREA CLOSED.
PARK NEXT TO
MAINTENANCE BLDG 3

Dan swung the rusting Corvair around, found the EXIT signs, and followed them. Leaning over the steering wheel he tried to wipe a peephole with the cuff of his overcoat. As he passed the security station a chunk of

filthy ice let go. The security guard jumped back as an avalanche of slush sprayed his feet. Dan floored the pedal.

He has orders to shoot anyone who runs the barrier. He won't shoot, the weather's too nasty.

He made a one-eighty around the secured parking area gunning the little convertible toward Maintenance. As the engine revved, hot air forced from the rear engine compartment defrosted a wider area of the windshield. Peering through, he saw the flashing blue light of a snowplow windrowing slush into two-foot-high ridges, effectively sealing parked cars in place.

Good thing I'm late. I'd have been trapped in the parking area. The damned union wants time-and-a-half for clearing snow before or after their eight-to-four workdays.

Dan parked near the maintenance building. Briefcase in hand, he entered the lobby and passed through the first guard station. He clamped one limp wet glove firmly in his teeth and drew his overcoat over his left arm. His furry hat glistened with droplets. His picture badge was buried in his coat. Even with his face obscured by hat, scarf, and fogged glasses, security waved him through. In the foyer mirror, he saw the reflection of the thing passing. It bore no resemblance to himself.

Some security system, you dumb bastards. The headlines will read: The mad bomber from hell, Dan Hill, second-rate analyst, sailed into one of the most secure buildings in the western world as if it were a shopping mall.

Down the hall by the elevators the backup security officer was busy. *Filling out forms? No, the dumb ass is doing a crossword puzzle!*

He got the nod.

Dan stepped into the elevator; his feet squishing in his wet shoes. Holding his briefcase tightly to his chest he pretended it contained top security files he was returning after a night at the Russian Embassy. He played the game each time he entered the CIA stronghold.

Enemy agent Hill, here. My car's filled with explosives and I'm just about to demolish the CIA's safe place.

“It's a damn good thing we terrorists only work in good weather!”

BOOK I
THE DAUGHTERS
OF ONOTO

Chapter ONE

The coffee was hot. Searching for cream and sugar, Dan Hill remembered the General Services Administration memo. "There will no longer be free cream and sugar for Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) employees." Mug in hand he made his way to his small office.

Gloria should bring my coffee as soon as I step through the door. Damn Woman's Rights Movement. Now, getting coffee is demeaning. So, is my dignity enhanced because I get my own?

The red ink memo on his desk was hand written. The Deputy Director of Operations (DDO), affectionately known as Y, ordered him to report immediately.

Why for Christ's sake?

"Why?" was the question being asked by dozens of CIA staffers when they learned Hill had been called before Number Two. Why Dan Hill, a no account nothing of an analyst? Rumor had it he was getting the axe.

"He's such a dud," a knowing commentator summarized.

"See me immediately!" Y's memo commanded.

Security was tight within the old building. He had his ID checked two times before he was admitted to the fifth-floor office. No one patted him down.

Got a .44 magnum tucked in my pants. Infiltrated the joint to take out Number Two.

Y stared at him for a full minute without speaking. Only his facial expression changed. Y was able to contort his face into a puzzled Chihuahua sort of glower.

Maybe he knows what he's communicating with that look. I sure as hell don't.

He stood anxiously waiting for the gist of the meeting.

I haven't done anything for two years, there's no reason to fire me ... or is there? Do they know about my affair with Gloria?

"You goddamn well better believe you were right!" Y pounced. "They do know! What I want to know is how you knew. How did you know?"

"Sir?"

This isn't about Gloria.

"How the hell did you know they knew...knew all about them ... all of them?"

"Are you talking about my old reports on operative exposure?"

The DDO nodded, shrugging his shoulders. "What the hell else?"

Knowing you bastards, it could be anything. "I knew they knew because I figured-out how they learned about our Intelligence Agents."

"You better believe they know about us! They have a file this thick." He held his soft, pudgy-white hands two feet apart. "Every operative we have is exposed!" He paused and put the dog-like look on his face again.

"Do you know what that means? We can't operate. What if the Press finds out? What if the President learns of this?" He clasped his hands, fat fingers barely meshing. "I'll tell you this, Hill. This country is finished! We're through. We're supposed to gather intelligence, not provide it. Our entire Intelligence operation is the major source of their intelligence. How could it happen? Help me find the bastards that turned us. I'll see you jump five grades. We'll hang the bastards ... no, hanging's too good for them.

We'll set them asshole-down on sharpened posts like the Mongols did. You give me their names and they're dead - the hard way!"

"Uh, Sir, I don't think you really want to do that,"

"And why the hell not, you bastard! And don't tell me you're soft on those commie sons-of-bitches."

"Because we did it to ourselves. The whole service. Our way of operating. They know about our agents as soon as we do. They have the profiles we use to recruit."

"Don't tell me that! I don't want to hear that! What?"

"Y, it's very simple. We recruit agents according to certain qualifications, a profile. All the other sides have to do is keep track of the ivy leaguers, academy boys, and military personnel who fit the profile. When the select are sent to special schools and run through our training programs, they tag them. When they're employed by the agency, they disappear. Then they reappear in our embassies or as international business leaders or press. Those who disappear completely - you know, deep-cover - are the most obvious."

"Oh shit! I told you not to tell me. Are you sure?"

"I'm certain! I saw the pattern - the profile - when I was updating agent files."

You've known it for years, but never had the guts to confront it. Shit. It's time I tell him. He's going to fire me anyway.

"This knowledge has been burning a hole in my gut for years, Y. You know this service is elitist. We only recruit from our own. You can't be a CIA operative unless you went to the right schools. To spy, you must be all-American, and that means you must come from America's privileged class.

Intelligence operations are dependent upon the elite! Obviously, some kid who went to Nebraska U isn't capable of serving. But a Yale or a Princeton man? Now do you see how we are compromised?"

"Oh get the hell off of it! How is some fat-assed cowboy from the plains of Wyoming, who never heard a foreign language or traveled in anything but a pick-up truck, going to meld into a foreign society? We don't have a choice. We have to recruit our agents from the upper class - bullshit-goddamn it! Now you've got me doing it. America doesn't have an elite. We don't have a privileged class ... and that's final!" Pointing a fat finger, shaking his head from side to side, he concluded, "We have a profile for agents because only educated people who have opportunities can do the job!"

"Yes, Sir."

"So what the hell are you proposing."

"Nothing Sir ... except..."

Now I'm screwed!

"Except? This had better be damned good. We need agents the other side can't make."

"Sir, consider changing the agent profile. We must field operatives the opposition can't make. That means recruiting a different type of agent - guys no one would suspect are CIA."

"So now you're telling me we need a Wyoming cowboy doing deep cover work in Romania? He can't speak the language, doesn't keep both hands on the table while eating, and doesn't know shit about the culture. What possible good could a klutz do for us?"

"Y ... I mean, why Sir, the Cowboy, as you call him, will succeed precisely because he doesn't fit the World War II OSS image. Instead of the 'most likely,' we take the 'least likely to be a spy' profile. We create agents who can't possibly be CIA. We don't use them the way agents are presently used. We develop a base network to connect with our intelligence sources. Sources who do know the cultures, languages, and ways, because they are Romanian, Russian or whomever."

Don't you read, dogface? Obviously, you didn't read my whole report. I've already answered your question!

"You bastard! Californicos are always way-out thinkers. Berkeley does something to your minds ... where's that goddamn girl with my coffee ... oh shit! I forgot. You want coffee, I gotta go into the work room and get it. The custodians have to make it, but they won't serve it. What the hell, keep talking, some of what you say rings true."

"Right now, our agents meet with their sources to get information or the info is passed via some drop. All the Russkies have to do is watch our guys. We hand it to the enemy on a platter. All our sources know our cover is blown. They won't pass info because the trail leads right back to them. We don't get what we need. Oh ... and Sir, it's not just us. The British, French, and Germans recruit the way we do. Everyone knows their agents. Only the Mossad are unknown. That's why Israeli intelligence is so effective. Sir, you know for a fact most of our good stuff comes via Israeli contacts."

"I think you're full of shit. But I'll tell you what. I'm going to think about your proposal. If I like, I'm going up top with it. And, if the Director can forget Texas oil and politics for a few minutes I'll drop this whole thing

in his lap. I'll tell you", he paused, the angry look fixed on his face, "you better be ready with a detailed plan. If you Californicate this, you smart-assed SOB, you're FBI meat ... if they'll even take you back again."

Sure, you'll cover your ass and put mine in the pan. When will I learn to leave things alone?

"Sir, I'll need clearance. I need the green light through the FedSysts. I'll need a budget."

"The hell you say!" Y picked up the green phone on his desk. "Roger? Well, where the fuck is he? It snows every winter. Who's in charge? Who are you? Listen Aston, you get your ass in here. I need things done. Now!" He placed the green phone back on its base as he picked at his nose with a large index finger. "It's done! You got no excuses. By tomorrow you'll get what you need. Now work!"

An angry Dan Hill hunched his shoulders, elbows to his sides, and walked past the staring reception secretaries. He had weight on his back. He didn't like how it felt.

Five years. Five fucking years I've been writing reports about agent security that no one reads. Now, they read one! Now, because that son-of-a-bitch DDO got caught by the NIA.

The elevator made a miserable squealing sound as it lowered him to his floor. It stopped, jerked, jumped a little. The doors opened. He stepped up four inches to get out. Behind him, the elevator tried to shut its doors. Failing to get the needed contact, it opened them and tried again, then again. As he went toward his office, he could hear the poor thing trying repeatedly to shut up and move on.

Damn thing kind of reminds me of my wife Sally.

His secretary, Gloria Nixon, wasn't at her desk. In his cubicle, his desk was bare except for a pile of books and a small box containing the contents of his desk drawers. Everything had been packed and ready for two weeks. His telephone sat on a rumpled D.C. phone book and a red, Phone Code manual. The Director ordered the whole building to be packed and ready to move to the new building by February 1. Everything else had been stripped from the office and awaited shipment to the new building. In fact, the whole building was ready to move. The second-floor staff committee protested.

It was February 10th. Word came up through the grapevine that the new building would be ready for occupancy in June. Dan shrugged.

Yessir boss! We stand packed and ready until then. Disgust-resignation. That's the standard emotion of us government employees. Who needs terrorists?

Gloria appeared in the doorway radiating that special energy he knew so well.

"Good morning Danny. Look!"

For God's sake. She's excited because she found a roll of scotch tape in the supply room?

"It hadn't been packed yet and I got a roll before they got it. I might find yellow legal pads. I know how much you like them."

For two weeks it had been impossible to get supplies. Her typewriter, taken for its yearly cleaning and repair, had been sent ahead to an office that didn't exist. Gloria couldn't work if he wanted her to. The move

rendered the CIA inoperative, something foreign nations, the FBI, and Congressional enemies had been trying to do for years.

"Gloria, can you find me a copy of that agent security analysis we updated two years ago last October? Now, Y agrees our operatives are known. He wants me to develop a detailed plan that will allow the CIA to build a force of unknown operatives. I'm in trouble."

She moved with long-legged grace and an intentional sway of her hips. She twitched at him, because she was confused. They were good together—nothing serious—but good! She couldn't fathom why he stopped asking to be with her. He still liked her, was attracted to her, she knew. A woman always knows. That nonsense about not being able to stay with Sally if he kept seeing her, was crazy. What did it mean?

Something is wrong and it isn't something I did. He'll come around.

He sat waiting for her to find the report in the maze of file cabinets jammed into the foyer. At least they didn't move that stuff to storage yet.

Gad, she looks good! Something is different about her. He sat back, eyes wide in disbelief. She has a cleavage! She has boobs!

He replayed the vision of her bursting into the office. He leaned way back in the chair. He had eighty per cent or better photographic recall. He recalled the night he first opened the front of her dress and found those proud little mouthfuls, small but mighty. He focused on the still-warm image of her.

A cleavage! What happened? Silicone implants? Has she? Is she?

Gloria came back, the report held tightly in front of her bosom. He couldn't see a damned thing.

As she handed him the thin, blue-lined report marked CONFIDENTIAL, he confirmed that mounds of soft flesh came together to form an unequivocal cleft neatly framed by the cut of her dress. He stared at her chest, licked his lips unconsciously, and imagined pulling back the fabric to study the swollen orbs.

"Is this the report you wanted?" She attempted to be officious. His eyes were fixed on her. His energy penetrated her with the warmth and tingle she was accustomed to - even on a horribly cold and snowy Monday morning in February.

"Er ... yes, that's the one." He reached for it, but she dropped it on his desk.

"Gloria, you look damned good! What have you done?"

"Thank you, Howard Hughes!" She took a step back and posed with her chest stuck out, elbows back. "Friday I was flat-chested. Today I have a cleavage. Want to see?"

Blood pounded up the back of his neck. He blushed. Pressures increased elsewhere.

She unbuttoned her blouse slowly, just far enough to pull the soft cloth to the side and over the mound of her left breast. There, in the frilly see-through lace of her bra sat the mound, a hard, rosy nipple erupting from snowy whiteness. He gasped. His face got pinker. Tiny beads of moisture appeared on his forehead. She held the cloth back just far enough to expose the lacy mist over her breast's aureole. Then, foolishly, she pulled the fabric back further to reveal a convex insert that forced her flesh up and out.

So that's why you thanked Howard Hughes!

"That's an uplift bra?"

"I should never have shown you." She turned her back, refastened her blouse. "Danny, do you like it?"

"Jesus, Gloria! Gad!" The pulsing wouldn't subside. "You are one hell of a woman!"

"I remember when you used to think so and did something about it."

She turned abruptly and left the office. Back in her territory, she cursed herself for showing him the uplift device.

Recovering from Gloria's revelation, he turned his thoughts to the report she had delivered. He had written the same stuff into every analysis ... same old shit, final version. He perceived the fact that someone on the third floor had actually read the report and sent the summary on to the DDO, as his misfortune. Damn. His endless hours of imagined terrorist scenarios were over. No more hiding. Now, he had to come up with a way to get real-world operatives into the field, that the vodka-swillers in Moscow couldn't make.

This is real deal now. For too long I put in time and let longevity push me up the G-ladder. I've got a chance now. Hah! I might actually be able to change the way we select and train operatives. I could make a contribution after all!

Dan stepped out of the office. "Gloria, honey," he announced, "I'm thinking about not telling Sally about this promotion. Our relationship is obligation now. She doesn't care what I do unless it endangers her security."

Gloria sat up and shook her head. "Danny, when are you going to tell her you're through? We've had this same conversation before."

He remembered Sally when they were kids - high school sweethearts. She'd been a small package of dynamite. "Pert," everybody said. She just quit trying when her body turned against her same as her mother and all her aunts. I became her security, nothing more, not lover, friend, or companion. I have to be there for her.

"I owe her, Gloria, she worked without complaining to pay my way through Berkeley. She nurtured me when I was still a man-boy. I gave little back. Gloria, Sally's given up, died back to a homebody. Outwardly, she's a gregarious Italian mama, like her mother. Behind the jovial façade there are no hopes, no dreams, just sagging flesh."

Gloria nodded. "So what are you going to do about it?"

"I'd like to get a divorce and marry you, but I can't. I'm obligated. If I dump her, I won't retain what little self-respect I have left. I'm barely keeping up the façade now, as you keep reminding me. She's done nothing. She doesn't deserve what happened. Besides, the Agency frowns on divorce. Fuckin' service!" he complained through clenched teeth. "A man can't rise to the top unless his wife meets the agency's qualifications. Sally isn't the wife I need if I go for section chief or even deputy director. You would be that kind of wife. Those jobs are political."

"And what about me? How can I retain my self-respect committing adultery? I need a decision soon. I can't waste my life on a man who runs from his potential and uses his wife as an excuse."

Gloria lounged at her station. She served as secretary for three offices in his section. Aston Martin was leaning over her and he too was obviously studying her amazing cleavage. Dan watched her through his open door.

I wonder if she ever gets it on with Aston, or Howard? Stop! Stop thinking of her. Stop feeling guilty.

A Vet came by with his *Washington Post*. Hill opened the paper to the sports page as he always did, but couldn't focus on the small print. He didn't have the energy to glean the facts from the columns of crap the sports writers generated.

He started at the beginning of the paper. Licking his index finger, he turned the pages. TEENAGER GETS TEN FOR ONE, screamed the headline. He read the copy about a kid caught with one ounce of marijuana. The judge ordered him put away for ten years without parole as an example to others. MURDERER-RAPIST WILL BE RELEASED AFTER SERVING FOUR, raged another headline. He read about the release of the convicted murderer for good behavior after serving a fifth of a twenty-year sentence. WHITE COLLAR SWINDLER AVOIDS PROSECUTION. He slapped the paper shut and sent it fluttering into the wastebasket. "Why the hell am I defending this society? Fuck-it, it's lunchtime." Then he remembered the cafeteria was closed due to the move.

Shit, maybe I can bum some doughnuts somewhere.

Gloria was making curlicues with his pubic hair. She lay, head on his stomach, purring. He couldn't tell if her eyes were closed. Things worked-out, as usual. Fuck guilt! Good thing I accidentally parked in that dumb fire zone by maintenance. The bastards towed my car. Oh well, at least I didn't get bulldozed-in by snow. My little Corvair is probably being offered to

Ralph Nader for dissection. Shit! It will cost forty bucks to get it back. I wouldn't have made it home, anyway.

She moved slightly, pushing closer so his hand could reach her.

Why does she think she needs a cleavage? What a woman!

He felt renewed energy and a confidence that surprised him.

I knew, deep down, that someday, somehow, a new opportunity would arise. I've got to take this chance. I can solve their problem.

Chapter TWO

Dan perfected his plan to identify secret operatives. Y insisted the operation be code-named Operation Cowboy. "All I need are men who don't fit the profile, men that no one can make. I'll call them Cowboys."

The Director (DCI) gave him an order in the form of a suggestion. "Danny Boy, why not go to Passport and find marks who fit your profile?"

Dan flew to San Francisco, and hit a wall. The Passport Division's officious bureaucrat would not recognize the CIA. The man produced a list of approved Federal Agencies for whom he could provide data. The Central Intelligence Agency wasn't on the list. He informed Dan it would take an act of Congress or a Presidential order before he could let him or "... any fucking foreign spy outfit peruse my files." What it finally took was a note from Big Oil George. The two toughs out of the San Francisco pool who delivered it, helped.

Gotcha, you dumb bureaucratic SOBs!

Dan sat by the San Francisco Bay in a room without windows going through thousands of passport applications. He was amazed the Passport

Office couldn't pre-screen applications by sex, age, or marital status. It took him sixteen hours to sort out five passport applications from young, single males. The five forms lay on the table. Of the five, only one fit the profile he had in mind. David Dean, who lived in Denver, Colorado.

He held the application photo so it caught the light.

The man wears a toupee. It isn't the worst I've seen, but it is obvious. The guy is twenty-nine years old, a high school teacher from Colorado, single, and ready to travel.

Under optional information, "You may leave this section blank if you wish," he read the reason for the application: "Sabbatical year travel in Asia, the Middle-East, and Europe."

Clutching the application, he returned the others knowing this was his best chance to recruit a mark for Operation Cowboy.

He better be the one or I'm really gonna be in trouble. What would make a young guy's hair fall out? Fallout! What a great code name. Heredity? Sure. No operative under forty-five is bald. That's great. The guy can change his appearance with a toupee and he won't fit the age profile.

Denver's Stapleton Airport had to be well anchored because the cold north wind did everything in its power to blow it south. Dan felt the plane land on one downwind wheel and then run-out way too long before the wind let the other touch ground. Instead of taxiing straight down the runway, the plane crabbed toward the concourse at a forty-five-degree angle.

Gloria had made the arrangements. Hertz knew he'd been on the flight from SFO. The car was ready. What he didn't know, and the nice lady at the counter tried to explain, was that they would not accept government credit cards.

"It's something about the Government not paying when they should," she grouched.

The bus is better anyway. What enemy agent would lower himself by riding a city bus?

He turned and looked back at the cars following his bus. There were several suspicious ones, a blue one in particular. He watched until the bus pulled in under the awning of the Brown Palace Hotel. The blue car double-parked at the far end of the block.

You're good, Danny-me-boy.

He climbed down and let an older Bellhop take his bag. Once inside he tipped the man and made the excuse that he was waiting for someone. The guy took the tip and looked at him with a very practiced, sad, long face. He ignored the man and slipped through the lobby and into the bar. His suitcase hooked the burgundy velvet curtain at the entrance and he pulled the heavy fabric into the tavern with him, letting more daylight into the place than had shown there in fifty years. Conversations stopped. People shielded their faces and put their drinks down. He made his way through the Ship's Tavern and out the side door. If anyone followed, he wasn't aware of them.

That was really stupid, Dan Hill! How could I be such a klutz? Get that taxi and get out of here!

He stopped the taxi at a small motel on South Colorado Boulevard and got out, searching the street for the blue car.

Good job ditching that tail.

He made his way into the motel office. Assigned a room, he sat on the bed trying to ignore the musty-humid stench.

The Denver office used by the Agency was located in a brick building on Capitol Hill. The old sandstone mansion had a Museum Offices placard near the front door. They gave him a tiny office, once part of a gracious hallway.

Dan had requested a soft-spoken secretary who would make first contact with the potential Cowboy operative. The woman facing him behind the desk was neither soft nor sweet. She was an uptight, bureaucratic character right out of the Victorian Era.

He told Miss Priss to call the passport applicant at his home after work. "Inform him there are some routine questions about his application and set-up a meeting." She huffed off. One hour later, she appeared to inform Dan that there was no answer at that number.

"Keep trying every half hour after he gets home from work. You'll get him."

A file arrived early the next morning from Langley. A note from Y was clipped to the mark's tax records: "Guess what I found!"

He laughed. The FBI and CIA could justify anything they did - so they did whatever they wanted.

I wonder how the CIA built a file on a US Citizen. We aren't supposed to spy at home.

By noon, just as he was leaving for lunch, a packet arrived from an Office of Strategic Services retiree who worked in the same school district as the mark. The packet contained everything but the umbilical cord of the private citizen. There was even a comment disapproving a liaison the teacher had with another teacher believed to be "too loose." Attached to the packet a hand-written note informed him that a more comprehensive dossier would take a day or so to complete.

By late afternoon, bitchy Miss Fairfax marched in and announced that the line was still unanswered. "Are you certain you have given me the correct number, young man?"

"The number is correct. He teaches all day."

Out she marched.

She doesn't have room for another cob!

The dossier arrived. The depth of information it contained stunned him. He scanned the documents and summarized: At nine, David had lost his mother. A Gold County social worker's note read:

"I'm concerned that the boy in question has not shown the proper amount of grief at the loss of his mother."

Down the page:

"The mother, Daniella Dean, had been separated from her family for over six months. The boy in question doesn't know why his mother left him. He complains of being abandoned by her. Obviously, he's very immature and doesn't have the capacity to understand that she left him because she never wanted him in the first place."

Another note read:

"Mrs. Dean was found dead in a gully on the west side of town. The Sheriff ruled the death a suicide."

Geez, what kind of heartless people are these? Maybe this guy is too screwed up to do what I need? But that may be an asset.

There were more notes from the social worker, but a manila envelope containing newspaper clippings and other documents caught Dan's attention. He laid the papers out and studied them. Someone glued a clipping from the February 10, 1949 edition of the *Gold Times*, in the center of a piece of typewriter paper:

"Daniel Dean and his son David were found to be mentally unstable. Judge Louis Apagai sentenced them to the State Hospital in Pueblo for treatment. The local Pharmacist charged that his wife was having an affair with Sheriff Joe Apagai. He is convinced his wife was murdered by the Sheriff and that everyone is involved in the cover-up. Judge Apagai found the accusations unsupportable."

In the stack of articles, Hill found parts of newspaper clippings stapled under a handwritten note: March 11, 1951. "Both Deans have now been released from the State Mental Hospital by order of Judge Clark."

Someone attached an autopsy document, and more clippings from the *Gold Times*, with one paragraph highlighted: "Mrs. Dean was three months pregnant at the time of her death, but there is no way to prove who the father was."

Dan searched for a record of what happened to young David. He found the information in the social worker's notes:

"I, having determined that the boy in question needs psychological treatment and custodial care, do recommend to the Court that he be remanded to the State Mental Hospital until such time as he can deal with his abandonment issues and inability to accept the facts in this case. His delusions that his mother did not leave him and was murdered by our respected Sheriff, demonstrate that he needs corrective treatment.

As a matter of record,

As of this date, March 10, 1949.

ss Maggie Apagai Bent, Director of Social Services.

Gold County, Colorado

Stamped in red ink across the top:

BY ORDER OF THE COUNTY COURT

In another stack of papers, he found a release order dated June 1, 1951, from the State Mental Hospital: "Following intensive counseling and electrical intervention it was determined that the subject is able to deal with the facts in his case and will go on to lead a healthy and productive life. He was released to the custody of his father who was released almost a year ago by Judge Clark."

So, David Dean, was released to the custody of his father when he was 12. There's no information about the date his father was released. Maybe they brainwashed them? I wonder if he remembers? I wonder how much of his past they wiped out? What about his father? What did he end up doing?

Also interesting, were reports from the guy's R.O.T.C. instructors. They liked him, but went to great length to state that he was unable to conform to the " ... highest standards of the Reserve Officers Training Corps." The reports went on to give specific examples of the cadet's lack of respect for traditions and standards.

This cowboy turned into a rebel who knows how to take care of himself. They screwed his mind, but he might use that to his advantage. I'll know more when I meet him.

Miss Priss was at the door when he looked-up.

"Did you get him yesterday?"

"No Sir. No one answers the phone."

"He's a teacher. He should get home about 4:30."

"Maybe I should call him at work, Sir."

"No. I don't want him contacted at work."

"Well Sir...ah...may I suggest that you have someone call after hours?"

"I told you to call!"

"Of course, that's impossible young man. My hours are eight to twelve and one to four."

Chapter THREE

That evening at five-thirty, the mark answered the phone.

"Hi. Mister Dean?" Dan asked in his most practiced, good-old-buddy voice.

"My name is Dan Hill. I work for the Passport Office. Are you the Mister David Dean who applied recently?"

"Yessir I am."

"Mister Dean, there's no problem with your application, but I do need to talk with you. I know you work weekdays. Can you be at the Museum Office Building, Fourteenth and Sherman Street, Saturday morning at 9:00? I work half a day, so it will have to be in the morning."

"Is there a problem? Will I get my passport?"

"Of course. We just need to meet and go over a few details. On second thought, why not meet for coffee? Someplace closer to your side of town? I see from your application you live South of Denver. Would you mind meeting at the White Spot - the one between the Cooper Theater and the Drumstick Restaurant?" He was getting to know the strip on South Colorado Boulevard near his motel pretty well.

"I'll be there. Do I need to bring anything?"

"Naw, just yourself."

Before the meet, Dan had to make certain he wasn't followed. He had to be damned sure no connection between Dean and himself was made. People had been following him for years ... since his FBI days. He lived with a tail so long he'd feel naked if someone wasn't shadowing him. Once, he attended the funeral of a KGB agent who died of a heart attack while following him on a jogging trail. He tried to get the agent's heart started again, but the bastard was dead before he hit the ground.

He wasn't naive enough to believe they hadn't made him again. Obviously, the Museum Office cover for the Agency's Denver operations was known to every clandestine operator.

It would be stupid to believe they didn't make me the minute I walked down the sidewalk and turned into the building. It would be a

grave error not to believe they know who I am, what I do for the Agency, and everything I've ever written. They probably know more about me than the third-no action calling floor clowns.

Since the jogging death of the KGB guy, he'd been tracked by more than one agent. He couldn't get a make on the new guys. The one time he tried - he cut into a doorway, turned, and took a photo of the people on the street behind him - the only guy he could make turned out to be an FBI operative covering him for some reason known only to the paranoid and powerful.

It's amazing how much time and money our own people and the enemy spend watching me, their going-nowhere agent. Only now, I'm about to do something important and I've got to do it alone.

His ditch-them plan was not too complicated, not book. He ate lunch at a small place on Colfax Street and then dawdled his way back to the office. He made a tail, but was unable to identify him or get his mode of operation. He walked past the car assigned to him. It sat at the curb, untouched. Its white and blue government plates made it immune from parking tickets. He had asked Control for an unmarked car that would blend-in and help him maintain cover.

"Yessir!" the agent snapped, "I understand. We have just the car for you. It will be parked in front of the office within one hour. Is there anything else we can help you with?"

He hid in the foyer of the old sandstone, peering out the window when the car was delivered. If it were flagged, painted school bus yellow, with "Follow me" stenciled on the trunk, it couldn't have been more obvious. Even before he saw the white and blue plates, the light

government-gray color, and the For Official Use Only on the doors, he knew that a Studebaker Lark was not the car to drive if one wanted to blend-in.

Just before 2:00, he emptied the papers from a beat-up, borrowed briefcase into a brown paper Safeway sack. Taking the case, he went to the waiting room - once a fine parlor. On the coffee table in front of a worn couch the Agency placed several museum publications and old issues of antique and collector magazines. Beside them, yesterday's *Denver Post* lay untouched. He picked-up the *Post* and several of the museum publications and stuffed them into the briefcase. As he did, he birthed a clever thought.

They know my position. If I don't put something in here that looks clandestine, they'll think I faked this.

In a wastebasket in the first empty office he passed he found agency inter-office communications. He stuffed several documents requesting updated financial data on building maintenance into the case.

That will confuse them.

Dan Hill went back into his office for one last look around. He stuffed the brown grocery sack into the large desk drawer, donned his coat and hat, and locked the door as he left.

On the third step, he faked his fall. He acted as if his ankle twisted or his heel caught. With unpracticed skill, he fell headlong on the sidewalk. As he fell, he carefully aimed and threw the briefcase. It landed on the grass at the side of the street exactly where he hoped it would. He rolled-over quickly and brought his knees up to his chest. Both hands held his left ankle, a look of shock and pain contorted his face. Slowly, he got up, acted dazed, and shook his head as if to clear it. He tried to put weight on his left foot and grimaced in pain letting a loud "Aaugh!" escape his lips. He

hobbled back up the steps, fumbled out his key and got back in the building. Before entering, he steadied himself, wiped his brow, then hunched over as if sick or in shock. Once inside, he brushed himself off and peered-out through the lace curtain covering the window.

To a secret agent a briefcase is more valuable than mind-warping drugs. It wasn't long before a large man with a lumpy red scar on his upper nose got out of a dirty-beige 1965 Chevy van parked halfway down the block. The man's scar reminded Dan of a Muscovy Duck's waddle. The operative was clever. He seemed preoccupied with a city map as he walked toward the corner, then quickly bent down and scooped up the prize.

As soon as the briefcase was safely in his hand the agent crossed the street and made his way back to the van. Long before he got there Dan was out the back door and down the alley to 13th Avenue. He walked north, crossed Colfax, and stopped between two buildings. No one followed him. He took a taxi to the Brown Palace Hotel. The old busboy gave him a queer look.

Damn, I didn't draw enough cash to go under cover. I need money. I can't use a government credit card. They can trace me by charge receipts. All it takes is someone going through accounting office trash - probably in Omaha or Pasadena, where security means nothing more than a good retirement program.

The snot at the registration desk took his last twenty, assigned his room, and sneered at the registration form. At the elevator, he stopped, turned quickly, and made the whole lobby. No one was there that didn't work in the place.

Gloria missed him. So did Sally. His secretary was concerned about his safety, his wife about a clogged sink. Gloria had Western Union do what the Agency couldn't without blowing his cover. A man in a yellow and black checkered hat knocked on his door. He signed for two hundred dollars.

Dan arrived at the White Spot fifteen minutes early and held a booth. When he saw Dean, he stood and pointed.

He's on time. Six foot, one and a half inches, about 200 pounds ... looks healthy, like a Colorado country-grown should. His flat cap is like the ones the kids used to wear in the old movies. Interesting, he doffed it as he entered the building. He's holding it curled in his big hands.

"I'm Dan Hill—Federal Employee—here to serve you and the Country on this fine Saturday morning," he announced with a friendly smile and a handshake across the table.

"Hi Dan. What's this all about?"

"Dean, do you mind if we order first? I've been up for hours. I'm starved."

The waitress, whose blouse said her name was White Spot Sally Jean, was plump, fortyish; frumpy. Her smile was that of a young idealistic girl, her voice sweet and sexy. Something about her reminded him of Sally. He was bummed for a minute, caught himself, and ordered three eggs, hash browns, and coffee.

"I'm sorry sir," Sally Jean said. "Our special comes with two eggs. If you want a third, I'll have to charge you *a la carton*."

"Decisions, decisions, decisions. Two then, easy over."

"Same here," Dean said throwing his hands up, fingers spread, palms up.

"You ever in the service?" Dan asked knowing Dean was sensitive about not serving in Vietnam. It was part of his plan of attack. He'd put Dean on the defensive and then make his move.

"No, I was exempt as a teacher. Now I'm too old."

"Have any friends that served?" Dan knew Dean lost two friends - one in a flight training accident in Florida and one shot down in Nam.

"Yeah, but the two best ones were wasted. Is that why you're holding up my passport? Because I didn't serve?"

"Oh hell no! No! Damn, I'm sorry if I made you think that. I was just making conversation. I never saw any action myself." That wasn't completely a lie. He served two years between wars in Military Intelligence, before the FBI took him.

"Mister Hill, what's the problem? I've got a sabbatical year of travel and study planned and I need a passport."

Dan reached into his inside coat pocket and pulled out a gray-green booklet with gold embossed eagle seal and the words Passport United States of America on its cover. He opened the booklet to the page with Dean's photograph. On the facing page the office had typed in the blanks:

Name:	David. F. Dean		
Date of Birth:	June 21, 1939		
Height:	6 feet 1 1/2 inches		
Wife:	XXX		
Minors:	XXX		
Birthplace:	Colorado U.S.A.		
Hair:	Brown	Eyes:	Brown

He held his finger to the line titled: Signature of Bearer.

"Sign here, and it's valid ... and that's all you need to do."

Dean took the passport and thumbed through it.

"Was it because of my picture?" he asked, holding the passport open and showing Dan his image with his toupee.

"No, that's a pretty good hair piece. Why don't you wear it all the time?"

"I haven't decided if I want to wear it at all. I think it's bullshit. My dad and stepmother think I need it. The kids at school voted. They want me to wear it. You know, I never minded being bald. Women like it."

So, his Dad remarried.

"Sign the damned thing ... You got a pen?"

Dean signed the passport. White Spot Sally Jean arrived with two large platters.

"Be right back with more coffee."

"You didn't have to deliver this in person." Dean sopped egg yolk onto a piece of toast.

"No, I didn't. There is something else. If I could show you that the Country needs you, would you consider serving? I mean? No, no, don't answer that." He replaced his fork on the plate, freed his hands, then paused and waited. Things were going exactly as he planned.

"Two hundred thirty million Americans and my country needs me?"

"Yeah, millions of Americans, but how many single guys that haven't been in the military, have the means to travel, a job that gives them an excuse to travel, and are planning to go to the Far East in August? Let me tell you, there is only one such American and we both know who he is."

"What would I do, be a spy or something? Work for the fucking FBI?"

"No! Hell, the FBI can't even operate outside the U.S. No, what we're talking about is not glamorous. It's not cloak-and-dagger. It's simply being a courier. A guy that carries the mail. A guy the other side can't make as part of the military or government. A tourist who carries messages - letters and such."

"You mean in this day of high technology, satellites and microwaves, the Government still needs someone to carry the mail? I find that hard to believe!"

"Think about it. All the new systems can be tapped. People listen in. They aren't secure. The only sure way to keep our enemies from tapping-in is to send stuff via guys like you who don't have any history or contacts with the Government. We use a lot of folks - lots of women traveling about. But you have a natural cover, you're legit.

I lie. The good thing is I know when I'm fudging the truth. Omission is necessary in this line of business. What the hell, what matters is results not the means. I don't believe that ... I have to manipulate the bastard to press my advantage.

"You want a mailman?" Dean thought it incredulous, "You want someone without the taint of government to carry messages? You want me because I fit, and I'm going there anyway? What else do you want? Who do you work for?"

"I'm just a guy too low down on the totem pole to know all the ins and outs. I'm just doing my job as I have every day for ten years now." He let some hurt feelings into his voice. Dean was known to respond to people's feelings.

"Sorry, I want to understand. Do you work here in Denver?"

"Yeah, that address I gave you is my office."

My temporary office that is.

"You work for the Federal Government. Is there a branch or something?"

"There is. I'm proud to say I work for National Security." Before Dean could respond he added, "I'll bet if you hadn't become a teacher you might have considered a career with the Fed. The pay's better than for teachers. I can't believe what they pay teachers. What do you get, ten grand a year? You gotta like the work."

"Okay, let's say I agree to be a courier. What happens then?"

"You do us both a favor. You help your country and feel good about that. You help me get out from behind a desk. I go with you. Do you understand the term handler?"

"It either means you think I'm an animal or you're queer."

They both laughed.

"That's funnier than hell. I never thought about it that way. Naw, handler means I act as your go-between to make things go smoother."

"Do I need training ... languages and stuff?"

"How good's your memory?"

"It's not photographic. I have to work at it."

"You good at languages?"

"I tried to learn Spanish in school."

"You good at sports?" He already knew all of this from the dossiers he studied, but it kept the meeting going the way he wanted it to, so he kept asking.

"I swim, ride, ski. Stuff like that. I never played organized team sports."

"Hell yes! I got an idea. Why not get you to Hawaii and enroll you in one of those physical fitness, self-defense courses."

"I could stand that."

"Hey, there is something else I forgot to mention. You get paid!"

"If you pay me, I'm government. You said you selected me because I wasn't connected with the Government."

"Shit, that's right! You are really right-on. Dean, you've got a brain in that head of yours." He thought a minute. "You still get paid. I'll work it out so the money comes from another source."

"I'd rather not be paid."

Dan was unable to cover his surprise.

"You gotta be paid!"

"No pay. I have an opportunity to serve my country. You cover my out-of-pocket expenses related to what I do for you. That's enough."

"Dean! Did you just fall off a hay wagon? You got some screwed-up idea that people serve their country for free? Wake-up man, this is the real world."

"I've only got to deal with me ... my concept of the world. I like to think of a world where people serve without thought of gain. It pleases me to live that way. I don't want to be paid."

No way I can sell this to the Agency. To them, pay means control. Maybe I can get a special account set-up and put his pay in it. Someday this guy will need the money. If he lives ...

"Is that it? That's really all you want?"

"You mean you'll do it?"

"I mean I'll give it serious thought. I'll probably do it, but I want time to think about it."

"Dean, there is something else I'd like to know. You don't have to answer. It's a personal question not official, you understand?"

"Shoot."

"On your application in the optional section you put down your religion as Celestial Sufficiency. Is that a religion?"

"Why not?"

"Well, it's just that I never heard of it. I couldn't find it listed anywhere."

"Who decides what is or isn't a religion? The IRS? Who makes up the accepted list? That's my religion. It's no one's business but my own. Oh, God might be interested ... I don't know you'll have to ask him."

"Will you call me at this number tomorrow morning and give me your answer? You can call if have questions any time before then." He handed Dean a slip of paper with a phone number scrawled across it.

"Tomorrow's Sunday."

"Yeah. Call Sunday." He picked-up the check as they slid out of the booth. They shook hands and Dean, centering his slouchy hat, walked into the crisp Colorado morning.

After Dan Hill paid, a beautiful oriental girl followed him out and then tailed Dean. She had been sitting in the booth behind Dan Hill.

Chapter FOUR

Washington, D.C. MI5 British Intelligence Safe House:

Lord Ayers, head operative for the U.S. branch of British intelligence, led Song Onoto down the steps. Traffic noises from Pennsylvania Avenue reverberated through the basement. The rumbling vibrations were supposed to defeat even the most sophisticated listening devices. Ayers took every precaution. He activated a whistler, a device that emitted a constant range of sounds on every wavelength audible to the human ear. He moved over and pressed its rocker switch. It vibrated like a too-hot teakettle, warbling its screen cacophony.

He studied her as she moved about the room. In some ways, she resembled the tall sinewy upper-class Chinese. Her facial features were Japanese or perhaps Eurasian. Her ancestry was the best of fifty-seven varieties combined to make her beautiful.

She's my most effective operative. Assigning her to Denver was a good call.

Unlike most operatives, Song was seldom in an office. She was best in bed. The little man knew the magic things she could do to captivate and put her friends at ease. He had seen the videotapes of more than one of her encounters. He wondered if she knew her handlers kept close watch on her? She turned more information than any man in the field.

"What do you make of what you observed in Denver?" Lord Ayers asked, turning toward, but not quite facing Song.

"The NSA operative you assigned me to was doing a routine surveillance of the CIA's Denver drop. He was covering an FBI guy doing

the same thing. My mark got a room across the street and ran a camera—he's smart. I got a room there and got to know him. For a month nothing happened. The only thing puzzling was a guy on stakeout. No one has been able to ID him, even though he has a large lumpy red scar on his nose and forehead. They think he's Russky, that's all I know. My NSA guy thinks he's KGB, but so low level he doesn't count."

"And I suppose you agree?" The little man asked.

"I simply don't know. One night when my guy was asleep, I went through his case. I got my Minolta full of his mug shots. I made everyone at the scene but the stakeout guys."

"Guys? Did you say guys?"

"There were two of them. We didn't make either of them." Song responded.

"So what about this CIA guy Dan Hill showing up?"

"One day Hill appears. My mark thinks there is something big going down. When Hill arrived, they gave him an office and a secretary. I moved in close. I overheard her bitching about the way Hill treats her and the fact she's supposed to call some teacher every half hour until she gets him and gives him a message. She thinks she's being misused."

"Did the stakeout men react to Hill's appearance?"

"They brought in a closed lorry and started covering Hill. Both of them, day and night. They were tired as hell, and mad. One of them was on all the time, either there or at his motel. They lived out of the lorry. My mark said none of his people had ever seen anything like it. They used a twenty-four-hour Safeway for a loo."

"Why the hell is Dan Hill important? Why is the CIA involved?" Lord Ayers asked.

"Hill was once a good agent. Came to CIA via the FBI. Now he's a second-rate analyst. He's lazy. He's what they call a longevity pig. The only thing he's done in recent years is rework the same report about agent security. It means nothing."

"What do you make of it, Love?" Lord Ayers asked, studying Song's long black hair.

"Hill's probably a messenger boy. They wouldn't let him run an operation. He's clever. He faked a fall and passed his briefcase to the stakeout guy we can't make."

"Which one of the guys did he pass it to? The original guy or the latecomer?"

"The big one. The first one, the one with the lumpy red scar on his nose and forehead."

"What do you suppose was in the briefcase?"

"I've no idea. Whatever it was, it's what the two unknowns in the lorry were after. They disappeared that night."

"How in the bloody hell could they disappear, for God's sake? Every top agency had someone watching them."

"We all bought their pattern. They were always there and suddenly they were gone. We all thought it was just another trip to the loo."

"What did you do then?"

"Hill went to cover in the Brown Palace Hotel. Someone got money to him - Western Union. The next morning, he cabs to a meeting with a schoolteacher. My guy followed him, never lost him. Hill goes to a White

Spot out south. My mark had promised to take me to the mountains, so I'm tagging along. He tells me he would give anything to hear what those two are talking about. I got into the booth next to where they're meeting."

"Damned clever of you Love, damned clever!"

"Hill asks the guy to serve as a courier."

"A courier?"

"Yes. He tells him his country needs him because he's never been in the government, the military, nothing related to the National service. He tells him his country needs him because he didn't go to an ivy league college. I don't know what to make of that. It seems the teacher is going to the Far East in August."

"My gawd, that really could be something!" Lord Ayers exclaimed.

"What did the teacher say?"

"He'd think about it and get back to Hill."

"By the by, Love, what did you report to your NSA guy?"

"Oh," she laughed, turning her head down so he couldn't see her eyes. "I told him Hill propositioned the teacher. That wasn't a lie. My guy jumped to all sorts of conclusions. I told him the teacher told Hill to 'fuck-off'."

"That should confuse the NSA for a while. But damn it all, we must find out what was in that briefcase! What do you think was in it?" She had seldom seen the little man so agitated.

"My guy told his control that the information in the briefcase is tied into the CIA's opening a Denver office. I think the CIA is in open competition, should I say warfare, with the FBI. Hoover set it up. The Agencies spend most of their resources competing for position. I think the

NSA is monitoring the fight. That's why the mark I was covering was there. He was putting together information for a report to the President.

"My gawd! They certainly do make a jumble of things. Do they ever have time to work on National Defense?"

"There's little evidence of it, Lord Ayers. They chase each other about, but they never seem to catch on."

The little man shook his head as he moved toward the sound generator on the table. He turned. "Get that teacher covered, Love! He will hold the key to the people and information we need. I want to know every breath he takes. I'll have someone else cover the NSA operative. Get on David Dean full time, and don't let me down! My gut instinct is that he's a main operative and the meeting was some kind of information exchange. I learned that Hill got Dean's okay on Sunday. Then he made a beeline to Langley. Now I know what that info meant."

He hit the OFF switch and left the room.

Chapter FIVE

Langley:

Hill sat at attention in the straight-backed wood chair. Y heard him out, commented on his cleverness, and sat picking a scab on one fat hand.

"This cowboy you call Fallout, is he some kind of a super patriot?"

"No Sir, he's a strange guy with a strong code of ethics that only makes sense to him. He has a lot of history with personal tragedy."

"You trust him?"

"Absolutely Sir. His word is his bond."

"Bullshit!"

"No sir, he's a native Coloradoan, kinda grew up on the land. He thinks a handshake is a better bond than a signed contract—but don't get me wrong Sir, he knows damned well that he lives in a world where others don't think that way. This guy says he lives like his convictions tell him to, that if everybody did the world would be a better place. He lives that way, but he doesn't expect others to."

"Bullshit!"

"Honest, Sir. He's been that way since he was a kid."

"That I can believe! The other is Bullshit!"

"Yes Sir."

They sat facing each other. The scab came off and a spot of blood appeared on Y's hand. He put it to his mouth.

"When does he start traveling?"

"August."

"You can handle him?"

"Without a doubt!"

"You blow this and I'll see the end of you!"

"I need something else, Sir," he continued before Y could interject something cruel. "I need a secret fund set-up—not through the government—to pay Fallout. No trail. No IRS bull shit. I'll see he's paid, manage the account through my own sources. No trail, do you understand? ... er, Sir?"

"You got it. I'll make a note. Tomorrow you get it. How much?"

"I don't know Sir. Perhaps a \$100K. It won't be much, not in exchange for what we get."

"We're protected aren't we? When he gets hurt and killed we're protected?"

"I'll take care of it, Sir."

Denver:

Before operative Song left her NSA mark, she went through his briefcase one last time. He was good. He made the teacher. A phone number and address were clipped to his photo. She carefully erased and replaced digits in both numbers. As an afterthought, she changed the street name and added north where south had been. Then she wrote a note he would find when he awoke, intentionally misspelling many words.

My old beau fren is back and he need me. Thank you and I give you kisses. Your Malay princess.

That should satisfy him. He will never suspect.

"Hello, is this Dave?" Song asked in her softest, sweetest voice. "Dave, my name is Song Onoto. I got a message to call you from a friend of mine at Denver University"

"Yeah?"

"She said you were going to the Far East this fall and asked for help learning about Japan and places."

"So?"

Who told her? I've talked to so many teachers and friends any one of them could have.

"Have you read Twelve Doors? It is a great book to begin with."

"Hadn't heard of it. I've had difficulty finding out what to read."

"I understand. Do you ever come to the library here?"

"Sure."

"I could meet you and help you find good books. Please don't say no, I'm glad to help. I'm Oriental. When will you come?"

He thought a moment. "It'll have to be in the evening. I teach."

"Better for me in the evening."

"When is the best time for you?"

"I'll be here Wednesday at seven o'clock. How will I know you?"

"I'm a little over six feet, big, and bald."

"Oh yes, that's easy. You don't need to wear a flower in your lapel."

They laughed.

Two weeks later:

They became friends during six evenings spent together talking about the Far East. She helped him find great books on Asia—especially Japan. They usually studied at the D.U. library and then went for a coke. He often made subtle suggestions that their relationship could include a physical side, but she let his interests grow pretending to want only an academic relationship. Now, Lord Ayers was pressuring her about her progress. The time was right to let Dean know she was interested in bedding their relationship.

"Dean is withholding something, Lord Ayers, and I'll extract it."

Song put down her coke, and met Dean's eyes. "Is what they say about bald men true?"

"I'm sure it is," David said, laughing. "What did you hear?"

"Bald men very good lovers—very strong in bed. Have too many hormones. Bald men exciting." She spoke like Japanese girls do in the movies.

"Do you believe that?"

"Oh, I have no way of knowing. I'm just a naive girl, most sheltered, but I'm not a virgin. I have plenty of experience, at least a little. But never very good."

"It's true, it's a curse! Hormones, I mean. First they make you look too masculine, then they make you want to spend your life in bed."

"Oh my! What do you do? You take cold showers and exercise a lot? Too bad. In Asia country, you would have many girls. Many girls take away many hormones."

"It sounds too good to be true. Listen, would you like to come over to my place tonight for a snack or something?"

"No, but this weekend? We may need a lot of time."

Chapter SIX

The Pentagon:

"There's no doubt about it. Whatever was in that briefcase is vital to National Defense!" the Military Intelligence Field Operative commented. He pulled at the waist of his Eisenhower jacket and paced in front of the Director of Intelligence Agency's desk.

The DIA puffed up, taking control. "I'm placing this information on the restricted list, the BIGOT list! Let's not fuck around. Whatever it means,

it shows the CIA is feeding foreign agents. That's hotter than Johnson's Tonkin. We've got to cover this."

General, what do you make of this?" He turned to his Deputy.

"It's like he said, Al. CIA passed a briefcase to some agents we haven't been able to identify. It happened in Denver last month. Made it look like Dan Hill tripped, lost the briefcase. A NSA guy was there. Filmed the whole thing."

"What about Hill? What the hell was a CIA prick doing there?"

"He's a CIA nothing. We went over him with everything we have. He's clean, may be queer, but there's no proof, just one report that he tried to pick up some guy."

"Why do you suspect the FBI?"

"Who the fuck else could it be? The goddamned Mossad?"

Langley:

Dan Hill had become one of the most sought-after men in the CIA. Everywhere he went he was tailed. Gloria was also followed. His office and the reception desk in the outer office had been rifled. Someone forced the safe room door and went through files. Sally saw men hurriedly leave their house when she returned from shopping. There was a white van parked across the street. Security swept his car on orders from Y, and found an electronic tracking device. Dan tried to photograph his tails in order to ID them, but the film was "damaged" in processing. Only one roll—the one he dropped at Rexall—came back.

Y was deeply concerned. He discussed the tails at length. After hours of processing and re-processing, his people concluded that the tails were

not related to Cowboy, they couldn't be. Somehow, they surmised, Dan had stumbled into something hot in Denver. Denver was the key.

"I still say something you did or saw has everyone on your case," Y said, scratching his hands. "What else did you see?"

That's the third time you've asked me the same question, you dork. Get on with it man!

"Find out the identity of the guy I call the Moscovy Duck. He should be easy to make with that waddle-like red growth on his upper nose! If you find-out who he is I think you'll break this whole thing." *I'm in the middle of my operation and now this. I don't need it.* "Someone sacked my office. I made them. They were FBI operatives ... and a guy with National Security, may be military Bob Beloit thinks, was tailing me. Bob went through Yale with the guy."

"This is internal?" Y screamed. He hit the intercom button. "Send Carl Deevers in!"

As the head of CIA Internal Affairs entered, he let a blast of Y's cursing out into the reception area. Heads bent, three ladies tried their best to look busy.

"I fucking don't! I don't have to take it!" Y screamed. "I don't have to be spied on by our own side. Never! Not never!"

Dan sat back and watched the two men face-off. Carl Deevers was tough beyond tough.

He would enjoy being a hangman, only he would use his hands instead of rope. Carl is a seething ulcer of hate. Now, thanks to his training and years of focus, he only hates those he is told to. He believed the enemy is every foreigner living or dead and anyone his superiors say

is bad. He's a pit-bull with the instincts of a shark. He's also brighter than hell. All that bile-juice has sharpened his brain chemistry into a computing center that misses nothing.

"I can't talk about it." Deevers looked at the floor.

"You're my head of security and you can't talk to me?" Y sat back as if someone kicked him in the solar plexus. The look on his face was pure Doberman. Even his mouth and nose changed.

"No Sir, no disrespect Sir. You'll have to talk to our boss, the Director of Central Intelligence, Sir!"

"DCI! DCI!" Y yipped. He couldn't get his breath, then slumped, spittle running from the corners of his mouth.

"My God, what happened?" Dan screamed as he jumped up and made his way behind the desk to Y's side.

Carl was quick to respond. He leaned out the door and calmly told the receptionist to get a doctor on the double. "Full security you understand! No one to know, anything! Got that? Then, quite calmly, curious but unconcerned, he walked to Y's side. "Man, I do think he blew his mind! I truly do." He looked Y over with intense curiosity. "I ain't never seen a man blow before. Fascinating! Nothing we can do. Help's coming."

Chapter SEVEN

Denver:

"How in the hell do you do that, Song?" David asked with surprise and pleasure. "That's the most amazing thing I've ever felt."

"Asian girls practice with tooth brush handles." Smiles filled her steaming face.

A little later he was astounded and gratified again.

"Where in blazes did you learn to do that?"

"Confucius say even mighty river can be dammed, if dam in right place."

By four that afternoon, they were too exhausted to move.

"I try to be many nice girls for you. Take too many hormones. We quit now. I go home and write book about bald men."

"Stay," he begged. "We've got a lot of research to do."

That was Saturday. Sunday was better, but on Monday, Song knew she had worked David to the point where he would tell her everything. An image of Lord Ayers flashed in her mind. She knew what she had to do, but ... she was having strange thoughts and feelings. She sat up, confused and angry.

"Song, what's wrong? I sense something ..." He cuddled her, rubbing her back.

Song tried to direct her thoughts.

Something is wrong. There is a recurring voice in my head ... It's there so often, lately, I've even given it a name ... Suzi Why is she in my mind? What's happening?

She sat up and moved to the edge of the bed, letting her feet hit the floor. "David, tell me about yourself. There are parts of you I don't know and it scares me." She was doing what she was trained to do, but a voice in her head shamed her for it. Her thoughts were tangled. She had hesitated

and that unnerved her. She focused on doing her job. "David, tell me about yourself. Who are you, I mean really?"

"You mean a quick review of my life story?"

"I've never met anyone like you. Like I mean, you're almost thirty and you say you've never been married. Is that because you do dangerous work?"

If he's an operative he'll tell me.

"Dangerous? I'm a teacher. It's about as safe a job as one can get. I've never married. I just came out of a relationship that never quite worked. It wasn't the first. I've come to know it was something about me, not them, that wouldn't let me commit. I have this ... this part of me that never trusts, always doubts, always questions, always wants more. Do you know what I mean?"

As Song mechanically nodded yes, somewhere inside her head, Suzi connected with tender emotion, frightening Song. She shook her head, trying to clear the other thoughts.

"Even as a kid, I wasn't content unless I was tinkering, observing and trying to understand things—everything. I tried stuff, like lying and stealing and, you know, breaking the rules. It didn't take me long to figure out that even though I never got caught, those acts damaged me. I didn't respect myself. As a result, I guess I developed a personal code. You know, a code of conduct." He looked up at her, searching for a sign she understood. She nodded and gave him her warmest smile.

"Song, I don't really understand where my code of ethics came from. Where I got some of the rules I hold myself to. I think about it. Maybe it

was from fiction stories and comic books. Maybe it was from reading parts of the Bible. Maybe my ... my father said things ... I'm sure.

"I grew up in a small town in Colorado. Dad was a pharmacist, still is. My Mom, before she left us, was a nurse at the local clinic. They said she wasn't a good mom, that she didn't love me. I know better, but ... she died. Dad made up for it though. I got a lot of my values from him. Song, when I was nine, my mother ran off and left us. About six months later we think she was murdered

"People didn't think much of us after that. And my dad? He was the only pharmacist in town and knew all their problems. Sometimes he told me their stories. I learned things about teachers and ... well, you know. I kept pretty much to myself. I had a few friends, I think. Most of all I remember how much I wanted close friends that I could trust. My Dad remarried. Clara is really nice. She told me that Dad has never given up the idea that the Sheriff killed my mom to cover up their affair. The Sheriff's cronies had us both put away. They tried to change what we knew. We went along with their story that Mom killed herself to get out of the nut house. I'm still bitter about it. What gets to me most is that I don't know why Mom went off with the Sheriff ... why she deserted me."

He shook his head and continued. "Enough of that. There were twenty churches in town. I went to most of them. The good part was that I became aware there is a purpose for living. You know, staying alive, not killing yourself, not thinking that nothing has meaning." He paused, wondering why he was telling her personal stuff that didn't matter. As David's story of abandonment and loss unfolded, Song felt a deep sadness overtake her. She felt like her heart was tearing apart. She had never

experienced emotions like these before. She had a funny look on her face and was moving her head slowly from side-to-side.

"Song, what's the matter? I shouldn't be telling you this stuff. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to ... to upset you."

"Don't be silly, David. I'm just amazed, that's all. I never would have guessed you had been through so much. Please tell me more. Is that when you decided to help others and your country? Did that change you?"

Damn he's special. He frees me in a way I've never felt before. What will I tell Ayers? Come on Song, get on with it and do your job. Quit the sentimental bullshit.

"Well, I did become a public servant. Sure, I decided to teach - not go into some profession just for the money. I decided to always be honest, like I said, not like my mom. I lived by my code and expected others to do the same. Some of it was basic like keeping my word and expecting my girlfriend to keep hers. If we agreed not to screw around with others, I believed the agreement was cast in stone. Know what I mean?"

"Yes, David I do," Song replied. "When I'm in a relationship I'm committed to one man and one man only."

Yeah right, Song, you are such a liar. What about all those guys you screwed for information? David will figure it out sooner or later, then I'll lose him.

"Exactly! The same with lying and doing things to others that caused emotional pain. You know, like running trips on the other person or withholding information. I had this pure concept of love I believed in and held others to. Honestly, I won't continue a relationship that isn't open and loyal. The way I see it, if I got into a relationship without that I'd only be

opening myself to pain and disappointment. And I did! I mean I got into relationships where openness and honesty were perceived as weakness. I was a sucker, easily abused, kinda like my dad. Follow?"

Song had a puzzled look on her face. The voices in her head were at war.

*You're not a sucker, but I abused you. I mean Song abused you ...
Song did, not me.*

Her Suzi presence pushed Song's strong personality aside. "You think that because you had such high expectations and lived by a code of openness and honesty—they thought you were weak? They took advantage of you?"

His code is what friendships and love are based on. I understand, but I don't know why? A part of me doesn't know why. They didn't program me that way.

He watched her face wrinkle as if she were about to cry.

What am I saying that gets to her? Why is she so sad? "

Are you okay, Song?"

She nodded, wiped her eyes, and smiled. "Don't stop. Keep talking."

"Well, where was I? Oh yeah, I check it out ... I mean my code. I check to see if I've adopted an extreme viewpoint, a self-defeating ideal. I've changed things I believe in. I had to. I had to become tolerant—care about, you know, understand—other people's views. Song, I first decided that stuff when I was a kid. I was intolerant—idealistic and intolerant. For a while, I was an inflexible bastard, judging everyone by a kid's code. I wasn't a very likeable guy. I wasn't a good friend. I ... well, you know. I had to change me before I walled myself up any further and became a total bigot."

"I think you did a good job." Suzi wanted to hug him.

"I'm still working on it. I need feedback—straight strokes—not bullshit. I have a tendency to be judgmental. If people really care about me, I know it because they give me straight information even if they think I might be hurt or angry. But some things are too ingrained in me to change. For example, I haven't changed the way I want relationships to be. I won't engage if I feel there's no commitment to straight communication. Honesty. Openness. No games."

Lie to me woman, and I'm gone. You won't exist.

"Why would you want to change that? I think those are good qualities."

"I'd rather be easy going and not give a damn. I can't get drunk, overload on drugs, play light and loose with other people's emotions, be one of the boys or ... probably get what I really need."

"I don't think you're wrong. I wouldn't want to be with someone who didn't have strong values and convictions. I think you're the healthiest man I've ever met. That's what I like about you."

And I never had anyone. I never cared for anyone, ever. My parents. My parents, I was never to think about them. Damn, what's happening. I'm in the middle of an operation and I'm emotionally involved with my mark. This is really dangerous. What can I tell Lord Ayers? I care about David, and he's not what they think he is.

"Want to eat something? You look like you've run out of energy, Song. Want to watch TV? This heavy personal stuff is too much, right? I'm sorry. The story of my life is not what you needed."

"David, I needed to know. I'm amazed and thrilled by the way you live and think. It's just that...that, well, can we make a sandwich. I need to process all you've told me. We can talk more later? Okay?"

"Are you sure you want to tell me about yourself tonight? I know you're tired. It can wait."

"No, David. I need your help. Please don't judge me. I don't know what's happening. In my head. It's like a voice, I'm hearing a voice, a voice I know ... did know ... like a conscience, but it's my voice. It challenges everything I do. I can't think or say anything without this debate in my head."

"A voice you know? I don't understand, Song." He put the plate with the crusts of his sandwich down and moved across the bed to snuggle against her. "Is there anything I can do? Describe it to me."

"It's more than a voice." Feelings flooded her. Good feelings, safe and soft, protective energy. Suzi's energy. She shuddered and hunched over, her gut tightening. Sweat beaded on her forehead.

My God, now I remember. They took away my memories and created Song. I'm Suzi. Oh my God! Why? Why did they try to destroy me?

"Are you okay, Song? What's going on?"

"David, I'm remembering things. Just let me have time."

Suzi's feelings and knowledge overpowered Song. Confused and uncertain, Suzi focused on David.

My feelings for him are my strength. I need a way to explain to him I'm not Song, not really. But first I have to figure out what I'm going to do.

Those bastards brainwashed me. David's story broke down the walls. I'm, touching my emotions and drowning.

"Hold me David. Hold me!"

Buried in David's arms, Suzi felt safe. Song pressed her advantage and took control. "David, I haven't told you about my dreams. About the house I'm designing in my head, and the white mare I will ride along the beaches of the world. How do you make it on a teacher's salary?" Ayers needs information. I can't tell Dean I'm an operative for the Brits. Or ... Suzi fought back, overpowering her Song personality.

Go away Song, I don't need you anymore. They made you do things that...that, oh my God, Song, they made you do terrible things. If I tell him the truth, I'll lose him. If I'm not honest, I'll lose him.

Chapter EIGHT

Washington D.C. MI5 Safe House:

Song had nothing to report to Lord Ayers. "This assignment is very hard. I have as yet been unable to learn Hill's plans from Dean or what kind of operative he is. I guarantee, I am making progress. Be patient."

"Song," Lord Ayers said, "We know something of great significance is happening. Your mark is the key. If you can't get the information, let me know. Understand?"

She nodded.

"Love, you seem different—preoccupied somehow. Do you want off this?"

Suzi reacted with fear and then anger. Song replied, "I have never let you down. You make me fly across the country to report something I could have told you over the phone. I know you are under pressure, but let me do my work."

"Yes, Love, you're right. Go back to Denver. You are not my problem, sorry Love."

Denver:

Friday night, Suzi was in control. It was getting easier to overpower Song. She gave David a button that said, "Bald is Beautiful." He gave her the shivers.

On Sunday they went for a ride in the Black Forest southeast of Denver. He put the top down on his convertible. Her long hair blew back over the seat. He marveled at her beauty. She knew it wasn't a line. It was the first time she accepted a compliment from a man. She wanted to bite him and draw blood. He really did something to her.

They sat in a small cafe in a little town. She nestled into his side, still chilled from the ride in the open car.

"You're really going away, aren't you?"

"Not until August."

"I finally meet a man I like and he's leaving. I'll go with you?"

"I'd never see the world, just you."

"You're going alone?" She acted surprised.

"Yeah, it's something I've got to do."

"What have you got to do that you must do alone?"

"I've got to learn how the world works. About other people." He paused a minute, thinking. "About educational systems, philosophies and life. My values."

"Alone?"

"Yes, it's something I must search out alone."

"Do they pay you?" The Song personality broke through and asked, programmed to do her job.

"No," he said smiling. "I pay. I'm selling everything to get the money."

"Not your car?"

"Everything."

"You aren't lying to me, are you?"

"I try not to lie."

"Does that mean you do lie?"

"Sure, some call it rationalizing. I try to know when I'm doing that, but sometimes I slip."

He really doesn't lie. If Song asks about Hill, he'll tell her. If she wants the details of the operation Hill recruited him for, he will tell her. Then Song will tell Ayers ... I won't let Song ask, not ever. I need to know about him too, but for me, not them.

Walter Reed Hospital:

Gloria joined Dan and Sally as they looked down on the still smiling face once animated by Y's strong personality.

He's gone. I wonder if Operation Cowboy is blown.

Langley:

Y had set things in motion his death couldn't reverse. Operation Cowboy was approved by Big Oil George. Operatives from the West Coast and as far away as Brazil were secretly brought in to trace and identify the agents shadowing Dan. A week later, Carl Deevers, head of security, announced: "They're made!"

Dan gave the report a quick perusal and smiled. "We have met the enemy and they is us," he smiled, "I'm quoting *Pogo*."

"You damned better well believe they is us," Carl seconded, "except them two." He pointed to the photos of the agent with the lumpy red scar on his nose, and his bland looking partner. Them's Russkys. Got to be real bad. Look at that one with the red scars on his face. He's Ivan. And why did this guy Pogo think their ours?"

"So now what?" Dan asked, ignoring Deever's question.

"So now we know all our agencies were covering what these two were covering. You just got in the way, Hill."

"Can our efforts and theirs be coordinated?"

"No way, Jose!" Carl answered, "I have orders from the top that this whole operation is to disappear. We know now what's up and that's it! We let the other agencies alone."

"Even if they're spying on us and robbing our offices?"

"Tell me about it. They got to be left to their own devices. Ain't no person big enough to stop 'em. Ain't no power strong enough to deal with them if we force them to cover their stupidity. Ain't no politician brave enough to expose them. They may be out of control, but there they must remain. Never underestimate the damage J. Edgar did to intelligence."

"And in the meantime? What do I do?"

"You were da fox that led the pack." Carl said with a southern ring in his voice. "Now, thanks to some wonderfully creative disinformation, you no longer da fox. You were a good distraction."

"Oh great. I'm back to being a dud, right? What about my operation?"

"We don't want to know nothing about that, Hill. We ain't got to know nothing! You got that? That stuff is between you and whoever they get to replace Y."

In one of the smoothest, cleverest moves ever made by the CIA, the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), with the President's full support, appointed Dan Hill to replace Y as Deputy Director of Operations (DDO). There were five Deputy Directors, but Operations held the cards.

The DDI (Deputy Director of Intelligence) was overheard commenting as he received the news. "Oh gee, they made that dodo, DDO? That fuzznut's nothing!" From then on, Dan Hill was discreetly known in the inner circles of the intelligence community as the Dodo DDO, a code name of some significance. Sit was said several fourth-floor secretaries and receptionists preferred the moniker "Fuzznuts."

Dan was given Y's job because of Operation Cowboy. Only those on the DCI's list knew that all operative cover had been blown. As DDO, Dan Hill could ensure that Operation Cowboy resulted in anonymity for the intelligence gathering services. He planned to handle Dean himself. Then reality hit him. He was stuck behind a desk.

The new DDO selected his one friend and confidant as Dean's handler. Gloria accepted the promotion without a whimper. She sat with a

blank look on her face as he explained to her that if Cowboy failed, every operative employed in the interests of National Security would continue to serve the enemy.

"Operation Cowboy is the last best hope for the intelligence gathering agencies of the United States of America, and most of its allies."

"Now it all hangs around my neck like the ancient mariner, or millstone, or whatever." She moaned.

"Gloria, you will handle secret agent Fallout. As you know, he's a guy from Colorado who has never been abroad—not that you have—and who is a rugged individualist. I've given you the code name Old Glory."

"Old Gloria? That sticks in my craw." She pulled herself together and vehemently protested. "I'm not that old, you son of a ...!"

"It's an ideal cover, Gloria. Glory, not Gloria. Every other agent will think we're talking about the flag. You're my right arm. I'll call you *OG*. Is that better?"

"Well, I guess being *OG* is better than being Old Gloria?"

The next day Dan sat alone in his new office. He had only a vague idea of whom to contact, trust, or fire. Whenever he started to work on something fear paralyzed him. He sat through lunch hour, his mind going in downward spirals. "Shit!" he screamed to the walls when he finally broke. Then he pictured the screwed-up face of poor blown-out Y. He caught himself scratching scabs on his hands.

It took Gloria almost an hour to get his thoughts back to a more basic level and raise his self-image. Outside his door his receptionist stood guard. She understood top security. As per his orders no one got near the office

during the meeting. She held all calls. From what she overheard she would never be convinced that it was a meeting that determined the future of spying.

Dan's first executive decision was that the desktop was no place to have such important conferences. His first official act, was to order a large couch for his office. When the couch arrived, he stopped scratching.

Chapter NINE

Denver:

Suzi watched the Lear Jet settle into the hot June air and taxi toward the private aviation section at Stapleton Airport. Arrangements had been made. A man with thick ear protectors and red flags waved the jet into a private hanger. When the bay doors closed, she ran from the hanger office to the Jet. Suzi Song Onoto walked coolly up the lowered steps and disappeared into the darkness of the plane.

"*Bon Jour*, love." Ayers handed her a sweating glass half full of gin with just a touch of tonic and lime.

"You look well, my dear. Your work is going as well I presume?"

"Have I ever let you down?"

She sensed his irritation. Did he know that Suzi, not Song sat in front of him? "I have many things to report, Lord Ayers."

"Yes but, some of us feel that if we removed this courier-teacher fellow it would set their whole operation back quite a bit, and you could go on to other things."

"What operation is that?" she countered, refusing to let him see the effect of his words. She was way ahead of the little Lord.

"Oh, that's just it! We haven't a clue as to what the operation is all about."

"Then you'll admit I'm handling it well?"

"Not well, but adequately, I suppose. Oh all right, give me your report ... and Song, I'm sorry! Stupid of me getting off on the wrong foot like this. I don't react to being pressured from above the way I did when I was younger."

"Thank you, Sir!"

When she finished her report, he sat, obviously frustrated.

"That tells me very little, you know!" he stared at his drink. "Stay with him Song. Stay on him for as long as it takes to get what we need. I regret to tell you that we have failed on every other front. We can't get a firm ID on those two agents Hill passed the briefcase to. Our sources inside American Intelligence are as confused as we are. Do you know they took that man Hill and made him a Deputy Director of Operations? He's simply not qualified! Whatever this operation is, it's like nothing we've ever witnessed before."

Suzi, still in control, thanked him, assured him, and left. She sat in her car and watched the jet taxi toward the runway. Then she broke-out in a cold sweat.

That was close. I didn't suspect they would consider killing David. Now only I stand between them and his life. I'll see they never hurt him!

She became aware of another voice inside her that disagreed: The voice of Onoto. Suzi was learning about Song—how they created her—but

had never come into contact with her Onoto personality. The cold, analytical presence sent chills through her.

Chapter TEN

"They're dead! They can't operate with dullards like that!" the MI General exclaimed as he walked about the Military Intelligence office, tugging at the waistband of his Eisenhower jacket.

"You mean because of Hill?" the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) said mockingly.

"Al, you know damned well Hill hasn't got one contact with one fucking agent. He's been isolated in analysis for too many years. We know the guy inside and out. He isn't even a good analyst. He's written and rewritten the same garbage for as long as he's been there. He's a zip, a nothing, a bureaucrat, a vegetable!"

"He's got something Rudy. The President himself told me the DCI wouldn't take no. He told me to butt-out. He said whoever the director selected as DDO was his own business, his privilege. With the President's support, I've never seen the DCI so bullish."

"But look, the DDO is the head of the entire clandestine and espionage branch. It conducts all sorts of covert actions, recruits intelligence sources, and does other shit like that. Am I leaving anything out?"

The DIA Director shook his head. "That's most of it."

"So now a guy that isn't qualified," the General continued pacing, thinking out loud, "is put in charge and we know for certain, not for sure,

for certain, that this guy doesn't have any, not a few, but not any contacts with the agents he is in charge of. What does that tell me?" he turned toward Al's desk, "It doesn't tell me anything, not a fucking thing!"

"It tells me something, General, "the Defense Intelligence Agency's Director smiled evilly. He walked around his desk and positioned himself so he could look out the window. The thick, green bulletproof glass gave his features a deadly pallor. "It tells me that the Director of Central Intelligence is making a power-play. He's been seen meeting with Goldwater and others from Congress. What we've got here is a big play for my job, General. A fucking move to oust me and take over the Defense Intelligence Agency—at the least Military Intelligence—and bring it totally under CIA control!"

"My gawd Sir, they can't do that!" the General slumped into a stout chair, the green leather squeaking in protest.

After long minutes, the DIA head regained his seat and pushed his tired body back into the plush leather of the big chair.

"Hill passed information about their plan to agents who obviously work for the CIA, but aren't on our list. Hell, no one knows who they are as far as I can find out. That means the CIA has developed a force of new agents. Agents we can't make. They must be inside every operation, including ours. That son-of-a-bitch! CIA has wanted to control the military since WW II. What I can't savvy is why the President is going along with all this." He paused and thought hard. "Jeesus, what's the CIA got on the President?" He sat back, his face the color of a bar of Palmolive soap. He reached forward and held the lever down on his intercom.

"Get me Pierson at the FBI!"

"Pierson? Al, I know your boss won't answer my calls, but ... are you on a secured line? Good. I make that Hill is not what we have been led to believe. I make it that there are operatives we don't know about, new guys working for the CIA. Any comment?"

"We agree."

"Thanks guy. Anything else?"

"Hill goes right through to the top. We're afraid here. Looks like a move is on. They're in our territory, want to take over. That's the word." he hung-up as the FBI Director came into his office.

"They've come to the same conclusion," he said. "CIA is moving against us."

The FBI Director sneered and rolled up his sleeves.

Chapter ELEVEN

Before unhooking the line, the operative dialed a memorized number. The phone rang five times before the *Post* reporter's voice came through. "I heard it clearly. Thanks."

He unclipped the wires. Another easy hundred bucks. He nodded to the secretaries as he passed and told them to call if they had any more problems. Had they compared notes there were no problems.

"The story's confirmed by my source," the *Post*'s reporter said. The editor looked at him over half-glasses, and snorted.

"So what? The story's too hot for us to touch."

"But Sir, this means that the CIA is making a move on Military Intelligence and the FBI."

"Do you want to die with those words on your lips?"

"But Sir?"

"I didn't tell you to stop, did I? Now get the fuck out of here and dig deeper." He turned back to the copy he was editing, hands shaking.

The NSA undercover man in the printer's apron sat near his machine deep in the maze of presses on the first floor. His hearing aid was fed by a device inside the Editor's office. He took a break and called from the pay phone in the hall.

"O132," a soft voice said on the other end.

"Oh, I wanted O123, sorry." In less than a minute, the pay phone rang.

"What have you got?"

"The CIA is making a move on Military Intelligence *and* the FBI. Reporter said confirmed. Direct quote."

"Thanks! What would we do without the *Washington Post*!"

Chapter TWELVE

Jan Hurlbut was destined to serve. At least that's what her Dad said. She was his surrogate son, or so it seemed to neighbors who knew the family. He was Major Hurlbut, USMC Retired. She was Second Lieutenant Hurlbut, USMC on active duty in the great state of Virginia. Since April, she had been assigned to Military Intelligence, the great *MI*. Her dossier said she was an Intelligence Analyst. The men she worked for said she was a nice kid, a good looking broad who would have made a damned good secretary.

Everyone knew a woman couldn't possibly fathom Military Intelligence reports—let alone analyze them.

"What they don't know," the DCI told his lady Ethel, "is that Jan, aka Agent January, reports directly to the director of the CIA, or that we're her Godparents. By rights everyone in the Defense Intelligence Agency, including Military Intelligence, is supposed to report to me. But they don't, Ethel, they don't report to me. That's why I have Jan in there. Don't worry, she's safe."

They assigned Jan to a small office and gave her last year's leftover busywork. Too soon, she put the files in order and asked for more work. One of the old files she analyzed was labeled: A Breach in Agent Security. It was two years old, an updated report that went nowhere. It had been compiled by a CIA analyst named Hill.

Jan's analysis of the analysis was excellent. She gathered other data. It supported Hill's findings. She set up his hypothesis and tried to disprove it. She worked each day on the problem for two months. She knew Hill was correct. The enemy did have agent profiles. America's secret agents were blown. She concluded that America's intelligence community was an enemy asset.

It took Jan two days to format and type her report. When it was done, she went back over it several times searching for typing and spelling errors. Finally, on a dismal April morning, she met with her superior and presented the document. He tossed it into the IN bin on his desk and thanked her. Before she could comment, he told her about her next assignment. She left unsure of the status of her report. She hoped the copy she sent to the DCI would get a better reception.

Jan's instincts were right on, but she was wrong about one thing. As soon as she was out of the office, he picked it out of the bin and thumbed through it. He didn't read it for content, he wouldn't waste his time on old outdated stuff from the CIA. But he did require a specific format, Campbell to be exact, and held everybody under him to it.

"Nice work. Properly formatted, well typed. No misspelled words." He'd been an English Professor at Emory University before being called to serve his country as a civilian analyst attached to MI. "This broad does nice work," he mumbled. "Damn, why isn't she in my secretarial pool?"

He perused the report again, saw that she properly credited her sources, and mumbled, "She knows the proper form to use when stating a hypothesis." He put the analysis down, impressed, and wrote a note to his file clerk on his personal memo pad and clipped it to the report. When Mrs. Penn filed it, she was careful to credit Lieutenant Hurlbut. "What a nice young girl," she commented to her assistant, a CETA job trainee, "If that young lady keeps doing neat work like that she'll make First Lieutenant in no time."

The DCI didn't give a damn about format and form. The copy of the report Jan submitted was not treated lightly.

"She confirmed your thesis!" the DCI said to Hill. "Any doubts I had are gone now."

George patted Hill on the back and went behind his desk.

"Hill, thanks to me, you're DDO now. Your work is cut out for you. Someone I trust has confirmed your theory. Now you better figure out what you're going to do."

"I've known for a month, Sir." He feared calling him George. "I've got things rolling. By the way, I need a sharp woman—attractive, amoral—knows the Far East. Someone I can put under cover to watch Fallout. Any suggestions?"

The DCI grinned like a kid writing "fuck" in a head for the first time.

"Goldie!" he announced. Goldie aka *Vipress*. She's wicked, profane, sinful, and corrupt. I trained her myself when I was in the field."

Chapter THIRTEEN

"You know everything about me Song, but I don't know a damned thing about you. I've been blathering along all about me and my uninteresting past, but so much about you doesn't make sense. We can't mean anything to each other if I can't know who you are. You say you'll be here when I return? Why would you want to? Why should I believe you? Be straight with me!"

"You wouldn't understand!" She swished her hair over her breasts, and caught her knees with her arms, hands clasped tightly together. Her face clouded with anger and then resignation. How could she tell him he fell for Song and that she, Suzi, came back because of her love for him? What if he knew about her, the woman whose personality was split into parts by those who controlled her?

He would hate me. He is serious about honesty and openness, no lies. I must tell him, hurt him now and not play him along like a mark.

She didn't know how to tell him. Song did. Song took over.

"You like this body?" Song asked, her voice harsh, manipulated.

"What?"

She's near breaking down. She seems different, mechanical.

"Would you like this body if you knew what it had been—what it has done? What it has been used for?"

He couldn't respond. He sat still, a quizzical look on his face. She was so different. Something was wrong.

"Feel!" she ordered, releasing her locked hands, grabbing his hand, spreading her legs, thrusting it between.

"Is what you feel used? Is it any different than any other even though it has been used? Is it different than my hands or my face?"

He pulled his hand back and sat looking at her, totally confused ... hurt.

Song faded as Suzi, aware Song overdid it, pushed Song out. Tears welled in her eyes as she continued. Her voice was soft and familiar. Dean relaxed.

"When I was fourteen they took me away. My father was accused of something, I don't even know what he did. They took me and they placed me naked in a wire cage. Men in white coats stood around the cage looking at me. They wouldn't let me sleep or rest. When I thought I was alone they yelled at me. There was no night. They were always there watching and commenting. When I tried to sleep, they shocked me, slapped me and threw cold water on me. Each time I collapsed I awoke tied to a gurney. A horrible and cruel doctor jabbed needles into me and made me drink vile liquids. Men prodded and poked me—everywhere. They pulled at me and roughed me up. I was fourteen!"

He reached for her, cradled her. Her head against his chest.

"They wouldn't let me sleep. They watched and joked while I cried, while I pleaded and even when I relieved myself. Then, one day they untied me and began to beat and rape me. Men and women came in and did horrible things to me. They raped every part of my mind and body, again and again, then tied me back on the gurney. My head was shaved, I was covered with some vile goo and tied on a table. The hoary old doctor cut me. It burned like fire. I lost track of time. After weeks, they left me alone, untied, but still in the cage with people watching.

Suzi faded, weakened as she acknowledged the ordeal for the first time. Song took over. Dean sensed by her body language and voice that another personality emerged.

"I'm Song. I took over. I believed the girl they abused was bad and deserved what she got. Suzi was bad she had to go away. I was pure and still my Daddy's little girl. I agreed to join them and work for them to help my Daddy. I had to make Suzi go away. It was easy. She'd had enough. She stayed away until *you* ... Understand?"

He didn't, not for sure, but he nodded.

Song continued: "They gave me nice clothes and taught me to do things they said would help my father. All the tricks, sexual control, how to speak English, how to kill, and yes, how to get information from marks like you."

Dean was stunned, but tried not to communicate it. Song wasn't through.

"Several months ago, I began to suspect I was also the girl they destroyed. Then I knew I was Suzi Song Onoto. They split my personality and created me. Then you came along, and Suzi woke up."

Suzi took over again. He felt the change as he held her. He heard her voice.

"It's me, David, I'm not going away again." She sobbed and caught her breath.

"David, forgive me. I know it's hard to comprehend both parts of me—what they did to me."

Suddenly she jerked away from him. Untangling from the sheets, she moved away from the bed. "Now you know! You'll never think of me the same way again. I know men! You will see my body and envision men rutting into me. You'll look at my face and see deception there always." Tears streamed down her face, her humiliation and pain exposed.

She turned away and went into the bathroom, slamming the door. He heard sobs, and then, too soon, she was quiet.

Dean jumped up. As he reached the door, his mind full of the things he would tell her to assure her she was wrong, Onoto emerged, cold, naked, and in total control.

Onoto came out of the bathroom full of contempt for Song and Suzi. David faced a stranger whose eyes were dead black emotionless beads of hate.

"I am Onoto. We have so much to talk about. So much to do." She reached for his hand and started toward the bed. He slapped her hard. Her head snapped back. Onoto glared, her body shook, and Suzi's tears came again.

In the small hours of the morning, as the false dawn made the room seem cold and dim, he continued to soothe Suzi. She laughed when he played the part of an eccentric German doctor pretending to look between

her legs with a magnifying glass, announcing, in broken English, that he could find no fingerprints there.

She explained how her relationship with him was helping her gain control of Song so she would have but one personality.

"Dean, tonight something happened—you saw that woman who came out of the john—I'm scared. There's another part. They planted someone else in me. My God, I didn't know. I'll never win. This is the first time I've been aware of ... of *Onoto*. Her name is Onoto, like my last name. Do you understand?"

He nodded. Understand? How can I. "I am trying, Suzi. Help me."

She told him of her plan, the way she was working to find out who did this to her and why. "But, Dean, whatever you believe, the dreams Song shared with you are real, they're mine! When I'm finally free I will just be me, Suzi. The Suzi you know."

He held her, not knowing how to help her, wanting to keep her safe and protect her.

"A man named Lord Ayers ... the Brits, think they control Song. But now I control her. They ... well someone controls Onoto ... I don't know how. I need to be the strongest part, me."

He wanted her to be the Suzi he knew, no one else. What happened to her, who she had become, was beyond his ability to comprehend.

"You've got to stop being the thing they made. I'll help you get free! Suzi, tell me how to help!"

She held him, aware she didn't deserve him. Aware he had already helped her more than he would ever know. Caring strongly gave her the strength she needed to win back her life. Wasn't that enough? Should she

hurt him this way in return? She should end their relationship and not torment him. And yet, she knew she would stay. She had to stay. She had to protect him, not let them kill him. Song used him to get information. Well, Suzi was altering that plan.

Suzi knew she could use Song to keep them at bay, to discover who and what they were. She relaxed, sure all would go as she wished. When she lowered her guard, a dim part of her consciousness registered a dark force hiding in the mists of her mind. *Onoto*. She sensed Onoto as if she were a ghost, a cold emotionless presence who wanted her dead.

Dean couldn't process all he heard. He smiled and gently touched her shoulder.

I'll be there for you Suzi. Too bad I couldn't be there when Mom needed help.

Chapter FOURTEEN

August, the fleeing month when D.C. empties its millions into the countryside and out along the coastal shores. The hub about which the world turns slows as the workers go on vacation. The heat and humidity make people who stay irritable and unreasonable, but only an expert could monitor the change. Dan Hill, analyst turned Deputy Director of the world's most comprehensive intelligence network understood, at least when he was drunk.

In his state of inebriation, he was aware three things had driven him to warp his mind with booze. Sally's announcement that she was going to

California to live and study at the Michelin Institute, the dog-eat-dog fight going on at the upper levels of the CIA, and Operation Cowboy.

He was glad to see Sally go. As for the fight at CIA, he stayed out of it so far, but come September he would have to commit one way or the other. The men leading the intelligence services of the Nation's most central agency were at war over the design of a new logo. Not that everyone didn't agree that the present one was too blah. What they couldn't agree upon was whether to add something on the shield - like missiles and satellites arrayed below the eagle's head. Or, they could design something more intellectual. An emblem containing books? Perhaps the image of an OSS Officer from WWII, instead of an eagle?

The third thing that drove him to drink was Operation Cowboy. Dean—Agent Fallout—was leaving for Hawaii and self-defense training at the end of the month. Gloria was too valuable to him, he couldn't let her go with Dean. The new agent, code named Goldie, the one his superiors called "*Vipress*," wasn't Dean's type at all. She was Swedish, buxom, and short. He was impressed by her amorality, but Dean would respond to someone younger, not a viper from the fifties. He must find someone soon. Without a handler, Dean could only be a tourist.

On Tuesday morning he was at his desk counseling Gloria, who kept looking toward the couch then back at him with soul-searching eyes.

"Sure Sally's gone," he said, clipping his words in an attempt to sound analytical. "But that doesn't mean I will compromise your position here and let you move in with me."

Gloria pretended to adjust her panty hose, seeming to straighten the seam as it ran up the back of her leg. He looked closely, there was no seam.

"What are you diddling with?"

"Not you, I tell you!"

"Gloria, honey, please help me for a moment." he paused long enough to know he had her attention.

"Who can we get to handle Dean?"

She thought a long time, clicking off names in her mind. Suddenly, she jumped to her feet.

"My roommate speaks French and went to Hong Kong once with her folks."

"Tanya? You mean you're thinking of Tanya Horowitz?" Before she could answer, he continued, "She would do it? She would forget her wardrobe, hair and nails, and eating at the most expensive places in town long enough to work for us?"

"I think so."

"You told me yourself she has an iron-clad rule that she never spreads her legs for anybody who doesn't have three Roman numerals after his name."

"Well, she wants to marry someone with bucks. What's wrong with that?"

"What's wrong? Maybe she has to get this Dean guy into bed to ... uh ... help him."

"Oh, she'd do that," Gloria said indignantly. "Tanya hasn't any morals, just strong financial instincts. We'd pay her well, wouldn't we? And then there's the travel. She would love that!" she paused and her mind

worked away behind her sparkling eyes. "Wait just a minute, you son-of-a-bitch, did you expect me to sleep with the guy?"

"Shit, Gloria, I never gave it a thought." his mind sped, "Honey, why do you think I wouldn't let you handle him?"

She cooed, as they rested for a few minutes on the couch.

On Friday, it was settled. Special operative Horowitz would be sent to Hawaii a week ahead of Dean. She would begin her own training as a physical therapist. She was assigned to Dean, with orders to establish a good relationship with him. A relationship the DDO described as: "One full of trust. One that establishes firmly in his mind that you are his handler."

As she swore her oath and told the DDO she would put her whole heart into her work, Dan caught himself wondering if anyone could ever get to her heart as he admired her amazing lungs.

"You better be right, the DCI taunted him. If you think you can run this operation out-of-house, I mean not in-house, I mean with outside people ..." he paused and picked at his nose. "Well, Mr. DDO, you better be right."

"It's the only way, George. Every other operative's cover is blown."

You still haven't read my goddamn report, you prick.

The DCI opened his desk drawer and pulled out a pinch bottle of scotch. "Let's drink to Operation Cowboy and agents Fallout and ... what did you say that woman's moniker would be?"

"PT for Physical Therapist."

"*Siempre!*" the DCI announced as he held his glass to the light.

"What do you mean *Siempre*?"

"*Salud!*" The DCI said, as he downed the shot and refilled his glass. Then under his breath he said, "I sure as hell didn't mean always."

Chapter FIFTEEN

Dean stood looking out the window. He was on the twenty-seventh floor of the Hotel Ilikai. Waikiki beach was just visible to his right. Diamond Head was supposed to be somewhere in the haze. Below, he could see a sea of rooftops, puffs of palm tops, and a colorful string of automobiles—like jewels in necklaces—slowly moving along the streets. In the distance the land rose away from the ocean. It looked black and barren. He hadn't imagined Hawaii as anything but green.

When he arrived, the red light on the telephone was lit. He fumbled with the phone, unable to get the office. Grimacing, he turned the pages of his Services Guide, dialed 6 as it instructed, and listened to a recorded message. A car would pick him up at 9:30 the next day. It wasn't Hill's voice. Someone else left the message. He was too naive to be suspicious, but that didn't matter—yet.

Upon arrival, Tanya was taken to the Health Club used by the CIA as an Oahu Front. Once there a woman with biceps and pecs so hard they were like smooth brass castings got her a white PT's uniform, a small nurse's cap, and a large plastic squeeze bottle oozing some kind of coconut oil. The woman turned her over to other white coats in a room with a paper-covered massage table.

By nightfall Tanya sat in a sticky vinyl chair next to the table, exhausted. A man, who looked like a TV wrestler, his name was Timmy, finished lecturing her and was preparing to leave. The lady on the table moved, groaned, and came to a sitting position with her blue-veined feet swinging limply a foot from the floor.

"I don't know if I can move," she announced, rubbing her shoulders and the tops of her thighs. "Honey, you've got to cut your goddamned nails."

"She'll learn, you've got ta encourage her and help her Ma," Timmy said in a high-pitched voice.

They had three more days to turn this soft city girl into what could pass for a Physical Therapist.

"You got work ta do tonight!" Timmy ordered. "You memorize five muscle groups a day and them ten other therapy terms, and by the first of next week, you'll be able ta talk like one of us."

Tanya was fed a health food they called *soy-poi* and delivered to a white, two story, flat-roofed apartment house somewhere in Honolulu. She fell asleep and dreamed of white beaches, a glorious sun, and waves breaking against her thighs. For the next week she might as well have been home in Maryland. The only parts of Hawaii she saw were from the plane, the cars that took her between the health club and bed, and a Waikiki poster on the Health Club wall. She complained a lot, but was tougher than any of them.

All three parts of Suzi knew everything Dean knew about his job as courier. He answered each question Suzi asked without hesitation. The

most disturbing thing was that he knew so little and trusted so much. When Song reported to Lord Ayers, he hunched his shoulders and shook his head.

"There's a sour note somewhere in all this. If the teacher is as you claim him to be—just a pawn—then who is yanking his chain, and why?"

Song assured him that when she found out, they would have the operation cold. "Leave the mark to me. I can get whatever we need from him. When he learns something, we will know it right away."

"That's a hell of a way to run an operation. You don't suppose they're leading us on? He answered his own question before she could speak.

"Bloody hell, they are leading us! And on a merry chase at that. It has to be, it figures. There is only one conclusion I can reach! Hill is a front for the real DDO. The teacher is a key player in another game. We accidentally blew that cover. We'd never have known otherwise. Keep on him Song. He's important."

Song stared at the animated little man. Was he right? He'd never jumped to conclusions before without being right. He hadn't risen to the top of British Counterintelligence by being wrong about such things.

"You see it, don't you?" he looked beyond her then directly into her eyes. "Hill has operatives in the field who don't work for him. They work for some other faction in the Agency. The CIA has gone undercover."

Onoto listened to Song's control. It could be true. It probably was. She would have to take a risk and flag her control. The woman in brown would know what to do. It didn't matter now that she had control of Song and Suzi.

Onoto carefully placed the comb into the knot of hair twisted and stacked high on her head. The comb provided the finishing touch. She looked in the mirror oblivious to her beauty. Wearing her hair up was a signal she had information. She drove to the University Hills shopping center and surveyed the line of specialty stores before entering the May Company. At the lingerie counter, she ran her hand over a silky thing designed to do everything but keep one warm. A small, dark-haired lady came to her side and spoke softly in Japanese.

Onoto turned and looked down at her contact. She held the negligee out between them as if she were showing the flimsy thing to the older woman. As she fingered the silk, she reported Ayers' conclusion that DDO Dan Hill was a front for a new CIA operation which was building a network of operatives. The small woman reached out and felt the silken thing, bowed, and left. Onoto left with the negligee boxed and jammed into a large bag. Song could use it or give it to Suzi. She didn't know why Suzi liked such things. She didn't care.

Chapter SIXTEEN

By the end of the first *Tai Kuan Do* session every muscle in David's body had been pulled, knotted, and bruised. Only hot showers and gentle massage could remove the lactic acid poisoning his muscles. He limped to the showers, dropped the nylon trunks, and untangled the jock strap from his body hair. He leaned into the hot force of water, taking deep breaths. After a very short time, he heard a "click" somewhere in the wall. Cold water blasted him. His time was up.

Painfully, he bent to dry his legs. He could barely work the towel across his back. He dried his head, straightened fringes of hair, anchored the towel about his waist, and headed to the door marked PHYSICAL THERAPY.

Tanya was ready. In her most business-like way, she motioned him to the table. She wasn't too frightened to notice that her work involved a man much younger than she had guessed. His picture made him look older. She'd been prepared for a man in his forties.

She moved around the table trying to look professional. She was afraid to touch him. She squirted a glob of massage oil onto his back. He jumped.

"Damn that's cold! Can you do something with the knot under my left shoulder blade?"

He hadn't noticed her. He saw her as a blur of white. It wasn't until she turned him over on his back, began massaging his chest, stood behind his head leaning over his face, that he became aware his therapist bore qualities that more than made-up for her weak hands.

Suzi languished in her Denver apartment. It had been two weeks since David left. She thought of their last weeks together. He hadn't rejected her. The next day after she confessed to him, she asked if her past made a difference. He said it did, he wouldn't lie to her. It made a difference because a part of her still suffered. It made a difference because, in a part of his mind he couldn't control, he imagined the mutilation of her psyche and the degradation of her body. Still, he told her, that's not the you I know.

What I see is a body untainted, a mind struggling to be one again. He assured her that he liked what he saw, the person he knew.

She missed him. She decided to fly to Japan and meet him. Before she could act, something dark rose inside her mind. She became confused and disoriented. The phone rang. She had been dozing. She caught it on the third ring.

"Click, click-click, click-click, click. Obey!" a voice commanded.

"Onoto. What is it?"

"Go now! Whatever you do don't let him see you! Fly via Anchorage. Hair up. Change your makeup. Reservations for Song Osoto. Not Onoto, Osoto. New Otani Hotel. Envelope at the airport Pan Am counter. Be there at 5:45 p.m. tomorrow your time.

Suzi awoke. She was going to follow David to Asia. She went to sleep that night imagining how surprised he would be to see her. Onoto took over. Suzi wouldn't wake up again for a long time. What Onoto and Song didn't suspect was that Suzi knew what Onoto was ordered to do. It was a major breakthrough for her and the beginning of ... an end?

PT Tanya massaged David Dean three times a day for two weeks. His body grew hard, his reflexes quicker. Her hands grew strong, her fingers sinewy steel. She lost two inches in her bustline, an inch from her waist and both gluteus medius. Her gluteus maximuses hardened into tight little buns.

The waves cast them back and filled their bathing suits with particles of sand that invaded and abraded. They lay on the hot sand absorbing Hawaiian sunlight.

"I got a letter today I want you to read." Tanya said, reaching for her beach bag and withdrawing a blue envelope.

"Who's it from?"

"My roommate, Gloria, back in Maryland."

"Why should I read it?"

"Read it and you'll know, silly."

He took the blue envelope from her and smelled it. "Damn, perfumed and everything."

He removed the blue pages and began reading. Suddenly he brought his body to a sitting position with a loud exclamation. "Shit! How long have you known?"

"Keep reading."

When he finished he read parts of the letter again.

"You're my handler now?" he spluttered, looking at the kittenish girl next to him. "Your roommate, Gloria, works for Hill? We get our orders via the U.S. mail in perfumed envelopes? You go with me? I'm a *hot property*? This is too fucking unreal to be true."

"It's true. Isn't it neat?"

"Neat? I agree to carry some mail for a government prick and suddenly I'm getting orders via goofy roommates and perfumed letters."

"They thought a long time about how to communicate with you ... us. It was Gloria's idea. Who on earth would intercept perfumed letters on

colored stationary sent between two roommates? Hill said it was the best cover he ever heard of. They'd never thought of using the mail."

"Hill! Where is that son-of-a-bitch? He told me he would handle me."

"Danny Hill is now Deputy Director of Operations for the CIA. Isn't that just great! Danny promoted Gloria to be his aide and Gloria got me this job. Isn't that just dreamy! It pays to have friends in high places ... my mother taught me that. It's not who you know, it's who you ... Oh you know!"

"This letter says I'm to leave for Tokyo on Sunday. Have you got your ticket? When do you leave?"

"I have a ticket just like yours, I think. I can fly unlimited miles for a year as long as I don't backtrack. I leave Saturday night. I'm not supposed to contact you until I get my orders."

"Where are you staying?"

"New Otani Hotel."

"Me too."

Much later:

"I didn't know sand could get into so many places."

"It's that damned coconut oil."

"I didn't taste any coconut oil!"

"And I don't think you got all the sand."

"It's perfect!" Hill announced to the DCI as he sat before him. He thinks he's carrying messages to them. In fact, he's carrying messages from them."

"I really don't understand. What messages?"

"Look George, we know foreign agents won't pass information to our guys because they know our operatives are watched. Too many of their guys are down because the KGB followed a trail that led from our guys right back to them. They have no safe way of receiving or passing intelligence."

"Sure, that's what you wrote about."

I'll be damned. He finally read my analysis.

"It's true. Now, we have an operative whom nobody knows and he thinks he's delivering mail that isn't important."

"Is that what you told the guy?"

"Our agent Fallout—and others as we find them—will be told they're passing false information to double-agents, to confuse the enemy. Then, if they are made, captured or talk, the enemy will learn nothing and"

The DCI interrupted. "You mean 'made, captured *and* talk', don't you?"

"What? And ... or ... whatever. Fallout hands-over an empty envelope. The foreign agent hands him a brochure with a microdot filled with intelligence. When he gets to neutral territory, he mails it. No one is the wiser. Even if he's caught, the packet contains information a tourist like our guy would send home to his girlfriend, in this case Gloria's roommate, who is really his handler and isn't at home, but they don't know that. The intelligence is a microdot—probably on the stamp."

"Why not have the foreign agent drop the information in the mail himself?"

"I thought of that. He can't risk it. His country monitors all outgoing mail. If he addressed it to us or someone connected with us, they would

intercept it. Besides, even if he mailed it, we don't want him, any of their guys, to know how we forward information. Think about it! What if some of them are working for the other side?"

"Are you sure about this?" the DCI asked, obviously confused. Something seemed wrong with Hill's plan"

"Has the President approved this?" Hill changed the subject.

"No, I was hoping you would explain it to him."

Hill gulped. "Oh no Sir. No Sir. I'm not that kind of guy."

"What do you mean?"

"I won't steal your thunder. I won't ride on your coattails. Sir, this is your operation and you deserve the merit for it. He has to hear it from your lips." He paused, relieved at his fast thinking. "But I thank you for the opportunity, George. I may have blown my one chance to meet the new President."

Later:

Dan knocked and entered the DCI's office. The Director seemed harried. A four by five-foot placard with the current emblem of the Central Intelligence Agency hung from the wall over the back of the liquor sideboard. The great white crest with the Rorschach inkblot stain and the cartoon-like head of an eagle looking west, made the patch seem a bit too basic. It looked like something done for a high school club on a five-dollar budget.

On the opposite wall, another placard hung. It bore a circle filled with electronic devices: Satellites, laser-beamed rockets, and things too fierce to fathom. In cardinal red and psychedelic letters projected by lines from the

background were the sacred three letters. In the outer circle, a halo effect was achieved with lines and colors. Floating therein was a motto. On the left: "America is Safe". On the left, right, and around to the left again:

"Thank You, Central Intelligence Agency!"

"What do you think?" the DCI pointed to the proposed emblem.

"It needs more work, Sir. The words in the outer circle don't balance. The right side is too hard to fit in, Sir."

"I have to decide whether to keep the old one or go with this new," he motioned toward the placard on his left. Frankly, I don't like either. Won't someone come up with a decent emblem."

"Sir, I need to clear Operation Cowboy's mode of operation with you."

"Danny, Danny! Didn't you go over the operation with me?"

"Yes Sir."

"Did I object to anything?"

"No Sir."

"Is there some other problem?"

"No Sir ... I ... er."

"I delegate. I delegate because this job's too big for one man. I delegate because I have a team I trust, a team of good ... well, just now one good man. A team I'm selecting. You are my team Dan. That leaves me with a choice. I get new men or I back the one I have."

"Yes Sir!"

"Cowboy is moving down the greased skids and will soon be launched. I'll formally authorize it and your ass will be covered."

"Sir, Cowboy is already underway. Fallout has been in the field almost a month."

"Sure Dan. And you say you find the new shield unbalanced?"

That afternoon a letter signed by the DCI gave the DDO authorization to begin Operation Cowboy. A note, handwritten in the upper margin urged him to proceed with haste. "National Security and the future of our Intelligence depend on you!" George scrawled in his peculiar hand. Dan sat in wonder.

Maybe he means Intelligence Agencies?

Chapter SEVENTEEN

The flight to Tokyo was pleasant and uneventful. The trip to the New Otani Hotel was difficult. The taxi was a tiny tin box on wheels. David Dean jammed himself in, butt-first, but he couldn't get his knees and feet in. He twisted and contorted, got his feet in, then knees going left he slid his rear in far enough to get the door closed. Each bounce of the car was painful. At the hotel the driver had to pry his legs around so he could get out.

The gardens of the New Otani were Japanese formal. The edifice, right up to its revolving dome replete with bare-breasted dancers, was resplendent in stainless steel and glass. Dean registered, found his tiny, uninteresting room, and unpacked. Within minutes claustrophobia chased him out into the hot night. Outside, for the first time since his arrival, he had room to move his arms and legs freely. Everything in this country was built for small people. His muscles ached from being confined.

On the long, circular, glassed-in veranda, a small woman in her fifties, dressed in a coarsely woven brown suit watched him explore the paths, pools, and high arched bridges.

Near a pagoda a figure stood in shadows. He puffed a cigarette pretending to enjoy the night. He was sent by British Intelligence to keep an eye on the operative called Song and the schoolteacher. The American hadn't made contact with Song. He assumed the schoolteacher had come out for a meeting with her.

In a room on the tenth floor Onoto slept. Her dreams were filled with ghostly images. She chased her father into a brightly lit room with windows for walls. In the room she met her twin, only this girl was only ten or eleven years old. The girl was beautiful with long black hair and a sweet-innocent look. Another twin entered the room, then another. The phone rang. The dream images crept back into her subconscious.

In fifteen minutes Onoto was outside walking through the garden, staying in the shadows. Song's mark was gone. He's back inside, she thought. As she returned to her room the woman in brown passed her in the corridor. "Damn you Onoto, stay out of sight, he'll think you're Suzi."

The old woman passed her before the question formed. She turned and walked rapidly back toward the older woman. The corridor was empty, but she was smart. She bent as if retrieving something from the posh carpet. "You dropped your earring." she said in Japanese." Then in English she whispered, "Why did you call me out?"

The woman in brown was obviously surprised.

"I never called you out!"

"Someone did!" Onoto whispered.

"I'll find out," her control snarled as she bowed and walked away, pretending to replace the fallen earring. The exchange had been a good act, but there was no one to appreciate it.

Dean was tired. The twelve-hour jet trip from Hawaii had been uneventful—even boring. He had read and slept, but not the kind of reading one remembers, or the kind of sleep that soothes the body. In the tiny room, the most expensive hotel room he ever stayed in, he tossed, rolled and fought claustrophobia. He was up as the gray light countered the glow of the city in thick smog. He showered in the tiny cubicle, barely able to raise his arms and rinse the soap from his pits.

He opened the window, almost a porthole, and let dirty light into the room as he opened Frommer's: Japan On Fifteen To Twenty Dollars A Day. He read through the list of recommended hotels and selected one. He would move to the Hotel Daiei, listed as: "A European Style Hotel. Clean. Central location. Manager speaks English."

Compared to the Otani, the Daiei had spacious rooms. It was in a part of Tokyo rebuilt after an urban renewal project run by Jimmy Doolittle. Veneers of yellow-brown lacquer, deposited by human pollution, aged the streets and buildings. The open markets, rusting tin roofs, and jumble of tiny humans produced an exotic, unfamiliar aura.

If any one of the four agents assigned to follow him had been more observant, they would have seen three other anxious agents searching for him. All underestimated their mark. He was a professional! He disappeared into the seething Tokyo traffic and was lost to them.

Two people in Japan knew his itinerary. Suzi and Tanya had copies. Suzi couldn't be reached, not that Onoto would think of trying. Tanya had arranged to meet with Dean in two days. She would contact him at Chufu-Shi, a suburb of Tokyo and home of the American School in Japan, ASIJ.

Dean wandered the streets near his hotel. Free of the synthetic world surrounding the Otani, he absorbed the sights, sounds and smells. People rushed about trying to see ahead and pick easier pathways. He walked along easily, literally head and shoulders above the crowd. When hungry, he searched-out small restaurants whose windows were filled with plates piled high with plastic replicas of food. The waiters took his orders as he pointed to the plate he desired. Plates heaped with steaming rice and vegetables satisfied his hunger. He avoided meat. The many colored and banded snakes that steamed on top of some rice dishes did little for his appetite. The fish tanks filled with horribly mutilated fish waiting to have another fillet cut away, made his stomach cringe.

The manager of the hotel was helpful. In time, with the use of multi-colored maps, he was able to understand the workings of the city's vast transportation system. On Monday morning Dean ventured into the subways, caught a train and transferred when necessary. He got used to riding chest-deep in people, packed like Vienna sausages in a can. He was on his way to Chufu-Shi, he guessed. If not, someone would point him in the right direction. It didn't really matter, he was having a ball. The train left the tunnels and stop-started its way through the suburban jungles.

If anyone told Dean that he was the subject of one of the largest furtive search operations since WWII, that agents from deep-cover assignments all over Asia were passing through customs at Tokyo's Haieda

Airport with his picture in their pocket, or that while he was leisurely enjoying a train ride in the Tokyo suburbs, very angry people were out to capture or kill him, he would have thought them daft.

She waited for him on a bench at the commuter station. A gray Ford Fairlane with a non-talking Navy non-com at the wheel, had dropped her off more than three hours before. The Ford parked, waiting for her, several blocks away.

She reread Gloria's letter, "Tanya, after you meet Dean go directly to the car. It will be waiting to take you back to the hotel." She wondered how much time Gloria thought it would take to meet Dean and how Gloria knew she was waiting.

Trains came and went. The station emptied of identical little men in interchangeable dark suits and maroon ties. It began to fill and empty with little fat housewives carrying net shopping bags and mothers tugging scrubbed children dressed in identical blue uniforms and wearing blue caps.

For an hour she sat patiently, a cold knot forming in her tummy.

Where is he? Did he arrive in Japan? Is he lost? Has he been captured?

She fidgeted and fussed with her umbrella. She stood and leaned against a post. She sat and tried to calm herself. The ninety-degree heat and the ninety-nine per cent humidity wilted her. Droplets of moisture ran from her fingertips. She was miserable.

Another train arrived. She didn't look up. It was going into Tokyo, going the wrong way. When she heard him call her name she jumped. All she could think was that she looked awful.

He was thinking her appearance added something wonderful to an already perfect day. He didn't hide his surprise. He was taken aback when she wouldn't let him hug her.

"Where have you been?"

"Lost."

"Oh my God! I thought something happened to you." She handed him Gloria's latest blue perfumed letter.

His orders were simple. He was to introduce himself and do whatever he was there to do at ASIJ. The school arranged for him to stay at nearby Christian College. He would take his meals at the golf course. Tanya would contact him when they needed him. Until then, he was to do whatever business he came there to do.

"I won't move out here yet," he told Tanya. He used a tone of voice that let her know there wouldn't be any debate about his decision.

"Why not? I have a car and driver."

"I like where I'm staying and I love riding these trains."

"Will you move out here soon?"

How can I avoid writing Gloria and exposing his stubborn side?

"In a day or two. When I do move out here will you come with me?"

"I don't think I'm supposed to," she paused and pursed her lips. "They didn't say anything about me visiting you. They just told me to stay at the Otani until further orders." She thought a moment and, in a dejected voice said, "You're staying in a men's dorm. I don't think I'll be welcome there."

He caressed her cheek with the palm of his hand. "You let me work on that. I'll see you here Wednesday night."

"Oh David, that's not possible. I won't have a driver."

He thought a moment, then smiled assuredly at her. "I'll pick you up at the Otani, show you how the subways work."

Chapter EIGHTEEN

Acieto Onoto was angry. The rolls of skin on the back of his head and neck grew dull red. He pulled at his straggly beard as he focused his boar's eyes on those around him. His barrel chest heaved and growled, "Find him! Alive!"

The others, dressed in dark brown, watched the short black hair on his head stand on end as he wrinkled his forehead and glared. They knew that sign. Bowing and back-stepping, they got out fast.

Brown-suited pawns spread the word to every part of Honshu. The American spy was to be apprehended. In the New Otani, it was whispered to Onoto. She nodded and waited for a lead. Her wait was long, but fruitful.

Acieto was the only Ainu working for Mitusuka Industries. He grew up in the forests of Northern Hokkaido. The extreme prejudice of the Japanese people against his race and Caucasoid heredity subjected him to hateful abuse as a boy. He developed into a creature of gourmandistic self-abuse, cupidity, and malignity. When preparation for war created opportunity, he was sent to Hokadate. In the Hokadate shipyards he learned about controlling men. He was cruel and totally dependable. When the war broke-out and prisoners needed to be interrogated or enslaved, the

great industrial giant used him. In return, he was allowed to claw his way into the ken of company managers seeking personal gain. They used him to help cut their way to the top. He rose with them.

When the war ended his name was third on a list of most wanted "internal" criminals. That made him interesting to MacArthur's command. Like the German SS officers being integrated into the services of the conquering, he and two of his shadows were "disappeared" so they could serve a new master. The records of his atrocities lay in a file protected until the year 2025 by a blue band and the words TOP SECRET. The file lay, with many others, in a deep locker at Langley.

The Occupation forces never suspected that the industrial giant they rebuilt was run by employers of Acieto Onoto. Employers who thought they owned him. Innocuous men who had been mid-level managers until the great army of occupation handed them control of Mitusuka Industries.

It was easily assumed by his masters that it was impossible for a creature like Acieto Onoto to settle with a woman—live with her on a daily basis. Such a pairing would not fit his psychological profile. When he moved-in with the Chin-Aussie girl company analysts were sent scrambling to understand her motives and her past. What they found made the union understandable.

She was the bastard of a Chinese whore and an oft-drunk Aussie vagabond. By rights, she might have received Australian citizenship but such rights weren't granted bastard girls of half Chinese descent. By rights, she had a father and a mother, but her parents abused her before selling her to a merchant of misery. The life she lived was as sick as her body. Her gut

was tight with worms. Her mucous, often red with flecks of blood. Her puberty, years delayed, her growth too slow. Then the Japanese came.

She presented herself well and found an officer who thought her claims of Japanese heritage true. Within months she was well-fed. In a year she reached puberty. In two years, she found her way to Honshu as a helper on a vessel carrying bauxite and wounded prisoners to the Land of the Rising Sun.

She loved everything Nipponese. She knew the language well enough to translate Aussi-English into the chosen tongue. In time, she found work helping Acieto Onoto's men interrogate Australian prisoners. She took pleasure as she worked with Acieto to break men. They were always together.

Her parents never named her. She called herself *Me*. In time, it became *Mei*, now Mia. She passed for Japanese-Malay. She took Onoto's abuse as love. To their vile union daughters were born.

Year after year tiny things without penises were pulled screaming from her and turned over to someone else to raise. Six years worth of girls were thrust onto a family that owed Onoto. Three lived. It was a poor family. The woman was good, the father a loving and tender protector of the children.

Then, years later, even while she thanked her Emperor-God for her barrenness, a new child formed inside her and came into the world with hair on his head that stood on end as he wrinkled his forehead. He was the last thing she saw before she died. Bowing and back-stepping, everybody in attendance got out of the way and a lady in brown handed the boy to Acieto Onoto.

The parent who survived the bloody birth rejoiced. As an offering to Mitusuka Industries, he gave his three forgotten daughters to the service of the giant. At fourteen, his oldest was modified and prepared to better serve. Each year, for three years, another of the daughters of Onoto was offered up. The last had been seven years ago.

The child offerings were received as tokens of Onoto's allegiance. At the top of the management echelons at Mitusuka, sat two old men who believed they knew Onoto well. The old men cherished the value of their knight. They prized his loyalty gift of three daughters, whom they altered, one each year, so they alone controlled them. They moved Acieto Onoto around for the benefit of the Company.

After WWII, Mitusuka grew to do what war and generals failed to accomplish. As noxious evil its tentacles spread around the world. The natural inherent superiority of their race led them out to conquer through economics. Acieto Onoto insured solidity at home. The company's enemies disappeared before the winds he blew.

The old ones placed the Daughters of Onoto on three continents. They used them as servants who would help clear the way for economic conquest and the servitude for which all inferior races were destined.

The two delicate old men, interchangeable husks created by centuries of limited genetic material, thought they controlled Onoto. They did not comprehend the magma of his hate for them. They believed they destroyed the contamination of his Ainu soul. Conceit made it impossible for them to understand that his hate of them had boiled since he was a small boy. His hatred for his tormentors—the master race—gave him strength to infiltrate their ranks and gain power over them. After the war his hatred led him to

the American Embassy and an alliance with those who believed they defeated his tormentors. He had information about Mitusuka Industries to trade. In exchange, the Americans gave him information and money.

Dean spent the day in the Shinjuku-Ku district. He unraveled the mystery of the color-coded coffee houses. In purple surroundings, he lounged back into a deep, theater-like chair and listened to hours of classical music. The coffee cost seven hundred yen. It was the best \$2.00 he ever spent. Only once, and that as he entered, was he bothered.

The subway system whisked him around Tokyo like a wraith traveling through walls. Soon, he could pop-up at will into environments as outlandish as Japan could offer. For a country boy his first time in the big city was more than thrilling. At 5:00, he popped-out at the foot of the New Otani's ramparts. Tanya was waiting inside, looking through the glass for him. She saw him as he approached the great front steps. He saw her, stopped, and waved her to him.

As she hugged him and put her arm in his, other eyes were on them. Onoto's wait was over. She watched him sweep the girl away. She hurried to follow, focusing on the pair as they pushed against a stream of sidewalk traffic then headed underground. The image of the two burned into her mind. She must not lose them!

Unexpectedly Onoto was dizzy. She fought against the force within her, but couldn't overcome it. Then Suzi was the one rushing toward the staircase. Her will was strong. In her growing ken she knew what Onoto knew. She processed the horrors and cold-bloodedness of her other-self. She understood. It changed her.

From deep inside Song lost power and form. She no longer mattered. Suzi caught the body-jammed car directly behind the one entered by the laughing pair. She rode into the evening with them, her heart beating pain into her brain. She was experiencing the power of jealousy for the first time.

The train click-clacked from station to station. The human cargo thinned into small clusters within the car. She sat back, her hands struggling to remove the comb that held her hair. At each stop she studied the emerging sea of people. Far into the suburbs she saw David and the girl emerge from the train and make their way down the roofed platform. Chufu-Shi, she noted. Onoto was sapping her energy, trying to take over again. She couldn't go on. If she got too tired, Onoto would win.

I can follow the girl to him, wherever he is.

Suzi rode one more stop and detrained. She caught the next train back into Tokyo. She knew how to find David. She chewed on the fact that he had a fickle side she hadn't suspected. She hated the girl with venom. She would deal with that betrayal, but first she must save his life. She twisted and curled her hair onto her head once again. To do what she must, Suzi would pretend to be Onoto.

Chapter NINETEEN

The men's room in the new building at Langley had six urinals. They hung in a row along a tiled wall, about fourteen inches apart. Even if there was a line, no two men peed at the same time. It was indicative of the secretiveness of the Agency. The analysts and agents were all too unsure of

themselves to stand side-by-side. They were not used to being compared. They hunched over themselves to insure it wouldn't happen here.

The higher-ups used private johns, but once, while out inspecting the building, DDO Hill popped into the men's room and, without regard for another standing there, faced the wall four urinals down and did his thing. Word traveled around and around the new building. Beware! The *Dodo* is unpredictable, unorthodox; dangerous!

When he learned from Gloria what they thought, Hill found their observations flattering. He liked to think he was a loose cannon rolling about the Agency. A cannon the DCI believed would right the ship. Gloria didn't dare tell him that the girls called him *Fuzznuts*. He was on a need-to-know basis. Besides, how would they know?

"Get word to Fallout that he is to go north to Niigata. Leave Saturday by train," Hill dictated as Gloria sat writing shorthand squiggles on her baby-blue stationary. "Tell him he will be contacted there by someone who will make a remark about the moon, and hand him a packet. He'll say he's from the Japan National Tourism Agency. Tell Dean to mail the packet first opportunity."

Hill paced around the office. Gloria wrote furiously and finished with an exclamation.

"Damn it, Danny! Don't talk so fast. I'm writing shorthand you know, and it is hard for me."

"Sorry Glory, do you know how important this is?" He was talking as much to himself as to her. "A guy of ours we thought we lost years ago has surfaced. He has information about Mitusuka."

"About who?" she interrupted.

"A giant company that has spread itself all over the world. A Japanese company that has long been suspected of unfair-business practices."

"I thought the SEC or something was supposed to watch outfits like that."

"No," he said, stopping in front of her and scratching a scab on the top of his hand. "Nobody watches ... we watch a little. That's the problem."

She licked the scented envelope and went looking for a stamp. Half an hour later, she returned to notify Dan that she had to leave the building.

"Leave?" he asked, puzzled.

"There are no stamps allowed here anymore. They've been outlawed. We have to use the metering machines. Metered mail with the government stamp might look suspicious on my letter. Besides, it has to say: 'Federal Law Prohibits The Use ...'"

He interrupted. "Go get stamps! Get back as soon as you can! And bring food! One more week and we're in the new building!"

British intelligence was on the move. An agent from deep cover, known only to three NSA men, those on the American's bigot list, and every enemy field agent, made his way across the Otani's foyer. As he passed Suzi, he nodded and whispered loudly: "Song, follow me to room 1020 in fifteen minutes!"

Every agent in the lobby tagged the contact. Word rumbled through the networks of secret services that the Brits were involved. Puzzled analysts typed memos. Powerful men in high places felt the heat.

When working for Lord Ayer certain rules were followed. Song knew them well. Room 1020 meant someone would call her in her room at 10:20.

It was a sophisticated system of information exchange that worked well every time, or so she was told. She went directly to her room. Five stereotypical agents—all undercover operatives masquerading as bored businessmen—stationed themselves on the tenth floor. As each attained cover, four others moved to keep him in sight. Embarrassed, their cover blown, they reported to those who controlled them. Four were ordered back to Haieda and their points-of-origin. One was sent to Niigata.

When the phone rang, she picked it up on the half ring. A proper voice said: "Miss Song are you aware the largest undercover manhunt in recent history is underway? Are you aware the teacher you gave us in Denver has given us all the slip?"

"Not all, Sir," she said, preening her nails as she held the receiver shoulder-to-cheek. "The teacher has never been lost!"

"Not lost? Not lost? What in bloody hell—excuse my language madam—do you mean?"

"I never lost him. I know right where he is. I've been following orders exactly as they were given to me."

"I say, that's really the truth is it?"

"Yes, it is. Is there anything else?"

"No ... yes ... er, I'll get back to you. Don't lose him love, don't lose him!"

As soon as the connection to Song's room was cut the operator dialed "9" and waited for an outside line.

"Well?"

"She never lost him!"

"Mushy-mushy. Mushy-mushy. The Brits have him, Hai!. They never lost him."

"Operation's secure Sir. The Brits have him," the hotel telephone operator reported on a direct line. Acieto Onoto grinned, his face in a pleasant scowl. He broke the connection as he handed the phone to an aide.

"Call them off!"

People in brown rushed to make contact with their operatives.

Within hours the manhunt was over, David Dean delivered a very tired and grass-stained Ms. Horowitz to her hotel and Suzi lavished in a hot bath. In Niigata, a woman explained to Acieto Onoto that they still didn't know where the American CIA operative was. The powerful man grinned and snarled: "It really don't matter no more to me," or the equivalent in Japanese.

Chapter TWENTY

His physical therapist had a body that wouldn't quit. She sat before him showing off her well-defined physique, at least the top of it. She wore a white, lacy, half-slip with nothing underneath it.

"If I tighten my serratus anterior like this, they do something to my pectoralis majors, like this ..."

"My God! Do that again!"

Once before, in *Penthouse Magazine*, he had seen breasts like hers. They stood frozen on the page, firm and insolent, stapled there forever. Tanya's had life! Minds of their own. They firmed and cupped and

"I can't believe it. And all of this since we left the States?"

"I exercise all the time. I have so much time to kill."

"Show me some more!"

Late that evening, they walked the golf course greens and fairways, hand-in-hand.

"What is it you do during the days?"

"Sight-see."

"Really, Davy, what do you do? Why are you here?"

"I'm studying."

"Sure you are!"

"I am! I'm traveling to learn about the world ... people. I'm here because I can't believe what I read anymore. The schools—the colleges and universities—don't teach about the real world."

"You're serious, aren't you?"

"I took over my own education. This is where it led. I'm seeking the sights and sounds of knowledge ... the feel of it. Wisdom, I hope."

"Wow! That's really heavy, Davy. Do you think there are people on Mars?" She caught him off guard, as usual.

The minute I try to express how I really feel it gets too heavy for her.

He retracted and closed the door on a long-term relationship.

"I'm certain there are, or soon will be."

They walked back to the dorm through a moonlit campus still closed for the summer.

"Did you come here or did they send you here?"

"I came here on my own. I pre-arranged contacts in American and or English-speaking schools so I would have a base every place I visit. Sometimes I teach in exchange for their help getting me into the national schools."

"Why? What's so special about schools?"

"Where else can you read the pulse of a nation's past, present, and future?"

"I didn't think it mattered," she said. She thought about it for a few moments until she lost the thought entirely.

She stood, looking at him in the moonlight.

"I never was with a bald man before ... I mean I never knew. Bald is beautiful!" The moonlight on his head and face gave his skin an ivory hue. "You're like a statue of ... marble. In the moonlight ... tonight ... I mean, you're beautiful."

Her buttons were free.

"And you," he cupped her in his hands, "you know, bare is beautiful!"

"I'll leave Friday as planned," Dean told Tanya at their next meeting. "My schedule was set months ago. I'm leaving for Sapporo on Friday. I'll stop off in Niigata if they like, but on Friday, not Saturday. What possible difference can it make anyway?"

Tanya was in tears. She held the rumpled blue message in her hand.

"I'll have to write them and tell them. I'll have to Davy, you make me feel like I'm betraying you."

"Betraying me? Bull! Tanie," he called her Tanie when he patronized her, "you write and tell them. I want them to know."

Her letter was carefully worded. She didn't want them to be mad at him. It was posted that day. It arrived in Maryland three days later. Gloria gave it to Dan on the fifth day. By that time, Dean was already through Niigata and in Hakodate.

Suzi Song Onoto had plans of her own. She contacted the British agent who passed her the message. Using him as a conduit, she informed Lord Ayers that a brunette staying at the Otani, name of Horowitz, was a DIA operative trying to get at the teacher. She made the part up about Horowitz working for Defense Intelligence. It seemed like a good idea at the time.

The British agent wired Ayers immediately. His message was carefully coded using the latest version of their Scrambled Eggs system. As he held the codebook on his knees and encoded the message the overseas operator became impatient. "Sir, please write-out your message before you call!"

When the message was finally on its way to the Isles, a teletype in MI headquarters Bristol, copied it. The message, jumbled by the secret code, printed-out as a tangle of letters and numbers. Within minutes, a young Lieutenant checked the message's origin, selected the correct decoding manual and wrote-out the message for his superiors. A MI-2 Colonel interpreted the message as best he could and had it sent, steaming over the lines to Washington. On its way the message woke a teletype machine in the

basement of FBI headquarters. The FBI operative in charge notified his superior and gave him a brief synopsis of the message. In doing so he was overheard by a mole from the CIA. The mole reported directly to the DCI.

When the DCI arrived for work at 9:00, Friday morning, two TOP SECRET EYES ONLY file folders lay on his desk. One was in a red barred folder. The other was in a folder with blue bars.

At 10:30 the DCI sat before the DDO. What he reported was not good news. He scowled and made clicking noises inside his closed mouth.

"Operation Cowboy is in trouble. Someone got to your operative Fallout." He looked accusingly at Hill. "I have it from verified sources—from two independent sources—that things are not as they should be." He handed the folders to Hill and sat back.

Dan Hill opened the first folder. No emotion escaped as he read.

BRIT CODESCAN TKO-LDN THURSDAY PM. STOP. MI agent 'teacher' contact Horowitz known. STOP.

Dan's eyes grew bigger, but he refused to communicate his surprise to the man watching his reaction. He closed the file and opened the other.

INTERNAL SECURITY INTERCEPT. FBI RPT. LDN-DC. THU AM. Agt Horowitz identified. Un-named operative "teacher" in danger. MI operative. STOP.

Dan carefully closed and aligned the two folders, enjoying his moment. He placed the folders on the DCI's desk. The DCI let loose.

"It's blown! We failed. We had one chance and you blew it!"

"Horowitz is ours George, there's no problem."

"No problem!" the DCI shouted, his voice at the high end of the scale.

"No problem."

His superior leaned forward; mouth open.

Dan put an empty look on his face. "Tanya Horowitz handles Fallout. The Brits made her. So what?"

"So what? the DCI asked. "What about the references to MI?"

"Sir, the DIA—MI report to you. As coordinating officer can't you find out how Defense Intelligence is involved?"

The DCI sat back. Dan's question hit a nerve—tweaked some axon-dendrite synaptic chemistry in his brain. He put his fingers together, closed his eyes and let his alpha waves do the walking. Long seconds passed. The DCI opened his eyes, smiled, and looked at Dan with fatherly affection.

"Amazing! Simply amazing how well our system works. I used MI to trace old OSS records about an agent who surfaced in Japan after almost thirty years of deep cover. They found his payroll vouchers and confirmed he's been on our payroll all this time. Name's Acieto Onoto. Based in Niigata. He's the guy I asked you to have your agent Fallout contact."

Now Dan was surprised. "You mean the Niigata operation is blown?"

"No way," the older man said, shaking his head back and forth. "The Brits obviously used what they knew about our MI search—we had to contact them you know; they were part of the OSS operation after the war. My guess is they made Horowitz and thought she was part of MI."

Dan slid his buns to the front of his chair and balanced at attention.

"If the Brits made her"

"Others made her," the DCI injected.

"We must assume your Horowitz is made. Bring her home!"

Things were going too fast for Dan.

Even if Horowitz has been made, can't I use her to direct attention away from Dean? Can't I field another handler, another unknown, and keep Dean effective?

He held both hands up, palms toward the DCI. "Hold on! Wait a minute Sir. I anticipated this," he lied. "I have a plan for Horowitz. Meanwhile, I'll field a new handler for Dean."

The DCI took time to think. When his thoughts were sorted, he pointed at Dan. "I have just the person!" This was his opportunity to get someone loyal to him in the game. "I know a young lady—he didn't say a First Lieutenant in the USMC—who would serve you well. I'll have her contact you. Use her! Her name's Jan Hur" he caught himself. He couldn't use her real name. Hill would discover her true identity. "Hurley ... I think it is. Yes, Hurley, Janet Hurley. Lives here. An unknown. Fits the bill perfectly."

When Dan returned to his office from the meeting, Gloria gave him the latest letter from Tanya. The one that mentioned that Dean couldn't leave for Niigata Saturday, because he was leaving on Friday. That wasn't good news. It was now Tuesday of the following week. Dean was to be in Hakodate or maybe Sapporo today. The Niigata operation—if it had gone as planned—if Dean waited until Saturday and had not left Friday—was over.

For all I know Dean is dead, Tanya's a prisoner, and my ass is grass.

"Gloria?"

She knew him too well to think he wanted her to take dictation. After worrying at his numb state, she assured him they she could wire Tanya and

have Tanya report back by telephone. That helped Dan get his spirit up. Gloria was wonderful.

Tanya offered to go with him to the station. Dean agreed. But when he planned his time, he realized he would have to rise before dawn, make every connection into Tokyo, and get to the train station by 6:00 a.m.

"I don't like to be seen off anyway." He said goodbye in her room at the New Otani. "I'll see you in Kyoto in a week or so. I'll miss you ... but it's only a week." He let himself out.

The three agents, two from enemy services, had orders not to let Tanya out of their sight. They did their jobs well. They logged her male visitor, whoever he was, but they weren't interested in him. Tanya didn't leave her room until 11:00 the next morning. She led them through a boring brunch and uneventful afternoon shopping. It wasn't until she changed into a tight leotard, and went to work-out in the Hotel's spa, that they found they enjoyed their work.

Once the train was out of Tokyo's eternal smaze, the sun colored the land and the trip became a joy. Dean sat looking out the window, his brain on record. The scenes before his eyes were changed to electro-chemical impulses and stored forever.

As the train moved away from Tokyo, fewer and fewer stations displayed signs in English. Soon the glyph symbols on the signs provided no information a *gaijun* could use. By map and time, he figured his location. The train made its way northwest, then west, then west-northwest until it inched across the width of Honshu, found the coast and arrived in

Niigata. He got off because the train dead-ended there. He was pleasantly surprised when he learned he had reached his destination.

Bags in hand, he gullivered his way through the throngs of little people in the streets. He was looking for any one of the *ryokans* Frommer's book recommended. He stopped at the first one he saw and went in. After removing his shoes, he registered. He couldn't read the form he filled-out. The desk person looked at his Passport, wrote something on the form, and with reluctance led him to a room. A tiny kimonoed lady bowed to him and handed him a square cut *yukata*. She bowed away, sliding the delicate paper and bamboo door shut as she left. He searched the *tatami*-floored room for a bed. He couldn't find one. The lady appeared again. She communicated that he should shed his clothes and put on the *yukata*. She left. He did. She returned and led him to the basement saying, *Furo. Furo. Furo*. She took him to the bath. Later, he sat at a tiny table and wrote a letter home:

Niigata, Japan

Dear Dad and all,

I found the real Japan about an hour from Tokyo, as the train began to roll through beautiful countryside. I must admit, as you have probably guessed from my last letter, I don't care for Tokyo. I really don't like big cities. You can imagine my relief when I saw open country yesterday. For the first time since seeing the island from the air, I feel I am really in Japan. The countryside is green. Lush rice paddies, wheat fields, and fields of plants I don't recognize dot the valleys and the plains between almost vertical mountains. Large racks made from posts and rope are

used for drying grain—stalks and all. When full the racks look like thatched-roof huts. Houses in the countryside are neat, small, and have tile roofs. The tiles are usually bright blue, red or orange. Some houses are painted brown or ship gray. Houses in the towns and cities are usually concrete gray.

The train passed many villages. Villages of both the living and the dead. About every mile, cemeteries appear. Many are moss covered and old. These 'cities of the dead' are filled with pagoda-roofed markers, statues of Buddha, or simple vertical stones. As the train crossed Honshu heading toward the west coast, we inched up into the mountains, the island's spine. The views became fantastic. Ski resorts appeared. Quaint villages nestled in valleys. We passed through a dozen tunnels, usually coming out to cross a river. In some rivers, narrow high islands of rugged rock, wearing caps of moss and grasses, rise from the water. Some of these beautiful islands-in-the-rivers have one or two stunted and twisted trees growing from them.

After many hours we reached Niigata. I found this ryokan (Japanese style hotel). I don't know its name, no one here speaks English. The signs are in Japanese. My room is 12 X 12 with tatami mat flooring. It has paper windows on one side and frosted glass on the other. The toilet is at the end of the hall. The furo (bath) is downstairs. There are hand basins outside my room in the hall. A little lady in a kimono gave me a yukata to wear. From what I surmise, you are not to wear city clothes in your room.

The lady came and took me down to the bath. No one else was there. She motioned that I was to squat in front of a water tap that jutted from the wall about two feet above the floor. She made washing motions,

handed me a plastic pitcher, and made rinsing motions. Then, she pointed to the hot tub set into the floor. I got the idea. From what I read, I knew that in Japan one washed the dirt from his body before entering the bath. It makes sense. We've been doing it wrong all these centuries.

Back in my room a tiny table was set. My meal was served in courses brought by the kimonoed lady, who approached me on her knees and served with delicate beauty. When I finished eating, she cleared the table and left. I sat with my legs folded and spindled, under and around the ebony square of the short-legged table and started writing this letter. In about fifteen minutes she returned. From a side cabinet I had not seen, she removed the sleeping quilts, a comforter, and a mat. She laid my bed. Bowing, she retreated for the night.

Tomorrow I will explore the town. Then I will find the train heading north to Hakodate. I'll write from there.

Love David

He slept late the next morning and was awakened by the lady. She seemed upset. She pointed to his watch and somehow made him understand he was to be out of the *ryokan* by 9:30. Dean knew, from reading Frommer, that one was not allowed to stay the day in a *ryokan*. He dressed, packed his bags, and left the room. With some difficulty, he communicated to the man at the desk that he wished to leave his bags and claim them later in the day. He traded slippers for shoes and went into the morning. The sea fog was beginning to lift.

With pleasure, he explored the waterfront town. As the fog cleared, he made his way back to the rail yards. The station was deserted. In the yards,

switch-engines moved freight cars back and forth. At a ticket window, he communicated that he wished to buy a ticket on the next train to Hakodate. The man behind the counter was patient. In time, he understood what Dean wanted. He cut the ticket and showed Dean the time and track. The train left at 3:00 p.m.

Dean had time to kill. The man who would contact him believed he was on today's train from Tokyo. As yesterday, it arrived today at 2:40. Dean could make the contact and still have time to catch the Hakodate train.

Acieto Onoto was playing a dangerous game. He had only a few days left before he was supposed to retire from Mitusuka Industries and move to Hokkaido. Only a few days to live, if he let them kill him. He knew the old men would betray him. They always covered themselves. He knew too much.

He sent his son to Hawaii. There, agent Sami Onoto—one of his daughters—would take charge of him. His son would never know a sister helped him, nor she that Heto was her brother. To Acieto Onoto that was very funny.

The Americans were slow and inept. In spite of that they were his only hope. The secret data exposing Mitusuka Industries was encrypted in dots printed on the envelope his man would deliver to the American operative at the train station. Perhaps his information would shock them into action. He planned to take their operative as insurance so they would deal seriously.

Acieto Onoto was on the move. He waited for the pieces to fall into place. When the American got the message, they would give him time to

enter the city and pass the information along. Then they'd take the American hostage. He knew the American obsession with protecting their own. If necessary, he could trade life for life. Onoto believed in insurance.

Exactly at 2:40, the Tokyo-Niigata train clanked into the station. Dean stood, stretched, and looked around the waiting room. People shuffled bags and gear and left the station. Within minutes, the arrival area was empty. Perhaps his contact was waiting outside? He went through the main door, looking about. A big man, obviously European or American was near the wall. He seemed to be tying a shoe. When he stood-up Dean was startled. The man's face—his brow and nose—were covered with a vicious looking, lumpy-red scar. The man approached. In too loud a voice he announced:

"I'm the Reverend Moon. Can I help you?"

"I'm who you think I am," Dean was unable to describe himself in any other way.

"Come to our Church," the man offered, still talking in a voice which echoed down the front of the station. "You will find the directions on this card."

As he handed Dean the card, he continued. "Oh, and here is some tourist information you may need."

Dean took the small manila envelope and put it in his pocket. "Thank you, Sir. I'll get this underway."

Before the scarred man turned and walked away, he whispered under his breath, "It's important you come to the church. Follow the directions! You are in danger and we will protect you."

Bullshit! I'll miss my train. I'm not going anywhere with you.

Dean turned and reentered the station, waited a few minutes and went back to the tracks. He barely caught his train. In Hakodate, he found the American Express Office and mailed the manila envelope he carried from Niigata.

"They have your man. They're holding him until we guarantee Acieto Onoto safe passage and protection. They've got us by the short hairs now!" Aston gloated, delighted to bring bad news to Dodo Dan.

Dan wasn't prepared to hear bad news, or to have anyone gloat over him. "How do you know?"

"Acieto Onoto sent word through MI channels. Don't you believe me?"

"I believe you. I've known it since we got the mail this morning."

"I'm glad it's your problem. What are you doing about it?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing? You're kidding?"

"Nothing now. Nothing later. We lose our operative for a few days. When we cover Onoto, we get him back. That's the breaks."

"They'll torture the guy. Don't you care? I mean think of National security."

"He knows zip. That's the beauty of this operation. They get nothing."

"You cold hearted son-of-a"

Dan cut him off, "Get the fuck off it. You know the game. We did what we could to cover him. He didn't do as we told him. We lost him. I have to believe we'll get him back in good shape. We sent a message to Acieto Onoto. If he's touched, Onoto's out and on his own. What else can we do?"

The analyst had ideas, but he wouldn't share them with the DDO. The DCI would get an ear-full ... if he asked.

Jan unclipped the hairpins holding her potbellied cap. She stood admiring her image in the mirror, loosening her tie. "You're not plain little Janet anymore!" she said to her reflection. Smugly she compared herself as she was now to the eighteen-year-old girl who enlisted almost a decade ago. Then, her figure was boyish. Her face was—she tried to recall—not quite tuned. Her self-image was buoyed by thoughts of fulfilling her dad's concepts of worth. She had suffered a lackluster dullness communicating the last frustrations of pubescence. At eighteen her body let her down. At nineteen, she noticed changes. Now, at twenty-seven, she was pleasantly amazed.

George was sending her on an undercover mission. Her godfather had been at the Christmas parties—played Santa and held her on his knee every year while they were stationed in Munich. He even gave her a baby-doll with a penis. Her dad objected, but she was flattered. He wrote a letter supporting her enlistment. He assigned her to MI and arranged for her to work secretly for him. He was at her father's funeral. Friend, mentor, and now boss. She loved him.

Janet was careful to hang her uniform on its special wooden hanger and clip the skirt to the bar. She opened a side compartment and put cap, belt and tie inside the suitcase. It might be a long time before she would wear the uniform again.

Chapter TWENTY-ONE

The large man stood in front of his mirror looking at the scar disguising his face. With care, he caught an edge of the soft rubber accessory. As he peeled it away from his face, he grimaced in pain. It stuck too well. He left it on too long. A white mark sat where the fake one had been. He daubed make-up on the place.

Without the scar, he was handsome—except the ends of his mouth turned down in a malevolent frown. His eyes were blue, bottomless, emotionless. He was a psychopath. It was something special about him they identified when he was in the service. Something he was proud of.

To Acieto Onoto, he was Scar. He had been for fifteen years. To Tsuzui Hyunda, his real patron, now the crown prince of Mitusuka Industries, he was Alfred Agnew. Tsuzui had known him since they served in Indochina. Tsuzui was a businessman. Alfred was in the quartermaster corps. Mitusuka Industries bought everything Alfred had to sell. Who knew the directions of armies better than those who outfitted the troops. Alfred sold information and people's lives.

Hyunda was a product of the oppressive Japanese corporate, cradle-to-grave, system. Regardless of skill, men could not advance unless another was promoted or died. The creative moldered in line. They were forced to conform to standards set centuries ago, standards badly adapted to the modern world. Hyunda found a way to bypass the staid system. He removed the dead wood above him. He bought his peers or sold their lives. He amassed a power base none could question. Alfred was his tool, a man who did as he was told, a man who had infiltrated Acieto Onoto's ranks.

Only Tsuzui Hyunda knew the man known as Scar was a double agent for forces within the same monstrous company.

Acieto Onoto was the cleverest force of all, but he screwed up. He announced through channels that he had taken the CIA messenger hostage, before the fete was accomplished. It was understandable. Others couldn't deliver everything he planned because his plots were often more complex than his people could carry out.

Onoto covered every operation and himself by having his own people watch each other. He doubled his agents. They weren't supposed to know. They were always watched. Some guessed and it didn't matter. Others learned of it and became insecure and ripe for a turn. The Scar knew who they were. With the information, he built loyalties to himself and Hyunda within Onoto's forces.

Some of Onoto's operations were so complex Scar, the trusted captain, didn't know what they were all about. He found himself observed—like the time in Denver, which still grated on him. That time he was tagging CIA and FBI operatives in a city targeted for "investment" by Mitusuka. He knew he was observed by a girl, one of Onoto's own. He never knew why. It bothered him. He didn't like that. He would deal with it soon just as he would kill Acieto Onoto. Tsuzui Hyunda had given the order. It was in the mill.

Alfred looked at his image in the mirror. No one would recognize him. All people saw was what he wanted them to see: The ugly red scar. Without it, he was unknown. He changed his clothes and appearance. Scar was now Alfred Agnew, a handsome devil. He smiled at his reflection. When Onoto was dead, the Scar would disappear forever. He felt no emotion, no care

either way. He was told to wait until Onoto's services were no longer needed, maybe two weeks more.

With all his insights, Scar never suspected Onoto had turned to the Americans. Nor that the packet he delivered that day to the American—that bastard who slipped away and made him look bad—spelled the end of Tsuzui Hyunda and himself.

Alfred placed the lumpy-red device in its Sucrets box filled with tissue. He slicked-back his hair, pulled at a hair in his nose, and finished dressing. Tonight, Tsuzui promised him a reward. The German whores were waiting, drugged into zombie states by the refined opiates the Company manufactured. Tonight was special. Flesh would yield and the whores would die so slowly.

On Saturday, Suzi Song Onoto lost her tail. But first, she destroyed the note placed under her door by Lord Ayer's man. She didn't need a note to remind her David was being held prisoner in Niigata. She dressed and packed her few things in a large canvas traveling bag with a shoulder strap. She went out into the hall and found a housekeeping cart in the room next door. She commandeered the cart and parked it in her room, leaving the door open. She hid behind the bedroom door.

In a matter of minutes the Brit looked in. He surveyed the room and decided she was gone. Suzi waited. Soon a woman she had seen in the Hotel, a woman Onoto knew, came into the room. The woman was older, dressed in brown, obviously upset. The chambermaid interrupted her search. The maid, confused, yet certain she placed the cart in this room

instead of the neighboring one, went about her cleaning. The little woman disappeared.

Suzi wasted little time. She left when the woman in brown was out of sight. She took the stairs up to the next floor, walked the corridor around the building, and caught the down elevator that opened on the opposite side of the lobby. She got off on the level below the lobby and walked quickly to a service door. In the alley, she used a backing truck as cover and moved to a side street. From there she skipped down the street to freedom.

Tanya received a wire delivered by the Hotel manager. She was to call home. Her sister said it was an emergency. Tanya was in tears. Then she remembered she didn't have a sister. She looked at the note the manager gave her.

To: Ms. T. Horowitz.

From: Gloria.

Signed: *Sis.*

Her tears dried and she went to her room to call home.

When the phone rang in the wee small hours of morning, Gloria jumped from her bed, notebook in hand. She was expecting the call.

"Gloria? Gloria? Is that you?"

"It's me Tanya. You got my message?"

"Silly, that's why I'm calling. You told me never to call."

"There's been a change in plans. People over there know who you are."

"Oh gad! They do? ... Gloria, honey, who am I?"

"You're a handler ... need I say more? Need I say names over the phone?"

"Oh that. And they know?"

"We know they know, honey. We think they're watching you."

Tanya thought a long moment, "It's true. They are watching me. I saw a bunch of them when I was exercising. They're horny looking guys."

"You've got to do something for us."

"Tell me where David is first."

"I can't"

"It's the phone line isn't it. I understand."

"Yeah, listen honey, can you get to the American Embassy?"

"Sure, I'll take a cab."

"Tanya, Honey, pack and go there immediately. Okay?"

"Gloria, are you mad at me?"

"Mad? Of course not. We just want you safe."

"What will they do at the Embassy?"

"Call me from there. Okay? We send hugs. Bye for now."

Within seconds Tokyo and Maryland agents were tying up secure phone lines, Tanya was in her room packing, enemy agents were deciphering an obviously coded conversation between women agents, Dan Hill got a call from Gloria, and a Marine guard at the American Embassy was put on alert and ordered to watch for an American brunette who would arrive within the hour.

Chapter TWENTY-TWO

Janet had her orders and a new civilian identity. A military jet would take her to an Aleutian Island Air Force base. From there a military 727, painted to look like a JAL mainliner crew trainer, would take her on to Sapporo. From Sapporo, she would work her way south to Hakodate and on to Niigata if necessary. Her assignment: Find Fallout.

Tanya's taxi pulled-up at the Embassy gate. A marine jumped to open the door in the gate. Tanya emerged. When the Marine saw her beauty, he clicked his heels and saluted her. Those watching the gates made quick notes. The mark arrived and was saluted by a Marine non-com. There was but one obvious conclusion.

Tanya ordered the Marine to unload her baggage. With style, she entered United States Territory.

Suzi Song Onoto flew to Osaka. There, she caught a flight to Sapporo. In Sapporo, she found the safe house Song used. She began to plan. By the second day, she knew what she must do. Acting as her Onoto personality, she contacted the woman who was her control. The woman was pleased, emotional, thankful Onoto called. Her response tipped Suzi off. Something was wrong. The woman hesitated, as if to keep her on the line.

"What are my orders?" Suzi asked in Onoto's clipped, businesslike voice.

"There are no orders."

Suzi risked telling a lie. She explained she was following the teacher she made in Denver. The woman exclaimed that that was too good to be true.

Suzi asked her to hold. It gave her a minute to think.

"Why is it too good to be true?" Suzi asked. "What do you mean?" Her thoughts raced to conclusions, perhaps they didn't have David captive.

The woman stalled for time. "Hold, or I'll call you right back ... give me five minutes."

"That's not possible. I'm moving. I'll call you in one hour."

Suzi needed time to form a new plan. Did they lose him? Dean escaped?

One hour later Suzi dialed the secret number. The woman answered on the first ring.

"Your orders are to bring him to me."

"How can I do that?"

"He must be brought to me."

"He thinks I'm back in the U.S. I'll lose my cover."

"Did you hear my order?"

"Where?" Suzi knew Onoto never questioned an order.

"Where are you now?"

"I'm calling from Niigata." She told the lie hoping they wouldn't trace the origin of her call.

"He's still in Niigata? We know he left on Saturday."

Suzi suppressed a gasp, almost gave herself away. He was safe! She composed herself and found Onoto's voice again.

"He only pretended to leave. I can see him now. He's getting into a taxi. I've got to go. I'll call back!"

Suzi hung-up, shivering. They would never forgive Onoto. It might be her life for his.

Two hours later, Suzi dialed the secret number for the third time. A man answered. She didn't recognize the voice, and said nothing. The sound of a hand being placed over the instrument made a hollow sound. Then the woman's voice asked:

"Do you want me?"

"He met another agent. They went to a small airfield. A Cessna was waiting. He's gone ... I think back to Tokyo."

"Gone? Tokyo? Why Tokyo?"

"The plane took off west, and then headed southeast. I have seen the other man before. He's CIA, Tokyo."

Suzi hung-up. She sat exhausted, yet thrilled. "I think I've done it!" She bragged to the walls. Then as Song, she called the British Embassy and told them the schoolteacher got away and was not in Niigata.

Jan worked her way south, looking for Dean. She carried a doctored photo which merged their two images into one happy couple. She showed the picture at the railroad station and the ferry. She was almost certain he hadn't crossed from Hakodate to Hokkaido. The DCI was certain he was held hostage in Niigata. Her job was to be there just in case he got away.

The Russian Orthodox Church with the onion domes was a long shot. A teacher interested in history would visit it. If not, the hills on the side of the hourglass-shaped landform provided a view of the harbor no one would

miss. From that vantage point, she would watch for him. If he came that way she would see him. If he got on the ferry, she could follow. She waited, praying for luck.

She saw him hiking on the hillside street near the Church. He was happy and obviously unconcerned for his safety. As he made his way down to the railroad terminus and ferry landing, she could see he followed a sites map. He was taking a self-directed tour of the hourglass city. At the train station he got his bags from behind a counter and headed into the city. On the outskirts of the dirty industrial section of town he found a *ryokan* and disappeared inside. She waited outside feeling stupid. She didn't have her gear. She didn't want to lose him. She might never see him again if she went back to her hotel. She headed into the building.

At the desk she smiled sweetly and held-out the photo of their two heads side by side. She pointed to her heart and asked, with words and hands, "Is he here?" The little man smiled and led her to Dean's room. She composed herself, waited for the man to start back to his desk, slid open the door, and barged in as if she owned the place.

"Who are you?" she asked indignantly. What are you doing in my room?"

Dean was so startled he dropped his pants to the floor. He held his shirt in front of him and almost dropped the white *yukata* he was changing into.

She had the advantage and intended to keep it. "Are you American?" Why are you in my room?"

Dean answered, "Yes. Your room? I, I just checked-in and this is where they put me."

"Really? I mean really, is that the truth?"

He stared. She turned her back and told him to, "Finish putting that thing on."

He pulled-up his pants and replaced his shirt.

"Do you know this is the last hotel room in Hakodate? I mean, the last one where they will let foreigners stay?"

"I didn't know that."

"Are you a fiend? I mean are you safe?"

"I'm a fiend and safe," he said laughing. She was damned attractive.

She pretended to feel faint, held her temple, and looked around for a place to sit. She lowered herself to the *tatami* and sat cross-legged. He relaxed and sat, his legs chevroned to his side, his upper body balanced on one arm.

"Well, what do we do now?"

"I'll get another room."

No," she said. "I know this is the only room they let *gaijuns* have. I know the hotels are also full."

"I can't stay here." Dean's face was reddening.

"I guess not," she said slowly as if not believing it herself. "Do you have sisters?"

"Yes." He lied.

"Well then why not share? It's only for one night. I don't know why I trust you but ... tell me who you are ... please?"

"I'm an old bald school teacher with three sisters and, I'm a weary traveler. A stranger with a stranger in a stranger land."

"And I'm a weary traveler who got dumped by the gentleman who called himself my friend."

"I'm sorry. Where is your suitcase, your stuff?"

He said he'd leave them here. If not, I think I can find my clothes tomorrow ... but come on now, are you up for staying?"

"I'll stay, but what will we tell the *ryokan* man?"

"That we're together of course. Were *gaijuns*, foreign hairy barbarians. They won't suspect a thing."

Someone scratched on the door. It slid open and a beautiful Japanese woman in a tight, brightly-flowered kimono came into the room. In her arms, she held another *yukata* which she offered to Jan. She bowed and backed out of the room.

What is your name roommate?" he asked.

"I'm Jan. Janet Hurley from Virginia. Yours?"

"David Dean from Colorado. We better get out of these street clothes. They frown on dirty clothes in these places.

They turned their backs and changed without comment. When they were wearing the *ryokan's* uniform, they admired each other and bowed.

The beautiful lady entered again. This time she held two towels and motioned them to follow. "*Furo. Furo.*" she said, as she led them down and back toward the bath.

"What's happening now? I know what *Tora! Tora! Tora!* means, but not *Furo.*"

"Now we get better acquainted, like it or not. We'll make a clean start."

At the door of the *furo*, the woman in the beautiful kimono bowed and handed the towels and their care over to a short, squat lady who led them into a steam-filled room. The bath attendant, dressed in square-cut, silk see-through underwear, pointed to a large narrow tub about six feet wide and twenty feet long. Two heads with long, shiny-black hair seemed to float on the water.

"Oh my God!" Jan exclaimed. "Don't look! Don't you dare look at me! Now what do I do?"

"Sit in front of one of those spigots and soap-wash your body. Then the attendant will rinse you. I'll meet you in the water."

The attendant brought them soap and soft bristle brushes. She gave Dean a disposable razor. Then she insisted they hand over their *yukatas*. She placed their towels at the far end of the room. They had nothing but hands and smiles to cover their nudity.

Dean shaved, washed, and gasped as the square lady rinsed him with ice-cold water. She motioned for him to go to the steaming bath. He moved as quickly as possible, intending to get into the water and hide. He stepped into the water and gasped. It was so hot it felt like acid.

The two heads floating in the water belonged to young women. They studied his body and then turned to each other jabbering.

Gasping and burning, he got in to his waist. As he contemplated dunking the last half of his body, he felt Jan beside him.

"If you look, I'll die."

He looked, briefly. Her face reddened, but she smiled. He looked directly into her eyes, at her face, letting her see his eyes weren't focused solely on her body. Together they lowered themselves into the bath.

Cooking slowly in the steaming water, they relaxed, two more floating heads gazing out through clouds of steam. One of the Japanese—a mature woman Dean observed—stood and made her way over to Jan. Dean overheard: "You GI persons? How like Hakodate?" Then the woman whispered to Jan. Jan put her hand to her mouth as if shielding surprise. "I didn't think about that! Perhaps you are right. I'll see."

The woman stood again and went to sit and cool on the side of the cauldron. She was beautiful.

"What was all that about?"

"I can't tell you. I'd be too embarrassed."

"We've lived with each other for over an hour. We're sitting neck deep in a bath together, bare-ass naked, and you can't tell me something because you'd be embarrassed?"

"Well, you would be embarrassed too. You'll hate me if I tell."

"I won't hate you. Goddamn it! Tell me!"

"Okay, the girl asked if all bald men were made that way?"

"What way?"

"Well, I don't think she has ever seen a bald *gaijun*, and very few, if any, circumcised men."

Chapter TWENTY-THREE

"He got away! The wily bastard got away!" the DCI announced to the man before him. "Wait until I tell the President! This is really good news. That Fallout guy has saved Operation Cowboy. You really know how to pick 'em Dan. You sure came through!"

"What I want to know is how you knew before I told you?" Dan asked. He was pissed. He didn't know Dean was free until early this morning when the communication to the British Embassy in Tokyo had been made and relayed."

The DCI got nervous real fast. "Danny, Danny. We get the same stuff you do."

"Oh," Hill said, unconvinced.

"Wait until the President hears this one. Fallout is amazing! He slips through the largest manhunt ever organized by the enemy. He walks into Mitusuka's nest of killers and gets away. He delivers the most important intelligence data we've received in years and he still gets away. If Fleming had written a story like this, we would call it fiction." He paused, looking at Dan Hill with pride. "You really served us well this time Danny. The President will want to meet with you one-on-one."

Two days later, he was led through a maze of tunnels to an elevator. The elevator opened into a small cubicle near the hall outside the White House swimming pool. A young Marine in a garish new uniform led him up and into the Oval Office. The room was empty. Hill stood alone, sweating. A panel opened and the President entered.

"Dan Hill, you gave those fuckers hell!" The President commented as he entered. "Your plan has exposed the rawest bunch of corporate thieves this world has ever known. Dan Hill, America is forever in your debt."

Dan was embarrassed. He had a flash-picture of Sally and himself standing on a podium receiving a medal from the President. He substituted Gloria's image in his mind, got weak-kneed, and felt sick.

"This schoolteacher operative of yours. What kind of man is he? I'm told he's quite the individualist. There was a lot of flak in the agency when you picked him. Hell, there was a lot of flak when George picked you!" the President paused, fumbling with a pen he couldn't open. "Hill, you're the best DDO we've ever had. We can never pay you enough. By the way, what are we paying our superstar?"

"He won't be paid, Sir, I mean, Mr. President, he refused to work for money."

"What is he, some kind of hippy son-of-a-bitch?"

"No Sir! He's probably a patriot."

The President was amused. "Patriot? Patriot? There are no Patriots. This guy could be dangerous to us. If we don't pay him, we don't control him. Do you understand?"

"Yes Sir! Mr. President. We have a retirement program set-up for him. Annuities. He doesn't know about it, but he'll be a wealthy man—for a schoolteacher that is—if he makes it."

"I don't want details. I'll take your word for it. Hill I'm signing a letter here." He fumbled with the top of the pen. "It goes in your file ... a letter of commendation." He handed the pen to Dan and sat at his desk, poised to sign the letter. "You open the blasted thing!"

"Got it Sir, it's a ballpoint. You press this button."

Okay, got it. Dean is the one this is all about and he should be here. You've done a fine job, but this is about David Dean, right? You'll give this letter to him?"

"Absolutely Sir. I've just set the thing in motion."

"Good! Now don't stop. Keep me informed. This is fuckin' patriotism!"

"Thank you, Mister President."

Suzi was aware it would be a short time before they knew she hadn't followed Dean to Tokyo. As soon as they spotted him, wherever he was, it would be her end. Song had always prepared back-up plans in case something like this went wrong. She had set up bank accounts in Hong Kong and the Cayman Islands. She owned safe houses in strategic places. Suzi knew it was time for her to get out of Japan and go into hiding. She looked at Dean's itinerary. He would travel from Japan to Taiwan, then on to Hong Kong. Song had a hiding place on Kowloon. She would wait there for him. He might need her to provide Song's or Onoto's help again.

Tanya was comfortable at the American Embassy. She was debriefed by a nice man who said he was from Central Intelligence. What he learned confused MI agents and sent communications filled with questions between the Embassy and every part of the American and Allied intelligence communities. Only Dan Hill understood the reports. He knew she knew nothing. Others thought she knew everything. Tanya's reputation grew. The West Germans thought she was the best agent the Americans had in the field. The Brits were confused. The French thought she was too beautiful to be an agent. They suspected she was a *jeune fille* put out as bait. They were right.

Gloria's letter arrived at the Embassy. Tanya opened it, read it, and wept. It was too good to be true. They still wanted her to handle David.

The DDO ordered her to leave the Embassy and Tokyo. She was to fly to Osaka and take the bullet train to Kyoto. "Make certain you are followed!!!" Gloria wrote with exclamation marks. She was to stay in Kyoto for two days and then go back to Osaka. From Osaka she was to fly to Singapore, stay at the Raffles Hotel, and await further orders.

Hill's plan for Tanya made sense to him, if not to Gloria. He assumed the enemy had Fallout's itinerary. They would always be one stop ahead of him—waiting to nab him when he walked into their trap. Tanya could foil their plans. He would move her to Kyoto a full week before Fallout was due to arrive. Then he would move her to Osaka, and then out of Japan. They would follow her, leaving a clear path for Dean. It was a great plan.

Chapter TWENTY-FOUR

Dan Hill wouldn't give-in. He would not let Gloria move in with him. He rambled around the old house nude, ate when he wanted, and generally abused the place for his own mental health. He paid Sally's credit card bills amazed she was spending so much money. He was lounging in front of the TV when she called from California. He accepted the charges and waited.

"Dan?"

"Hi Sal."

"Dan, I need to talk with you."

"Are you coming home?"

"No. We can talk on the phone."

"Shoot!"

"Dan I've changed a lot. I'm into something very important to me. I've found answers ... a way of life with meaning."

He was sincerely happy to hear that.

"I've found friends. People who are trying to help me get centered. I am living with Eric Bern, Claude Steiner, and a plastic surgeon named Maltz."

Dan almost fell out of his chair. Fat, frumpy, Italian mama Sally? His Sally?

"They're into me. Do you understand?"

He thought he did ... But ...?

"I'm not the same person you knew. I need adult-to-adult relationships."

Sounds like she's doing quite well!

"Dan, I need a life mate who will grow with me. I need someone with your qualities but who has not stopped growing."

Not growing? Stopped growing? What bullshit!

"Dan, if you agree to come out here and study at the Institute, sit at the feet of these great teachers, perhaps ... I said perhaps, not for sure, there is hope for our marriage."

He tried to interrupt her again ... but then her words sank in.

"If not Dan. If you won't, I'll have to ask you for a divorce."

Is this really happening? Am I off the hook?

"Dan, think about it! To help you, I'm mailing you a book called BORN TO WIN. Read it. If it doesn't change your life, I want a divorce." She paused, out of breath, then added, "Dan, I've finally done it, I really have."

Sal, you've done it. You really have!

Chapter TWENTY-FIVE

Alfred Agnew didn't think or care about whores. He thought about his relationship with Hyunda Tsuzui. Hyunda was the heir designate of the Mitusuka Empire. His power was consolidated. Those who had other opinions or other histories in the company were now, or soon would be, dead. Because of Alfred's cleverness, Tsuzui also controlled Acieto Onoto's security forces. When Onoto was dead, Alfred would be Tsuzui's No. 1. Somehow that thought reached Agnew's cold, emotionless mind and made him smile. It also made him careless. Events he had already put into motion would result in a surprising turn.

In the early days, in French Indochina, Agnew served any master who paid in gold or opiates. Then Hyunda offered him gold, opiates, and a position of great power. From then on Agnew served one man. He served because he thought he could control the man. Hyunda Tsuzui was clever that way. Most of those who served him thought they had a handle on him. He let them believe they alone saw his weak, innermost self and were thus in a position of great power. Tsuzui only let Agnew see one facet of his complex personality, the sadistic part. He did so to gain control of Agnew. Hyunda Tsuzui combined pleasure and business with manipulation. That was how he got and held power. It was also how he satiated his sadistic id.

When the French were defeated, Tsuzui's operational base ranged from Hanoi to Bangkok. When the Americans entered what they myopically called Vietnam, he was able to expand Mitusuka's interests to New Zealand in the south and Russia in the north. It was an amazing feat. The men at the top of Mitusuka gave him a place at their council. Alfred Agnew was secretly

placed as Scar—the one the CIA called the Muscovy Duck—into Onoto's security force in Niigata.

Occasionally, Alfred was asked to provide women for the rising prince's amusement. He had a source of European whores via an Arab connection. For a small packet of opiates, they would provide him with women who came into their possession. These were women from European houses of prostitution, and women kidnapped, addicted, and used in the harem-brothels of the Near East.

The first time he provided a woman for Tsuzui, he saw the sick side of the man. Tsuzui slowly tortured the drugged whore. The more she screamed and cried, the more elated and charged his mentor became. Alfred had never seen or heard anything like it. It didn't bother him. It was entertaining.

That first time, there was trouble with his Arab contact. He couldn't return the whore. It cost him dearly. After that, he bought the women outright. He got women the Arabs wanted to rotate out of stock due to age. Later, he sold their bodies to a medical school that paid a premium for female, Caucasian cadavers—regardless of how ill-used.

Every few months Hyunda needed sexual-sadistic release of the kind Alfred could provide. Soon the encounters formed the basis for their relationship and mutual trust. Alfred joined Hyunda's trysts. It didn't please him, satisfy him, or amuse him. He copied the other's cruelties and pretended release. He felt nothing. He went along because he believed he could manipulate or perhaps blackmail Hyunda.

The prince's release took longer each time and required more and more suffering. Stories of unusually mutilated women's bodies that turned

up regularly at the medical school, reached one of Onoto's brown-clothed agents. Thus, Onoto learned of Hyunda Tsuzui's perversion. He also learned of the man who supplied whores to Hyunda. An investigator opened a Screts box in the man's kit. Onoto had known about Alfred Agnew for some time. Scar was always under surveillance.

The whores were on their way to Osaka aboard a small private jet. They were dull-witted addicts; unaware they were used. They believed the men and women who controlled them were their protectors. The parties they attended were often lavish affairs. They imagined themselves members of a jet-set elite, benefactors of a life they were accepted into because they were beautiful, desired, and good actresses. They were often with the rich and powerful. They enjoyed the best of everything, including an endless supply of magical opiates. They liked their lives. Now, both were over thirty, well used. This was to be their last tryst. Agnew owned them.

The Lear landed at a private airport near Osaka. The two whores were taken-off and two women took their places. These two pretended to be drifting in the stupor-state their employer's desired. They were taken from the plane at Niigata by Alfred's men. They giggled their way to the old church in the city they left only hours before. Soon they would meet the men who killed women. It was their turn to seek release.

With their privacy insured, Alfred and Hyunda barred the large, soundproofed basement doors. The whores stood together giggling, weaving, looking around the room. They were obviously pleased with the decor. The basement of the old church, a Buddhist monastery before some obscure Christian sect tried to establish a foothold, was now a lavishly decorated playroom. A bar ran down the length of the entire west wall.

Mirrors played light back and forth across a bed of comforters and quilts on soft *tatami* floors. Lights hung low from a mirrored ceiling.

"Come", Alfred ordered as he motioned to the bar. Tsuzui reached into a niche and removed a large brass opium cooker and pipe. As he placed it on a table near the bar, he grinned and motioned for the women.

The women swayed and laughed as they approached arm-in-arm, smiling coquettishly.

"Pick the one of us you like," the taller one said softly, looking at Tsuzui.

Tsuzui was pleased. This large one would last a long time. He grinned evilly. "Come," he motioned to the girl who had spoken.

Onoto's women positioned themselves—each to the side and slightly behind a killer. Gradually, exchanging glances that helped them coordinate their timing, they moved closer to their prey. As they moved, they opened needle-like devices on their rings. Each, as one, reached out and placed left hands, palms down, gently on their mark's shoulders ... then slid them up and toward the bases of their necks. As one they pressed, then darted back.

Tsuzui felt the sting for only a moment before the paralysis numbed his shoulder and neck. He had time to turn and look at Alfred, who's head was back. His tongue was a red gobbet jutting from between his teeth. He turned and sought contact with the whore and fell, unable to control his muscles. He saw everything, but could not move. In time, he saw Acieto Onoto's face above his own. Two hours later he died, fully aware. Acieto Onoto helped him on his way as soon as the numbing effects of the narcotic wore off. Alfred preceded him by fifteen tortured minutes.

Chapter TWENTY-SIX

"OK, we buy that, Onoto. The information you forwarded confirms Mitusuka's intent. What we don't buy is that you have worked for us all along. How do you explain almost thirty years of no contact?"

The MI Officer paced as he talked, his uniform left behind when he went to cover for this meeting with Acieto Onoto. Without his uniform, he felt naked, exposed. The clothes he wore did nothing to intimidate others. He felt like a turtle without its shell. It was an awful feeling.

"You pay each month. I cash each check. I await your orders. You never use me!" Onoto said, putting on an old, tired man's ambience.

"That's true, I don't know why. You worked for Mitusuka. You were in charge of their ... how do you say ... security?"

"I was. I did my job."

The Colonel paced and fussed with his civvies. He was on this mission to confirm Acieto Onoto's latest communiqué. Onoto sent word via the Embassy in Tokyo that he would arrange a complete shake-up of Mitusuka's management. Langley received the news with skepticism. Their analysts had only recently confirmed Acieto's information about Mitusuka's goals to economically enslave whole nations. They were still investigating the inner workings of the giant corporation and its deadly power. They were yet to confirm the monstrous nature of Hyunda Tsuzui.

"I did job. I give you what you pay for. Tonight, I give you Mitusuka in form of Tsuzui and his head of—how you say it? Security?"

"Pardon me if I'm slow to catch-up with this thing. What will happen to Mitusuka now?"

"Ho, now confusion! Japanese company based on what *gaijuns* call serfdom or peonage. It's old Japan way. Powerful men own companies. People are enslaved and work for them. After a time, people love their masters. Masters give them just enough to make life bearable ... to control them like animals. They interbreed them until almost all on the islands are same. They make them same size, temperament, and mind.

"People told to worship Gods in form of companies. Once, before the war, people told to worship Gods and companies in form of Emperor. Still, in Japan, a few enslave many. It's still that way but not same as past centuries. Now things changing," he paused. "Things change fastest at Mitusuka. Ho! Ha! Hi! No man in charge. No man in company take care of people. No Emperor. No one keep people enslaved. It's very simple. Mitusuka collapses, others take over."

"My God! It's what MacArthur dreamed about." He thought a moment and came back at Onoto with a challenge. "I don't believe you! Why would you turn against your own people?"

Onoto straightened, dropped the "old man" facade, and looked with contempt into the Colonel's eyes. "Not my people, Colonel. My people have suffered more than you could ever understand at hands of these Mongol, Nippon hoards. My people are Ainu. We were here long before the inferior ones took our land. We will be here long after they go!"

Chapter TWENTY-SEVEN

Janet had known few men. Her professional self-image depended upon her separateness from the men with whom she worked and competed. In high

school, and while attending college at the University of Maryland as a non-com, she hadn't been approached by or attracted to anyone. She had a minor affair with a civilian who worked near her base. That was an educational encounter driven by curiosity and growing physical need, not a love affair. She knew other women in her ranks called her a PV, a derogatory term used by the women to identify naive sisters they thought perpetual virgins. It was what she was, though not by choice. Now she was naked beneath a too short *yukata*, sitting across from a man she had known for less than three hours.

She sat uncomfortably. The *tatami* dug into her bare buns. Her legs cramped from being pressed together and held out straight under the short-legged table. She balanced on one hand, then the other. With the free hand, she tried to hold the fabric of the short *yukata* down over, and in front of her. Wherever she tugged it closed another part was open. Across the table she saw David was having the same battle. His *yukata* was tight, many sizes too small for him, and would not stay closed. The table hid what she knew was exposed below its ebony top. She couldn't help but look. He did the same.

"That's what they call it an ice breaker." Laughter crinkled his face.

"I've never broken the ice in hot water before."

"If it weren't for that little lady in the kimono coming and going at will, I'd put my street clothes back on."

"Me too! I haven't got the hang of this short cotton thing." She blushed. He could sense her embarrassment and shyness. It tantalized to him.

"I've got to do something ... get up I mean! Don't look!" He leaned over his knees and tried to stand and turn away from her at the same time. She looked and gasped before he could turn away.

She spoke before she thought. Her mind was spinning with charged particles of stimuli. "I'm sorry! I didn't mean to ... I didn't mean to make you ... I didn't mean to be provocative."

He moved about the room, obviously at a loss as to what to do. There was no place to hide, no john to duck in to. He pretended to look at a print hanging on a paper wall.

Still not in control of her thoughts, she felt a wave of compassion. "David? Is there anything I can do?"

"President's right. That teacher's a hero. If people only knew what he did for his country," The DCI whispered to the DDO as they walked to the elevator.

The dumb SOB didn't know what he was doing. Who you trying to kid?

"He did his job."

"He did more than that. Do you realize we didn't even know of the Mitusuka crap until your little Operation Cowboy exposed it? Damn, that's the most important operation since ... I can't even think of an operation as big as Cowboy."

"We do our job."

"And think, they took him prisoner and he got away and delivered the information. That's amazing. Where is he now?"

"Still going."

"Who's handling him?"

"No one. The woman you suggested—Jan Hurley—hasn't contacted him yet."

"Well, let me know when she does. Oh, and I need to know. How the hell does American Express fit into this thing?"

"Sir?"

"American Express. You know, the bank and card people. Who gave you permission to involve them?"

"Sir?" He hadn't a clue what this was about.

"They've had bomb threats against them and been accused of being a front for the CIA ... and their Hakodate Office was searched. They've complained to Spiro or someone who has the President's ear. I got my ass chewed an hour ago. They know it was us! That means You!"

"Me Sir?"

"You goddamnit! You!" He stood behind the shining mahogany. "MI said it was you."

"Yes Sir, it wasn't me Sir," he paused, then added, "I didn't authorize it George. It's just the way things are done."

"Done where, goddamnit?"

"Done by people who travel. They get their mail delivered to them at American Express offices. Some offices take their mail and send it to the States for them. It's a service that goes with the card."

"You mean to tell me, oh no," the DCI held his head in his hands. "Fallout uses American Express to get his mail, and to mail his letters home."

"That's about it, Sir."

"What do you mean 'about it'?"

"Well Sir," Dan leaned over the desk, whispering into the DCI's ear. "That's how we contact Jan, you know."

The DCI smiled and nodded. "Pretty good operation if I do say so." He stood and placed his hands behind him, body at parade rest. "Now what's this nonsense about an agent on Formosa ... Taiwan, who wants to plan a defection?"

"All I know Sir is that a Red Chinese pilot wants to bring in a MiG. He contacted our field operative. The Reds made the contact. We're blown. Now we have no way of using any of our guys. We have no way to pass the guarantee to the defector's people. We need an anonymous to deliver the message that we'll pay a million for the plane, plus safe passage and a new ID for the pilot."

"Do you plan to use Fallout?"

"I do Sir. If we can get word to him in time via Agent Hurley."

Jan lay on the comforter on the hard *tatami*. It felt good to lie out flat. At the far side of the room Dean snored softly, his blanket wrapped around one leg, his upper body covered by a deep blue pajama. In the dim light she studied the distance between them, a shining straw sea that seemed unbridgeable.

An hour later she was still awake. She processed a dozen plans for shortening the gap between them. She thought of a dozen ways to ... she caught herself. He hadn't made a move. He hadn't given her a signal, except for the time he had to leave the table, but that was natural and he was embarrassed. He could have asked her to help him, showed her what to do.

No! This was an assignment. She had messages to deliver, things to do for National Security. She was First Lieutenant Janet Hurlbut. "Shit!" She exclaimed almost loud enough to wake him. She was Jan Hurley, undercover agent, setting him up for the service.

If I can't get a man to make a pass at me after bathing nude with him and sharing dinner at a small table in a hotel with body parts exposed top and bottom through ill-fitting yukatas, I'll never be able to get a man. I am a PV.

Bummed out, she fell asleep.

Before gray light Dean awoke. He looked at the woman across the *tatami*. He wanted to ... No, he had made a promise.

She moved, rolled from her side onto her back. Her pajama top parted. Firm breasts with nipples relaxed and almost flat on cones of soft flesh caught the dim room's light. He tightened, relaxed, studied her—the texture of the robe, the quilted lumpiness of the comforter. Her silky skin against a backdrop of paper walls and stained wood frames—the way the filtered light from the paper-covered window was reflected onto her by the shiny-gold *tatami* straw. It was one of the most beautiful sights he had seen. She was magical and exotic. Everything a woman could be.

When she awoke, he was sleeping on his side, facing her. She felt coolness and tried to close the tangled pajama top. She sat-up and pulled the cloth back where it belonged. She studied him. Sound asleep, a gentle smile on his face. She got to her feet and was out of the room and down the hall to the john before he moved.

After breakfast was served and the tiny kimonoed lady cleared the table and bowed from the room, they dressed. In street clothes they became more formal. He packed his things and offered to help her find hers.

"I need to talk with you first." She motioned for him to sit with her on the *tatami*.

"It's not an accident I'm here. I had to be here to contact you."

"What?"

"I sought you out. I've been assigned to you."

"You mean this wasn't your room?"

"No."

Goddamn it, not another one!

"You work for Hill!"

She nodded, afraid to meet his eyes

"You replacing Tanya?"

"I think so. I'm not certain what their plans for her are. I have orders to get information to you about your next contact."

"Does that explain last night? You were just toying with me?"

"Toying with you? Damn you! Toying with you?" Tears flowed before she could catch herself. "I never ... Dean, I have never felt so close to anyone before. I never said no."

"You made me promise. In the beginning you made me promise not to do anything. Remember the thing about sisters?"

"Oh yeah, I did." But ... she took time to think and say it right ... "I just want you to know, David Dean, that now that I know you, I like you. Last night ... the bath, that skimpy *yukata*, our conversation and all, made

it difficult for me not to be with you. That was real. That was just you and me. That's not part of the assignment."

"Me to ... I've never had a more erotic experience. You really did something to me. You're intelligent and very beautiful."

Something inside her got loose that never wandered free before. It howled up and down her spine and along her nerve endings like a hormone in a medusa. It bit at her in places she was just now learning were of value. Womanhood coursed through her, a biological epiphany.

"Are you alright?"

"Better," she answered smiling up at him and looking into his eyes. "I'm better than I've ever been or thought I could be." She reached for him, but the sliding divider opened and they were hassled by the little man who ran the desk. He stayed with them until they left the room. It was after 9:30.

Outside, she almost apologized then quickly realized there was no need. She took his hand and they were off to her hotel to retrieve her bags. Later, at the Hakodate station, they bought tickets to Sapporo.

The train arrived at the station sooner than they wished. They were sitting with a group of sailors home on leave from Japan Lines. The sailors were anxious to practice English they learned in Anchorage and other Pacific coastal towns. David and Jan were anxious to learn Japanese. One sailor, the best English speaker, used his vocabulary of ten words and the international language of hand-talk, body language, facial expressions, and a map to communicate he lived north of Hokkaido in a town called Sagawa City. David learned he planned to stay at a hotel in Sapporo for a few days

and then travel north on a mail train. They made a tentative agreement to meet in Sapporo.

Dean's plans were simple. He wanted to explore this northern, wildest and largest island. He read about Sapporo and how the American Corps of Engineers laid out the frontier city for the Japanese. He wanted to visit schools, talk to teachers about their educational philosophies, and meet Ainu people. He imagined being able to spend a few days with a family. Hokkaido was supposed to be like Colorado. He planned to see as much of it as possible.

At the American Express Office, Dean and Jan picked-up their mail. Jan was handed a blue, perfumed letter from a friend at home. Dean recognized the stationery and scent.

Jan is who she said. What the hell am I supposed to do?

They got a city map and the man recommended a nearby hotel. They sat on a bench outside the hotel in the warm afternoon sunlight. By unspoken mutual agreement they agreed to let things flow as they would. Whatever happened later would develop in its own time. For now, they were at peace with the world. Jan read her letter. Sapporo became a dangerous place.

Jan handed him the blue stationary. He could tell something was wrong from the look on her face. He read through the social stuff and stopped. He read the fifth paragraph twice.

Jan,

Dean was identified by enemy sources in Niigata. He is being hunted at this time. We believe they intend to kill him or at least hold him for ransom or as a bargaining chip. If you have found him and they have seen you two together you are both in danger. Get to the Embassy in Tokyo. We have orders for you there. Dean must go immediately to Osaka. We'll get him out of Japan. These orders are for your own safety. Do whatever you can to lose anyone following you and then get going fast! We fear for you!

Love,
Gloria and Dan

Acieto Onoto hated unfinished business, especially insurance business. He wanted any CIA operative he could get. The trouble was, most of the known CIA men were pulled-in. The few left were his go-betweens. He couldn't risk taking one of them. That left only one. The one who gave Scar the slip. The one traveling north to Hokkaido. It would be easy to pick-up a *gaijun* traveling alone. He sent an old woman and her sons to do it.

Jan sat at attention. Orders were orders. David was slumped, legs crossed at the ankles, blocking half the sidewalk.

"That letter's two days old. Maybe things have changed. No one has been tailing us. We would have seen them."

"Be serious David. We have our orders. They know what we don't."

Dean sat up, back against the bench. Okay, I'll make you a deal. We sightsee. We go around town and watch our rears. If we are being followed, we'll soon know it. Then we follow orders."

"I don't know. What if ...?"

"Bull! They could have taken us a dozen times today when we weren't even suspecting it."

She thought about the letter and her orders. More, she thought about an evening together. "Okay, but I have an idea. We read about the tramway to the mountaintop? It's a ski lift in the winter and tourist attraction in the summer. If we take it, we'll have a good view behind us."

He smiled his approval. They studied the city map and headed toward the tramway base.

They stopped several times in doorways and watched their rear. Each time, they became more comfortable. Finally, at the tramway base, they bought tickets and walked up to the entry ramp and gondolas. On a hunch, they let several cars go by before they took one. They swung off the loading hill, and felt the cable pull them skyward. The mountain was covered with trees and brush. The views of Sapporo and the surrounding countryside reminded David of Denver—but a Denver set in a countryside like that in the southwest part of the state near Durango. He felt at ease. Jan didn't.

"Do you see that woman standing at the ticket window? The one dressed in dark brown?"

Dean turned and looked behind them. "I think so. Yeah."

"I'm sure that woman was in Hakodate. I saw her near us at the American Express Office. Now she's here." She thought for a moment. "Would they have a woman follow us?"

"Sure, why not!"

At the top of the hill, they put a coin into a telescope and studied the woman standing far below. Jan shivered. "She looks like a mean person."

"She does have an unusual appearance. Look how heavy her clothes are. Look at the way her hair is done-up. She doesn't look like the other people here."

The coin dropped and shutters fell in front of the lenses. Dean backed away and sat on a stone bench facing a pagoda. "What do we do?"

"Let's ride down and start across the city. If the woman follows, we're in trouble. I'll have to follow orders."

"Follow orders, follow orders. You sound like a soldier."

They both laughed.

In a park, they pretended to study birds in large cages. Looking through the bars as they fed the birds, they saw the woman in brown. As they watched her, she gave a hand signal to two men leaning against a nearby wall. The men were not there when they entered the park. The two began to walk toward the birdcages.

"What now?"

"I guess we say goodbye. Jan, leave your luggage at the American Express Office. Rent a car. Get to Tokyo. Have the Embassy send for your stuff. As soon as we can split, I'm going to lead them away from you. I have a plan. I'll go to Osaka eventually, but I have things to do first."

"Your orders are to go to Osaka."

My orders? I don't take orders.

"I'll go. Only not just yet."

"David, I"

"We've got to go! Let's get out of here, they're trying to surround us."

Acting like lovers they made their way down the main street pushing through crowds of shoppers. When they had gone several blocks, Dean hailed a taxi. It was a sudden act, a last-minute thought. They rode two blocks, directed the man to turn onto a busy side street, and got out. Dean thrust a bill at the driver and they were off. Down another block they turned into a busy camera store. Jan watched the street through the window as Dean played customer and tested several cameras. He ended up buying a Canon FT-QL, all its lenses and a sturdy case. Darkness began to fall. They were in the clear.

The storekeeper called a taxi for them. When the car arrived, they got in quickly.

"Airport please."

The cabby knew the word. Soon they were heading across town. From their vantage point in the rear of the cab, they were certain they weren't followed.

At the airport, they found a rent-a-car company. Jan rented a blue Datsun. They swore to meet again, wished each other safety, and Jan was on her way to Tokyo. David caught a bus back to town. He got off at the hotel where the Japanese seamen were staying. Later that night, the seaman friend he met on the train went to the American Express Office with Dean's claim-check and recovered his bag.

Jan drove through the night reaching Tokyo by 11:00 a.m. the next day. She parked in front of the American Embassy and went inside. Outside, monitors from enemies and friends around the world noted her

arrival. She meant nothing to them. She wasn't on any list. Jan was home free.

Inside the Embassy a Marine escorted her to a side office. A tall man who looked like he just stepped out of an Arrow shirt ad identified himself as a section chief. He said it was his job to debrief her. He was curt and rude. She gave only her name, rank and a code number. Politely, she informed him that was all she could give him at the time. He chose to be personally insulted by her refusal to give information. He wouldn't let her relax, threatening that if she didn't come clean, he would see her sent back to the states in chains. He would report her AWOL. She sat, glaring at him.

"Does that code number mean anything to you, Sir?" She asked as politely as possible. He ignored her and sat smoking his pipe looking like a Princeton man.

"Sir, I respectfully urge you to check-out the code number I gave you."

"Look Lieutenant. I make the rules here. This is my territory and you're in deep shit."

"Sir, may I speak to your superior?"

"No damn it! Now shut up. If I want anything else from you Lieutenant, I'll tighten your belt."

A tall gray-haired man entered the room. The section chief sprang up, not quite to attention. "Mr. Ambassador!" he blurted. The tall man ignored him.

"You're Janet?"

"Yes Sir!"

"Janet, on behalf of the President of the United States, myself, and my staff, I welcome you to this Embassy. I am instructed that anything you

need or wish should be offered. I will serve you to the best of my ability. The section chief stood, eyes bulging. Janet looked at him, then at the Ambassador.

"Sir, this man," she pointed at the section chief, "has been more than rude to me. He is, Sir, a consummate jackass! I hope you will do something about him, Sir."

The Ambassador took her arm, ignoring the stupefied ass. "He most certainly is not an asset. He will be dealt with." Laughing, he took Janet on a tour of the Embassy while others prepared a room. He liked spunky women. Janet made a new friend.

The Ambassador had recently been appointed to the Japan position. Like the two posts he served in before, he found the Embassy filled with pompous, self-aggrandizing, bureaucrats from all the right schools and families. The "real untouchables," his peers called them. They were dead wood that did America more harm than good ... but then, the Ambassador employed an unusual way of pruning-out dead wood. He gave them assignments requiring hard work and intellectual acuity. He exposed their incompetence. Letters requesting transfer were already stacking-up on his desk. The politically well-cushioned bastards couldn't protest too loudly, they would expose themselves.

In their plush new offices at Langley, Gloria did her best to serve. Her best was better than she ever imagined. Largely because of her efforts, Dan obtained stature within the agency. He was grudgingly asked to lunch at Old Boy's Clubs reserved for the select few. He was interviewed by the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. His picture appeared in *Newsweek*.

Dan was gaining respect, and it was noted at all levels of Government. The secretarial pool seldom called him "Fuzznuts" anymore. The Dodo was rising in the service. Some speculated that he might become DCI someday.

Gloria was also rising in the service—figuratively speaking. Her body accepted Dan's seed and began to swell in appropriate places. Gloria, whom some thought a confirmed spinster destined to serve her life out in the closeted halls of the Central Intelligence Agency, was pregnant. Dan Hill, married, husband of Sally, was to be a father.

"Oh geez Gloria, no one must know! Sally filed for divorce. I'll marry you in ... let's see, it will take weeks for the divorce to be final. How long have you known—been impregnated, I mean?"

Gloria was shocked and angry. "Impregnated? Can't you just say pregnant? You're the impregnator! I'm the pregnated. You're getting divorced? What about my divorce?"

"Oh my God. No! Are you married Gloria? You never told me!"

She sobbed into her blue handkerchief, the one that matched her stationary.

"I never told you because I didn't think of myself as married."

This was too much for Dan. He sagged over to the couch, fell into the cushions, and pushed back against the cool leather.

"Gloria, who are you married to?"

"Whom! He was studying to be a lawyer and a politician in California where we went to school. I thought I loved him. He sold used cars on a lot near campus and we went for a drive on Sundays. He drank a lot."

"My God, and you married him? Your married name is Nixon?"

"That's right. My maiden name is Head. Danny, I think I married him. I can't be certain."

"You can't? You think? Do you have a marriage license?"

"I'll get it. I thought you might want to see it." She got up slowly, holding her middle. Dan groaned. She dug into her purse and handed him a folded document. It had lacy squiggles all around and in official looking lettering it screamed Marriage License.

"It looks official to me. Here," he held the paper so she could see. "Here, under the NAMES heading? She had filled in the blanks. He perused the blanks filled in by Nixon. Wait a minute." He let the paper down slowly, a giant smile creased his face.

"What is it Dan? Is it good news?"

"Now listen Glory. Did you consummate the marriage? She looked away. "Is this necessary Dan. It was more than fifteen years ago."

"I need to know, tell me exactly what happened."

"Well, he ... we did it several times. I ... I thought I loved him. Then I wouldn't let him touch me. He got mad at me. I told him we had to marry before I would let him make love to me again."

"So you got married?"

"Yes, a private ceremony. Only his friends. I didn't care, I thought I loved him."

"Then what?"

"He was terrible. He told me the marriage was off. He said it wasn't a legal marriage anyhow. By that time, I knew he was just a creep. I couldn't stand him. I didn't want to be married to him either."

"You never tried to get a divorce?"

"No, I never tried."

"You weren't ever married Glory!"

"How do you know?"

He hesitated. "See this signature?" he pointed to a scrawling ink mark at the bottom of the page under the heading: MINISTER. "Read it!"

"It's D. Segretti. What does that mean?"

"It means you were never married!" He pulled her onto his lap.

"I just don't understand."

Dan controlled his laughter.

"Glory," Dan called to her later that afternoon. "Did you see this report from Jan Hurley?"

Gloria looked up from her desk, pushed away the soda crackers she was nibbling, and took the report.

"I haven't seen it. Too much has been happening."

"We have trouble. Fallout is off on his own. Jan reports he won't get to Osaka for a week. We need him in Taiwan, now!"

"Oh, that's terrible! You promised the DCI we could get that plane, didn't you?"

"I did." He was starting to get itchy again. He paced, he scratched, he raved.

"Danny, stop it! Stop hurting yourself. I need you more than ever now. We need you."

"Damned amateur! That damned teacher! Who the hell does he think he is? I know who he is! He's our only operative the enemies of this nation don't know. That's who he is"

"Dan, we do kinda have another agent." She hesitated to bring it up, but in a way, they did have another unknown in the field.

"We do? Who?" He stopped pacing and looked at her. His mouth open. He couldn't figure her out.

"Agent PT is sitting in Singapore awaiting orders. Can't she be the Taiwan contact?"

Dan closed his mouth and stared. "Tanya Horowitz?"

"She's there Dan. Who would suspect her?"

"Her cover was blown in Tokyo. We used her to lead the pack to Singapore. Now you want to bring her into this Taiwan thing?"

"Sure! Why not Danny, honey?"

David couldn't figure out why Hill said he was in danger. Not wanting to take chances, he changed his identity. He put his hairpiece in place and donned sunglasses. His face sported a three-day growth. He was not about to miss the sights of Sapporo. With his friends from Japan Lines, he was shown the town as only Japanese sailors know it. No one followed, the sailors saw to that. Between all of them they mastered only ten or fifteen words with which to communicate. Yet, he made himself clear, somehow. He was their special project and they had more fun at it than he.

The milk train to Sugawa City was pulled by a pre-WWII steam engine with the biggest drive-wheels David had ever seen. The little monster was short, high, and powerful. Soon it was smoking its way out of Sapporo, north up a wide valley into the interior. The sailors played cards, talked among themselves, and ignored him. After an hour, they pointed out

the window and urged him to look. Far away, like a Colorado view from the Eastern plains, was a snow-capped peak.

“Ashibetsui-Dake, Ashibetsui-Dake”, they announced.

Half an hour later, another peak appeared in the distance. “Asahi-Dake.”

They pointed and talked among themselves, then watched as he looked at his map. These six and seven-thousand-foot peaks formed the backbone of Hokkaido. The sailors made him understand that spirits lived there; that the country was wild—like the Wild West.

At the Hotel in Sapporo, he had pointed out Colorado and Denver on a map of the U.S. They were impressed. They knew of the West—had seen it in hundreds of movies. From then on, they treated him with renewed respect. He was a cowboy! They greeted him by pretending to draw a gun and shoot at him, their thumbs triggering imaginary hammers while they made clicking noises with their tongues. Now they were showing him their wild frontier.

People from Hokkaido were different. On the bumpy, swaying train ride he began to understand why. They were more individualistic. They didn't fit a cookie-cutter matrix like people in the south. He came to understand they were shaped by the frontier they lived on. Isolation required—perhaps even sparked—individualism.

Dean noted more variations in the size of the people on the train than he observed on the city subways.

They keep their personal space. They don't meld into each other.

He read in one of the books Suzi found for him, that prior to WWII and the influx of new genetic material from Caucasian and Negroid

conquerors, a Japanese man could order clothes for his wife by giving the salesgirl her age. Their breeding was controlled for centuries. The population standardized. But here in the north it wasn't as true.

As the train stopped, started, and-steamed its way to Sagawa City, Dean formed a hypothesis:

In the future, the Japanese people will become more individualistic. The age of state corporate—social, religious, cultural and physical slavery—is coming to an end. If my hypothesis is correct, prosperity will breed a people who demand more than conformity and cradle-to-grave security. The economics of the Japanese Empire will change. Individualism will grow and chaos will follow.

Sagawa City was a neatly planned community that served as a rail center for the wood products industry, a silk and linen industry, and as a shipping point for some locally grown oats and rice products. Locals worked for the railroad or in mills. The rows of neat, rectangular, one and one-half story, pitched roof stucco houses were post war, practical and pleasant. Canals running alongside the houses took sewage into gardens where vegetables grew. Even this early in the fall nights were cool. Wood smoke rose from cooking stove-heaters and flew as pennants from each chimney.

David tagged along with the sailor, a captive giant. When they arrived at the house it was obvious the young man hadn't called ahead to warn his parents and siblings. They were surprised and pleased by the arrival of a 'hairy barbarian'; a possession highly valued by the family and the community.

No matter how he tried Dean could not master Sailor's name. It was a source of embarrassment. As he was introduced to his host's family his ear simply couldn't grasp the consonants and vowels of the language. His confusion over their names didn't dampen their hospitality or his welcome.

Mamasan was almost four feet high and two feet wide. She wore her hair in a bun and her apron over a faded print dress. There was a hole in her sock and a smile on her face. She was, in every way, *Mama*. She fretted about the food the giant *gaijun* could eat. She worried about finding a place large enough, private enough, for him to sleep. She tugged at drawers and held-up items of clothing until she found a *yukata* she thought big enough.

Papasan was trim and professional. He worked for the railroad. He assembled his family and a few neighbors in the largest room in the house. They sat tightly jammed together around the room, facing him. *Mamasan* was in the kitchen. Her eyes and ears missed nothing as she cooked.

When the family was comfortable, he motioned Dean to sit at his side. There was warmth in his voice. Dean felt comfortable and at ease. When Dean wiggled his way into the tight space, *Papasan* began to speak. He went on and on. His voice was soft, yet full of enunciated points of interest to the audience. They "ooed" and "ahhed," always smiling. When he finished all in the room nodded and bowed their heads toward him in greeting.

Papasan got up and went into a back room. He emerged with a well-worn shoebox. The way he held it, it was a family treasure. Dean watched the family and knew he was about to share a family prize. They were honoring him.

The head of the household put the box in his lap and removed the cardboard lid. Inside Dean could see tightly stacked collections of photos, packets of prints and cards held together by rubber bands. Family photos?

Starting at the part of the box nearest him, he carefully removed several photos. He held the first one up and Dean caught a glimpse. It was all he could do to mute his reaction. It was a photo of two people posed in a way that would make a sex therapist blush. It was hard-core pornography—at least it would have been in the West. The graphic photos were individually passed around the room. The entire family, boys and girls, men and women together, commented and joked about them. Comparisons were suggested as they jeered or laughed and made what seemed to David to be personal comparisons. *Mamasan* ran in from the kitchen and made comments about particularly explicit acts. When the dog-eared pictures arrived back at *Papasan's* box, he re-stacked them, banded them, and placed them carefully away.

After Dean got over his first, second, and third shocks he learned that their concept of human interaction—acceptance of natural and necessary acts—was healthy. Much healthier than the way his own culture dealt with sex and the human body.

This is obviously more enjoyable, more bonding than watching television!

He slept on a comforter under the eaves in the warmth of the rising heat from the wood stove. He was fed, toured about, and made to feel the family's warmth and acceptance. He wondered if an American family would welcome a completely alien stranger into their home with such openness.

He visited the high school with his host. Inside he parked his shoes and put on slippers that slapped the floor as he walked. He met the headmaster and together they went to find the foreign language teacher. A bell rang and kids filled the halls. The swish-pat, swish-pat of hundreds of slippers was a sound he would always associate with Japanese schools.

The English language teacher was hiding. He feared loss of face. The headmaster found him in a cloakroom and prodded him out. David knew to pretend to understand everything the teacher said. He smiled, bowed, and thanked the teacher. When the teacher knew he wouldn't be publicly humiliated he relaxed. Speaking slowly, he explained the workings of the school. He was a good English teacher. It had been years since he conversed with a native speaker.

A family member brought a car around and drove him three blocks to the station. The train stood in white vapor. Friendships ended, broken by ignorance of language. They watched him depart, not knowing his name or how to contact him again. Dean left, never knowing his host's name or address. He had lived in the moment and that was important.

In Sapporo, Dean was alone again in a strange land. His memories of Jan and the warmth he carried in his heart for the Japanese family didn't buoy him. He saw gray buildings as gray, clouds as clouds. He went to the airport and booked a flight to Osaka. From there, he would go to Kyoto on the fast train.

As he sat waiting for his flight to be called, reading a Kyoto guidebook, he wasn't alone. Vigilance rewarded, the woman in brown was on him. He wouldn't escape her again.

Chapter TWENTY-EIGHT

Tanya profited from her new profession. She never worked-out a day in her life until they trained her and gave her cover as a Physical Therapist. Now her body was hard and compact. Her softer parts, stood out on her body like drops of water on carved alabaster—but only when she flexed. Today she was working on her gracilis muscles. She lay on her side and raised her leg. Then she bent it and twisted it about. Her hip and side hurt but it was worth it. Her thoughts turned to David. Her body carried the memory of their time together. She wished that he was in Singapore staying with her at the Raffles.

Later in the day, Tanya was taking tea in the grassy courtyard of the old hotel. She had shopped and walked through the open-air markets dragging her tails with her. She knew they were there. They gave her a sense of security. She assumed they wouldn't let anything happen to her.

She stopped by the front desk on her way to her room. It was habit now. For two weeks nothing arrived. She was surprised that a blue, perfumed letter was in her box.

In her room, she sat on the bed with a swish of her skirt and tore open the envelope. Bad news.

Tanya,

You must make everyone believe you are going to Bangkok. Be loud and obvious. Secretly tickets and instructions will be delivered to you for a flight to Taipei. We need you to do this for us. More later. Love, Gloria.

Tanya searched the map in her Tour Guide having no clue about the location of Taipei. Taipei was also known as *Taihoku* on an island called Formosa (Taiwan, Nationalist China). She read on that Taipei, the capital city, was situated near the northern end of the Straits of Formosa, in an area that suffered from some of the worst typhoons in the region. The information meant little to Tanya at the time but it proved to be significant. She was ordered to ditch her tails and hightail it out. It boggled her mind. She changed into her exercise clothes for her daily work out.

As she exercised, she devised a plan. She would pretend she couldn't get the flight she wanted from the Raffles Travel Agency Office. She knew just how to confuse the girl at the counter. Then she would go to the airport and book Bangkok for the next day. She would pretend to return to her hotel, then lose her tails in time to catch the afternoon flight to Formosa. It was a plan taught to operatives at spy school and it worked.

Two hours out of Singapore, the weather shook and spit at the plane. Half an hour later, it was hurled through the sky by forces so fierce the pilot checked to see if the engines were operating. Sheets of lightning fractured the sky. The plane became a charged particle in an accelerator.

Lucky for Tanya and about ninety other folks, the typhoon's winds hurled them out of the storm. They landed on a rain-slick, storm-battered runway. The storm had just passed. Their plane's tires were the first in three days to splash through the stupendous puddles. When the door opened and a steward stepped inside, the smell was strong enough to make him retch. The winged tube expurgated green people.

Tanya's excellent physical condition sped her recovery. While others aired their clothes and searched for toilets, Tanya collected her wits, passed

customs, and caught a taxi. In the weather-beaten center of the city, she found a few stores open. In no time she purchased a new wardrobe and received advice about selecting a hotel. She felt sad about the fine clothes she abandoned in Singapore. She would have Gloria order the Raffles to send her old things back to the States. She never dreamed that doing so would break the morale of two secret services.

Chapter TWENTY-NINE

Acieto Onoto knew his time was limited. Even with Scar and Tsuzui Hyunda dead, the forces the two old Mitusuka men had put in place were still operating. He thought long and hard on the problem of his safety. He received CIA/MI protection—of sorts. He sponsored his own carefully laid-out network of operatives. What he didn't have was a lead as to who would inherit the contract to kill him. In thirty years, he never felt as vulnerable.

Mitusuka Industries came apart rapidly. Networks dissolved and left division managers confused and powerless. Divisions dissolved and segmented. Like maggots appearing in rotting flesh, infiltrators from other corporate giants began to eat away at the dead and dying. Within a week, isolated international operations that were once well-guided tentacles became severed hands. There was no provision for survival in this type of disintegration and collapse. Whole industries failed and were taken over by mega-corporations led by Dutch, English and U.S. interests. Within Japan and throughout the East, the empire was ripped apart and fed to companies

with household names everyone knew. Sungawa Industries ate the lion's share.

The Government of Japan was embarrassed. Its only defense was a strong offense. The two old men, managers placed in positions of power by MacArthur, were to be tried for offending the National Honor. Honorably, they took their own lives. Truth be known, they had help. The investigations died with them, but not the order that Onoto be killed.

New companies formed as growth on other tentacles. Few cared. Americans couldn't buy Datsuns anymore. The T.V. accessories business was consolidated into fewer hands and a few Japanese workers were fed into other companies forcing stagnating workers up a peg. All-in-all, the dissipation of Mitusuka was good for business.

What could Acieto Onoto do? He could accept the offer from Dan Hill, DDO of the CIA, to disappear. That was not an end his ego could accept. He could consolidate his networks of agents and focus them on one last challenge: Secure his protection and once discovered, eliminate all those committed to destroy him. This option was much more appealing. Onoto always liked extra insurance.

Messages reached the brown-clothed agents of Acieto Onoto in secret places throughout the East. New orders were given. A cadre of his finest came back to Niigata and formed a protective shield around him. Others searched everywhere for those who would assassinate the old man. CIA operatives were contacted and told to provide cover for him. He moved to Hawaii where he believed he was safe. He was prepared to defend himself in this one last fight, or so he thought.

Dean's brown-garbed shadow disappeared. With the collapse of Mitusuka, none of the daughters of Onoto were followed. They lay in wait primed and ready to kill. All it took was a phone call, five rhythmic clicks, and a voice that commanded: "Obey!"

Tanya didn't like Taipei. Perhaps it was the disarray caused by the typhoon. In reality, it was the staid, properness of the place. She did the things tourists do—pottery and jewelry factories, National Museum, the Opera—then she waited in her room for orders from Gloria. The blue, perfumed envelope finally arrived. She tore it open in the hotel lobby. Then she hurried to her room, glad to be of service once again.

For the third time she sorted through her closet. Her wardrobe was so small she had nothing to wear. What she needed for this operation was something sporting—perhaps tan slacks, a silk blouse, a billowing scarf?

She found what she was looking for in three different emporiums. Two specialized in men's attire. One was an India Imports shop. She was ready to serve—until she looked at herself in the mirror. She needed a leather flight jacket—the kind lined with lamb fleece. When she found one, she would be ready, not until then.

First Lieutenant Janet Hurlbut, AKA Jan Hurley, code named January, was wined and dined until she felt like royalty one minute and a bad case of indigestion the next. Clarified butter wasn't her thing. In fact, she was a simple mid-western girl with plain tastes. Living like Marie Antoinette at the taxpayer's expense wore on her. America's elite, sacrificing themselves in national service, didn't impress her. That's why

she liked the Ambassador and his wife. When all the details were attended to, they took off their shoes, placed their feet on the Ming coffee table and made light of their formal duties. She loved to unwind with them.

"Pompous Ass!" "Bonehead!" and "Fuckweed!" Were their favorite expressions.

Jan's orders came at the right time. She was itching to do something, anything. When she received orders to find Fallout in Kyoto, she cried. The Ambassador's wife comforted her and held her until she could regain her composure.

She told her husband later, "She was so sad to be leaving us. Make certain they don't abuse that girl!"

Jan set out on her mission. She left the Embassy disguised as a boy. No one was looking for a boy, so the ever-watchful agents on duty logged him and kept searching for someone suspicious. A photograph or two of the lad were perused by analysts. A French agent asked, "How did he come out if he never went in?" His concern was duly noted.

The plane from Sapporo flew over Niigata, Nigano, and Gifu. Before landing in Osaka, it dog-legged over Sakai and came-in over Osaka Bay. Dean caught the fastest train in the world and soon arrived in the ancient city of Kyoto. He got a taxi and communicated to the cabby that he wanted a ryokan in the center of town. The cabby let him out in front of a large Kabuki theater. Confused, he stood wondering what to do. It started to rain. The taxi went around the block and came back, honked and the driver motioned Dean to look across the street. Up a flight of steps, beneath an overhanging tile roof, was a sign with large Japanese characters. Below the

ideograms, in English, was the word 'Ryokan'. He waved and bowed and headed across the rain-shiny street.

That night, he added his Kyoto observations to a letter to his father and stepmother. He titled them: "A Walk Through Old Kyoto."

Dear Dad,

Rain is falling. Deep gray skies obscure the mountains surrounding the city. The street is wide, busy, and ringed with small shops and stores—some with their wares spilling-out onto the sidewalk. Others, dimly lit dens, are inhabited by quiet people sitting on high stools overlooking their wares and the passersby. A trolley rolls down the middle of the street, its deep-throated horn driving a swarm of small Toyota cars in front of it. Blue sparks fly from the wires above as rails below reflect the gray of the day.

The vehicle traffic and the people weave patterns of motion and noise. The rain falls harder and the people sprout black umbrellas and move at a faster pace.

On my right, the gates of a tile-roofed temple glow orange and gold. Buildings shine dull-brown with rain-soaked blackened patches. I pass an open-air fish market with its wealth of little boxes full of white squid, purple octopus and shining fish of all sizes. Next, the odor of frying fish sweeps through the rain. A small man with a dirty white apron cooks shrimp in a vat of dirty boiling oil. He nods and says "Ohio." I return the greeting and pass on.

To my left is an old three-story building of Japanese Archaic Style. Covering the second story wall are large paintings of kabuki dancers in

stylized dress with vivid colors. In front of the theater, along the walk, are photographs of famous kabuki.

I pass the Minami-za Theater and cross over the river. From the river bridge, I can see ryokans lining both sides. Under tile roof porches, on old wood rails, bedding airs in a profusion of color.

I'm in a small arcade when the rain stops. Down go umbrellas as if on signal. I shop and look at treasures in every window. Soon all the stuff looks the same. I duck into a coffee shop called MUSE and order a thick cup of coffee. I listen to classical music from the cafe's extraordinary sound system. I think of home and you ... everyone. I miss you all, wish you were here.

Love, David

Dean was glad he bought his camera. The ancient architecture fascinated him. He captured vestiges of ancient builder's minds. He filmed tiles flowing down graceful roofs and vines that crept up and hid them. Wherever he went he scanned for the lady in brown or the men he and Jan saw in the Sapporo park. He set traps, sprung them, and marveled that he was alone. Why weren't they following? Then he knew. They didn't have to. They could watch the Bullet Train and the small airdrome and know when he left. That bothered him. He began to plan an escape from Kyoto by car or bus ... bus, he decided. He would make certain they weren't covering the bus station, then get on at a stop out of town and give them the slip. He had no way of knowing he wasn't being followed. Nor did he suspect that Jan would arrive in Kyoto the following day.

Tanya, found a replica of a WWII bomber jacket in a Pakistani run, Chinese owned, British mod rocker store. It was too large, but it fit the bill. The other bill was added to the envelope she sent to Gloria. Gloria was surprised a week later when the large, perfumed, titty-pink envelope full of sales receipts arrived. Tanya explained she left everything in Singapore to avoid being seen. She needed to replace "absolutely everything" in Taipei. She asked Gloria to contact the Raffles and have her things sent to Maryland.

Tanya was ready for her next assignment. Impatient, she waited for a letter from home. When it came, she memorized the details and flushed the evidence. The next time, she swore to herself, she would tear the paper into tiny pieces. She dried her hands and watched the water fill the bowl. Secret stuff was such dirty work!

Her orders were clear. An agent would hand her a small ivory statue as she shopped in the hotel's jewelry store. She was to walk into the Suzen restaurant in downtown Taipei at exactly 3:00 p.m. on Friday, take a table near the kitchen door and ask to see a menu with the specialty of the day. She would be handed a large menu which contained a small envelope.

Hide the envelope in your purse or somewhere. Don't let anybody see it. Eat, and then go to the ladies room. In a closed stall open the envelope and follow directions. Make sure you destroy the envelope and directions before you leave. Good luck!

When Friday arrived, Tanya worked-out in her room and diddled away the morning. She was dressed in her silks and leather by 1:00. Time dragged. At 2:30 she left the hotel. Several quick turns and a hide in a doorway assured her she wasn't followed. She entered the restaurant,

picked a table, and asked for a menu. The menu contained a small folded paper. She slipped it into her purse while pretending to get a Kleenex. She was cool, calm and on the verge of being collected by two Chinese standing just inside the kitchen door.

After a very nice meal, she sat in the toilet stall and unfolded the paper. She memorized her orders and tore the coarse paper into tiny pieces. Unsure, she put the pieces in her mouth and chewed them into a wad. Then she flushed it. She was learning the innermost secrets of clandestine operations.

"It can't be!" the pox-marked, C-Chan man stated.

"It's got to be!" his partner said shaking his head No.

"They wouldn't be that dumb!"

"They must be."

"Gods! It's a trap. We're talking a million dollars for a MiG and they send a woman dressed as an airman? Why? I can't understand it! They must know."

"Maybe it is a diversion."

"Was she followed?"

"She had to be in that outfit! She's the only American woman on Formosa that's dressed like Jimmy Doolittle. Why didn't they send an Embassy car like they did the last time. At least it didn't confuse anybody."

"We've got to be missing something. Something important."

"What?"

Tanya paid her bill and began to rave about the food. "Oh, I must tell the chef!" she said loudly and moved toward the kitchen. She played her part well. There was nobody in the front except the waiter but she acted as instructed just the same. As she headed for the kitchen door, two frightened men ran out the back.

Tanya found a man she thought was the chef, thanked him for the meal, and offered him the ivory statue. He looked surprised, bowed gracefully while accepting the gift. It was the first time anybody gave him a present for washing dishes. He liked Americans. Later he gave the cheap, fake, ivory piece to his smallest daughter. He never suspected it was a miniature transmitter.

Dan Hill was furious. "Gloria, what the hell were you thinking? You substituted a transmitter for the papers and used Tanya Horowitz to deliver it? You had her pass a transmitter so our guys could track the rogue Chinese agents down and give them our guarantees about the money and safe conduct for the Chinese pilot of the MiG. You were only supposed to get her in place. I had another plan for her."

"But it worked Danny. I did it for you and it was the right thing to do."

"Bullshit!"

Gloria jumped up and moved around her desk.

The door opened and the DCI walked in.

"What seems to be the trouble Hill?"

"We almost blew an important operation," Gloria announced, quick to steer the conversation to Dan's advantage.

"Blew what?"

"The MiG for cash deal," Dan said through clenched teeth.

The DCI turned pale and saw the President's face pass before his eyes.

"Blown? But I just told the President it went down."

"It's down all right."

"On Danny, don't be so negative. Right now, your men are probably delivering the guarantees to the Chinks."

"Prove it!" the DCI challenged. "You prove it or hand in your resignation right now—today."

Dan was trapped. Gloria stared at him, urging him to support her. He had no idea what was happening in Taiwan, but he played along.

"I'll have confirmation within the day—maybe first thing tomorrow. I tell you it's done!"

The little girl grew tired of the plaything and dropped it in the gutter. A black and tan bitch with ribs so prominent she looked like a dinghy turned inside-out, chewed on the little ivory statue. Suddenly, the dog was surrounded. She yelped and ran as five men raced toward her. Two men carried concave dishes, microphones sticking out of their pockets, earphones clamped about their heads. Two carried drawn pistols. One had the dumbest look on his face the others had ever seen. They spoke quickly in a Chinese dialect, then turned and skulked back to a waiting van. The leader moved toward a black sedan parked across the street. A man inside waited for an explanation.

"They fooled us, Comrade. They must have identified our men in the restaurant. They tricked us again."

There was no joy in Red China that night.

At 2:00 a.m. Dan was awakened by knocking on his door.

Shit, what would Sally be back here for?

He stumbled to the door and almost opened it, before he remembered he was at risk. He pushed a button installed near the frame. A recorder started. He moved the eye-piece cover back. Cameras inside and out began to record. He slid the bolt. A mic turned on.

"Who is it?"

"Sir, you are needed at Langley right away. My men and I have been instructed to ensure your safety and escort you there. Sir, call and verify. Then get dressed. We will wait here to escort you."

Dan felt thick and sluggish like a sea cucumber. He peed like one, called, dressed, and allowed the marines to escort him back to work. Once there, they let him find his own way to his office. Inside, he found an urgent printout of a communication received three hours before from Taipei. He was wide awake now. Three hours? What in the hell took them so long? Who entered his office and put the copy on his desk? Who knew of this besides him? He was on the phone demanding answers.

"Nobody but you and me ... er ... I mean us, Sir." A National Reconnaissance Office aerial overhead officer answered.

"And who the hell is us?"

"Captain McBevie and me, Sir. We are the only ones on duty tonight. We took it off satellite."

"Satellite?"

"Yessir. It came over a little after twelve, Sir."

"It's almost four now. What took so long to get it to me?"

"We didn't know who you were, Sir. We report to the Department of Defense. He wasn't home ... I mean the Secretary, Sir. We tried to contact the Director of Central Intelligence. He wasn't available, Sir. We called the Duty Officer, Sir. He said to call the DCI. We told him we tried, Sir. Then he said if the DCI wouldn't deal with it, he sure as hell wouldn't. That's a direct quote, Sir. So we called the CIA and they confirmed Hill was you, Sir. We sent the Marines, Sir. A janitor let us into your office."

"Amazing!" Hill said, meaning it. And you did all that in under three hours! You are to be commended. Thank you, son." He was only forty-four, but his position allowed him to call the NRO officer son. Things like that amused Dan Hill.

He was asleep on the couch when Gloria opened the office. In his hand was a computer printout. There was a smile on his face. She woke him. He was in a good mood.

"PT—little Miss Horowitz—did it, Glory. She sensed the danger and blew their cover. We got word last night from the Nationalist side that they approve of the way we exposed the enemy. Their own agents had been captured. Others were substituted. Tanya gave the radio transmitter to a dog. Damn that girl's smart! They want to set-up a meet with PT and get the written guarantees."

"The American Embassy is holding the papers." Gloria still smarted from yesterday's encounter. He must learn to trust her.

"We'll have the Embassy deliver them to PT. She can mail them from the Hotel to the Nationalists in Taipei. I'll get their address."

Two days later, Dan nonchalantly announced to the DCI that the guarantees were in the proper hands and the MiG arrived at an island base

off the coast of Formosa. The DCI swore eternal support for Tanya Horowitz and Operation Cowboy. He offered to arrange another meeting with the President but Dan refused. He offered a better office but Dan liked the one he had. In desperation he shouted at Dan "Goddamnit! What in the hell do you want?"

Dan took his time to answer.

Is this the right time? Will the DCI understand? Screw it, I'll ask.

"I need time off to get married ... and take a honeymoon."

The DCI was dumbfounded. "Married? Honeymoon? What are you talking about? You're already married."

"I won't be when I get married."

"Oh?"

"And Sir, I can't take a regular honeymoon. I mean if they catch me ... us ... I'm a security risk." He wasn't sure he was making himself clear.

The DCI thought and thought. He sat, an Auguste Rodin model. Minutes passed. He scratched his chin and adjusted his crotch. It all made sense, after all Dan saved his neck, he was due a favor. He got a sly grin on his face that scared Dan, who sat wadding his hands, waiting for his superior's decision.

"I'm sending you on a special mission ... you and your wife. I've decided there is a critical situation in ... oh, let's see, Hawaii. That's right, Hawaii ... on the island of Hawaii. You will arrange military transportation. Deep cover operation. Deep Cover! Everything you need, we'll provide, Dan. Everything!" He paused and looked Dan right in the eye.

"Dan this a Top-Secret operation. I'll get a Presidential Finding on record. No one will ever know why you were sent there. It's Top Secret all the way."

Dan shook hands with the DCI and rushed out to tell Gloria. If they had a boy, they'd name him George.

Dean explored Kyoto for almost two days when he sensed he had to get out fast. A primeval survival instinct in the core of his brain took over. He felt the presence of someone behind him. He walked faster. A woman gained on him. He felt terror. It pushed him along the sidewalks like a dark saurian force of cold-blooded evil bent upon his apprehension. He had to flee the forces conjured in his mind. He caught a bus outside town as he planned.

In a dream, Jan was driven by raw emotions. She had to see David. She had to touch him and know he was real. A primeval survival instinct in the core of her brain took over. She felt Dean's presence. She walked faster. She was gaining on him, getting closer to him. She ran, her need pushing her along the sidewalks like a force of energy. She was focused on his apprehension.

She arrived in Kyoto that evening. Jan missed him by six hours. It took a full day for her to accept that he was gone.

Tanya mailed the documents from the Embassy in a large pink envelope. She sent it to the address Gloria had given her. It was all so simple. Then she called Gloria as instructed.

Gloria went on and on about her cleverness and bravery. The DDO himself came on the line and thanked her on behalf of the DCI and the President.

"You went beyond the call of duty and served your country at great personal risk."

Gloria came back on and told her about her plants and a package of old junk that had arrived from her mother. That was nice!

What bothered Tanya was the way Gloria ended the conversation.

"Tanya, your cover has been blown. You're in danger. Throw them off your trail if you can. We're wiring money. Go to Hong Kong, honey. Go there and try to relax."

The phone conversation was monitored at the hotel, at the satellite sending station, by a repeater's repeater 22,000 miles over the Equator, at the satellite receiving station, at the microwave tower in the Sierras, the microwave towers in Nevada, Arizona, Colorado, and Kansas, and on the secured lines going into Langley. Nine secret agents from six different services, all working for their country's equivalent of the NRO, the National Reconnaissance Office, got the message loud and clear.

Six different services challenged twenty high ranking analysts to decipher the code used by the CIA. Twenty distinctly different interpretations were sent to six top ranking directors of covert activities. One Director, an FBI old-timer, suggested there was no code. He was marked for early retirement.

All intelligence agreed: The MiG would be delivered to Hong Kong by junk. A junk carrying plants. The woman operative who dressed like Jimmy

Doolittle would coordinate the job. She would have the million dollars. The CIA was wiring it to her.

The defeated Chinese notified Hong Kong. They licked their Taipei wounds—inflicted by a woman CIA agent! "A dog! A damned dog," they said as they cursed her. They'd intercept the plane, take the million, and then get even. This woman operative was finished!

In Taipei Tanya made arrangements to go to Hong Kong. She had the hotel pack and ship her old clothes home to Maryland. As she planned her new wardrobe, she fantasized silks and satins, polished cottons, brocades, and tweeds. When funds from the CIA arrived, she bought her ticket and was on her way. She really didn't feel like relaxing, but orders were orders.

Chapter THIRTY

The Daughters of Onoto, wards of Mitusuka Industries, chattel of the two old men, were sown into environments where they flourished and served. They had been brutally brain-washed and manipulated to manifest different personalities.

The Daughters of Onoto, and their brother, Heto, grew from joined chromosomes containing genetic codes from Acieto's Ainu-Japanese-Caucasoid-Mongoloid heritage and Mei's Australian-Chinese-Caucasoid-Mongoloid ancestry. Except for their hair. Their hair wasn't round and straight as mongoloid hair, or flat and kinky as Negroid hair. The strands were slightly oval and black. They gently curled in natural waves. They might have come from any part of Asia.

Acieto Onoto sent Heto to Hawaii. He settled on the island of Hawaii, passing for a Polynesian. His Christian name was Thomas Cook. There were lots of Tom Cooks on the islands, the name was a good choice.

The oldest daughter, Suzi Song Onoto, was in Hong Kong. Until the age of fourteen Suzi was a bright, loving, and happy child. For the past decade she had been under the control of Mitusuka brain washing. Only Suzi was aware of her other personalities thanks to her love for David Dean. Now she had almost regained control of herself. Suzi controlled Song and was beginning to overpower the murderous Onoto. She was almost free.

Mitsu Sami Onoto, the middle daughter, went about her life as Sami Cook. Her personality was split into Sami and a creation called Onoto. Only once had the Onoto part of her been called-out. Sami was twenty-five, willowy, and striking, if not beautiful. She graduated from the University of Hawaii with a degree in P.E. She worked for a Sungawa corporation as a manager. She was given a trust fund she was told had been set-up by an uncle after her parents died in an auto accident.

She was told her parents died before she was born. Except for nightmares and an occasional lack of ability to concentrate, Sami did well. As they did with Song, her controllers used her as a British operative. She dated an occasional mark and recorded their conversations.

Once she was asked to photograph the contents of a Frenchman's briefcase. When she thought he was sleeping she started her work. He jumped from the bed and caught her arm. He held a pistol pressed into her ribs. He laughed, showed her that the contents of his case contained nothing of importance, and then made a deal with her. He wouldn't blow her cover if she came to him twice a week. After several months he became

bored and broke it off. She never heard from him again—or thought of him for that matter.

Onoe Seiko Onoto was the devil of the three. The youngest sister, Onoe was split into Seiko and a creation called Onoto. She was placed in a village outside Bangkok. Although her original personality was still unknown to her, a strange combination of her other two selves made her dangerous and unpredictable. Seiko, at twenty-one, was petite, wiry, and unable to hold still. She was beautiful, but her features changed quickly as emotions raged through her. People she met didn't feel they knew her, not really. It bothered them. None called her friend. The village-home where she had been placed at age fourteen, specialized in prostituting girls. That was normal and possibly necessary in the 'Brothel of the East'. Bangkok was every army's R&R center. The French were out. The ANZUS (Australia, New Zealand, United States) guys were in. City girls learned to greet foreign men with a question. "GI-you-wan-a-fuckie?" instead of "Hello."

Seiko avoided life as a hired wife by being squirrely. That was the only benefit of the run-on between her Seiko and Onoto personalities. The young girl who had been shattered and re-assembled was unknown except in the memories of her sisters and one woman who remembered Onoe as a gentle little thing who loved animals and flowers. A dreamy girl who lived as lace riding a breeze. She loved and had been loved by all but Acieto Onoto, her father, who had no interest in her.

Seiko worked as a maid in the American Embassy. Occasionally they asked her questions about the goings-on in the American's place. For that she was paid enough to afford the comforts and possessions they thought she needed.

When Mitusuka disintegrated and the two old men died, they left a curse on the Daughters of Onoto. An icy talon, hooked into their subconscious minds, could be triggered by five rhythmic clicks and a command: Obey! Whoever knew this key could unleash Onoto, a zombie-like instrument, buried in each of them.

Only one person still alive had been in the windowed room where the girls were broken, re-formed and their new identities programmed. She was a sick and tortured soul held together by her undisclosed love and admiration for Acieto Onoto. Acieto was the man who brought her family from Hokkaido, hidden their Ainu ancestry, and given them positions of power in his organization. She controlled the women in brown. She had watched Suzi Song Onoto in the hotel and was sent by Acieto Onoto to capture Dean. Now, she was charged by her mentor with a final mission. Find those contracted to kill Acieto. She rallied her network of women and began the search. If necessary, she would activate the three jewels in her terrible sword.

Chapter THIRTY-ONE

A mid-level CIA analyst named Stead hated Dan Hill but thought him an example of how to rise to the top. Stead found a note in his office on Thursday morning. He wanted to believe it was a hoax but then fear overtook him. On Thursday afternoon he gave the alarm. His section chief ordered all involved with internal security, all department heads, and section chiefs to meet in his office posthaste! He phoned the DCI and informed him of the threat. A consultant was contacted—a man who

worked with MI5 to ensure military security. He was an expert on lie detection technologies. He assured the DCI his team could administer lie detector tests to everyone at Langley if necessary.

As men arrived and took seats in his office, Stead watched them closely. He didn't know whom to trust. Anyone could have written the note and placed it on his desk. Obviously, whoever wrote it had access to the building and the secured offices of the CIA hierarchy. His gut churned. He sweat the cold dampness of fear.

"I don't like what I have to say today," he stared at the team of investigators meeting some eye-to-eye, "I have to tell you our security has been compromised. Within this building ... yes ... within these very walls and in this very office, a terrorist has been operating." He stopped and carefully removed his vest-pocket handkerchief, wiped his brow, and replaced it before he spoke again. The room was quiet at first, then alive with expletives muttered quietly but clearly. Men sat waiting for information, afraid to ask questions because they were afraid of the answers.

"Last night, sometime after 6:00 p.m. and before 7:00 a.m. this morning, someone entered this office and placed this note on my desk." He held-up a sheet of white copy paper. Across the top, the men could see writing. Before they could read it, Stead waved it about and placed it back on his desk. "I've had these terrorist demands and threats analyzed by John here, he pointed to the security expert, Carl Deevers, head of security, and our other experts on such matters. They have concluded that it is real, Gentlemen. This is real and we are in grave danger!" He paused again. "If any of you know of an organization which goes by the acronym HVAC

please tell us who they are?" He paused and waited. Puzzled looks communicated any lack of association. "We think it could stand for a group like Hungarians or Haitians, Volunteers or Vigilantes, for America's Collapse. It could be a splinter off some middle-east terrorist group, perhaps something out of Iran's *SAVAK*. Our guess right now is that it is a splinter group from Iran's Intelligence Service. It could also be a resurgence of American super patriotism and the House Un-American Activities Committee. Frankly, that would be my guess. The team suggests there are several infiltrators. It is plain *HVAC* is in a position to create *havoc*."

The room filled with loud talking. Men turned to those sitting next to them and discussed the threat. Several tried to get the analyst's attention.

"What did they threaten?" they asked in unison.

Stead couldn't resist being theatrical. He would play this out in a way that allowed him to command what must be the most serious breach of security since ... he couldn't think of anything with the magnitude of this threat. He slowly lifted the paper. He held the note in his hand so only he could read it. The room fell quiet. He read:

Your system is out of control. Your safety in this office is endangered. By noon tomorrow we will have gained control of all office systems. By Friday night we will have the entire building under our control. HVAC.

The room was quiet as men thought. Several stood to remove jackets. The room was stuffy, unbearable. A Section Chief stood and got the analyst's attention.

"Sir, are we in danger?"

"That's putting it mildly. We have swept these rooms, this floor, and this building. We haven't found anything suspicious, yet. Yes, we are in danger!"

Dan sat with the other men, sweating and fidgeting. He had nothing to add. The situation was critical. It was a time for level-headedness. He got to his feet.

"We shouldn't be here together. If this room blows ... this floor ... this part of the building ... they would get us all. We need a plan to separate and communicate effectively."

Men agreed, anxious to get to safety.

Analyst Stead became incensed. Leave it to the DDO to try to undermine him—make him look bad. In his mind, he saw himself: *Winged Victory*. He was winning! He silently vowed to get even with Dan. As his focus cleared, he became aware men were on their feet, moving out the door. "I didn't dismiss anyone!"

"It's for their own safety!" Security Chief Deevers countermanded. The men were down the corridor, out like exorcised spirits. The analyst stood in his doorway blocking the flight of two men who had been slow to migrate. Then he thought of the probability of a bomb. He beat the others to the elevators and was gone.

Outside, the building was sealed-off. Employees and service people milled-around behind yellow plastic tape barriers. Uniformed security men held the line—not that anyone wished to go back into the building. Dan, Gloria, and a dozen others moved quickly away from danger and into the crowd. Flashing red, yellow and blue lights pinpointed twenty or more emergency vehicles for the enemy. Firemen and people in hard-hats moved

with direction to and from the vast building. A security man with a power bullhorn blasted coded orders into the melee. Langley was in complete disarray.

"Gloria, let's get the hell out of here and go to your place." Dan grabbed her hand and started to move to the security gate nearest his parking area. A guard at the gate wouldn't let them through. "Why not?" Dan made the guard repeat his orders. He waved his security clearance.

"Sir, no one is to leave the grounds."

Gloria pulled him away from the gate and around one side of the milling crowd. The bullhorn roared. His name was called in a list of others.

"The following are ordered to report to the main foyer immediately."

"Now what?"

"I'm going with you!" Gloria announced as they skirted the crowd and began making their way back.

The crowd focused on a scuffle going on at the main entrance doors. Security men, white-helmeted police, and firemen were running toward the entrance, many with portable radios and communicators. Others carried guns or machine pistols at ready. People in the crowd turned to get back away from the building while others were pushing forward to see what was happening. The crowd was out-of-control. Hysterical cries, shouts, screams, filled the air as panicked people collided. *En masse*, a wave of bodies ran toward the security gate Dan and Gloria had left only minutes before.

Dan took the lead and Gloria's hand. They stayed to one side of the mob. From there, it was relatively easy to skirt the crowd and get to the entrance. In the doorway, men with drawn guns and clubs sat on two men

in white coveralls. Inside three more were held flat-out on the floor, spread-eagled by security men. One threw-up. He was choking on his vomit.

Deevers ordered Gloria back outside. Dan tried to leave with her but was stopped by Stead who motioned him forward. Dan made his way to the side of the elated bureaucrat.

"We got 'em! We got them all." He taunted Dan with a haughty voice, Cheshire grins stacked against his cheekbones.

"Who the hell are they? Dan ignored analyst Stead.

"We will know soon! I promise you that ... I promise you that!"

Carl Deevers approached with a strange look on his face. Dan sensed deep embarrassment, internal anguish.

"Who the hell are they?" Stead demanded. "Who is HVAC?"

The aging security chief bowed his head. He couldn't meet Dan's eyes. "They are our own people." He addressed the analyst, looking him right in the eye. The look was fiery enough to brand his contempt onto the man's soul. The analyst took notice and sensed all was not as he wished.

"They are the guys who work on our heating and air systems. In their trade, they are Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning specialists. This is the team working on the problems with the new system. The note explained they were doing their best to get control of the system on our floor ... or so they thought."

The Chief turned and walked away. Five men in white coveralls, HVAC embroidered patches on their backs, were now standing in a tight group, shaken and still petrified with fear.

The foyer was suddenly quiet. People turned. The DCI arrived. At first word of the threat, he was taken to a secure area—a part of the complex reserved for this type of crisis. Now he was back, taking control.

Deevers explained to the DCI that there had never been a terrorist group or threat. Once the Director regained his composure, he tapped a policeman's club against a clipboard. He had everyone's attention.

"People, this has been a Top-Secret security drill. Had this been the real thing we would all be alive thanks to the fine efforts of our security people here." He paused and looked from one to another around the room.

"You HVAC men played your parts well—so well in fact that I want to meet with you to give commendations. Chief," he turned to Carl Deevers, "Please see that these fine men are escorted to my office, now!"

As the baffled team moved-out, the DCI looked at them with pride and began to clap.

"These men deserve our thanks for making this exercise work." He led those in the foyer in a round of hard clapping. When the men in white were gone, he turned to the forces in front of him. He pushed-back strands of silver-gray hair the way image-makers had taught him. He stood tall and powerful in the foyer. Men relaxed as he took their power for himself.

"Gentlemen, this operation will be studied and improved upon. Your debriefing reports will be read by me. This is the way we learn, gentlemen. This is the way! You are instructed that this has a Top-Secret rating. You are not to discuss it with each other or anyone. Do you understand?" He paused and met their eyes. No one but me, gentlemen!" He spun on his heel and left the room. No one spoke. People just drifted away.

Outside, an EMT crew finished loading the last victim of the hysterical mob into an ambulance. Other crews were picking-up purses, hats, coats, and miscellaneous personal possessions left by the fleeing crowd.

The next day, 10 November, a report released by Reuters about a Civil Defense exercise at Langley, was cut from the *Post*. It really wasn't news.

Mid-level analyst Stead was out with the flu. He planned to be ill for a week. Then he would take accrued personal vacation time.

Dan met with the DCI who vowed, "It will never happen again." Then quickly changed the subject. He ordered Dan to reevaluate his relationships with agents PT and January. "Recruit as many others for Cowboy as you need!"

Gloria requested maternity leave three weeks in advance, as per policy.

Sally wrote Dan and thanked him for signing off on the divorce giving her freedom.

Jan left Kyoto and, following his itinerary, went in search of David Dean in Osaka.

Tanya got a room at the posh Miramar Hotel on Kowloon. Her room overlooked a quiet part of the territory and a safehouse used by Suzi Song Onoto.

Acieto Onoto turned himself over to the CIA. After their interrogations, he planned to bask under their umbrella of protection. He looked forward to a long stay on Hawaii.

The woman in brown sent more of her people out to listen. She had them networking for information. Nothing new had been learned. She was ready to unleash the daughters of Onoto. She waited, frustrated and angry.

The Red Chinese intelligence forces began to search every junk entering Hong Kong harbor. Junks carrying plants were identified and boarded. A control center for the operation was set-up on an island off Lai Chi Kok.

Everything Tanya did was recorded on video tape. Red agents were exposed to hours of shopping, sight-seeing, and physical fitness exercises, often sans leotard. Three agents were chastised for moral weakness. They took matters too firmly in hand. Western corruption was exposed. Sau Ki Wan Tung, political agent in charge, scheduled all operatives involved for political re-orientation. It would start when the operation was completed and the CIA she-devil dead. In the meantime, he alone reviewed all video surveillance tapes.

David Dean caught a flight to the Philippines. Due to mechanical problems, the plane delayed at Taipei. He decided to stay there for a few days. Only one agent—a woman in brown—kept on his tail. Two other agents stayed with the plane and arrived in the Philippines in bad humor.

British and French intelligence teams met with German, Australian, and Nationalist Chinese teams to attempt to uncover the CIA's new intelligence system. Interpol coordinated the workshop in Geneva. MI agents were invited, but didn't show. The meeting was an exercise in supra-national paranoia.

The meetings of the 'friends' so confused the enemy that Russian and Eastern Block intelligence were put on full alert. World security was threatened. The button-pushers drooled.

At home, FBI intercepts scared the hell out of the Director. He demanded an immediate meeting with the President. The President's aides wouldn't let the Chief Executive meet with anyone.

Chapter THIRTY-TWO

Dan Hill was growing confident. His perceptions about agent's cover profiles and the success of Operation Cowboy were floating him to the top. One of the President's men even suggested they have lunch at the University Club. Dan was taken off-guard. Only those with God's direct permission to be America's elite were allowed in the club. Only men with certain inalienable rights to rule over the masses rubbed shoulders there. The club was the sanctuary of the chosen and it was the enemy's main source of valid intelligence data about every key U.S. operation. The Russians, whose embassy was two doors down, vicariously participated in every discussion and club activity. They were *dis aliter visum* members of the club.

Dan was asked to speak at Langley workshops and planning sessions. Gloria saw to it that he was in contact with the movers-and-shakers in the CIA and on the cabinet level. Speaking—actually being asked to give his opinions—was a tremendous release for him. Since entering the intelligence services, he had always made observations. Until now, these footnotes and

insights went around and around in his head like pinballs. He processed some of the stuff so many times it seemed unimportant excreta.

Some observations were honed-down until they were effective jabs of insights. One he used at a keynote address delivered to CIA upper-level administrators was especially effective:

“American intelligence agencies attract men from our finest colleges, universities, and academies. These men find comfortable niches in the service where they can practice their language skills, enjoy the benefits of a multi-cultural lifestyle, receive prestigious titles, and find 'to-the-grave' security and benefits.”

He paused and let it sink in. People in the audience nodded and communicated their agreement with proud smiles.

“Our job as administrators of America's intelligence agencies is to keep men like that out of the service.”

A long pause, "We are not a repository for second sons or pompous goldbrickers. We are not a cache for educated fools. We are not a pond for embassy toads. Gentlemen, what we are is America's first and best defense. Give us men who serve America first!”

It was great. They hated him and loved him at the same time. Most of all they feared him. Dan understood what Langley men were up against. To advance in the agency they had to play the game. The rules of the game were established following one rule—the rule of suck. If you played the game, you would rise to positions of greater power and adequate pay. If one fought the system's rule of progression, you were out. A dynamic, motivated, talented, creative man who didn't play the game was dead - as dead as he would have been if he came from the masses and didn't have the

stamp-of-the-elite to carry him into the circles of the chosen. If he played the game, he had to fade.

Fade-in was expected. Fade-in killed creativity. The talented were left with only one option, flee or have their best parts choked-off. Those most necessary to America's first line of defense, fled. Those who stayed and succeeded were shells of men.

Dan had faded into the bureaucracy. He pulled a paycheck and did nothing important. He served and, in the beginning, wrote well-thought, well-researched, timely reports. Then he did nothing. Strangely, work done when he had idealism pulled him along until a patron, the DCI, pulled him up and made him DDO. Dan never forgot that. But for an early spark of creativity and dedication, he would be a zit in a blue-gray suit, the uniform of the suck-up corps, the Suckaucracy.

Power has an infectious quality that grows like a tentacle from everyone who has it. Dan was no exception. As he commanded others, he gained contempt for them. As he held two hands in front of him giving his blessing, his tentacles picked their minds for ideas. Soon he was picking for plots against him. In time, he was using the tentacles to constrain or thwart. He was aware that to maintain, he would have to have more power. He believed the myth that there was a top to climb to, a vantage point where one could stand and not fear.

A lot of Dan Hill's energy went into covering his ass, not building "America's First Line of Defense". Then something happened. He saw his wriggling child on a cathode tube when Gloria got amniocentesis and ultrasound. He drove Gloria back to the house lost in thought.

Up is not up. Up is probably down. What I thought was a ladder is really a treadmill leading into a kind-of hell. If I had nothing, I would have everything because I have a son, a woman who loves me, food, clothing, shelter. I have what life is about. The rest is bullshit!

"Bullshit! Bullshit! Bullshit!" he yelled-out scaring Gloria so badly she almost peed. "I need only one more thing. I need time I am in charge of. I need my time for me ... I mean us."

Gloria stared at him, confused.

I have cathected the catechism for monitoring the rest of my life. A baby focused my thinking and caused me to ask complex questions which have a simple answer. I'm near the cream of the human experience, I know it.

"It's so fabulous!" he said reaching for Gloria's leg. "I am me because of who I am, not what I do. I need to work to live, not live to work. Gloria, I'm free! I'm free!"

Gloria didn't have the slightest idea of what he was blathering on about.

The DCI urged his DDO to expand Cowboy. Dan thought about it. In a way, he now had three agents. Dean, Tanya and Jan—Fallout, PT and January. All were told they were messengers or handlers. Three agents for a whole world. The thought was unpleasant. What if he fielded a dozen agents? Or two dozen?

Can I get that many people into the field that don't know they are spies? Dean is unique. How many Deans are there? Not many. Maybe only one or two more. I must find them ... men or women.

He ordered the passport files perused again. The search turned-up dozens of women, but no men. Young men didn't travel. They were saddled with obligations: The military, school, careers, families. Young American men were enslaved by a system of expectations and obligations they couldn't shirk. On the other hand, young single women were out adventuring and doing what every young man should do. They were out seeking their fortunes. The continents were seeded with young women who fit Dan's profile. The thought of America's first line of defense being a line of female operatives delighted Dan. It was a way to build a force that no enemy would expect. It was also a fine way to twist the tails of the chauvinistic, elitist bastards who ran America.

More than anything now, with the baby due, Dan wanted to arrange his work in a way that would allow him to buy his way out of the system. Creating a network of Cowboy operatives who were cowgirls, seemed to be the best way to succeed.

On the surface, he had to make himself look like the perfect Suckaucrat so that no one would notice he was cutting back. He was building a system that could be maintained with little effort. As DDO, he initiated his plan. Messages were transferred via innocents and could even be handled by naive people like Gloria. He followed the old Roman model, management by tens. The players would change as the innocents—damn, he had to think of a better name—completed their vacations and went home. There would always be new people involved the enemy couldn't make.

What should I call them?

He worried a name from his brain.

Ingenuous. Right-on! Ingenuous Deputies. Damn that's clever! Code named IDs.

Dan was pleased with himself. He rocked back in his chair locking his fingers on his stomach, his mind playing with the exercise.

IDs with IUDs, he chuckled. IDs no one can ID. IDs

Gloria entered his office. Dan was acting so strange since the tests. He became euphoric, giddy. Dumb-bunny was a better description. He was sitting there chuckling to himself and babbling about IDs. She approached him carefully and folded herself into his lap. She brushed back his hair and looked him in the eye. He smiled and hugged her with one arm.

"Honey, is anything the matter? You seem so ... light and happy ... amused by the strangest things."

"Gloria! Miss Mom! I've got it all figured out."

Chapter THIRTY-THREE

Had Dean known Jan was not only in his thoughts, but also on his trail he would have stopped and put-up signs. What he knew was he wanted to be with her. As days passed, her memory was as unreal as a wet dream. The reality of her sorted into the imagined. He couldn't be sure where the actual stopped and the needing began. He traveled, stopping often to look for her. Faces in the crowd were hers. He knew he wasn't in love. In the end, she would leave just like his mom.

I'm reproductively ensnared with no interest in progeny. A fine state to be in.

He got out of it by thinking of Tanya.

Tanya would have liked that. She associated all the marvelous things that happened to her with David Dean. Her new body, her clothes, the travel experiences she was enjoying. All of those things reminded her of him. She came from a dull, dreary life in Maryland to the exotic Far East to serve David. Tanya 'PT' Horowitz was his handler. She missed him. He was a necessary piece of her pie.

She was tired of shopping, touring and sitting in her hotel room. There was only so much exercising she could do. In fact, now that she thought about it, Tanya missed having something to do more than she missed David Dean. Life was getting too routine. Then Gloria's blue perfumed envelope arrived. She was so thrilled to get it she was reluctant to open it. She was in her room at the dressing table when she finally forced her finger under the flap.

Unfortunately, for her observers, the two video cameras were aimed at her bed and her workout pad. The hot faces behind the cameras saw only her back.

Gloria was such a good friend and roommate. It was a shock for Tanya to read that she moved in with Dodo Dan and was going to have a little boy in the spring. Gloria assured her that her plants and things were safe and looked after. Her clothes arrived from Singapore and Taipei. Everything was fine.

Her orders were to go over to Hong Kong and take the tramway to the top of Victoria Peak. She would be contacted by an American who would ask her about physical therapy. She would pretend to give him a list, "Be very obvious about it!" Gloria wrote. In fact, he would give her an envelope.

No one was to see the transfer. She would go back to her hotel, place his envelope inside one of her pink envelopes, address it, and mail it to Gloria.

The orders were very clear except for one missing element. Gloria forgot to give Tanya the time and date of the meet! Tanya had only one option. She called home. Before calling, she flushed the little pieces of blue stationary. She was a professional.

Few phone conversations have been set-up to be recorded by so many interested parties. Friendlies and enemies tapped agent PT's hotel line. There were so many taps, the connection was too weak. Tanya couldn't hear. The operator asked her to call back later. Impatient, Tanya went out to find a phone. She knew of only one place with a direct line to the U.S.—the American Embassy, Hong Kong. She took a cab, explained herself to the Marines and got into the lobby. There, she explained herself to a security agent. He verified with the DDO's office at Langley. Tanya was escorted to a secure area with a direct line to Dan Hill's office. His secretary answered.

"Gloria? Gloria? Is that you?"

"Tanya? Tanya? Is that you?" Gloria placed her hand over the phone and told Dan Tanya was on the phone. He picked-up an extension and listened in.

"Gloria, I got your note ... the directions. Only, honey, you forgot to give me a day and time."

"I did? I really did? I'm so sorry Tanya. It's a good thing you called. The date and the time have been changed."

"Is there a problem?"

"There was a problem ... but," Dan was waving madly at her and shaking his head.

"No problem now, just a new date and time."

"Is it okay that I called? You won't be mad or anything?"

"We're glad you called honey, it's good to hear your voice. Are you alright?"

"I'm fine. It's great here. I do miss David though. Will I be seeing him soon?"

"Maybe. I don't know. Right now, we need you for this new project." Dan was waving at her again. She covered the mouthpiece and listened.

"Tell her she's still Fallout's handler. Assure her she will see him soon. We don't want her to get lonely and come home or something."

"Sorry honey, Dan says you'll see each other soon. Oh, I almost forgot, did you get the money?"

"I got what you wired. I need more. Can the Embassy give me some? I mean it seems I've spent millions here."

"Good idea. I'll have Dan instruct the Embassy staff. Tanya, I have to go now. Be good, won't you?" Dan was making cut motions with a notebook across his throat.

"Oh Gloria, I think it's so wonderful ... the baby and all! I hope I'm there when it's born. I love you."

The line clicked dead.

Tanya replaced the code-a-phone receiver and used the restroom before she realized they hadn't given her the new time and date of the meet. In response to her tears, an Embassy section chief assured her he would get the information for her and deliver it with the money she requested. He even provided a car and chauffeur for her return to the ferry. In twenty minutes, she was back in her hotel on Kowloon.

Foiled the first time, the Red agents weren't about to lose contact again. When it was obvious CIA agent Tanya was splitting for the Embassy, they were too unorganized to intercept her. They couldn't have anyway, because they had orders never to let her see them. They watched in horror as she entered the sanctuary, certain their mission to recover the MiG was over.

They raced to their telephone and communications office. When they arrived, they were assured that conversations in the Embassy, as well as to and from the Embassy, were coming through clearly. They listened as Tanya asked for a phone. Their technicians recorded the conversation with her CIA directors.

Pleased they would be allowed to live, they congratulated themselves on a job well done. It was someone else's head that would roll if the code wasn't broken. They drank Coca Cola and relaxed until word came that the woman was leaving the Embassy and going back to her hotel. Once again, they rushed to take their stations. The men enjoyed surveillance work.

Yuen Long Kau Hui, AKA John Cheng, was educated in the States. He graduated from Harvard and took post graduate hours at MIT. He loved America but he loved his family more. He returned to China to serve. After a probationary year of service to the Party, his ancestors were re-buried and his parents and siblings released from labor camps. There was no doubt of John Cheng's loyalty. They had him by the heart strings. He served as Intelligence Analyst for the Kuangchou Branch. Most of the intercepts from the American embassies in countries and territories surrounding China

passed across his desk for analysis. He was considered the best. This day John Cheng had a problem.

Five officials took over his office. Five fat-faced men in Mao hats with red stars exploding across the brims gave him the 'life is cheap' look he knew too well. He stood, papers in hand, waiting to kowtow with his answers.

"Comrade, you have finished?"

"Yes, my Comrade Generals." He bowed and humbly looked at the floor.

"And?" The fattest face one asked.

"It seems they have a new way of encoding information. I saw this once before. It is the same cipherring process they used before."

"We didn't ask you for a history lesson. What does it mean, boy from Yuen Long Kau Hui?"

"It can only mean one thing. The operation is drawing to a close. Payment has been made, but it was not enough. The woman operative you call Jimmy Doolittle has asked for more money to pay the traitors. They have cleverly hidden the operation's code name. I have determined that it is David. In barbarian mythology they have a story of a young boy named David who killed a giant with a sling. I have only begun to analyze the analogies here."

The generals farted and shuffled, nervous and angry. This son-of-a-warlord was their only insulation from humiliation and punishment. His information better be good or he would disappear before they did.

"Her masters told her the date and time had been changed. That is a code only she could understand. It's something between them we can't

know unless we get information from her or find a code translation book. I'm certain it was a coded order because they never gave her a new date and time. That's a break. It means we learned what they really meant"

"Oh ho! What does this mean?" Fat-jowl, red-faced, many red stars General Number Three asked.

"The operative said," and he read the page in his hand again, "Oh Gloria I think it's so wonderful ... the baby and all! I hope I'm there when it's born. I love you."

Gloria stands for Old Glory, the American Flag ... probably a U.S. aircraft carrier, a flagship. The Yorktown. That would be David's sling. The baby is our MiG. Being there when it's born refers to her passing the exact date and time of the landing to them. "I love you," is an old code we are familiar with. It has an inverted meaning if you follow, Comrades?" He paused and waited for them to acknowledge his findings. They stared blankly, saying nothing. He continued.

"To Americans, 'to love' is to have sex, or 'to screw'," as both men and women describe it. In their language, they use the word love for everything. It is very confusing. They love cats, ice cream, sunny days, clothes, and each other ... and it's all the same to them. They love their mother and their wife and their cars the same way. When they want to describe love between a man and woman, they must use the one word "love" and then infer that love is to have sex, to screw." He paused again, waiting for some reaction from the men who took over his office.

"Generals, I know this is confusing. Language studies give us an insight into the way the enemy thinks. This is one reason Americans are capitalists. They have shallow feelings. They love money, women, sex,

hamburgers, and their cars equally. In this case, I love you means, screw you. We know a field operative wouldn't say that to her boss. So, we deduce it means 'Screw the enemy!' It's a taunt, Comrades."

The generals milled around the room. The fat-faced leader ordered John out of his office. Outside, he was handed a newly transcribed document. It was a record of the conversations before and after the woman operative left the Embassy. He read it.

"Sir, I didn't get what I called for. They didn't give me the day and time. Sob ... sob. Sniffle."

"Ma'am I can call back and get it for you. In fact, I have a scheduled call in fifteen minutes."

Sob, sniff, blow. "Oh, can you really do that? Will you find out when I get my money?"

"Now miss, don't you worry. I'll tell you what. I'll have you driven back to the ferry and I'll personally deliver the information and the money later tonight. How's that honey. Will that do?"

"Oh, thank you. I'll go now?"

The next page contained translated conversations from Embassy personnel which took place after she left:

"That silly fucking bitch! It's not my fault she can't even talk on the phone."

"What a looker! I'd give a month's pay to pop her."

"Cool it Sarge, I'm the one going to her hotel tonight."

"You'll get your butt in a sling. I hear she's a DDO direct connection."

"I'll bet she's connected." Laughter.

John scratched on the door of his office, now occupied by the Generals. He had the additional transcripts in hand. After a long time, a general opened it a crack.

"I have additional information, Comrade Generals."

The door opened and he stepped inside. The men inside weren't pleasant.

"Comrades, new pieces to our puzzle. This is a transcript of what happened after the telephone conversation to the CIA," he held up the pages. A general with only one ear grabbed it out of his hand, looked at it, and handed it back.

"It seems the day and time of the MiG retrieval at sea will be passed along tonight."

The generals shuffled, breathed heavily. One coughed as if a doctor had hold of his scrotum.

"The Embassy will get word from the CIA and take it to the woman in the Miramar Hotel. She will pass it along ... we don't know how. They will also give her the rest of the money for the traitor. When she passes the information and the money, we will know who the traitors are.

"Comrade Generals, this is the strangest part. The man who delivers the message and money has instructions to kill her. 'Pop her' as they call it. He plans to play with her first; put her in a sling and rape her. It's an old Kamasutra trick. After tonight she is no longer of use to them. She is what they call a Dodo. That's an extinct bird that was known for its stupidity."

The Generals pushed him out of his office again. There was arguing inside. None dared listen. Then the door opened and the Generals notified

their aides to get their cars. The meeting was over. John Cheng's ordeal was over ... for now.

That night, a MiG fighter stolen from Red China was flown to an island off Formosa. Its landing was observed by agents who radioed, phoned, teletyped, and wrote messages home.

In Hankou, the head of Chinese Intelligence went berserk. The enemy had led them on a chase, decoyed their operation away from Formosa, and used the same woman operative who made his men chase a dog. He spouted rage and prepared for his humiliation. He would not fall alone. Orders were cut for five generals to depart Canton immediately and go to Peiping for evaluation and re-education.

In the Miramar Hotel in Kowloon, agents were ordered to break-off surveillance of the American CIA agent. They were ordered to report directly to Kwangchow Headquarters for re-assignment. A new agent was assigned to shadow Tanya Horowitz until she was killed. Another team of workers, led by a trusted agent, was ordered to stop going through the hotel's sewage. The small bits of blue paper were no longer important.

A section-chief named Mulhaney was given a marine escort to the Miramar Hotel where he delivered a packet of twenty-dollar bills and a sealed envelope. In the course of his visit, he suggested something Miss Horowitz deemed rude and out-of-character for an embassy officer. She physically threw him out, more violently than he would have thought possible. Damn she was strong! Later, he rationalized that if he had had more time to gentle her, he could have avoided premature ejection.

Agent PT opened the sealed packet. The date and time listed were clear enough. The problem was the International Date Line. It was already past yesterday's tomorrow, at least if you went by Maryland time. Tanya sat and tried to figure what time and day it was in the eastern U.S. She would call home again.

Suzi Song Onoto observed a small woman dressed in brown that was obviously watching her safe house. She fled by private jet to a place she was certain no one knew. The route she took was designed to confuse anyone trying. She ordered the pilot to fly over the South China Sea to Sarawak, over Borneo to the Celebes Sea, and then north over the Sulu Sea to Pasay near Manila. Her safe-house was a beautiful little hotel on Leyte Bay overlooking the South China Sea. She felt safe in assuming that none of her enemies would look for her in the Philippines.

Agent January reported to the American Embassy on Formosa. She lost Dean's trail in Taipei where she confirmed he never got back on the plane to Manila. She feared the worst and delivered the bad news to Langley.

Acieto Onoto was landing on Oahu. He braced himself for the rounds of questioning he would undergo. The Naval Station's hanger was standing open. He wondered if the doors would close behind him and he would disappear forever.

Chapter THIRTY-FOUR

Dean's itinerary was firm, only the times were open. His airline ticket, like Tanya's, allowed him unlimited flying as long as he didn't backtrack.

Reviewing his itinerary, he discovered an error and deplaned in Taipei. If he went to the Philippines first, he would have to backtrack to get to Taiwan. Taipei was located almost 122 degrees east longitude. Manila was near 120 degrees. He and his travel agent missed the slight difference. By deplaning at Taipei, he would be able to see Nationalist China. Then he could go to the Philippines, Hong Kong, and then Singapore. As far as he was concerned there was no problem. He caught the error and would be able to visit Nationalist Chinese schools.

As far as Dan Hill and his staff were concerned, Agent January summed it up: A CIA operative was on a plane bound for Manila. The plane was forced down in Taipei for mechanical reasons. He left the plane and disappeared.

One other person deplaned at Taipei. Had Jan checked the ongoing passenger list she would not have discounted the probability of a woman traveling alone being a threat to David Dean. As it was, no one noticed the small woman in brown who carried a large plastic shopping bag and gave the impression of a mom coming back from a visit with relatives. Dean, occupied with new sights, sounds and adventures, never thought to look for a tail. If he had, he might have realized the small woman following him was the woman from Sapporo.

The Daughters of Onoto were conditioned using methods that had been used for centuries to enslave Japanese women and men. The use of drugs, sleep deprivation, physical abuse, and manipulation of environment was a tried-and-true way of destroying one personality and creating others. Those who served Emperors and industrial mongers were such creations.

The art of generating servants with unquestioning loyalty belonged to the ruling few until the 1840s, when the doors to Japan were pried open. Then, the art fell into the hands of brokers. These men used it to provide servants, assassins, and human weapons to anyone who could pay.

Prior to WWII, the founders of Mitusuka Industries bought a stable of these servants. When Onoto took over Mitusuka security he destroyed all but one 'family'. He kept a group of seven women, all from different backgrounds, yet physically similar. They had been controlled by the previous head of security. He carefully transferred control to one of his own, an Ainu woman named Kita, who was loyal to him. Then he gave his own daughters to Mitusuka as insurance.

Kita, his Ainu friend, didn't remember her treatment. He left parts of her original personality in place. He added another that was completely loyal to him. Insurance on insurance upon insurance. To carry-out his will, he made her controller of the group of seven women now in their fifties and his three daughters. A word to Kita set ten servants on course. Kita pulled the strings and the women did her bidding.

Onoto was in Hawaii with the American CIA. He was unable to contact her. She alone was charged with finding those contracted to kill him. She proceeded methodically. One assessment she made was erroneous. She didn't connect the three jewels in her sword with the two old men who once controlled Mitusuka.

As Kita analyzed the information available to her, she became aware of the strange role the teacher named Dean played. He knew Song Onoto. She didn't know he really knew Suzi, and that Suzi had almost gained control of herself. Kita knew he worked for the CIA. He was the operative

who foiled Scar. She laughed. They called him the Muscovy Duck, and thought him Russian. Dean's actions caused the death of Alfred Agnew. To do that, he had to know about Acieto Onoto's innermost security systems.

Dean was the CIA operative used to coax Acieto Onoto into their protection. That was clear to her. Could it be possible the CIA wanted Acieto dead? No! They would have killed him by now. That left another alternative. What if Dean was a double agent? Could Dean be the assassin? If he was, who did he work for? Who else wanted Acieto Onoto dead?

Kita spent the evening thinking of answers. She made a list. Then she scratched-out those who were dead. Of the living only three remained on the list: A man named Shikoku, the head of a corporate body that assimilated most of Mitusuka's assets; Dean, and an MI/CIA agent, a First Lieutenant in the Marine Corps, code-named January.

She would have Shikoku broken to root out his intention toward Onoto. Once she confirmed Dean and the woman were the ones programmed to kill Acieto Onoto—they would die.

Kita had a focused plan. She arose early, ate heartily, and prepared for a pleasant day. At 10:00 a.m. she was informed Song Onoto had disappeared. Her day turned bitter with her mood. Late in the afternoon there was some good news. Her agent assigned to Dean reported in. He had unsuccessfully tried to throw them off track by jumping plane in Taipei. Dean was hers!

Another operative reported that the MI/CIA woman departed Taipei for Manila. Now Kita had two. By evening, she felt much better. She had three! She was informed Hedeki Shikoku would be delivered to Niigata in the morning. She fell asleep puzzling over the disappearance of Song

Onoto. Song had no reason to hide unless the British did something to make her seek deep cover? The woman assigned to her would be disciplined.

Chapter THIRTY-FIVE

Acieto Onoto was in control. He kept the intelligence people jumping. They were in and out like ants protecting their hill. He would give them an assignment and then ask to be left alone while he wrote-out a list of his own. When they returned, he put the lists side-by-side. The Americans and specialists borrowed from Allied intelligence agencies went into shock. The CIA's top analysts called in the DCI. The DCI called his staff. The DDO was already in Hawaii, so the DCI came himself and interrupted Dan's honeymoon. National Intelligence Operatives and officers were briefed. Onoto's lists scared the hell out of them.

To start with, Acieto Onoto asked them to put together a list of Japan's Pacific objectives, targets for conquest, finalized in 1938. Then he listed, by date, Japanese economic investment targets for the same areas. His list started in 1946. When the lists were compared, the Americans and Australians went into shock. The British and French said, "We told you so."

Acieto Onoto chastised, "You make Hawaii a state. You make Japan colony. Hawaii has Statehood, Japan has ownership. War over. Japan won! All are happy, hai?" The DCI paled. Onoto continued.

"Japan most want California first ... then rest of US ... soon own California. Already buy lobby people and get rest by controlling

government. You like? Big Japan industrialists like. They masters at control. Do same thing other countries."

A special meeting was called. Hours of discussion followed. The DCI took it all in and summarized.

"Onoto says they have a plan to carry-out pre-war objectives. He says Mitusuka Industries was the main player but that all of the giant corporate bodies in Japan have the same goals of conquest. Gentlemen, how do we know if he is right? If right, what do we do?"

Dan Hill stood. He was still an outsider in the group. They avoided him and only reluctantly admitted he was doing things right.

"What is it Dan?"

"I move to form committees to check out this information - a China committee, a Singapore committee, a Philippines committee ... even a West Coast U.S. committee."

"I like that idea!" the NIA head seconded, "We can involve the Brits, the French, and the Aussies. We can use this collected data to accept or reject Onoto's theory."

The NSA head jumped to his feet.

"Mr. Director, the gravity of this situation must be discounted by its improbability. If improbable, good. If probable, and gentlemen let this weigh heavily on us all, then we have no choice but to find that a state of war still exists between our forces and the Japanese Empire."

The men were stunned. The parameters were set. The DCI, his eyes tearing, nodded his acceptance. He rose to full height, brushed back strands of gray hair, and commanded the room with his eyes.

"Gentlemen, we will form ourselves into committees by areas of geopolitical expertise. Studies will begin as of—he looked at his watch—eighteen hundred hours today. Your committees will report directly to me. This operation is now officially a Top-Secret operation. What you prepare is for my eyes only. Do you understand? Top Secret! My eyes only! You are dismissed."

"I person that oversee investment of fifty billion dollars in Hawaii," Onoto argued. He stood in front of the team evaluating Japanese economic control of Hawaii. "Nipponese and religious orders own islands. People independent, I hear you say? Cockroach! Economic slavery many ways more potent force than past system for People's control." He paused to get his breath. He wasn't used to being questioned or to having his conclusions debated. Yet, this is good.

This is what it will take to weaken the New Empire; to let another decade or so pass until the Japanese people demand individual rights. Then the Nipponese will fail. Their conquest will disintegrate from within. "I want this over soon," Acieto stated as bluntly as he could. "I then share plans for other parts of world. Do you know Japanese Spain? What about Japanese Argentina? You touch me, I give whole iceberg." Acieto Onoto's deep laughter rolled through the halls.

That afternoon, Dan Hill formed study teams for every continent and the major nations on the planet.

In the bay, tourists visited the monument built over the Arizona.

Dan Hill had opened his mouth, put in his two cents, and was given the job of coordinating the study teams. The job was giving him mental hemorrhoids. The teams proceeded and then ground to a halt.

"We need experts!" the team leaders pleaded. Dan understood. Whenever the leaders of the federal systems came to an issue that frightened them the agency heads went running to their alma maters to ask their mentors for solutions. The university savants breached the walls blocking understanding and led the Nation's agencies out of each morass. Such was the role of intellectuals. No one stopped to weigh their advice. After all, they were erudite Gods even if most of them never had a day's practical experience in their lives. They were brilliant because they researched research someone, in some dawn age, researched. They didn't have to be right, they had simply to master the art of footnoting.

The saviors from hallowed ivy halls were identified, glorified, and shanghaied into the project. The stately experts met and read each other's notes. They induced and deduced data. They eliminated, by tested hypothesis, any outcomes that weren't fact-based. In simple terms, Dan observed, they eliminated things that suggested there was a problem.

With the aplomb of masters, they concluded with one conclusion. Their judgment was submitted to Dan in documents produced after a few hours of thought and days of careful editing. He read through the paragraphs of accepted rationalization and made his own assessment of the meaning of their work. He summarized it. The scholars said:

"So what? One of the wonders of capitalism is that it doesn't matter who the masters are."

The President agreed. The DCI thought it sane. The study groups regrouped and focused on the World Bank.

Almost everyone involved called their stockbroker and bought stock in Japanese companies. The Nikkei Index shot to new highs. The American insiders took their profits and bought Mercedes and BMW cars, thus spreading the wealth to West Germany.

A World economic-political crisis was averted because the new DDO created Operation Cowboy and a new type of agent had helped expose Mitusuka International by giving them Acieto Onoto. When people profit from such insider information, they tend to support those who made it possible. Dan Hill was invited to lunch with members of the Council on Foreign Relations. He wouldn't be asked to join; he didn't have the wealth or class lines. He paid for his own lunch. They would have been shocked to learn he thought them myopic assholes.

Suzi Song Onoto was tired of hiding-out. Hours spent alone allowed her time to recapture parts of her original personality but there was only so much processing one could do. She knew well the Song personality they created. She gained insights into the workings of her Onoto component—the amoral, unfeeling creation they built by triggering id parts within her. Onoto's reptilian coldness scared her. She cut her out, mentally ate the parts, and digested Onoto piece-by-piece until she was no more, or so she thought.

Since Colorado, Suzi had no one. There were opportunities— attractive women always had opportunities. None of those who advertised their need met her requirements. Part of the problem was she shivered

when she thought of being hunted. The rawness of her coagulating being recoiled when someone made advances. Men needed gratification every three days or so. That made men the aggressors. Women needed intercourse at times determined by the moon. Two times per lunar month—once slightly gratifying, once satisfying and fiery. Suzi knew that instinctively, yet she also remembered her times with David. Although she wouldn't have initiated sex each time they were together, she learned she could turn-on. Regular sex wasn't fiery for her, but it was damned good.

She walked the back routes and secret places. She hid from agents sent by the British. She feared the creators of Song and Onoto. She knew her Onoto part was too precious a tool for them to lose. In the Philippines, she found the emptiness called peace. Inner peace became the boredom of seeing life pass-by while alone. She looked at sunsets. She knew the joy of them as she had as a little girl. Then she couldn't bear to look at sunsets alone. It was the same with flowers. She seldom enjoyed food. She felt she was drifting in a nether-world purgatory. She fought to focus her life on something. All she could think of was her relationship with David.

David's thoughts were toward the future. He seldom visited the past; it was too painful. When he needed something, he looked forward. His was a world unfolding. In Taipei, he traveled the streets until he took his fill of rawness and humanity. In his hotel he ignored the bellman's offers to procure for him. Sitting in the lobby or cafe he watched whores appear and reappear on different arms. He studied them and learned they worked their job as women on assembly lines do. The fact that body parts and fluids were involved was the same to them as washing clothes or pounding clay. They

learned to act as salespeople do. In the end, they caught futility and died but no sooner than factory workers or housewives.

David was in search of the direction of the world, the planet's future. He believed each nation would develop according to the extent they utilized their best resource, their children. He searched the schools for evidence that nations were poised to serve man. What he found was difficult for him to deal with. In Japan he found a system that penalized individualism; a system that destroyed, in suicidal tides, those of its youth who didn't fit the mold. Unknown to itself, it was seeding the planet with its finest minds as young people fled to survive.

On Taiwan, he saw that education meant hands. Hands to assemble, hands to move things about. The educational system served a master called production. Hands took priority over minds. Instead of idealism, he found a reality that didn't make sense until he factored in the role of slavery. Economic slavery destroyed the opportunities of the future. It left nations dull and sapped. More, it was stupid. Technology was on the verge of advancing beyond the use of hands. What use was an information age if there were too few receptors?

Suzi diddled her time and mind. She thought of surprising David ... but then what would she do with him. He already knew too much. He said it didn't matter but it did. Men saw fingerprints on flesh. They had some ego thing. She didn't know for sure but Song knew. Men who were attracted to other men didn't care if others had been there. Men who weren't attracted to men cared, they wanted to be the first and only. They imagined stains, whether there or not. Her thoughts rambled that way. She knew he cared ...

knew he didn't ... depending upon which way she processed what she thought she knew. Seeking an end of it, she began a stakeout of the Manila airport. When David arrived, she would know.

Kita was updated when Dean flew to Manila. Her woman reported that Song appeared and contacted Dean as he arrived in the Philippines. Kita hummed and bubbled. Song was the best of the three. Song knew Dean was important. She lost the British tails, positioned herself well. Song would keep him in sight until she and Katasawa could drain Shikoku's brain.

The process of deprogramming was going well. Hedeki Shikoku was a complex creation. Kita was amazed as Katasawa exposed subconscious implants and burned wastelands of memories in his mind. He had been linked with Mitusuka Industries, but to no one who wanted Onoto dead.

Still, he is the likely one programmed to kill Onoto, my last hope.

She was to learn that there were two Shikokus and an organization called Sungawa Industries.

Katasawa explained. "Sungawa Industries took over when Mitusuka was beheaded. Like its predecessor, the company's thrust is world conquest through economic enslavement. I, and only I, created the Brothers Shikoku for Acieto Onoto when he was the head of security for Mitusuka Industries."

"No." he said in answer to her question, "There is no way Hedeki could harm Acieto. Hedeki Shikoku is responsible for Sungawa's expansion in Asia. His brother Ito is in charge of everything from India to Western Europe. Kita, Acieto thought it best that the two brothers knew nothing of each other. He needed no Pope to draw a line of demarcation; I was able to

draw it for him ... in their minds!" He stopped swabbing chemicals on Hedeki's brain and laughed a senile, dry, sick, coughing gurgle of sounds.

Kita stayed by Katasawa's side, learning things she could barely comprehend.

"Hedeki and Ito were twins, taken as boys and modified by me because they each had near genius I.Q.'s. They were made to serve Acieto Onoto. The old men who controlled Mitusuka Industries never suspected our subterfuge."

Katasawa was pure demon. Everyone around him was sickened by the joy he took digging into beings. It was obvious Katasawa enjoying peeling into Hedeki, whom he described as his finest creation. Kita feared him, but didn't suspect Katasawa would never damage his handiwork. He let her believe he was searching for an implanted code that would make Hedeki Acieto's killer. In fact, Katasawa was repairing and updating Hedeki. He played her along. He had other motives.

Katasawa told Kita that Acieto Onoto still controlled the brothers. Kita assumed that gave either twin reason to kill Onoto and be free.

My job is to protect Acieto and save his life. Katasawa will extract the betrayal from Hedeki's mind, but what if Ito ...? I can reassign my woman. Besides, a fifty-five-year-old servant with nothing to do starts thinking, then goes crazy. Without external structure and constant direction my women come apart at the cerebral seams. Hedeki Shikoku's brain will be altered, but in case Katasawa fails, I'll move the women out of Manila and Hong Kong and into positions to act against either brother.

That move bought Dean and Suzi time.

Suzi fought back the empty feelings coursing through her body, often her eyes wouldn't stay focused. She watched as Dean cleared the International Passengers section. She followed as he bought a city map and tried to fathom the transportation systems into the city. Outside the giant glass doors, the rutting taxis pushed along, their drivers anxious to fill them with fares. She came up behind him and took his arm, steering him toward an outlying parking area. He looked down and recognized her. For a minute, he stood and stared.

"Hi Colorado, I came here to be with you. I have a place. Will you come with me?"

"Suzi! Damn! I've never been so happy to see anyone in my life. I arrived here feeling so alone I almost found a dark corner where I could curl-up and assume the fetal position. What in the hell are you doing here?"

"Why are you late? What have you been doing? Do you have another girl? I've been waiting four days. Where were you?"

"You mean my itinerary? I'll explain. You've been waiting four days?"

"Longer! But I know my way around now. Do you like small hotels in the jungle with beautiful views?"

"Naw."

She steered him to her rental car. Bag in, a tight hug, a long kiss, and they were off. She drove like a goosed rabbit. The tires screamed like banshees, if they foretold a death, neither Suzi nor David paid attention.

Central Manila, with its wide streets and long central parkway, looked planned and proper. That was a look in direct contrast to the tenor of its people. It was hard for Dean to think of Filipinos as having Latin temperaments. The inclusion of Iberian-Ostrogoth-Moor-African blood in

the polyglot mongoloid people living on seven thousand islands, had created a volatile population. The American mystique, primarily that of the Chicago gangster era, mixed with all the rest caused Philippine politics to resemble gang wars. Their democracy nurtured strong dictators.

The country was rich in potential but poor in focusing the energy of its people. The educational leaders questioned the positive effects of education. What would the country do with an educated populous which didn't have roots in the established and powerful elite? If children from the masses were educated, they would soon be demanding changes. That was not acceptable to those in power. Training was okay. Education was to be limited to the progeny of the powerful.

Suzi took Dean to a bamboo-shrouded hideaway for romantics. Song scouted it three years before as she built her plans. It was a place unnoticed. People passing on the narrow road focused on a large rusting *Coca Cola* sign in front and didn't look back through the trees. It sat behind palm fronds and vertical bursts of safari grass. It wasn't shiny or painted. It looked more like a decaying plantation house than an inn. Inside, mahogany and bamboo were interwoven with mats made of narrow-leaf plants. Cotton dangles with bobs, hung from nets serving as room dividers and art.

Suzi led Dean up to her room. Garishly painted religious scenes and carvings filled walls, nooks, and crannies. A suffering Christ hung over every bed, bleeding into the rooms.

The icons are placed over beds, Dean mused, because beds are where life began, people are born, suffer when ill, and die. He didn't plan to do any of those things.

Beds had better uses. They roamed over the top of theirs like wrestlers on canvas. They pushed against its sides, kneeled at its base, and sank into its straw-and-feathers. They floated above it, made its surface irregular with pillows, and hid themselves on it with sheets. Then they slept, icons be damned.

"Suzi, why are you in the Philippines?"

"I told you I ..." she stopped mid-sentence and looked at him. She would tell him the truth. "I lied. I'm here because Song and Onoto were sent to Japan to keep an eye on you. Onoto followed you but I made certain you were safe. Then I took-over completely. I knew all of Song's hideouts and money stashes. I hid in Hong Kong until I lost my cover. A woman dressed in brown was following me. I think she's connected to the woman who controls my Onoto part. I fled here, to this hotel. I knew you would be coming, I needed you."

Dean lay back and looked at her. Then he touched her hand.

"Suzi, thanks for not lying to me. There is so much I don't understand. For instance, where did you learn to speak English so well ... you speak like a native. Where did you learn?"

Suzi's eyes got big. Surprise filled her face.

"I ... David, I don't know! When I was just Suzi, me, I spoke only Japanese. When they created Song and Onoto I could speak English. They must have taught me when they tampered with my brain. I wonder if that is possible. It must be."

"Damn, I'd like to know how they did that. Yes, I believe it is. They know things about the human brain I would give anything to learn. Just

think about an educational system that could teach people a foreign language easily!"

"Do you have other questions about me?" She cuddled-up to his side, her expression and body language suggesting she had other things on her mind.

"Did Song ever ..." he paused, embarrassed, afraid to go on because she might take it wrong. She looked at him, and gave him nodded permission to go on.

"Did Song ever enjoy sex? I mean making love?"

Suzi hated what the question implied. He said her past use and abuse didn't matter ... did this mean he was hung-up on it? Did this mean it did matter?

"Song was programmed to use her body to get information. She was taught how to get men to respond to her. She never thought of sex as a feeling or a form of expression. Song and Onoto knew everything about sex and sexuality but they never shared their emotions, their spirit. You helped me find my true self and I found joy with you. That's why I'm here."

Dean nodded and put the information away. He believed her. He ignored her unspoken message and even his own instincts telling him to stop questioning her. He wanted it all out now.

"Why haven't you gotten pregnant?"

The question hit Suzi hard. She bit her knuckles and stared at him. The muscles of her face formed a question.

"I don't know. Oh my god, David. I don't know. Do you think they ... they did something inside me?" Tears filled her eyes. She pulled the sheet around her and sat on the edge of the bed.

"Maybe I'm not a woman. Is that what you mean? Maybe I can never be a woman."

"Bullshit. Bullshit Suzi. You are a woman. Having or not having babies isn't what determines if you are a woman. I didn't ask the question to hurt you," he rubbed her back through the sheet and gently clamped the back of her neck the way she liked. "I asked you because we make love and we don't take any precautions. I asked you because I'm in no position to deal with a baby. I asked you for those reasons, not because I thought you less a woman."

Suzi heard him and her own concern.

He isn't questioning my womanhood. I am. What did they do to me? This is one more horrible discovery on a list of abuses and wrongs. How many layers of knowing could there be?

"I don't know why I haven't gotten pregnant. I'll find out." She paused and then continued before he could interject another question. "I have questions too."

Dean was relieved the focus of the conversation turned to him. He was aware Suzi's emotions were still raw. Almost every question of a personal nature sent her off on a search and recovery mission through her tangled emotions and memories.

"You think you are too difficult to love? You think no one could love you forever ... that they will leave you?"

"No, I just think I'm not ready to be loved. And I'm not ready to give up some things. Things like this year of traveling and seeking. Things like good sex."

Suzi turned on the bed, swinging her feet off the floor, clutching her knees.

"Good sex? Isn't our sex good? Do you mean if we were married it wouldn't be good anymore?"

"That's kinda what I mean. The greatest sex I've had is with you. I know in time that has to change. What I mean is that the newness and adventure will wear off. Oh, I know it shouldn't wear off, but it does, it really does, more for the woman than the man. The man is easily excited and ready. The woman is slower to respond. When things get regular and the newness and urgency are gone, women want other things. They aren't that easily turned on except at certain times in their cycle. They tire of the man's need for sexual contact. Gradually, they learn to manipulate the man by his hormones. I'm not ready to deal with that."

"Are you so sure? How do you know so much about women? What makes you think I'd be that way? I think you are a ... a chauvinist! You may be wrong, you know."

"I'm not wrong. I know women. All my life I've been with women. I know only one man, me. Even my father had that problem. I know women because I was raised by women. I was taught how to be a man by women. I spent time with girls in school because I was attracted to them. I spent a lot more time with girls than boys. I've dated women, loved women, shared innermost thoughts with females. Women taught me, told me, showed me."

"That's true? You really know more about women than you do men?"

"Yes."

"Then that's the hole in your argument. If you knew men, you would know they are the ones who get bored. They are the ones who lose the romance and excitement."

"Probably Suzi, you are probably right. But for me, I don't want to lose my sexual self. I don't want to make love on someone else's schedule. I don't want to use another to get my gratification. I define marriage as a place where I would lose that. The married men I've known all have the same complaint. Be it the man's fault or the woman's, I don't want it."

They sat together, not feeling close. Dean knew he let-out feelings he never shared before, conclusions he reached at some time in his life, and now lived by.

"I'm not trying to make it sound like I will never marry. What I think I'm saying is I'm not ready to handle the day-to-day, give-and-take, of a relationship. I'm not ready to give some things, or to risk losing others." I guess that makes me a loner. Strange."

"So tell me about me. Would you ever marry a girl like me?"

She bowed her head and blushed. What a question.

"A girl like you? A mind searching to be whole. A soul so strong it conquered forces used to split her into pieces? A girl who sees the beauty in the world and wants to share it? No, I'm looking for a fat and frumpy little housefrau who pops-out kids like a sow, and never asks me why I stay late at the office."

They laughed together. The laughter wasn't cement; it didn't make them one. It did make them friends who could communicate their inner thoughts.

Later, as they played their way toward dinner, bathed and dressed, she asked,

"Do you really think men and women are different?"

"I really do. We are alike in many ways, but I think we are so different we can never really meld together."

"You bastard! I hope you're wrong."

They toured Manila and surrounding towns. They discussed the fibers of life they found themselves scurrying along. They became aware they were friends, lovers not in love, at least not the type of love that equates to kids and dishes and sharing things for better or for worse. They wanted to be together, but be separate. Dean wanted to go on seeking answers on a global scale. Suzi wanted to find the answers locked within her. They were together when together, but each knew that apart they would be looking for something else.

"I saw the girl you were with in Hakodate and Sapporo."

"You were there? You followed me?"

"I was there. I was protecting you. I led the people you picked-up the envelope from in Niigata on a merry chase away from you. I was there."

"You knew about all that?"

"I knew. Your people used you badly."

"My God, I never thought ... "

"Do you love that girl?"

"No, I like her a lot."

"Will you see her again?"

"I don't plan to. They may send her again, the bastards. I'm not doing anything for them again."

"What about the girl I saw you with at Chufu-Shi?"

"You were there too?" Damn it Suzi, was I ever out of your sight?"

"Almost never. I wanted to be with you ... not spy on you. I did what I had to do, but they didn't know I knew. They still don't know I'm Suzi. What about that girl?"

"I kinda like her. I don't think about her."

"Will you see her again?"

"No. I told you I'm not working for them anymore."

"I'll bet!"

They walked along lawns edging the South China Sea. They were beginning a parting dance although neither would admit it.

"So you go to Hong Kong?"

"I fly-out tomorrow."

"Do you have to travel alone?"

"Alone. I've thought of taking you with me."

"I know. You won't. I can't."

The path led to a bench near the breakers.

"I will always love you, David. You are my only friend."

"It isn't over, Suzi. There is another time for us in the future."

"There may be. For now, know that you are my heir, my only family."

"What kind of talk is that! Suzi, your life as 'you' has just begun. The future is full of adventure. It will be rich and good because you are."

"Song made me rich. You'll never know how rich. It's yours David, I'll see to that. If anything happens to me, it's all yours."

"I don't like this conversation! Suzi, if what we are, what we are to each other, has meaning, it's because we go into the future supporting each

other. If you really feel morose, let's find out why. To think that tomorrow when we part is the end ... that's bullshit!"

She felt his words break through a wall of thick feelings. Through the breach her energies flowed and welled-up in hope and anticipation.

"I have a future. I have a future and it will be fun."

I am beginning the process of changing my programming toward happiness and fulfillment.

The energy gave her visions; a stream of picture-thoughts of people and places. Her whole body relaxed.

"Hey love, stay alive if only to see how it all turns out. Don't you ever think of getting even?"

Chapter THIRTY-SIX

Gloria was gaining more than weight and girth. She joked about the care and feeding of her 'viviparous vertebrate'. One week she had pimples, the next, a craving for sweet potatoes. "I'm hormonally honing my mother instincts and practicing the motherly art of scion preservation." She told the other secretaries. "I also have to keep Dan at bay."

As for Dan, he was committed. He had to live through it.

Their Hawaiian honeymoon was interrupted by the news the Japs were winning WWII. Dan and Gloria looked forward to receiving a Hawaiian lei, a hot rub, and then their first night together in paradise. The call came before they did.

"Par for the course." He returned to their pre-nuptial bed. "The wedding will have to be postponed until I save the World from the rising sun." Luckily, Gloria understood.

From then on, it had been downhill, at least as far as Gloria was concerned. In her state of chemical dependency, she blamed Dan for everything.

Men get off so easy ... the bastards. Now he is off having fun while I have to pee every ten minutes. He doesn't have to go through months of nausea. He doesn't have to live on crackers and 7-Up. Damn him!

Once Dan solved the world crisis and everybody agreed capitalism was such a potent system that it didn't matter who the capitalists in control were, Dan returned to his honeymoon. They were married the next day in a civil ceremony—at least the Unitarian who married them was civil. Gloria was not. They returned to their hotel and Dan tried to carry Gloria over the threshold. Of course, the expectant mother couldn't let him. Then Gloria missed everyone who had not been at the wedding. "At least you could've had Tanya here for me," she cried. "You're so selfish."

Dan shouldered the burdens of marriage and pregnancy and thought of the fun he would have interviewing the new IDs for Operation Cowboy. He tried to feel guilty about his thoughts, but ...

When they arrived home things got better. Instead of Dan, the kid's room and paraphernalia possessed her. Basic blue objects arrived in plastic shopping bags and foil-wrapped packages from her baby shower. Wedding gifts were shuttled into the bedroom closet. Dan found his wife warm and cuddly, angry and cold, within the space of hours. He was so confused by all of this he said, "Yes Dear." more times in a week than "I'd like"

Operation Cowboy ... or was it Cowgirl, now? ... required field work. He arranged to be gone two days each week. The selection process went well. In his mind, he envisioned himself as Dean. He tried to imagine the types of women Dean would want as compatriots in the field. If sexuality was a criterion, he did well. In no time, he identified five potential agents.

Dan had another problem that wouldn't go away. He was in charge of one hundred fifty agents with blown cover. He tested one extremely talented agent's cover by having him deliver misinformation to Tanya—the Victoria Peak meet. When Tanya received the misinformation, the services of friendlies and enemies knew the gist of it within hours. Of course, he knew this wasn't a valid test. Tanya's cover had been blown for a long time and the operative probably had more people following him than Elvis. Still, knowing they knew was a plus. Dan Hill began to dream-up "Operation Dazzle."

Operation Dazzle was a good name for an operation designed to accept things as they were and make them seem like things they weren't. With one hundred fifty blown operatives as a liability, the Service was dead. If one looked at the one hundred fifty as assets, and bolstered the assets, then the Service would prosper.

Using Tanya to pass misinformation to a blown agent, Dan was able to verify his assumption, which was: The value of a blown operative is in direct proportion to the information you want out and in. By providing misinformation to the enemy, (actually more friends than enemies got the misinformation) he was able to identify their agents. Soon, the CIA was on equal footing with all of the other services. Dan's secret was that all his agents weren't blown. He fielded a whole new category of women

travelers—Ingenuous Deputies (IDs)—Cowgirls, saving American intelligence.

Due to Operation Dazzle and his misinformation campaign, the CIA was able to discredit information gleaned by the world's other intelligence communities. Soon, opposite meanings were assigned to everything. If a man said gold, he probably meant marks ... or maybe rubles. Perhaps he meant poverty ... or no payment necessary? If a day was set for a high-level meeting, it was probably at night on another day. Or perhaps, the meeting was canceled?

Unbeknownst to Dan Hill, Operation Dazzle saved the world from war. His cadre of IDs plied the nations seeding misinformation and retrieving valid information from one hundred fifty CIA operatives whom our enemies discounted, thereby making them effective again. Thus, the intelligence services of friendlies and enemies were played.

Because of Operation Dazzle, truth was doubted. Without truth there can be no war. Without truth, nations lose direction, leaders cannot lead, and people cannot die for higher causes.

As Operation Dazzle progressed, new truths were born. In six months, most nations adopted new courses. Religious leaders rationalized new visions. Masses of fanatics found new leaders. The DDO was sorry about Palestine. He suspected a boost toward individualism was good for Japan. There were rumbles in the Eastern Block and several SSRs that bothered him ... but what the hell, the old ways led to impasse.

Chapter THIRTY-SEVEN

Acieto Onoto felt secure in Hawaii. For his son Heto, aka Thomas Cook, he purchased a ranch on the big island. The ranch was guarded by men and technology. Three sides faced the Pacific. The houses he designed and built were insets within insets, utilizing Japanese defense strategies developed in the days of the Samurais. Onoto had the best security his billions could buy ... and the United States Intelligence Services could provide.

When Kita passed the message that she had identified three possible assassins, he laughed. He told the American Colonel in charge of his security what his source warned. The Colonel became excited and attentive when Onoto mentioned Hedeki Shikoku. The possibility of an inside look at Sungawa Industries intrigued the intelligence agent. The names of the other two would-be assassins were new to him. Dutifully, he passed the names along to MI. MI was supervised by the DCI. The DCI got a routine brief-synopsis of the possible threats to Onoto. He reacted immediately. Jan was yanked to safety. Dean's plight was noted to the DDO.

Dan Hill wouldn't accept the information about Fallout's danger without confirmation. Working back through channels, he came to Thomas Cook. He had no way of knowing Cook was Onoto's son. Cook assured the DDO that his agent would not be in danger if Acieto Onoto gave the order to leave him alone. Dan flew to Hawaii to meet with Acieto Onoto. To get to Onoto he had to island-hop, go deep, and finally submit to a verification-of-identity process that included giving blood. Onoto bought excellent protection. It was beyond anything the CIA had at their disposal.

Onoto met with Dan in a sunken conversation pit surrounded by plants and beautiful women. They were served and petted. When Onoto got down to business, the girls, by some signal, fled.

"I tell you what. I take people off your agents. You will give me something?"

"I'll give something if I can. It looks to me like you are pretty well fixed already. What else could you possibly need?"

"I need happiness for my children. I am old. I ask nothing for myself."

"Go on!"

"I have three little girls. I want them to have safe passage."

"That sounds do-able."

"I want three passports. Three American passports."

"Okay, if they aren't wanted criminals or in some kind of international trouble you can rest assured, I will recommend the issuing of U.S. Passports. U.S. citizens born in Hawaii; I presume?"

"Thank you, Director. I send word that your people are not to be ... shall I say, disturbed?"

He rose off the couch and bowed.

"This has been a day's work for an old man. Please be excused."

Dan was shown the door and began the process of re-entering the world outside Onoto's fortress. He was flown back to Oahu via islands he hadn't known existed.

Onoto had Thomas contact Kita and give her the news. The three jewels in the crown would now be American citizens traveling with American passports. "Oh, and Kita, don't worry about the two Americans.

They aren't after Onoto," Thomas reported before he hung up. That was bad news for Shikoku, but he never knew it, Katasawa saw to that.

Dr. Katasawa shuffled between his lab bench and the cooler. He poured the juices extricated from sections cut from a fresh human brain into quart beakers. Each beaker was labeled. Each section of jelly-like cortex cut carefully from the frontal or temporal lobe was examined for its peculiar nerve stem before it too became chemicals in a jar. The brainstem's juices were removed in much the same way.

As each beaker filled, the hoary old doctor shuttled them to the cooler. When done, he pushed a button on the wall. A servant came and removed the remains. What the doctor did, had been done for centuries. He practiced an ancient art whose roots were cannibalism.

Katasawa laid another set of beakers out and labeled each with his unique code. Into these, the warlock poured juices and powders from plants—opiates and hallucinogens known to his kind for centuries. In time, he would mix the plant and human fluids. Then he would inject them. He chortled. He had a plan.

The next day as Kita leaned over the babbling Shikoku, asking, probing, the doctor plunged a needle into her neck. In seconds, she too was laid-out before him. She was the creation of another master. Dr. Katasawa wondered how she worked. She was Acieto's no longer.

The senile doctor peeled his way into her scarred and patched brain. He found her buttons and pushed them with chemicals and electricity. He found Onoto's patched-in messages of love and loyalty. She told him things too garbled to understand. She told him things that made him drool. He

learned of the three jewels in their crown, and wanted them for himself. He changed her loyalty to hate, and programmed her to kill Onoto. He played her like an instrument of grief and pain, then made her love him. When he was done, he wiped the memory of his alteration and placed her in her bed. When she awoke healed, weeks later, she never knew she was another's beast.

Chapter THIRTY-EIGHT

The jet tucked its wheels and shot through the high clouds into sunlight 10,000 feet above Manila. The breakthrough changed the gray mood clouding Dean's mind and sapping his energy. The vision of Suzi standing forlornly at the chain-link gate, small and weak, a clear plastic scarf over her hair, made him sad.

I did everything a friend could do—or did I? If ‘d stayed with her, it wouldn't have helped her. Her internal strength will keep her going. She has all the information. There's nothing more I can offer. It's up to her now. She has demonstrated she has the strength to win herself back

Looking out the window he marveled at the fleece hanging at the bottom of the sky. The clouds were white blossoms in an exotic garden. Below, the deep blue of the South China Sea was broken only by breakers churning over the coral reefs guarding the Pratas Islands.

The plane held course until the fog banks and peaks of the China coast appeared. Then it began lazy circles as it entered a holding pattern, waiting for its turn to land. After circling for half an hour, the pilot

announced they would land, "Behind the big 747 you can see if you look out the right-hand windows."

His 727 pulled its nose up as if someone jerked the reins. The plane dropped, heading for the tiny access to the cul-de-sac that held Kai Tak Airport. As its speed slowed, the jet headed-in. The pilots activated every drag they could causing the 727 to do a turkey, where every wheel and flap was pushed out to grab air. The plane fell, glided over the harbor, and touched the runway as if it were landing on an aircraft carrier. Its arrival at Kowloon was still being announced as he departed and entered immigration.

Nathan Road led to the Miramar Hotel. The taxi driver and doorman worked together to transfer his flight bag and hustle him into the magnificent lobby.

Deep carpets, shades of red, and museum quality antiques made the Miramar one of the most beautiful hotels in the world. He was shown to his room and left alone to sink into the sumptuous fabrics. It was the finest hotel he had ever been in.

From the windows, he saw what the glimpse from the landing jet had only briefly revealed. Kowloon was a peninsula facing Victoria Hong Kong, the fragrant harbor, across the busiest channel in the world. In the distance, he could see the towering skyscrapers of Hong Kong's business center. The view dwarfed that of the San Francisco skyline he had thought the most magnificent.

Living and eating like a lord, exploring the exotic land and harbors, standing at the bow of ferries plying the waters, and shouldering his way through a sea of humanity down narrow streets and into shops full of

treasures, Dean came to know the British Territory. Back at the Miramar he relaxed on the plush bed planning his next immersions.

At the end of the second day, he returned to his room hot and tired. He showered and wrapped himself in the heavy robe provided by the hotel. Lying flat-out on the bed, eyes closed, revisiting the places he had been, he drifted off.

He was awakened rudely. Someone kept pounding on his door. He rose, pushing back dreams, and grumbling, answered the door.

"Who are you? What are you doing in my room? Jan pushed her way past him and took command of the place.

"Jan? How did ...? Is that ...? How did you know?" Dean stumbled words at her.

"At least you have the courtesy to wear a much larger *yukata* this time!" Jan said in her most sarcastic voice. "Look at the size of that bed. Last time I remember we slept on the floor. I suppose you won't leave this time either? I get the bed!"

She waited for him to hug her.

"I'll let go when you promise not to leave."

"Didn't you tell me you have sisters? That I am safe with you?"

"Lady, you're not safe, you're being held captive for my pleasure, and I lied about having sisters."

"Your pleasure? I want it understood that I'm here to take my own ... bite out of your ear!"

She bit him gently on the earlobe, then became soft and cuddly. He danced her to the edge of the bed, helped her out of her polished cotton trench coat, threw it over the chair, and sat her next to him.

"How did you know I was here?"

"I just checked-in ... the room next door."

"How did you find me?"

"They told me you were here. Dan Hill told me. Dean, can I stay?"

"With me ... here? Hell yes you can stay!"

"I need to go next door and get my make-up kit and some clean clothes. I've been traveling hard to get here ... I need a shower."

"What is it, lady? Every time we meet, we end up in hot water?"

He helped her get her kit then double-locked his door. I suppose you'll need help?"

"I was afraid to ask. David would you help me shower?"

"Naw, I already took one. See ..." he opened the heavy robe, slid it off and stood in front of her. "I'm clean!"

"Not really. You missed a spot." She was out of her clothes and in his arms. "Right behind this ear!"

They played slippery games as the hot water tantalized them. He lent her his robe, a towel. She dried him. When they entered the bedroom, the telephone was ringing. It wouldn't stop.

"I guess I have to answer it," Dean growled. He reached across the bed and grabbed the instrument.

"It's for you ... an emergency ... what the hell?"

"No! I won't. Not now! ... It matters to me! ... No! ... Of course, I understand ... I do have a choice! ... You're taking this to the extreme. What would you do? ... You can't. This is someone else's room! ... Is it really that important? ... Yes Sir! ... No, I don't understand, but I'll be right down."

"I can't believe I just heard what I think I just heard."

She was crying. She turned and began to dress.

"Who in the hell was that?"

"MI. Someone I can't ignore. I am a Marine officer. He said if I didn't come to the lobby and meet with him, he would come up here."

"He can't!"

"Oh David, he really can. I have to go down. It will just take a few minutes."

Dean put on the robe and slumped into a chair.

"My meter is running."

She left and he sat as one suspended, a frame of his life frozen in place waiting for the film to continue. The light outside turned to dusk.

Dean waited for Jan until he was certain she wouldn't come back. Her cosmetic case and clothes sat in his room. He presumed her other things were next door.

She has to come back ... sometime? She was honest in Japan ... or was she? She told me she was a Marine working for the DCI. She failed to mention she was Military Intelligence. She appeared out of nowhere and forced herself into my life. Damn woman. They are all the same! They get you dependent and leave.

"Bullshit!" He shouted to the room as he headed into the Kowloon twilight.

The next morning, he found a note from Jan under his door.

David ... my superior feared for my safety and ordered me to go with him. I am safe but terribly unhappy. Believe me I never wanted this. I will make it up to you. Please see Hong Kong for both of us. Don't be mad or sad.

I'm thinking of you!

Always,

Jan

P.S. An MP sergeant will pick-up my stuff.

Please help him get it for me.

Dean wadded the paper and hooked it into the wastebasket. "Fuck it!"

He showered and dressed while cursing her and his own stupidity for playing into the game she was involved in. As he loaded film into his camera, preparing to sightsee, the phone rang. A voice identified itself as that of a Sergeant Tomlin, Military Police.

"Okay, come on up."

When the sergeant knocked, Dean opened the door to let him in. The uniformed man stood outside, hesitant to enter.

"Sir, my orders are to pick-up a case and some clothes belonging to Lieutenant Hurlbut."

"Lieutenant Hurlbut? ... What's the first name?"

The sergeant pulled-out a written order and scoured it for a name.

"It doesn't have a first name, Sir. It just says Lieutenant Hurlbut."

"Who sent you?"

The sergeant handed him his orders. Dean thought they looked official.

"Okay, just a minute." He gathered her things. "She has more stuff next door."

"I know Sir, I have the key. Sir, I was asked to deliver this envelope to you."

Dean watched as the sergeant went to the next room. Assured he did the right thing, Dean closed the door and examined the envelope. It was addressed to him. A drop of red wax with some kind of imprint held down the flap. He tore the paper open, being careful not to break the seal.

The letter was written on bond. It was headed: United States of America, Central Intelligence Agency; Mr. Daniel B. Hill, Deputy Director of Operations. Along the left margin, in small font, were names he didn't recognize.

Mr. Dean,

Your service in Japan has been noted. You have served our Country well. As per the terms of our understanding please observe the following: Today, across the channel in Hong Kong Victoria, a large white ship, the Bulbul, much larger than a yacht, privately owned, will anchor off the ferry landing. Men will come ashore. Please position yourself where you can photograph their activities yet not be seen. Act the tourist you are.

When done, go back to your room. Place the exposed roll of film in its aluminum can. Seal the can with the wax from this envelope. Melt it with a match and let the drops fall on the place where the cap and can come together. The sergeant who delivered this message will come to your room. Give it to him.

Remember, do not let anyone suspect you are photographing them. Destroy this order now.

Orders? How dare they! Jan was part of something orchestrated by the CIA. Whatever she was involved in is sweeping her out of my way. I

agreed to be a messenger. Now Hill wants me to be a photographer. Well screw him. Screw them both. What really hurts is that somehow Jan is playing me for them. Hurlbut! Her last name was Hurley. Hurlbut the Marine? Last name's probably Dimplecunt. I'll take their goddamn photographs and inform Hill I'm out. I'm through.

The day was glorious. The ferry ran cross-channel through a jumbled sea containing more sampans, junks, yachts, ships, and barges than he had seen in his life. It seemed one could walk across the channel on a bridge of boats. The ferry horned its way through the myriads of wood-and-metal-lined holes in the water. It never gave way, cut speed, or hit anything. It cut the wind, rolling the sweet and acrid smells of the land onto its decks. Dean stood near the prow and let the smells educate him. Nearing the ferry landing he searched the water for a large white ship. In the haze of distance, he thought he saw it. He wasn't sure. Landed, he was pushed-along by a caterpillar of bodies. The streets seethed; humanity fused as one.

He climbed the incline of tarmac to its first level above the harbor. From that vantage point he could see a white ship, the one named after the Persian songbird. It was joining the sea of vessels off the landing.

The Bulbul, an island of wealth, commanded everything around it. An exclamation point of sooty diesel smoke rose from a forward stack. He thought he saw a splash forward, probably an anchor. The shining spot of purity in the polluted harbor caught on its chain and began to swing around. He could see men moving on its decks.

Dean fixed a 200 mm lens to his Canon. Looking around, he found a niche where two buildings failed to come together. In the recess, he could

rest his camera against a corner of the building and sight the landing. He clicked-off a shot of the Bulbul and waited.

Twenty minutes later the back of the ship unfolded into a ramp. The ramp birthed a boat-like object, a duck. It caught the water, billowed its own comma of black diesel smoke, and headed toward the landing where it dropped a ramp onto the dock. Inside the amphibious duck he saw men and a car emerging. The car was a Rolls Silver Wraith. The dark blue vehicle crossed the landing dock and stopped. Then twelve men, six per side, formed-up alongside. With the aplomb of a funeral procession, the car and escorts came toward him.

Dean looked at the film counter on his camera. He had used ten frames. He must conserve the remaining twenty-six. Through the eye of the telephoto lens, he saw the churlish guards. They carried machine guns and automatic rifles. The street cleared in front of the procession. Dean noted that people pretended not to notice, no one turned to stare. He moved up the street to find another place to spy.

The menacing procession reached the first plateau and kept coming. The cross-street traffic halted even though the signal light was green. He was forced to find another shelter further up the hill. The street divided around a jail-like box. The ten-by-ten steel stall had solid walls on three sides. The fourth was slatted with heavy steel strips. Each strip was about one-half inch thick and four inches wide. They were lined-up vertically, each about four inches apart. A weathered sign proclaimed the metal shed a Hang Chen Bank. Dean couldn't figure out why it was built in the middle of the street.

When the Rolls reached the armored outbuilding, it stopped. With men moving along its sides like outriggers, it turned-and-backed, turned-and-backed, until its trunk was near the metal slat wall. The Rolls sat heavily, its rear squatting like a dog. The guards brought their weapons to ready. Their eyes searched the streets, buildings, and sidewalk booths. The two men nearest the slatted wall opened the trunk. As Dean clicked away, they began to unload gold bars and pass them through the slats. For fifteen minutes they passed gold bars into the armored shed. When the gold was off-loaded, bundles that looked like American currency were passed from the shed and stacked in the trunk. When the trunk was filled, they slammed the lid shut.

Slowly, the procession made its way back to the dock and the waiting amphibious vehicle. Like a film run backward, the duck swallowed the car and men, crossed back to the Bulbul, and was ramped into the ship. As the ramp closed another exclamation mark of black diesel exhausted the forward stack and the Bulbul was underway. On the streets no one saw a thing. The bank outbuilding stood deserted, as it was before. There was no door. Inside the steel shed a tunnel led to a Hang Chen Bank about a block away.

Did someone see me? Did they see a glint from my lens? I feel like someone's watching. I'll catch the next ferry to Kowloon.

In the lobby of the Bank, two Hang Chen men met. Both were in the crowd when the car came ashore.

"Who was that big bald guy, the spy taking pictures?"

"A tourist. Maybe an agent we haven't made?"

"Get the film. Have Todeh kill him! Make him an example."

"Todeh will find him. He took the ferry to Kowloon."

That day the DDO returned from Hawaii after successfully getting his agent's names off Kita's hit list.

Jan was on board the USS Yorktown. The Yorktown weighed anchor for Singapore.

Seiko Onoto, aka Onoe Seiko Onoto, the youngest of the three daughters of Onoto, met Tanya Horowitz, as per the British intent, at the Old Palace Gardens in Bangkok. Seiko just happened to sit next to Tanya and ask her for help with her English.

Suzi Song Onoto flew to Oahu. She sat in the airport waiting for a puddle-jumper to the big island. She didn't know why she was going there. She had never been to Hawaii. She didn't know anyone. She felt strangely disconnected. She rationalized she needed to get away from the Philippines to find someone like David to love ... but why Hawaii?

Suzi experienced vivid flashes of comprehension. Somehow, she was flying to the big island because of Onoto. That part of her personality danced in her head as through a fog. If only she could break through

Sami Mitsu Onoto, aka Sami Cook, jumped when the phone rang. It was 5:00 a.m. Only her reflexes were operating.

"Click. Click-click. Click, click. Obey!" Sami faded. Her Onoto personality answered.

"Onoto here."

"You will go to the Hilo airport at eleven. Meet the flight from Oahu. Greet a woman traveling alone. Her name is Song Onoto. Take her to the Kani Hotel. A reservation has been made for her there. Be her friend. Offer to take her around the island. Keep her in sight. Wait for further orders."

A deep-cover agent in Bulgaria sent word via a CIA contact in Sofia, who immediately made a drop to an American, a pretty, young, female CIA Cowgirl operative posing as a tourist. A ton of Russian gold had been converted into dollars. He mentioned, and word was carried down the line, that the cover of an American operative who photographed the event was blown. Word came down that he would be killed by the Hang Chen bankers as soon as they got the film.

Gloria had a burst of energy. She repainted the nursery, refinished part of the crib, and was halfway through a box of Turtles, when exhaustion and ineffectuality zapped her. When Dan arrived, exhausted from his travels, she was beached on the living room couch crying softly. "Dan, clean up the paint stuff, finish refinishing the crib, and get those horrible Turtle things away from me!" At eight, she left for a neighbor's house to sleep because "The smell of all those fumes makes me sick." He ate leftover beet-lasagna. At midnight he finished her work and fell into a bed full of saltine crumbs. If he dreamed, it wasn't about fatherhood.

Gloria filled the Hill household with books and magazines about fetal development, birth, and parenting. Dan searched through the tables of contents and indexes looking for information that would help him understand his role as a father. His male instincts were strong. They told

him to nurture, help, and share. That wasn't acceptable. The women, through many subtle and not-so-subtle means, told him to get the hell out of the way.

Dan wanted to experience the prenatal and natal aspects of parenthood. He wanted to understand life from the vantage of a man, and a woman. He didn't know how. He observed changes in Gloria as nature made her ready for incubating and caring for a new being. He searched the books for clues as to how he should act and feel to get the most out of the events. Fathers, he learned, were not necessary. Their role was to provide security and comfort, if asked. Fathers were economic necessities, but not indispensable.

With instincts to guide him Dan created visions of his postnatal worth. As he read, he learned otherwise. The baby would bond to its mother. It already synchronized its heartbeat and brain waves to hers. As it suckled, it would cling to her for survival. Mother and baby would bond. Dad would bring worms and keep the nest warm while she was away. Mom would have no need of him except that driven by guilt. The books warned women not to let the baby's needs and her "complete gratification as a mother" destroy her "most important adult relationship."

He learned that in three to five years the child would start bonding to him. Then he could experience the joys of parenthood—if he survived being an outsider that long. He girded himself for the austerity ahead and focused on his work.

The report on the latest Russian gold-for-dollars exchange was no surprise to the DDO. Rubles weren't traded on world markets. The

Russians needed dollars for international trade. They exchanged gold for dollars or West German Deutsche Marks in Hong Kong. No one was supposed to know, everyone did. The CIA kept track of the amounts and the middlemen. That information was supposed to be power. The addendum about the CIA agent-photographer did surprise Dan Hill.

"I just saved his prick in Hawaii," Dan told his new secretary. "Now he's in trouble again."

Dean had the film ready when the sergeant came to his room. The red wax was still warm when he handed the canister to Tomlin.

"I got some great shots!"

"Yes Sir. I'll deliver them."

"Is Jan okay?"

"She was when I escorted her to the Yorktown."

"I'm finished. I'm not doing anything else ... do you have orders for me?"

"No Sir. Thank you, Sir."

Dean was alone. Horny in Hong Kong. He felt the walls closing-in. He showered, decided to look younger by wearing his toupee, and dressed in slacks and a sport coat. He was out of the room and in the lobby perusing two worn-looking long-legged ones at the hotel bar, when the evil-eyed operative from the Hang Chen Bank came looking. They passed within five feet of each other, Dean leaving the hotel, the assassin seating himself in the lobby waiting to identify the bald photographer.

Chapter THIRTY-NINE

Dr. H. Katasawa's cackled laughter undulated across the room. At his command, Kita, the creation of the Wakayama faction, his hated competitors, was receptive. "Sleep!" he ordered. He left her prostrate on a gurney, and turned to his best creation.

Shikoku lay amid the chemicals and wires used to probe him. He had been in a stupor-like state for over a week. His body flesh sagged away from his skeleton. His facial flesh formed an expression written by gravity. On the gurney he was less than human. Katasawa breathed new commands into him, as he had done ten years before. He inculcated Kita's data. Now Shikoku knew what Kita had known. He was programmed to continue her undertakings as well as those Katasawa thought necessary.

The evil practitioner leaned over Kita and spoke acid into her mind bringing her into a receptive state again. Most of her programs were erased. He gave her a new mission.

"Seek-out and kill Acieto Onoto."

He left her with the memories and data that would lead her to Onoto, nothing more. Shikoku now controlled the Daughters of Onoto and the women in brown. Dr. H. Katasawa controlled him.

His servant cleaned and dressed Shikoku. When he was as he had been, he was awakened. His post-awakening plans were imprinted. He greeted Katasawa as his father. He urged him to come with him, be with him in Tokyo. He spoke of duties to Sungawa, the final hours of Mitusuka Industries, and the goals he thought his own.

Kita was awakened rudely. She responded without feeling or thought. She planned her way to Hawaii, shaking with anger as she thought of her quarry. The good doctor's aide helped her arrange transportation. By the end of the day she was on her way to Haieda Airport. In fourteen hours, she landed on Oahu. She slept in Honolulu as instructed. The next day she flew to Hilo. In Hilo, she rented a car and drove to Honokaa. In Honokaa she called Thomas Cook.

Cook checked with Acieto. Onoto told him to make certain Kita was picked-up and made comfortable in their quarters. Like everyone, before she was allowed to enter the inner sanctum, she was blood tested, voice tested, and confirmed. Still, Thomas and Acieto Onoto weren't satisfied.

"Why's she here? Ask her Thomas."

"Why did you come here without authorization?"

"You know I can only give Acieto Onoto that information."

She was admitted to the inner estate. She followed Thomas Cook and a uniformed guard, walking humbly five paces behind. When she saw Acieto Onoto she forced a smile, bowed to her knees, and hung her head.

"What is it Kita?"

Kita looked at the others in the room. She hung her head again.

"Leave us alone!" Acieto commanded. The others, now at ease with the situation, left the room and went back to their tasks.

Kita rose slowly and approached the fat old man. She observed his shaved-bald head, the rolls of flesh that circled his neck like a wrinkled scarf. She looked into his pig-like eyes and picked the left one as her target. With a sudden lurch, she drove her index finger into his eye socket, penetrated the brain, hooked her last joint and nail into the socket, and

pulled him toward her. He was dead before she lowered him to the floor. She removed her finger, smiled as if a great weight had been lifted from her, clasped both hands to her chest, and died. It was done as Katasawa directed.

When Thomas Cook took control, heads didn't roll. Acieto had intruded upon his quiet life. Now he was gone. The woman who killed him was his father's own agent. Perhaps he'd done something to anger her? No one could understand why she turned. In their wake they left little of the older ways. The future they fought to shape was free of them. Only the American Colonel seemed to care. Thomas suspected, correctly, that the colonel felt the loss of information more than the loss of life.

Security at Cook's ranch was cut. The U.S. agents went their ways. Social events were planned. Two young women attended the first get-together. Both were natives of the islands—or so their passports proclaimed. Both were beautiful. They looked alike as many Eurasian women do. They were friends for reasons they didn't know. Suzi Song and Sami Mitsu partied with the guests.

At the next social event a man in town for a few days from Japan entered on Sami's arm. He was wiry, tall for a Japanese, sallow, but handsome. His name was Hedeki Shikoku. Sami Cook introduced him as a friend out seeing the world.

Hedeki was on Hawaii surveying his new domain and those who served him. The woman who escorted him was one of the jewels from Onoto's sword. His host, Acieto Onoto's son, would soon to be dealt with. Three older women served the guests. They no longer wore brown.

Hedeki seemed to have a wonderful time at the party. Suzi let Song play a loose and nonchalant game with Thomas Cook. When he got too interested, Suzi got scared. Shikoku moved in. Song excused herself. She had no idea Thomas Cook was her brother Heto Onoto. Only Hedeki Shikoku knew.

Chapter FORTY

Todeh, the assassin for the Hang Chen Bank, had time on his side. He sat like this on many occasions, waiting in a lobby for the opportunity to kill—to make a statement to the world that banking transactions in Hong Kong were to go unnoticed. He read and watched. The hotel employees knew who he was. He was invisible.

Dean was out exploring the tight alleyways and strange shops. Women were the aggressors here. They ran things. Business was theirs. They were quick to confront him, sell him, and discount him when he didn't buy. They argued with each other adding strings of words he couldn't understand to the background din of the whirring city. He rode the ferry as a sight-seeker. He found the tramway to Victoria Peak and sat atop the heights awed by the scene below. He took a cab to Aberdeen and sat cross-legged on the throne in the Sea Palace floating restaurant. He stuffed himself with the lobster of the rich, rode a sampan through poverty, and saw junks with junk stacked as high as buoyancy would allow. He learned the essential auras of China, its fluency, its effluence.

Later, back in Kowloon, he made his way through the crowds filling the streets. In the quiet of his room, he played the TV as he showered and read until he slept. He missed companionship as he floated to another day.

Tanya shopped the Venice of the East until her shins ached. Her feet were sore where new shoes rubbed and blistered flesh. Her arms were tired from carrying shopping bags and boxes. She should have been in bad temper, but putting together a new wardrobe didn't affect her that way. She wore the satiated look of a woman done right. She labored along the corridor to her room, dropped everything, and fumbled her key into the lock. Bangkok was hers.

Today was the second day of her every-other-day routine. That meant a hot bath and massage, no workout. She ran the water into the tub and called room service. A masseuse would arrive in twenty minutes. She collapsed into the suds and sank to her neck. What the heck, she muttered, she would find batik dresses another day.

After the hefty rubber left the room, she lay basking in the warmth of her own circulation. She dosed. The phone rang.

"Tanya?"

"Is that you Seiko?"

"Hi. Are you doing anything? I mean ...?"

"Not really. What did you have in mind?"

"I ... I thought you might help me with my English."

"Seiko, your English is better than mine. I mean really, honey, you speak like you were born in Omaha."

"Do I? Do you really think so? Thank you, Tanya. It's just that I don't get the opportunity to speak with American women. Where's Omaha?"

"I know. You really do speak well, you know. I don't get the opportunity to speak with Thai women either. Omaha is in the mid-west. People who live there speak good English. Where are you?"

"I'm on the street near your hotel."

"I can hear the noise. Will you come up or should I come down?"

"Can you meet me in the lobby?"

"I'll be down. Give me about ten minutes?"

"Oh and Tanya? Can you bring the book about exercises ... body building I mean?"

Seiko enjoyed her time with Tanya. The Brits paid her well for information. She explained to them that Tanya was a handler, a physical therapist who helped keep people in shape. Not people, she corrected, one guy. A guy she hadn't seen for months. "He's a teacher out traveling the world to seek his fortune or something."

She reported that Tanya had a roommate who wrote her long letters and told her what to do. Her roommate sent her money and was the one who told her to come to Bangkok. "I don't understand, but that is exactly what Tanya told me."

The British agent who controlled Seiko didn't understand either. His reputation was on the line. Everyone in the CID, Interpol, the KGB, and even the MI and FBI knew Tanya Horowitz was a principal in the MiG operation. The Chinese hated her. Rumor had it she not only acted as a decoy but humiliated their agents by having them chase a dog on one occasion and sort through sewage on another. The Chinese claimed that the

morally degenerate West was typified by Terrible Tanya. Her videotaped workouts were used as evidence of western corruption by intelligence agencies throughout Asia. Lord Ayers happened to know that copies had been purchased for non-Asian study as well.

Terrible Tanya was, according to Seiko who liked her and thought her simple and vain, a narcissistic woman who barely had two brain cells to rub together. Ayers said different. That forced the Bangkok agency to push Seiko. Seiko received a lecture about cutting through the fog. She responded by getting anxious. When they calmed her, she agreed to work Tanya for them in a new way. She would get Tanya drunk. When drunk, talkative, when talkative, candid. When candid, she would expose herself. They wired her and sent her off. They hadn't counted on physical fitness.

"Seiko, you know I don't drink. Booze is really bad for the body."

That ended their best laid plans. The next time Seiko was better prepared.

"Tanie, try this wonderful drink."

"Honey, I told you I don't drink."

"Oh this isn't booze. This is a special drink that helps weak people grow strong. It's an old Siamese remedy for aging. My people think this stuff prevents wrinkling and dry vagina."

"Are you sure it won't hurt me?"

"Oh I'm sorry Tanya. I never thought you would think I would hurt you."

"I'll try it. Where's yours?"

"If you like it, we can get more. You drink mine first."

Tanya tasted the strange liquid.

"It tastes like Gatorade with malt in it. It's not too bad." She took another dainty swig, then another.

"Go ahead and drink it all. I can get more from my grandmother."

By the time Tanya saw the bottom of the glass, she felt her wrinkles loosen and she felt stronger.

"This is really a special tonic. We should market it."

Seiko adjusted her wire. She would do her part.

"Tanie, you are an amazing woman. Please tell me about your work."

Tanya got a buzz on that ran her circuits like a fuzzy arachnid. Her eyes never saw so clearly. She never sensed mental acuity as she did now.

"Seiko, I'm actually getting younger!"

"You look younger. Isn't it amazing? Will you tell me?"

"I learned PT so I could get next to a guy named David."

In a van parked nearby, two British communications experts breathed a sigh of relief. The smaller of the two got on the horn and notified the agents in the Embassy basement.

"Here it comes!"

"A guy named David? Who is he?"

"Oh, he's sweet. A real gentleman. You know, once in the moonlight, he held me ... you know here ... and she cupped her breasts. He said, 'Bare is beautiful.' Isn't that amazing? What a perception."

The agents hadn't seen her gesture. They took her words down and wondered.

"Another time, he told me he was seeking life on Mars or someplace. It was Mars. I remember. I think you would have to call him an intellectual,

but that's not bad. Intelligence is just his way of getting what he needs. Seiko, I'm his handler. Aren't I lucky?"

"I don't understand, what does he do?"

"Oh, he travels around and learns things. He goes to places I would never want to go and he gets information."

"Now we're fucking getting somewhere," one van man said.

"Go on. It's so interesting. Who does he work for?"

"He works for Gloria's boyfriend Danny."

"He does? Doing what?"

"He travels around and learns things."

"Is he a spy or something?"

"A spy? I think that may be the answer. Seiko, do you know who he would spy on?"

Seiko couldn't determine if Tanya was playing her or just dumb. She tried another tact.

"Tanya, you have such beautiful clothes."

"Oh thank you Seiko. I really try to buy quality and to look nice."

"I can't afford nice clothes. Are you very rich?"

"Rich? I sometimes don't have hair money. No, I'm not rich."

"How can you afford nice clothes? You must have a wonderful job."

"It is wonderful. When I travel to handle David, I don't take my clothes. I buy new ones."

Seiko was amused, but frustrated. The men serving Queen and country were flabbergasted. This broad is Tanya the Terrible?

"If you aren't rich, how do you get your money?"

"Oh, that's easy. Gloria sends it to me."

"Gloria? Tell me about Gloria."

"She's pregnant you know!"

"I didn't ... really?"

"She moved in with Danny."

"Danny? Tell us ... " she caught herself, "tell me about Danny."

"Danny is Gloria's boyfriend. I think they are married now. They're going to have a little boy."

"What does Danny do?"

"I'm not certain, but it must work. She got pregnant right away."

Seiko tried one more time.

"Does Danny work for the Government?"

"Oh yes. He hired Gloria."

"What does he do for the Government?"

"I'm not certain. I think he's a ... he's very important. One time Gloria told me he cleans up other people's messes. He's like a custodian ... no, a head custodian I think ... of the Public Trust. That's it, that's what he does, I heard Gloria describe him just that way. I do know he is in charge of Fallout."

"I say Stuart, we've been had!" Lord Ayers paced. Operative Stuart Starver removed his earphones and wiped sweat from his billiard ball head.

"If that woman is Tanya the Terrible, then the Americans are on to something big. Do you think it possible? Could it be? Do they have some secret system of mind control? Is what we just heard simply an implanted cover? Is the bloody CIA capable of fielding an operative like her?"

"Sir, I think she's just a tart ... a chutney-head. Sir, I think we don't have the real Tanya Horowitz. That's what I think." He wiped the sweat away again. With no hair to stop it the salty droplets ran his forehead to his eyes.

"If that is true, Stu, we have been duped. It figures, though. This one has focused the eyes of half the world's intelligence upon her while the real Tanya cut intelligence to ribbons."

"You have it, Sir! Perhaps Seiko can get this Tanya to reveal her counterpart?"

"I say, splendid plan. When Seiko comes back, tell her what we need ... and Stuart, find-out who or what Fallout is. Perhaps we learned more tonight than we thought."

Dan was distracted as usual. This time he was manufacturing headlines ... The DDO paced his office confines as his operative fought bravely for his life ... Or, Dan thought ... The DDO ordered America's bravest and best to the aid of the fallen secret agent ... No, that wasn't right either ... How about

"Sir?" his new secretary and confidant interrupted. She was concerned. Dan Hill's hands were scabbed from scratching. His demeanor unsettled.

"I have a problem, MaryKay. One of our best is out there needing help and I can't help him."

"Oh dear, not Agent Fallout?"

"Yes, in Hong Kong Kowloon. We had him do some recon for us and they made him. Now they intend to kill him. He may be dead already."

"Can't someone help him? Isn't there another operative in the area?"

"January could have. The Yorktown is somewhere in the South China Sea or ... our other agents are too well known. I pulled them."

"Can't you reach the killers and ask them not to kill Fallout? It worked before."

"Not without endangering our relations with the Cartel. We have agreed not to interfere with their world banking systems or their supranational power."

"I never heard of the Cartels. Are they a family?"

"MaryKay, this is top secret, but if you must know, in the order of things on planet earth, the Dominick Cartel comes first. It dominates. Then comes the United States, then Russia, then Europe. Whatever, the CIA can't go against the Cartel without their permission."

"There must be someone who can save Fallout?" She had tears in her eyes. Even though she never met Dean, she felt akin to him. She knew that the DDO—even the President of the United States—trusted Fallout implicitly.

Dan Hill slumped at his desk. MaryKay rose and came around to massage his neck.

"Hell's bells!" Dan exclaimed. There is someone. PT is in Bangkok."

MaryKay admired men who could make decisions. Dan was her kind of man. He was under so much strain. In addition to all of this, he and his wife were going through a difficult period. So much of America's future depended upon her boss. Anything she could give to keep him focused and on the job was too little. MaryKay was committed to service.

Tanya finished her morning workout and lay back on the mat. That stuff Seiko gave her did wonders. She could hardly feel her muscles ache. The special concoction did make her younger. If Seiko could get her the recipe, she would be young forever. The thought entertained her as she dressed and went to the hotel restaurant for brunch. As she passed the front desk, she noticed an envelope in her box.

Tanya read the note. Her sister was ill. She must call home immediately. This time Tanya knew the ropes, she was a professional. She dialed and asked for the overseas operator while she chewed the paper into a gob. When she gave the operator the number the operator told her she would connect it and call right back. Tanya waited in the phone booth.

In the lobby, agent Stuart Starver pretended to read a week-old issue of the Times. A small Chinese operative fumbled with a suitcase. A little woman dressed in brown waited for someone to pick her up.

The phone rang. A sleepy voice muttered something.

"Who is it at this hour Dan?"

"Hello?" His voice was quaky with sleep.

"This is Tanya. Is Gloria there?"

"Tanya. This is Dan. Gloria is here, but I need to talk to you."

"Hi Danny. How is everything?"

"Listen! Go immediately to Hong Kong. Back to the same hotel. Get to David and get him out. Get him to Singapore. You know Singapore. Same MO. Got that?"

"I think so. What about my stuff here?"

"Pay your room for two weeks. Leave everything. Don't let anybody follow you! Get Fallout out ASAP! Got it?"

"Yes Dan."

"Goodbye then and good luck!"

Tanya went for brunch.

Stuart Starver took the phone. He got through to the British Embassy on the first try. He was read a transcript of Tanya's call, then given orders not to lose her. Control told him his tickets would be ready at the airport. There was only one flight from Bangkok to Hong Kong and it flew at 2:00. He wiped his head and made another call. In German, he relayed his information to Supreme Command.

Tanya arrived in Hong Kong and caught a cab to the Miramar Hotel. The clerk gave her Dean's room number. At a white phone in the lobby, she asked to be connected to his room. The phone rang. It was 5:00 p.m.

"Hello?"

"David, this is Tanya. Can I come up?"

"Tanya? You bet! Do you have my room number?"

"I'm on my way."

As Tanya entered the elevator, Stuart Starver moved across the lobby. He found an overstuffed chair near an Oriental who sat reading. The Oriental looked-up, grinned, and went back to the glyphs. SS sat wiping his head, waiting.

"You have to leave!" Tanya announced when Dean opened the door.

"You have to go to Singapore right away."

"Yeah, I know," Dean said. "I leave in the morning."

"You do? How did you know?"

"I've known all along. I have my itinerary. This is my last night in Hong Kong ... and now I'm not alone!"

"Oh Davy I've missed you. You wouldn't believe where I've been since I last saw you."

"Tell me about it," he said as he led her toward the bed.

When the body of British agent Starver was found, Lord Ayers requested a leave of absence for health reasons. Routine fingerprints exposed Stuart Starver as Arian Himmler, a double agent for the Neo-Nazis. Luckily, the body disappeared. Only the woman in brown knew where the body was hidden. She didn't realize she identified the wrong bald man to the Hang Seng thug. Through channels, they put the blame for Dean's death on Tanya Horowitz. It took several days to learn that they removed the wrong man. By then, it didn't matter.

"Chalk-up another one for Tanya!" Lord Ayers said as he left for Cornwall. "She and her counterpart David Dean, cold-blooded killers, have written a new chapter in the annuals of espionage."

Tanya in the meantime, was demonstrating a new exercise. She stood naked before David and flexed her gastrocnemius muscles as she jumped. After several hops, he caught on.

Seiko arrived home after a trying day at the British Embassy. She had been forced to review the tapes made on the night she got Tanya stoned. The analysts went over and over the conversation. Seiko stuck to her interpretation. Tanya was a physical wonder driven by a limited intellect. The Brits knew otherwise. The record was too clear. There were two Tanyas.

Daylight faded into dusky shadows by the time Seiko arrived at her apartment, kicked off her shoes, and collapsed on the bed. As she relaxed, she sensed someone else in the room.

"Click. Click. Click-click. Click. Obey!"

The body sat up on the bed. "Onoto here."

"Good. I wanted to meet you. I have work for you."

Dr. H. Katasawa poured liquids back and forth between beakers as he dry-chortled little bursts of sound. After a few minutes he got the beakers confused. He spent some time trying to decide which contained what, and which he should inject or shoot-up. Then he forgot why he was trying to decide. His servant put his things away. He stumble-stepped from the lab back to Shikoku's room. There, he started for the kitchen, lost direction somewhere near the hall leading to his bedroom and started heading that way. Then he sat on a chair in the hall and tried to see his shoes. His degeneration could mean the end of Shikoku and his brother.

Suzi Song Onoto was aware her Onoto personality was the reason she was in Hawaii as Song. Sami, the woman who could have been her twin, had greeted her at the airport and served as her Hawaiian host. Suzi knew their meeting was not an accident. Sami Onoto Cook? Could the name they shared be a coincidence? Suzi was prying open doors. What she learned frightened her. Should she disappear? She must before they became aware that Song no longer existed and her Onoto part was compromised.

Song maintained a refuge in the Caymans. Suzi began to plan her way to it. As she planned, she assumed a passive-adaptive guise. As it turned

out, she was wise to go along with Sami's suggestions. The Onoto part of Sami had orders to report everything Song did. Hedeki Shikoku had plans for Song Onoto. Song would be his knife as he cut out corporate hearts and replaced them with his own. He would use her to help him take over all that was left of Mitusuka Industries, and the world.

Putting her escape plan in motion, Suzi smiled her way aboard a private catamaran sailing to Kauai. She told the three L.A men on board that she had just graduated and was free for the first time in her life. She asked them to teach her to sail. They accepted her aboard without a second thought. Her white canvas duffel bag was placed near a hammock in the small cabin. The cat, *Adventure Bound*, routed from Hilo via Kahoolawe, Lanai, and then skirting Oahu, had a hard four-day sail to Hanalei Bay on Kauai. Suzi learned the sheets.

On Kauai, Suzi looked for a way to Mexico that no one would notice. She found her opportunity in a bar in Hanalei. A group of American sportsmen was celebrating their victory in a race from San Diego. The victors had another crew who had flown over and were leaving the next day to sail the sleek racer back. One of Suzie's mates from the Hilo sail was a long-lost buddy of the racer's captain. The return crew was a crewperson short. Suzi's mates heartily recommended that she join their crew.

The sleek racing sloop cut its way to San Diego through rough seas barely ahead of storms which raged over the horse latitudes in early spring. She was seasick for almost a week. The only pleasure was being free.

As the sloop diesel past Point Loma and into San Diego Bay, Suzi looked for an opportunity to avoid customs. When they docked, she hugged her mates and thanked them. They made plans to get together that evening.

Suzi agreed, knowing she would be in Mexico within hours. The crew prepared for inspection and clearance. Suzi hoisted her duffel and milled herself in with sailors preparing to check out of the harbor.

Three slips down she found a crew ready to depart for Ensenada. She approached the Captain, a vain young stud who grew-up with a concrete yacht in his slip, and coquettishly invited herself along for the trip. He asked her for her passport. She showed him the one recently furnished by the CIA.

"What's in Ensenada for you?"

"Oh nothing. I saw you and your beautiful yacht. I started dreaming. Tom, please take me along. I know how to sail ... or I can pay?"

"Sandi," he had her name wrong but that was okay with her. "Have you filled-out a Mexican tourist card?"

"Oh, no. Do I need one?"

"I've got an extra. Welcome to the crew."

In Ensenada, Suzi told the crew she would run into town shopping and be right back. Instead, she hitched a ride to Tijuana with some hippies in an old VW bus. In TJ, she took a cab to the *aeropuerto*. In Mexico City, she bought a seat on a flight to the Cayman Islands. Upon arrival, she was greeted by Georgetown, Jamaican hospitality. Suzi disappeared, Song died, Onoto went into a deep sleep.

They admitted Gloria Hill to the hospital five hours before little Daniel was born. He weighed nine pounds eleven- and one-half ounces. Dan arrived at the hospital in time to be with Gloria and witness the birth. Once again, he affirmed the true meaning of life.

Hedeki Shikoku returned from Bangkok, impressed with Mitsu Sami Onoto. He agreed she would assume the name on her passport, Sami Cook. When he learned that Song disappeared, he suspected the worst—and the British. He guessed wrongly that she would turn-up again soon. At home, he found the aged Dr. Katasawa in bed where the servant placed him. The old man was mumbling frantically in Japanese. When he saw Hedeki, he became lucid. For the next hours he explained himself and his deeds to Shikoku. The next day he took his creation through the laboratory and tried to explain the ancient art of mindwarping. Hedeki was in shock.

Three days later, Dr. Katasawa died. Hedeki closed himself in his room. His staff thought he mourned. Inside, he fought for reality. He searched his scarred mind for memories. When he found them, he became sick with the nausea of the damned. In time, he returned to the world of the sane, insane. His mental gears clicked together and drove a new version of himself. He, like so many before him, was a beast in human form. The only difference between himself and slaves like Kita, was that, due to Katasawa's diddling, he was his own control.

A small woman, now dressed in the livery of the Cook estate, dropped a special heart-stopping poison into Heto Onoto's nightcap. A week after Thomas Cook was pronounced, "Dead by natural causes," lawyers opened an envelope from a legal firm in Niigata, Japan. In it, they found Acieto Onoto's will:

I leave everything I own to Heto Onoto Cook, son, if he survives me by sixty days, and if he does not survive me by sixty days, then to Mitsu Sami Onoto Cook, daughter.

Proof that Mitsu Sami Onoto and Heto Onoto aka Thomas and Sami Cook were his children was included.

After Dan Hill recovered from the birth of his son, he notified the DCI that he had selected two problem areas in the Far East for Operation Cowboy's agents to work. His success to date and his new ID networks were so profitable that all the DCI could say was, "Go to it man, America depends on us!"

The DDO targeted two Asian hot spots: Malaysia and Thailand. In Malaysia, CIA networks had broken-down. The US and British weren't getting information about attempts by rebel forces to communize labor, primarily in Singapore. Fallout and PT would join Agent January and establish new information networks connected by IDs.

In Thailand, opiates flowed faster than the sewage-laden canals. The produce of the Golden Triangle and the CIA sponsored governments (military warlords) was flooding the world. Something had to be done. The CIA, acting in the interests of one of its factions, killed off its own DEA operatives in an attempt to keep the warlords happy and for their support to fight a meaningless war in Vietnam. He would get Fallout in and use him to re-build the information network between CIA agents.

David Dean, sans toupee, cleared customs in Singapore ahead of Tanya Horowitz. If Jan had known he was in Singapore, she would have

taken leave from the Yorktown and sought him out. As it was, she sat in the harbor awaiting orders.

At the Raffles Hotel, David and Tanya had tea on the terrace and learned to say, "Jolly good!" and "It's not quite cricket you know!" Soon Dean was off on his own studying Malay educational philosophies and projecting Singapore as the future economic center of Asia. He absorbed new cultures and assimilated sights, sounds and smells until he overloaded his circuits. He then took a quiet break to let the alpha waves sort and put things away in his brain. Once out of cultural shock, he was out again, deciphering the world.

Aside from the physical, David and Tanya shared nothing in common. They were both relieved when she got a blue perfumed envelope from Gloria. Tanya thought it clever that Gloria now called herself Mary Kay. She was happy to be David's handler and to be of service to her country once again. David said he didn't work for Hill any longer. He'd quit.

Chapter FORTY-ONE

Agent January felt like a captive aboard the Yorktown. A suggestion was made to the Admiral, by a friendly MI official, that she was to be treated with caution. MI was convinced she was connected with the move by the CIA to take over military "territories" they thought their own. The Captain also learned that the President of the United States had an interest in the young woman. Her presence aboard gave him nightmares. When orders came that she was to transfer to Singapore operations, he breathed a string of expletives into a brandy glass and thanked his stars that nothing

happened to her aboard the flagship. He waved her away, rather than salute, as she went ashore. He questioned how such an innocent looking woman could be so dangerous.

Jan moved to a CIA safe house near Malacca. There, a team of fellows introduced her to Southeast Asian realities. Dan Hill's orders determined the subject matter. January learned about happenings on the Thai-Burma border at places like Mai Sai, a narcotics town. She learned how the CIA and Drug Enforcement Administration operatives shot the U.S. in the foot while tripping over its best interests. She learned that even the President hadn't been advised that CIA operations resulted in opium and heroin bombarding U.S. and European cities. She was told how the DEA fought to stop the flow of heroin and almost blew the CIA/MI strategies for winning friends for the U.S. war in Southeast Asia. "Friends who will support us against North Vietnam."

January learned of the Golden Triangle and the Shan United Army, the Chinese players in the game. She saw reports about Chang Chi-fu, its leader. She learned of the Ynnanese generals and how the CIA supported Lung Yun's forces. Most importantly, she learned of Lu Hsu-shui and the connections he had in Thailand's government that allowed him to ship opium and heroin in large quantities to New York, New Orleans, and San Francisco.

"Guys," she said, looking up from the reports she was reading, "This information makes it look like the CIA is responsible for the increase of drug use at home."

"Right on Sister! The CIA thinks it is helping the war effort."

"But how can the DEA be blamed for the loss of the CIA operatives?"

"Them that's weak gets the burden!" the black sergeant observed. "The DEA was a stepchild. Nobody really wanted it to succeed. What those in power had in mind was gaining allies in China, Burma, Thailand, and Cambodia. The drugs were thought of as currency. The CIA ignored the drug trade and the domestic damage."

"But?"

"Yeah, we know Lieutenant. The CIA is in a pickle because we were willing to ignore the damage reports and go for a target that only made sense to a few bureaucrats sitting on their cushy asses back in DC. The six DEA operatives took the bullets and died because they were going after the top crooks, but not because the CIA was trying to stop the flow of drugs. The CIA got its ass whipped because they were playing in a game with rules they never bothered to learn. All the DC boys could see was winning a war no one else in Asia cared about. Hell, nobody else intended to get involved."

"So now the CIA doesn't have operatives in Thailand?"

"We have a few. The Brits and Frenchies have networks. That's where we get our information. Our guys are known to everybody. That's where Hill says you fit in. You, the guy he calls Fallout, and some people he calls IDs."

"What about the DEA?"

"Funny you should ask. At the present time they're trying to convince the Ynnanese and the Chinese Chui Chow—mafia—to grow and trade in food instead of poppies. And all this at a time when CIA policies have increased drug production tenfold, and new markets for drugs have been opened in every western nation. The DEA is pushing a string! But believe it or not, they could be effective. They could stop the leaders of the drug

underworld. They know who and where they are. There is a part of the DEA, which is the most unorthodox, effective, and least known international police organization in the world. It goes after the heads of drug and criminal organizations and not the drugs or crimes. The only problem is that the CIA is afraid the drug lords would work against our war efforts and that we would lose friends in the Golden Triangle and Thailand. The DEA is forbidden to touch the cartels and drug lords. They even have to be careful about whose drug shipments they bust. Now ain't that politic! Ain't that what they ask us to fight and die for?"

Jan was cold in the heat and humidity of Malaysia. The chill in her was the death of her idealism. The death of idealism destroyed the part of her that believed in God and Country. The cold pervaded. She was changed. She left the Malacca safe place and was escorted to the air terminal. Outwardly, she was stiff, officious, bitchy. Inside she was fighting for some warmth to push away the chill. She couldn't wait to see David, even if she had to go to Thailand to meet him. Even if their meeting would put him at risk.

In Hong Kong's pulsating Wanchai district, fifty-nine floors above the chaos of the streets, a high Chinese official met with Hedeki Shikoku. Shikoku was cementing an arrangement between the Chiu Chow heroin merchants and Sungawa Industries. The agreement provided for the exporting of opiates via Sungawa manufactured products. Shikoku offered the merchants something they only dreamed about—a steady market for their products with no distribution risks or headaches. Sungawa would pay

upon delivery in Chachoengsao, Bangkok, or Rayong. Sungawa would distribute the opiates to the world through its legitimate networks. Shikoku guaranteed to buy eighty per cent of the Golden Triangle's production at a price fixed on average sales made by the merchants in the last twelve months of operation.

The merchant's problem was that the goods couldn't move through Burma, China, Laos, or Cambodia. They had to move through Thailand. The merchants had to get Thai officials, and meddling DEA, CIA and the operatives of Britain and France, "out of the way" or to "look the other way" when the goods came down.

That was easy. The Thai economy flourished on poppy-gold thanks in part to the CIA and the Dominick Cartel.

Shikoku joined the Chinese in a toast to long life and prosperity. Then, the willowy Chinese, acting as if it was an afterthought, brought up a subject that was a sore eating away at his pride.

"My Nipponese friend, how would you suggest I deal with the American agent Tanya Horowitz?"

"The Terrible Tanya who has often embarrassed your agents?" Shikoku taunted.

"That garish nightmare of an agent! The British believe there are two Tanyas, you know."

"I heard. I have ways of reaching Tanya. What is she worth to you?"

"Hanoi and Saigon markets?"

"Then consider Tanya or the Tanyas out of the way." Shikoku tightened his features to suppress a grin. Perhaps Seiko was worth

something after all. The weakest of the daughters of Onoto was the British contact with Tanya, and Shikoku pulled her strings.

Dean learned that Singapore was not representative of Malaya. Singapore is to Malaya as Tijuana is to Mexico. Singapore was western, British, multi-cultural. Someday, he promised himself, he would get to know the true Malaya. He tried to re-schedule a trip up the Malay Peninsula to Kuala Lumpur. Failing that, he pondered the future of the equatorial land. The schools he visited were modeled upon British systems. What was really happening for young people in the country remained a mystery.

When Tanya told Dean she received orders to go to Bangkok, Thailand he pretended to be sad. Had Tanya known his itinerary, she would have noticed that Dean was to leave Singapore for Thailand the day following her departure. As it happened, Tanya was caught up in her own adventures. She planned to see Seiko, shop for Thai silks, and work out. Little did she know massive jaws were closing off her options.

They played hot sweaty games that left them drained, slept together like spoons, and parted easily the next morning. Dean was glad to see her go. Tanya felt the loss of a companion, but she was certain she would see him again soon.

Dean walked along the canals and waterfront one more time. He was uncomfortable with British Malaya. At the Raffles, he studied the peeling paint, the slow rot that was gradually claiming the building. To him it was an indicator of things passing, forces in conflict. Late that night he walked the nearby market streets and breathed the steamy, prickly-hot smells of

the tropical land. It remained as mysterious as when he arrived. He wasn't certain he learned anything.

The next day, Dean arrived at the Bangkok airport as it appeared through a haze of moist air and pollution. The taxi ran him through the streets to a white, western-style hotel, six floors sandwiched into the busy downtown landscape. He left the taxi, bags in hands, and fought his way through throngs of hawkers into the foyer. He relaxed in his small cheerless room, prepared to take Thailand in without preconception.

On maps, he searched for the suburban Bangkok location of the International School. Once located, he had the operator put through a call. The school would send someone to pick him up Monday morning. Until then he had the weekend to explore the neighborhood around his hotel and seek ancient Siam.

Chapter FORTY-TWO

Dan Hill explained MaryKay to Gloria for the third time. "She fills-in for you until you come back to work, that's all. I had to have someone to do your job while you are on leave. That's all. I had to have someone, Gloria!"

Gloria understood. That didn't mean she would let Dan off the hook. "You bastard!" she said, her words held-in, hot. She gave him a look that really had nothing to do with him ... one reserved by women who have never resolved their deep hate-envy of men. "I'm coming back Dan! I'm coming back and there better not be any Mary Kay at my desk. And another thing, Dan, I'm writing Tanya in the future. I'm still her contact. She is my friend you remember."

The Deputy Director of Operations got little respect at home, but on a national and world scale he was a power to be dealt with. Although the President's men wouldn't let the Nation's leader meet with Dan again, Dan talked to the Chief Executive on the phone. The President urged him on, expounding about Southeast Asia and worrying about fears of exposed policies. "You are our only hope." The President placed his hand over the mouthpiece of the phone as Dan waited. Someone gave his boss Dan's name. "You are our only hope, Hill," the leader of the Western World lied as his truth.

Later that day, Dan explained his Thai policy to the Director.

"January and PT are in position. Fallout is arriving about now. I have two IDs in the area that we can use if needed. I have no doubt we can get information to the Kingdom's leaders that will help curtail the flow of opiates to this country in exchange for the aid package, of course. I believe we can reactivate our discredited operatives and build some form of cooperation with the DEA"

"The DEA? The goddamned DEA?" George exploded. "We won't cooperate one little iota with those bastards. They're trespassing in our territory. They are worthless as tits on a ... a ... one of those ... you know ... whatever. You forget about the DEA! Pretend those intruding opportunists aren't even there."

"Sir, the DEA has a legitimate mission."

"Like hell they do! Drugs aren't the problem. Winning Asia is."

Seiko Onoto was primed and ready. The British thought so. Shikoku knew so. The only problem was when she would blow. The Brits didn't

know. Neither did the keeper of the kingdom and the head of Sungawa Industries. Neither did Seiko. Remarkably, Tanya Horowitz sensed that Seiko's head was in uproar. She read her friend's confusion as a lack of physical exercise and, more importantly, as a lack of contact with a man. Tanya was wrong, but the results of her treatment worked wonders.

Tanya arranged for Seiko to have a complete body massage; the kind so readily available in the sin center of the world. The large Thai who manipulated Seiko's limbs and body was adept at keying a woman. When Seiko emerged from the hot bath and her first experience with her sexuality, she thought she was in love. The dreamy state was reminiscent of Onoe's tender world. Like Suzi, her original self began to peek through the layers of scar tissue. Seiko became even more squirrely. As Tanya fixed her hair, she began to talk about strange things. She tried to explain to Tanya that she was in trouble ... that people wanted to hurt her though she hadn't a clue why.

Seiko began to dream ... even during the day. Through her Onoto part, she had visions and urges that translated into what she believed were religious experiences. Voices coaxed her to hurt Tanya, kill her. She shared her nightmares with Tanya. Tanya was shocked, but typically, she dealt with things she wasn't capable of dealing with. She told Seiko it was the voice of the Devil trying to take her soul.

"Refuse to listen to the voice," Tanya pleaded. "Pray instead."

Seiko knew it was true. The devil was fighting to take her. She made a commitment to Buddha that she would conquer the Devil and save her soul for good. She overpowered the evil and negative thoughts and began to pray whenever tempted by the Devil's urges. She spent time with Tanya working

out and building her body. Every few days, Tanya arranged another massage. A part of Seiko was becoming what Onoe should have been.

The phone was ringing in Seiko's tiny apartment when she entered. She picked it up, "Hai?"

"Click, click, click, click, click. Obey!"

Seiko's head snapped up. Her body stiffened. The relaxed look on her face turned hard. "Onoto here."

"The Tanya person must be eliminated. Do you understand?" Shikoku sat in his Tokyo office, certain this Daughter of Onoto was activated by his commands.

Seiko came apart, her face reflecting a quizzical look, her body relaxed, then reactivated into a battle stance. "Tanya said to ignore you."

Hedeki Shikoku's mouth fell open. His surprise was a dagger into his self-confidence.

"I order you!"

"I won't listen, you Devil." She chanted a mantra Tanya taught her.

"I order you!" Shikoku screamed into the phone.

"Yea though I walk through the valley. The shadow of Tanya's death will not be with me. We won't hear your evil."

The phone clicked, went dead. The keeper of the Kingdom, the most powerful man in the Eastern world, sat rubbing his neck.

Tanya Horowitz, Terrible Tanya! How could he have underestimated her? No. It was someone else playing games with him. Someone left over from Mitusuka Industries? He shivered. There was a woman out there with powers he couldn't overcome ... unless it was the

Americans of course. They had powers but how had they accessed one of the pearls in his sword?

Gloria's blue perfumed letter arrived in the same mail as Mary Kay's blue perfumed envelope. Tanya collected both and sat in the coffee shop reading first one, then the other. "Who is Mary Kay?" she mumbled. "Why is Gloria mad at me? What should I do?" She sat lost in thought.

Lord Ayers wasn't. He returned from Cornwall and was handed a thick file on his agent Seiko and her encounters with Tanya Horowitz. He took the situation under control and went directly to Bangkok to confront the source of their problems. He politely asked Tanya if he could join her.

"I just need someone who speaks English to talk to," he apologized as he slid into the booth, facing her.

Tanya was relieved at the interruption. She looked at the slightly built, keenly-dressed man who had joined her.

"I don't usually sit with strangers." She smiled.

"Will you make an exception this time?" Lord Ayers asked in his best Eaton form. "I really don't know what I would do if you sent me away. I need a friend ... at least for a few minutes."

"Why?" Tanya asked, intrigued by his plight.

"It's so dreadful being alone in a country as confusing as this. I'm not used to being on the go. I can't speak the language or understand the people. This isn't Canterbury you know."

"I'm not either ... and I can't either ... but it really doesn't matter. There is so much you can do. You just have to forget you are in a strange land. I shop, eat, and go to American movies."

"You do? How very lucky you are my dear. What is it you do that gives you this lifestyle?"

"Oh, I don't do very much. I'm a physical therapist."

"Oh you are? How do you do that here?"

"Oh I don't do it here. I mean not yet. Maybe I'll do some, I don't know. Life is so confusing. I was just reading letters from Gloria and someone called MaryKay. I thought they would tell me, but they didn't. I don't know what I'm doing."

Lord Ayers pulled at his short-clipped mustache and eyed Tanya's bust.

This was Terrible Tanya? Had Starver, the neo-Nazi SOB, confirmed what he believed? Maybe there are two Tanya Horowitzes. If so, could this one lead him to the other? Of course!

"My body aches so. At home I have a masseuse—really a physical therapist—who keeps me fit. Here I have nobody to help me. I have to suffer." He grimaced as he said it, hunching his shoulders as if in pain.

"Oh, I have just the right solution for you. I have a man who is really a good masseur. He works on me and I had him work on a friend of mine."

"Oh no, I could never," Lord Ayers huffed, "I could never stand to have a man touch me. It's a cultural thing, I guess. I don't know. I must have a masseuse."

"I don't know then," Tanya tried to think of a masseuse she could recommend. Then the thought came to her. "I am the only woman masseuse, I mean physical therapist, I know here in Bangkok."

"That is a noble profession. What you do for others must make you proud!"

"I could help you. I'm not certain I would even have to charge you. In fact, the first treatment is usually free anyway. Would you like me to be your PT?"

"Oh, that would be fine. I would pay, you know. I would be your most perfect client and I would be forever grateful."

Tanya gathered the two blue envelopes, sniffed them, and made a wry face as the two perfumes clashed in her nostrils. She offered them, one at a time, to Lord Ayers to smell.

"Which do you like best?"

Lord Ayers took in the flowery smells, smiled, and picked the first envelope. Little did he know that the key to the mystery he was embroiled in was right under his nose. Who would have suspected?

Ayers paid for their snacks and escorted her to the elevator. They agreed to meet in the spa in twenty minutes.

In his room he dialed a number from memory.

"2125," a woman's voice answered.

"Ten," Ayers said as he drummed his fingers on the nightstand.

"Ten," a man's voice stated.

"It's me. I need protection. In twenty minutes. In the spa. Here at the hotel. I'll be completely unarmed."

"Got it. You have it Sir. What level is it on?"

"Maximum danger to me, top level."

"I mean what floor, Sir?"

"What in the bloody hell are you asking me that for? Damn your sides. Get someone there. Understand?"

Lord Ayer met Tanya at the spa. There was a skin conditioner provided by the hotel for the masseuses to use. It was reputed to be the finest available. Tanya was repelled by an ingredient in the lotion. She wouldn't use a product with whale semen in it ... at least not on a man. She reread the label. "Sperm whale byproducts." No way! She found a bottle of glycerin, a small jar really, half filled with the translucent jelly-like stuff and placed it near the raised gurney.

Ayers appeared in his best blue British button boxers and a towel. Tanya wore a white tennis outfit she adapted for her work. In a cubicle near the door, a British agent pretended to await his masseuse. He held a powerful pistol hidden under his towel. His eyes never left Tanya or the head of British Intelligence Operations in the Far East.

Tanya was all business. So was Ayers. Tanya focused on muscles and joints. Ayers on conversation and getting information. The two approaches soon came into conflict.

"Who ... ouch ... do you give PT to ... hey ... ow ... stop ... whew."

"Just relax Mr. Ayers. I can get your body to give me all the information I need if you will just relax."

The operative in the cubicle by the door came to his feet, swathing the pistol in his towel.

"I say, that really hurts!"

"Come now, Sir, relax. Let Tanya get it all out. Give me your cooperation and I promise it won't hurt anymore."

That was all the operative needed to hear. He burst out of the cubicle and stood, pointing the swaddled gun at Tanya.

"Get away from that man!" He commanded in his meanest, licensed-to-kill voice.

Tanya turned to get the glycerin so she could begin the smooth part of her therapy. She turned back to the man. Jar in hand, she confronted him. She didn't realize a gun was hidden in his towel. The operative gasped as he saw the clear jelly-like fluid.

"Just who do you think you are coming in here and interrupting us? Don't you know this type of thing is private? Get out! There are certain codes of ethics we observe. You, Sir, have violated those codes. I will have to take appropriate action if you do not leave." Turning to Lord Ayers laying in shock on the table, she tried to sooth him. "Mr. Ayers, you are completely safe. Don't be alarmed. When this man leaves, we will continue."

Ayers nodded to the agent. The operative backed to the door and out of the room.

"Mister whoever you are, come back in here and shut the door!"

The British operative appeared, perused the room again making certain his boss was safe, closed the door, and waited in the hall. There was nothing he could do but wait outside.

Damn that woman is cool.

Ayers let Tanya have her way with him the rest of their time together. He suspected now there was only one Tanya Horowitz. He also knew she was the best agent he had ever encountered.

At least she's an ally. Glad she doesn't work for someone else. I have a lot to learn about DDO Hill and the new CIA.

Back in her room, Tanya pondered over the two communications she received that day. Gloria wanted her to come home and be with her.

MaryKay, wanted her to "Lay low in Bangkok until Fallout needs you." Tanya didn't really see a conflict. She had time. She would go home, see Gloria and then come back and do what Mary Kay wanted. The only problem was money. Where would she get the money to buy a ticket to Virginia?

She called Gloria and got Mary Kay. Dan was out at the time. Mary Kay urged her to stay in Bangkok. "I'll drop you a note if you can come home. In the meantime, be there for Fallout."

Tanya was depressed. "I haven't a thing to wear," she told Mary Kay.

"Oh dear, then why don't you buy something?"

"I don't have enough money," Tanya wailed over the trans-global line.

"I'll talk to Dan about that. Meanwhile, honey, I think you better sit tight."

Once again, repeaters were tapped and intelligence agents fought to be the first to decode Tanya's latest communication. Even the FBI admitted the CIA code was not decipherable. What was the message? What did Tanya want? Did the communiqué signal that Tanya thought her cover blown? What was the money for? Only the French translators understood, but of course, they didn't share their interpretation with anybody. At Sungawa Industries offices in Thailand, the telephone interception was decoded. Shikoku was given a capsulized report.

An operation is underway of major magnitude. Tanya will be supplied cash and be in position to deal with any fallout from the operation. They will inform her if her cover is blown. She may be recalled for a short time. It seems that Tanya is to buy another garish wardrobe. The Doolittle

operation all over again. Her job is to lead all the other operatives astray. In our opinion, Mr. Shikoku, Tanya is not leading this particular operation. She is there for clean-up if anything goes wrong.

Shikoku read and reread the report. It seemed likely. He would deal with Tanya. He would find a way. Until then, he would continue close surveillance and see if they could make the big operation from her end. He had no other leads as to what was going on with the CIA in Thailand. The bastards could be up to something that would blow his whole deal with the Lu Hsu-Shui factions.

Chapter FORTY-THREE

David Dean wasn't finding the world described in textbooks and travel films. He was dealing himself into the excretes of reality. Bangkok wasn't Yul Brenner's Siam. Its primary focus was thrusting the groins of humanity together and creating short-lived pleasures for R&R servicemen and hordes of perverts. Dean found himself in the hip-grinding region of the city—a place where human sexual parts were aroused, bought, sold and used as nonchalantly as handkerchiefs and handshakes. Sex was a raw commodity sold in each street-front business. Copulating bodies, human forms, writhed together before audiences sitting on each other's hands. The sidewalks were patrolled by hawkers and pimps, whores, and perverted children. All were grabbing at passersby and yelling promises that joined body parts would make life's dreams come true. The streets around his hotel were a hell where diseases incubated and people were organs.

So that's why they call this the brothel of the East.

It was impossible to walk the streets to explore. In his room he tried to read. Every few minutes a knock on the door would disturb him.

"Wanafucki? Want good Thai stick? Need good pop? Hey soldier, I got it hot for you!"

At first all Dean wanted was out of Thailand. Then he thought about it. Maybe his travel agent booked a hotel in the wrong part of the city. He decided to catch a cab and explore. Maybe he could find a place that didn't cater to R&R servicemen and the world's deviates.

He got the doorman to stop selling him "a lovely girl" long enough to flag a taxi. Once inside the Aussie Humbler, he communicated he wanted to see some of Bangkok's religious shrines and temples. The driver nodded, responding in English that he knew the right places.

"You tired of sex now, soldier. You want do something for the head."

Something for the head was a visit to ancient Siamese palaces. The driver took him to pagodas and temples inlaid with glass shards and glazed ceramics. Giant figures protected palaces once thought important. They passed over canals and stopped at markets swarming with people. The driver chattered away, describing his land, bemoaning the times.

"The past gone forever. We lost what they learned. Now we nothing." The man turned and studied Dean. "You like Thai boxing? Thais box feet and fists. Most effective. You like protective self-defense? We go Thai Disneyland. You see elephants, dances, boxing, self-defense arts and I get you a nice girl?"

"No girl! All of the rest."

On Monday morning, a car arrived to take him to the International School.

"You're staying in the same hotel I lived in when I first came here," the driver, a school principal, volunteered. "I come down here often. To me this is what it's all about!" He swerved through traffic and continued. "My wife likes to come down here too."

"That's interesting."

"Yea, she's a regular gal. You'll meet her."

"Great."

"The school's in a mess. Every year we have a thirty per cent or larger turnover of staff. We get new administrators almost every year. The headmaster is new. Been here all summer though. Came from Oakland. All he does is buy Thai antiques on the black market and ship them home. He hasn't had time to get into running the school. If you came here to learn something, sorry! There's no leadership. A few of us long-timers try hard ... but, well, you know how it is. Everything is too easy here."

Dean learned that the principal presented the International School in its best light. Try as he did, he couldn't seem to find the value in it, or Thailand's present course.

Beaten by the futility and emptiness of what he was seeing, Dean returned to his hotel. His energy waned. He was slipping into a foul mood, a deep depressed anger at himself for not getting more out of his visit. He ate alone and left five American dollars on the table. He waited in front of the elevator, watching the indicator mark the floors as the cage dropped to his level. The doors opened. Jan Hurley threw her arms around him before he was even certain it was her.

The weight of her embrace pushed him back from the elevator. It closed and went back up in response to some unseen call. Dean held Jan at arm's length and looked at her.

"I never thought I'd see you again. Did they send you to find me?"

"They sent me here ... I came to find you. They wanted me to, but ... Dean, I think we're getting off on the wrong foot."

"You're here, that's what counts. Can we spend time together?"

"Time? I think so," she paused and thought about what he was asking. "I'm not sure we have enough time. I want to spend a lot of time with you ... if you do?" The elevator returned to the first floor.

Dean looked around the lobby and mezzanine for a quiet place where they could sit and visit. The lobby was filled with working girls and marks. "We can't have privacy here. Okay if we go to my room?"

"It seems I've been in your rooms before and I've been safe." There was a fun look on her face and a twinkle in her eye Dean didn't miss.

Dean keyed the heavy door and let them into the room. The sterile, pallid yellow walls, worn cotton spread, and pale turquoise vinyl on the chair, communicated cheapness and meanness. He thought of the contrast between this nothing place and the plush room in the Miramar Hotel on Kowloon. He wondered if Jan noticed.

"God this place is sterile. Remember your room in Hong Kong?"

"I remember. Remember Hakodate?"

"How could I forget! Dean? I want you to know I'm not playing a game with you ... I mean what you said when we met ... I mean"

"I know what you mean. I know you're military and you have your orders. I know you're one of my handlers. I know, and it makes me ... I guess I just get pissed when I think about it."

"That doesn't change the fact that I feel a special way about you. I care about you ... I think about you. I want to break out of their control and just be with you."

"I really don't understand what they want from me or how they use you. I sense something almost evil. Jan, something is wrong. You look ... you don't look happy. Well? What's with you?"

"I'm not ... I haven't been happy. I'm very happy now. Can we discuss the bullcrap later? I mean, can we talk about fun things ... about us, now?"

"Do you want a drink or food ... anything?"

"I want you to hold me. I want to cuddle and whisper, be tender and together. I want you to tell me about the magic in the world and make me believe in it again."

She was wearing an ankle-length dress tied at the waist by a thin sash. The material was silk, filmy yet proper, gossamer and slightly seductive. She wore a brightly patterned scarf about her neck held in place by an ivory cameo. Her hair glowed. The high humidity made it full and glorious. Her eyes sparkled yet they looked out of orbits darkened from worry and lack of sleep. He sensed her inward tension as he held her, his hands automatically kneading her back, caressing her willowy body through the thin material. She relaxed into his arms, nuzzled into his shoulder. The world around them faded. They drifted in their own aura, swirled around as energy, teetering to keep their balance.

On the edge of the bed, they removed each other's shoes. Jan stood, undid the enameled pin, and reached behind her neck to undo the top hook of her dress.

Bam! Bam! Bam! The heavy door shook as some intruder's fist pounded. Dean shook his head to clear her from it. Someone kept banging, some bastard wanted into the room. He assumed it was a drug dealer or pimp. The fist struck three more times then, the sound of a key being fitted into the lock brought them both to their feet. The door opened as Dean got there. The front desk man and two thugs half entered the room before Dean stood them off.

"You haven't paid to have a woman in here," the deskman growled.
"You no have woman in room unless you pay and she pay!"

Dean wasn't taken aback for long. "This woman is my fiancé."

"Hell you say, soldier. Our girls only in here. You pay, I find you special girl. Other girls not allowed here. She go now!"

"Right. We'll both leave. Get out! In ten minutes, we will leave. Have my bill ready!"

"Fuck you, GI!" and the trio left.

Dean stood holding the door and shaking with anger.

"Let's find a place that's not a whorehouse," he said turning to Jan. Jan started to laugh. Soon they were holding each other and shaking with laughter.

"Dean, I don't think we'll find a hotel that isn't a brothel. Maybe we can find a plusher place with more privacy?"

The CIA-supported warlords in the mountains of Thailand and Burma pressured their benefactors to get their people off their case. That filtered down through the networks as a plea for the Director of Central Intelligence to better coordinate his people and policies in Southeast Asia so that the drug trade was ignored. The Director was sandwiched between his policies and practices. His meat was the DDO. Dan Hill was in the middle because of Operation Cowboy. He and Hill were creating a new CIA. The problem was, the old CIA, though broken and exposed, still reflected U.S. policy. Big Oil George had to be perceived as carrying out Presidential and Congressional directives. To them, drugs were not the problem, America's power in the Far East was. At the same time, he had to undermine the old CIA and build his dream.

Hedeki Shikoku's networks picked-up the signals sent by the U.S. President and his men. He moved rapidly to ensure that Sungawa Industries took on the outward appearances of a convert to U.S. policies and thinking. He communicated, in person, with the Secretary of State asking how he could serve America's interests. The Secretary was so pleased to have an Asian convert he asked for nothing but loyalty ... and a few million dollars for the committee for the re-election of the President. In return, he pulled levers for Sungawa Industries.

The State Department suggested to the Chamber of Commerce that Sungawa Industries be given most favored treatment and provided with unlimited, unregulated access to stateside markets. Shikoku used the position to damage American manufacturing and sales, using buyouts, sabotage, underselling, labor union manipulations, and any other unfair

methods that would result in the closing of U.S. industries. Soon Japan was the leading producer of electronic gizmos and autos for the world.

Sungawa was able to import drugs in quantities beyond estimation and to do so with government insured immunity. With the acquired wealth, Shikoku controlled the Yunnanese generals, the Chinese mafia, and the Thai government. His power policies resulted in continual pressure on the DCI to ignore drugs and focus on making friends who would help win the war in Vietnam. He fed the competition between the CIA and its parent, the DEA.

Dan Hill got word from the DCI that his Cowboy agents in Southeast Asia were to focus on making friends, not being DEA stooges. Dan was given a task the DCI took credit for but the Dominick Cartel dreamed up. His people were to pass messages to Thai officials friendly to ANZUS (Australia, New Zealand and the U.S.), and get information gleaned from Thai informants back to Langley, nothing else. Any thoughts Dan entertained of fighting the flow of drugs to the States were quashed. The Director informed Hill he was to coordinate efforts with Sungawa Industries executives who had access to internal Thai communications. Sungawa Industries was in a perfect position, the DCI crowed, to get us the inside dope on Thai policies.

Dan Hill's people came shoulder-to-shoulder with Hedeki Shikoku's operatives. Sungawa's people delivered a strange goodwill request. They wanted access to agent PT, a certain Tanya Horowitz. In return, they would show the CIA how it could use Tavoi and Mergui bases on the Burmese strip of the Malay Peninsula. Hill was baffled by the request, but could see

no harm in letting them talk with her if it meant so much to them. The CIA had long wanted footholds in southern Burma.

That week Gloria Hill dropped by her husband's office and found him in a couch conference with MaryKay. She had her job back the next day and Mary Kay went back to the FBI, her effectiveness diminished, or so they thought.

Tanya Horowitz, using money paid by Lord Ayers for physical therapy, flew to the States to visit her friend Gloria Hill. Gloria convinced her to stay and help care for her baby while she worked out some problems with Dan at the office. Tanya was tailed by the FBI and MI. Her passport disappeared.

Hedeki Shikoku experienced a "Katasawa moment" and became aware he had a brother named Ito, who had also been altered. Ito Shikoku lived on the island of Kerkyra (Corfu), Greece.

A disgruntled CIA operative who reported to MI exposed Jan Hurlbut's secret CIA assignment in Thailand. MI foiled the CIA plan by transferring Jan to Calcutta.

Onoe Seiko Onoto joined a French Catholic convent in Indo-China. Her conversion to Christianity didn't stop the voices in her head or her visions, but they did give her special status. She was a wonder to nuns who wanted badly to believe in the Devil.

Suzi Song Onoto married an official in the Jamaican hierarchy, gained dual citizenship, and began to live openly as a Cayman princess.

Mitsu Sami Onoto aka Sami Cook, was put in control of all of Shikoku's Hawaiian and Pacific Rim Empire. She began to carve a personal

foothold in the islands. The layers of scar tissue in her mind were beginning to separate. She would do well for herself.

David Dean's reaction was calmer than Jan expected when an MI officer intercepted them in the foyer of their new hotel with orders for Jan to depart immediately for India. As they parted, Dean swore he did not work for Hill or any other governmental agency. He asked her to resign her commission. She searched his face and marveled at his innocence. Tears filling her eyes she boarded her plane. She tried to tell him the choice wasn't theirs to make. He just didn't get it.

Dean spent a few more days in Thailand, grew fond of the people, and left for Calcutta. Hedeki Shikoku's bodyguard Taegu sat behind him on the plane. Agent Fallout had no idea this was all just the beginning of his adventures.

BOOK II
THE BROTHERS
SHIKOKU

Chapter ONE

Calcutta, India:

Stripping off her Marine uniform, Janet Hurlbut crossed David Dean's hotel room. In the bathroom, sweating, naked, she held the mildewed shower curtain in front of her as a shield from the anticipated blast of cold water. The pipe hissed and gurgled as it ejaculated a stream of lukewarm, red, stagnant water. Gagging at the smell, she twisted the handles to the right and sat down. The sting of the cold porcelain seat-less toilet turned her revulsion to anger.

"Get me out of this shit hole. I want another room."

No, it will be the same everywhere in the hotel. If only Dean were here.

She glared at the shower. She twisted the knobs wide open and jumped back. The water burped out, slowly losing its color and odor. She let it run until the corruption was indiscernible, then showered.

The water washed away grit and oils, but didn't relieve her tension. She toweled droplets from her breasts and legs, let others evaporate, the coolness a luxury. Wandering the hotel room naked, studying the heavy wooden furniture and the framed prints of forts labeled Moghul Empire. 16th Century, she absorbed the strangeness of the place. Through the lace curtains, the open French doors, the balcony and beyond, a maze of dun-colored buildings spread farther than her eye could see.

The din from the street sounded like the old D-C3 that brought her from Bangkok. She looked at her watch, then at the clock near the bedstead.

Seven. David's flight should arrive at Dum Dum Airport at eleven. By twelve-thirty he'll be here. I'll make this surprise one he'll never forget.
She pulled the sheet over her and slept.

David Dean boarded a 727 jet in Bangkok at nine-thirty on a steamy evening. On board, the JAL crew and the air conditioning made him forget it was October in hot, humid, Southeast Asia.

The controlled environment of the jet didn't ease his fear of Calcutta. He had known about the Black Hole, the old capitol of British India, since he was a kid. It was a place where over eight million people were jammed into an area that could not house one million. Calcutta slums, *bustees*, were the most appalling in the world. It was a city of castes, in a country that had technically outlawed the caste system. He recalled reading that Calcutta destroys the idealism of angels.

Too soon, the plane touched down on the concrete runway. As he deplaned, the suffocating humidity of Bengal and its cargo of sweet and sour odors stung him. He entered immigration, weakened. Immigration officers—tall, bearded, and turbaned—guarded the gate.

*Protectors of a Mogul Empire or the welcoming committee to hell?
Definitely hell.*

They perused him, scribbled pencils across forms, smeared oily fingers on his passport photo, and played games with his luggage. A guard jabbed a three-inch long little pinkie nail at him and, assured he had Dean's attention, pointed it toward the exit. Another turbaned specter handed him his stamped passport and visa.

Outside, signs directed him to the downtown bus. On the tarmac, weighing more than its old springs could hold, crouched a Leland bus with "Dum Dum—Calcutta" painted neatly on corroded sides. On the dash, behind a cracked, blue-tint windscreen, a card read:

Rs2 each way. 12 miles, 48 minutes.

Baggage handled.

Please to be considerate of our customs.

Be so kind as to not give baksheesh here.

He entered the dark interior. The vehicle reeked of diesel, moldering upholstery, curry, and piss!

"Careful not to touch the sides or seat backs!" The proper English voice came from a small man with round-lens glasses sitting directly behind the driver.

Shuffling, he took the first unoccupied seat on his left. There was red slime on the upholstered wall and the back of the seat in front.

"My God, what is this stuff?"

"Spittle. Some chew betelnut and lime, you know? They spit!"

Dean, arms tightly at his sides, sank into his seat as the Leland lurched forward. They left Dum Dum headed for Calcutta. Outside, camped families, the bodies of the multitudes, covered the fields right up to and on the road, leaving a track barely wide enough for the bus. The Leland growled along, the driver tooting a secondary horn. Indian Morse Code. By the time the bus made Cornwallis Street, David was experiencing cultural shock.

"*Kahan? Kahan?* Tell me precisely where must you go?" The driver pleaded, as he dodged a bus coming at him from the Upper Circular Road.

"Rail-gharri," the Brit requested.

"The Eastern," Dean tried to sound just as in-control.

The Eastern came first.

"*Namaste, namaste, Good-bye, good-bye,*" the driver repeated as he unloaded Dean's bag and turned it over to bellhops.

"*Jow! Jow! Jow, meharbani se!*" The bellhops ordered as they led David under the canopy and into the great cavern of the hotel's lobby.

"*Jow, means, piss-off! Meharbani se, please,*" a small hotel greeter informed him.

He leaned on the registration desk. The manager queried him, and stood waiting.

"Name's Dean. David Dean."

The manager spindled a stack of yellow papers until he came up with the appropriate pre-registration form. He read a note attached to the form and flashed a juvenile grin.

"Oh yes Sir, Mr. Dean. Please wait here for our Bell Captain. Will you need anything?"

"Sleep."

The Bell Captain appeared, picked up Dean's bag and led him to the elevator.

"Holy cow! Eleven forty. I've got to get ready for David."

Humming, Jan slipped into a filmy negligee that delicately revealed her buns when she moved. Looking in the mirror, she traced over the

intricate lace net clusters spun strategically over her breasts, admiring the silken triangle where her legs began. Fluff and comb. Powder? Perfume. Ready!

The dim light over the bed set a mellow mood. She went to the open rack, took her uniform jacket off its hanger and straightened her other military issue.

"Whoever heard of no damned closet."

She swung her uniform jacket over her shoulders and went out on the small balcony overlooking Old Courthouse Street.

Below, a mass of humanity seethed. Groups of homeless people gathered around tiny fires.

Surely, they can't be trying to keep warm in this heat. It must be over ninety degrees at half past midnight.

She spotted a beetle-like black sedan making its way toward the hotel like an amoeba swimming through a drop of water. Humanity opened before it and filled its wake when it passed. The car stopped. Three men got out, the car continued. Jan leaned forward against the balustrade hoping to see David's face. Self-consciously, she checked to see if anything below the jacket was exposed. Modesty assured, she leaned out further, observing.

A man seemed to be looking right at her. She had seen him at the secret airport when her CIA charter landed. The aquiline beauty of his face did not match the gross configuration of his body. The man motioned to the others. One took a position near the entrance. The other started to enter the hotel, then turned to look at something. She followed his gaze and saw a bus forcing its way toward the hotel. The third man checked a gun from his pocket. The first man, stepping over and around bodies, made his way into

the hotel. Was Dean on the bus? Did they plan to kill him? She leaned over the rail watching in horror, ready to scream a warning.

The bus stopped. A swarm of bellhops formed a corridor while others opened the undercarriage and brought out suitcases. As Dean departed, she leaned out ready to yell a warning. The man with the gun put it back in his pocket, turned, and walked into the crowd. Dean disappeared into the hotel. The men followed.

She ran back into the room trembling. Counting slowly to ten allowed her military training to kick-in.

Shit, they're coming upstairs. I have to dress.

She tossed the uniform jacket on the bed and made her way to the rack for the rest of her uniform. Grabbing her slacks, she started pulling them up as she reached for the jacket on the bed.

A loud click. Unable to reach the jacket, she turned as the door opened. Dean stared at her, mouth open, eyes wide. The Bell Captain slipped the suitcase inside and politely disappeared.

The friends stared at each other. David tried to make sense of what he saw: The flowing beauty of Jan's hair, her soft face, the pert cones of her breasts filtered by her lacy gown, juxtaposed against the sexless drab of Marine Corps slacks. Her bare toes peeking out from under military grim. A beautiful woman from the waist up. A military officer from the waist down.

His laughter winded her. She sat on the edge of the bed, head down, embarrassed. Then she remembered the three men, jumped up, and ran to lock the door.

"David, did you see those three men in the lobby? They're on the way up. Hurry, we have to get out of here."

"Get out of here? Why would they be coming to my room?" He paused, remembering the time she claimed his room in the Japanese *ryokan*. "Jan, this is my room, isn't it?"

"Three men have been following me—or maybe you. I'm not sure. I saw them from the balcony."

"Jan, I told you to tell that DDO CIA prick Dan Hill, I was through. I told you to tell him to leave me alone. Lady, I'm done with the CIA." He paused. She didn't say a word. "You're working for them? Is that why those guys are after you? Shit, I get it. They're after me, aren't they? That's why you're here. Did you set me up?"

She sat, shoulders slumped, unaware her breasts were partially exposed. Dean noticed, tired and angry as he was.

"From the waist up you're beautiful." He walked toward her.

"I'm beautiful from the waist down, too! You're wrong, you bastard. Dean, there really are three guys out there. What are we going to do?"

"I guess we better block the door." He grabbed the ladder-back chair at the desk and braced it under the doorknob. When he turned toward Jan, she was slipping into her jacket. It sent a loud, unwelcome signal.

"Shit! Now everything is a mess. I had such a wonderful surprise planned."

He went over to the bed and sat next to her.

"We need to talk, David. We need to talk about a lot of things. I don't blame you for not trusting me." She looked toward the door. Listen! Footsteps, someone is out there."

"Probably just someone passing in the hall. They didn't stop."

She may be right. Her fear is real.

Chapter TWO

Old town Calcutta:

Chowring, the man with the beautiful face and a body designed by a fireplug manufacturer, got out of the car and entered the storefront office. He slammed the door, hoping the glass window with the solicitor's name stenciled across it would fall out. Miss Orissa gave him a view of nostril hair as she cursed him.

"You bloody stump of a prick! If you break that door Mr. Sankina will send you back to the bustees where you belong."

"I didn't break your precious door, and I didn't come from the slums." He grinned at her with his perfect face, and hunched his shoulders. "Mr. Sankina in, dear girl? You get him for me, Miss?"

The inner door opened interrupting Chowring's diatribe against poor Miss Orissa. Sankina was a bulky man with unusually long arms. His complexion dark, textured, leathery: tanned pigskin. His mouth was the size of one eyebrow, smaller than his nose. If he had teeth, which he didn't, they would have been hidden inside the tiny purse. He was a powerful force, a very unattractive man, and he knew it. That made him dangerous, and Chowring knew that! The office got quiet, fast.

"You'll do me the honor of your presence in my office," Sankina said in his squeezed voice. He turned, intentionally failing to make eye contact with Orissa. Chowring followed him into his lair.

"Leave Orissa alone! Don't come here again unless I order you to. After this, I'll meet you near the east gate of the Maidan where we met poor Dhauli, the night ... he left us."

Chowring nodded. He understood too well. He had knifed Dhauli at Sankina's request because poor Dhauli found pleasure under Orissa's skirt.

"I understand, Sir, I have no interest in Orissa ... or any woman. You can trust me." He continued talking in the same quiet way, hoping to assure Sankina of his loyalty. "I came here because you would want me to give you the information I got this afternoon." He paused waiting for a signal from the dark man. He got a nod. "The American, the one the CIA calls Fallout? Well, he arrived in Calcutta tonight. The American woman who arrived secretly from Bangkok is already here."

Sankina pursed his tiny mouth, tongue tip darting in and out. "Is that all?" He sensed Chowring was withholding something.

"The girl lied to the desk clerk at the Eastern Hotel. She told him she was the American's wife, wanted to surprise him. She's in his room."

"Aha," the dark man let slip from his tiny orifice. "The hen comes to roost in the cock's bed, and our patience will be rewarded. He will crow, Chowring, he will crow loudly enough for us to learn what it is he wants from our poor country."

Sankina scratched his crotch, then his armpit. He absent-mindedly smelled his fingers. "Hedeki Shikoku pays well, but think of the rewards we will both receive when we have the information we seek." He reached for Chowring and hugged him, pulling him close. Chowring melted into the big man's frame, closed his eyes, and groped for his reward, mewling "*Dhanyawad, dhanyawad, hahn, hahn,*" Hindi for "thank you, thank you, yes, yes!"

After checking out the location of Dean's room, Chowring walked about the hotel lobby pretending to wait for someone. His two cronies sat in leather chairs, pretending they could read.

"Enough," he broke the watch. "they're in for the night. Let's go."

From the balcony, Jan and David saw them leave.

"That heavy guy was at the airport when I landed yesterday."

I don't know why Hill ordered me not to tell David I flew from Bangkok. David put me on the plane. Why order me to lie and tell him I came by ship? He doesn't want David to know about the secret airport. It's just more crazy spy stuff.

"I think he followed me here. He may know about you, but I'm not sure ... It's just a hunch, I hope I'm wrong."

"And just what is it he's supposed to know about me, for God's sake? I'm a teacher traveling and studying schools. I was duped by the CIA into being a messenger boy, but that's over. I'm not connected with them anymore. What could anybody possibly want with me?"

Jan stared at him. Unfortunately, it doesn't work that way. The Director of Central Intelligence sent me here to report on you. She sneered.

"What's that look?" Freeing his hand and cradling her chin, he forced her head toward him. "Look at me!"

"I can't. I can't answer you, David. I'm on special assignment. That's why I left Bangkok. I can't tell you anymore. And besides, you'd see the look of a woman who dreamed of an evening with a man she cares about, only to see the evening ruined."

Dean felt her tighten and sensed frigidity.

Great, a repeat of the night in the hotel on Kowloon when we started to make love ... the telephone call ordered her away. She's a Marine, disconnected from herself.

"You can't be honest with me? About what? I ... I can't deal with this shit. Jesus, Jan!"

"Orders! I'm here on orders. You know I can't tell you. But Dean, I want to be here. That's not a lie."

"So tell me straight-out!"

"David. I'm so goddamn scared I can't think."

"Are you leaving? Tonight?"

"I'm with you David. Would you try to understand that I'm confused. I'm fighting them. I mean, I don't lie, yet the ... I'll get through this. Oh David, I'm so sorry!"

"Yeah, remember that first night we were together? That night in Japan? You pretended I had your room? You asked me to respect you like a sister ... we slept in the same room, but not together. Is that the way you want it tonight?"

Blood rushed to her face. "Fuck you, David Dean!"

"But not tonight, right Janet Hurlbut?"

"No David, not tonight."

"Damn it, you're under orders, right?"

The shower didn't help. The water ran rusty and lukewarm. He expected her to join him, no such luck. He considered walking into the bedroom naked, thought better of it, and put on his pajama bottoms.

I don't need this shit. Why is she back in my life?

She was slumped uncomfortably in the overstuffed chair, a sheet covering her. She had turned his bed down and hung his clothes on the rack.

"You can sleep in the bed. That's one thing we can get straight between us!"

"It's your bed."

"Don't be a jerk. You'll break your back in that chair."

"Oh David, can't we just be close? Do you understand?"

"Ever read about bundling?"

"Bundling?"

"Yeah, it was developed on the frontier when kids from different families had to sleep in the same bed."

"Go on!"

"The parents wrapped the sheet over one, under one, over one, under ... get the picture?"

She smiled. "You mean I'm under the sheet, you're on top?"

"It works better than a raw egg held between the knees."

"Be tender with me, David, don't force me. I'm having a terrible time with this and I need time too."

"Keep your hands under the sheet then! Goodnight Lieutenant, or I should say good morning, it's three."

"David, I'll make it up to you. I will David, I will!"

They lay side-by-side, motionless. She faked sleep, cursing herself for following orders, manipulating David, and letting the CIA use her feelings for him. and his feeling for her, to entrap him in their stupid web. Then things became clear.

I'll end the game, the dishonesty. I'll tell David everything. Only it has to be at the right time.

Chapter THREE

CIA Headquarters. Langley, Virginia:

While Dan's lady Gloria was out on maternity leave, MaryKay, had been placed as his temporary secretary. She was a Military Intelligence (MI) plant. All was going well until Gloria dropped in unexpectedly and surprised Dan and MaryKay together on the big couch in his office. Gloria took appropriate action and handed Dan his hat. DCI George was furious when he learned that MI had literally screwed CIA secrets out of his DDO. Things weren't going well for Dan Hill.

George paced his office chewing on a plastic pen. "Do you know where Dean is, mister shit-for-brains Hill?"

"India. Calcutta."

"And you've got a handle on him? Really?"

"Hurlbut is with him."

The plastic pen cracked and George threw it into the wastebasket. He stood looking at Hill, turned slowly pretending to study the CIA logo, then asked sarcastically, "Why, mister intelligence officer, are we in India?"

"Dean was scheduled to go to India. We had no choice."

"Is there anything for us in India? I mean India is outside our usual area of perusal."

"I don't know."

"You don't know? What is it you do know?"

Who the fuck knows? I'm stuck. Better come up with something or George will make my life unbearable.

"Sir, I've determined that an international named Sungawa Industries gained control of what was left of the Mitusuka Empire. Something happened in Bangkok. Our people got too close to our drugs for support of the war effort, and Sungawa Industries made a deal. You know all about that. You ordered our people out. It centers on Sungawa activities in India, right?"

Hell, he isn't going to answer. Why is he keeping this stuff from me?

"Anyway, Dean went to India so I sent Janet Hurlbut to watch him. Had to get her out of Thailand. She reported by phone this morning. They're both in danger. She was followed, so was Dean. It seems to me, Sir, that somebody doesn't want them in India."

"India! That's not our part of the planet. Damned Brits. They still hold us responsible for introducing modern medicine and changing the mortality rate. According to the Brits, our meddling resulted in India's overpopulation. How do we win that one?"

"George, quit the bull. Do we have anything going in India I need to know about?"

"Yeah, since Pakistan got the atomic bomb, we have been feeding India info and materials. Balance of power, the think tank guys call it."

"Sure, I read about it in *Time*. That's hardly a secret anymore, besides, George, all our intelligence suggests that Pakistan does not have the bomb."

"Doesn't have the bomb? Are you daft? If Pakistan doesn't have the bomb do you think India would be making such a stink about getting one? Think twice, Dan. Think twice!"

Dan did, and marveled at the logic of this man, one of the most powerful men in the world.

"Another thing, Hill. Immigration and Naturalization has a plan to attract India's best brains to America. They call it a "brain drain." We're supposed to facilitate. Any scientist or doctor can immigrate and become a naturalized citizen without problems. We grease the wheels."

"I know that, George. The *Washington Post* had an article about it six months or so ago. Now cut the crap!"

"Look Dan, this thing is touchy, you probably know about it ... but, well, we make most of our deals with the USSR via India."

Dan looked at him, studied him for several moments. "I know, George. I read the piece in the *Times*, and the *CBC* had a special on it over a year ago." He paused again, wondering why the Director was holding back information. He knew what George was omitting. He had read about the rise of Sungawa Industries in a *Rising Sun* magazine article. "Are you going to tell me the rest, George, or are you going to bullshit me all day?"

The Director straightened his back, pulled his coattails down, checked his zipper, and stared at Hill. "India is of little interest to us. We don't want to compete with the Brits, Canadians, or even the Russians. No, Dan, that's all I know! Besides, my policy is fuck India! Get Dean into Europe as soon as you can."

Dan isn't buying it. If I don't bring him in, he'll never trust me again.

"Oh, screw policy! Find out about this Sungawa Industries thing and that Shikoku guy while our people are there. I read the article too. You might as well get information."

Hill caught the second name and came alert. "Shikoku? You said Shikoku? His name wasn't in the article. How does he fit?"

"Oh, didn't I tell you? Our friend Hedeki Shikoku is taking over Mitusuka's interests. It's to our mutual benefit. You have to trust my judgment on this. They are not part of the Dominick Cartel, so we leave him alone!"

"Hedeki Shikoku is Sungawa Industries?"

"You heard it from me, now forget you ever heard it. Get on with what's important!"

"George," Dan opened the door. "If I get any leads on things in India, I follow them? That's what you're saying?"

"We always follow good leads, Dan. Good leads!"

Shikoku stronghold. Urawa, Japan:

Hedeki Shikoku awoke in a hot sweat. Eleven o'clock, he'd slept an hour. He couldn't stay asleep—not since Katasawa told him who he was and how he had been mind-fucked. He felt nauseous. Grabbing the edge of the mattress he hoisted his body to sit, his feet hit the floor like a rag doll.

"My gods, I've been a puppet." He let hatred flow. The heat gave him inner strength, a core he could rebuild his life around. By midnight, he was in control.

Then he slept.

Shizu hovered over him until he awoke. "I have come before you to tell you that it is time you stopped mourning the death of your father. I have come before you each day for a month to tell you this!"

"Today I hear you. Get me dressed, Shizu!"

The old man came alert, energized. He smiled, "A bath first, Hedeki. Tell me where you go and I will select the appropriate clothing."

"Dress and pack for travel. We leave as soon as arrangements are made. I must find my brother in Greece."

The old man dropped a towel he was folding, mouth agape. "You have no brother. I have known you since you were just a boy of fourteen."

"And you think Katasawa is my father, don't you?"

"He's not? You have another? You have a brother? I don't understand how."

"Shizu, you are one who has stayed close to me, but you don't know about me. That is understandable as I just learned these things about myself. Shizu, old man, I have not been mourning the timely death of Katasawa. I have been mourning the death of two boys he possessed and brainwashed. I have been mourning the death of the boy I was before I met you. I mourn my separation from my brother. I mourn my parents, dead at Doctor Katasawa's hand. But now, Shizu, it's over. I have an empire to run, and a brother named Ito to find."

Corfu, Greece:

On the north end of the Greek island of Corfu (Kerkyra), in a house with a view far out into the Straights of Otranto, Ito Shikoku lay immobilized by seizures. The servants sat quietly in their rooms waiting.

Outside Ito's room Taka, his old valet waited as he had so many times before. On the street, a customized gray Bentley sat unused. In the garage, in the twilight of painted-over windows and twinkling monitor lights, a sophisticated jumble of electronic communications equipment clicked and hummed. A teletype came to life and spat words onto the paper rolling through it. In the basement, Gifu, Ito's bodyguard, a short, thick-waisted man, naked and almost hairless, sharpened knives and tested them against the few hairs on his scrotum.

"Ito has never been out so long," the old valet said to a crone, as she passed a sandwich to him.

"His bile builds until he poisons himself!"

"Get out! If he is that bad, then we have ourselves to blame."

"Yourself, maybe. I tried being tender to him, so did others. You are the one, and now you pay, Taka. Now it's you who pays!"

Taka finished his sandwich and reentered the quiet room. Ito lay, stiff and sweating, eyes rolled back, fists clenched. He bit down hard on a chamois. A terrible scar, ear to forehead, shone white. Katasawa said he had been injured as a boy. Taka never understood how. Ito brandished the fresh scar at fourteen. It was vivid now, as it always was during a seizure.

The body relaxed, the fit passed faster than it came, and sleep took Ito away. Taka left, closing the door. He whispered into the kitchen, "Everything is over now, I'm going to sleep."

"You bastards, you let me loosen my teeth. You have a responsibility to me ... do you understand? To me! To me! If something bad happens to me, it happens to you." Ito cursed at the walls, his servants, the light of day,

the world. "Damn you! Damn them! I will have the service I deserve, or you will suffer."

"I suffer, Ito," Taka said. "You were gone a long time, the longest time ever. We cared for you, we let no one else get close. You must have the operation ... soon, before a fit takes you and you can't come back. You suffer too much."

"Run my bath. Get Pirgo and have him here to massage me. Every muscle in my body hurts and Taka, call my father again. Whatever it takes, get him this time!"

The phone in Katasawa's lab rang ten times and stopped. Ten minutes later, it rang ten times again.

Hedeki entered the lab for the first time since Katasawa died. He looked for a document, some clue as to the full identity of his brother. The phone rang, he answered it, said nothing.

"Doctor Katasawa? Katasawa? Are you there? Mushy mushy, Katasawa? This is Taka. Ito needs you."

Hedeki held the phone, not believing.

"I am Katasawa's son. He has told me to help you. I am Hedeki, your servant." He held the phone in an iron grip, perspiration dripping from his forehead.

"I must speak to Doctor Katasawa."

"I am sad to tell you that he is ill, a stroke. He is here beside me. He writes, he cannot speak. He has not lost his mind. What is it you want from the old man?"

There was a long pause, the hollow sound of someone placing a hand over the phone, a muffled call.

A new voice came on the line.

"I need my father. Can he come to me?"

"Hold a minute, I'll ask him. He will write his reply and I will read it to you." Hedeki felt a charge of excitement.

"He writes, I must send another."

"Can I come there?"

A long pause.

"He writes no, I will send Hedeki there."

"Who?"

"I am Hedeki, another son. He has trained me, taught me all he knows."

"I need Katasawa!"

"I'll ask him again," He placed his hand over the mouthpiece again.

"He writes, he will be dead before another day passes. I can tell you he has little time. Wait, he is becoming agitated ... hold!"

Hedeki placed his hand over the phone and danced a circle around the tether of the cord.

"He writes Hedeki is your hope. Tell him where to find you."

Ito grimaced and gritted his teeth. "Do you know Corfu? Come by air. Wire date, time, and flight care of Sungana Industries, Corfu Town, Kerkyra, Greece. Bring my father. I need him!"

"Sungana? Sungana Industries? Hedeki said after he replaced the receiver. "Sungana, not Sungawa? How strange." He shuffled around the lab for a few minutes, making certain the refrigerators were working, the

storage cases locked. He picked up the phone, dialed and waited for the code numbers disguised as a telephone number, he gave a string of numbers of his own and a curt command. "All that is known about Sungana Industries. I said S-U-N-G-A-N-A. It may be Greek or European. Get it to me this morning. Wire it to me in-flight if necessary. Don't fail me!"

Hedeki Shikoku's sleek 727 left Haieda Airport and sped west. It refueled at Bangkok, Bombay, and Tehran, overflew Turkey and the Greek mainland, skirted southern Albania, dropped down to fifteen-hundred feet, passed over Corfu Town, dog-legged, and came in over the waters of the Chalikiopoulos Lagoon.

Taegu, his Korean bodyguard, Shizu, and Hedeki, heads pressed against their windows, searched the terminal building for a glimpse of a welcoming party or trouble. As the 727 taxied toward the airpark, the trio glimpsed another 727, a private almost exactly like Hedeki's own. As the jet taxied to the airpark nearest immigration, Hedeki saw his Bentley parked outside the chain link fence.

"How did my car get here?"

"Sir, it can't possibly be your car," Taegu said, "but it is a customized Bentley. It is the same silver-gray as yours but, it cannot be! Yours is still parked at the Urawa house."

Chapter FOUR

Eastern Hotel. Calcutta, India:

David Dean got up early and went to the hotel restaurant for tea and a paper. He came back to the hotel room and surprised Jan as she finished a

telephone conversation. She gave him a, now you know nod, her features communicated embarrassment at being caught.

"Before you say anything David, I want you to know I am going to tell you everything I know."

David sat on the edge of the bed, dejected by the CIA crap that had yanked him around since he arrived in Asia.

"Shit, I may not want to hear. Things are messed-up between us, Jan. I'm supposed to be having the time of my life exploring the world. I am, but sometimes it feels like I'm pulling you and a lot of other people along with me."

"You are, David. You have a lot of riders dragging along on your coattails. How much do you know about what's going on?"

"I know you're with me because you're assigned to me ... that you're a Marine, doing your duty. I know the CIA wants to own me, have assigned you to me as a handler, and that you are wired or something so that every time we start to get intimate, they know it, and save you from"

"No! No! I am not wired! No one knows what we do! No one is aware! Look at me, David. Do you believe me?" He saw in her eyes she was telling the truth. He leaned forward, elbows on knees, head cradled in his hands.

Jan relaxed enough to take the edge out of her voice. "I want to be here with you. Ever since Hakodate, I have felt that you're a kindred spirit. I like you a lot. Unfortunately, I am also a Marine working directly for the Director of the CIA. Not because I chose to, but because George is using me, like Hill is using you. I don't think either of them know I care for you. To them, I'm a woman able to use any means to handle you. They may think I

fuck for God and Country! They probably make jokes about it! But David, I do not, and I won't. I won't be used that way."

"That explains last night?"

"Yes it does. That explains last night! I wanted you so badly. I dreamed of being with you. Then those men showed up. I couldn't pretend I wasn't assigned to you, given orders to handle you, to control you so you would do CIA bidding. I couldn't make love with you and be a Judas goat. Now do you understand why I froze-up last night?"

"Geez! I feel like a hooked fish. I don't want any part of them. I'm going to go on and do what I came here to do. Jan, I need to search alone. I can't take time, not now, to build relationships, not even our relationship. I have other things to do this year." He paused to collect his thoughts. She tried to speak. He cut her off. "I'm searching for something akin to wisdom. I'm in search of a Grail, or at least the essence of what the Grail holds ... as it relates to me. I have an agenda and a mission of my own. I have appointments to visit schools. I have questions I want answered. I have needs that aren't physical."

"David, listen! Listen carefully. I'll tell you why your plans may not work. Don't give me that look. I said I would not lie. Well, here is the truth as I know it ... all of it. Please listen and don't interrupt.

"Dan became Deputy Director of Operations for the CIA as a result of work he did as an analyst which proved that CIA operatives everywhere were known to the enemies and friends of America. He identified a précis of a CIA operative and developed the hypothesis that all CIA operatives are selected by, and thus fit an easily identifiable profile. When he presented his thesis, it lay in the Langley files for several years until it was placed

before the eyes of the Director. Later, I reviewed Hill's work and found it valid.

"Hill was promoted to Deputy Director of Operations (DDO) and charged with creating a new intelligence network for the CIA made up of people who did not fit the profile. The new program was called, 'Operation Cowboy.' David Dean, you are Dan Hill's first operative. He calls you Fallout. You never guessed how he uses you.

"Hill lied by omission. He didn't tell you, his naive schoolteacher from Colorado, the truth. He justified keeping you in the dark by utilizing one of the base deceptions from the CIA's 'any means justifies the end' bag of tricks. The omission of information was justified by what government agencies call a need-to-know-basis. Hill rationalized that you didn't need to know you were the key to a new spy network.

"Hill set you up by suggesting that as you were already going to be traveling around the world studying educational systems you would be able to help the country by serving as a courier. I'm right about that, aren't I?"

Dean nodded. "That SOB met with me and told me he was a nobody with National Security. He conned me."

"You agreed, assuming the agency and Hill were honorable. I like the fact that you don't think everybody is dishonest.

"To manage you, Hill selected women handlers who would be in contact and thereby able to keep the agency informed of your activities. Through the handlers, Hill planted microdot information and you unwittingly carried it between CIA posts. I think you knew Tanya Horowitz was more than a physical therapist. She was the-rapist, get it?"

"I'm a marine officer assigned to military intelligence. I am one of the handlers Hill uses to work you. I was aware of my role, upset by it, but unable to do anything about it. I acted on direct orders. I never planned to fall for you or become a friend."

"Thanks. I feel the same way. Who else is using me?"

"Other women have been recruited, lied to by omission, and will be used as your handlers. Hill calls us his unwitting female accomplices—the Ingenuous Deputies, or IDs. He often jokes that we are IDs with IUDs. Do you know how evil and disgusting that is? It is so degrading. Anyway.

"After you suspected you were being used by the CIA as more than a courier and declared you wanted nothing more to do with Hill or the agency, you thought you could just get out. When you left Bangkok for India, you believed your services to the agency ended. But Hill had already ordered Marine Lieutenant Janet Hurlbut to Calcutta to find you and handle you. Dean, he never imagined that Janet Hurlbut, human being, would not carry out his orders. Don't react yet! There's more you need to know.

"Dan Hill has another problem. Our other intelligence gathering agencies, all reporting by law to the Director of Central Intelligence, have managed to establish themselves as separate, self-serving networks. For example, the MI—the Pentagon—won't weaken the position of the generals by reporting to a damned civilian CIA Director.

"All intelligence gathering agencies, including the FBI, spend more time spying on each other than they spend on domestic or foreign intrigues. The intelligence networks of friendly nations spend more time spying on their friends than enemies. Dan Hill's spy profile applies to their agents too.

Of course, there is one exception, the Mossad. The Israeli agents are unknown. Their intelligence is usually accurate. The western powers and the CIA depend on Israeli intelligence!

"Dan Hill used you to pass and collect messages in Japan. Quite by accident. Remember when you caught a train instead of meeting with that guy? And instead of using a handler you sent the microdot via American Express? Remember? Well, the Mitusuka Industries guys were going to kill you. You disappeared and never even suspected it. When you didn't do as you were told, you foiled their plan to kill you."

"You are saying they used me as an agent? An operative? I never agreed to that. I don't do anything they tell me to do. What did Hill get out of using me in Japan?"

"Well, for one thing, Hill was able to learn about Mitusuka's attempt to take over the world's economies. And the guy you saved? A sleeper name of Acieto Onoto, was in charge of security for Mitusuka Industries. Instead, he wiped out their leadership. Seems he has a grudge against the Japanese. He's Ainu. And, you'll be interested to know, everyone but Hill, George, and I, believed you did it because you're a master spy. I was sent to Hakodate to protect you. Well, at least to lead you out of harm's way.

"Hill believes a successor to the monster company is gaining power in Asia and Europe, mostly through the drug trade. Hill needs you to carry information regarding a company, Sungawa Industries, and a guy named Hedeki Shikoku who's in charge. I was told to find you, wait for orders, that's all."

Jan sat next to him, her weight tipping their bodies together.

"Listen to me, David. I'm caught up in this just like you, but I'm on your side. You want to do your thing alone. It would be nice, but ... but we can also be together. I can protect you." She paused to observe him and make certain he heard what she said.

"This is beyond belief. I need some time to process this absurd situation."

"I have a plan, David. I hope it's a way out of this, or if not out, then a way to set-up damage control. But first, let's order breakfast and relax. Later, we'll have time to take control of our lives."

Chapter FIVE

Sankina was a solicitor who could not pass the exams for barrister. As a result, he could not argue cases before the superior courts. He was a man driven by a battered ego that forced him to try too hard. When he failed the exams for the third and last time, knowing that he would never be allowed to go to Delhi and take them again, he amended his ethical code so he could justify anything he did to gain wealth and power. After that, he did well, especially when he prepared papers for a Japanese client named Acieto Onoto. His work helped the foreigner's company Mitusuka Industries compete against the Dominick Cartel and American "business interests" in India.

Over three decades, the power of Mitusuka Industries had grown. With his help the company became invested in, or gained control of, several of India's largest manufacturers. Things had been sweet for him. Then, when Mitusuka's interests were taken over by Sungawa Industries, he

learned that his client, Acieto Onoto was gone and Hedeki Shikoku replaced him. Everything settled. Sankina traded his loyalties and began to serve Sungawa Industries.

His latest orders were to shadow two Americans. One was a bald spy pretending to be a teacher. The other was a woman marine who worked for American Military Intelligence. He kept both under surveillance at the Eastern Hotel. "Life should be so hard," he mused to his lackey Chowring.

Eastern Hotel. Calcutta, India:

"I have to leave for a short time," Jan announced as they finished eating and mapped-out the steps to separate themselves from the dictates of the CIA. "That phone call, the one when you came in, was to the CIA. They screwed up. I entered the country in uniform, without a visa. There are laws against that. I have until four this afternoon to get to the airport. If I leave, the governments will agree that I was a service person on twenty-four-hour shore leave. Someone is arranging for me to re-enter the country legally. I'll be back in a day or two." She read the look of disappointment on his face.

"David, everything they do is a screw-up! Nothing they do is based upon reality. Well, I guess that isn't entirely true. They have their own naive and selfishly myopic realities. Did you know what happened in Bangkok? Why I had to get out fast?"

"I thought you wanted to come to Calcutta to be with me."

"That's why I'm here, one of the reasons, but not why I had to leave Bangkok. I had to get out because I discovered that the U. S. of A. is building the international drug trade to reward those who are supporting

our war in Southeast Asia." She shook her head, grimacing. "Don't believe it, it's too awful to be true."

"I have a hard time believing anything our leaders tell us. I thought that was because I come from the sticks and don't understand the wisdom of the ruling class. That's why I travel. I'm trying to build a knowledge base of my own."

"You won't like what you learn, David. You're like me in that you trust people and want to believe the very best about them. We both want to believe those in key places got there because they were the finest, most competent people for the job. It's not that way, my friend, and I am sick with what I'm learning about who really controls America. It sure the heck isn't our elected officials."

"Jan, I guess each one of us suspects that, deep down. I read a theory of American History that stated it was individual greed that built America. Self-serving egomaniacs created things that, in the end benefited the whole. I'm not certain I would trust a business mogul with the atomic bomb, but that's the way the game is played."

"I grew up thinking politicians were people who ran for office and that voters selected the best ones. Now I know that key offices and cabinet positions are filled with men who are politicians in the worst sense of the word. They get put into position by a small power elite. They never have to run for office or be accountable to the people. That's a big difference, David, and it scares the hell out of me!"

Dean looked at her, imaging the two of them close, loving, and loving. Instead, they were talking about dynamics they couldn't change. He suppressed his attraction to her and continued. "Each country has within it

the seeds of its own destruction. Away from our country, we're beginning to see it more clearly. What we see scares us, but maybe it shouldn't. Maybe, just maybe, the incompetence, no, a better word would be ineptness and greed of those in high places is what will save us."

Jan looked at him and smiled. "You don't really believe that, but thanks for saying it, it leaves some room for hope, and besides, all anyone can do is take care of the things they might have an impact on."

"There's something else I hope to learn," Dean added. "Suppose countries that don't pretend to be run by elected representatives, like ours does—countries that make no pretense of being democracies—have leadership that is responsible to those they govern? I mean, as those in power don't have to hide behind the pretenses of democracy, maybe they spend their energy governing effectively."

"That's the old benevolent dictator argument, isn't it?"

"Yeah, I guess so. But I hate to think Churchill was right. Compared to all the rest, is our form of government really better? If so, we're in deep shit!" He looked at her, knowing he would lay awake at night trying to remember her face, the way he tried to recall the image of his mother. "One thing is certain.

"What is, David?"

"You're safe from me again!" He got to his feet, bowed, and left the room before she could make their parting easier.

Dean went down to the lobby and asked the manager to recommend a walking tour of Calcutta. The man looked at him as if he were crazy. Dean got the drift.

"Well, is there a route around this neighborhood that you recommend?"

"Oh yes sir. I can safely recommend to you that you see the Howrah Bridge and the Hooghly River. You can make a short walk of it ... and you would probably be safe." He paused. "Yes, I think you would be safe and it would be difficult to get lost." The man fumbled with a pad of paper, began to draw a map, thought better of it, and looked at Dean. "May I just tell you Sir?"

"Shoot."

"Go out these doors. Turn left on Old Courthouse. Turn left, the first street, Bowbazar. Cross Dalhousie, come to Strand. Turn right, go along the Hooghly on Strand to the bridge. You may return the same way."

Dean thanked him and turned to leave.

"By the by, Sir?"

Dean turned back.

"Your wife? Will she be checking out?"

"You've heard," Dean said caustically as he turned away.

The bellman ushered him out the great doors, made way for him through the throngs of homeless on the sidewalk, and left him body-locked in humanity. Myriads of faces turned toward him. Hands groped at him, some pulling at his clothes, some foisting objects. Voices bounced off him. He stood, beached and surrounded. He tried to go on, but wasn't rude enough to push, knee and shove his way through the wall of bodies. He looked back and observed he was separated from the hotel by a mass he couldn't hope to penetrate. Then, through the humbled masses yearning to assimilate him, he saw a middle age, gray-haired man in white linen coming

through the crowd like a positive charge in a positive field. He moved forward and humanity was repelled. The man came to him, freeing him from the crowd.

"I am most humble and glad to be your guide!" He took Dean's arm and steered him down the street as a tillerman steers a scow.

"Thank you! I ... I was on my way to the Hooghly and the Howrah."

"Yes, you are. And I am Mr. Nakhoda, a Brahmin man. I taught in San Francisco. I understand the needs of Americans. I am to be your teacher."

If Dean had landed upon the Mormon's invisible planet behind the moon, he wouldn't have been more out-of-place than here in the lower city near the Hooghly River. Every sight and sound, every smell, came into his senses, was associated incorrectly with something in his ken, and numbed his axons and dendrites. His mind couldn't find places to store the new information. His brain could only surface charge. Within minutes, he slipped into cultural shock. He fought for control, tapping subconscious strengths he never imagined. He stayed aware, if not fully cognizant. His eyes saw streets with shit and garbage piled into hills of rotting, reeking matter. He saw children climbing the hills, digging out scraps of food. He saw the gutters running with sewage, old people drinking. He saw orange flowers in garlands around the necks of scarecrows, an insane person, naked and screaming, pushing through the mass, rending her body with her long nails. He saw funeral piers where bodies were consumed by fire, changing form as they became oily black smoke. He saw people bathing in the river, throwing water into the air while they avoided garbage and partially burned body parts. He saw death, and life that seemed to be death.

"What you are seeing is beauty, my friend. What you see before you is life! You Americans do not yet have the capacity to understand beauty."

As the man led their way through the lives of the homeless and untouchables, he veered left, reached down and took a dry crust of bread from the hand of a skeleton, broke a chunk off with his teeth, and handed what was left back to the crouched being. He veered right, and someone drinking from an open hydrant filled a glass for him. Bowing, he handed the glass back with a smile.

"You Americans see only suffering. You are wrong. It is beauty. From suffering comes death and re-birth. Without suffering, a soul cannot be cleansed and one cannot grow. I am one who has suffered and been reborn many times. Believe me when I tell you that what you see is beauty!"

What Dean saw, he could barely process. If it were beauty, then beauty must definitely be in the eye of the beholder. He couldn't sort it out. By the time his guide steered him back into the lobby of the Eastern Hotel, none of his senses worked properly. In that state of overload, he found his room, collapsed on the bed and slept through twenty hours while his alpha waves ran bits of information against matrices and finally got things sorted and put away.

Someone was pounding on his door. He came to, searched the room for some trace of Jan, knew she was long gone, and went to the door.

"What do you want?"

"Mr. Dean? Mr. Dean, I am a solicitor, what you call an attorney. My name is Sankina. May I see you?"

Reluctantly, Dean let him into the room.

"I am here regarding your friend. She was registered as your wife?" Sankina pursed his small mouth, closing it and clicking his lips like a purse snap as he said each sentence. Dean perused the incongruities of his physique.

"I regret to inform you that she was arrested today at Diamond Harbor as she attempted to leave the country. She is thought to be a spy." He feigned sadness and anguish as he formed his lips around the words. Dean, caught off guard, said nothing.

"She was in uniform, that's not a point in her favor. I learned about her arrest from contacts I have on the docks. I traced her back here. I am what you call an ambulance chaser? Is that the term in American? I follow events and then solicit those whom I can definitely help."

Dean heard the words, analyzed his intent. Still, he chose to say nothing, he stared at Sankina.

"If you are a spy also, or entered the country illegally, I cannot help you. You will need a barrister, one who is licensed before the bar to plead in the high courts." He paused, licked his tiny labial enclosed mouth, tried to fathom Dean's reaction, and continued, "If you are not part of the woman Marine's reasons for being in India, then I can help you!"

"Why ..." Dean started to ask a question, but Sankina cut him off before he could finish.

"Mr. Dean, that is how I make my living!"

"I mean, why aren't the secret police or whatever you call your intelligence people, here?"

"Mr. Dean, you're not going anywhere! They have all the time in the world. If the woman implicates you, they will pick you up and you will disappear along with her. India will not be embarrassed by such events."

Sankina sensed he had done what he came to do. He turned, quickly walked to the door and stepped into the corridor. "I leave you my card. Call me if I can be of service. You will find that my time is very inexpensive ... at least compared to the alternatives. Goodbye!"

That afternoon Sankina called his employer at Sungawa Industries and reported that his meeting with Dean went well. After reporting, he turned to Chowring and smiled sweetly. "My good friend, it seems that we shall soon have that lovely flat near Dalhousie Square."

That evening: A high-up executive at Sungawa called on an acquaintance that controlled India's Congress Party. In the course of elucidating certain contributions to the party, he asked for a "tiny" favor. He received a staunch and firm commitment that a United States Marine named Janet Hurlbut would not be readmitted to India under any circumstance.

Janet Hurlbut was de-briefed aboard the freighter Malacca Straight. She informed her contact that Fallout was not to be trusted. "In a nutshell," she stated, "Dean is an American loyal to his country, but not the men who run it."

A coded eyes-only message reached the Director summarizing the marine's observations: A high official in India's Immigration office notified the American Counsel that a Janet Hurlbut, USMC, would not be allowed to enter India again. He also filed a weak protest, claiming the United States

violated the immigration laws of his country. He dispatched a wire to the CIA, in care of Hill, DDO, informing him of India's decision and protest.

The Director called Hill into his office and accused him of botching the Cowboy operation. "Get a new handler for Dean, or take him out of the game!" the Director ordered in his nastiest voice. When Hill left, the DCI wrote an order for Hurlbut to return to Langley. "No one is to know of your return but me," he scrawled across the orders before he sealed them.

Calcutta, the next day:

Laura Callert sat in her sparse room in the Red Shield House, a hostel run by the Salvation Army. She was alone, in a state of cultural shock, and caught up in rounds of introspection. Bobby was gone, married, out of her life forever. She knew that. She still didn't know why she lost him. Her loss ate at her even after all of these months. She joined a health club, met new people, and still she couldn't regain her self-confidence. Her aunt suggested travel. A poster showed a magic land, India. Now she was here, afraid to leave her shabby room.

She stood and adjusted the mirror over the ancient vanity, stepped back, looking.

I'll never be anything but wholesome looking. Waist. Acceptable. Buns and legs? Okay. I'm in good shape.

Still, her reflection made her uneasy. She pulled the blouse down through her belt, making it tight against her breasts. She knew the problem. She hadn't admitted it until she saw that damned movie! She heard Marlon Brando's words as he told his last tango girl that her breasts would ... It was too awful to think about.

Unbuttoning her blouse, she pulled it off. Reaching behind, she unsnapped her bra. Her large breasts sagged against her rib cage. "Sacks, bags, jugs, totes," she complained to her reflection. "Soon I can throw them over my shoulders so they aren't in my way when I bend over." She knew how people felt about her bosom, had known since a kid in school teased her, hurt her. "Laura can't jump rope nude, she'd have two black eyes." His taunt became a class joke.

In a harness bra, I can attract a man. Without it ... I'd smother him.

She put her blouse back on, combed her hair back, collapsed in a chair, picked up her novel, and began reading. There was a knock on the door.

"Are you Laura Callert, Springfield, Missouri?" A forty-something man in an expensive business suit asked politely.

"What do you want?" She was suspicious, worried. "Something is wrong at home?"

"You're Laura, then? My name is Caldwell. I'm assigned to the Counselor Section of the American Embassy. May I have a few words with you in private!"

"Oh no," she moaned, "Something is wrong ... is it my dad?"

Caldwell knew to let her stew for a few moments. He needed to size her up, get her to trust him and think of him as the bearer of good tidings.

"Miss Callert, I know of no problems at home with your dad, or anything. I'm here to ask for your help." He pushed his way into the tiny room.

"Miss Callert, I will come directly to the point of my visit. On behalf of the United States Government, would you consider helping your country with a little problem?"

"Me?" She looked at him, decided there was some mistake, and corrected him. "I'm just Laura Callert from Missouri. I went to business school. I planned to marry and have a family. I don't have any skills that you might think I do ... I mean that my country would ... could use."

"I understand. But you may be wrong. Are you interested in hearing my request?"

She offered him the chair and sat on the edge of the bed.

Caldwell started weaving his lie. "India is a strange land far from our country. We have some interests here. After all, one of every four people on earth who live in a democracy lives in India. The problem is, we don't have many resource people here. When we need an American, a loyal American who understands what we stand for and is true to the dreams of our forefathers, we are often at a loss. We can't afford to keep a large staff here. We must seek out Americans traveling through India and ask them to help."

"That's why you're here? You need a secretary?"

Caldwell smiled. "Not a secretary, Laura, but a person who would stay near an operative of ours. We need to keep an eye on him; we need someone to pass messages to."

"I don't understand. You have an agent you don't trust?"

"Oh, sorry, I didn't mean to imply that! What I mean is that as a matter of security, National Security, every one of our field people is evaluated. Not for patriotism or loyalty, but for mental health ... you know,

job stress, personal problems, things like that. We take care of our people, Miss Callert, but we can't care for them if we don't know what they need." He saw she was forming another question, probably one he didn't want to answer. He raised his voice and continued. "In a far-off country like India where we don't get to see our people for weeks at a time, we need contacts who will see them, help us know of their needs and, occasionally, help us get information to them." She was forming a question again. He could tell because she wasn't paying enough attention. He raised his voice and continued.

"Laura, do you like bald men? Not old bald men, but could you like a young bald man?"

Her question was wiped from her mind. She looked at Caldwell, completely baffled. He waited for her answer.

"Well, I really never ... I haven't, well that's not right, I knew Tom, he was getting bald, everyone liked him. And there was that football player ... no, he might have been older ... I really never thought ... yes I did! No, I don't think it would bother me at all. Does it bother him?"

"I don't think so. A lot of women find baldness sexy."

"It wouldn't bother me then. Now tell me again, what am I supposed to do?"

David Dean's room, Eastern Hotel, Calcutta:

Dean awoke, prepared to shower. The Indian lawyer, or whatever he called himself, put fear into his heart. What happened to Jan? How could he help her? How much danger was he in? He rummaged in his shaving kit

for a blade and came up with a piece of stationary folded into a small square.

Dearest David,

Whatever you hear, when you read this, I will no longer be in India. I plan to return as soon as I can. Do not, I repeat David, do not worry. I am OK. Remember our plan!

Forgive me! Don't forget me!

Love, Jan

Late that afternoon, a coded eyes-only from Caldwell, arrived at Langley. Dan Hill picked it up, read it, and smiled. "Gloria, we have a new ID in Calcutta. She will contact Dean ASAP. He'll never suspect she's ours.

Chapter SIX

Corfu:

Hedeki had never been to Corfu. He deplaned behind Taegu, who went out first, a machine pistol under his coat to protect his master and make certain their way was clear. The small airport was almost deserted. They arrived as planned between the arrivals and departures of the Olympic Airways flights. The door marked Immigration was guarded by a man in blue. His uniform was rumpled, shoes scuffed. He wore a holster, but Taegu saw it was empty. Corfu was at peace, had been for most of seventy-thousand years.

Taegu presented their three passports and waited impatiently for another man in a rumpled blue suit to stamp them. The officer ignored Taegu, looked carefully at Hedeki, and then waved all three through the customs passage. He pointed to a gate leading to the main lobby. At the gate, Taegu saw a man about his size and build. The man was nodding to him and motioning with his chin for them to follow him out of the terminal.

Hedeki observed all of this with impatience. "Where is my brother? Will Ito accept me? Be prepared, Taegu." He moved through the terminal, passed Taegu, and stood looking at empty taxis and the deserted street. Taegu passed him, turned right as their guide did, and began walking in the direction of the Bentley. The man who led kept about fifty feet ahead. He turned once to make certain they followed.

Ito Shikoku discounted Gifu's orders. His bodyguard begged him to stay in the bulletproof sedan, but he was too curious. He stood on the far side of the Bentley, waiting for a glimpse of the man who called himself his brother. When he saw Hedeki leave the terminal, got a clear look at his face, all doubts were gone. He saw himself. He walked around the front of the Bentley toward Hedeki. His mind focused, taking all his energy so there wasn't enough left to form a frown or a smile.

Hedeki Shikoku approached cautiously. Taegu led, then stopped abruptly as a man came around the front of the Bentley. Behind him, Shizu let out a gasp. Hedeki stopped and stared. The man approaching was his identical twin.

He even looks tired and haggard, as I do.

The brothers approached, seeing something in each other that neither Gifu nor Taegu tracked. The brothers stopped about three feet apart as if

they were afraid that closer might mean the loss of separate identities. They stood, confused as to what to do next, and too engrossed to be aware of that decision.

Ito spoke first. "So, I really do have a brother. Welcome brother, to my heaven on Corfu."

Hedeki reacted, "I've only known I had a brother for a few weeks. I didn't suspect we were twins. Is that your plane?" he motioned with his chin toward the other 727 visible at the airpark. Ito nodded. "I have a Bentley almost exactly like this one. Your man and mine could be brothers. You dress much as I do. Look, we even have tassels on our shoes."

Ito noticed, and anger was welling up within him as it always did when he was confused or unable to control a situation.

"Where is my father?"

"Our father was killed by Doctor Katasawa, fourteen years ago. So was our mother! But this is not the time or place to discuss it." He sensed the violence boiling to the surface in his twin, and noted that they were different in at least one other way. Ito had a terrible scar from his ear to his forehead, a scar growing more visible as Ito's anger came to the surface. Gifu also saw the scar and knew what it meant. He barked an order pretending it was directed at Taegu.

"Get them into the car, quickly! There is danger here!"

"Where are we going," Taegu asked as he rode shotgun next to Shizu who sat in the middle on the leather-covered hump.

Gifu scrunched around in the driver's seat until he felt comfortable. "Prepare for a long drive, three hours. We are going to Ito's retreat near Kassipi Castle. The road is good and we can make good time until we get

to Nissaki. From Nissaki to Karitotikon," he handed Taegu a map, and pointed to the towns, "we can't make more than forty km an hour. Kassiopi is here," he pointed. "The castle is here. Here on the Cape is Mr. Shikoku's retreat."

Taegu held the map, aware there were few escape routes if things turned sour. They were on Ito's turf, strangers in, what had Ito called it, heaven?"

"Mr. Hedeki Shikoku, my boss, will need to eat." Taegu said.

Gifu nodded. "My boss, Ito, always has us stop at Kouloura. Sungana Industries owns a hotel there."

Taegu leaned forward and looked around Shizu. "Did you say Sungawa?"

"Sungawa? No, it's pronounced Sung-a-n-a."

Taegu leaned forward and looked around Shizu again. "My Shikoku's interests are pronounced Sung-a-w-a. Jets, cars, dress, companies ... I wonder just how identical our twins are?"

The car sped north along the coastal highway. The three servants in the front wondered what was going on in back, behind the glass and drawn drapes. They said nothing about their thoughts. An hour passed. Shizu tried to make light conversation, but the bodyguards ignored him. Taegu watched twilight form, and the long, last rays of the sun cast their shadow. Across the water he saw red-lit peaks. "What is that land over there?"

"Albania." Gifu said. "That's the reason Ito's located his operations headquarters here."

"Albania? I never heard of an Albania."

"That's okay, I'm sure few Albanians have heard of Korea. That is where you're from, isn't it?" He paused, looked past Shizu, and caught Taegu's nod. "Me too! But I don't remember Korea, I was too young."

Calcutta:

The solicitor's message sent Dean back into cultural shock. Even after finding Jan's message telling him not to worry, he was unable to think clearly, afraid to go outside, too uncertain of his options to decide to do anything. He sat; time passed. If he slept, he was not aware of the respite. Another dawn lit the balcony and sunlight streamed into his room. He showered, changed clothes.

I'm starved.

At eight he left the room. He expected to be arrested by the India Secret Service people, and wondered why they were ignoring him.

A turbaned waiter, who went to great lengths not to touch anything with his left hand, served breakfast. Dean knew that the left hand was for taking care of bodily functions. He ate rapidly. A boiled egg, toast, and tea didn't ease his hunger. He ordered three more eggs, six pieces of toast heavy with marmalade, and something that looked and tasted like Cream of Wheat doused with thick cream. The feast pumped energy back into his body. Looking around the dining room, he noticed a young woman sitting alone at a table under a window arch. She was carefully studying a map and seemed preoccupied. They were the only guests in the dining area. Turbaned waiters and a man in a brown suit coat were patiently waiting for them to finish.

Dean signed his chit, left Rs1 and some coins on the table, and started back to his room. A quick glance showed him the young woman had already gone.

Dean felt foolish. He had absolutely no desire to leave the hotel. In fact, he was afraid to go out. He looked at papers and trinkets in the gift shop, bought a *Tribune*, and started toward the elevator. In the hall he observed the young woman. She was standing near the elevator doors, head tilted up, eyes closed, arms at her sides, hands clenched. Tears ran down her cheeks. As he approached, she seemed to pay no attention although his shoes clicked against the tiles making enough noise to annoy everyone in the hotel. She was blocking the elevator door.

"Hi, are you okay?"

Nice looking, wholesome, buxom, trim.

She didn't change her posture. She didn't open her eyes. "No!" She breathed, as more tears forced out under her eyelids.

Something about the way her body was frozen and tight connected with his fear. On a hunch he said, "I'm afraid to go back outside alone. Are you?"

She relaxed, just a little. Her eyes opened, brown and beautiful as any he had ever seen. She looked at him, closed them, squinted, and opened them again. "How did you know?"

"I suspected. I've been fighting cultural shock too."

"Cultural shock? Is that what you call it? I'm alone and I can't figure anything out." She paused. "I shouldn't tell you I'm alone, but you are American aren't you, like me? Do you have a wife I could talk to?"

"Please tell me your name!"

"Laura." She wiped her tears on her bare arm and her arm on her skirt.

"Laura, I'm alone too. I wouldn't mind having a friend right now, either. There's a window nook in the lobby. Come on, let's go have a chat-up as the English say."

No way she could be CIA. Could she? Now they've got me seeing spies everywhere.

Laura and Dean found a quiet place to sit and get acquainted. Laura didn't lie about her emotional paralysis. She was trying to attract Dean as agreed, but was unprepared for cultural shock. She felt foolish. It didn't matter, she made contact. Mr. Caldwell was right, Dean needed counseling and bracing-up so he could go on serving America and making a contribution to freedom. Besides, she thought as they sat talking, his baldness is sexy. She restrained an almost uncontrollable desire to touch his head.

"I have a proposition to make ... I don't care if you think I'm too bold,"

"It is probably the same one I was thinking of making to you." She blushed and smiled the wholesome mid-western way that attracted people to her. "Let me hear yours first, David Dean. I'll know if I can trust you."

"Okay. I say we pair-up, be friends, throw in together and conquer Indjah!"

"Whew! I hoped that's what you were going to propose! I think my life just changed for the better. What do we do now?"

"We let it all hang out, just be ourselves and see if we can use the old buddy system to save our sanity."

Dean was surprised at how strongly he meant what he said. From her reaction, she felt the same way. She reached across the table offering her hand. Dean took it, shook it, held it, but her grip was tighter. She wouldn't let go until their eyes met and she was assured he too felt the electrical currents—was thinking on the same wavelength.

Dean felt the pull and tried to push it off as hormones.

When will I learn to relate to an attractive woman without mentally ravaging her? Never, I hope.

"Do you like the Red Shield House?"

"I'd rather be here. I need privacy. I came over to see if they had a room."

"Let's check and see. I'll help you move."

Later:

"You'll find privacy and very little else in this room. Let the water run a while before you shower. Water's only hot in the early mornings and at night between seven and ten."

"I'm not a dorm person."

"You arrived in Calcutta, got to the Red Shield House, went outside one time, and went into cultural shock. Right?"

"And you? You arrived in Calcutta, got to the Eastern, went outside one time, and went into cultural shock. Right?"

They laughed, sharing warmth.

"I know a Brahmin guide who will show us the city." Dean wondered if either of them had the strength to wade into the masses again.

Laura smiled. "I asked the man at the desk what the best way to see Calcutta is. He told me there are tours that avoid the grimmer areas."

"I'm feeling strong enough to venture out again," Dean studied her, weighing her strength, "Are you?"

"Tomorrow, maybe. There's a dance in the hotel ballroom tonight. It starts at 8:00. Want to check it out?"

"A dance? Oh."

"Where's your enthusiasm? Don't you dance?"

"Yeah, I used to."

"But you don't like to, is that what you're saying? It's all right, tell me how you feel."

"I guess I don't like to dance ... well, that's not exactly true. Dancing is ... well, when I ... the long and the short of it is ... I guess I don't like dancing."

Laura had a sixth sense perception of what David was implying. "But you would love to dance with me quietly, in private, right?"

David looked at her, saw a gotcha grin, and blushed.

"How did you know?"

"Can I say what I think?"

"Absolutely, we're in this together."

"Well," she hesitated, playing with the loose end of her waist-tie. "I get the same feelings, but people can't see. She looked away pretending to be relaxed."

My God, I said it! What does he think of me now?

A few hours later they met for dinner and ate slowly while observing others in the dining room and trying to guess where they came from and

what their lives were like. A combo started its set with a song neither of them knew. "Shall we remove ourselves to my room?" Dean said as he pulled her chair back.

Back in the room, he tuned the radio to soft music, and smiled. She imagined his body and reacted.

"May I have the pleasure of a dance?" he bowed.

The music was soft and sweet. They melded together and strengthened each other. The dance floor was crowded, they separated for a moment as he moved the overstuffed chair back to the wall. When they came together again, they held each other so close imagination shut down. He pushed her back, looked at her, and bent to kiss her. After a long kiss, she loosened her hands, took them inside his arms, up past his face, and cradled his head. As she ran her fingers along his hairline, she trembled, opening, chevrons erect, demanding.

"Let's make friends, not love!" he said laughing as they undressed each other. Then he felt her tense, smelled a tinge of acrid fear.

"Hey, what's happening Laura? Is this alright?"

There's no way I can explain.

"It's okay to tell me ..."

"What if you don't like me! What if you find me ... "

Shut up, Find a way out of this.

She held him away as if they were dancing in an old fashioned, nothing touching way.

"I find you fantastic, desirable, hot and wonderful!"

Get it over with. Better now than later.

She undid her bra. Her breasts came free and drooped, nipples floating as lily pads in pools of soft flesh.

"Wow," his breath came out fast with the word. He cradled her breasts in the crooks of his thumbs, reached down with his mouth and sucked in her left nipple and areola.

"You don't think they're too ...?"

His moves told her she had little to be concerned about.

What a boob I've been!

The next morning they ate breakfast in her room. Neither was sure how they ended up in her room, but they both recalled that the change of bed and surroundings was fun.

Dressed, they went to the lobby to arrange for the Brahmin guide. Waiting in the foyer, Laura was contacted by a woman who introduced herself as "Mr. Caldwell's friend Susan," and asked her to follow her into the women's toilet.

Laura excused herself and followed the woman. In the spacious restroom the woman turned, a tampon in her hand.

"This is the way we will communicate." She waved the thing in front of her. "No one would ever look for a message in a tampon ... besides, I can approach you anywhere and ask for a tampon. Men expect that sort of thing."

"Do you mean I'm to write stuff on the inside of one of these?"

"Actually, not. What you do is write a note, roll it up, and push it in between the applicator and the cotton. Or, if you want, wrap it around the cotton. I don't think it makes much difference." Sue paused, somewhat put

out at Laura's daftness. "There is a fail-safe! If you suspect that he is on to you, use it! Now that settles that! Any more questions?"

"What am I supposed to write on the notes?"

"Didn't Caldwell tell you? Well, I will! Laura dear, tell us how he is doing, you know, how he feels, what his plans are, where he goes, who he meets ... you know, the things that will help the Counselor Section of the American Embassy keep tabs on him so that they can be there if he needs them ... and another thing. If we have information we want to give to him ... you know, suggestions of places to go, things to see that will be good for him, that sort of thing, I will deliver them to you using the same method we discussed. Is this all clear?"

"Oh yes. I was worried at first, but you know, I really like this guy. I really want to help him!"

Langley, Virginia:

"Top-Secret communication for you Sir. Just sign here." The CIA dispatch courier held out the thin dispatch case attached to his wrist by a handcuff and chain. Dan got his key out of his safe and placed it in the second slot, as the courier placed his key in the first. Dan took out a sealed five-by-seven-one inch manila envelope.

"Did you bring it all the way, Lieutenant?"

"Yes Sir, I did. I picked it up in Calcutta last night, their time. I've been airborne ever since, let's see, three o'clock yesterday afternoon your time."

"Did anyone else know of this communication?"

"Yes Sir. My boss, Sir ... and whoever made the plans for my travel."

"SOP all the way?"

"Yes Sir! Standard all the way!"

The DDO picked up the package, weighed it in hand, and searched for his letter opener. He was expecting the communication, but had no idea it would be delivered under such security. He found his knife, cut the seals and tape and opened the envelope. There was a tampon inside! He hit the desk intercom and yelled for Gloria. He was dangling the tampon by its string when she came into his office.

"What in the goddamned hell is this? Is this a joke? Who the hell had the audacity to send this? What in the hell is going on?"

Gloria hadn't seen Dan so riled since she caught him with Mary Kay. She immediately recognized the article he was holding, and knew its purpose.

"Dan, Danny, control yourself!"

He held the tampon like a cigarette, waved it back and forth in front of her, trying to be calm.

"Don't bend that thing, it's a secret means of communication!"

He let go of it as if it were hot. It bounced, end-first on the desk and lay on its side, innocuous paper-wrapped cotton.

Gloria reached over, picked it up, removed the tissue, applicator, and message. She threw what remained in the wastebasket.

"I believe this is what you're looking for." She handed the message to him, huffed, and turned to leave.

"Don't you dare leave. I think this thing had your hand in it. Was this your doing?" He motioned to the dead tampon in the basket.

"I think it's the best approach to national security since the perfumed stationary method I developed. Yes, I suggested it. Any problems?"

Dan looked at her, read her body language, and got off it quick.

"No Dear, I was just surprised, that's all. I usually don't get feminine hygiene items in the mail."

Gloria slammed the door as she went out. Dan slammed his desk drawer, picked-up the note and read it twice.

American Consulate

Calcutta, India

EYES ONLY. EYES ONLY.

Deputy Director of Operations, Langley. Stop. Be advised. Stop. ID in place. Stop. Syst op 110 percent! Stop. Cowboy to Nepal. Stop. Kathmandu arrival? Stop. Please advise. Caldwell.

Fourth floor. Langley, Virginia:

"Lieutenant, what was in the message you delivered to Hill?" the DCI asked, intent upon knowing everything that took place in the DDO's world.

"Sir, if I may."

"Go ahead son, what was it?"

"Sir, I think it was a dummy message."

"A dummy? What does that mean to you?"

"Sir, a message sent to monitor security."

"Really? We do that? Good."

"Oh yes Sir, often. We usually trap some ears or run an involuntary. It works, Sir!"

"And what was this message?"

"Pardon me Sir, but it was an article of feminine hygiene, a tampon, Sir!"

The Director sat, scratching behind his ear, thinking.

"You boys send this type of thing often?"

"No Sir, but now that we have women in the service, I think they send them as a joke!"

"Did you deliver it to Hill?"

"Yes Sir, and I stayed in the outer office as you ordered. I heard his reaction."

"Well?"

"The Deputy Director started screaming in anger, Sir."

"That will be all, Lieutenant. See if someone here can remove that handcuff. Check with maintenance. Get some rest!"

When the lieutenant left, George took out a pad and began writing. His anger grew as he thought about the waste of taxpayer money flying a tampon half way across the world for a joke.

Damn! Is this Dan Hill's attempt to ferret me out? To see if I'm monitoring CIA communications? I'm supposed to monitor my employees!

He angrily scratched out the line and began again. "Waste of taxpayer's money." Humm ... that isn't right. He scratched that line out too.

I've got it, this will do.

TO: ALL WOMEN, ALL LEVELS:
RE: FEMININE HYGIENE PRODUCTS VIA MAIL STOPS NOW!
QUESTIONABLE LACK OF JUDGMENT.

That was it! He buzzed for Miss Horowitz. Damned woman was still too green, too slow. She entered the office, saw that George was in one of the moods, and stood quietly near the door.

"Get this coded and out to all personnel! Have it done now, before further damage is done. Thank you, Horowitz, and relax damn it. We'll be working together for a long time Lady, so realize that I'm on your side ... never angry with you personally, you know. We must be a team!"

Tanya nodded and left the office as fast as she could. Within minutes, she sent the order to the code room, and headed to the second-floor john and Gloria.

"He's a mean SOB, he scares me!"

"Don't let him, Tanya. Honey, if you and I are going to pull this off for Dan, we have to be cool."

Deep in the subbasement below Langley:

"Excuse me Sir. I'm sorry to interrupt you but I have no idea how I should code this." The young intelligence officer's boss walked over to his desk leaned over his shoulder. He scratched his head in confusion as he tried to understand the meaning of the message.

"This is a strange one," the Colonel said. "Let's see, now ... oh sure, I get it. Let me sit there!" The officer took the seat at the machine.

ALL FEMALE PERSONNEL. ALL STATIONS. Stop.
BE ADVISED. Stop. FEMININE HYGIENE QUESTIONABLE. Stop. USE
OF MAIL ORDER PRODUCTS FORBIDDEN AS OF THIS DATE. Stop.
ss/Director of Central Intelligence.

He fed the message into the code machine and sent the jumble to the
far corners of the earth. It was the first major policy change the Director
made since becoming the head of the CIA.

Kyzylkum Outpost. Usbek, SSR:

INTERCEPT US/CIA

TOP-SECURITY

UNIVERSAL

EUROCONTROL. KGB ALL STATIONS TOP PRIORITY. Stop.

VENEREAL DISEASE RAMPANT US FORCES. Stop. DRUGS BY MAIL
ORDER. Stop

INTERCOURSE FORBIDDEN. Stop THIS DATE. ADVISE?

Listening Post. Chai Kok, China:

DISPATCH I.O. CANTON.

US POLICY CHANGE UPDATE. WOMEN IN USA INTELLIGENCE
COMMUNITY PURGED. CONSIDERED UNHYGIENIC. ADVISE?

F.B.I. Counter Intelligence Transmissions Interception Office (CITIO).
Washington, D.C.:

TOP-SECRET. TOP-SECRET. TOP-SECRET.

DIRECTOR, EYES ONLY. Stop. INTERCEPT. Stop. PERSONNEL ALERT
TODAYS DATE. Stop. WOMEN IN KEY POSITIONS TO START
OPERATION FEMININE HYGIENE. Stop. ORDERS DIRECT DCI. Stop.
UNABLE TO ADVISE.

Chapter SEVEN

Greece:

The silver-gray Bentley scribed each curve perfectly as they made their way north. Gifu seemed more and more relaxed as they neared the end of the trip. He began to chatter, more like a tour guide than a trained killer and bodyguard.

"See that castle? It's the remains of an Angevin Fortress. Do you know what Angevin is?" He paused. "It was built by the house of Anjou. Thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Charles of Anjou forced Catholicism upon the island. This was the fortress from which they ruled."

Shizu wasn't impressed. Taegu was. Gifu continued.

"Wait until you see the patio floor in Ito's retreat house. It's built on the ruins of the ancient Roman City of Cassiope. That's where Nero sang at the altar of Jupiter Cassius, as you might recall from your study of history. The mosaic floor may be the floor of the temple. Ito is very proud of it!"

Shizu sat, wondering how a trained killer and security man could be interested in dead stuff. Taegu sat, enthralled, anxious to see the mosaic and learn more of the island's history.

"Remember Lawrence Durrell?" Gifu continued. "He wrote about the town of Kakami, near here, in his book Prospero's Cell." Gifu was on a roll.

"Look, from this point Albania is only one and a half miles across the channel. One and a half miles and six hundred years away." He was interrupted by the buzzing of the intercom. The privacy light came on. He picked-up the earphones.

"Gifu. When we arrive, have Taka and Pirgo get our guests settled. I will be in my quarters. I do not want to be disturbed by anyone but Taka! Do you understand my meaning?" Gifu understood. Ito feared he was going to have another fit. It would be the second fit in as many days.

Hedeki knew something was terribly wrong with his brother. From the moment of their first meeting, he had watched the face that mirrored his own grow tight, the mouth become a line of pain-abiding anger. He had studied the scar that crossed the man's temple like a lightning bolt. When Ito mentioned he had spells, and when he asked Hedeki if he had them, Hedeki's answer that Katasawa corrected his problem before he died seemed to both please and taunt Ito.

With Katasawa dead, he didn't know who to turn to. "I called for Katasawa because I need an operation to relieve the scar pressure on the temporal lobe of my brain. Katasawa told me that one day the spells would get worse. I was to contact him. They're definitely worse now!"

Ito couldn't, wouldn't allow himself to process all the information Hedeki gave him. His brother had started talking as soon as they entered the Bentley. "Ito, Katasawa was a tool for a family with roots back to the Samurai period. The powerful heads of the family were selected from homosexual sons who were then castrated. The *Rule of Eunuchs* continued until the early part of the twentieth century when family members who controlled the companies by triumvir, replaced it. Two powerful men, whole men at this time, mastered the giant organization with absolute power." He paused trying to establish eye contact. "Do you understand what I'm telling you, brother?"

Ito nodded and stared straight ahead, not allowing eye contact.

"In keeping with the old ways, the triumvir allowed our conscription. We were taken before our fourteenth birthday, when it was believed we were formed enough to be known and young enough to be shaped. They reshaped us through a process of surgical re-design, chemically induced personality manipulation, brainwashing, and reprogramming.

"Doctor Katasawa was a master programmer. He was a man who knew more about the human brain and how it responded to manipulation than any alive at that time. Katasawa erased or hid memories of our first fourteen years, our parents and experiences, and replaced them with the belief that he, Katasawa, was our father."

The information traumatized Ito. His boyhood seemed not to have existed. He had information and spoke languages he didn't remember learning. Now he knew why.

Hedeki makes sense. So that's how I got to be head of Sungana Industries. I have no recollections. I am someone's creation! Hedeki is telling the truth!

Dealing with the truth made Ito's head feel like it would split open, anger boiled inside him.

I have to get home and let the fit run its course.

"He needs a doctor, a surgeon, now!" Hedeki told Taka, when the man appeared and announced to all that Ito's fit had passed.

"That's why you're here. Isn't it?" Taka said, humbly.

"Yes," Hedeki agreed, "That is why I'm here, but Doctor Katasawa is dead."

Gifu and Taka stared at the other Shikoku. Who would help their master?

Hedeki took control. "I know of a Doctor in Israel, a brain specialist. When Ito approves, we will go to Tel Aviv." He stood before a great window, watching false dawn gray the sky.

"That land over there," he pointed east, "is Erius, Greece?"

"No master," Gifu said, seeing Ito instead of Hedeki. "It is Albania."

Hedeki stared at the dimly visible landmass. "And Vione?"

"Far to the north, behind the island of Sazan,"

"Then what are we looking at?"

"We are looking toward Sarande, south of the great inland lake. This is a part of Albania known only to those who live there—and to history."

"Ito mentioned tobacco."

Gifu went to a shelf built into a corner of the room. He removed a flat cigarette case about the size of a small cigar box.

"This," he held the case open, revealing rows of oval cigarettes, "is Sungana's interest in Albania ... cigarettes, wine, and oil!"

Hedeki took the case and raised it so that he could smell the tobacco aroma. He took a cigarette from the case, rolled it between his fingers, and then held it close so he could see its label. He smiled, put the cigarette back, and looked knowingly at Gifu.

"Product of Turkey?"

"Nothing is as it seems."

Hedeki Shikoku was tired. Shizu kept reminding him that he had not recovered from his ordeal. A tired inner part of him, his core, felt heavy and exhausted. He forced his mind, but some tap was open draining his physical energy. Loss of a night's rest hadn't helped him. He looked haggard and worn, truly his brother's twin.

Ito entered the patio room as valets and bodyguards rose to help. Gifu and Taegu offering Ito their strength. Taka and Shizu, urged Hedeki toward the table and a large English breakfast.

"I cannot enter Israel, Hedeki. I have no problems with Israel, but if my passport is stamped, or my mid-eastern contacts find out I was there, it would be very bad for business."

"I understand you can ask them not to stamp your passport," Hedeki argued.

"True, but I am too well known. Someone would report my straying from the fold."

"Where then?

"New Delhi! Sir Edward Westfault, considered the finest brain surgeon in their Lost Empire. He's there teaching at a university. He will see me and decide about my case. Gifu, contact him! Last night," Ito continued, "I decided I must go to Delhi. Sungana has a hangar at Palam Ngurah Rai Airport, and I have people there." He paused a moment and then continued. "I planned to go there if Katasawa couldn't help me."

Gifu, got up and walked toward his master, his face wrinkled in thought. "Delhi's Palam is seven hours from here. I will need to make arrangements."

Ito saw Hedeki looking quizzically at Gifu.

He judged him by his physical looks, his first impression. Interesting.

"My Gifu is a wealth of information. He has near-photographic recall, a degree from Athens University, and he was an Olympic wrestling champion. We are impressed by him, and perhaps we rely upon him too much."

"Sungana has interests in Delhi? India?"

"Yes, all of India except Bengal. I decided not to do business in Calcutta or that region."

Hedeki looked at his brother and smiled a knowing smile. "Sungawa has interests in Bengal, but I decided not to do business in the other parts of India." He paused and his smile became broader, then he pulled his lips into a thin line and anger replaced his grin. "Now isn't that a coincidence? That bastard planted some strange shit in our minds!"

Ito forced himself to eat and then rose, throwing his napkin at the table. The pain and anger were there but under control. "Come, we will

spend the day in Corfu Town while my people make arrangements for my trip. New brother, I will show you a place that will amaze you! We will spend time together at the Sino-Japanese Museum, one of Greece's little-known secrets. Then we will part for a time. It would not be wise, in fact, it would be in our best interests if the world didn't know there are two of us."

Two hours later, a large helicopter landed near the retreat house, picked up six and their gear, and made its way to Corfu Town. After five hours, the brothers, and their servants bowed goodbye. Within the hour, two silver and maroon 727s headed east across the world. One refueled at Karachi and went on to Calcutta. The other settled noisily onto the runway at New Delhi's Patan Airport.

New Delhi, India:

The private clinic rambled as added-on-to concrete block structures with multi-layered flat roofs do. To blend in, the owners painted each new section the same dun-dung-beige as the first. The private entrance was a door set flush in the wall of a middle section. It was the same color as everything else, rendering it almost invisible. Inside, the painted block was glossy beige, the floor tile, the light fluorescent. A corridor led to a room with a raised platform in one corner. On the platform stood a desk with a woman seated behind it. The woman's nametag read, "Bowra." She looked up as Ito and his men entered.

"You are Shikoku? Doctor Westfault is expecting you ... he just arrived. Please give him a minute to change and get things the way he wants them."

Two days later, Ito sat in Westfault's inner office. His head ached searing pain. He feared another spell.

"These," Westfault said as he jammed sheets of x-ray film into the clips and turned on the lights behind the opaque viewer, "tell me more about you than you cared to tell me. If you were testing me, then let me describe your medical history and a possible correction of the damage done ... done when you were past puberty, but probably not yet out of your teens. Damage done by someone, for some reason I can't fathom here, was it torture?"

"I don't know."

Who the hell does this bastard think he is? I don't have to answer his questions.

"Do you know, or won't you tell me?" He perused the films. "Interesting this! Why would anyone cut through to the temporal bone, the sphenoid, and drill holes in the zygomatic. Three rather large holes! Whatever for?"

Ito saw the lines and dots on the x-rays as Westfault pointed them out. He felt sick; scared.

"It was all done without my knowledge. I said, I do not know."

"And here. There are holes drilled into, I think they went clear through the left side of the parietal. Some of these holes were—no, they are big enough to get an injection through. Look here, this view shows that the bone reformed, it's soft compared to the original." He switched films. "All this was done to you without your knowing it?"

"It was done. I just learned about it. What does it mean?"

"Here." Westfault pointed, "Spots on the frontal bone ... and more drilled holes. Hum, I have an idea."

Ito sat, daring to look at the films hanging before him. He felt like he would puke.

My head! My bones!

"Now here, look at this model!" Westfault commanded. This is the brain, for our purposes, your brain. Now, if we just," and he rummaged through his desk until he held a pair of calipers, "figure the drill hole, its location, and the part of the brain accessed," the calipers moved between film and model. "Now, oh yes, there is a correlation ... holes were drilled over the cerebral hemisphere ... not internal parts, not the optic or the olfactory, some temporal, yes!" He straightened and looked at his interesting new patient.

"Yes, I will take your case, Mr. Shikoku. I know what someone did to you and I will be able to help you. I am, perhaps, your only hope."

Ito stared at the man, and said nothing. His eyes told the doctor what he wanted to know.

"You were experimented with. I don't know why. I will tell you that I presume something was injected through these drilled holes into strategic parts of your brain. I will order brain tissue scans. I believe we may find some material, silicone perhaps, placed to pressure certain tissue, I don't know why, the effects of such a procedure would be macabre ... perhaps not! Perhaps such a procedure would only short out certain thoughts and memories ... you say you don't remember ... hum? We experimented in London with electrical stimulation, yes, memory centers. Pressure would cause interrupted recall and perhaps altered awareness." Westfault found

his chair and sat heavily, letting out a grunt as he focused on the oriental man.

"Human, I mean your cerebral hemispheres are," and he pointed to the model, "ninety percent of your brain tissue. This area is nerve tissue. The convolutions and wrinkles, if laid flat-out, would be about a big as, oh lets see," Westfault looked about his office for something to compare a flattened convolution to, "one sheet of newspaper, I would think each convolution is at least that big. The cerebral cortex is the part someone tampered with. Now, these holes in the zygomatic," he touched Ito's face and ran his finger down, and back from Ito's left eye, "are larger, more like screw holes. Like something was anchored here that had something to do ... maybe even held an apparatus to the head. The scar looks as if something was buried along that line! This is all too strange, too advanced perhaps for our understanding." He sat back again, and stared at Ito. His eyes focused on inner thoughts, his fingers clenched together, white.

"You must tell me all you know about yourself," Westfault said as softly and as kindly as he could.

Like hell. I'll kill you, you pompous bastard!

Chapter EIGHT

Langley, Virginia:

The DCI paced as he spoke, hands clenched behind his back. "Miss Horowitz, I know you didn't send the order. I gave it to your predecessor Miss Carpenter to send. I am not blaming you!"

Tanya felt all frantic with butterflies inside. She couldn't stand any more diarrhea.

"I ordered Agent January here! She has disappeared."

"Perhaps you can, well you know, trace her, Sir?"

"I can trace her! But I can't blow her cover."

I can't let my relationship with her be known.

"Horowitz, get me the DDO on the phone!"

Tanya handed the DCI the instrument after she got through Gloria's questions and convinced her ex-roommate to put Dan on the line.

"Hill? Okay, listen! I want you to find your agent Hurlbut. I need to talk to her!"

"Find her? I wasn't aware she was lost."

"Damned if I know if she's lost or not. What I want has nothing to do with that. I want her to brief me, is that clear!"

"Clear as ... Sir. I'll get her. George, do you want her here in Langley?"

"Here! I can't talk to her any other way that's secure. Now, can I? Just get her here!"

Dan held the telephone away and gave it the finger.

That mealy mouth SOB. The split tongued moron.

Gloria entered the office. "Hang up, Dear. George already ordered Lieutenant Hurlbut here, and on the way, she got lost. That's why he's so mad."

"Jan's not lost. I got a report from her last night. She never mentioned orders from the DCI. That's strange. Get a message to her. I'll cut the order myself."

"Think about it Danny. Wouldn't it be better if George didn't talk to her? I mean, what if she stayed lost, at least lost to George that is?"

He grabbed her about the waist. It was the first time they touched since MaryKay, and she didn't pull away.

International waters near Ten Degree Channel.

Off Little Andaman Island, Andaman Sea:

"Wire for you Lieutenant. You'll need to come below to read it. It's Eyes Only. Yours and the Captain's."

Jan returned the wire to the captain. "You're to take me to Singapore."

"I'll miss you. It's been a pleasure having you aboard this bucket. If anyone asks, you were and are a man, First Mate Hurley, and I can honestly say you were the first man I was ever attracted to. I'm not sure of anything nowadays, but aren't you dressed funny for a sailor?"

"Do sailors still wear those square front, box buttoned pants? I might object if I had to wear those."

"No, they went out with back-hatch long johns. The problem is, we're all dressed to look like this tired old freighter's crew. We don't have any uniforms aboard. How about we amputate one leg, give your hair a tarred pigtail, and dress you as Long John?"

"No," she laughed and her eyes sparkled, "but I appreciate your help. What if I go ashore as an old seaman? I think I can play that role ... it will be easier on my leg."

"Done! You'll look like hell, and I won't ever think of you as a woman again."

Jan didn't take the bait. She knew Captain Grimes was interested in her, she had been ignoring his hints all week. In another time and place, if things were different with David, she might have let things develop between them. He was attractive, attentive, and very bright as an intelligence officer had to be ... but she had other things on her mind. She was thinking about the note she left in David's shaving kit. At least he knew she was safe, even if she wouldn't be able to get back to Calcutta.

She didn't suspect that from Singapore, she would be sent to Hawaii and posted on indefinite leave.

Calcutta:

Laura walked around the room watching Dean do his fifty sit-ups. When he was done and sitting with his arms locked around his knees, she came up behind him and got on her knees. Placing her breasts on his shoulders, she reached around under his arms and gave him a hug. She let her lips touch his head as she locked her hands and let her weight pull them sideways to the floor.

"I'm sweaty!"

"I'm Laura, and I see you've hardened your heart toward me."

"I won't change my mind!"

"I'm just supposed to go back to the states and forget I ever knew you, is that it? Is that all you care?"

Dean put more of his weight against her. "It's your schedule. I have my own schedule ... decided long before I met you."

Two more days. He's leaving for Nepal and ... I have to go home.

"And now you tell me we won't even have these two remaining days together. Why can't I visit schools with you?"

"I guess you could, I hadn't thought about you going with me. Wouldn't you rather do something for *you* while I work?"

"No."

Her left breast lay across his cheek.

"I give up," he tried to roll his head and place his mouth.

"Not until I get a promise."

He would have agreed to anything.

"How do you know the school will let you visit?" Laura asked as they prepared to enter a dingy, red brick building.

"I made arrangements months ago. Doesn't it seem strange that there aren't kids around? I wonder where everybody is."

"In prison." Laura said in a matter-of-fact way.

Upon entering the school, Dean turned to Laura, "You were right, a prison! A Victorian English factory."

"Is this really a school? Where's the Principal's office?"

"Headmaster. The office is down this hall, I think."

Their visit lasted almost three hours. They were toured, lectured to, grilled about U.S. schools, and generally treated well. For Laura, the hours dragged. She was forced to re-live things from her own school days that were better left forgotten. Although she watched Dean closely, she couldn't read his reactions. All the way home, and through dinner, he avoided her questions and refused to talk about what he saw.

Damn his somber mood!

They got into bed. She had an idea. She sat on him and began rocking her pelvis, singing: "Ride a cock horse to Banbury Cross." That did it! Laura had a few more ideas and time to try them.

Too soon, Dean got serious again.

"Want to talk?" Laura asked in a sleepy voice.

"Do you really want that dreary school here in our bed?"

"It's been in our bed. I think it would help if you explained what's eating you."

Dean adjusted the pillow and pushed his back against it. "I saw another age, another time, and another way of understanding human worth." He stared ahead; eyes unfocused as if he were actually seeing what he described.

"I saw a system outdated and considered vile even before it was laid upon this part of the Empire. A system used to justify the joining of man to machine in a way that made the machine sacred, the bodies it used meaningless. I saw the children of an economically determined elite being trained to perpetuate a system of enslavement. The most disturbing part, Laura, is that the system of conditioning we saw today was designed by the alien conquerors and adopted by those conquered as if it somehow served them."

Gad. What have I done? He's so deep. Why can't he avoid things that depress him? He pokes into everything. That's not right. I could never live with him.

"You know the kids we visited today are the children of the rich and powerful, don't you?"

She nodded.

"They are being conditioned, taught a way of thinking that has merged the worst parts of the factory system, at least the system that emerged from the industrial revolution as it was many years ago, with the caste system of India. The combination of the two dead, dead-end, and degrading systems is the basis of the ideology taught at that school. Maybe not at all Indian schools, I hope not, but certainly that one."

"That master guy, he said India couldn't dare educate all of her people. What did he mean?"

"He meant that if India had an educational system like we do in the US, one that attempted to educate everybody, the governing and economic system of India would collapse."

"Collapse? Why? It's supposed to get stronger!"

"It would because those few who use religion and economics to control the masses would be replaced by those who served the people."

"Isn't that good?"

"Not for those in control. That's why they must control education."

"To perpetuate themselves?"

"You've got it!"

Who the hell needs to think about this shit. We're so different.

Chapter NINE

Daiwan-I-Kas Medical Clinic, New Delhi:

"You understand, Mr. Shikoku, that the headaches and fits have nothing to do with the scar on the left side of your head?" Doctor Westfault asked as

Ito sat on the edge of the examination table trying to steel himself for another series of tests.

"I have concluded that there are in fact two distinct scars. One to lay in a tube or series of tubes, and another made to perhaps carry a wire. The tubes were there for fourteen weeks or more. That's the time it takes for a cut like that to heal. Some form of chemical injector was screwed to the side of your head. Probably attached to your internal carotid artery as well. From a close examination of the holes in your zygomatic bone, a bone that does not provide entry into the brain cavity, something of no little weight was fixed there with screws."

Ito felt his stomach churn. He was terrified and fighting for control. Westfault, pure scientist, was unaware of Ito's state until he noticed his patient's face.

"Let me give you a little something for your tension." He turned and rummaged through a bag on the table. "Valium. Take these! Once you relax, we can continue. I'll be back in a little while."

Westfault checked on Ito an hour later. "Feel better now, do we? Here, sit in my chair."

"As I was explaining, each tube led to one of the holes drilled through your braincase. Soft tissue pictures we took show that each site was connected to your ability to remember ... memory centers ... or think of them as processing centers. A lot more showed up on the soft tissue pictures. Beneath each hole, between the brain and the case, is a depression in the brain tissue, the gray matter itself. The depressions were formed by the injection of something like silicone. Remember, I mentioned this before. The stuff exerts a constant pressure on that center of your brain.

"One location, the depression in the temporal area, is quite large. I'm willing to bet that is the one responsible for your brain wave disruptions ... your seizures. The pictures also show that the injected material shows signs of deterioration. We must remove it!"

How was Hedeki altered? Did Katasawa reverse Hedeki's treatment by removing the stuff putting pressure on his brain?

"Doctor, before we proceed any further, there is someone I want you to examine."

Westfault turned in surprise. "Are there others?"

"One other, possibly. I have a twin. I want you to examine him!"

"Mister Shikoku, we need to proceed. The degeneration of the materials in your brain suggests that we have little time. When can you get your brother here?"

"The day after tomorrow."

"I am at your disposal. I will clear my schedule. I am most impressed with your case, Sir, and you have my full attention."

"If you weren't a wealthy man, Doctor, you may consider yourself one now. Keeping things confidential has a price. I understand. I will pay."

Westfault hardly heard him. His mind was racing, thinking of the articles he would write for prestigious journals.

Chapter TEN

Langley, Virginia:

The DCI pulled on his overcoat, got his gloves out of the pockets and held them in his left hand. He took his fur-lined cap off the rack and held it with

the gloves. "It's getting cold out. Have a good evening. Horowitz. I'm going home to Virginia, Ethel and a fire in the fireplace."

In the garage, he chatted briefly with several top-level staff waiting for their drivers. In his black Cadillac, he sat back, relaxed. As the car left the security garage and came to the street, he saw snowflakes.

Snow's early this year. I haven't been aware of the passage of time.

As the limo came abreast of his Georgian townhouse, a man from special services, he couldn't remember his name, opened the door and saw him to the safety of his home. Ethel came from the kitchen and helped him off with his coat.

"It's snowing again, George. This may be a hard winter.

"Again?" George queried. "Oh yes, that's probably right." There was a confused look on his face. A look she saw too often now. They were still in their fifties, but played the game as if they were older and no threat. A look she feared was real, not an act.

"Can we mess the parlor and build a fire?"

"That would be nice. The matches, paper, wood ... everything you need is already laid out. I hoped you would have time for a fire, time to relax dear. You have been overdoing it again! You know that, don't you?"

"Overdoing it? Yes, but ..."

There's so much to do. I'm in a no-win position. I have to play rough. Means do equal ends, if I control the means.

The warmth of the fire sought his bones. "Most important thing about staring into a fire is its message that things may change form, like the log there, but they still exist."

"Oh, honey, are things really that bad?"

"They are bad, I guess ... no, not really bad, just human."

"And does that mean what I think it means?"

"It does. All my dreams, really our dreams, love, about using power to counteract the greed and stupidity of selfish men, are for naught. No matter what I try to do, others, including the President himself, counteract it and ... well, it's disgusting. I often think I've lost touch."

She took his hand, rubbing it.

"But you are there, Darling, just as we agreed you would be!"

"I'm there Ethel, and I know things are much worse than we ever believed."

"Oh George darling. We knew the President was amoral and prone to more evil than good. We knew going in that most of the men who groomed and placed the president were a gang of thugs working for Dominick and the Cartel. At least that monster J. Edgar is dying. At least America has a press that can act. At least the mystique of public service has brought some men to the fore who are selfless patriots willing to serve without great personal gain."

"True, in that way things have not become worse. It's just that I thought that by gaining this powerful position I could expose those who are solely self-serving and help form policies that would break the grasp of the Dominick Cartel and the New Wind Church that is out of control. I need to take it over—the whole Dominick thing and use it for our own purposes."

"Darling, you remember what you yourself said? That you could effect changes that would gradually work to enlist the services of men outside the gang of thugs? Don't you still believe that someday a President will be elected who is not a tool of any self-serving group? Please, Dear, try to see

what you're building. Stay in there to win the little battles that will gradually lead to victory over time."

The DCI relaxed, looked into the fire and then into the eyes of his lady.

How we planned! How naive we were in those days as we lay in bed at night dreaming of a nation with leaders who truly loved America. Leaders who love their country more than wealth and power. How I've learned. Strength, religious fanaticism and brutality win in this game. She wouldn't understand, she will forgive me when I do what I have to ... and take over.

"What a partner you are, Ethel! You re-energize me! It's just that when I get into those cabinet meetings and see nothing but self-serving, greed-driven power mongers from the Cartel ... when I see the President controlled by the gang, and I hear them talking, always talking ... bragging about those they are grooming ... like that actor ... or about how they placed congressmen and cabinet heads ... while they brag about ... actually gloat over the fact that none in the upper echelons of government can take a pee without their prior approval. I want to give up. "

Ethel stood, went behind his chair, and placed her hands on his shoulders, kneading his tight muscles. He relaxed, and let the fire and the woman comfort him.

"Honey, each time you expose one of those thugs, each time you help position an honest man or woman in their ranks—someone loyal to us—you are winning. Dare to dream again, my darling. Believe in the day when the Director of the FBI is selected because he has demonstrated his knowledge of law, and because he has accomplishments that show he is committed to

preserving individual rights. Maybe you can help get a judge we control, or a man without greed and a thirst for power, into the tube. Maybe you can help expose the Cartel, break the backs of those who think themselves more elite than we are, and position those who will serve. Don't give up, my love, you are good. Good will win!"

He put his hand on hers, holding it against his cheek. "That was a beautiful speech. I still have some tricks up my sleeve and the power and position to make a change. But nothing will ever happen."

"Oh no!" she gasped, certain that all their dreams were dashed. "You don't believe that!"

"Let me finish, will you Ethel! Nothing will ever happen if I don't get dinner. I'll probably die of starvation!"

Silver Hill, Maryland:

"Well, Gloria Hill of Silver Hill, what did you plan for supper?" Dan asked his wife as they drove into the three-car garage of their new home.

"I haven't planned anything. All I could think about all day was Chris. Where is that sitter, I thought she was to have him here at 6:30?"

"Probably kidnapped him."

"That's not funny, Danny!"

"Look, coming down the street. That's her car, isn't it?"

"She's driving awfully fast, don't you think?"

"No."

"I wish she'd be more careful!"

"Look, Gloria. We turn him over to her in the morning. She brings him back at night. It's a little late to worry about his safety, or to worry all day about his cold."

"And what should I do? Give up my profession and become a housefrau?"

"There are worse things! Just think, you could be a ding without a bat like Tanya. Or, you could still live in that flat with the peeling paint."

"Or," she exclaimed in anger, "I could be happy and have a life without a prick like you!"

"And without a child like Chris, right?"

Gloria stormed from the car and greeted the sitter.

Baby Chris cried when she took him.

"Seven in the morning?"

"Yes, Missus Hill. Drop Chris off at seven."

They piled into the car and called in their pizza order. Dan thought they ate pizza every night, but she assured him it wasn't true. Last night they had Chinese. Chris cried himself to sleep. They got home and sat at the kitchen table picking scraps of cheese and olives off the cardboard box.

"Do you like living like this, always fighting, I mean?" Gloria asked.

"I lived like this with my first wife too. It's all I know."

"Can't we change things back to the way we were?"

"You mean when you loved me, before Chris?"

Gloria glared at him. "Maybe back to when you loved me, before MaryKay!"

"I got from MaryKay what I couldn't get from you, nothing more. I didn't even like her!"

The baby screamed louder, red-faced, scared.

"He picked up the anger in your voice." She cradled the baby and tried to comfort him.

"The kid doesn't know either of us. He probably wants Mrs. Atkins. Want me to call the sitter?"

"Damn you, Dan. If you won't help, get out!"

"I'll be in the den watching TV." Dan left the kitchen. "Call me when it's over!"

It wasn't over the next morning as they drove to work. It wasn't over then, and there was no sign it would ever end peacefully.

At Langley, Dan was forced to deal with the way their anger interfered with work. "Gloria, I called you in to inform you that I'm having you transferred. We can't live together and work together. I need someone supportive, someone I can give orders to and who will follow them."

"You SOB. I suppose you'll divorce me to the pool!"

"No, I'll look for a position where you can utilize your skills."

"As a housefrau, a man's servant?"

"If you like!"

"I never heard you offer to stay home with Chris!"

"Funny, I never heard you offer either! I guess the loser in all of this is Chris, and I'm sorry for that."

Gloria turned pale and stared at him. She reacted as if Dan hit her in the stomach. She was visibly folding.

"Do you think I don't love him?"

"Love? What is that from Chris's perspective?"

She found the edge of the couch and sat heavily.

"It's all my fault, then, isn't it?"

Goddamn office isn't the place for a domestic quarrel.

"Not your fault. Not my fault. You had a career. I had a career. We got pregnant. We had Chris. Now one of us has to decide that a career is secondary to a Child's needs. Neither of us is willing to do that."

"But your career is more important than mine, right?"

"I guess you're right. Babies need mothers."

"They need fathers too!"

"I'm not sure of that, but you may be right. To you being a mother is a title. I guess father is a title to me. Whatever, Chris has Mrs. Atkins to nurture him. You and I keep him at night and on weekends while we hustle about trying to do all the things we couldn't get done during the week."

"I won't give up my career!" You bastard. Who do you think runs things around here? I know more about your job than you'll ever know.

"You're just a secretary!"

"And you are the worst Deputy Director of Operations the CIA has ever had!"

In charge of the Nation's external security! He had to break-it off. "I have a job to do. We'll talk later."

As soon as Gloria calmed herself, she called Tanya. Tanya had lots of ideas, like going shopping, but none realistic. They schemed together.

"Dan doesn't know how we get messages to Dean's handlers. Let's make certain he doesn't find out. He doesn't know what we know about the DCI's activities, either."

"We can make sure he doesn't know anything we don't want him to know. Gloria, you have the power. You run things. Tell me what to do."

Fucking men ... let them think they run things. We'll show them. We'll run things right while we hang their balls on the walls!

"Oh Tanya, thank you for siding with me."

Mrs. Atkins placed her hand over the baby's mouth and nose until it gasped, suffocating, and quit crying for a moment.

"You poor little dear. No one wants you. You'd better learn that you're in this damned world alone. Don't be trying to get any favors from me! I've got my own to worry about."

She left Chris in the back room with the others, as she always did.

Chapter ELEVEN

Calcutta, India:

Before Laura left the restroom she opened and read the message. Susan studied her. When she finished reading, she looked confused.

"Do you understand the message?"

"No, I really don't. I understand where you want me to take him, but what does details of his passage mean?"

Susan looked at her with her officious, cold eyes. "Is that what was in the message?"

"Do you know?" Laura asked innocently, "I think it means send them his plans, but I'm not sure."

"Yes. You write down everything about his travel plans. Get them to me in a tampon. Meanwhile, you will make certain that you ... let me see

that note! That you take him to visit the Asutosh Museum at Calcutta University. A man you know will contact you there. Have you got all that?"

"I think so. Susan, it's nice of you people to worry about him, he's really a nice man and he's been a good friend to me."

*You're as stupid as a post. Where do they get dingbats like you?
What's the service coming to?*

Laura made her way back to the table. "Who was that lanky woman?" Dean asked.

"Oh, just a woman in need of something I carry in my purse. She's American, not able to find some things in the stores here." She looked at David and smiled; aware he didn't suspect a thing.

"David, we have one day left. Can we see more of Calcutta, I mean, I kinda wanna see the University and Dalhousie Square."

"Not afraid to go out anymore?"

"That's funny, I'm getting used to Calcutta. Things I see don't bother me as much."

"Aren't we wonderful animals? Throw us in shit, and soon we smell roses."

"David Dean! What is that supposed to mean? You say the strangest things sometimes. Let's get going before you depress me."

After a day of taxis and one bus ride, Laura's whole body hurt.

He's ready to go back to the Hotel. He's getting grumpy. It's now or never.

"I want to go to this one more place, David. Come on now, it's important to me."

"Important? Why? It's an art museum and you aren't exactly into art."

"I know, but honey, this is a place I really want to go. Okay?"

They walked toward the museum. "This must be the Centenary Building. Look! The Asutosh Museum sign." He took her arm and steered her into the foyer. The place was deserted except for a sleepy guard and a tall, thin man who eyed them and then made a point of ignoring them.

"Do we pay?" Dean asked, looking for someone in the office or at the small desk.

"Maybe on the way out." Her voice echoed through the corridors of stone.

"I know! I'll go and ask that man over there." She pointed to Caldwell from the Counselor Section of the Embassy. Before Dean could object, she was off his arm and clicking across the marble floor.

"You are doing well. Here. Take this guide! Tell him I was leaving and gave it to you. Whatever happens, you make sure this guide is in his luggage when he leaves for Nepal. Do it! Goodbye, Citizen Callert, your country thanks you!"

Exhausted from their long day of sight-seeing they ducked in for a cup of tea. " *Chini Chai, do*," Dean said, holding up his thumb and finger for the waiter to see.

"Two hot teas with sugar," the waiter responded in Oxford English, as he bowed and returned to the kitchen.

Laura was avidly studying the museum guidebook Caldwell gave her.

"Those first days," Dean said, "who would have believed that Calcutta was once the intellectual center of India? I don't understand Calcutta ... or India. It's like peeling through layers, only we started at the bottom and are

working our way to the top. I'm glad I'm going to Nepal for a week or so. I can't take much more right now."

Laura wasn't paying attention. Then his words sank in. "You're glad? Don't you care that we will probably never see each other again?"

"That's not what I said or meant. I wasn't speaking about us."

"How do you really feel?"

Shit! Why did I ask him that? He'll probably go on and on about ...

"A loss. I'll miss you. Excited. I can hardly wait to board that plane tomorrow and see the high Himalayas and Kathmandu."

"You are always so honest! I don't want to go home. I wish I could go to Nepal."

She knew how she could make certain Dean carried the museum guidebook.

"David, I'm going to write something for you ... here, I'm going to write it on the blank fly sheet of this guide. I want you to promise you won't read it until you reach your hotel in Nepal."

"Okay."

David,

You held my hand and calmed me in the Eastern. We saw the Chowringhee Maidan parks, gardens and other amazing things together. You comforted me in the bustees and you were at my side along the Hooghly. You bought me an antique trinket at the market in Chitpore. You held me through a heaven of nights. You, David, are my friend, thank you! I am also yours. I miss you so! My love always, Laura

Before she closed the guide and gave it to him, she made certain the ink was dry and that she had spelled every word correctly.

"It's dumb, but it's me!"

It's dumb, but it's the only way to help him serve our country.

David took the guide, pretended to kiss it, pocketed it, and focused on their time together. He was about to ask Laura what she would like to do, when movement across the room made him look away from her. He froze.

My God, that lawyer Sankina and one of the men we saw the first night ... they're coming here.

"Good evening, Mr. Dean. You never called me. I presume you worked everything out?"

Sankina and the man with the obese body and pretty face glared at him, faces moist with sweat. The ugly man clicked sugarcoated words.

"I didn't think it was all that important."

"The American operative has probably been shot by now."

That's why she left the note. She knew about these clowns. Jan's safe. This is some ploy to get me involved again ... to use me for some perverse CIA business.

"I'm sorry to hear that, but I'm not involved and I couldn't have done anything to help. Could I!"

Sankina's face blanched. His tight little mouth clamped shut like a lash-less eye. The other man stared. Sankina's mouth formed a guppy smile.

"I had hoped to make a small fee by helping you. Please, accept my apology for bothering you. My partner and I just came in for *chai*. Please, let me pay for yours, and this lovely lady you are entertaining?"

He stood patiently at the side of their table hoping Dean would warm to him and introduce the lady. Perhaps she was the contact Sungawa was looking for.

"You are already out enough on this ambulance chase, Mister Solicitor. Thanks for the offer, but my friend and I were just leaving. We will pay for our own tea."

Sungawa Industries office, Howrah, India:

"That about ends my report Mister Shikoku. In summary, the Chinese are building their road through Nepal. That will insure the northern network. Our operation in Bangkok is tied to our operations in Calcutta and Delhi. That insures our eastern supply routes. Our teams have contacted the Iranians and the Albanians. Our western routes are open. Our plants here and in Bombay have begun production of the radios and televisions with the compartments for your goods. This entire operation will begin when you give the order."

"And there are no problems?" Shikoku asked, looking threateningly at Sankina.

"No real problems, at least we are on top of all possible problems."

"What exactly does that mean?"

"We are puzzled by the arrival in Calcutta of a man known to be a dangerous CIA operative, and a woman who has direct contacts with American Military Intelligence. We know that she, perhaps both, were urging the exposure of our operations in Thailand. You neutralized that threat yourself, Sir."

"That woman! I thought I had her sent out of the region?"

"Oh, you did! She disappeared and we learned she was recalled ... put on indefinite leave. She is out, Sir."

"And the man?"

"We have him under observation. He's very clever and we don't know what he's up to. We would have eliminated him but then we would not know of his contacts and plans. He will leave for Nepal soon. Perhaps we can learn about his mission and neutralize him there," he paused, wondering if he should tell Shikoku any more, decided that he must, and continued. "There is also another woman, a CIA handler who has been contacted at least twice in the hotel by CIA operatives. Whatever her role, we have verified that she will be pulled out of action and sent back to the USA tomorrow. It is all very strange."

"The man's name?"

"David Dean."

Hedeki relaxed, thought a moment, a slight smile on his face.

He's the one who saved Acieto Onoto's hide. He helped take out Mitusuka. Anyway, he's working for, not against me.

"Let me handle him, you keep tabs, let me know everything he does. I have many friends in high places, I'll see the end of this."

The meeting adjourned. A courier met Shikoku's party in the hall, said something to Taegu, and delivered a sealed communication. Shikoku's bodyguard handed the message to him and stood back, searching the hall for any sign of danger.

"I must leave immediately for Delhi. Make the arrangements, Taegu!"

As they left the building, Taegu barked orders into a hand-held radio. He informed Hedeki Shikoku that they would be able to travel within the

hour. The sedan sped away from the headquarters building, bound for Sungawa's private airfield.

Chapter TWELVE

Langley, Virginia:

"Dan, I called you in to discuss something with you ... no, in all honesty ... I called you in to clear the air. Things have not been as I would like them between us." The DCI held out a friendly hand. Dan took it.

"Dan, I got you in position because I saw something special in you ... you know that, but I'm not sure you know what I saw." He searched Dan's features for openness.

"It wasn't the contents of your reports that got to me, and God knows what you pointed out about our operatives being exposed was a major contribution. No, it was that you dared to write your reports. If you didn't suspect at the time that you might have been signing away your future options by writing the analysis, then you were naive. I think you knew the risks, and I think you told it like you saw it in spite of what might happen to your career."

Dan nodded.

I considered my career a dead-end at that time. I didn't give a damn what anybody thought.

"I was looking for someone who would put National interests above his own. A man who would tell it like he saw it and not lie to perpetuate a system that rewards those who look the other way."

Dan took a step backwards.

What's he saying? Am I invited into some inner circle?

"Wait a minute, George, I'm not sure you understand my motives."

"Tell me if I am wrong when I say that you would give-up your career here, your future with the government, if you could help our Nation."

"Yes I would."

"Now listen, I have something to tell you."

George talked for over an hour. The two men came close together physically as Dan leaned forward to hear the DCI. He thought he understood his message.

He's a practical idealist. He really believes he can make a difference. He knows about the cartel and all the rot. He's an any-means-equal-ends guy now because he considers this his last hand, his last chance to win. He'll do anything. I agree it's the only way, but I've got to be careful. They'll get him.

"George, I never allowed myself to hope there was a way out for America. I mean, out from under the control of the cartel. Do you really think we can win against the President's men and the system the rich and powerful have been building all these years?"

"Thanks for saying *we*. I knew I didn't misjudge you. We win because they have been in power so long without opposition, they believe they have won. They only listen to themselves. By the time they understand that God is not on their side—that they are not the chosen elite—it will be too late."

"So, there is opposition. How large is the ...?"

"Large wouldn't work, we would soon be sold out. As of now, there are two of us. But of course, we have unlimited pawns at our disposal."

"George, I have a lot of thinking to do."

What the hell, he's probably right. We have the equivalent of the hydrogen bomb and we control the delivery system. It might work.

"Another thing you should know, Dan. Jan Hurlbut is my goddaughter. I gave you her name, remember?" To me she is Agent January and I care a lot about her."

I should have known!

"She works for both of us now. She serves, but I want her out of harm's way."

When Dan got back to his office, he sat quietly for a long time. He held on to the warm feeling he gained. His pessimism and frustration were gone, evaporated by George's words and ideas. His personal problems seemed to disappear. "There is hope!" he whispered to the empty room. "And by God, we will win!"

"Get Aston Martin up here ASAP!" Dan ordered the new secretary from the pool who replaced Gloria. "Get me files on Hedeki Shikoku, Sungawa Industries, Bengali Companies, LTD., and a current report on David Dean. Oh, and get me an analyst who knows European Operations. If you need help putting this stuff together, contact Gloria Hill. She's working for the National Foreign Intelligence Board (NFIB). This is top priority! Any questions?"

The woman's life was suddenly complicated. She called Aston and told him to report immediately.

Aston Martin—known to the secretarial pool as Ivy League Ass—entered Hill's office, regimentally striped tie swinging freely, coffee mug in hand. One glance at the DDO and he stopped, amazed. Never in five years sharing an analyst's office with Dan had he seen the man animated.

"Put that damned coffee down Aston, we've got work to do!"

Aston felt his hackles rise, then calmed himself. Dan was DDO.

"Sorry, Aston, but I'm on to something that needs your brilliance. I'm throwing you into the pan as of now! From now on you have nothing to do but focus on what develops here. Call and have someone else pick-up any work you have ongoing. Better yet, I'll call downstairs and tell them." Dan picked-up the green phone. "What are you working on Aston?"

Aston thought a moment, hunched his shoulders, and announced. "Russian air flights in and out of Bandaranaike."

"What?"

"Colombo, Sri Lanka. That's the airport there."

"Here, you take the phone and give the order! I can't even pronounce the fucking place."

When Aston's workload was shifted, the DDO continued.

"Aston, some of our top leaders believe we need friends in Southeast Asia to help us win in Vietnam. As a result, our agency and others have been willing to overlook the flow of opiates and other shit from south China, Cambodia, and Thailand in exchange for some kind of support they are supposed to be giving us. The policy, including support for warlords and drug moguls, goes right to the top, the President's men. Those of us in the agency who oppose the support keep out and keep shut. The CIA wasted six of the DEA's top men to protect the drugs-for-support program. As a result, months of work by the DEA—the most unorthodox, effective, and least known international police organization in the world—was destroyed. As you know, we helped establish direct pipelines running drugs from Asia into our major cities."

He paused for breath; aware he was talking too fast. Aston's mouth was open, his face expressionless as he tried to concentrate.

"We all celebrated last month when Mitusuka Industries was exposed and broken. What I didn't know is that Mitusuka was built with fracture lines, like a grenade. When it went bust, parts flew off as planned and went right on functioning. One, run out of Japan, is Sungawa Industries headed by Hedeki Shikoku. Another is run out of some place in Europe, Greece we think. We don't know its location or moniker, but it has been trading in drugs, tobacco, oil and electronic equipment. Both have interests in India, what we call *pipeline* interests. We weren't aware of their power in India until just the other day. Those of us who oppose this stupid CIA policy have one Operation Cowboy operative in India, and some IDs."

Aston signaled with a grimace and outstretched hands that he didn't follow.

"Cowboy?" Dan asked.

"No, I know what Operation Cowboy is."

"IDs then?"

Aston nodded.

"ID is the code name for non-agency contacts used to support cowboys in the field. Usually women, known as Ingenuous Deputies."

"Cowboys? Are you saying there are more than one?" Aston seemed surprised.

"You're sharp! At this time, we only have one cowboy and one cowgirl."

"Really? Only two? You're hooking me into something the President wants us to overlook and you don't even have operatives?"

"I didn't say President, I said the President's Men! There's a big difference. Hell, no one can even get close to the President. The thugs have him insulated. He may be nuts! Tell me you don't know of the Cartel!"

Aston stared at Hill.

You son of a bitch, mention Dominick and the cartel and you're meat.

"I've been told never to imply that there is a cartel. So why the hell is there competition between the CIA and DEA?"

"I don't know. I can tell you that DEA programs have been organized by Dennis Dayle. That they are so secret even the director doesn't know everything about them. I like what they do, they're flesh hunters, not drug hunters. That means each of ten or more individual DEA programs target the people at the head of drug empires."

"Beg your pardon, Hill. I never heard anybody was out there doing what has to be done. Are you sure?"

"For a fact! CIA operatives fear that Dayle's forces will cause the U.S. political damage that will hurt our war effort. They permit the targeting of drugs in the pipelines, but not those who control the operations. It makes for good press. They have allowed DEA men to be murdered."

Aston turned pale. "You mean to confirm that we have guys out there who are fighting our own forces?"

He knows a lot, but not the role Dominick and the New Wind plays.

"It looks that way. I believe it"

"Why me? I don't know a thing about India. That area was always outside our sphere of influence, or so the big boys said. I'm interested, but I know the way things work. Besides, why drag my ass into this? Why me?"

You must know I'm highly religious, patriotic, and ethical. Most here consider that a weakness."

"Your ass is in and the door is shut. Break confidence now and I'll have you up on charges even your mother will believe."

I've got you Aston Martin! You cover your ass. Threatened, kept in line by fear, you'll give one hundred percent.

"No, I'm not in yet. I need to know who these men are you call the President's Men. The ones you claim run things."

"Fair enough, Aston. Start with those who have left the inner circles of power, like an ex-vice president. Next, connect the dots and draw your own conclusions. I know you analyzed a damage control situation when the VP left office. I know you have a line on those who, while in service to the nation or just out, would sell their mothers for a nickel, their country for a penny. You worked on the Dominick thing. The cartel operates out of Senate offices."

Aston held up his hand, palm toward Hill. "Stop! I know. I just didn't think anyone was independent of them. And Dan, Dominick is a religious man like me. I believe in him."

Dan moved about, walking, stopping, holding his hands clenched behind his back, folding his arms on his chest, smoothing his hair, and generally windmilling. Aston sat, his stomach churning.

"The Warlords in South China, the Shan United Army leader, the Thai-Burmese connection, the Lu-Hsu-shui factions and others have been able to use Thailand as a funnel for drugs going to the U.S. and Europe. Now they fear this channel will be cut-off so they have plans to re-route through Nepal, India, Iran and other pipelines they're establishing. One of

our agents, January, blundered on to the system in Thailand, making it difficult for the Agency to deny it. As a result, development of alternative pipelines became top priority."

Aston nodded. Dan knew what he knew about that.

"Is that why India?"

"Not exactly. Our Cowboy was scheduled to go to India ... private itinerary, nothing to do with the agency. We sent January there because we had to get her out of Thailand. Once there, all hell broke loose and I couldn't understand why. January was in danger of being captured by Sungawa forces. Fallout, our code name for Cowboy David Dean, was contacted by Sungawa's people. They may have tried to recruit him, but we don't think he got in bed with them." He paused for breath, realizing he was talking too fast. Aston nodded that he followed.

"We pulled January out, slipped an ID in. Through the ID, we were able to pass important information to Dean aka Fallout. That information advises our people in Nepal about the possible use of the new China-Tibet-Kathmandu highway as a pipeline for poppy products."

"Why didn't you contact our Nepal forces directly?"

"First, we don't officially have anyone in Nepal. Second, we've concluded that because of Sungawa's close connection to our government, all of our channels of communication are known. Luckily, we had Fallout on the road to Kathmandu. He doesn't know he's working for us. It's a perfect way to communicate."

Tribhuvan Airport. Kathmandu, Nepal:

Special Agent Caldwell met every flight into Kathmandu for three days looking for a young American woman he could recruit as an ID. As each flight arrived, his disappointment increased. He didn't want to stay in this exposed location, he didn't want to be in Nepal, and he dreaded the flight back to Calcutta on board the Embassy's ancient D-C3 mail plane. He knew his job. He waited, getting up occasionally to make certain no one made him. He pretended to be a harried businessman waiting for a company plane. He tried not to fall asleep.

The JAL Rangoon-Calcutta-Kathmandu flight settled into the valley, made its approach, and taxied to the gate. Caldwell watched the passengers depart and walk toward the immigration office. He knew each tourist had a seven-day visa and enough money to prove he would not be a burden on the society. Nepal had had its fill of destitute hippies from Europe and the States. Now, the country was exporting the drugged kids by the busload and controlling access by keeping out those who thought they would find mystical answers to the world's problems in Nepal.

The only woman traveling alone was tall and lanky.

Might be an American? Looks Aussie or English.

He waited where he could see the color of her passport and hear her voice. As she passed through customs, he confirmed she was an American traveling alone.

"Are you a United States citizen?"

The woman looked him over with an indignant huff.

"Yes?"

Caldwell sensed contempt. She didn't want anything to do with him.

"I'm sorry to interrupt your trip into town. I'm sure you must be tired and anxious to get to your hotel. As you can tell, I am a fellow American. I work for our government and I am here greeting Americans and giving them information that may be vital to their survival." Before she could react, he motioned to the empty waiting area. "Please follow, this will take only a minute!"

She's in her early thirties, angular build, somewhat acne scarred, and lacks something ... a feminine quality.

Her dark, angry eyes communicated contempt for men!

This one's a ball-breaker.

"Please, may I see your passport?"

She handed it to him. She hadn't asked for his identification. That oversight told him she was an inexperienced traveler. He perused the little book, noted her name: Dorothy Wentworth. Current address: Los Angeles. Her picture made her look better than she did in person. He handed it back.

"Miss Wentworth, I need to warn you about some conditions in this beautiful country. May we sit?"

Got her!

"Over the past several years literally thousands of young people have streamed into Nepal. Most have read Siddhartha by Hesse and are seeking the Hesse Mystique, mind-opening drugs, and what they call *wisdom*. Sadly, these young people become victims. In states of drugged indifference, they go barefoot through the streets, eat foods they can't assimilate, and" Her features relaxed, she looked more like the woman in her photo.

"To make a sad story short, the kids get sick. Doctors began reporting illnesses that had not been known since the Middle Ages. Kids began dying, and over a thousand bodies were sent back to Europe and the States before the Nepalese government decided to forcibly export the hordes of young people."

She's scared now, scared and concerned.

"You must be careful to keep your passport with you at all times. Leave some of your money in the hotel's safe box in case desperate young people rob you. They pray on their own countrymen."

Her eyes became shiny beads looking out through squinted lids.

"Country *persons*, don't you mean?"

Shit! What a bitch!

"Sorry, you're right. They pray on women and men from their countries because they know that to be sent back into India is a death sentence."

"Death? Why?"

"The kids are already sick. There is no treatment in rural India for them. No wonder drugs or magic cures. By the time they make it to Delhi or Bombay, if they make it, they're too far gone, too weak to respond to any treatment."

"And you think they would hurt me?" Fear caught the corners of her eyes.

"Not if you are careful. Don't travel alone. Keep your money and your airline ticket safe. Use common sense."

She was more trusting now, concerned. She recognized him as a friend.

"I'm traveling alone. What can I do here? I must get out to see Kathmandu!"

Caldwell suppressed a smile. "I'm not sure you will be safe! Let me think!"

Got you Bitch!

"There is a person who works for us, the United States, who also needs someone to travel around Kathmandu Valley with. But ... he must not know that we watch-out for him. He's very proud and independent ... yet, I fear for him, just as I fear for you."

"Mister, uh, what is your name?"

"Caldwell."

"Mister Caldwell, are you suggesting I help you?"

"Could you? No, that's not fair to ask! But you could do a patriotic thing and have a very capable and decent travel companion at the same time. Would you be interested?"

She already has the whole thing mapped out.

"What is it you want me to do with this guy?"

"First, you will have to convince him that you are a desirable traveling companion. Like all Europeans and Americans, he is staying at your hotel, the Annapurna on King's Way. May I drive you there? We can talk as we go."

Langley, Virginia:

"It just came in by tampon express, Gloria, it says they have another woman for Dean. The bastards. I was to be Dean's handler. Why did I have to come home?"

Gloria held the phone away from her ear and looked around the office to see if anyone was listening. "Don't worry about it, Tanya. Who else saw the message?"

"Your hubby is the only one. My boss is out and I told the courier I was instructed to hold it for the DCI."

"Good, you're clever!"

"Will I ever get to be David's handler again?"

"You will if I have anything to do with it! What did Danny boy do?"

"I don't know for sure. He's on the warpath. Everybody is talking about it. I think he's overreacting to your domestic problems. He's been ordering people around like he knew what he was doing."

"We've got to find out what he's up to. Get back to the DCI's office Tanya!"

Chapter THIRTEEN

Daiwan-I-Kas Medical Clinic, New Delhi:

Doctor Westfault stared at the nearly identical men. His tests on Hedeki were complete and he was attempting to nutshell his findings.

"We have not been able to locate the exact memory functions of the brain. We believe memory functions are controlled by the cerebral hemispheres generally. There is no one place I can probe to find a specific memory. No one area or grouping of areas that correspond to a time of life. Yet, holes were drilled with precision in the same locations in both of your skulls. The silicone, or whatever they injected, had specific targets. The injections of material seem to have been placed where they would have

outcomes someone knew in advance. I've never seen anything like this before."

Westfault's observations sickened Hedeki and Ito.

"Lasting brain damage can cause seizures and or convulsions. Other damage has been known to cause amnesia, which you both show signs of. We have never experimented on human beings using chemical deprivation or induced chemical alteration. There has been some work on the higher primates, but it is inconclusive as to its effects or its application to your cases." He paused to breathe and assess the brothers' understanding.

"Your braincases were similarly drilled. Ito, you had tubes implanted from a pump of some kind. That accounts for your scars. Hedeki, you have the mounting holes, but not the scar track. Perhaps the tubes ran externally. Both of you show brain trauma beneath the holes, but Hedeki, someone re-drilled and attempted to remove or replace the materials used to depress the surface of your brain. That happened not too long ago. That corresponds with what you told me about regaining your memory, or at least part of it. I must tell you that all of the old material was not removed. There is some sign of hydrocephalic occlusion. You are in danger. We must determine how much danger as soon as possible!"

Hedeki glared. "Something must be done, damn you!"

The look and the voice chilled Westfault. He forgot his line of explanation.

"I did not damage you, Mr. Shikoku. I will help you if I can. Kindly refrain from threatening me!"

Hedeki put a smile on his lips, pretending to apologize. I will enjoy the day you die, pompous barbarian.

Ito faked a warm smile. "When can you remove the pressure from my brain?"

"I must devise a suction tool to lift the implant, but not damage the cortex. It may be advisable to open a section of the braincase ... not try to remove the implant through a ... a straw."

"When will you know? When will you stop these fits?"

Westfault hesitated, looked back at Hedeki, and saw the primeval coldness of the man. "I will need information from you, Hedeki. I will need any records or data from the lab in Japan. I will not proceed until there is a reasonable chance that Ito will survive, and that you, Hedeki, can be guaranteed a longer life."

The brothers, grim and angry, left the complex. In Ito's sedan, Hedeki looked straight ahead refusing to see his brother.

"I have information for you. You have information for me. We must share information now. We must combine Sungawa and Sungana in case that hairy barbarian witch doctor blunders."

Chapter FOURTEEN

Hotel Annapurna. Kathmandu, Kingdom of Nepal:

"Dorothy Wentworth ... aha ... here it is. You are pre-registered. If you will just sign here!" The deskman turned a bound hotel registry so she could sign it. "The bell captain will take you to your room. Welcome!"

The hotel lobby seemed to be a men's club. Everywhere she looked, weather-tanned and sun-reddened mountain climbers talked to Sherpa guides and outfitters. The lobby was a page out of a National Geographic

Magazine featuring Hillary's preparations for an attack on Everest. No women were present. The bastards exclude women. They think all women are inferior—to be used as slaves and sex objects. Screw them!

Dorothy followed the bell captain to her room. It was small but neat. She unpacked and went to the window. An enormous tree full of large fruit bats hanging heads down like furry pouches blocked her view.

Everything's so strange—I'm alone. Maybe I can find a friend. I wish I had another woman to talk to. I don't want to nursemaid a guy, even if it's in the national interest.

Leaving the safety of her room, she walked across the lobby, down into the sunken bar area and around the clusters of men drinking and talking. All she found were men, men climbers, men in business suits, men from Britain, men from everywhere.

I can't believe there are no women! Damn them, don't they know this is a woman's world too?

The bald guy Caldwell described was sitting at a table alone, reading a book. She walked by and noted the book was Nepal: A Traveler's Guide. He looked up.

"It's good! It's published by Lonely Planet. That's a very romantic name for a publishing company. The author," he turned the book so that she could see the binding, "is a guy name of Prakash A Raj! Strange name, don't you think?"

She smiled her best smile. "May I join you? I've been wondering how I was to learn about this country, and you seem to be way ahead of me."

That was easy.

"Chai?" he asked.

"Tea? Okay. Is it good?"

"I think so! My name is David ... from Colorado."

"Oh, so you're here to climb mountains?"

"No, there's plenty where I come from. I'm here to learn about the country."

"Me too. I'm Dorothy. I'm from California. Please don't call me Dotty, I prefer Dorothy and I don't like it that Dotty implies dottering!"

She searched the restaurant again hoping to find a woman.

"Place seems crowded, mostly climbers. The guy at the desk told me they're leaving tomorrow. Seems they can't get a permit to climb Everest or Annapurna. They're going to Sankhu ... to try a peak near there. I was just looking at a map for that place."

"So, you aren't with them. You're traveling alone?"

"Yeah, and you?"

"I am, but I have been told that I dare not go out into Kathmandu alone. I don't know what to do. I want to see this place! I've heard about its wonders all of my life."

"Me too, I've heard about Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, Kashmir, and Tibet, but I never knew they were so rich in culture and history."

Who is this gal? Thin, angular—if she has any feminine qualities, she's trying to hide them. No bra, no jewelry, pancake makeup hiding old acne scars. Rough hands, nails trimmed short, straight across like a man's. Lets hair grow under her arms ... legs. A woman's woman? Strange.

"David, how long have you been here?"

"I arrived late yesterday from Calcutta. You?"

"Two hours. From Rangoon ... but that was only a stopover. They wouldn't let us deplane. Before that, Singapore."

The waiter came. David ordered tea. Both searched the faces in the crowded place looking for women. Dean missed Laura's company. He wondered if Jan would appear, knew she wouldn't. How nice it would be to share this exotic place with her.

Dorothy let the waiter place the tea, and let it steep as advised.

He'll expect me to pour. I'll get things straight right now.

Dean put his guidebook aside and lifted the top off the teapot. The leaves had settled. He replaced the top and without a thought poured both cups.

"What are your plans, Dorothy?"

"Would you let me tag along with you?" She asked in the helpless, little girl way she assumed one used with men.

"Tag along? I'm not a guide. I don't know any more than you do about this place. What if we plan excursions together? You must have things you want to do?"

Surprised, she agreed. "Okay, we'll plan. I've heard of palaces, multi-roofed temples, buildings covered with carvings, and temples with living goddesses. I want to see everything."

They finished their tea. Dean rose and helped with her chair.

Chauvinistic bastard!

"I'll meet you over there in half an hour." He pointed to the entry, turned, and headed down the narrow hallway to his room.

Entering his room, a disheveled mess greeted him. His clothing was spread over the bed. His camera and case lay on the floor. He sensed that

the room was empty, moved inside cautiously and checked the bathroom and the closet. He was alone. He gathered his things, marveling that nothing was missing.

Someone went through my gear! Camera's okay, shaving kit is complete. Were they after my tickets and travelers checks?

He felt the flat purse under his shirt. They were safe.

After reporting the break-in to the clerk, and conducting a survey of his room with the hotel security man, he realized he was late for his meeting with Dorothy. Grabbing his camera, he almost ran to the lobby. She was waiting, impatient, obviously annoyed.

"Someone searched my room. They went through my stuff but didn't take anything."

She stayed very close to him as they walked into the busy streets of the city made of wood.

Chapter FIFTEEN

Sungawa Headquarters, Kathmandu:

"He brought the pamphlet. The Embassy Section Chief got it out of his room and took it to his office. I guess he read it. He left it on his desk when he went out for lunch. I slipped in and got it. The message is written on the fly sheet."

"You do good work, my friend. As soon as we have finished copying this, take it back! You're a long time away from the Embassy. You have already been missed, I presume!"

"I'll cover."

"And you'll get the pamphlet back!"

"I'll find it on the floor under his desk. He'll never suspect. After all, I'm his man. He won't even know the guide was gone!"

Omiya took the copy of the museum guide to Sungawa's intelligence gathering and deciphering crews in the basement.

"Get busy! Get it back to me in ten minutes."

That night a wire went out to the New Delhi hotel where Hedeki Shikoku was staying. Shizu, Hedeki's valet, handed it to bodyguard Taegu, who read it, smiled, and knocked on his master's door. Hedeki read the message, grunted, and went back to sleep.

"What did it mean," Shizu asked.

Taegu looked at the valet and grinned.

"The American woman wrote their contact locations in the museum guide. We now know the places in and around Calcutta where they have observation posts. She tried to be clever. She made the information look like a poem. It's not, it didn't even rhyme, and it didn't make sense. Our analysts are certain it carried the message."

Just before midnight, Ito Shikoku was taken by another fit. After several minutes, seeing that his master was not improving, Taka called for a private ambulance and Ito was rushed to the clinic. Hedeki was informed and sent his men to Westfault's house, collected him, and rushed to Ito's side. At 2:00 a.m., surgery began. It would continue through the early hours of the next afternoon.

In Nepal, Dean lay back, ready for sleep. He missed Laura and reminisced their time together. It was then he knew what was missing from the room. He jumped out of bed and made sure the guide was gone.

The bastards used me again!

A CIA operative assigned as a business consultant to the American Embassy in New Delhi, examined the message from the Embassy Section Chief in Nepal. He called Langley on a secure line.

"Fears Confirmed."

Kathmandu, Nepal:

Dorothy was relieved Dean was easy to get along with. He hadn't pushed her around or talked down to her. He was natural, friendly, not patronizing, straight. He ignored her barbs and anti-male comments.

He doesn't care that I'm strong and competent, capable of doing everything for myself. He wants me to be his equal.

They started exploring Kathmandu at the Square. Each of the valley cities had a central area named Durbar Square, and Kathmandu's Durbar was surrounded with palaces, monuments and temples. The architectural styles varied from pagoda-roofed mastabas, to red brick buildings with intricately carved wood trim. In addition to the many Hindu temples and shrines, Tibetan Buddhists had their monuments and temples.

They wandered and identified Newars, the people of the Kathmandu Valley, and Sherpas of Tibetan background who seemed to mix freely in Kathmandu. The British influence, still present through the Gurkha soldiers, was all that was left of an Empire that never included Nepal, but

deeply influenced it. Most signs were in English, and most shopkeepers spoke the western language. On the streets they observed Chinese, wearing the high collared blue uniforms of their regime.

When they returned from their jaunt-about she asked Dean to join her for dinner. They ate the *dhal bhat tarkari*, which seemed to her to be a simple lentil soup. Dean tried the local beer called *chang*, which was touted by the waiter as a "Tibetan beverage of some potency."

As they finished dinner, Dorothy looked past Dean and caught the eye of a woman sitting alone at a table near the door. She couldn't believe her luck.

How long has she been here?

The woman looked directly at her, nodded acknowledgment, motioned with her head toward the rest room, got up, and started toward the door. Dorothy fumbled with her napkin, stood, and excused herself. Dean rose slightly from his chair, realized she didn't expect him to rise, and sat back again, enjoying his *chang*.

In the lady's toilet, by the mirrors, the woman greeted her.

"Hi, my name is Susan. I'm Mr. Caldwell's superior." She lied. From what Caldwell told her she knew Dorothy would be impressed by a woman who was a man's boss. "I understand you are helping us?"

Dorothy eyed Susan. Susan smiled, licked her lips, and studied Susan.

Susan thought about Caldwell's description of the ID. He was right! This ID was her type of woman.

Susan detailed the information Caldwell needed, and showed her how to roll a message into a tampon. They agreed to meet in Dorothy's room as soon as Dorothy could get rid of Dean.

Returning to the table, she made excuses to Dean. "I'm really not feeling that well at the moment. I think I need to lie down for a bit. Can we meet up later?"

"Sure. Let's check in after a while."

Dorothy went back to her room where Susan was waiting. "Oh you don't know how nice it is to have someone to talk to." Dorothy examined the golden crest on the hotel's stationary. "I have mixed feelings about traveling alone, but no one was free to go with me. I really haven't talked to another woman in two weeks! Tell me, why are you in Nepal?"

Susan rolled the desk chair around so her knees faced Dorothy. She wet her lips and smiled. Then, with as soft and loving a look as she could muster, she looked directly into Dorothy's eyes.

"Actually, I'm stationed in India. I just came up here on consul business. I'm required to stay at the Embassy here and I must be back there before eleven or they will come looking for me." She looked at the large, round watch on her wrist. "It's nine-ten now. That gives us a little over an hour to get acquainted." Dorothy didn't react as she hoped. "You do want to visit, don't you?"

Dorothy hadn't missed the way Susan paused and then emphasized *visit*. Susan looked at her in a hungry way.

She's making a move on me!

Her body stiffened. She felt cold. "Yes, sure, I do want to. I've been hoping to find another woman to talk to."

"You don't want me to hold you?"

"Hold me? Oh no! Susan, I'm straight. I just enjoy the company of other women."

"You certainly are giving off a different vibe. Aren't I your type?
What's going on here Dorothy?"

Dorothy looked at the floor, the walls, and the bed.

"I'm not sure. I've never been approached like this before."

Before she could process more, Susan came and sat beside her, placing her arm around her. No one had touched her in years, she shivered, felt guilt and then curiosity.

"Susan, I have never been with a woman ... or a man either."

Susan let a surge of warmth flow through her body. Her mind flashed back to memories of her first encounters with girls she introduced to the woman's way.

"I know, Dorothy, I know. Let me hold you, take your loneliness away and be as close to you as a friend can be. We'll take it slow. It feels like it's what you need. You have been calling out. Relax! Relax and let me love you. Lie back and feel what happens to your body without pressure or guilt."

Chapter SIXTEEN

State Radio. Panjim, Goa:

Today, in Lisbon, the Portuguese authorities announced a new trade agreement that will help build our Goa economy. The government announced that the Japanese have agreed to build an electronics manufacturing facility in Panjim, and that they will enhance the port facilities at Margoa. The international company, Sungana Enterprises, will build the facilities and train up to three hundred local workers to operate it. Sungana manager, Zenos Papadopolis, will coordinate efforts here and in

Europe. He announced that the plant will manufacture inexpensive electronic equipment including radios and televisions for export to markets in Albania, Greece, and eastern European countries.

American Armed Forces Network. Tokyo, Japan:

In other news around Japan, U.S. and Japanese authorities have announced the largest post-war trade agreement with a single Japanese Company to date. Sungawa Industries has been given complete access to American markets in exchange for that company's willingness to help third world and developing nations with economic development. Sungawa is best known to Americans as the manufacturer of quality electronic equipment. Its stock is widely traded. Analysts suggest it will jump several points in the next few days.

Langley, Virginia:

"Dan, our people were unable to contact the King of Nepal. It's some kind of holiday." He handed a dispatch to Hill.

"Oh sure, we should have known it's the Festival of the Sleeping Naravan. How long does it go on?"

"Our people say it's a short holiday. The problem is the Royal personage takes a long holiday at this time." The DCI held his hands out in frustration. "We can't stop the pipeline from using Nepal, at least not now. I've contacted British Intelligence, advised them. If anybody can get through to the King, I think they can."

"That's as much as we can do. Have you seen these?" Dan handed George the news releases.

"I saw them. There's more. The Greek government announced it will accept three quarters of a billion dollars aid in exchange for a favored trading partner agreement with Sungana Industries."

"You mean Sungawa!"

"No, I don't. I wish I did. My European staff has completed this," he turned and took a stack of blue labeled, white bound documents from his desk. Dan recognized the Top-Secret coding and format. "We just learned the main fragments of Mitusuka are Sungawa and Sungana. They seem to be led by one man, passing under two names. Our friend, Hedeki Shikoku seems to use the name Ito Shikoku when he's dealing in the West. Is that clever or damned dumb? I don't know what to make of it!"

Dan perused the folders, anxious to read the information they contained. "I think it's probably clever. We don't want to underestimate these people." He held up the reports. "Do these give us the location of the European part of the monster?"

"Several locations, none noteworthy. One report says communications come from Corfu. Another gives the location of the head offices as Lisbon. Still another suggests New Delhi. If it's Delhi, do you understand how serious that could be?" George folded his hands in his lap and sat staring at a world map. "Maybe we should start putting pins in the map." He thought a moment, shook his head, and continued. "No, there are too many people around here loyal to the cartel. We keep our own maps in our heads."

The men sat quietly for a long time. Dan was thinking about Operation Cowboy and how he could use Dean to get information from New Delhi. George was thinking of the powerful enemies he would have to battle

as soon as he could prove their duplicity in the expansion of Sungawa's networks.

Dan broke the silence. "Thanks to the oversights of our past intelligence experts, we don't have many operatives in India, let alone New Delhi. Those we do have are so well known everything they do is reported before they do it."

"Make your point, Dan!"

"We have Cowboy. We give him misinformation to deliver to our agents. He doesn't even have to know he's doing it for us. You know he thinks he quit. Then we use an ID or two to deliver and pick-up. I think it will work. We rock their boat, they let us see what we need to see."

"Okay, it's worth a try. I'll need to approve the information you release, and ... do you plan to use January?"

The DDO thought a moment. "I think she's doing something important in Hawaii?"

She's in Hawaii because I want her safe. Nothing important about that.

Honokaa, Hawaii:

After changing out of men's clothing and combing her hair, Janet Hurlbut took a long hot shower. She had arrived on Oahu six hours ago, been debriefed while still in disguise, been put aboard a private Beechcraft, and flown to the big island. Now, in the quiet and remote coastal town of Honokaa, she had time to relax and become a woman again. Her orders were simple. She was to seek out a woman named Sami Onoto Cook,

become friends with her if possible, or at the least report her movements and contacts to the DCI.

That evening she was called to another room in the motel and given a packet of reports to read. Attached to the stack was a handwritten note. She read the note, smiled warmly, and made herself comfortable.

"The packet will be picked up at dawn," the note said. She was given only a few hours to wade through the voluminous documents.

Black coffee kept her mind sharp, even if it tore around her insides like a gas demon. The first and second reports contained dull background studies about Mitusuka, the Japanese company. The third and fourth, corresponded to things she observed in Japan and Thailand. When she got through the fifth, and started the sixth and final report which focused on India and Sungawa-Sungana Industries, she started thinking of David. By the time she put the packet aside, she was certain David would be ill-used.

David was unknowingly involved in a high-stakes, life-and-death duel between factions within the U.S. Government. The mongers who supported the cartel, versus the small group of CIA operatives led by George and Hill, who were determined to destroy the cartel and use David in the process.

Liars! This is what George calls indefinite leave? I'm in Hawaii to work. Sami Cook, aka Sami Mitsu Onoto, is a coordinator for Hedeki Shikoku, and head of Sungawa Industries' interests. I'm in deep shit!

The courier came at exactly six a.m. to collect the reports. He left an envelope addressed to her, got her signature on several forms, and went out into the beautiful November morning. She locked the door, kicked off her shoes, threw the cover off the bed, and crashed. Before she could sleep, she remembered the envelope. She forced herself up, got the envelope, and sat

on the edge of the bed. Sleepily, she opened it and dumped dozens of fifty-dollar bills on the bed. A note advised her to change her wardrobe and military appearance. George scrawled:

"I'm counting on you Jan. Don't even think of keeping receipts. Forget India! I'll be in touch!

Forget India! How in the hell am I supposed to forget India! Oh David, I hope you're all right!

She didn't know Dean moved up his itinerary and was already in Nepal.

Kathmandu, Nepal:

"Please relax, just lay back, close your eyes and enjoy ... this is what you were born for." She gently moved her hands over Dorothy's tense body.

"What am I supposed to do?"

"Honey, just relax your muscles. Let me rub your neck and shoulders. There now. That's feeling better."

She moved her body closer to Dorothy's as she let her hands slowly move beneath the clothing. Susan let her hand move down inside Dorothy's skirt, felt the mound and put pressure there.

"I don't like that! Susan, please stop!"

She sat up, forcing Susan to one side. Susan angled her body up, and reached to kiss her on the mouth. Dorothy felt her lips, the pressure of her angular body against her own. She had a mental image of two praying mantises coming together. She forced Susan aside and stood, quivering with excitement and inhibition."

Susan lit a cigarette, took a deep drag and blew the smoke out in a long stream.

"Think of it this way, Dorothy. If you were sitting in the dark and a person—someone you didn't know—came up behind you and started caressing you, how would you feel?"

Dorothy thought and then answered. "I guess it depends upon whether it was a man or woman."

"You don't know if it is a man or a woman. All you know is that another human being is caressing you. How would you feel?"

"Dead!"

"Dead? What in the hell is that supposed to mean?"

"I don't respond with my body. I don't think I ever have."

"So, you have never touched and excited yourself?"

"No, not really."

Susan smiled. "You have been missing out on a wonderful world of pleasure. You give off all the signals for sex. If you haven't tried it, you might just find you liked it ... with women and men."

"I don't hate men exactly. I just think they subjugate women. I enjoy the company of women and always seek out women friends. That was my attraction to you. It wasn't physical."

"I know. If you don't love yourself, how can you love anybody else?"

"Do you mean love or ... make love to myself?"

"To love is to make love, in this case. It would be different if we were talking about your love for your child or something, but we're not. We're talking about you, a woman who hasn't given herself permission to enjoy

the natural wonder of her body. Dorothy, I would suggest now is as good a time as any to begin that adventure. I'm a very experienced guide."

Dorothy stood still arrested by her fear and conflicted by Susan's words.

"Too much for one day?" Susan smiled. "Are you going to leave?"

"I need to go. This is a lot for me to process. I'd like to let go and experience what you are offering but I have a lot of critical voices in my head to deal with. Thanks for your patience."

When Susan left, Dorothy went back to bed and began tentatively to awaken her body.

Dean woke up to sounds outside his window. He tried to identify the squeaky barks and the cacophony of sounds. He pulled back the heavy drape and looked into the red fur face of a foxy little creature hanging upside-down from the limb of a eucalyptus tree. The creature smiled an upside-down smile, covered its head with large leathery-black wings, bark-chirped a good day, and went to sleep. The tree held dozens of them. He had read about fox bats, or fruit bats as some called them, but this was his first close encounter. He felt good inside, humming around the room as he got ready for exploration and adventure.

Dorothy awoke to the sounds of the bats outside her window. She held back the drape and studied the tree hung with the large, foxlike creatures. Their pointed noses made her remember the weasels that raided their chicken house, and the red fox stole, complete with bead eyes and a

leather nose, her grandmother wore every winter. She let the drape fall back and sat on the edge of the chair in front of the writing desk mirror.

She saw her plain acne-scarred face. It was her mother's face ... and her grandmother's. The ghosts of those old women still haunt her. Their dreary days of suffering ... their messages like scratchy-voice records. She put her hands to her face, fingers pulling her cheeks until her eyes distorted, vision blurred. She wrinkled her forehead and saw Grandmother Thompson looking out at her.

Her grandmother had been full of hate. A nasty embittered old bitch with an ugly outlook on life. The old monster lived on and on in the messages she had implanted in Dorothy. Her mother had died ... fled is a better word! Dorothy became her grandmother's caregiver. Each day she made herself pretend to be the loving granddaughter, listening to the old woman's sick viewpoints on life and the world. Six years of dutiful service. A prison with bars of duty and guards of obligation. Her grandmother was so mean; it was hard to believe she would ever die. Even God would have a tough time loving her. Dorothy pushed her hair back, relaxed her face, and smiled at her reflection.

Give yourself a break girl. You've only been free two months. How can you expect to be You, when you're only two months old! You have a lot to learn about the world.

Dean ordered breakfast feeling sorry he hadn't arranged a time to meet Dorothy. The woman was tight and strange, but it was nice to have someone to share adventures with. He finished his toast and was pouring more *chai*, when she came into the restaurant. As she approached his table,

he sensed she was looser. Dressed differently? He couldn't tell what it was, but her body language was more relaxed, friendlier. He rose and helped her with her chair. She didn't scowl at him. She helped him pull the chair closer to the table.

"You're already through eating?"

"Almost."

"Do I have time to order?"

"Of course. We have all day to see the sights."

Dorothy looked at him, screwing her mouth around as if biting her inner lip. "Are you sure you still want to spend the day with me?"

Dean nodded. "When the energy is compatible, it is definitely nicer to share experiences and be with someone than it is to be alone."

"Did you have fun yesterday? I mean with me?"

"Of course! Why do you ask?"

He shifted his legs out from under the table and sat sideways so he could cross them, still focused on her.

Dorothy looked away, color flooding her face. "I'm sorry, I just don't think I've been a fun person to be with ... I mean ever ... I mean not just yesterday."

Dean nodded and let her continue.

"David, this trip is making me question a lot of what I thought I knew about myself. I don't believe I'm the person I act like I am." She uncrossed her legs and sat knees apart under the table. She shook her head from side to side and a smile crept out as her eyes watered. She grabbed her napkin to try to hide behind.

"Boy, that must have sounded dumb. D-U-M-B!"

David listened attentively encouraging her to say more.

"You see, I took care of my mother until she died ... and my grandmother after that. My grandmother just died two months ago. I was the dutiful daughter and granddaughter. I had no life of my own. It was horrible, but I couldn't get away. I have been free for such a short time. I don't know who I am or how to act. Sorry to go on and on. I know it's more than you probably want to know, but it may help to explain why I send the wrong signals."

"It sounds awful. That's a lot of shit to carry around, but why carry it? Whatever it was ... however bad it was ... whatever it did to you, it's over now. Dorothy, you have the power to make choices for yourself now. This trip can be your journey of self-discovery. I'm happy to tag along for a while." Dean smiled.

She nodded.

"Now is your chance to concentrate on what you want! Not what was, but what will be ... starting right now, and going on for the rest of your life."

"But I have all of the pain of those years ... all the damage that was done to me. It changed me. I'm different!"

"You are still in charge of you. You have all of the joys of what you will do now, how you will live from this day forward. The rest is dead baggage. Get rid of it!"

"You can't just forget your past!"

"Don't then. Pick out the good and beautiful, throw away the shit that no longer applies. I see you as a neat person. I don't care about your past, nobody does! What will you do for you ... I mean right now?"

"I know what you mean, that's why I decided to travel. It can't be as easy as you say ... can it?"

"Yes, it can. Be willing to let go and try out new aspects of yourself. Follow your intuition not that critical grandmother voice in your head. Focus on where you're going, the person you really are and want to become."

Dorothy stared at him, weighing his words against her own fears.

"I can't change what happened."

"No, but you can decide you don't need to listen to those voices anymore. You can send them packing and move on."

She ate, discovering she was very hungry. As she finished, she asked David for his Kathmandu map. He gave it to her and they began to plan the day's assault on the city.

David watched her, hoping she had the resolve to get on with her life. As he closed the guide and prepared for their adventure, he happened to look up. A tall, lanky woman, the same one who approached Laura at their table in the Eastern Hotel, was attempting to catch Dorothy's attention.

"Dorothy, you have a friend trying to catch your attention. That woman over there!"

Dorothy looked up, puffed her cheeks, let go a blast of air, and excused herself as she rose.

"I'll just be a minute, David. I think Susan wants to talk to me."

David didn't bother to rise. So, this was another CIA attempt to use him.

"Funny," he mumbled, "I would never have suspected Dorothy."

Chapter SEVENTEEN

Daiwan-I-Kas Medical Clinic, New Delhi:

Doctor Westfault entered the waiting area outside the surgery. Five men eyed him, each searching for some clue to Ito's condition. The men were rumpled and tired from more than eight hours waiting.

"We couldn't start the surgery until his fit ended and he was conscious. His brain waves stabilized about an hour after you got him here. We have been working on him since that time. His vital signs are stable, as I expected them to be. He will live, but there is no way to know the success of the operation or what his mental state will be. Hopefully, his seizures are past."

Hedeki scowled at Westfault. "You cover your ass! Tell me exactly what you know."

Westfault was immediately angry.

I worked miracles on Ito's damaged brain. I saved the man and worked until I was exhausted. Now this bastard is threatening me?

"Who the blimey hell do you think you are to speak to me that way! If it weren't for me, your brother would be lying in a coma he would never come out of. I owe you no explanations. I did not create this situation and you damned well better believe that I bloody well don't have to take any shit from you!"

Hedeki reeled backward. In his life, he had never been talked back to or threatened. Taegu, sensing his master's shock and rising anger, moved quickly to his side while motioning Shizu to calm Westfault. But Westfault wasn't through.

"One thing more, my ungrateful man. From what I have learned about the state of your brain, you have less than a year before your condition deteriorates and renders you helpless. If you want another doctor, get one. This is the second time you have threatened me, and I am off your case!"

Hedeki had no experience as to how to react, so he stood, bile welling up in him. His head hurt, and now, hearing Westfault's prediction about his future, he felt his brain burning.

Taegu moved him to the row of seats along the wall. "Mr. Shikoku, you will like to sit down."

Hedeki sat, loathing the doctor. Westfault turned on his heel and went back to the operating bay.

Ito's valet, Taka, and his bodyguard, Gifu, felt deep shock at the encounter. Their joy that Ito had at least come through the operations and was alive, was overshadowed by a new fear. What if Hedeki had Westfault killed? Then who would help their master? Gifu tensed and looked over at Hedeki.

What a damned fool. Hedeki has the same anger blindness as Ito. It's their Achilles heel. One might cause the other's death.

Calcutta, India:

The sign in the solicitor's office window said OPEN, but the door was locked and the office seemed deserted. It wasn't. In Sankina's back cubicle a conference of Sungawa's minor players was underway. Chowring reported that the bald American spy duped them.

"There is no corresponding evidence that the locations on the fly sheet of the museum guide have any significance."

Sankina nodded his head in agreement. His tongue shot out of his small mouth like a fire worm. He put down his copy of the poem and snorted.

"They sent us on a mongoose chase. This has no meaning. That dumb American woman probably wrote it to Dean. I wouldn't put it past her. We always seem to overestimate the Americans, and yet ... Dean carried some kind of message. We must find what it was."

The telephone buzz-rang-dinged twice, in rapid succession. Chowring answered.

"Hahn. Hahn, kab ... a ... achah! Namaste!"

Sankina's eyes widened. "Good news?"

Chowring smiled his beautiful smile and nodded to his boss. "The information was in a microdot. The Section Chief bragged about it. They know about Sungawa's plans to open trade routes through Nepal. The King will be told as soon as he returns from holiday."

Sankina grimaced. This will cost us our bloody bonus. We underestimated that damned American spy. Chowring, you get men on him full time. In Nepal or India, you make him wish he'd stayed home! Got that?"

"A pleasure, sir. I will have his photograph distributed to every one of our friends. Trust me, the man will simply disappear and we will have our time with him for whatever it's worth!"

Kathmandu, Nepal:

"Where are we?" Dorothy asked, trying to see over David's shoulder.

"I think this is the square of the Temple of Shiva-Parvati. Look! Do you see figures representing the gods looking out of that window?"

No, but I see a big thing that looks like a drum and a bell."

"Here we are, then!"

Dean placed the map against a wall and pointed to the location of the square with his finger.

All types of people, fowl, and animals congested the street. The noise level was so high it made it difficult to talk. This square was their last stop. Dorothy was finished for the day, her energy spent, her legs ached, and her mind reeled.

"I need some *chai* and a hot bath. Would you mind if we went back? We've been at this for hours."

"Thought you'd never ask. You lead, I'll cover our rear."

She started to react to his offer, to feel empowered by the fact that he recognized her competency. Then she realized that it didn't matter who led. Throughout their journeys around Kathmandu, she was the one who seemed to keep a sense of direction, and Dean acknowledged her skill. It had nothing to do with sex. Knowing that, gave her comfort.

Damn old woman. Was anything she lectured me on right?

Back at the Annapurna, they agreed to meet for dinner. Dorothy got to her room, kicked off her shoes, and rubbed her feet. Dean perused the lounge and restaurant area looking for the woman Dorothy called Susan, ordered a stout, and sat at one end of the bar trying to plan how he would ditch the CIA bastards dogging him. The last rays of the sun faded before

Dean went to his room and took a shower. His stomach growled. He was ready for dinner and the CIA.

Dorothy was seated when he entered the restaurant. She rose to greet him, not because of manners, but because she was glad to see him. When she realized what she had done, she understood that manners were not necessarily chauvinistic acts. She was learning a lot of things and questioning the facts of life that formed her.

"My feet were so sore, I soaked them in hot water for an hour."

"You'll need a good pair of hiking boots if we keep up this pace."

"I had fun today! I almost forgot who I am."

"Don't you mean you almost forgot who you were?"

She looked at him as if he were a bug on her nose, her face screwed up into waves of smiles.

"I know it, but I'm afraid to believe ... to accept that it could be that simple ... I mean going on as I want to, regardless of what happened before."

"Thank Glasser."

"What is Glasser?"

"Glasser. Reality Therapy. It works."

The waiter interrupted. They ordered from the simple menu.

"I don't think steak and kidney pie is Nepalese," Dean teased as she ordered the dish.

"Now tell me about this reality stuff."

"I already did." He fought the folds in his large napkin. "Glasser worked with girls in a California prison or detention center or someplace like that. He heard all their horrible stories, their arguments as to why they

were failures without hope. In the Freudian school of psychoanalysis, one has to go back and re-live all of that shit before one can get well. People spend years wading through stuff that is or was truly awful. In a way, everyone can justify anything they do based upon their past. Then along comes Glasser. He says to the girls, 'Gee, that's awful. You can't change the past, so what are you going to do now ... from this moment forward?'"

"That's exactly what you said to me this morning."

Dean nodded. "It's like having a personal atomic bomb. Drop it! Destroy all that baggage, and get on with your life."

"But won't I have to deal with that stuff someday?"

"Sure, some of it. But when you choose to, you will approach it as a healthy person. You can put those messages and behaviors out on the table, evaluate them, keep what your internal experience tells you to be true, and reject the rest. It is a process that takes time but the more you do it, the easier it becomes."

She sat looking at him. Their food came. "This was definitely a mistake. I should have stuck with local foods, and avoided the tourist fare. Yuck!"

Dean was prodding a rice dish with some kind of sauce.

"It's a good thing we worked up an appetite." She held her nose.

"Tell me about your friend Susan."

Dorothy stopped chewing and looked surprised and a little scared.

"What do you want to know? I just met her."

"How did you two meet?"

"A man named Caldwell contacted me and asked me to help you. He sent Susan to meet me and tell me what to do. She also thought I wanted to hook-up with her and have sex. I'm not, no ... I didn't!"

"How could you help me?"

"I could let them know if you needed anything. If you were doing okay. Things like that."

"And?"

"Oh, you know, tell them where we are going ... or went. When you are going back to India, stuff like that."

"Why? I mean why would they want to know that stuff about me?"

"Oh she, they both, work for the government like you do. It's her job to make sure you are happy and that everything goes okay for you."

Dean pretended to sip his tea.

"How thoughtful! But Dorothy, the only problem is, I don't work for the government. Your new friend Susan is spying on me and using you. I want you to know, but you can't let on to Susan or anybody else that you know. I'm trying to find out why they keep dogging me. Actually, I could use your help figuring out what they want."

"You're kidding me. I am such an idiot. So naïve. You're not just saying you don't work for them, right?" She studied Dean's face intently. "They really are after you. That's bad, isn't it? What can I do?"

"I have a plan."

As they finished dinner, music came from the lounge.

"They're firing-up the old instruments. Would you like to dance?"

Dean and Dorothy danced and enjoyed being together even though there were so many unanswered questions between them. Exhausted, they said goodnight and made plans to meet for breakfast.

Dean was already seated and stood when Dorothy came into the dining room the next morning. As they finished breakfast, he laid out his plan. "I will meet you in five days in Agra. That's a promise. I need you to tell Susan and Caldwell that I'm going back to India via the old Rajpath Road.

"Are you sure you want to meet up with me?"

"Of course! I will be there waiting for you. Using your information, one of them will have to go by road and the other will have to go ahead to watch for me when I re-enter India. They won't know where I am for at least three days. By then, I will have been to Delhi, and I'll be on my way to meet you at the Taj Majal."

"But won't they know about it when you check-out at the airport?"

"I have a plan, but yes, there's a risk. I don't know if they have access to Nepalese customs or immigration documents. It's a risk I'll have to take. If they're on to me, I have another plan."

Dean reached across the table and placed his hand on hers.

"Remember, they involved you and they think you're too innocent to mislead them. Tell Susan what I told you and then tell her you need time, that you're going trekking around the valley. We'll pick-up a trekking permit for you so it checks out. Show it to Susan this afternoon when she comes around. Then, right after she leaves, I'll be watching and give you the all-clear signal. Grab your bags, get on the bus to the airport and catch the

India Air flight to Delhi. They're watching me, not you! Don't even bother to check out of the hotel, I'll take care of that before I leave."

Dorothy nodded. "This is our last day together in Kathmandu."

"Just a few more hours," he looked at his watch. "Four to be exact!"

"I wanted to go to the Monkey Temple," she opened the guide and pointed to the column under the heading *Swayambhunath*. "There is a spire there that is supposed to be over two thousand years old. The monkeys that live around there are supposed to be Nepal's best entertainment."

"It's across the river. We have time. Finish up and let's go!"

That evening, knowing that Dorothy was airborne high over the jungle on her way to New Delhi, Dean sat alone at the table he reserved for them. He explained to the waiter that the lady did not feel well, and asked if he could take some tea and toast to her after he finished his meal. As he finished dinner, he observes a new group of trekkers. The lounge filled with raucous talk and toasts offered and sealed with gulps of *chang* from small, brown bottles.

The waiter delivered the steaming *chai* and toast on a special tea service platter, which he intended to carry to the room. He was quite disturbed when Dean took the platter from him, told him to let him handle it, and carried the tea and toast down the hall. The man would remember him and the lady ill in her room.

The next morning Dean awakened to fox bat chatter. He showered and packed. Carrying his camera bag over his left shoulder, gripping the flight bag and a cheap sports bag in his hands, he left the room. At the desk,

he checked out Dorothy, explaining to the man that she decided at the last minute to go trekking with some of the group that were in the lounge last night. Then he asked for directions to the bus that went down the Rajpath Road to India. The deskman pointed out Durbar Square on the city map, and told him all buses departed from that terminal. As Dean left the hotel, he saw Susan standing across the street pretending to pick through a vendor's fruit. He smiled. His plan could work.

A pushbike-taxi-boy was motioning him to get aboard. He asked the boy to get him to the Tourist Office on Ganga Path. The boy's leg muscles strained as he forced their way into a stream of bodies and vehicles and rolled toward the busy tourist office and terminal.

A man in a white turban and a black suit coat extricated Dean's bag from the bike's rack. Dean asked him to take the flight bag to the India Air check-in. He paid the pushbike boy, and was through the door into the crowded office in time to see the man place his flight bag on the scale at the weight-in counter. The man turned as Dean approached, asking for his flight number. Dean gave it and handed the little man Rs 10, observing the man's eyes brighten with delight.

"I come here often," He hoped the lie and the large tip would buy the man's loyalty. "Please be so kind as to tell anyone who asks—especially a mean looking tall woman—that you checked my bag on to the Rajpath bus." He winked and smiled, as if sharing a secret any man would understand.

The man bowed, smiled, and went back to the airline counter to finish checking Dean in.

It seemed that half the tourists in Kathmandu were inside the office trying to get the attention of the polite and collected agents at the bus

counter. He saw Susan trying to position herself so she could keep track of him. She hadn't seen the flight bag checked to go air. He forced his way through the pack toward the men's toilet. Inside, he waited for a stall. In, he quickly opened the sports bag, took out his gold sport coat which he had carefully rolled so that it wouldn't wrinkle and replaced it with his brown windbreaker. He took a small box out of the case, removed his toupee, removed the paper strips from the sticky tape, and carefully placed it and combed it in. Then he attached a pair of flip-up dark glasses to his regular ones, took a cigar stub from the depths of his case, zipped it, and re-entered society.

At the airport, he passed immigration, boarded the small twin-prop plane, and sat back ready to enjoy his flight to New Delhi. He was aware of the man at the airport who carefully studied each passenger, but the man meant nothing to him. Had he known that the man carried a photograph of the other David Dean, he would have been afraid.

Susan was red-faced with frustration and exertion. She stood next to Caldwell, trying to explain that Dean gave her the slip, but happy to salve the angry man with the information she bribed from the luggage handler.

"He told me the luggage went to the bus, the Rajpath Road bus. That corresponds with the information Dorothy and the man at the hotel gave us."

"Did you see him get on the bus?"

"No, I lost him in the mobs of people. But I'm certain he's on his way to Delhi by bus."

"My God, Susan! No man in his right mind would ride those buses. Now one of us has to, and I know I can't send a woman alone on that route. Damn! I'll get my stuff and start after him. You get my ticket and change lots of money for me. I'm in for four or five days of hell!"

"I'll contact Dorothy again, and then fly on to Delhi."

"Wait, let's re-examine this. What if he flew out of here. How hard would it be to find out?"

"Have the Section Chief ask immigration."

"We'll ask him. He's at the American Library."

Susan contacted the Section Chief. "We can't get that type of information from the Nepalese government," the Section Chief announced as if he told a dozen people a day the same thing. "They won't give us shit! Oh, I'm sorry Susan, they won't give us any information like that."

"Well Caldwell, we tried!"

Resigned to his fate, he went to pack his things while Susan went back to the station and bought him a ticket on the evening bus.

In the American Library, a man overheard Caldwell's request. As soon as the Section Chief went back to his office, the man called his Sungawa contact and confirmed that Dean was on his way to New Delhi by bus.

The man at Sungawa Industries read the report from his surveillance team at the airport confirming Dean did not leave by air. He ordered two Hindi *thags* to catch the evening bus out of Nepal and follow Dean along the hundreds of miles of jungle road, via five connecting buses, to Delhi. "You can catch up with him at one of the layovers," the Sungawa man said. "Detain Dean. Bring him to Sungawa headquarters in Delhi!"

Chapter EIGHTEEN

Daiwan-I-Kas Medical Clinic, New Delhi:

Ito Shikoku was confused; disoriented. Taka stayed with him day and night jabbering away as the doctor ordered. Ito made little progress at first. The third night, the bodyguards, Gifu and Taegu had a long talk. Gifu feared Ito was in danger. He asked Taegu to help him observe on two fronts: Any attempt by Hedeki to misuse Ito and take power away from him, and any attempt to remove Doctor Westfault. They agreed that working together was in the brothers' best interests. As a result, Gifu stationed other men in the clinic freeing himself so he could be where he was needed at any time of the day or night. Ito was safe.

Westfault warned them that Ito would be in a critical state until the swelling in his brain went down. The swelling is expected, especially in the temporal regions where it was necessary to remove and replace a large rectangle of brain case. In other areas, beneath the holes which had been drilled for access, something was causing the build-up of fluids which were also putting pressure on the brain's convoluted gray matter. Westfault warned them to be prepared in the chance infection or some other complication took over.

"Gifu," Taka said, "Master Ito would be better off dead than to live as a vegetable. We must act together if ..."

Toward the end of the fourth day, Ito complained of pressure and headaches in his right temple. Taka informed Westfault. Westfault looked grim.

"From the damage I observed to the temporal arteries—they were scarred and thickened—Ito has a condition we don't usually see in men his age. It's called Temporal Arteritis, or in his case, Giant Cell Arteritis. The damage was caused by irritation and abuse. I fear it may cause a stroke. I expect it will affect his vision—may in fact cause a severe loss of vision. However, if we can avoid the stroke, I can control vision problems with drugs."

Taka nodded, trying to understand.

"How soon will we know?"

"Two days. If he makes it through the next two days, we can assume he is past the immediate danger of a stroke. At least the odds are in his favor!"

On the fifth day, Ito pulled himself up in bed and asked for food. He conversed with Taka and Gifu as he had in the past. "I remember being a boy. The pain is gone. Vision's blurred. Dizzy." He asked questions about Sungana and his brother. The next morning, he called for Hedeki.

"You are going to recover as I did." Hedeki stood next to his brother's bed.

"So the Doctor tells me."

"I have been very busy, Ito. I now understand the linkages between Sungawa and Sungana. It was cleverly planned and I doubt we were ever to know of our, shall I say, symbiotic relationship. When Mitusuka was destroyed there was no one left to benefit by using us. We are the only ones left to run things. So it is good we found all this out."

Ito had other things on his mind, questions to ask his brother.

"How long did it take for you to remember your past?"

"Not long, a week, no, two."

"And how long did it take before you integrated all of the past and present?"

"I'm still doing that. Everything reminds me of something, you follow?"

Ito nodded.

"What I was just telling you? I learned that Sungawa often pipelines to you. Then I realized that I had always known that, but I was not supposed to contact you or ask questions about you."

Westfault entered the room, unnoticed by Hedeki. He stood listening to the brothers, then interrupted.

"What you are saying is important to both of you!"

Hedeki turned and scowled, about to order Taegu to throw the man out. Ito saw his brother's intent.

"Let the man speak!"

"What you have described confirms the hypothesis I have been working under ... that physical changes were made in certain parts of your brains ... those parts which control memory and other less understood functions. In addition, I assumed the tubes were used to inject chemicals into certain brain centers. I also assumed that in some way those chemicals opened or closed brain receptors that allowed information in or kept it out. Call it chemical induced hypnosis, for lack of a better nomenclature."

"You mean that Katasawa blocked certain memory centers, while opening others to information he put in?"

"That sums it up beautifully, Ito. I see you are recovering the use of your intellect. You are doing very well!"

Gifu stepped nearer the bed, made eye contact with his master, and was given permission to speak.

"What now, Doctor. What can Mr. Shikoku expect?"

Westfault took off his glasses and looked for a towel or something to clean them. He paused, looking at Hedeki, then Gifu, then, replacing his smeared glasses he focused on Ito.

"We know little of the brain's capacity to heal itself. Your brains are damaged. Much of the cause of that trauma I removed for Ito. I assume Katasawa removed some from you Hedeki. The problem I am working to understand now, is why the build-up of fluids in the damaged areas." He paused again, removed his glasses, and walked around the bed to a towel on the bed stand.

"Brains are, in simple terms, in protective bags. If the bag is punctured, a hydrocephalic condition can occur. However, the fluids I have observed do not seem to be building in this way. If I can't find a way to stop the fluid buildup and tissue degeneration, a way of insuring that an infection of the brain can be avoided, deterioration will accelerate. At the present rate, Hedeki, within a year you will be rendered ... made helpless. Ito, I assume the same will happen to you. That is not the information you wanted to hear, but you asked me at the onset to be honest, and I have been."

"But you are working on a solution?" Gifu asked, his voice filled with urgency.

Westfault grimaced. "It will take time and money ... no promises!"

"But for now, we are okay?"

"Yes, Hedeki"

When Westfault left the room, Hedeki turned to Ito.

"I must ask your permission to speak to you, Taegu, and Gifu of a matter of some urgency."

"Go ahead, what is it?"

"There is a security breach. Someone we don't own in the American CIA is making trouble for us. He has learned of our plans in India and Goa, and perhaps in Greece and Albania. He knows our plans for Nepal. CIA operatives are exposing our trade networks and they may intercept some of our shipments."

Ito was tired, but he managed to focus on his brother's words. The two bodyguards stood, paying strict attention.

"My friends in American government have not been able to stop this incursion into our operations. Do you know why, Hedeki? They are in high places, they have been well paid, and they stand to benefit in many ways!" Anger built within him. "Is it the Cartel? Are they turning against us?"

"Ito, my people learned that someone in the CIA is informing national leaders who are not friendly to us about our plans. The bastards are weaving a net to stop the flow of product. Somehow, a CIA spy name of Dean has become a major player. He slipped through our hands in Nepal and re-entered India ... well, we believe he re-entered this country. My best men can't find him! He seems to become invisible and moves about freely destroying years of our carefully laid plans. We must capture him to learn who he works for. We must know who in the American intelligence services does not cooperate with the cartel and with us! We must work as one on this problem!" he paused long enough to see that Ito was nodding

agreement. "Taegu and his networks are already advised. If Gifu and Taegu work together, I believe we will be well served."

Ito nodded agreement. "I see no problem with that plan, but remember one thing," he said as he turned to the bodyguards. "The more aggressive the seeker, the sooner he becomes the prey!"

Chapter NINETEEN

Langley, Virginia:

The DDO paced, made a decision, and buzzed the secretarial pool for a temporary. The woman entered. Dan Hill looked up in surprise.

"You're new!"

"This morning."

"Have I received any communication by courier?"

The lady looked at him quizzically.

"No, but there was a courier delivery. A secretary from the Director's office followed the man in and took the envelope from him. When the courier seemed concerned, she pointed out that the envelope bore both of your names."

Dan's heart pounded. Was this a double cross?

"You didn't recognize the secretary, did you?"

"I don't know her name, but I know she is the DCI's personal."

"Thank you. I'll need you later."

Dan used his direct line to call the DCI.

"George. Hill. May I come up? Thank you, Sir. Be right there."

Dan was past Tanya Horowitz before she could react. He knocked and went in.

"I understand we got a message from India this morning, by courier."

George looked up, obviously surprised.

"Not to my knowledge, Dan."

"Your secretary intercepted it. Signed for it in my office. The courier released it because it had both our names on it."

The DCI stood, his chair wheeling away behind him.

"I never authorized that! I wasn't informed!"

It's not an act.

"Then you haven't seen the communication?"

George leaned over his desk, jamming a big finger down on the intercom button.

"Miss Horowitz, come in here, now!"

Nothing happened. George came around his desk, stormed the office door, then stood looking at his secretary's empty station.

"Goddamn it, where is that woman?"

Dan saw the empty outer office, spun around and went back to the desk.

"George, check the lav. If she's not there I'll call security. We've got to find her!"

When Dan Hill stormed into the DCI's office Tanya knew the reason and got out fast. She grabbed the courier's envelope and almost ran to the elevators. Within minutes she was sitting in the woman's restroom near the first -floor offices of the NFIB, explaining to a goggle-eyed Gloria, what she did.

Gloria couldn't believe Tanya's stupidity. She knew her ex-roommate, knew Tanya wasn't long on common sense, but she never dreamed Tanya would do anything that could send them both to prison.

"Did you read the message?"

Tanya shook her head and smiled.

"Is that it?" Gloria reached for the manila envelope. Before she could take it, Tanya reached inside and withdrew the tampon. Gloria separated the note from the applicator, read the message and interpreted it for Tanya.

"David took a bus from Nepal back to India. They think he's headed for Delhi, but he's disappeared. So has a special agent Caldwell who was supposed to be keeping an eye on Dean. They think Dean has been captured!"

Tanya's eyes teared. She took a handkerchief from her pocket and snort-blew her nose.

"If he's lost, I'll probably never be able to go over there again," she said sadly.

"If he's lost, Operation Cowboy is over! So is Dan's career."

Tanya's eyes got big.

"We're in trouble aren't we Gloria?"

Gloria nodded. She knew they had one chance of coming out of this mess with their hands unshackled and their jobs intact.

"I'm going to call Dan!"

She watched Tanya's reaction and seeing none, knew it was all up to her now.

"I'll tell Dan you were so worried about Dean you failed to think! That you wanted to help Dean, and that you didn't want men to see the tampon."

She smiled at Tanya's blank-eyed reaction to the defense.

"It will work, Tanya. I know Dan well enough to know he'll buy into this. Still, prepare yourself for the fire. I doubt that the DCI will let you work for him after this."

"Do you think they will ever let me go back overseas?"

Gloria smiled. "I'll suggest that as a way to get you out of this mess."

Tanya sat down.

"But ... but what if I can't travel again? Have an unrestricted allowance for clothes? See David?"

Before Gloria called Dan, she had to help Tanya walk from the john to a chair in the foyer. She got her a paper cone of water and told her not to move.

Tanya fought valiantly to regain her energy and focus on herself.

The temporary secretary found Dan Hill and gave him Gloria's message to call. Gloria's gut churned as she envisioned armed men handcuffing her and taking her away.

Meanwhile, the DDO stood, feet spread, gripping the telephone. "Do you mean to tell me that a top-secret communication was stolen because Tanya didn't want George or me to see a tampon? She was embarrassed? She was going to take the message out and give it to George separately? Are you kidding?"

He looked over at the DCI, who was holding the receiver of the other phone, hand clamped over the mouthpiece. The DCI nodded, to communicate that it was all too stupid to be a lie. He believed Gloria.

"I'll get back to you!" He hung up the phone. The DCI did the same.

"That stupid bitch!" Dan hissed.

"She's your wife, Dan!"

"I don't mean her. I mean Horowitz! Horowitz is the one, not Gloria. And to think we gave her a job here to reward her for what she did for Operation Cowboy."

George looked grim. "We need to put together a damage report. How much damage has been done?"

"If they are the only ones who've seen the communication, no damage, just delay."

"What was in the communication?"

"Shit," Dan said as he picked up the phone and dialed Gloria's extension. "Gloria? Get that communication over here, now! What? Of course, I'm not mad at you. You assessed the situation properly and because of you little damage has been done. Bullshit! I'm not going to apologize, but I'm going to be damned mad if that communication isn't on my desk in three minutes! What? Tell your boss to call George!" He slammed the phone down so hard it rang.

Chapter TWENTY

Near Kiholo Bay. Kiholo, Hawaii:

The party at the Cook residence was informal by Cook standards, but uncomfortably tight and restrained by Jan Hurlbut's measure. The amazing complex of houses that made up the Cook Ranch looked like the set of a Japanese Samurai movie. The residence was the innermost flower of a perplexing fortification. Once inside, Jan was completely at the whim of her

hostess. She stood staring. Sami Cook broke away from a swarm of suckers and walked toward her.

"Jan Hurley, I knew you would come to my party. Don't be shocked by this place ... my brother built it as a fortress before he died. To me, it's a place to play and at the same time keep the outside world at bay. By the by, since that day we met on the beach? I've been wondering about"

"Wow, this is strong stuff!" Jan felt cold fear grip her heart. Aware the change in her circulation could give her away, she forced a smile and raised her drink.

Sami Cook, stopped by Jan in mid-sentence, observed her guest and continued.

"I was wondering if you really jog ten miles every other day, and if you do, would you challenge me to do the same?"

Jan relaxed; relieved Sami was not questioning her cover. "Ten miles on a good surface, five miles on sand. Sure, the challenge would be great for both of us. In fact, let's set a goal of fifteen and seven!"

Sami held her drink out. "I'd better get rid of this poison." She handed the glass to a passing waiter. "Did you know I was a PE major in school? I used to be fit, and I will be again with you to push me!"

Jan placed her glass on a nearby table. "I don't need this stuff either. Let's seal this challenge with a handshake."

Sami was shorter than Jan, delicate, her grip weak. Jan reacted.

"Didn't you mention you were recovering from some kind of head injury? Is that something that should be taken into account before we start challenging each other?"

Sami let a hangman's laugh slip out. She put her hand to her temple and cradled her head. I got hurt when I was younger. She laughed again. "I'm going to get in shape even if it kills me. I've recovered from that! I may be weak, perhaps a little, but I have nothing to fear from good healthy exercise."

"What kind of injury was it?" She had read a description of the brain programming techniques used on Sami Onoto by her father's people. Acieto Onoto, her father, was head of security for Mitusuka Industries. He let Mitusuka Industries operate on all three of his daughters. What a bastard!

"Oh, would you believe someone experimented on me?" Sami said in the same jocular way she used to cover her trepidation about her head injury.

"What I really mean to say is that I got hurt and the doctors tried to repair the damage using new and then experimental techniques."

"That sounds terrible!"

"I'm okay now. Oh, I still have some work to do, some healing, but that won't affect my running or getting into shape."

Jan smiled and shrugged. "Okay girl. You call it."

"Sami, I haven't had a new friend in a long time. I think this challenge will be fun ... in fact, if I can find a job here on the island, perhaps we can get in great shape together and have fun as well."

"I thought you said you didn't need to work?" Sami looked at her, puzzled.

"Oh, I did say that, didn't I," She showed just enough embarrassment to be believed. "Then, I wasn't planning on staying. I meant that I didn't

have to work while I was here, but I only planned on being here a week or so."

Sami let go a relaxed smile. "I can find you a job!" Sami took Jan's arm and led toward the food and condiments table. "I'm starved, aren't you? You won't have to leave. I can help you get a job you'll love."

Jan followed along. First relieved she made a breakthrough, and then scared by the thought of what would happen when Sami's branch of Sungawa Industries did a background check on her. Jan didn't know that the systems for background checks and security clearance were male specific. It was almost impossible to run a full security check on a woman with a simple and "clean" cover. Thanks to George, her background presented her as a "little miss passive adaptive." To a male chauvinistic world, there was no such thing as a woman military spy, so they would never find a connection.

The party evolved into orbiting little groups, each occupied with trivial social one-upmanship. Then, decay set in as it always does at such affairs and people fell out of Sami's orbit, arranged a sexual liaison if that's what they came for, or in other ways excused themselves. Soon, only Sami and Jan and a bevy of cleaners occupied the innermost secure of the estate.

"Jan, I can give you a job as my personal secretary and trainer. How does that sound?"

"I'm not sure I'd be a very good secretary ... I mean I only type sixty words per, and I don't always organize as well as I should."

Sami interrupted. "Oh, I have people who can do all that. I need someone who can sort through stuff and help keep me focused. I need someone to talk things over with ... you know, it is lonely at the top! And,

there are few people I can trust ... I mean people who don't have other agendas or who aren't trying to climb over me and take away my power."

Jan looked at Sami, smiled and looked down as she spoke. "I would like to say yes, but Sami, I don't even know what you do."

Sami turned toward her, her slacks making a squealing sound on the leather of the couch. "I'm the head of a large import and export house. I inherited the position, but I'm very good at it. You've probably heard of the major company, Sungawa Industries? There are also lots of small companies ... in fact, there's a company with a different name in almost every country around Asia."

"Wow, I had no idea! And you think I am bright enough, good enough ... competent enough ... to help you?"

Sami looked straight on at Jan, nodding her head, making eye contact. "I need a friend and someone with a good head. You can learn the details, and I know you can help me. That's it then? Your answer is, yes?"

"Okay, Sami. If you will take me on a trial basis ... say for a month. If I can't haul it, then we part friends?"

Sami shook her head. "I can't believe you! Don't you ever look out for yourself? You should have asked me what the job pays, what the work load is, when you get time off, things like that."

Jan's shoulders dropped. She looked down, embarrassed. "I guess that tells you how much I trust you."

"Maybe, but don't set me up to take care of you. I'll tell you what, I think I'll pay you \$100,000 a year to start."

Jan looked up, shocked and unbelieving.

"I'll tell you what I want. I want you here whenever I need you, day or night, weekends or holidays. I work all the time, so will you. If I give you time off, then enjoy it. It won't be as bad as you think, a lot of what I do is play, like tonight. I will be straight with you, but I won't put a lot of energy into being polite or nicety-nice. When I work, I command. Don't think that means I don't like you or respect you. It just means that my energies are going into my work."

Jan nodded. The proposition sounded great. Then she wondered if the military would let her keep her \$8,000 a year salary. Probably not. It wouldn't be right if she was paid for doing one job by two employers.

Sami stopped talking and waited for her reply. "Are you considering saying no?"

"No ... I mean no, I'm not considering saying no. Yes! Yes I will give it a try!"

"You'll have to move into this house."

Jan was scared but elated. George would never believe this! "I'll move in tomorrow ... okay?"

Sami smiled. Obviously pleased, Jan accepted her spur of the moment offer. "Let's go get your stuff now. I feel like running the beach tonight ... I have more energy than I care to take to bed with me. I'd never sleep."

Chapter TWENTY-ONE

Edge of the Ganges Plain. Gorakhpur, India:

Pursued by two *thags* and an American operative named Caldwell, the man they thought was Dean, supposedly on his way to Delhi, couldn't have

gotten off the Rajpath Road or the buses between Nepal and India, without being observed. With experience born of years of hunting human prey, the *thags* covered every possible escape route, layover, and option a traveler had.

By the time the bus arrived at Gorakhpur, they were certain only one American male was riding the road, and they realized it wasn't Dean. The American didn't fit the description or photo of the man they were after. Observing Caldwell, they became aware that all was not lost. As they reached the edge of the great Ganges Plain, they hatched a plan. In Gorakhpur, they called Taegu, Hedeki's bodyguard, who was coordinating the search for Dean.

"He's American. Alone. He travels from Kathmandu. He acts very suspicious."

"You are absolutely certain the man named Dean is not on the bus?"

"No, never."

"You believe this man carries information we need?"

"Most certainly. Dean slipped it to him most likely."

"See that he gets here! We have a lot to discuss with him." Taegu smiled as he hung up the phone and turned to Gifu. "It is possible Dean never left Nepal. The man Caldwell, a known CIA operative, is on the bus. My men think Caldwell is carrying the information, whatever it is that Dean was supposed to be carrying."

Gifu raised a thick hand to his chin. "I think it is possible that the Americans work together. There is no other explanation as to why a man who can fly for free on his government's aircraft would take a bus. The man Caldwell is not going to Calcutta?"

"No. My people say he transferred through to Delhi. He has no reason to go to Delhi. His office is in Calcutta."

Gifu was no fool. Perhaps Dean used Caldwell to lead them on a chase. "You know for certain that Dean did not fly out of Kathmandu?" he asked Taegu.

"My people are still watching the airport and that includes the Embassy plane. I think we can be certain that Dean is still in Nepal or ..."
He paused to think, but couldn't come up with any other solution. "He's got to be In Nepal. Caldwell is our man."

Gifu nodded, stood, stretched and looked at his new friend Taegu. "I agree ... but there is one question I have that has not been answered." He paused, watching Taegu's puzzled expression.

"You have not told me what is so important that the Americans have gone to such trouble to smuggle it out of the Kingdom of Nepal."

Taegu did not anticipate the question, but he was ready with an answer.

"It could only be one thing. They have obtained our plans for the shipment of goods through Nepal and Northern India."

"Were those plans available from our people in Nepal?"

"No, but for a price a rebel Yunnanese General who is at war with our factions would gladly sell the Americans information. We know a Yunnanese General named Chang was in Kathmandu recently. Now we know what he was doing there!"

Gifu wasn't convinced. "What type of information did the General have?"

Taegu looked away, staring out the window. "I don't know. But I do know that he could have knowledge of all of our routes from southern Thailand to the Golden Triangle, and then on to India. That information would not be hard for a Yunnanese General to buy. The Chui Chow Mafia in Bangkok would sell anyone that information. When Sungawa moved in, they felt the pinch. They have not forgotten."

"Such things are new to me. I only know Sungana's interest and history. But if it is as you say, then the future of both Shikokus depends on our actions. One of us must be at the interrogation of this man Caldwell. We must squeeze him until we are certain we know everything."

Gifu needed to walk alone and think. He left the room, telling Taegu he should be at Caldwell's last service.

Susan waited for Caldwell, as they planned, at the bus stop in front of the Tourist office on Janpath Street. She arrived in New Delhi two days before, thankful for the comfortable flight from Nepal and the outdated and worn luxury of Delhi's Imperial Hotel. She could only imagine the long trip poor Caldwell was suffering. If necessary, she planned to meet each bus from Gorakhpur until he arrived. That kept her near the Tourist Office and away from the Akbar Hotel on Chanakyapuri Road, where David Dean was staying.

Susan was to have a long, fruitless wait. On the fourth day of their journey, Caldwell and his two new and very persuasive friends debussed outside of Delhi, where they were met by a black Sungana limo. If anybody noticed that the American seemed less than happy, they kept quiet. It was

obvious to everybody that the man was protected by two *thags*, and nobody messed with *thags*.

Chapter TWENTY-TWO

Langley, Virginia:

"It's just in by courier, Sir," the girl who took Tanya's place announced to the DCI.

The courier checked the DCI's ID before he let them unlock the case from his wrist. He was tougher now, having lost a bar and paid dearly for giving the last package to a secretary instead of the DDO or DCI.

"Get Dan Hill up here!" George commanded as he re-entered his office. He wasn't expecting anything by courier from India, maybe Dan was.

Hill entered his office, breathing hard.

"What is it? Your secretary sounded like it was a matter of life or death!"

"You expecting this?" The DCI held up the manila envelope.

"No! Open it!"

George fumbled with the sealed envelope. "Fuck! Not another one of these," he said, dangling the tampon by the string.

"Open it George, it's just cotton!"

"Message here," George mumbled as he opened the rolled paper and read. "Says our agent Caldwell followed Dean to India via the Rajpath Road. Both disappeared. Caldwell presumed dead. Shit. Bad news."

"And Dean? Nothing more about Cowboy?"

"Nothing except that Caldwell followed Dean. You don't think Dean killed him?"

"No, of course not! I have an awful feeling that Dean will turn up dead."

George was sweating, red in the face. "Both dead? But why? What could they have known that would get them killed?"

"Something about drugs? Something about Sungawa? George, we've got to find out!"

George had his handkerchief out mopping his brow. He hated it when his men died. He really couldn't take it.

"Dan, who do we have on the ground over there?"

Dan thought a moment, "Well, there's Susan. She got this to us," he held up the tampon. "Then there's ... no ... she went back to Missouri. There's that woman Dorothy, the one Caldwell recruited as an ID in Kathmandu. Perhaps we can find her. Damn, George, that's all! We don't have any other operatives we can trust!"

"There's got to be one person. Let's assume Dean is alive. Who do we have who knows him and might be able to find him?"

Bing! A little bell went off in Dan Hill's head. Gloria was on his case about Horowitz. Horowitz knew Dean and could probably find him if he was still alive.

"Terrible Tanya!"

George looked thunderstruck. "Her? You'd send that empty headed oversexed nincompoop to India?"

"Who else?"

"She's the only marble we have left?"

"Unless we can make that last ID Caldwell used in Nepal. I'll contact Susan and send her looking for the woman. Until then, we better prepare Tanya Horowitz! That ding bat may be America's last hope in this war!"

Hotel Akbar. New Delhi, India:

Fallout, Cowboy, AKA David Dean, sat alone at a side table in the hotel dining room sipping tea and studying an article in the business section of the *Hindustan Times*. A Japanese company's offer to build an electronics manufacturing plant near Delhi, was discussed in detail.

The company would assemble portable radios, TVs, and a new item, beta format video recorders. Marketing information released by Sungana Industries showed that a majority of the exports would go to fourteen of the fifteen Soviet Socialistic Republics. Other exports would go to Greece, Spain, and Portugal.

There was text from an interview with a Mr. Ito Shikoku, the company's Director. He stated that India, with Sungana Industries help, could become a major manufacturing nation, exporting electronic equipment to every country in the world. The article noted that funds for the expansion of Sungana Industries in India were provided by the American's Aid to Developing Nations program, which was known to be a CIA agency.

Dean searched the paper to see if more about the CIA involvement was on another page. No, the writer dropped his bomb about CIA involvement without belaboring the fact.

It was the first time Dean saw the names Sungana Industries and Ito Shikoku. They were of no special meaning to him other than what Jan had

told him. He made a mental note of the information because CIA involvement was implied in the article. He ditched the CIA operative in Nepal, but now he wondered if they had tried to involve him in this economic development cover. He thought about it, saw no connection, and dismissed the idea.

That afternoon as he walked down Janpath, he saw the lanky woman who worked for the CIA. Susan was hiding in the shadows across the street from the Tourist Office. She was trying to blend into the crowd in the same way she staked him out in Kathmandu. A bus came and unloaded. She searched the faces of the passengers, obviously looking for someone. He surmised she was looking for him. When she was certain the bus was empty, she turned and left. She looked depressed and angry. He followed her to the American Embassy. She entered and was back on the street in fifteen minutes.

She went to the Hotel Imperial and disappeared into the elevator. Staying out of sight in the lobby, Dean waited. After an hour Susan reappeared and went into the inner foyer. She was looking for someone. Then he saw Dorothy Wentworth arrive. Susan stopped her. Dorothy looked angry and suspicious. They talked, standing near the elevators facing each other. Dorothy became increasingly indignant. He couldn't hear their words, but he knew from their body language they disagreed about something. Dorothy turned and walked past him, not recognizing him with hair and sunglasses. She stormed out of the hotel. Susan looked dejected as she caught an elevator and disappeared.

David, gold sports coat over his arm, followed Dorothy down Janpath Road to the Janpath Hotel. He got close as she went to the Tour Desk. She

asked for information about how to get to Agra. He smiled. She still planned to meet him. She bought a ticket on the Tourist Express which left at 7 a.m. the next morning. After she disappeared into the elevator, he went to the tour desk and booked his own passage on the 11 p.m. express train leaving that night. He would be in Agra in time to scout around and position himself to see who followed Dorothy. If she was alone, they could be together.

Dean had the afternoon to attend to business and to hang out. He planned to return to Delhi after Agra, visit schools and see the sights, so he didn't feel pressured to be a tourist. His family and friends would have sent his mail to the American Express office in New Delhi. Thought of mail from home made him homesick. His thoughts were of Colorado, family and friends.

The man at the desk gave him back his passport and American Express card, walked his fingers through a mail file and extracted three letters addressed to David Dean.

Dean took the letters, thanked the man, and walked to a bench along the wall where he could sit and read. Two envelopes were postmarked Gold Canyon, Colorado. One had the postmark of Hilo, Hawaii. "Hilo," he mumbled. "I don't know anybody in Hilo Hawaii!" Then he recognized Jan's handwriting.

Sungana apartments above Chandni Chowk Road, New Delhi:

Ito was weak, but mobile. Although the bandages were off, scabs stood like islands floating on his shaved head. He was alert, calm, and direct.

"I am not satisfied with the information you got from Caldwell!"

Gifu looked down, afraid to meet his master's gaze. "Nor I, but it is all he knew."

Hedeki sat forward in his chair, looking at Ito. "That is true. He knew less than I hoped."

Ito was unmoved. "He was a plant, not a main player. He was CIA, and he arranged contacts for the man who got away, Dean!"

"That is clear," Gifu said, "But he did not know why Dean needed contacts."

"And the woman?" Ito asked.

"She meets every bus. She is confused. She goes to the American Embassy every day at least once. Our inside contacts say she reports she cannot find Caldwell or Dean, nothing more," Taegu reported, looking toward his master, Hedeki.

"What could the woman tell us?" Ito asked, pointing a finger at Gifu.

Gifu was pleased that his master was staying calm and not getting angry as he always did before the operation.

"Little. According to Caldwell she only knows what he told her. He said she had seen Dean, could identify him. That may be important to us, although we have his photo and he is easy to make."

"Would Caldwell be able to get her to cooperate with us?" Ito asked.

"Caldwell is in no condition to talk to anybody," Hedeki stated, grinning his cold primeval grin.

Ito grimaced. "Will he ever be?"

Taegu stepped forward, nodding to Hedeki. "No, he will never be."

Ito understood.

Time passed and the men in the plush apartment thought their individual thoughts. No one said anything for perhaps fifteen long minutes. Then Ito spoke.

"Dean is the key to this thing. Where is he? Can we find him before he damages our operations? Who will take the lead?"

Taegu was first to answer. "He never left Nepal or if he did, he went back to Calcutta or directly out of India."

Gifu interrupted. "Not so! My bet is he is in Delhi now! He's here trying to ferret more information about us. I would guess the CIA had him flown out of Nepal by a plane leaving from a private airport ... they would know how to get him here. I think we must assume he is here, and we will find him looking over one of our operations."

Taegu puffed out his chest, angry, face reddening. "If that's true, our contacts in the American Government would have informed us. Don't forget, Sungawa has a special status with those who advise the President."

Hedeki sat forward again, his eyes like slits as he thought. "We will contact our CIA friends here in Delhi. They have delivered the AID funds as they promised. They have done everything we have asked them to do, including giving us direct import routes into the United States. They have equally as much to lose if this Dean fellow gets too close. We will keep up our search, but it is time to get the Americans involved. They must find him to protect themselves."

"I agree," Ito said, smiling the same evil smile as his brother. The dance is in their theater." There was another long pause, broken by Ito again.

"What are your connections with MI6, brother?"

Hedeki looked over at Ito, hunched his shoulders. "We know of British Foreign Intelligence."

"But you don't use the British?"

"No, not really. We access most of what we need from them via the Americans."

"And it is the other way around with Sungana!" Ito stated, smiling his coldest smile. "We access via the British, the French, and the West Germans."

Gifu motioned to Ito that he wished to have a say. Ito nodded permission. "Gifu, what do you think?"

"In Delhi and all of Western India we must network through the British. However, they are idealistic, pompous, regimented, and often difficult to deal with. The French, on the other hand, have no ethics." Ito gave him a sharp glance. Gifu continued, cautiously. "That is to say they practice situational ethics." Ito smiled approval at his bodyguard's choice of words. "If one plays to the French inferiority complex, one can always get what one needs from the French."

"And the West Germans?" Hedeki asked.

"Well, the Germans can be bought ... they will sell anything, do anything, compromise themselves in any way as long as one remembers two things."

Hedeki stared at him. Ito smiled, "Go on Gifu!"

"Flatter them with comments about their inherent superiority, and put them in charge of managing the project."

Hedeki didn't smile. "I've heard that said about our people. I didn't find the analogy amusing!"

"But you did find it to be true?" Ito asked, staring his brother down.

Ito wasn't through. "And the Americans, it would seem they have everything. Why do they sell their services to us?"

Hedeki took a long time to arrange his thoughts and answer. Finally, he stood, walked around to the breakfront, opened a glass door, and took out a small bookend, a world globe.

"America was sold out long ago by religious fanatics who want to Christianize the entire world. You know of the international cartel? It is a company like our own, but larger. It exists outside the boundaries and the laws of any nation or government." Ito nodded that he knew. Hedeki continued:

"You know the hold that the energy companies—cartel companies—have on our little islands, right? Now imagine the hold the cartel has on America." He paused to let the points sink in. "American values foster the development of the cartel, thus the American system is to be manipulated, as are the systems of the other world powers, including our interests. They have to destroy us."

Ito and Gifu came to the edges of their chairs, obviously shocked by what Hedeki was telling them. Taegu, sat back, not involved, trained to let Hedeki do the talking and thinking. Ito understood.

"Without America, the West, we have no markets with unlimited purchasing power."

Hedeki gave Ito one of his evil little smiles. "Right, brother!"

"What can we do Hedeki?" Ito asked, not having time to think of outcomes.

"About America? Who gives a shit! About who takes over the new world order? We ride along pretending to be a player. All the time we position ourselves to do battle with the Dominick Cartel. That battle will either be the beginning of our world order or it will be our end."

Ito sat back, doubting his brother's words.

"I find this whole plot hard to believe! Give me some specifics!"

Hedeki replaced the world globe bookend, giving the earth a spin.

"By 2000, eighty-five percent of the American infrastructure, their ability to create and manufacture things, will be gone. America will be a country of workers who do not produce clothing or shelter or the necessities of civilized life. It will have what they call a service economy. At that point, the cartel will move to destroy America's capacity to produce food. They will do that by increasing the cost of fuels, fertilizers, and transportation, while at the same time closing off the supply of funds for rural America and agricultural producers. They will undermine the small towns and communities, causing mass immigration to the cities.

Ito was nodding agreement. "I have seen this pattern developing, I know the role Sungana has played."

Hedeki sat, relieved he convinced his brother he knew the way the future was going.

Ito continued. "And our great company? We get the drugs into the American and European cities, thereby creating mobs that destroy the cities. We use drug monies to underwrite economic expansion, destroy competition, and thus we are able to drive western manufacturers out of business. The cartel uses us to do their dirty work and destroy the

established economies of the world. Then they intend to destroy us and let their few rule the many. I don't like the outcome of their game!"

"I never planned to play it their way," Hedeki smirked.

Chapter TWENTY-THREE

American Express Office, New Delhi:

Dear David,

I still have a copy of your itinerary. I am sending this via American Express, praying you are okay and you receive it.

As you guessed, they would not let me re-enter India. I was sent here, to the big island, to get me away from danger and to do some things for George and Dan.

I am writing to warn you, my friend. You are in danger! I have learned that a company, Sungawa Industries, was/is involved in the drug traffic in Thailand. That company is developing a network of electronics manufacturing plants in India and Goa, funded by our government. Each radio, TV, or VCR will have a special capacitor that will hold up to a pound of high-grade heroin. The electronic, gizmos will be sent to the US and can you believe it? ... Western Europe and the USSR, as well.

David, remember our plan? I told them you were a wild card and not to trust you. But I have learned that they have already used you to get information to Nepal. Last contact, I was told that you disappeared. You did that before, remember? Gad, I hope you are reading this and that you are safe!

David, get out of India! Go home! Travel again someday when it is safe. I know you won't but you must do everything you can to stay away from the CIA. Both CIA factions, the good and the bad, are looking for you. So are Sungawa's thugs.

Watch out for strange women you just happen to meet, and for someone called Susan and another called Terrible Tanya. No, I'm not kidding! I'll write care of Tehran.

All of my love to you my friend,

Jan

PS: You bastard! How could you walk out on me that way?

You really hurt me!

Dean folded the letter and put it in his flat purse. If Jan hadn't mentioned the Nepal delivery, Sungawa, and a woman named Susan, he would have discounted her warning. From what he read and from the things that happened to him, he knew she was telling the truth. Paranoia rode his shoulder now. He decided to keep wearing his hair and grow a beard. He had to do something to look Indian, not like an American tourist. The sooner he was out of Delhi, the safer he would be, or so he thought.

The late-night express to Agra wasn't an express at all. The half-passenger, half-freight train bumped and clunked, started and stopped its hapless way down the one hundred-twenty-five miles of worn track to the city of the Taj Mahal. At 7 a.m. Dean detrained and made his way by rickshaw down Station Road to Taj Road and finally to the Hotel Jaggi, recommended by a station employee. The hotel was old and clean with a

certain charm Dean couldn't quite identify or appreciate. He took two rooms, stowed his gear, showered, ate a leisurely breakfast, and headed back to the railway's station. He expected Dorothy's train to arrive about ten. He had twenty minutes to scout the place, position himself and get ready for her arrival.

At 10:30, the express from Delhi arrived on track number one. A gaggle of English women, traveling as a sideshow, came off the platform and into the station house *en masse*. The noise the group made echoed throughout the building, commanding everyone's attention. Like sperm rushing to overripe eggs, porters pulling two-wheeled dolly tails, made for the women. Soon joined, the women, porters, and luggage made for the street and a waiting Leland bus.

Dean had a difficult time ignoring the sideshow and focusing on the platform that ran along the line of gray cars. He saw Dorothy step sideways down the narrow steps of a car, fighting to get her suitcase out with her. He watched as she reached the platform, hitched up her luggage, and came inside. Behind her a short man with an evil aura detrained. The man carried no luggage, only a newspaper tucked under his arm. His eyes never left Dorothy. He stopped when she did, moved forward when she went toward the newsstand, fighting her suitcase and carry-on. The porters were outside packing the English ladies and their gear into the bus. Dorothy thought she was alone. The man following her thought he was.

There was no way Dean could contact Dorothy without being seen. All he could do was follow and wait for an opportunity to present itself. Dorothy would find a place to stay and then go to the entrance of the Taj Mahal to wait for him. Between now and then, he would contact her and

together they would neutralize the man following her. At the time Dean hadn't a clue as to how he would pull it off.

Dorothy's rickshaw pulled up in front of the Grand Hotel as the Leland, barfing black smoke, pulled away from the curb. The colorful herd of ladies was being organized in twos by a barker furnished by the tour company. Their luggage, now loaded on a hand truck, was on its way to the lobby.

Dean had his rickshaw driver go past the hotel. He got out about a block away and walked back to the Grand. The man following Dorothy arrived in a scooter-driven rickshaw and was in the lobby by the time Dorothy paid her driver and organized her luggage.

Dean watched as Dorothy hefted her bags and started toward the entry. Past the entrance, directly on the heels of the gaggle, she had to stop and wait. The lobby was jammed with the tour. She was out of sight of the man waiting for her on the other side of the wall of English flesh. Dean moved in behind her.

"Hi. It's me. Don't turn around! You were followed from Delhi. That small man in the gray coat? He's inside waiting for you."

Dorothy turned around and looked at him, did a double take, and turned back again.

"David! If I hadn't recognized your voice I ..." Dean interrupted her.

"I have a plan. Go in, check in, but make a big deal about being ill. Act it out so your tail gets the message. Check into your room. Tell the bellman you don't want to be disturbed. Put the card on the knob if they have a card. Wait a few minutes. When you are sure the man cannot see you, get your

stuff, find the stairs, and get out of the hotel by a back or side entrance. Meet me up the street ... to your left about a block ... under the big tree."

Dorothy nodded. She turned again and saw Dean moving off.

In time, all the ladies were lifted to their floors, and the tour leader collapsed in a lobby chair. Next to him, she saw the short man Dean described. He pretended not to notice her.

She began her act by sitting on her large suitcase, hands on her stomach, upper body bent over, a look of agony on her face. Almost immediately the bell captain came over and asked if she was all right. She shook her head. He helped her up and over to the check-in counter. Another man took charge of her bags.

As she turned to face the elevator door, just before the doors closed and the elevator started, she could see the small man positioned in a large lobby chair watching her over the top of his paper.

The bell captain offered to get her a doctor. "I have the flu," she held her hand to her forehead. "A day or so of rest and I'll be good as new. Please, how can I keep people from disturbing me?"

The bell captain reached inside her door and detached the Do Not Disturb card from the knob. "Put this on the outside ... here, I'll do it for you."

"May I order tea and toast or something ... I have crackers and water to drink, and medicine in my bag, but perhaps tomorrow or the day after if I need toast?"

"The menu is on the table Miss. Dial eight to order."

He put the large suitcase on the stand, checked her towels, and waited. She sat on the edge of the bed, hand to forehead, complaining.

"Damned flu! I always get sick when I travel." He stood waiting. She understood, took Rs5 out of her purse and gave it to him with a weak smile. "Please see that I am not disturbed!"

When the bell captain left, she stood with the door slightly open, perusing the hallway. It was empty. At the far end she saw a faded STAIR sign. Thinking through a plan, she closed the door, went to the radio on the bed stand, turned it on, and smiled to herself as she heard an English voice come through the speaker. She lumped the pillows under the covers, turned on the bathroom light, hefted her bags, and was soon wrestling them down the back stairs. Two floors down she found the exit and went out into a weed and trash strewn lot. She made her way down a narrow alley, and came upon Dean, leaning on the hood of a small blue taxi.

"Jaggi Hotel!" Dean commanded. The taxi driver kick-started the little machine and off they went. Dorothy missed the view of Agra. She was staring at Dean's clever disguise.

I like him better without hair.

They arrived at the hotel and checked in at the front desk.

"You already got two rooms?" Dorothy observed, a tiny bit hurt.

Dean ignored the implied question. "I hope you like this hotel, it's not as posh as the Grand. I haven't seen your room. I hope it's clean."

"What do we do now?"

"Take time to rest and get cleaned up. As soon as you're ready, let's go out and see the sights. I figure we have two days before we smuggle you back into the Grand and you lead your tail back to Delhi."

"That man scares me ... I mean, he's stalking me!"

"He thinks you can lead him to me. He won't hurt you. He'll report back that you're not worth following."

Dean handed her the key. As he was turning to go, he remembered Susan's meeting with Dorothy. "I saw your run-in with Susan. What did she want?"

"You were there? In Delhi?"

He nodded.

"She called and left a message at my hotel asking me to meet her. I don't know how she knew I was in Delhi or at the Janpath. I went over to the Imperial and she stopped me in the lobby. She accused me of tricking her. She said she knew I knew where you and Caldwell were." Dorothy smiled a guilty smile. "She was right about you. I don't know about Caldwell. I didn't let on. I told her you ditched me and took the bus back. She called me a liar. I walked away."

Dean smiled. "You think fast, Dorothy. Thank you for helping me."

"*De nada*, my friend."

Dean closed the door for her and went to his room.

Fuck the CIA and Sungawa Industries. We'll see the sights and I'll do what I came to India to do. Damn them!

Sungana apartments above Chandni Chowk Road, New Delhi:

Taka and Shizu worked together in the spacious apartment kitchen preparing meals for their masters. It was a surprise to both when they learned the brothers ate a simple fare. Each day they learned how similar their masters were. The similarities were their major topic of conversation.

Taka, as Ito's valet and closest confidant, marveled at what he called the "conservative good judgment" of his master. Shizu interrupted, remarking that their masters were, perhaps, the two wealthiest men in world, yet they lived modestly.

"I knew Doctor Katasawa," Shizu stated, one-upping Taka. "He was a man who believed that if the Shikokus were too visible, they could not be effective. He taught them to use power and get joy from that, nothing else."

"That is most likely true," Taka agreed, ignoring Shizu's association of himself with Katasawa. "Ito has never taken time to play or even to be with a woman."

"Hedeki also!"

"Then neither of them has any purpose but to serve the Company," Taka concluded, saddened by the information.

"The only thing I have ever seen Ito do for pleasure is go to the Sino-Japanese Museum in Corfu. I wonder if now ... now that the surgery has been successful and Ito remembers his childhood, things will change and he can learn to play a little."

"Doctor Westfault said that both are still in danger. I was there when he told Hedeki he would have trouble within the year," Shizu said.

"Yet your master plans to kill the Doctor?"

"I have spoken to Taegu about Hedeki's hate for Westfault. He understands that it is important for the man to be kept alive."

The kitchen door opened and Gifu and Taegu entered, Gifu complaining loudly about the lack of food for their masters.

Taka bowed an exaggerated bow and motioned with his hand toward the dishes they prepared.

"Aha, you are ready now! Here, help us take this food to them."

The plates of sandwiches were a welcome reprieve from the topics Ito and Hedeki were sorting. They ate while sharing their newfound memories of their boyhood. Ito had not recovered all of his childhood memories, but he was encouraged by Hedeki's stories.

When their men came back into the room and removed the plates and serving dishes, both Shikokus were refreshed. Ito was in pursuit of Hedeki's observations and plans. Hedeki strove to learn more about Sungana's operations in the lands west of India.

Ito picked at his teeth. "We are no longer bound by the outdated plans of Mitusuka or Katasawa. These times are different, the world is in another phase."

Hedeki lounged back in his chair. "I couldn't agree more. It's up to us now!"

"And the cartel? Can we break it, Hedeki? I honestly do not know our combined power."

"We can and will brother. Let us agree that from this day we will play the game to serve ourselves, not the cartel."

"The Dominick Cartel?" Ito asked.

"Yes Ito, there is only one cartel, with many parts."

"And you know its players?"

"Some of them. I deal with them regularly, so do you! Peter Dominick intends to gain absolute control of all of the Earth's resources."

Ito got up and walked around the room, made a full circle and then stood near the window that looked down on the busy Chandi Chowk Road.

"Hedeki, we are a family, but we are both without heirs and within a year, we may both be rendered ineffective. He paused, looking sadly toward his brother. The multi-colored lights from the signs along the street below painted colors across his face and upper body giving him an ethereal look. He continued, his voice soft and low.

"What role must we play in all of this? What difference does it make?"

Hedeki gave him an unspoken snarl of a look. He noted his fear behind the anger and the knowledge unnerved him. He was worried about the future and the time bomb ticking in his damaged head. His look turned softer, his body language signaled resignation.

"Ito, we must pick our heirs and start training them now." Saying that, getting the thought out and on their agenda, gave him some release. His thoughts raced. "We must select from our employees those most suited to command, and we must do it now." His thoughts were still racing, kicking out things for him to say. "Let's list those in our organizations who are potential heirs and ..."

Ito interrupted. "I start my list with Gifu. As you have seen, he is exceptional."

"You agree that we make such lists then! I have many choices, but I don't have anyone at the top of my list." Hedeki put his hand to his head as much to stroke away imagined pain as to think. "I have a woman who is now in charge of all of Sungawa's Pacific Rim countries. I have been observing her, but it is too soon to tell if she has what we want."

"Then find out soon," Ito said. "Maybe in a week, no longer. In that time, we can make our lists and prioritize them. Next week we can start meeting each other's people. I will make arrangements for guests, a small

number to start with, at Sungana's Bombay headquarters." He looked at Hedeki and saw him nodding agreement. Then he changed direction. "But Hedeki, we need to talk about how we will take on the cartel! I need to understand!"

Hedeki stood and came to his brother's side.

"Ito, through Sungawa's networks, I almost control the so-called democratic processes in America. Already Sungawa interests are represented by lobbyists who can get anything through state or federal governments. We control Hawaii, California, and soon manufacturing, finance, and most entertainment centers ... what they call the media. The cartel supports our efforts because it thinks we can be used to spread their New Wind religion to the world. We must keep them believing that. In actuality, we must position ourselves so we can break the cartel."

Ito was following every word and idea. He injected, "Sungana almost controls the rest of the Western World, so I know what you say is true."

Hedeki paused long enough to agree and then continued.

"We take over and then rebuild American and European industries. We make certain Western cities do not crumble at the hands of drug-crazed mobs. We buy the farms if necessary to keep them productive. We gain control of the cartel's energy monopoly and stop them from using inflated oil prices to destroy rural America and make Americans totally dependent on them." Hedeki paused, realizing he was animated and charged. Looking at Ito, he saw his brother similarly energized.

"And what do we get for our efforts?" Ito asked, certain the answer was nothing.

"You and I? I don't know! We're damned puppets, that's all we are."

Chapter TWENTY-FOUR

Silver Springs, Maryland:

Gloria Nixon Hill was having a quiet chat with herself.

I'm a nothing. A nobody. Why am I afraid of losing my job? Dan never suspected I encouraged Tanya. He is grateful to me for recovering the message and getting Tanya out of George's hair. I misjudged Dan's commitment to his job ... and my need to have a career. Tanya's theft of the top-secret communiqué almost cost me my job and maybe even my freedom, but it doesn't matter.

Any \$2.25 an hour secretary can do what I do at NFIB. Until I met Dan and became his confidant, the job with the CIA was just as dead-end. Being a secretary doesn't challenge me. I need to be on a different track. I should request specialized training to qualify as an analyst or division chief. I've got to make a change. I could even quit, be a housewife, and play the day away. Even my dad keeps lecturing that there's a world out there to experience. I know he's right.

Mrs. Akins was not due with Christopher until after 3:00. Early that morning Gloria called the woman and told her she was taking the rest of the day off and wanted Chris with her. Mrs. Akins said it would be after 3:00 before she could get free and bring him home. Gloria looked at her watch. It was 12:30. On the spur of her impulse she grabbed her coat, purse, and car keys and headed toward her car.

I'll pick-up Christopher and we'll have the afternoon to play together. I'll take a personal leave to be a mother and housewife for a while. This afternoon will tell ... if I can stand it.

The Akins house was one of the Levitt track homes dwarfed by trees planted after WWII by young idealists kicked into the future by the G.I. Bill. The front yard was covered with crisp, new fallen leaves. The backyard was fenced with a high chain-link barrier that kept strangers out and kids in. Gloria could see back along the side of the house to where Mrs. Akins and a group of toddlers were playing. She tried the gate in the fence. It was locked. She entered the house, intending to go through to the back.

As she crossed the living room, she passed the hallway to the bedrooms. From behind each closed door, she could hear babies crying. The crying was disturbing. It activated an instinct inside her. The sounds were raspy-tired, mournful wails. She recognized the wails as those of babies who had been crying for hours, were exhausted but too miserable to sleep. She was familiar with the weary pleas for comfort coming from behind the doors. It was the way Christopher cried regardless of what she did through the long nights at home. She blamed his upset on herself, assuming he missed Mrs. Akins—that he thought Mrs. Akins was his mother and he missed her.

Christopher lay in a crib with three other infants. The babies were bound tightly in cotton blankets, hands at sides. All were grieving, unchanged and soiled. The room reeked of urine. There was no sign of bottles or baby food. To Gloria, it seemed as if the babies had been there, untouched, since they arrived that morning. She lifted the tiny form of her son, unwrapped the wet and smelly blanket, and held his diapered form

close to her. He whimpered, rasped, and cried little exhausted sobs. He was completely spent. She looked at the other infants, noted the cries still coming from the other rooms, and went to the kitchen. It took her only a minute to dial the operator, explain the situation, and get a promise to send help.

Fifteen minutes later the police arrived. A blue Ford four door pulled up behind them and disgorged two ladies from Social Services. Mrs. Akins was still in the backyard, oblivious to her impending demise. Gloria let the duty-bound rescuers into the house and showed them the rooms of suffering infants. Then she bundled Christopher in her coat and left. Her first stop was the clinic where she received her prenatal care. She handed Christopher to her doctor and stood, unable to speak. She called Dan, trembling and nearly incoherent.

Dan Hill took the call in George's office, the DCI trying not to feel indignant that Dan was using his phone to answer a personal call. It didn't take George long to forget his objections. Dan's face became gray-white, his voice quivered.

"She's what? ... Shock! ... He's okay? ... What do you mean? ... What happened? ... Anemic? ... Abused? ... By whom? ... I'm leaving now!"

Dan made an attempt to replace the receiver, missed, and it clanked to the floor, bouncing at the end of its cord. George recovered the instrument and placed it in its cradle, his eyes never left Dan.

"A car wreck?"

"No, the woman who keeps Christopher has been abusing him. Gloria is in shock or something. Doctor says she blames herself and has withdrawn. I need to go!"

"Damn, Son! You're in no condition to drive. I'm going with you. Let's get your car. I'll have my driver pick-up Ethel and bring her to your house. Let's go Dan, we'll make arrangements from your car radio."

Chapter TWENTY-FIVE

Jaggi Hotel. Agra, India:

Dorothy luxuriated in the large porcelain bathtub. The hot water covered her entire body. She couldn't remember being in such a large tub. It was like when she was a child and the bathtub was the sea. She remembered being little and playing in the water, then she looked up suddenly, expecting to see Grandma Thompson enter with her awful brown soap and the stiff bath brush she used to scour her skin to make it 'clean and pink'.

Dorothy sat up, making a wave that almost left the tub. Every nice memory I have is always ruined by bad memories! David is wrong, I can't be who I want to be. I will always be who I am.

She sat, soaked, and thought about what she said. Then she sat up in the bath again, and told the room she disagreed.

"Old lady bitch! You aren't going to push me around anymore! I will be as I want, not as you tried to make me!" Tears filled her eyes, "Oh Mommy, you tried to warn me ... why did you die? It was to get away from her, wasn't it? But Mommy, you left me with her!"

She ran the hot water again, sloshing the water around so it would mix and not scald.

"It's in me too, isn't it?" Hearing the words made them real.
"Grandma's hate was in you, that's why Daddy left. That's why I have this

awful perception of men. It's a family trait, isn't it? Passed down for God knows how many generations. You knew Mommy! You knew you carried this learned hatred of men. At least now I know it's not biological. It was planted by you both. You tried to warn me ... I didn't understand. I was too young. But now ... It ends here Dorothy! I've got to end it here! I've got to feel what I feel ... for myself." Dorothy finally allowed herself to relax as she enjoyed dripping the warm soothing water over her shoulders and breasts. When the water felt a bit cool, she stepped out of the tub and got dressed. She locked the door and went to David's room.

"You took a long time," David said as he opened his door and let her in.

"I took a great bath. I had time to think some more about what you told me about being who I want to be. I got a lot settled in that bath, and I hope I let a lot of my past go down the drain with the soapy water."

"You look nice! Whatever you did agrees with you."

"David, not now, but later I want to talk to you about something."

"Okay."

"Don't you want to know what?"

"Sure, but later is okay."

"Okay." She really wanted to get it out, but she set a different table.

"Are we going to the Taj now?"

David smiled, aware she wanted to talk, but wise enough to let her ask for what she wanted and not rescue her.

"I'll tell you what! You be Mumtaz. I'll be Jahan. We'll pretend we are ghosts and that the Taj Mahal is your tomb. What do you think about that?"

Dorothy grinned; her eyes wide with the fun of it. "We've come back after three centuries to visit the tomb."

"And we're wearing disguises so no one will know who we are."

"And we must be careful we're not followed. We're in danger!"

David motioned her into the hall. "Let's not make this too real."

Dorothy fell under the spell of the white marble wonder. Its four delicate minarets looked to her like the spikes of an amaryllis bulb, just before it bloomed. The huge pointed dome, set among four smaller domes, topped the octagonal building. The pointed arches placed all around the building's facades seemed to reach upwards to the great dome, supporting, yet making the massive weight of it seem to float. The pointed arches gave the Taj a light and airy look. The beautifully carved marble facades, like lace, suggested the building had no weight at all.

David read his guidebook, looking often at the wonder. "It says here that the base platform is more than 800 feet wide! The reflecting pools and gardens are considered to be an integral part of the structure."

"Can we really go in?" Dorothy asked, knowing the answer, but hardly believing one could walk into such a perfect work of art. To her, it would be the same as entering her favorite Seurat canvas, *Sunday Afternoon On The Island of La Grande Jatte*, and joining the people there.

"We must go down into the tomb and find your marble sarcophagi," David said, making his voice sound spooky.

"You weren't supposed to be buried here, Shah Jahan!"

"I know, but after 22 years of marriage and all those kids, how could I leave you?"

"Come now, you know you couldn't find enough black marble to build your own tomb. Besides, I told you to watch out for Aurangzeb. He was always a penny-pincher. I can't believe he's our son! The very idea of him locking you in the tower! That's parent abuse, you know!"

Their guide, ignoring them and their palaver, switched off the lights as they stood before Mumtaz's sarcophagus. They saw only shadows in the thin bands of light creeping in through the tomb's doorway. He placed a flashlight's head against the marble and switched it on. The translucent marble glowed and the intricate insets of flower motifs, in the colors of a thousand precious stones, wreathed the burial case. The image burned into their minds, never to be forgotten.

In time, they left the tomb and re-entered the world of the living. "I had no idea!" Was all Dorothy could say.

"And so, Mr. Mogul Emperor, will you build me a tomb like that some day?"

Dean reached over and touched the water in the reflecting pool, making the image of the Taj more ethereal.

"After we have been married 22 years and you have born me 20 children, I might consider it. Are you sure that's what you want?"

"I'm not sure about 20 kids? That means she was almost always pregnant."

"Things were different in those days. If you loved and made love, someone paid the price. I think it was the woman!" Dean found little humor in his observation.

Something connected in Dorothy's mind. "Not long ago, sex had a different meaning, didn't it?" She paused, looking at Dean, but thinking of the answer he was sure to give.

"It really did. If you wanted lots of intercourse you risked killing your wife."

"My God! That explains everything! Oh David, now I understand." She got up off the viewing bench and began to walk around, muttering, "Now I understand, now I know!"

David turned to follow her with his eyes.

"You do? You know what?" But Dorothy was too engrossed in her new insight to notice his confusion.

Dean watched her pace and process what seemed to be a major epiphany. As she started to calm down, he proposed a plan for the rest of the afternoon. He figured she would tell him what she had learned when she was ready.

"Dorothy, I would like to enter the garden by each of the four entrances and look at the Taj from those vantage points. Then I just want to sit here by the reflecting pool and let the night come and the moon rise. Do you want to do that?"

Dorothy nodded. "Sure, I want this place to seep into me until it's part of me. I want it to imprint. I would lick it all over and eat it if I could."

The hours passed. The night grew cool. Dorothy shivered.

"I think I need to go now David. Do you mind?"

"I'm ready. We can come back tomorrow."

"No, I will never come back. I have it here now," she pointed at her head. "To come back or see it again, would somehow weaken my vision."

"We need to eat! I'm starved."

Dorothy nodded. "Another kind of food."

"We can order at the hotel, eat in our rooms. Someone might see us in the restaurant."

"We can eat in my room," Dorothy offered. "Mine has a pretty big table and two chairs."

They returned to the hotel and ordered a more traditional meal. The dinner tasted like India smelled, ripe with curry. They had curried chicken and rice and *bhelpuri*, a sort of puffed rice, onions, and potatoes drenched in chutney. The *chai* was a black variety that tasted green. They ate until the large clay dish was empty and their plates were clean. The boy brought more tea, cleared the table, and backed out of the room. David tipped back on the legs of his chair trying to get horizontal and let digestion do its thing. Dorothy, energized by the meal, moved about the room and then lit on the edge of her chair, across the table from David.

"I wonder if this is a good time to talk?"

"Shoot!" David wondered why she always came to things from the oblique, thought he understood, and let it pass.

"My grandmother fell in love and got married. Almost exactly nine months later she had my mother, but it was not easy. My mother was a breech birth. The doctor told Grandmother that she would die if she tried to have another child. My Grandfather understood, but he wanted sex, and so did she, but they couldn't have it. He visited prostitutes ... there were lots of them in those days. I understand that every town had a house. I think she started hating his freedom and her forced restraint. Maybe it was because she couldn't and he could ... you know what I mean?"

Dean nodded indicating he did.

“Grandmother taught my mother to fear men. All my life I remember her saying, all they want is sex, all they want is to use you and kill you if they can! I heard that so many times I can play her voice in my head like a tape.

“My mother ran away with Daddy. I was born ... an easy birth, but my grandmother convinced Mommy that if she let Dad have his way with her, she was weak, a fool, and she would eventually die in childbirth. Mom was afraid to sleep with Dad. She told me all about their fights. Then he left. I never really knew him.”

Dorothy got up and walked the room again, stopping to look at her reflection in the mirror, stopping to look at Dean.

"Grandmother was right, you know! In her day, wanting a man ... being a sexual being, meant getting pregnant ... having babies. Too many babies and mothers died in those days!"

David was uneasy, uncomfortable with what he was hearing. He'd had the thought before, but he'd never heard it from a woman's perspective.

"David, my grandmother never knew about the sexual revolution. Neither did Mom. They were women from the world when it was another way, and they tried to make me that way ... actually tried to protect me. I never understood that before, and I never understood the damage they have done to me ... I mean because this is a different time, and women are supposed to know their bodies and desires ... and they get to have sex without fear of babies or death! Improved medical practices have made all that possible. She sat down, slid onto her tailbone, and rested. David smiled gently. He understood.

"And another thing, I don't think men and women could really make complete sexual love before, not and be married and be sane. That's why men went out and played with prostitutes, and women hated them for it."

David nodded. "I guess that's right."

"And David, I'm the first woman in my whole family's history who is free to enjoy her body. I'm the first woman in our history that has been told it's okay to touch myself and have an orgasm! I can have a husband and we can have intercourse and get each other off! That's amazing, don't you think?"

The words and mental pictures stopped David's digestion. He was energized, though he tried to relax and not think the thoughts that triggered responses. He knew Dorothy wasn't talking about having sex at the moment, but simply getting used to the thought that she could do. He relaxed a bit, and let her go on.

"Am I embarrassing you? I mean when I talk so openly this way?"

"No! What you are saying is natural and is okay to say. I'm not embarrassed. I admire you for what you're processing. "Whatever I can do to help I'm game." He caught himself trying to hook her into letting him help her get in touch with her body, hated what he was thinking, and changed direction, pushing the mental picture of helping her reach orgasm out of his mind. "I mean, if I can answer any questions just ask."

She looked at him, a funny sort of quizzical look. He knew she sensed he was eager to give her pleasure, but she wasn't sure. She was evaluating his response. Then, the old tapes surfaced as she discounted herself.

No man would want a scrawny woman like me anyway.

"I do have a question, if you'll answer it?"

"If I can."

"Are men and women really different, I mean in their sex drives?"

Dean had heard that question before from women. "I honestly don't believe we are that different. What you said about fear and repressed drives is probably what makes us seem more different than we are."

"Then when I am not afraid, I will feel like it?"

"With tenderness and a good teacher."

Damn, can't I just answer her questions without trying to get it on with her?

"And you'd volunteer to be the teacher I suppose?" She smiled.

"I'm sorry. I wouldn't mind that at all, but I sense that's not what you need right now."

"What do I need?"

David had no answer. He looked up at her, hunched up his shoulders, and smiled a dumb smile.

"How do I start?"

His imagination was having an orgy.

"Can you start me?"

He stood, and walked around the table, away from her. She stood and came around and cornered him.

"I feel something in me ... something happening that I like a lot. Will you hold me?"

"Better than that. Let's find some music on the radio and dance!"

Chapter TWENTY-SIX

Cook Ranch. Sungawa Headquarters near Kiholo, Hawaii:

Sami and Jan completed six rounds at the water's edge where the sand was packed making it easier to run. Their legs were cramping. Although the salt air filled their lungs with each deep breath, it didn't seem to contain enough oxygen. Sami held a hand to her chest.

"I can't run another step, let's walk!"

The gulls following them heard another call and flew en-masse down the deserted beach, landing upon some treasure one found and stupidly bragged. The morning temperature was in the mid-seventies, the sun cast eight o'clock shadows from their bodies. Two-foot breakers came ashore, their undulations across the vast Pacific blocked by the island, but not without cost. Sand washed back to the ocean with the retreating waves. Sami held her side.

"My side hurts, so does my heel. Let's sit!"

"We made six rounds, that's over five miles! We're getting in shape Sami, sand-running will do wonders for us."

"It's killing me!"

They rested on the damp sand, stretching tired muscles and twisting their bodies to relieve the tightness in their calves and thighs. As they cooled and their breathing returned to normal, they lay back on the sand watching the clouds.

"If you stare at a cloud, you can make it disappear," Jan announced. "See that one up there? Poof, I made it vaporize."

"I wish I could do that with my problems," Sami lamented.

"I knew you were worried about something. Don't let it bum you out."

"He wants me to come to Bombay! That really pisses me off! Bombay! I don't have any desire to go to Bombay. And I really don't want to meet with Hedeki Shikoku. I had enough of him when he was here."

"Tell him to fuck-off!"

"Oh Jan, how I wish I could. But I can't! You wouldn't believe the control he has over me!" Sami paused, remembering the way her personality had been split and the Mitusuka people took control of her. Then she caught herself, knowing this was nothing Jan should know about, and moved the conversation back to the upcoming trip.

"We must leave for Bombay on Wednesday. I have a lot of work to do before we go, I'll need most of your time." She got up, did some long body-bending stretches, and walked toward the beach gate.

Jan got to her feet and followed, keeping distance between them.
India.

I can't go back to India. Someone might recognize me ... Sungawa's people in India know me! My cover would be blown ... they'll kill me!

Jan was short of breath again, this time from running thoughts. She wasn't aware that with her Hawaiian tan, sun-bleached hair grown longer and worn, informally in a pageboy cut, she bore little resemblance to the unisex Marine Lieutenant with Dean in Calcutta.

By afternoon, Jan learned that there was no way out. She was going with Sami Cook to Bombay!

Anchorage, Alaska:

The CIA's 707, left Virginia as soon as Tanya was on board. She slept as the jet made its way along the first leg of the Great Circle Route to Asia. In Anchorage, she was asked to deplane and wait in a metal hut on the field. An hour passed and her only company was a smelly, oil-fired heater and racks of spare parts. Outside, a blizzard howled. She had enough common sense to know that it was a blizzard, even though the soldier who placed her in the shed assured her that the weather was normal for this time of year.

Thanks to Gloria's help, she was on her way back into the field of battle to find and rescue David. She was his handler, had trained as a physical therapist to serve him, and it was about time they realized he needed her! She left the day before Gloria rescued Christopher from Mrs. Atkin's home, so she had no idea that her best friend and most important contact was fighting depression and riding guilt into the depths of hell.

The shed door rattled, the wind wailed, the snow blew.

Someone's trying to get in!

The night before, when she couldn't sleep because she was too excited, she saw a movie on TV that scared the gee out of her. The Thing! She watched it because it starred her hero, James Arness, the man she modeled all men after. Arness acted the role of a creature from another planet, found frozen in Alaska. Tanya knew the story was true. She marveled that her hero could act like a blood-sucking creature with rose thorns on its body.

The door rattled again and she was convinced the Thing was trying to get into the shed!

She tried to scream, but no sound came out. She tried to get out of her chair, but her muscles wouldn't respond. The door opened and a furry hand came through the crack. Then a snow-caked furry thing that had a face without features and a mouth ringed with icy-white teeth, pushed into the room. Her heart stopped, she fainted, falling forward and to the side, out of the chair, over her suitcase, onto the greasy floor.

"Jesus, ma'am, what's the matter?" the private asked, his voice squeaking as the first shots of adrenaline hit his system. He pulled off his fur ringed hood, goggles, and nose and mouth shield. He went quickly to her side, observed she was having trouble breathing, and got her onto her back. He fumbled with her light overcoat, pulled the scarf away from her throat, and unbuttoned her top so she could get more air. In doing so, he revealed a cleavage that would have won first place in any body-building competition. The sight finished him. He stood up weakly and then sat heavily in the chair she vacated.

Her eyelids flicked to test the air. Her eyes opened, but she was not oriented enough to realize she was on her back on the floor. She saw the hoarfrost covered ceiling, the private's face over her, upside down.

He's one of the Thing's victims, hanging by his feet, throat slashed, body drained of blood!

The next time Tanya awoke, she was in the airport clinic strapped to a gurney. The kind face of a medic was smiling down on her. The man took her hand and asked her if she was going to be okay.

"It almost got me! She sobbed. It killed a man ... I saw him, it cut his throat and drained his blood." Then she tried to move her arms. "What did it do to me!" she screamed hysterically.

The next time Tanya awoke, the world was a fuzzy place full of bright, sun-like lights. Everything was soft, warm and comfortable. Something nagged at her brain, she didn't care. The people around her moved as if they were dancing, then she knew ... she had died and this was heaven.

Later, she understood. "I've been reborn!" she shouted.

Tanya described to the disgusted psychiatrist her wonderful out-of-body experience with death. She told him about the bright lights and the long tunnel she passed through as she went between heaven and Anchorage.

The white-coats gathered to discuss the case. "Goddamn it! The psychiatrist exclaimed, slapping the wall. "Every time that damned movie is shown we have a case of *Thing* contagion. I'm not certain this woman will ever recover. The movie should be banned in Alaska!"

"What should we do, Doc, the CIA says get her on her flight and on her way to India."

"Okay, guys, this is what we'll do. We'll explain to her what really happened, give her some valium, and put her on the plane. Evidently, she has a job to do!"

Chapter TWENTY-SEVEN

Silver Springs, Maryland:

"Ethel trained as a psychiatric nurse, before we were married you know," George said as he and Dan left Gloria and Ethel alone in the master bedroom. "She has more moxie in situations like this than anyone I know."

"She said the depression was Gloria's way of being angry with herself ... I'm not sure I know what that means?"

George knew.

"Is she angry with herself Dan? Should she be?"

Dan nodded.

"Yeah, we both are. Neither of us wanted to stay home and take care of Christopher. I feel ... we both feel that we abandoned him, and now this! That woman wasn't taking care of him. We should have been!"

"It's deeper than that, Son. Don't be too hard on yourselves. You are both ... hell, everybody is a victim of something very sinister that is happening to our country and our way of life. You just got caught up in it, caught up hard!"

"That sounds paranoid."

"Maybe," the DCI said, not agreeing, but willing to let Dan make his point. "Think about this and tell me if I'm paranoid or not." He walked into the living room, sat at one end of the couch, and motioned for Dan to sit next to him.

"When I was a young man your age ... no ... a little younger ... I had a good education and a good job. With the income from the job, I could support Ethel and our three daughters. I could buy a fine home, an Oldsmobile, and a closet full of good suits. We had nice vacations, and money in a savings account." He smiled, remembering. "Now tell me Dan, can you do the same?"

Dan caught on. "This house? Both of us working and we barely qualified for the loan. The cars? We need two, because we are both working, we owe on both. My suits? I owe on them too, and Gloria's clothes. Both of

us are well educated. We're both working at really good jobs, and yet we don't have enough income to get out of debt. We have a bank account. I think we've saved a hundred dollars."

"You've been enslaved! You and Gloria and everybody else have become economic slaves. Who really owns what you have? Who do you pay for the privilege of having a few things? Who owns your future, Dan?" He paused to let the answers become obvious. Then asked, "Now do you think I'm paranoid?"

"Gloria and I really didn't have a choice about Gloria working. In fact, if she quits now, we will have to give up this place, a car, lots of shit!"

"You never discussed that part of it, did you Danny Boy. Gloria has been hit with a double whammy! She plays mother, you lose all your nice things. She works, you lose your child. You two try to make it both ways ... you hire a mother. She turns out to be the wicked witch! Now you know why Gloria is mad at herself. Are you getting in touch with your anger?"

"I need to go in and tell Gloria," Dan said, rising from the couch.

George reached out and grabbed his wrist.

"Hold on a minute! Ethel's explaining it all to her. It will do her good to hear it from another woman."

"Geez George! There's no way to win!"

George released Dan's wrist, and sat back on the couch, a big grin on his face.

"What's that shit-eating-grin for?"

"Because Danny Boy, you and I are in a position to change the rules of the game back to the way they should be! I told you about my plans. What I didn't tell you is that I will do anything in my power to destroy them ... the

Dominick Cartel, the appointed officials, the President's men. I will use any means to get to that end. Understand? They will bring America to its knees if we don't act."

Chapter TWENTY-EIGHT

Sungana apartments above Chandni Chowk Road, New Delhi:

Taka and Shizu had coffee ready as they waited for their masters to order breakfast. Ito was the first in, looking barely rested after the long night.

"Good morning, Master Ito," Taka said, bowing from the waist.

"I want toast ... some cold rice with cream!"

"Good morning, Master Hedeki," Shizu said, bowing to his man.

"Cold rice ... with a little cream. Maybe some toast."

"I lay in bed making lists," Ito commented.

"You did! I did as well. I think I finally got an hour of sleep."

"I was thinking about what we talked about," Ito said.

"That we should combine organizations and lists and find one man to head it all, if worse comes to worse?" Hedeki assumed he knew his brother's thoughts.

"Exactly! And I have a suggestion for the candidate, do you know who?"

"Gifu! It could only be Gifu. He came to the top of my list as well."

"There is something else," Ito said. Hedeki looked up, surprised. Ito continued.

"Katasawa couldn't possibly have been the man who organized us and all of this empire we control. I want to know who did."

Hedeki stood, jarring the table. His bowl tipped spilling milk across the linen.

"I see," he paused to think. "I see! You're right! There does have to be someone or some group ... some brilliant thinker, some genius who put this all together. Find him ... find him is right! Ito, you see more clearly." He was going to add "than I," but his ego wouldn't let him.

Hedeki sat down, pushing his chair away from the table as Shizu hurriedly cleaned up the spilled milk. Then he shouted through the kitchen door where he could see Gifu sitting at the table.

"Gifu. Here. Now!"

Gifu came in, his stout bulk belying his immense strength and lightness on foot.

"Your master and I have a question," Hedeki looked at Ito and received his permission to address Gifu. "Who is the best organizer in Japan. Who would have the ability to organize all of our interests, and to have set all that we have in motion?"

Gifu was struck by the question as if it were a cosmic wind. He looked down, his mind racing through its amazing files of data. "I will have to work on that answer, Master. Now, I have no name."

"Work on it, Ito said, "If you need to go to Japan, we will arrange it." Then with second thought, Ito continued. "Gifu, you are Korean. Is it possible that we need someone of Nipponese descent to do this? I don't think so, but if we do, find the person who can help us!"

Breakfast long past, Shizu served hot breads and honey. Taka was arranging with the market for the next day's food.

"The girl, Sami Cook," Hedeki said, continuing his discussion of Sungawa personnel with Ito, "is the product of mind alteration done by another school. Katasawa drilled into our heads, but her manipulators only used deprivation, chemicals, and hypnosis. She is recovering from a split between herself and a slave personality designed to serve the old Mitusuka security man, Acieto Onoto. She is his daughter, but she does not know that. She was well programmed, not as well as we were, but they were amazingly thorough. I can control her using a hypnotic code if need be, but that is no longer necessary. She has seen the benefits of our relationship and cooperates in all things."

"And you have ordered her here?" Ito queried.

"Yes, to Bombay. She will arrive and you can meet her. She is not to know that there are two of us!"

"Of course, my brother. We are as one now."

Ito wore the Shikoku family's evil grin on his face. Taka saw the grin and knew his master intended to outlive Hedeki by many years.

Soon after the meeting with Ito and Hedeki, Gifu left the apartment. In New Delhi's government area, he went directly to the Japanese Embassy and was granted permission to enter the reading room library. Two hours later he came out into the late fall sunlight and hurried back to Ito's Delhi headquarters.

"Master, I am seeking the information you requested. I must go to Korea to find the information you need."

Ito heard Korea, and scowled. "Korea? You mean Japan?"

"No, master, the answer lies in Korea. The key I found is Taegu and me, our entwined histories. Did it ever seem strange to you, that you, a modern Samurai, have Korean bodyguards?"

"I'm not certain ... I don't know what you are suggesting."

"I must go to a part of China, that was once Korea, once Japan. Then, I may need to go to your homeland."

"Then do!"

Lushun, China (Port Arthur) and Pyongyang, North Korea:

Gifu came into the Land of the Calm Morning with some consternation of his own. The small Sungawa jet lifted him from the Chinese city of Lushun, where he had perused historical records, and put him down in Pyongyang, Korea. He went directly to the People's Library.

He knew little of the land of his birth, only enough to know that the peninsula sat between Japan and China and had thus been a battleground and a prize for both. In September 1894, the Japanese disabled the Chinese fleet and took Port Arthur as a staging area for their conquest of Manchuria and their march on Peking. In the Treaty of Shimonoseki, China recognized Korea's independence and ceded to Japan the peninsula of Liao-tung as well as Formosa and other prizes. However, before the Japanese could gloat over their new empire, Russia, France, and Germany, under the pretext of guarding China's sovereignty, demanded the restitution of Port Arthur and the Liao-tung peninsula.

By 1900, the Russians had a twenty-five-year lease on the area, and Japan had to consider war with the Cossack soldiers fighting under the blue

and white cross-of-Saint-Andrew flag, which the Russians wanted flying over the Yellow Sea.

Gifu learned that a man named Toyama Mitsuru emerged in this period. He organized the *Kokuryukai*, or the Black Dragon Society, which was a secret army designed to drive all whites out of their world. Perhaps more important, Toyama Mitsuru believed in the resurrection of the Samurai, and the re-establishment of ancient Japanese values regarding racial purity and superiority.

In 1904, the Imperial Japanese Fleet under Admiral Togo appeared off Port Arthur. In mid-April, 1904 the Japanese fleet was victorious and the Russians were handed a devastating defeat. Toyama Mitsuru's credibility was established. Other major Japanese thrusts resulted in the taking of Russian ground, and the Russians putting together another fleet to re-take their Asian territories. In the end, the Japanese were victorious, the Russian fleet destroyed, and the war ended, thus opening a glorious new era for Japan.

In 1912, Emperor Mutsuhito died, ending the Meiji era. The Taisho era began with his son Yoshihito, who looked favorably upon the goals of Toyama Mitsura.

Starting in the 1930s, Korean boys were identified because they had no allegiance to any other Japanese and would serve without bias. Boys of exceptional physical and mental ability were taken from their families and trained by members of the Black Dragon Society to serve the new samurai society led by Toyama Mitsura. Gifu and Taegu were two of many Koreans who were made over in Mitsura's image, and trained to serve. Although they never knew or met Toyama Mitsura, he died just after they were born,

they were selected by Mitusuka Industries leadership to be the bodyguards for top Samurai.

The thirties were an era of many small societies within Japan, each providing some function like forming Imperial Guards, and each vying for power in the emerging Empire. The one consistent forceful voice was Mitsura's. His visions of a racially pure and always dominant Japan led to the military and industrial expansion of the thirties and the move on China and the Pacific Rim countries that led to Pearl Harbor.

In the Korean library, not been purged of Toyama Mitsura's Black Dragon Society's records as had the libraries in Japan, Gifu learned that Toyama planned in careful detail the operation of the Empire after the Japanese people were victorious in the upcoming war. Toyama Mitsura died, never knowing that Japan was defeated in World War II. But, his plan, delayed a few years, went into effect despite the defeat.

Gifu also learned that Toyama Mitsura was the man behind the formation of Mitusuka Industries and every other giant Japanese corporation. He was the man who, before he died, set into motion the selection process which had, in the late 1950s, found and created the brothers Shikoku and built Sungawa-Sungana Industries.

Gifu smiled. He was successful in his quest. He had found the Master Planner, and thereby the key to understanding the New World Order planned and set into motion before World War II. It went into effect in spite of defeat and continued to blueprint and build Japanese interests to the present day.

Chapter TWENTY-NINE

Calcutta, India:

Poor Tanya, even after the medics and shrink explained to her that there was no rose-bush alien in Anchorage called the *Thing*, she still felt scared.

One thing they can't take away from me is my out-of-body experience ... my death and resurrection. I never really believed in God, well actually, I never ever thought of it. But now I have been there, seen bright lights, and know for sure one exists!

Tanya wasn't the type to notice what was going on around her. As an ID, David Dean's personal handler, she traveled all over eastern Asia and saw only the things she bought, or the things she ate. If people were suffering in the slums or on the streets, it was a surprise to her.

Things changed for Tanya when she arrived in Calcutta. From Dum Dum on, she hadn't been able to shield the sights from her eyes. At the hotel, fighting the crowd to cross the sidewalk, she saw what looked like hell. After checking-in, she locked herself into her room and fought to get the visions from her mind. Then she had her revelation! David isn't here. I'm not supposed to be.

As she knelt before the bed as if to pray, knowing she was blessed, she came to understand that as one who had been to heaven, she could also see into hell. Unfortunately, that blessing didn't do anything for her that she liked. She didn't want to be blessed, and she rejected her gift. Her very vocal announcement of her rejection, given to God without room for discussion, immediately followed her call to Dan and Gloria for help.

The Marines landed and rescued her. She was on a plane headed for a place called Bombay, where David's itinerary said he was supposed to be. She hadn't heard of the place, but had heard of bomb bay doors. She made a connection, thought about it, and concluded that they wouldn't drop her out of the airplane's belly. She began to worry about how she would arrive. That string of thoughts got her mind focused on something other than the *Thing*, and Calcutta's *bustees*. When the plane disgorged her at an airport named Santa Cruz, she could focus on the future. She was ready to shop and resume her search for David if she had time.

Chowring wasn't the least interested in Sankina's secretary, Miss Orissa, but his man, Qutb was. Qutb knew the danger of being under the secretary's skirt, but couldn't bring himself to believe his friend Chowring would *do* him if he got caught diddling the dolly, as Sankina once described a certain act.

Miss Orissa learned about sex at the library. She spent hours as a young untried, viewing the photos and drawings from the ancient temples. Rituals of mating thrilled her and she learned to get off just imagining the pleasures of gymnastic copulation. One day, standing naked before her mirror, leg up, foot on the dresser, her brother's friend came upon her. They practiced the ancient art and found it pleasurable. They could easily understand why it merited documentation in stone friezes hundreds of years before when the world was a better place.

Orissa the Innocent, as her friends called her, had thus initiated a secret life. Her ability to contort and cavort and resort to some very exciting, if base acts, made her irresistible to those of a similar bent. So, it

wasn't surprising that Qutb, for the price of a nice dinner and a room at the Eastern, was able to get wrapped-up in Orissa.

Qutb's weakness could have gotten him killed, but luck was with him. One promising delicious night, as he ordered the Hotel's best fare for his challenger, he looked up in time to see a very pert American-looking young lady registering at the desk. He overheard her ask for David Dean. He made a mental note of his observation before returning to the affair at hand—her hand sliding along his leg under the table at the time.

The next day, arriving to pay a little baksheesh to his hotel accomplices, he happened to be in the Eastern in time to see six marines arrive and then depart with the beautiful American woman protected in their phalanx. A question to his friends, and he was told the story of Tanya Horowitz's inability to adjust to beautiful downtown Calcutta. She had, he was told by his friend behind the switchboard, that very morning called directly to the Central Intelligence Agency in the United States of America and begged to be rescued. The marines arrived only two hours after the call. It could be assumed that the woman had clout! Of course, Qtab didn't know that Tanya was an ID, Dean's personal trainer. He learned from the concierge that she was furious when she learned Dean checked out more than a week before.

"They extricated their spy before she could contact Dean?" Sankina said with surprise upon hearing Qtab's version of the tale. "We must find out who she is. Sungawa might pay well for this information."

That evening, Sankina was disturbed at home, something he absolutely forbade, yet he took the call from Taiwan. His Chinese contact was almost drooling through the phone in his anticipation of learning the

whereabouts of the woman removed from the Eastern Hotel. A woman his service considered *the* most dangerous American undercover operator. The woman he called "Terrible Tanya."

"Most certainly my friend, she was here in Calcutta!" Sankina said through his tiny mouth. "May I be of service in finding her for you?" He was so clever!

He held the phone, listening to the excited Chinese chatter away, telling him that she was of minor consequence, but if things could be arranged his government would be forever grateful to the tune of maybe even fifty-thousand pounds, that is, if she were captured and came to them alive.

"Consider it done, my good ally!" Sankina proffered. "If we locate her, where would you like her delivered?"

The Chinese talked and Sankina listened.

"Your ship in Diamond Harbor is a perfect place. What say I ring you back when I know more? "

The thought of over fifty thousand pounds for a woman didn't win the heart and loyalty of Sankina as the Chinese assumed it would. He figured if she was worth that much to them, then Sungawa would probably pay even more. Sankina dialed his Sungawa contact. By late evening the whole Sungawa network was alerted to the fact that Terrible Tanya had been in Calcutta.

Hedeki Shikoku was alerted just before midnight. He knew about Tanya. He once promised the Chinese he would get her for them. In exchange, they smoothed over some problems for Sungawa with the Chinese mafia in Thailand. His part of the bargain was still open. Now, the

CIA sent Tanya to find Dean and meddle in Sungawa affairs. Obviously, the extraction from the hotel in Calcutta was a ruse designed to throw them off track. But which track? The Americans were up to something, and perhaps David Dean was the least of his worries. By capturing Tanya, he had a way to find out who in the CIA was not on his or the Cartel's payroll.

Agra, India:

The next day, Dean and Dorothy set out to explore the wonders of Agra, much as they explored Kathmandu. Their first stop was the Red Fort, which architecturally dominates the city. From there, to the tomb of Akbar the Great at Sikandra, and then back to Agra, shopping their way along the Mall. Back at the Jaggi Hotel, they made final plans and discussed their parting.

"I'll go in through the main entrance, take the elevator to the first floor and then walk down the fire steps and open the side entrance. You'll be waiting there with your bags, okay?" Dean wasn't asking as much as he was telling her his plan. Dorothy nodded.

"I disappear. You take the bags to your room, check that things are as you left them, and order tea and toast. Call the front desk and tell them that you wish to return to Delhi. Make arrangements for the morning train."

Dorothy agreed it sounded okay, and tried to think of possible problems.

"What if someone has been in my room?"

"I don't know ... follow the plan, I guess."

"What if that man stops me?"

"Start yelling rape!"

"What if he knows where you are?"

"I'll know, because I will be out on the street watching you and him. Signal me somehow. You could whip out a white handkerchief like they do in the movies. Try not to worry. Any other what ifs?"

"What if I don't want to leave you? What if we don't connect in Delhi?"

Dean knew there was a possibility he would never see her again. "I'll contact you at the Imperial ... somehow. You'll know. If for some reason I can't get through to you, I'll send a letter care of American Express in Paris. Make sure you check with them when you stop over on your way back home."

Dorothy moved about her room throwing things in her suitcase not bothering to fold or pack them. "You are the first friend of the new Dorothy Wentworth! I hope you don't forget how important you are to me." She shut the case, clicked the clasps into place, and swung the heavy leather case to the floor. Dean moved, too late to help her, but soon enough to grab the handle of the bag as she released it, and to come shoulder to shoulder with her. She turned her head, saw him close and kissed his cheek, pulling him toward her. They stood and hugged, she kissed his cheek again, and then broke from each other, neither pushing the other away, but neither holding tightly.

Dorothy put both hands to her chest, over her heart, one hand on top of the other. "Wow! That sure got my heart pumping! We need more time!"

"There's Delhi!"

"Maybe I'll be ready then." Deep down, she was afraid she wouldn't be.

The next day, Dean watched as Dorothy, followed at a distance by the dutiful shadow, left the hotel and went to the train station. As the train pulled out, he felt both loss and relief. They had their time together and weren't caught. As he left the deserted station, he felt so alone he ached. Late that afternoon he took the express back to Delhi. All he could enjoy were thoughts of home.

Sungana apartment, New Delhi:

"Gifu never fails! I expect him back tonight and then we'll know who's plan we puppet!" Ito announced as he handed the phone back to Taka and rejoined Hedeki and Taegu in the living room.

"He's reported in then?"

"A message."

Hedeki had no idea what Gifu found, but he already had a plan designed to bolt on to the new information.

"When we know who, we cover ourselves. If need be, we take over or take out any opposition or competition, and move to contact the other groups—those that aren't on the Dominick Cartel's payroll.

Ito agreed with his plan, but was worried about the loyalty of intelligence agents in the CIA and MI6 they didn't own.

"Do you have a plan to ferret-out the other side? I mean, those guys obviously against us."

Hedeki gave Ito one of the evil Shikoku grins. Ito got the message and was alarmed. Hedeki moved away from him, walking the room like the tiger he was.

"You forget, my brother, that those who were our enemies must now become our friends and accomplices. When we are ready to destroy the cartel, we will have already gained the support of those elements in the CIA. The cartel will be on its own."

Ito felt his brother's scorn, cursed himself for being a slow thinker. "Then you have a plan as to how we will connect with the others? We don't even know who they are!"

"Oh Ito. Don't be so slow brother," Hedeki's scorn dripped like blooded *sake* from his words. "The others know who their enemies are, or at least the ones they suspect. The cartel's own people will serve us well in this matter out of greed and fear."

Ito's rage was rising. "I'm not slow, brother, I was baiting you! I want to know about the woman ... the spy the Chinese call Terrible Tanya. What is your use of her?"

"Her? Oh, she is the key to the lock! I believe she works for the ones who oppose the cartel."

"When will we know?"

"When we have her, she will give us Dean and the others! She is here in India. Taegu will find her!"

Ito stood, accepted Hedeki's promise, but still driving an agenda of his own.

"We leave for Bombay tomorrow. I have business there as you know. What will you do?"

I must go home to Japan, then Thailand, and Calcutta but not before I hear Gifu's report. I will be in Bombay in time to observe your meeting with Sami Cook. She arrives next Wednesday, correct?"

"And Taegu?" Ito ignored Hedeki's taunt.

"He goes wherever," Hedeki opened his arms and made an every – direction motion, "to find the American agents. Dean is the target. The Tanya woman is the key to Dean. Both will lead us to those we do not yet control."

Oberoi Sheraton Hotel. Nariman Point. Bombay, India:

Tanya checked into the room reserved for her by someone in the CIA who didn't understand she needed lots of room and a tub. She had packed only what she considered to be the most essential items knowing that as soon as she arrived, she could buy a new wardrobe and charge it to her employer. Her main objection to Calcutta had not been a concern for other humans. The reason she panicked and had to get out was the lack of a posh shopping area in the vicinity of the Eastern. Bombay was different.

On the way in she observed a wealth of shops and clothing stores near the Oberoi. It was time to shop for some decent things to wear. Out into the Bombay heat and humidity she cruised, directly into the swankiest women's specialty shop she could find. Within the half hour she was convinced she had to have a total re-do. From the skin out, Tanya Horowitz needed everything, including one of those cute red dots on her forehead. Three hours later, after being handed between stores and shops along the Point, Tanya re-surfaced. Her hair was pulled back in a bun. Her make-up gave her bright red lips and a dark complexion.

Her sari complemented her figure. She wore jangling bracelets on her arms and ankle, and filigreed jewelry in her hair and around her neck. The diamond pin in her nose was a clamp-on earring. She had convinced the

girls she didn't want her nostril pierced. Her new perfume smelled like roses and curry. She wore a hidden cachet of pungent leaves and spices dangling on a thin gold chain down beneath her sash. All Tanya lacked was a proper escort and a circle of Hindu women around her.

In the hotel she took it all off and worked out in the shower until her muscles bulged and her appetite got the best of her. She called room service and ordered the day's late night special. After eating, she took another hot shower and then, just before falling asleep, thought of David Dean. She fell asleep knowing she had no clue as to how to find him, but that didn't bother her. She had a lot of shopping to do tomorrow.

The arrival of a single woman at the Oberoi was news. When word got around that this woman was in Bombay to shop, everyone imagined she was the wife or daughter of some very influential American. When she returned from her first shopping spree looking like a Hindu Princess, gossip had it she was Indian, returning home to be with her people.

There were employees in the hotel who made a few extra rupees reporting to intelligence agents. One clever observer, a bellman, sold Tanya's name and photograph to his contact at the British Embassy. The Brit intelligence gatherer wired the name to a friend working out of an old estate near London, where the CIA and BBC had a world listening post and an intelligence assessment service. He put the photo on the Section's bulletin board near the coffee pot.

Ordinarily, his report would have gone directly to MI6, but the Embassy official had a friend whom he owed and could pay-off with tidbits of information such as this. And besides, he didn't like MI6, having often been ignored by MI6 agents.

The man near London who got Tanya's name also intercepted Tanya's plea for help when it was phoned from Calcutta via satellite to the CIA in Langley, Virginia. In addition, he was the same British Intelligence Officer who was double-agent Starver's contact in Asia. Starver's last assignment before he disappeared was to follow this same dame. He licked his lips and ran her name through Interpol with the hope of learning more about her.

A French Intelligence Officer, needing to return a favor in exchange for one he received from a contact in Albania, asked if the Albanians would be interested in a woman whose moniker was "Terrible Tanya". The Albanian contact drew a blank, but the Chinese political advisor who watched over him thought he had heard of the woman. The Chinese political officer checked out the name and came back beaming. Within hours the Chinese knew that the woman of their nightmares, the woman they recently lost in Calcutta, was in the Oberoi in Bombay. Of course, by then, Sungana's contacts in Albania informed Gifu's people of her whereabouts. Ito was notified.

"Bombay? How convenient! How considerate of her. We'll take it from here!" Ito announced. He turned to Hedeki's bodyguard and ordered, "Taegu, pick Tanya Horowitz up at the Oberoi Hotel on your way to Sungana Headquarters. Tell her anything you like!"

Taegu had his driver stop outside the Oberoi Hotel and cover him while he went inside. He found the hotel phones, got the operator to connect him to Horowitz's room, and waited while the instrument rang for attention.

"Hello." A sleepy voice answered.

"Miss Horowitz?"

"That's me."

"I have your car in front. Are you ready?" Taegu had Horowitz's profile and knew how to approach her.

"Oh, I'm not ready," she wailed. "I'll need fifteen minutes."

"Very well Miss Horowitz, you're the boss. I'll wait down here. I'm at your service as you deserve."

"Yes, thank you! Oh dear, what shall I wear?"

"Something very functional, I should suggest."

"Oh, I haven't bought something like that yet!"

"Well then how about your traveling clothes?"

"You're right, thank you! I'll be right down."

Forty minutes later, Tanya the Hindu swished from the elevator and was escorted to Taegu's waiting car. Two very attentive Chinese businessmen, half asleep in the lobby, jumped up in shock as she was escorted from the hotel. An Interpol operative pretending to be a lady for hire went to her room to make a call. The Brit who bought the information and photo observed the departure from the front seat of his stakeout car and then drove back to his embassy to check on the license plate number. When the report of ownership came back, he dropped the whole matter and ripped the photo from the bulletin board. Nobody messed with Sungana Industries, that order come down months ago. He assumed it was signed by the Queen.

Word soon spread through intelligence circles that the feared American agent was also an employee of Sungana Industries. The evidence was clear: Taegu's conversation with Tanya was taped and circulated. His

references to her car, "I have your car in front," and his statement that "You're the boss," were without question, evidence that she was being catered to. The fact that she voluntarily left with a Sungana employee in a Sungana sedan was additional proof of the importance of the lady.

No one would have suspected that Taegu knew Tanya as an empty-headed pawn. He made it his business to know everything about the woman, and had recently evaluated a recorded conversation between Tanya and a woman she thought her friend, a British agent. The interview gave Taegu all the keys he needed to unlock what she knew. He played a charade as he tried to learn what he wanted from her.

"I am Taegu, Miss. It is my pleasure to be assigned to you. I am at your service, and I am also your contact here in Bombay. Your people and mine are friends. I am to tell you that you may ask me to help you do your work and I will do everything I can to serve you."

Tanya smoothed the beautiful silk sari along her legs and ran a cupped hand over the bun at the back of her head. She adjusted the nose ring and shook her arm so the bracelets jingled down her wrist. This was more like it! A limo and a servant. The CIA was treating her as she deserved. She turned her head toward the funny looking little man.

"Are you Japanese?"

"Oh no Miss. I am Korean."

"I'm sorry," she said. "I thought you looked oriental."

Taegu did a double take. Damn she was dim. "I do look oriental," Taegu said with a smile. "All my friends tell me that."

"Korean? Is that in India ... I mean near here?"

"Oh yes Miss. You studied geography?"

"Well, actually not. But I have traveled a lot lately." Mentioning travel made her think of David Dean. She made a connection, smiled warmly at the little man, and asked "Does that mean that you will help me find David?"

It was Taegu's turn to smile. They had only been together ten minutes, were still riding in the car on the way to Sungawa headquarters, and she explained her mission.

"I am to do whatever pleases you Miss. Tell me who this David is, and I will find him for you."

"That would really be nice of you Mr. Teegoo."

"Taegu ... say Tay-goo," Taegu corrected.

"Oh yes, sorry. Now about David. David's name is Dean, you know!"

"About Dean, then?"

"Actually, I prefer David. Do you mind?"

Taegu turned his head from side-to-side.

"I was trained to serve him, you know. I'm his PT."

"PT? I don't understand Miss."

"Physical Therapist. I help him relax."

Taegu didn't like the way the conversation was going.

"Miss, may I ask you ... is David lost?"

"Oh Taygood, knowing him, I don't think he thinks he is. In fact, if I know him, he knows exactly where he is!"

"But you and your people don't?"

"No, we don't. I'm going to try to find him."

"What will you do then, Miss?"

"Oh, we'll just be together."

"Do you have a special message for him?"

"Do you mean a tampon?"

Taegu didn't have the foggiest idea of what she meant.

"Miss?"

"You asked about a message. I have one, but I don't have anything to write and put in it."

Taegu pushed his back hard against the leather seat and gnashed his teeth.

"Please Miss, if I am to find him for you, you must tell me where to look."

"His itinerary says Delhi, then Bombay. He should come here ... at least that's what Gloria thinks."

"Gloria?"

"She was my roomie before she married Dan. That's before Christopher, of course."

"Isn't Dan your boss?" Taegu remembered a similar reference to a Dan on the taped interview he studied.

"Oh yes, he's the DDO. I worked for the DCI ... that is before I took the tampon and he fired me?"

"This tampon you took, what exactly is that?"

"Oh Taygo, I could never talk about it with you! You understand, don't you? There are some things men and women just avoid talking about."

"Excuse me Miss," Taegu gave her his humblest look and apologized.
"What is a DDO and a DCI?"

"I'm sorry," Tanya said, with warmth and understanding. "We Americans describe everything by their first letters. I know it's confusing to Koreans. DDO is Deputy Director of Operations. DCI means Director of Central Intelligence. You know them, they're the guys we work for. So does Gloria, although lately she's been sent to the NFIB, and don't ask me what those letters stand for, because I don't know."

"Okay, Miss." Taegu said as they arrived at the entrance to the underground garage beneath Sungana's headquarters. Mentally, he was a little rattled. As he suspected, the woman knew a lot. Getting the information out of her disorganized mind was maddening. He had enough of her for now. He would re-play the tape of their conversation for Ito. Until then, he wondered what to do with Tanya. He didn't want her inside, not yet.

"What would you like to do now, Miss?"

"Oh, I desperately need to shop for clothes. May I?"

Taegu ordered the driver to stop before entering the garage.

"Let me out Pirgo. Then take the lady shopping. Don't let her get lost! Please return her here in three hours."

Taegu bowed his way away from Terrible Tanya, and watched as the sedan disappeared in traffic.

"Mr. Ito Shikoku and Mr. Gifu are due in Bombay within the hour," the radio room operator informed Taegu as he read through up-dates coming in from all over the Sungana Empire.

"Give me the Sungawa up-dates I wired here!"

"Yes Mr. Taegu, they are all in that big pile over on the table."

Taegu grunted. He had more work to do than he could possibly finish today. Still, he would have to spend time learning about Gifu's findings so that he could evaluate them for Hedeki, and he would have to analyze the Tanya tape with Ito and Gifu and report those findings. He grabbed the stack of up-dates and went into an inner office assigned to Sungawa, grumbling.

Some days you just can't get there from here.

Gifu's report to Ito took almost an hour. Hedeki was still in Japan. Ito wanted Hedeki to check records in Sungawa's headquarters, and Taegu wired the information to his master, along with the request for a records search.

Taegu's report on Terrible Tanya was a matter of some concern for Ito and Gifu.

"It's difficult to believe they would field such an agent." Gifu said, not believing.

Ito nodded agreement, but had other things on his mind.

"These two men she works for. I know who they are. They are the most powerful men in the CIA. Taegu, can you or Hedeki check on them ... are they on Sungawa's payroll?"

"I know they are not! The DCI is supposed to be an old worn-out and bungling yes man. The DDO is an analyst whom the DCI promoted over the objections of almost everybody. Both are thought to be dull and of no particular consequence."

Ito smiled and clapped his hands together. "Then we do have our men, don't we? These guys are the ones we need to contact if we are to combat the Cartel!"

Gifu got up and walked around Ito's large office. "I'm not certain it will be that simple. I want two days! I want more from Horowitz, and I want Dean! Only then will I believe that finding the opposition within the American Government is as easy as it seems."

Ito started to react to Gifu's denial of his conclusion, then acknowledged what Gifu suggested. He turned to his bodyguard and chosen successor.

"Find Dean! Take two days or five days! We must know him with certainty."

Chapter THIRTY

Langley, Virginia:

Dan and George sat solemnly in the DCI's office with the shades drawn. Dan reread the messages they received via tampon from Delhi. George threw his clipboard on the desk and turned toward Dan.

"Nasty business! Caldwell must be dead ... no other explanation. And Dean?" He paused for effect. "I have to believe Dean isn't dead. Why would they kill him? If they got to him, they know he doesn't know anything. I am right about that aren't I?"

Dan grimaced. "By the time they knew he didn't know anything, he would have been too damaged to live. If they have him, he's dead. We must assume that."

George nodded and pushed himself out of his chair. "You think Martin can replace Dean and keep Operation Cowboy alive?"

"No! Aston Martin is too well known to be a Cowboy. All we can use Aston for is to replace Caldwell and provide disinformation."

George moved to the back of his desk and fidgeted with the large, unattractive CIA emblem hanging on the wall. "Who will move information for us?"

"IDs, I guess. I haven't had any luck finding another Cowboy but until I do, we can count on IDs that Aston locates for us."

"Isn't that Susan what's-her-name useful without Caldwell?"

"She's useful, but they made her long ago." Dan sat forward as a new problem became evident to him. "Damn! She knows too much and they know her. They'll go after her next if they haven't already. We've got to get her out of there!"

"Better do it now! By the way, Ethel is at your house again this morning. She and Gloria get along, but Dan, I'll tell you that Ethel is deeply concerned about Gloria ... her attitude toward motherhood, that is."

"And mine about fatherhood?"

"She hasn't mentioned that. Do you think you have a problem?"

"Gloria and I have a problem."

It was quite a while later when Dan read the wire transmitted from Delhi.

"What do they mean, 'Contact not available'? Does that mean she is doing something they know about and so not available at this time, or does it mean that she is already in somebody's hands?"

He selected a form and wrote transfer orders to the Delhi Consul, ordering operative Susan Arles to Langley. Now! Dan signed the order and had his secretary put it in the tube. The order went out within the half-hour

and arrived in Delhi the next day, less than forty minutes after he wrote it. There was no reply until the new day reached the east coast of the U.S., almost fourteen hours later. It read. Subject not available. Dan saw the reply when he got to the office. He knew what it meant. He cursed and damned the bastards that wouldn't say outright that they lost their agent.

Bombay:

Pirgo had driven for Sungana Industries since he was seventeen. He earned the position of special chauffeur and guard. This was the first time he even remotely considered disobeying an order from someone he drove. This woman was a half-wit. Was he really supposed to follow her orders? His quandary got the best of him. He raised his eyes and looked into the rear-view mirror. She was too busy to notice. Besides, her sari was over her head. She was tugging at it, trying to get it untangled from the bun of hair and the jeweled comb that held the bun in place.

A surge of electrical stimulation went through Pirgo's body as his eyes focused upon the perkier, roundest, firmest breasts he had ever seen. Pirgo wasn't exactly a breast man. None in his circle of friends paid much attention to women's breasts. There were other parts of a woman he delighted in seeing, parts that were seldom exposed, like ankles. But these breasts! Cold beads of sweat formed on his forehead. His seated body responded in a most uncomfortable way, trapped as he was under the steering wheel.

"You looked!"

Pirgo met her eyes in the mirror and quickly looked away.

"I understand," Tanya said, thinking how nice the man was to her. He was about her age. "I didn't mean to disturb you. I thought I could just slip into this new sari-thing and try it on. Now the old one is caught on my bun."

Pirgo dared another peek in the mirror. She was hunched forward, but her breasts didn't sag like water bags.

Tanya raised her hands above her head and battled the silken cloth. The hem of the sari was firmly anchored to comb and bun.

"Please," she had forgotten his name. "Please, can you come back here and help me out of this?"

Pirgo gulped. "I ..." he paused, cooling his thoughts. "I would have to come around to your door."

"Well don't just sit there, come around! I need out of this."

"But ..." he paused again, trying to think. "But you have nothing over your ... self."

"Oh come on now! It's just skin. Skin is skin, you've seen skin before.

Pirgo admitted he had, but

"Are you going to help me or not?"

"It would be most difficult for me ..."

"Get back here!" she ordered, interrupting his explanation.

Pirgo slid from behind the wheel, adjusted his trousers, and moved back to her door. Tanya opened the door for him and he half-knelt into the car to help her. She moved closer to him, bowing her head. Her breasts quivered against his hands, which he quickly moved to her head and began undoing the snags. It took longer to get her undone than he intended. He

removed the comb, unhooked one more thread, and handed Tanya the sari as her hair cascaded down.

"Oh, thanks!" Tanya sighed as she shook her head to make certain she was free. Strands of her beautiful hair found valleys to nestle in. Pirgo was almost out of control.

"Well, wasn't that strange." Tanya announced as she gathered her hair and began to re-roll it. Pirgo stared in wonder.

"Oh, I'm sorry," Tanya said as sincere as possible. "I should have put my new thingy on. I didn't mean to have you see me ... but," she tried to remember his name and couldn't, "it is only skin, isn't it?"

Pirgo nodded and backed off her seat. Eyes still fixed on her, he closed the door, adjusted his trousers, and slid behind the wheel.

"Tell me your name again?"

"Pirgo."

"Pirgo, I still have some shopping to do. Take us to the next place please."

Pirgo was a wreck. He was so shaken he could barely drive.

China Trade complex, New Delhi:

"These photographs will confirm that there are two Tanya's, as our agent Chen assumed."

"Was the other hiding in the Sungana car?"

"She must have been. See here in this photograph the fake operative is changing clothes." Len Cheoi pointed to an 8x10 blowup he had made.

"Here, in this photograph the driver is leaning into the automobile ... we

think it is to open the secret compartment and let the two Tanyas change places."

Cheoi was anxious to get away from the man from Peking. The visiting agent seemed possessed by the woman. Fanatical Cheoi thought, as he watched the man peruse the photographs.

"It is possible. We know for certain that the woman we have observed on several occasions is too stupid to be an agent. Chen first surmised that she was a cover for the real American agent, the one who has earned our respect. The one we call Terrible Tanya."

Len Cheoi bowed his head and then inserted his conclusion into the visiting agent's collection of facts. "That means that both are of Sungana. Shikoku supports them both and yet they are American agents."

The man from Peking jerked his head to attention, chin touching his chest, eyes bulging. A mustache of sweat formed on his lip. "You mean Sungawa, don't you?"

Len Cheoi felt a trap was springing on him. He was warned that the man from Peking was dangerous—a fanatic, a killer.

"Apologies Sir, I thought Ito Shikoku's company was Sungana."

The agent stiffened and grabbed the edge of the desk while mouthing curses in a Cantonese dialect Cheoi did not speak. Slowly he turned to the hapless Cheoi.

"Ito?"

"Yes Sir, Ito Shikoku."

"Have you heard him called Hedeki?"

"Never."

"Have you heard of Sungawa Industries?"

"No Sir."

"You will do something for me. Lead me to this Ito you speak of. I have done business with Shikoku. I will know if he is Hedeki using other names. I sense we are being betrayed ... Hedeki Shikoku promised Tanya to us in exchange for ... shall I say, favors."

Sungana Headquarters, Bombay:

Hedeki, suffering from jet lag and lack of rest, moved about the office as a caged animal. Taegu arrived and gave his report. He would personally question Tanya Horowitz.

"Where will Pirgo bring her?"

Taegu drew a map from his pocket that Gifu, Ito's man, drew for him.

"She will be taken to an apartment near the Oberoi Hotel. It is secure. Pirgo will explain that she is too important to stay at the Hotel. She'll like that. She will be very cooperative!"

"Take me there now. I want to be there to greet her."

Taegu took the stairs down and entered the lobby of the office complex to make certain it was secure for his master. Hedeki's elevator door opened and Taegu gave a nod all was clear. The thin and willowy master and his thick, powerful bodyguard moved to the street and the waiting Sungana sedan. As Taegu held the door and Hedeki entered, a tall Chinese man came from the left calling, "Mr. Shikoku, Mr. Shikoku." He was beside Taegu before the bodyguard could react. Hedeki slid into the seat, turning to see.

"It is you, my friend," the Chinese announced in Japanese. Taegu recognized the man, stood ready to break him if he threatened Hedeki, and waited for Hedeki's orders.

"Chen Ho, I last saw you in Bangkok. Bombay is a long way from China," Hedeki said, trying to stall until he could think.

"I am part of the trade delegation. It is my first time in Bombay. I saw a face of someone I know. Forgive my rashness. I wanted to say hello."

It is Hedeki. So, Hedeki has two identities and two companies.

"I remind you that you still owe me a favor!" Ho threw the words at Hedeki in hope that the Japanese would give something away.

"I owe you. I have not forgotten!" Turning his head forward, he ordered Taegu to close the door. Rolling down the window, still looking straight ahead, he announced "I must go now. Please, we must meet again ... perhaps in Bangkok?"

Taegu got in beside the driver, and ordered the sedan away.

Chen Ho returned to Cheoi, who was standing near a pillar in front of the building. "You are to be commended! You have helped me expose him. Now, can you get me Tanya, the real one? I never trusted the Nippon, now I will teach him the cost of his lie."

As the sedan sped away, Taegu noted that Hedeki seemed unperturbed by the incident. He, however, made a vow he would never put his master in danger's way again. From now on, Hedeki would never be allowed in unsecured areas. The thought of an assassin where Chen Ho had been, sent chills through Taegu.

Chapter THIRTY-ONE

Langley, Virginia:

The large greeting card in the orange envelope arrived at CIA headquarters in a brown manila envelope postmarked Cedaredge, Iowa. It was addressed to Dan Hill. Hill's secretary opened the manila envelope and found the envelope addressed to: Danny, 180 First Street, Cedar Edge, Iowa. In large red letters someone wrote "Please Forward" across the front. The secretary thought that odd, odd enough to merit interrupting her boss.

"Just leave it here ... and thank you! I know what it is and I'm glad you got it to me as soon as it came." He waited for the secretary to leave then checked the origin and postmark date. He tore the orange envelope open and perused the surfer card inside.

Leave for Bombay in two days. Personal secretary to Sami Cook. Must go. Meet with H. Shikoku. Cover me! No opportunity to pass info.

January

Dan left for George's office even before his secretary confirmed that George would see him. When he arrived, George was at his inner door, motioning him in.

"From Hilo, via her aunt who forwarded it as we arranged." Dan handed the card to the Director.

"Back to India? How could that be?"

"Says she is Cook's personal secretary ... she goes where Cook goes. The question is, why is Cook meeting Hedeki Shikoku in Bombay?"

"And Dan, there's that order from the Indian Government that forbids Janet entry into India. What if ...?"

"Yeah. And George, what about Dean? Dean is in India ... oh no, goddamn it! Tanya is in India."

"Dan, they're all in Bombay!"

Hotel Ritz. Bombay, India:

Sankina cursed through his tiny ruck of a mouth. Bombay was not his city. He felt uneasy on the wide streets and gracious colonial parkways. The openness bothered him. He preferred humanity-clogged Calcutta where he could disappear into the throngs. He didn't like his hotel either. He should have been booked into the Oberoi, not this second-rate tourist hovel.

Sungawa Industries doesn't appreciate my contribution. They don't give me enough respect. I'll change that, but first I've got to find out why they ordered me here. He unpacked and kept cursing. After an hour in the stuffy room and attempts to order from room service that was closed from three to seven, he decided to wander the hotel and get the lay of it.

The prevailing winds coursing over the Arabian Sea cut at the hand-like peninsula of Bombay Island and the moldering edifices forming the city. Smells from the Back Bay, caught in the wafting currents of moist air from the sea, made the effluence of over six million inhabitants known everywhere. This afternoon the odor was unbearable around the Ritz Hotel. The heat rendered the air conditioning system useless.

Dean was queasy from lunch. He tried *srikhand*, a sickly-sweet yogurt, and Bombay Duck, which was really a dried fish. Strong tea couldn't

faze the roiling in his gut. He lay quietly in his room until the worst of the mess was digested, tried to ignore the permeating stench, tried a shower, tried sitting under the fan, and decided to go swimming.

The pool water was warm, the pool sides slick with algae. In the shallow end, people were standing waist deep in the water splashing themselves in the hope evaporation would relieve their misery. Three other people were in the deep end of the pool with Dean. By diving, they were able to find cooler water near the bottom of the tank. Down there, in the murk of aquatic growth and tendrils of slime, coolness could be had, a long-held breath at a time.

Sankina wouldn't get near water, yet he envied the people standing in the pool. He stood in the shade of a second story balustrade, what little of it there was, and watched the almost naked bodies jounce and glisten. Then he saw a bald head emerge from the depths of the water. He recognized David Dean and almost peed his pants as excitement coursed his sweaty body.

"Think, think, think!" he said as he gained control of his senses and ducked back seeking cover nearer the building.

Hedeki will pay well for this find ... but so will Chen Ho. Ha! Now I know why the gods sent me here.

In crowded places people learned not to notice others—even a grossly big man talking to himself with a mouth that looked like his pharynx was connected directly to his lips. Sankina moved about the street outside the hotel like a wind-up clown. Then he realized he might be the object of a tail and cooled his newfound joy enough to find a seat at a sidewalk stand where he could think. Then he called the number Taegu had given him and

left a message for Hedeki Shikoku. The message was as clever as Sankina thought himself. He said he learned through his contacts that the whereabouts of David Dean were known.

Taegu knew the import of the message and suspected Sankina's game.

"Master," he announced to Hedeki, "Sankina has Dean ... or at least knows where he is."

Hedeki didn't let a smile out, but his pleasure showed in the lines around his eyes. He started to call Ito, changed his mind, and told Taegu to get a tail on Sankina and find Dean. "Dean is the key. Don't let him slip away again! Get others. Cover the Ritz and all of Sankina's animals. This is the break we've been waiting for."

Sankina knew Sungawa would pay well for Dean, but the thought that the Chinese might pay even more taunted him. Perhaps, he thought, I can sell my find to the highest bidder.

I'll check the pool and make certain Dean is still there. No, Chowring must do it.

He went back to the room and woke Chowring.

"You go to the pool ... he's swimming in the deep end. Watch Dean! You let him out of your sight ... your meat is hanging! Got that?"

Chowring dressed his stumpy body and quit the room in less than two minutes. Sankina went to find another phone.

Dean found a shady spot in the courtyard where a slight breeze swirled around just enough to help speed evaporation. He stood in the spot until dry and hot. Then got wet again, found the spot, and savored the brief coolness. Across the pool, Dean recognized the form that came to the edge of the courtyard and stood peering.

That little fucking fireplug was with the ambulance chaser guy!

Chowring moved at the edges of the courtyard crowd, searching heads and faces in the pool. He moved closer to the water, ever closer. He was desperate to find Dean and Dean sensed his desperation. Chowring walked up to the edge of the pool and stood peering at faces.

Dean circled around and went back to his room. He knew the men from Calcutta were on to him, and although he didn't know why, they kept showing up.

Chowring's report to Sankina was taken easily by the big man.

"No matter. Dean is in this hotel. We check the desk, get his room, get him, and hold him for whoever wants him most."

Chowring expected a fit of violence. Sankina's logical calmness pleased him. He worshipped the big man.

Dean's mood was black and mean. Lunch still rumbled in his stomach. The heat prickled his armpits and crotch. As he placed his toupee, sweat ran down his temples. He carried the gold sport coat over his arm, wore his shades, sucked on an unlit cigar stub, and manhandled his bag to the elevator. As he passed through the lobby, he saw the man with the beautiful face talking to the registrar. Chowring looked right at him, but saw only another tourist, one of many. A cab took him away down Tata Road, then through a maze of streets to the Sun 'n Sand Hotel on Juhu Beach. His room cost Rs29, all of \$4.00 US. He wouldn't go broke changing hotels. The air conditioning worked. On the stub of a balcony there was a sea breeze. "Thanks guys," he said mockingly. Then he began making plans to visit the Hanging Gardens and see the view the guidebook recommended: "The best view of Kamla Nehru Park."

Meanwhile, Chen Ho took the news about Dean from Sankina, combined it with his newfound information about the two Tanyas, the duplicity of Hedeki, and giggled. Life was good!

Good things come to me ... I'm smart and observant. I deserve this. Savor this! Celebrate fortune.

Tanya shopped until everything started looking the same. Then Pirgo told her she didn't have to stay in any old touristy hotel anymore ... that her government had a special apartment reserved for her. As he drove, he phoned ahead for Taegu. Taegu met the limo at Sungana headquarters. He hadn't expected to be ordered to carry packages up two flights of stairs, but what could he do? Tanya demanded his help.

"Miss Horowitz, you are not safe alone in this city." Taegu warned as they finally got all Tanya's new clothes into the apartment. "As you know, an important handler such as yourself is always a target of vicious people. We will protect you, but you must not go out alone."

"I couldn't anyway, my feet are killing me!"

"I mean at any time ... even tomorrow."

"They might be better then. But what about my work?"

"Your work?"

"David. I mean David Dean!"

"Where is he? Can we bring him to you?"

"Yes, of course! Please don't ask questions like that! Of course, you can bring him here! I don't know where he is or I'd have him here now, don't you see, Teego."

"Taegu Miss. Tae-gu."

"One thing is certain, Tae ... ah ... goo. Without him, I wouldn't be here!"

"No miss. If we can find him, he'll be here."

"I'd look, you know, if my feet didn't hurt so. Mr. T, your man Pirgoo was real nice today. You know, skin is just skin and he knew that and helped me. You should reward him for that! You people work for Dan, right? Tell Dan to give him a citation or something. Maybe just a cash incentive. You all will do that for me, won't you?"

"Skin Miss?"

"That's all it is ... I know, because I'm a woman and I'm in it."

Taegu stared. He was certain Tanya knew more than he learned from her.

"Miss, we're looking for Dean. Think carefully. What do you know that could help us find him?"

"He's strong."

"More!"

"He's bald ... sometimes he's bald."

"What's that? Sometimes?" Energy surged.

"No, he's really always bald. I didn't mean to imply ... I mean it's not his hair, it's just a toupee."

"A hair piece is what you call a toupee?"

"Of course! That's French. He's very intelligent you know!"

"Yeah, sure. So how does he look with hair?"

"Not like the David Dean I love, I assure you!"

"Have a hot bath, Miss. Anything you need, just pick-up the telephone."

"You doctored the photograph?" Gifu looked at Taegu's work.

"Just pencil. With hair, he's really different looking. Think hair, sunglasses, maybe a fake scar ... maybe a built-up nose? Remember Agnew, the Muscovy Duck guy? Everyone looked at the scar, only Onoto knew his face."

"This explains a lot! He did fly out of Nepal ... walked right by our guys."

"And he's probably walking right past Sankina now ... and our people too."

"Yeah, and when we get her and Dean together ... that's when we start learning. Anything she say give you a clue as to who we need to contact at the CIA?"

Taegu shook his head and looked down. "She talks about Dan ... Dan Hill. He's the Deputy Director that everybody thinks is a dud."

"Another cover?"

"That would mean the old man is part of it!"

"Makes sense. A good cover, two men, one tired and burned-out, the other a dud. No country would have two top intelligence officials like that. We need to inform Hedeki and Ito. I think we have our counter-cartel people."

"Gifu, Dean works for them! I'm certain of that. Dean is the field operative for the anti-cartel faction."

"Dean's our contact, you're right! Now we need Dean more than ever. Get word out, protect Dean at any cost, but bring him in! He's one of us!"

Len Cheoi tried to hide from Chen Ho. Chen was crazy and Cheoi sensed his own destruction in the man's possessed nature. Chen caught him on the street as he was leaving his hotel.

"Sankina knows where Dean is. Dean can lead me to Terrible Tanya ... the real one! You get to Sankina, offer him anything, agree to anything, make him believe you! Find this Dean and we'll let him lead us to Tanya."

Cheoi was relieved that Chen didn't threaten him with an *or else*. He knew Sankina was playing his last game. Chen would kill him. Cheoi wanted no part in that, but felt relieved that his part was relatively easy. He left for the Ritz Hotel, popping antacids, swallowing bile.

"Mr. Sankina, how good it is of you to see me. You know we have mutual friends? I bring a gift for you that, should you be able to earn it, will satisfy every earthly desire you have now, will have ... or will ever imagine."

"Dean's gone. Dean got away."

"Now, dear Mr. Sankina. I suspect that there are others who you offered this gift to?"

"Do you think I would toy with you? We had him, right here at the Ritz. Then moments later he was gone. I'll tell you something. I think Sungawa knew he was here. I think he's one of them."

"You made Sungawa an offer?"

"How can you think that? I'm the loser here. But I'll tell you, I'll get him back, I can you know!"

Cheoi's manner turned icy. He glared at Sankina and chose his threat carefully. "You want a good life, you do that. You let me know or ... our little business arrangement will be finished ... if you understand my meaning?"

Chen Ho had tears in his eyes, squeezed out by his grimace.

"No lead to the real Tanya? We know where the fake Tanya is, Sungana or Sungawa or whatever Hedeki calls it here, has her. Dean could have led us to the real Tanya. Sankina says they have Dean too, right? Dean works for them? That figures, damn! It's Shikoku's game, and we're playing against him ... do you know what that means? That means the CIA and Shikoku are in this together. That figures, too. Tanya couldn't have done that much damage to us acting for just one agency. She's an operative for both, protected by both. This is grave. Cheoi, I must now get orders from my superiors on how to proceed. This is grave, do you know what it means?"

The three black limos drove across the concrete apron of Santa Cruz Airport to meet the incoming 727. The first limo stopped about 100 yards from the gate, positioned so that its hidden guns covered the area around the plane.

The second limo stopped near the parking area and let out five men who stationed themselves around the incoming plane and walked it into place.

The third limo slowed until the plane stopped, then approached the descending stairs at the rear of the plane. Two men got out of the limo and opened large umbrellas. Each collapsible frame was covered with black cloth that hung twelve inches past the frame, effectively hiding the identity of anyone sheltered under it.

Sami and Jan left the plane carrying only their purses. Inside the limo with its smoked, bullet-proof glass, they were whisked away. One of the

other limos stayed to pick-up baggage. The other followed the first away from the airport on the divided highway, nine miles into Bombay and on to the parking garage under the Sungana offices and apartments. Men stationed along the route noted that only the Chinese agents followed. Taegu predicted that, and ordered that the Chinese be ignored unless they posed a threat.

Chen Ho, however, knew things were not always as they seemed. "They made it very clear that they wished the identities of those on the incoming plane to be secret," he told his superior as they talked on the secured line at the Cambodian Embassy. "We now confirm that the passengers were two women, both young and of no importance. What we were not supposed to suspect was that their subterfuge was designed to put someone on the plane, smuggle someone out! But they were not as smart as they thought. I asked myself, why would they use women? Obviously, from their perspective, to cover the identity of another woman. That's how they would think—swap a woman for a different woman. We wouldn't think that because we wouldn't know a woman was involved, so we would have used men."

"Your logic seems acceptable. Is it provable?"

"Comrade, they got Terrible Tanya out. Now they will use the dumb one to try to lead us. They may even try to sell that one to us so we will kill her and be off the trail of the Terrible One. That way Hedeki pays his debt to us and still has his agent. There's more. We know that Sankina works for Sungawa. He called us and pretended to give us the agent Dean, who knows the real Tanya. Agent Dean was never in Sankina's hands, that was just a way of getting us on the trail of the dumb Tanya."

"That makes sense. What are you doing about finding the Terrible One? Chen Ho, Comrade, it's a matter of face, you understand!"

"The plane. The plane was the key. It flew directly back to Bangkok. It's sitting there, crew on standby. We have confirmed that no one is on board. Our man on the cleaning crew also confirms that papers with lipstick smudges matching the color Terrible Tanya used in Hong Kong, were found in the trash."

"So, Hedeki gives us the dumb Tanya and thinks we are even. We shall see. Pretend to play along, but don't get into a position where they can deliver the dumb one. Do you understand? Observe. Make them think we are playing their game, and let's see what happens."

Chapter THIRTY-TWO

Sungana Apartments:

"Sami, what should I do while you're meeting with Hedeki again?"

"Do something fun. I'll get you a car, go shopping, go to the beach. Have fun and relax! I think I'll be with Hedeki another day or two. I'll need you fresh and relaxed. We'll be deep at work again before too long, I'll need you."

"Gifu. Can you get a car and a driver for my secretary?"

Gifu called Pirgo and he pulled up 30 minutes later to pick up Jan. They drove around looking at the sights in the city but Jan grew bored.

"Pirgo, I've seen enough of the city. Can you take me to where I can see the Arabian Sea? Perhaps walk along a quiet beach?"

"Nice place! Juhu Beach it's called. Goes around here ... few people this time of year."

Even with the sea so close, the temperature and humidity made walking along the beach in mid-afternoon a chore. The wind in her hair felt good and the sand was crisp with salt. Groups of locals sat around small cooking fires. Their bright saris and umbrellas made dots of color on the sand. Waves lazily washed the long beach. Trash floated up to be stranded on the land again and again. Jan relaxed, took off her scarf, and moved slowly toward a long bench placed at a lovely vantage point. In the distance, she saw what looked like a fort, ancient and maybe deserted. Several luxury hotels, moldering, formed a backdrop. Gulls were grounded by the heat. A pelican sat on the prow of a strangely shaped skiff.

Two people sat at separate ends of the long bench looking out to sea. She came up behind them. The taller man ... her heart stopped for a moment.

Is my mind playing tricks? It's impossible!

She shrugged, discounted her impression, and moved forward. Then, she was sure. She came up behind him.

"David, don't turn around. It's me, Jan. Don't turn! I'm coming around ... I'll sit to your left. Please don't acknowledge that it's me."

Dean started to turn, heard the command form in her voice, and sat still, daring only to turn slightly and move his eyes.

"I suppose this is your bench and I'll have to leave!"

"David, I can't believe I found you. I had no idea you were here."

"It shouldn't be a surprise. You know my itinerary."

"You should have been here a week ago."

"I was. What are you doing here? I thought you were in Hawaii."

"I was. I'm here expecting to be found-out at any moment. It's dangerous ... so much has happened. Believe me, I've never been more scared in my life."

"Some marine you are!"

"That's not funny. I'm so deep under cover I'm not sure if I'm still a Marine. I'd be killed if they found me in India ... knew who I am. They want you too."

"Where can we go to be together? I have a room at that hotel over there, the Sun 'n-Sand."

"No, I'm being watched ... really protected. The guy in the limo parked back of us. David, I'll figure a way to get to your room ... what number?"

"8 Front."

"I don't know when, but I'll find a way, okay?"

"Jan, I'm really confused. You want to be with me again? You just accidentally found me here? You are spying under deep cover? It's not easy to believe."

"I know it sounds like total fiction. I understand. I can only say that when I told you I would never lie to you, I made a commitment for all time. I won't mislead you, lie to you directly or by withholding information. David, that's my all, all I can give!"

"I'm visiting several schools. I'm usually back to the hotel by 4:00."

"Stay here for a few minutes after I'm gone. Don't turn around."

"I trust you. Please be careful."

Pirgo dropped Jan off at the hotel. She went up and checked-in with Sami. Sami got a phone call and excused herself for a moment.

"But Pirgo, how could that be true? You said yourself that you, not Jan, selected the places to go and the times."

"Yes, Miss Cook, that's true. But she did act strange and she knew that man on the bench ... I could tell."

She went back into the other room and sat down across from Jan.

"Jan."

"What is it Sami?"

"You met someone today, someone you knew."

Jan almost jumped out of her chair. Her body immediately betrayed her and she knew she couldn't deny the meeting.

"I walked down the beach and there was the guy I think I love sitting there. It's hard to believe, but I had no idea. I was scared to death. I thought it might be a trick to get you or something. I pretended not to talk to him, but we talked. He's here visiting schools. That's what he does. He's a teacher. I want to spend some time with him. I don't want to cause problems for you or for him. Sami, it's too strange!"

"It is strange ... too strange to be a lie?"

"Sami, I have no reason to lie to you. Ask the driver, I didn't even know where he would take me."

"You want time alone with him?"

"I ... Sami, don't be angry with me."

"I'm not! Oh, a little. How come you never told me about this guy?"

"Sami, I did ... well, not in detail, but remember when we talked about men that time on the beach, and I told you about a teacher I cared a lot about? It's him, and he's here."

"Jan, is there any reason to believe he's not here by plan? Pirgo works for the company. Hedeki could have set it up."

"What do you mean? You mean to get to you?"

"Is it a possibility?"

"Sami, I know who and what he is. He is no danger. He is exactly what he appears to be, a teacher from Colorado studying schools and trying to learn about the world ... life."

"See him, then. But keep alert, okay Jan?"

"How can I see him? I can't get there without Pirgo or others knowing. I don't want to get him involved ... I don't want others suspecting you."

"Where is he?"

"At a hotel on the sea, Juhu Beach."

"Good. We'll take a room there to be by the sea. Then you can slip down and be with him."

"Really?"

"Tomorrow. I'll arrange it. You don't owe me Jan, it's nice to give back something for a change."

Sungana Apartments:

Hedeki was in a foul mood, fouler than usual. His head hurt. His fear of his damaged brain deprived him of any joy he might have found in his

confined world of work. He was meeting with Sami Cook again. Ito, Taegu and Gifu observed from behind the two-way mirror.

"You did well yesterday, you impressed Taegu and Gifu. Today you must impress me."

"And so, if I do or don't?"

"You've guessed why you're here?"

"No, I haven't. I thought it was to evaluate the job I've done in the Pacific Rim."

"Yes."

"There's more?"

"There may be. You realize that many people don't think a woman's opinion is worth anything? Sami Cook, tell me about America!"

"Be specific, what do you want to know from this 'woman'? My opinions are worth a great deal."

Behind the mirror, the three observers nodded and smiled. This woman was not easy to intimidate.

"America's weaknesses—economic and political."

"There are five key points of vulnerability. A political system that can be invaded, bought, and manipulated by lobbyists. A land and businesses that can be bought by a foreign power. Energy systems that can be manipulated by outsiders and those who seek to break America's back. An education system that can be kept from being effective and, city mobs which are beginning to resemble those in ancient Rome."

"How do you know that?"

"I ... frankly, I just know. I observe, I guess. Those are key economic weaknesses. Politically, on the highest levels, America is controlled by a few ... a small well-organized group."

"Do you know who? What's the most powerful single organization in the world?"

"We are."

"Are you sure? Have you ever heard of the cartel?"

"You mean a combination of independent business organizations organized as a monopoly?"

"Not exactly. Think!"

"Consortiums? Coordinated business interests?"

"Your answer is not wrong ... not according to common use. But there is one *family*, one tightly interwoven group that calls itself by many names but only serves itself. It is more powerful than we are. Ever heard of it?"

"Dominick and the New Wind Church!"

"You have heard of it! Do you believe we should serve Dominick's interests?"

"Why would we? It would be all for their benefit, not ours."

"And America? Does it have value worth preserving?"

"I don't know. There is America the ideal, and then there is America the real. Who wouldn't admire the ideal? Who hasn't observed the damage done by the real?"

"Who should we side with?"

"No side but ours. We control best of all."

"But who should we side with in the interim?"

"America, Western Europe, maybe China, and India."

"What in the hell is that list supposed to mean? I asked for one country ... one power!"

"I understand. I too focus on America. But America is not as it seems. Dominick controls America's presidency and much of Congress. There is no independent military, CIA, or for that matter any other part of the government's regulatory or policing agencies. Dominick pulls all the levers."

"True."

"The Dominick Cartel, what some call the New Wind Church, controls the armies and the police forces of the world's civilized nations. Dominick controls energy, food, and the drugs."

"Enough! That's not completely true."

Sami leaned back, hot from blood coursing through her. Hedeki got to her. His thoughts. His energy. A meanness which ate right through to her. She paused to drink from her crystal glass.

"Hedeki, I have noted that we serve the Dominick Cartel."

"We have ... we did."

"And?"

"It is now necessary to destroy this Dominick and take over the cartel and the New Wind Church. Enough! We break now! I understand you want to be near the sea?"

"That's a Hawaii problem, I guess. Yes, nearer the sea if it's not an affront to your excellent hospitality."

"The word hospitality has no meaning. You deserve what you get." Sami acknowledged she was being dismissed and left.

"Hedeki, isn't it time to tell Cook there are two of us?" Ito glared at his brother as he posed the question. It irked him to have to ask anybody for input or permission.

"Is it ever time to give someone something they haven't asked for?"

"She can't ask for something she doesn't know exists."

"You think she can work with Gifu, then?"

"Yes. And more important, he thinks so."

"And Taegu?" Ito knew Taegu was Hedeki's man, but he also knew Hedeki had no sense of loyalty, he was all business.

"He serves them or he's odd-man-out."

"He will serve them and contribute also?"

"Yes."

"At the next meeting we will explain Katasawa and ourselves."

"And will we tell her about her alteration, Onoto, and her heritage?"

"Why?"

"No, you're right. It serves no purpose until she asks or is in some danger as we are."

"Agreed!"

"We must find Dean. He's our contact ... he can reach Hill. By the way, I understand Hill has economic problems."

"The report is that his wife can't work. Something about their son. He can't make the payments on his house or cars. The Dominick plan is working. He's desperate."

"Have our people move on that opportunity. We know Hill's value. He will embrace us more fully as benefactors."

"Gifu! In here!"

"Yes master?"

"Bring Cook up-to-date on this Dean problem. Let her know about Tanya, the Chinese ... everything. We may profit by putting her in charge of our new relationship with the heads of the CIA. Watch her, see how she works. You will need to know how she thinks things through."

Chen Ho wanted some way to send a message to Shikoku that he was still a player. He couldn't find Dean, but he could use Dean's name as bait, just as Sankina used it when he helped Terrible Tanya escape. He called Sankina and told him Dean wanted to meet with him. Sankina took the bait. Chen-Ho, acting for his own pleasure, met Sankina and shot him through the mouth severing his spine at the base of the brain.

When the body was found, Chowring turned his grief into hate and began hunting Dean. He was an animal driven by acid thoughts. He stalked imagined leads until he was somewhere beyond madness. His every move directed at the bald American. Along the way, he killed anyone he thought withheld information, including the Chinese agent Chen Ho, who, before he died, laughed at him and called him Sankina's whore. Chen Ho's bodyguard ended Chowring's suffering.

Juhu Beach:

An afternoon storm came ashore and with it a hint of the coming monsoons. Sami was in meetings again. Dean was not in his room. Janet had her own suite next to Sami's, where she languished waiting for the afternoon to pass.

Sungana Apartments:

Ito stared at Sami, Gifu, Taegu, and Hedeki. His anger welled-up and he swore he would end the game.

I should have pretended to be Hedeki. She would never have suspected. Now she knows Hedeki's face too well; knows Hedeki doesn't have a scar. Now it's too late! She has to be told, but so what? What difference does it make? If Cook is to be a successor, she has to know it all eventually.

He made his decision, set his teeth, left the viewing room, and entered the room where the others talked quietly. Sami Cook's reaction gave him little satisfaction, but Hedeki's face turned white, his mouth became a single line as he grabbed at the edge of the table with both hands and slowly came to his feet.

"I am Ito Shikoku. I am Sungana. I control the West. Hedeki is Sungawa. He controls the Pacific and the East. As you see, we are brothers. You will now deal with two of us."

Hedeki glared at Ito, controlled himself, and slowly lowered his body back into his chair. Taegu reached to help him, thought better of it, and sat back, looking at Sami, then Gifu. Gifu smiled at his master, nodded at Taegu, then looked back admiringly at Ito.

"So," Hedeki said, looking at Sami. "Your reaction tells me that you hadn't suspected?" He was clever.

Sami sat, not trying to cover her surprise.

"I hadn't imagined."

Ito smiled at her. "We are good at what we do. Now you will learn more about our interests in the world and the part you play."

Hedeki stood, bumping the table and knocking his chair back. "I will leave all of you alone. The story bores me. I have work to do. Ito, you surprise even me!"

Ito accepted his brother's glare, graciously. He laughed inside.

Now I'm in control.

Juhu Beach:

On the way back to the beachside hotel, Sami began dealing with things only time would help her sort-out. She tried to focus on what they told her about the counter-cartel group in the CIA and the man Hedeki described as their most important contact, a man name of Dean, a man whose cover was as a teacher and world traveler.

Jan, my friend, have you betrayed me? Oh Jan, not you too!

Jan sat in the lobby pretending to read tourist handouts. A small blue taxi stopped and let Dean out. Her pulse raced. He looked strong and happy. He came in, did a noticeable double-take when he saw her, and smiled. Then he went on to the desk, got his key, and walked swiftly toward the front corridor.

Jan's attention was on the hallway he entered. She didn't see Sami's limo pull in behind the departing taxi. She went to the elevator, punched up one floor, got out, and took the stairs down to the long front corridor and walked past seven doors to Dean's room. Things were as she planned them. She didn't knock.

He held her for long minutes, neither talking. She felt the length of his body against her, soaked in his energy and aura. He sensed her, but his

mind flagged the strangeness of their meeting and the unanswered questions that haunted him. He gently pushed her away.

"I'm confused. Tell me what's going on Jan! My feelings for you are strong, but my mind won't let me go on without answers."

"I understand. You know the CIA's still using you?"

"I know I've been followed ... or at least I was until I ditched them in Nepal. And now, I saw one of the ones you thought were after you in Calcutta, spying on me at the first hotel I was staying at here in Bombay. I snuck out and moved here."

"They're looking for you."

"The CIA?"

"The others too. Including the side I'm supposed to be working for."

"That's your deep cover assignment you spoke of?"

"I'm in deep shit! My cover could be broken at any time. David, I'm not that clever. I didn't want this ... plan this, or even get assigned this. It just happened as a result of my being hired by Sami Cook, in Hawaii, as her personal secretary. I knew she was one of their people. I was supposed to keep an eye on her, but I never thought she'd take me in ... or bring me here."

"So what are you doing?"

"Nothing. She meets with them all day. I just hang out. That's what I was doing when their driver Pirgo brought me to this beach. There you were! I know it's hard to believe."

"This is so bizarre. What exactly am I supposed to be doing for the CIA? Honestly Jan, they haven't known where I was or had a way to contact me since Nepal."

"Hill knows that. But it's because you gave everyone the slip that others think you are a key spy or something. CIA thinks something may have happened to you. Caldwell turned up dead ... on his way back to India from Nepal. Hill thinks you may be dead too. Sungawa thinks you're on a special mission. You're hot! You're in danger love, and I can't do anything to help you."

"This is unbelievable, I specifically told them I'm not playing their game anymore. I'm leaving for Pakistan in a few days. They can go to hell!"

"Oh David, I hope it can be that simple but I don't think so. If all goes as planned, Sami will go back to Hawaii soon. Once there, I'm getting out of the military. This is not what I wanted ... I can't believe what's happened to us."

She sat on the bed, pushing her hair back with her hands.

"Your hair is longer."

"It's been almost a month ... a lifetime."

"I don't have anything to drink here. Want to get something?"

"No. I want to be with you ... talk, share something other than the frightening truth."

"Can you relax?"

"I think so. How about a nice long bath together?"

Sami found Jan's note telling her she was in room 8 Front. Jan must not suspect she knew Dean was an American agent. She was still reeling from the revelation that there were two Shikoku brothers! She couldn't believe her good fortune. She would deliver the man the Shikoku's sought and they would owe her. She thought about making a deal with Jan and

decided it was too risky. Jan said she loved Dean and this would betray any friendship that she might have had with her. It was complicated and hard to believe—too hard.

Still Sami had questions. All that happened in Hawaii ... Jan didn't initiate it, she did. Sami had some of the pieces but some were still missing. There is only one way to find out. Confront them. The thought made her stomach turn. She would wait a few minutes and get control. Then she would find them.

Langley, Virginia:

The blue birthday card addressed to Gloria Hill arrived within hours of the tampon. Tanya wished Gloria a happy birthday and mentioned that she was being treated well by Dan's people. She asked Gloria to thank Danny for her and in a postscript, mentioned how much she missed Dean and hoped she would see him soon. The tampon message was less clear.

Gloria,

Please prepare to ship my clothes home even though I'm staying. I'm glad you understand how hard it is to wait. I may need more money. Tagooe is nice but Dean is what I'm here for, isn't he? (There was a line scratched and cross-hatched out) Send instructions to my new address. I had to send this regular because you never said otherwise.

There was no return address on the envelope or on the tampon wrapper. Dan was not sure how she got the packet to them until Gloria told him it came in the regular mail, postage due.

George paced his office trying hard not to let the unattractive and controversial CIA logo dominating the wall distract him.

"Dan, where is Tanya?"

"She disappeared from her hotel. That's all we know."

"Do you think she made the move?"

"Looks like it. Her card ... correspondence seems to indicate she's alone and well. Unless?"

"Sure as hell she could be sending us a hidden message. Is she bright enough to do that?"

"No, but she may be trying."

George reread the tampon message. "Tageoo?" What or who the hell is a Tageoo?"

"I haven't a clue. We're supposed to have her new address? That may be a clue. She let us know she moved, but not where?"

"She doesn't know where she is."

"Let's let your guys try to interpret this one, okay?"

"It's all we've got. Dan, is Dean ...?"

"Dead? Caldwell first, now Dean. Why not? I think we have to declare him at least missing and presumed dead."

"He gave his life to make us all a little safer."

"George, what kind of bullshit is that? He's dead. Too bad. The country isn't better off for it. The human species will go on as before, his death doesn't make a difference. We used him, he got killed. That's the way it is. So what?"

"I have to believe his life made a difference."

"It didn't!"

"But I have to believe, don't you understand? If I didn't, then what am I worth? What is anything or anyone worth?"

"George, if he bred ... had offspring, his life made a difference. If not, he's not even in the gene pool."

"We didn't kill him!"

"We killed him, we just didn't pull the trigger. We used him against his will."

"That's right, for the good of the country."

"Okay George, he died to keep us free. Satisfied?"

"I can rest easier. Now who do we have left in the field without Dean?"

"January and Tanya are in Bombay. Susan Arles ... and there's an ID, a ... let me see the file ... Dorothy Wentworth. Caldwell's last ID for Dean."

"Susan Arles? The operative who worked with Caldwell? I ordered her back to Langley."

"She's in Delhi, still waiting for Caldwell. I know that for a fact. It came in yesterday. Somehow, they lost her ... they never got the recall message to her. But they reported her position when they had her again. They're jerks."

"Long hard wait. Better tell her about Caldwell ... get her to Bombay. Cancel her other orders ... not that they meant a damn thing. We put our dregs in the dark corners of the world. What about this Wentworth person?"

"We ask Arles. She'll know. What about Aston Martin?"

"He's at the top of the blown-cover list. That's what makes him valuable. He's Mister Misinformation if we want him to be."

"George, we have hundreds of operatives like him ... what good are they, really?"

"What if we waited to hear from Jan and in the meantime had Aston go to Tanya's old hotel and do a lot of walking about? Maybe Aston will flush something. He can talk about AID involvement with Sungawa. Let it out that we're thinking of canceling the agreement. That misinformation should stir a nest of hornets."

"Yeah. We can't do anything but wait ... unless. What if we use IDs to scout Bombay? All the hotels? Cowgirls who could be our eyes and ears?"

"Sure, if you have that many but who would you use to find, recruit, and manage them?"

"Susan Arles. She's our only person on the ground until we can enlist another Cowboy. Damn, why did Dean have to get himself killed!"

"Okay. Until we get another operative like Fallout, we flood Bombay with our people and hope for the best. How are you going to contact Susan?"

"I'll go myself if I have to."

George gave him a threatening look.

Dan went back to his office to reach out to Susan Arles with his new proposition.

It took a few days but Intelligence determined that there was no hidden message in Gloria's birthday card from Tanya. They were still working on coded meaning in the tampon correspondence.

"Dan, Ethel says Gloria is making good headway. She's out of her depression at least."

"I don't know, she barely talks to me. She traps Christopher under her wings like a hen. She won't even let me hold him if she's not there."

"Are you going to move? Gloria is quitting, isn't she?"

"We have to. I've got another week or so until they start foreclosure. The attorney says they won't be able to take the cars for another month or six weeks."

"What about the credit union?"

"I meet with them on this afternoon. Not much hope ... not on my income alone."

"Damn! Things weren't this tough when I was your age. Then we had the American Dream."

"Yeah, I've still got the dream, but not the cream."

A few hours later, on his way to his appointment at the Federal Employees Credit Union, Dan was approached in the foyer by a tough looking business woman who identified herself as a lobbyist for Hawaiian Agricultural Interests (HAI).

"Mr. Hill. Stop, please! A moment of your time." She motioned him to sit at a nearby table. "We know about your financial difficulties and would like to help in appreciation for all you do for your country. Would two hundred thousand dollars at five per cent help?"

Dan noted her intensity of purpose and made a snap decision.

"No strings. A legitimate loan, albeit at a very competitive rate of interest. You listen to both sides. Not even a promise from you."

"Both sides of what? I'm not in Congress. I can't sell a vote even if I wanted to."

I'm being set-up. "Why?"

"Of course, Mr. Hill. We know that. What we do is help people we respect. Next time you are in Hawaii, we want some photo opportunities, nothing more."

"I don't believe that."

I should have her arrested. There are probably cameras focused on me from CBS. She's probably wired.

"Mr. Hill, you have friends. Do you think I give a rat's patootie about Hawaiian Agriculture? Don't be stupid. Do you think the Deputy Director of Operations of the most important intelligence service the nation has, is going to be allowed to lose his home, be dragged through a foreclosure and maybe even bankruptcy? Don't make it tough for me Mister Hill. Your friends think \$200K will help. It's not a gift, it's a loan. Are they wrong?"

Can I let her know I'm interested and still cover myself if this is a sting operation?

"I'm here in the hopes of getting a loan from my credit union. Of course, I'm interested in any legitimate loan. I don't sell anything. If it's strictly business, I will study your offer."

"That's all we ask, honey. It's okay with me if you don't care a rat's ass about Hawaiian Agriculture."

Sungana safe house, Bombay:

Tanya Horowitz worked out until her muscles filled with lactic acid. She showered, then moved around the spacious apartment nude until she dried off. Planning to catch a brief nap before shopping, she lay full-out on the bed and dozed.

The video camera hidden behind the two-way mirror stopped moving around when she did. The audio monitors picked-up her rhythmic breathing. Taegu waited and watched. He entered the bedroom through a panel in the cherry wood surround next to the headboard. He was not unimpressed by her beauty, on or off camera.

Taegu held a tiny uncapped bottle near Tanya's nose as he watched for any muscle movement that would tell him she was awakening. She slept, her breathing slowly speeding up as the effects of the mixture began to take charge. She moved, arms and legs jerking as if she were walking. Taegu watched the motions, couldn't help studying the clefts and soft hills of her form, and grinned toward the camera. He removed a tiny hypodermic syringe and needle from its case and carefully injected a fluid into her neck.

"Where are you walking Tanya?"

Her eyelids fluttered, but did not open. Her arms and legs kept their pace, awkward as it was on her back on the bed.

"Shopping. Going past the cheaper stores."

"Stop and visit with me!"

She stopped walking and moved her head around as if looking.

"We've been friends a long time. I'm your David, Tanya, did you miss me?"

"Oh David, I've been waiting to hear from you. How can I handle you if I don't know where you are?"

"You are. Where did you think I was?"

"Maybe still in Hong Kong or Singapore."

"What were you supposed to tell me?"

"To be good, to stick to your itinerary, and to stop trying to lose us."

"Who told you to tell me that?"

"Oh David, hold me."

Her hands were moving. Taegu's arm was in the way even as he tried to step back. She gripped his arm tightly, pulling him toward her.

"Let's wait ... not now, not yet Tanya. I want to talk to you."

"Oh David, I can't wait."

She gripped him harder. He knew better than resist. He was getting the information he came for ... he had to play along.

Her free hand was at her chest, fingers twisting, fingertips making tiny little pinching motions.

"The buttons are tiny. Here, put your head here!"

She forced his head down on her breast. Her other hand was playing havoc with his clothes, and then things inside his clothes.

"Tanya, wait, please wait!"

"David, I know what you need."

She took Taegu's hand and placed it between her legs. Taegu was shaking, unable to sort his mind's mixed messages. Then it was too late for him. He broke a vow once made, and entered the gates of hell.

"That's better now," the drugged Tanya said as she let him slide sideways and away.

It was worth it. Hardly a sacrifice ... in the line of duty.

He let his hand trail along her damp body. His thoughts gradually cleared. He knew he had to hurry now. The drug would lose its effects soon.

"Who told you to tell me to cooperate?"

"Gloria."

"Why Gloria, I thought she was Dan Hill's secretary."

"Of course. And his wife too."

"Did Hill tell Gloria to tell me ... give me the message?"

"I think so."

"What else should I know, Tanya?"

"David, you used to call me Tanie."

"What else should I know Tanie?"

"George and Hill made a pact. Gloria and I were not supposed to know. They didn't want you to know either. They know you don't know that you work for them."

"Do you think I know that I work for them?"

"You're not supposed to know. I didn't tell you because I wasn't supposed to know. You don't know that I tell Gloria everything, do you?"

"Of course not. But thank you for protecting me. That's what you're supposed to do, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Then we won't have any secrets. Tell me what else I need to know."

"You have a great cock!"

"No, Tanie, I mean about work."

"They call you Cowboy."

"Me? Cowboy? Why?"

"I don't know exactly. That's the name of the operation."

"Whose operation?"

"Dan and George's, I guess."

"And, what else?"

"Dan and George are fighting a bunch of thugs and they need you, even though you aren't supposed to know it."

"Thugs?"

"You know, the guys who control the President and all those other big shot guys."

"They're fighting? How"

"I don't know. Gloria doesn't either."

"What do you think?"

"A lot about making love. Your body and all."

Her eyelids began to flutter, she rolled to one side then back. Her breasts were so firm they didn't need time to catch up. Taegu stood, almost tripped over his pants, pulled them on, grabbed his shirt, the bottle, and the hypo, and moved quietly back through the panel.

Minutes later Tanya awoke, remembered parts of her dream, noted her sweaty body, wished she could remember more, and showered again. She called Pirgo and was on her way to the shopping district. She felt David was near. "Wow," she whispered as she entered the first boutique. "Now that's what I'd call a wet dream!"

Langley:

The intelligence operatives chosen to work on the tampon correspondence determined that Tanya's message was cleverly disguised. George got their report, read it and decided to wait for Dan before doing anything, not that there was anything he could do. Besides, he knew Dan had other problems. The message could wait until morning. He read it again:

ATTENTION DCI EYES ONLY...EYES ONLY

Message from Bombay sent by agent Tanya is plea for help. She makes it clear she is being held by an organization (TGU), and that they want money to release her. They will send some of her clothes as proof they have her. They want a way to contact you other than regular mail. We think your agent cleverly withheld her contacts. She did blow the tampon mail cover, however. We are searching for the group TGU. It may take some time. We don't have complete lists especially for Asia-India.

ss Col. Spingter, I-IX, Gs-001

He committed it to memory, wadded it into a ball, and put it in the hopper. The shredder grabbed it and ate it.

Sunset. Hotel Sun n Sand. Juhu Beach, Bombay:

The showerhead had a needle spray that made Jan's skin tingle. Dean lathered her hair with coconut-smelling shampoo and worked her scalp until her whole body succumbed to pleasure. She relaxed, opening her eyes only long enough to keep her balance and let his fingers do the walking.

She soaped his back and chest and finger-painted designs in the lather. They pushed and slid against each other, teasing until there was no distance between them. Dean turned the valve shut and they stood in the steamy cubicle unable to tell where one body ended and the other began. Then, taking towels from the rack, they dried each other and made their way to the bedroom.

"Finally," David said, sounds of both conquest and gratitude in his voice.

"Come here!" Jan ordered, grabbing a convenient appendage and pulling him toward her.

As Jan and David reconnected, Sami was in her room preparing for the confrontation she knew could not wait. Sami Cook rested long enough to get up the strength for what she knew she had to do. She organized her thoughts, let anger separate her from her feelings of rescuing Jan, and headed down to 8 Front.

David leaned over the bed, cradling Jan's face, lowering his lips." Someone pounded on the door.

"Jan! Jan! Open up! It's me, Sami. Let me in ... right now!"

Jan sat up as if a spring had been released. Dean stepped back, looking at the door. Jan answered the invader. "Just a minute," and began to cover herself with the sheet. It was like a bad dream, slow motion agony. His body was sluggish, unable to act. Jan grabbed his hand and pulled him onto the bed beside her.

"Under the sheet ... cover yourself. I'll get the door."

"Don't!"

"David, you don't understand, I know her. She'll break it down if I don't open it now."

"Jan?"

"Oh David, prepare yourself!"

Jan opened the door and Sami walked by her, noted the towel, Dean in the bed, and stopped.

"Oh no! Not the best time to come barging in. I'm sorry Jan. I should have called first."

Jan stood back. Dean glared at the intruder. Sami took the initiative again.

"Jan, this can't wait! I just found out who your teacher friend is. I demand you tell me who you are and why you have betrayed our friendship."

"Come in Sami, I haven't betrayed you." She closed the door and walked back to the bed, and sat next to David's sheet-covered form.

Sami glared at the bald man.

"You're David Dean, the CIA agent?"

David pulled himself up against the headboard. The intruder was Suzi Onoto! No, she was shorter than Suzi, but otherwise identical.

"I'm Dean, but I'm nobody's agent! Believe me, I'm not! Who are you? You look like Suzi Onoto. Are you her twin? A sister?"

Sami lost her train of thought. "Onoto? Did you say Onoto?"

"My friend, Suzi Song Onoto. You look like her identical twin, except shorter."

Sami looked at Dean, then through him. Pieces of memory came together in a split second. A doorway opened in her mind's theater revealing long awaited understanding.

"Suzi ... Song ... sister ... I remember!" She seemed dazed, Jan got up and pulled a chair near the bed and helped Sami onto it.

"Sami, are you okay? Can I get you something?" Then she looked at David and anger welled-up inside her. "Who is Suzi, David?"

Sami regained control and smiled at David. "My sister, yes. You know her?"

"I knew her. She was, how can I describe it? Brainwashed ... as a young girl. She was used by some powerful group ... a corporation I think, but she regained her memories and took her life back. We were friends. She changed her life and disappeared. Only she knows where she is now. She is your sister, isn't she?"

"I ... I think so. I remember her, a little. You are an agent then. That's how you knew her?"

"No, I told you I'm not anybody's agent. I have been used by the CIA, but against my will. Suzi was in Denver ... Colorado, where I come from. She taught me about Japan, the Far East. Later, I found out she was working me for the British, but then she found out about herself and told me how I was being used. It's all very complicated and hard to believe I know.

Sami interrupted Dean, forcing herself to do what she came to do. "Jan," she said, turning in the chair so she could look into Jan's eyes, "You are the agent!" It was both a question and a statement of fact.

Jan looked down, by breaking eye contact she confirmed for Sami what Sami feared. "An agent, yes, but not in the way you might think. I'm ... a marine on special assignment. I was supposed to be a handler for Dean, although Dean ... Sami, he's telling the truth! David didn't know he was being used. In fact, he demanded they leave him alone. "Dean," she continued, "was used as a messenger—only a messenger. I was to pass things to him or pick things up from him. Things he never suspected he was carrying."

Dean wanted to set the record straight. "Before I left the US I agreed to help as a courier. Later, I told them to go to hell!"

"Sami, I couldn't lie to David. I told him to go home ... to get out, do his travel and studies later. But he wouldn't listen. He learned to spot CIA handlers and avoid them. That's why others think he's a spy. But he's not!"

"Jan, you were in Hawaii to spy on me?"

"Your father was under CIA protection. He and your brother were killed. I was supposed to learn about you, help you, but not spy on you."

Sami took the blows in her gut. Father? Brother? Her mind raced with emotion. Things came together like clashing symbols in her mind. "Onoto was my father?"

"Your father," Jan confirmed, realizing that Sami hadn't known about Acieto Onoto.

"And Cook?"

"Your brother, Heto."

"And Suzi Song?"

"One of three sisters."

"Three? Where and who is the other one?"

"The third? I don't know her name. I heard she went crazy ... I think she's in a nunnery or something, somewhere."

"You weren't a spy?"

"Oh, Sami, I can't lie. I was a kind of spy, but really, I was there to learn and help. To find out how you were connected to Sungawa—Hedeki Shikoku. They may have killed your father and brother."

"It wasn't them!"

"Sami, I never compromised our friendship. I won't. Don't let them hurt David. Do what you will to me, but David is not a player."

"They don't want Dean to hurt him. We want him because we believe he represents a faction in the CIA that is opposed to a cartel that is a shared enemy."

"I am not working for anybody! Damn it, I want to be left alone to travel and study schools in different countries around the world. I'm tired of being set-up, I don't accept that!"

Jan blotted-out David's words. She had heard Sami say "we". The we was significant, what did it mean?

"Sami," you said 'We want him!'"

Sami looked up, thought a moment, and nodded. "I have been promoted, I guess you would call it a promotion. I've been brought into the inner circles of the Shikoku's empire."

"The Shikoku's?" Jan was listening to every word now.

Sami looked at her, dropped her eyes, and nodded yes. She didn't volunteer any other information about the brothers. Jan let her query rest, satisfied she heard Sami correctly. She flagged her question for later.

"They don't want to hurt David? They're wrong about him being a good contact for them. I'm the contact you need, not David."

"Maybe." Sami said in a thoughtful voice. "Maybe, it could be up to me what happens." Sami knew she needed time to think, she sensed the power this new information gave her."

"Tell me about an agent Tanya Horowitz?"

Jan started to answer. Sami cut her off, and said, "Dean, you tell me!"

David couldn't help smiling. Tanya was the last person he wanted to talk about in front of Jan.

"To get information moved they use handlers—women like Horowitz," he used her last name hoping Jan would think they had only a business relationship, "They pass information through me to others, to check on my whereabouts, and to get information passed through me from others."

"What exactly did she do?"

Dean felt trapped by the question. "Well, ah, she had training as a secretary, I think. She was also trained as a physical therapist."

"Was she a spy?"

"Tanya? No, she's dumb as a board. She couldn't do anything that takes much thought."

Jan was uneasy. "What did Tanya do for you?" She wanted to know every detail.

"Jan, I'm asking the questions here. You keep your personal curiosity and jealousy out of this, okay?"

Jan nodded. David relaxed. Sami continued.

"Is it possible that Tanya fooled you ... that she is really one of the finest agents the CIA has?" She knew of the Chinese interest in Terrible Tanya. Maybe Dean could shed some light.

David grinned at the thought of Tanya as a super spy.

"Miss Cook, Tanya Horowitz doesn't have enough brain power to light her own imagination. She's really a mental zero. The only thing she knows how to do well is shop for clothes."

Sami focused on Jan again. She looked at Jan for a long time—just sat looking, thinking, trying to put all she learned together. "I'm leaving now. I need to do some things. I hope what you've told me is true. I'll know soon. I

want it to be true, Jan. But now you understand who I am and what I must do. I'll call before I come back. Be here!"

The door closing, the click of the bolt, drew a line, a territory, for them again. Dean sat on the bed, slowly shaking his head. Jan had goose bumps. She was shaking all over.

"We can order something from room service."

"You hungry?"

"Damn her!"

"Think there's any hot water left?"

Later that evening, Sami surprised Gifu when she called for a limo to pick her up for the meeting she had called with Hedeki. He wasn't used to having anyone but Ito call meetings. He felt waves of resentment even when Hedeki gave him orders. Now, this newcomer ... and a daughter of Onoto at that!

"I need information. Let's cut the facades and get honest. You don't know what I know. You are withholding information from me. For starters, let me say that I can deliver Dean, the CIA, and a partial list of those who oppose Dominick."

The bomb dropped as planned and there were casualties. Hedeki turned pale, and then grimaced as a headache surged through him. Ito looked as if he would puke. His face turned red. Gifu sat back, closed his hands into fists, and glared at her. Taegu was the only one of the four who seemed unaffected. He sat, a silly grin on his face. Seeing that none of the others were prepared to speak, he looked for permission to Hedeki, got a

nod, and cleared his throat. As Tanya was foremost on his mind, he began with her.

"What do you know about Horowitz?"

"Enough."

"We need to know!"

"I said we get honest ... that means no games. Decide if you trust me, want me on the team, or not. I'll leave if you want to discuss it."

Hedeki looked at Ito. Ito saw the pain in his brother's eyes, saw the hatred and contempt that was always there, and tried to take over the meeting.

"A few questions. We decide then if we are a team as you call it. What do you know about Horowitz." He repeated Taegu's question.

"A nothing, a zero. Works as a contact, a handler for Dean. Supposed to pass messages, report on his activities. There is no Terrible Tanya."

"And Dean?"

"An unwilling, uninformed pawn. He is what he says he is. He knows he's been used. He wants out."

Hedeki came alert. "I would have found that hard to believe until about an hour ago. Taegu, this confirms the information you got from Tanya. It doesn't explain a lot of strange things that Dean has been involved in, however."

"I can get answers as you need them. Now it's your turn." Sami was calm, direct, and obviously enjoying her match.

"Do you know who you are?" Hedeki intended to be cruel, blasting at her with information about how she was altered, her father, and other things he imagined would send her writhing.

"Yes!"

Hedeki sat straighter, looking at her in surprise. "You can't!"

"Do you know who killed my father, Acieto Onoto?"

"You do know? How?"

"You didn't bring me into this circle because you thought me a fool."

Gifu sat back, glaring. Ito stared. Hedeki, still wanting to blast her confidence, moved for what he thought was a kill. He took a small metal cricket from his pocket, clicked it five times, and said "Obey!"

Sami sensed what he was doing and tried to resist. She felt her personality being pushed aside and another, cold and purely objective, take its place.

"Hai."

Hedeki smiled, a cruel fix on his mouth, paths of evil around his eyes.

"Report!"

The icy talon grasped her mind, but not completely. Sami kept conscious, like a small voice underwater in a sea of powerful forces. She knew Onoto was about to speak. She fought to be part of that, and grew in strength, as she was able to help forge Onoto's words.

"We obey your orders."

"What orders?"

"You put us in charge of finding a way to get to the Americans opposed to Dominick." It was all Sami could do to shape Onoto's words. It was getting easier. She knew she was gaining strength against that awful part of her.

"How does she know about herself?"

Sami was in control now. She played along, knowing she could convince Hedeki if he thought he was in control of her. "All of the information was there. She is very bright."

"Who is she loyal to?"

"Sami Mitsu Onoto is permanently bonded to you. There is a path for bonding to a man named Ito. No others."

Sami watched Hedeki relax. He smiled again, this time to himself. He looked toward Ito. Ito gave him a positive nod. Taegu shrugged his shoulders. Gifu stared, unemotional.

"Bring Sami Cook back. Be observant! Go!"

Sami pretended no time passed. "Well?" She asked

"We will tell you what we think is important. You will get straight answers to any questions you ask. There will be no further testing. That is my wish, Ito's wish, and our orders to Taegu and Gifu. Now, we must prepare for our first contact with the CIA's counter-Dominick people."

Saturday:

"They call this Chowpatty Beach. I will pull over here and let you out. See the sign, Marine Drive?"

"Thanks Pirgo. We'll walk around and meet you back here in two hours. You go pick-up Tanya. Take her wherever. We'll be here. Don't worry."

Jan and David got out of the car and started walking the beach.

"Jan, I don't want to see Dan Hill," David said. "I'd probably beat the shit out of him."

"You won't have to. Hill and I will meet with Hedeki, Gifu and Sami. Then it will all be over. I'll go back to being Sami's secretary in Hawaii. You'll be in Pakistan, right?"

"What makes you think they'll let you resign your commission, and leave the CIA?"

"They have to. I'll just refuse to work for them."

"Like I did? And why would Cook want you? More important, why would you want to be connected to Sungawa?"

"I really like her. I can help her. You could join me in Hawaii."

"Maybe, after this year. We'll see. Jan, something tells me it won't be that simple. I'll bet you once the cartel is broken—if it can be broken—America and Sungawa-Sungana will become enemies."

"Damn, I hope not. David, they really do plan to work together."

"Take my bet then?"

"I wouldn't dream of ... no, I won't bet. If Gifu and Sami take over, things will change. I can help make sure they change for the best."

"Will you join me when I get to Europe? Italy maybe?"

"Gad! I want to go to Italy. I'll do my best David. You know how I feel about you."

"I like to feel about you, too!"

"Keep walking! We have a whole night together you know."

"This time of year, the nights are long ... is it getting dark yet?"

"You're silly! Come-on, we have an hour to walk and talk before Pirgo gets back."

Chapter THIRTY-THREE

The Sungana limo was closely observed as it moved away from the Sungana apartments. Gifu and Taegu watched from opposite sides of the street. A bevy of Chinese agents watched from vantage points and follow vehicles. A tall, beautiful woman in a business suit looked up as she pretended to shop in one of the kiosks along the road. Pirgo drove slowly.

Tanya thought he was taking her shopping. She looked out her window, hoping to spot some boutique or specialty shop as they drove along.

With the Chinese following, Pirgo drove directly to their Embassy.

"What's this place?" Tanya asked as he pulled through the iron gates, past the machine gun wielding guards, and around the crescent drive.

"You are to be a guest of the Chinese Government, Miss Horowitz. Didn't they tell you?"

"No. A guest? Why?"

"You're a very important person Miss. I'm sure you do interviews all the time."

There was no way Tanya would deny being important. Besides, a driver didn't have to know she had never done an interview before.

The Chinese intelligence officers escorted Tanya into a comfortable interrogation room. Their job was to make a definitive determination: Was this woman the Tanya known as *Terrible Tanya* or the other one, the one Shikoku used as a decoy?

"Welcome Missy. You like Chinese things?"

"I think so. Like in Hong Kong?"

"You've been there?"

"Oh yes. I'm a PT for David, you know."

"Yes ... Missy, why did they send you here rather than the other Tanya they took out in their jet?" He knew that a blunt question, right to the point, was the best way to start an interview. He studied her reaction. He had lived in the United States and studied psychology.

"I wasn't going anywhere."

"But, why here?"

"Pirgo told me I was invited to be a guest."

"What if we decided you are a spy and arrested you?"

"I'm not a spy, I'm a Physical Therapist."

"You would be shot! You will be shot! You are a spy!"

Now she understood. She turned, found a chair, and sat down."

"This is an interview? Aren't I supposed to say something back?"

"Yes, answer this. You are the spy called Terrible Tanya. Now we have you and you will be executed for your crimes!"

"I'm not terrible! You're being terrible! Really, people don't shoot people just because they ... why would you shoot me?"

"Just a moment." An agent approached him and spoke quietly. Tanya heard the word "airport."

"You know what we just learned?"

"Something about the airport?"

"You knew? They gave you to us and you came? Even though you knew?"

He turned to the wall and spoke quietly. Tanya couldn't hear his words and thought it strange he was talking to the wall. Four agents, alike

as far as Tanya could tell, came out of a door near her and stood around the agent.

"You were a decoy?" One of them asked. "That's why you came willingly?"

"Of course not! I came willingly because I didn't know ... I had no choice, really. I wouldn't have agreed to this silly interview, and besides, you're not treating me like a guest!"

"Miss, would you consent to come with us to China?"

"Is it okay with Dan and Gloria? Would you start treating me like a guest?"

"I'm sure they would want us to take you back with us. And yes, Miss, we will treat you as you deserve to be treated."

"Can I get silk things there, like in Hong Kong?"

"Better."

"Will you bring me back here ... my things are here, and I have friends."

"If at all possible, Miss."

"Okay. But I just don't have anything to wear. Promise me I can buy appropriate clothes?"

"You can go shopping first thing."

"I'll go then, but first I need to send something to Gloria?"

"Send what? Why from here?"

"You don't even try to understand. You don't treat me like a woman. I need to send ... Hey, where's my purse?"

"Check it. Get it for her."

One of the men handed her the purse.

"Look, here's what I have to send Gloria." She held up a tissue wrapped tampon.

"Can't she get her own?"

"Of course she can! Some men just never get it! Now let me use the Ladies. I need privacy."

Chapter THIRTY-FOUR

Tuesday 15:00 GMT. Anchorage, Alaska:

"Mister Hill, Sir, your plane will depart now. Are you all right ... I mean you were kinda under the weather when you got here."

"Yes Major. I'm not used to flying in these things. Is it necessary to wave about so much?"

"This is a different pilot Sir. I'll tell him to fly conservatively, okay?"

Dan climbed on the F-4 Phantom and slid down into the seat and harness. The noise was almost unbearable as the pilot got them airborne. Except for the G-force, their take off was not as bad as he anticipated. He began to relax.

"Rough flight out I hear, Sir. Don't worry about this leg. With these extra fuel tanks we'll fly like a lead duck."

"How far this leg?"

"A carrier on the Arabian Sea not far from Bombay, off the Gulf of Cambay."

"Impossible, that's half way around the world!"

"From here we go southwest. We refuel in the air two times. I think we could stay up and never come down this week. I'm just kidding, Sir."

"And we land on a carrier?"

"Oh, you're worried about these bulky tanks. We ditch them. The exact spot is in my orders. Did they show you how to pee?"

Sungana offices:

"Let's go over this one last time. We agree to stop the drug supply from Asia to America. The CIA won't know we're rerouting through Central America. That's what we're working to set-up now."

"What if they find out we're rerouting?"

"They won't. We'll blame the cartel. With CIA help, we break the cartel, we end up controlling their whole distribution network anyway. We'll have it all."

"And Cook? Will she go along?"

"Ito, goddamn it! We tell her a little at a time. We don't have to tell her now."

"It can also be a final test of her loyalty. I agree, Hedeki."

"She's loyal to both of us, brother. You heard Onoto."

"Not yet she's not! Don't try to soften me Hedeki. She's yours until I decide differently."

"Ito, I also have reservations about Gifu. We don't have time to keep testing her or him."

"Time? Hedeki, isn't it time to let Westfault determine how much time you have left?"

"Damn you Ito! He would kill me. You'd love that!"

"Actually not, brother. He will help you ... look what he did for me. You're getting weaker Hedeki. I'll meet Hill. Admit you're not up to it."

"I ... okay, you meet him." Hedeki's face screwed into a mask of hate. Ito shrunk away from him, knowing a similar side of himself, a side that could kill, would kill, wanted to kill.

Early the next morning:

The helicopter looked as if it has seen recent service in Vietnam. Dan could swear there were bullet holes in the fuselage. His stomach sensed every air pocket and change of direction. His muscles were sore as boils. A knot near the base of his neck felt like a lead baseball. He hurt all over, still had to pee, and would have accepted a fiery crash if given the option.

"That's it, Sir! Those red lights, there and that green light in the middle."

"Our Embassy?"

"It's Bombay Annex, Sir." He moved his feet, did little circles and half-circles with the stick, and brought the large Huey to the ground.

"Mr. Hill, Dan! Welcome to Bombay."

"Aston! Good to see you."

"Let's get the hell off this roof."

"I ache all over. I smell vile. Damn, eleven hours! Aston, can you get me some of that pink stuff? I'll need an hour or two ... okay?"

"Gotcha, Dan. It's after two. Nobody gets going around here until after nine and several cups of bombo coffee. Phone on the stand is your contact with us ... just pick it up, we're here to serve."

A noise in the hallway brought Dan back from the land of nightmarish dreams. He spun his feet to the floor, stood bracing himself against the wall for a moment to let his head clear, and headed into the bathroom. The hot water felt better than anything he could compare it to. The steam made him queasy. He chugged some more Pepto and gagged as the thick stuff coated his tongue and throat. Shaved and combed, he found his suit hanging in the closet, neatly pressed. His shirt was stiff with starch. The maroon toes of his shoes caught the light like mirrors. He found his regimentally striped tie still wadded in the side compartment of his case. The sun was up. The air felt muggy like August at home. There was a strange smell he couldn't identify.

He found his lapel pin where the valet placed it on the nightstand. The boy scout pin had been his good luck charm for over twenty years.

He ordered up breakfast and found he had an appetite after all.

"More breakfast, Sir?"

"No ... what was that strange tasting stuff on the eggs?"

"Curry, Sir. Everything here is flavored with a curry. You get used to it, I guess. This way then Sir!"

The young marine led him through a series of door less spaces, through a steel door, and into a square office with light green walls, peeling paint, and patches of mildew exuding from the walls. Aston greeted him with a sheaf of papers attached to a clipboard.

"Feeling better than last night, I see."

"Better."

"I had a time getting Arles here. She's broken-up about Caldwell. Hardly makes one confident of her ability to be objective. I don't think they had a relationship, either. File says she likes women."

"Good work."

"Shikoku is busting his ass to see you. They keep calling."

"Good."

"There's a file here about a D. Wentworth?"

"I asked for it."

"That's pretty much what's in this stack." Aston thumbed through the files on the clipboard.

"Hurlbut?"

"I beg your pardon, Sir?"

"Agent January, Hurley, Hurlbut!"

"Nothing here ... let me see ... no, nothing here ... but there is an Eyes Only due here at any time. It was sent to Delhi by mistake."

"Sent from where?"

"From here Dan. These dolts were out of the loop, they sent it to the Embassy."

"Figures."

"Anything else?"

"No, just stand by, okay? Get me that file as soon as they return it."

Chapter THIRTY-FIVE

Surf n Sand Hotel. Thursday noon:

"Hill's here, David. I have to be with Sami."

"You talked to Sami? She won't let you come back here to be with me, will she?"

"No. She trusts me ... but she wants me where she can keep an eye on me."

"Tell Hill to never contact me again. If you don't have the opportunity, make sure Sami tells him?"

"Yes. But it won't make a difference if they think they can use you."

"Tell him I've written down everything. The *Washington Post* gets it if they don't leave me alone."

"David, what you don't seem to understand is that doesn't make a difference. It would never be printed. They're beyond accountability of any kind."

"Enough of this. Will you come to Europe? Italy, like I said? You have my itinerary I'll follow it as closely as I can."

"You know I'll try. David, we're going to be all right ... both of us. Sami guarantees it. Just do your thing and watch out!"

"I'd rather you did it!"

"David, be serious! This is our last time together for ... who knows how long?"

You're an expendable resource. They'll try to use you. Why won't you listen to me? Go home!

"Here, then, take this seriously!"

"Do you realize we have time to say good bye?"

"Hey! That tickles."

Hill took the Eyes Only file sent by January, threw it on the metal desk, and pulled the rip string. There were two pages inside. He took them out, recognized Jan's handwriting, and breathed a sigh that could be heard in the anteroom. He read and reread the reports, smiled, sat at the desk and held his finger on the button until Aston came back.

"Martin, arrange to have a message coded and on its way to the Director ASAP. Can they do that here?"

"Yes."

"Set it up. I'll have the message ready when you get back."

Hill sat for a few minutes composing.

Nice here, like January. STOP. Cowboy riding. STOP. Have surprise in store expect fallout. STOP. Meet with friends this aft. STOP. Next time it's TWA. STOP. Timing as planned. Will advise. DH DDO AYS

"How the hell am I supposed to code a message I can't understand? The son-of-a-bitch! Comes out here and starts fucking us over. Colonel, can you code this message? I never even heard of AYS."

"Captain, you just run it through the machine. You aren't supposed to read them. Follow procedures and quit being nosy! AYS means At Your Service, if you want to know!"

The captain grimaced, fearing he had come close to blowing his cover. He let the message go out and wouldn't mention anything about it to the senator. What the hell, it was probably just a greeting card or something anyway.

Dan waited in his temporary office for Susan Arles to appear. There was a knock on the door.

"She's here Sir, when you are ready."

"Show her in, please."

"Arles, I called you to Bombay to meet with you personally." Dan studied the lanky, officious looking operative from Calcutta. "You've been through some tough times. Caldwell was a good man, a very special agent. You stuck to the plan until we confirmed his death. I admire that, you were there if he needed you. I know that means a lot to you, it does to me."

She smiled sweetly, and lowered her eyes.

This usurper is the bureaucratic bastard who moved so quickly to the DDO position? This third-rate analyst who is second in power now? What a joke! I didn't care about Caldwell. He was the SOB that left me hanging in Delhi. The wasted days I spent meeting busses. Damn you ... damn the CIA!

"Susan, I need you to take over where Caldwell left off. It's a promotion with benefits. After a bit of a trial period, if I like what you do, you will advance two grades in pay. What do you think?"

She nodded.

"You, not Caldwell, handled an ID name of Callert. That went very well. You also handled an ID Caldwell recruited in Nepal, right?"

Susan wrinkled her nose, smiled, and nodded. She didn't lower her eyes this time, but looked right through Hill. "Wentworth."

"This Wentworth ... you still in contact with her?"

"Not really. I think she sold us out to Dean. She was in Delhi last week. No telling where she is now."

"You don't trust her? Did she use Dean or did Dean use her?"

"Oh, she was used! She's a woman isn't she!" She glared at Hill, but he didn't notice.

"Your new assignment is to identify and recruit as many IDs as you can. Do what Caldwell did ... get them to serve their country. I brought with me a list of five single women now in the Bombay area. Three are under thirty-five. Two are older, but ... well, if they can serve, bring them on board."

"Caldwell called them Deputies. What does ID mean"

"Oh, that's a code handle. It means Ingenuous Deputies."

Fucking idiots. Men think things like that are cute.

She batted her eyes, looking down. "I thought Ingenuous meant candid or straightforward. The way you use it suggests that IDs are artless and crude."

"Really? To me it means without sophistication. I guess we'll use my definition, as that's what I mean ... think of IDs as untrained."

"Do they keep track of Dean?"

"One or two maybe. I haven't decided yet. I want them to meet with and carry communications back and forth between our man Aston Martin and you! You will have other duties as well in your new position. I don't have them mapped out yet, but you'll hear from me."

"Dean may have killed Caldwell." She said it coolly, without emotion.

"No, it wasn't him."

"Indirectly, then!"

"You mean by tricking Caldwell into believing he'd taken the bus?"

"Exactly!"

"He had no way of knowing. He was protecting himself ... no other agenda." He thought a moment, processed the tone in her voice. "Is that a problem for you Arles? If so, let's get it on the table. Dean's too valuable to have any problems with our own people."

"Not if you say he wasn't the one, Sir."

"Good. Contact me immediately when you have something to report."

Friday:

Dorothy Wentworth spent a week searching for David. She watched the faces in the crowds. She sat in hotel lobbies ... he wasn't in Bombay. She was certain now. She spent her last day walking along the Walkeshwar Road to Malabar Point. She sat in front of Raj Bhavan, the Governor's house and then walked to the Temple of the Sand Lord. All day, walking, sitting, riding back to her hotel in her taxi, she thought of the things she wanted to share with David. Things she learned about herself. He would be proud of her ... she was ready to explore her new feelings.

Oh David, what's happened to you?

She cleared customs and found the international gate for BOAC flight 0411 to Teheran. Soon Bombay slid away and a seemingly endless Arabian Sea glimmered below.

David, I hope you got out! Thanks David!

Sami met with Jan before the big meeting with Hill. "You work for me now. Hill agreed to the story. You're my secretary. Be careful not to give us away. Don't let anyone know you're also a go-between! You know the signals?"

"Pencil up, true. Cross the page, false. Chew on the eraser means ask more questions. Pencil down ... be on the lookout for a trap or something."

"Good, now don't get involved and put your pencil where it shouldn't be. If you quit sending messages to us, put your pencil in your purse!"

"Sami, I'm scared."

"Me too, Jan. Remember, if I go down, so do you!"

Sami still isn't sure of me. Her life is at stake. People who screw-up usually don't get a second chance. Keep cool.

Sami and Jan composed themselves and walked through the door into the meeting. The table in the meeting room was shaped like a pointless Christmas tree, with a place at the peak for one person, Shikoku. The notches along the sides were cut so that everybody else faced him. Her place was one of three at the broad base of the table. From there she could clearly see the leader, but only the backs and partial sides of those who attended. They had difficulty seeing anyone except the leader.

"Sit where your name is!" Gifu commanded.

Hill was seated in the first notch on the right. Cook, in the first notch on the left. Taegu came and motioned Jan to her seat, then sat to her right. Gifu stood. There were no other nametags in the four remaining notches. A door opened in the front of the room. Ito Shikoku entered. Gifu looked relieved. He worried that at the last minute Hedeki would demand control of the meeting. Ito's head was turbaned, the long scarf held in place by a flat-cut peridot once worn by an Emperor of a Mogul dynasty.

Jan was too far back to signal ... Sami looked angry. Hill turned and smiled, pretending to look at Taegu while his eyes locked Jan's for a moment. He nodded and turned back. Gifu took his seat in the notch

behind Cook. Then Ito Shikoku came forward and took his place. All eyes were on him.

"Dominick has brought us together. Let us start this meeting with a wish for Dominick. May they dissolve into nothing." He paused as if to pray, then continued. He was looking at Jan as he spoke.

"Empires are built and collapse. Then there are empires like the one Mister Hill here represents. An empire of wealth and power never before imagined. An empire where even the poor live better than kings used to. An empire with energy slaves that eat coal and oil and do man's bidding."

"Mister Hill, there are other empires but they are almost insignificant compared to the one you represent." He paused, took a drink from a crystal goblet, and stared beyond Jan. "Your empire is vulnerable because it is based upon sound economics but undermined by foolish principles. Your empire nurtures those who would destroy it! That is what has given Dominick strength.

"It is also a fact that our meager empire of service and manufacturing, and yes, I won't deny a past wrong, drug trading, has also been nurtured by America. We once thought we must compete with you. Now, we realize your empire's basic good and turn to you to offer our help, little as it may be, in defeating Dominick."

He radiated power. He looked at Hill and ever so slightly nodded his head. Dan took the cue.

"Thank you Hedeki Shikoku."

Jan noticed Shikoku's head jerk back and a flash of anger cross his face.

What had Hill said or done to cause a slight? Hedeki, not Mister? Maybe?

"America is more than a place. It is a way of honoring human dignity and worth. It has a fault of being open, but like any truth it gains its own power. We believe that the very nature of our experiment is enough to win all hearts."

Ito looked quizzically at Hill, unable to fathom the meaning in the man's words. He suspected some hidden message. He caught Gifu's eye. Gifu was nodding agreement with Hill. Anger swelled inside him. He interrupted.

"Mister Deputy Director, would you say that again. Gifu, back there, doesn't follow your meaning and you can explain it better than I."

"Certainly. I said that what we are doing is right. So right, that it makes converts of all men, in time. That is why we do not fear being open."

"Gifu?"

"Now I understand." Gifu played along. So, it was Ito Shikoku who didn't understand. Gifu was troubled. Ito missed the most significant weakness in the most powerful movement the world has ever seen ... he missed it!

Hill cleared his throat. "Dominick and the cartel, have tentacles that reach to the heart of our government. None of our founders ever imagined that could happen. There are a few of us who know of their evil and are doing something about countering it. With your help, we will better understand the monster and we will stop it."

Sami turned to Hill, got a nod of approval from Ito, and began to speak.

"Our greatest fear is that you are naive. We fear you don't know how Dominick is weakening America. I live in Hawaii. I carry an American passport. My loyalty is not the question here, but I want you to know that we feel it may be too late; that you are too few and the thugs, as you call them, have already won."

Hill turned so he could see Sami's face. Jan held her pencil upright then put the eraser between her lips. "If you know something, tell me. I'm asking for information. I have other questions, but for now, I want at least a summary of what you know."

Ito slapped the table lightly, but with enough force to re-direct attention to himself. "Dominick, those who got into power, walked right in. That's your system. It's defeating you. Anybody can buy your politicians especially if they tap into nationalism and religious fervor. In fact, your politicians buy their offices. Right now, I can make a phone call and change tax policy in California. Another, and I can buy the five most productive farms in America. I won't, but I could! Dominick intends to destroy the economies of each state, state-by-state, by increasing taxation, making manufacturing companies uneconomical or selling them off to developing countries, destroying agriculture, draining the people by higher costs for everything ... and poor education. And also fear of each other," he added.

Hill sat forward.

"It isn't that simple! They don't own every politician."

"They don't need to! Look at energy prices. Who controls them? You Americans, the Dutch and the Brits tried, but you didn't succeed. As a result, in rural America a farmer can only sell at prices kept intentionally low by Dominick. But all the farmer's other costs keep rising. Fuel alone

will stay well over a dollar a gallon. Tractors and truck prices are being inflated as rapidly as Dominick can take control of manufacturing. They take the land, the raw materials, the manufactures, right out from under your noses."

"We know that, but"

"Your people are massing in cities. Most of those cities are in zones where everything must be imported ... food, water, and electrical power. Look at your own Civil Defense figures. Cities like New York, Miami, Denver, Houston, Seattle, Los Angles, are not possible to save in the event of a cataclysm. Your own figures show that people will turn to cannibalism within five days of the event. That is, those people who have not died at the hands of raiding mobs. True?"

"No American city can stockpile enough food. If the cataclysm, as you call it, comes in the dead of winter no American city will survive. Over a hundred million people will starve to death within a month ... or be killed by raiders. We know that. Everybody knows that! We also know that Dominick doesn't want a cataclysm. It's too expensive. It would destroy the potential of an enslaved population, and we might retaliate."

"You mention enslavement." Ito half stood, leaning forward to make his arguments. "Let me predict that within ten years ninety per cent of Americans will be economic slaves. They will be told that they own, but they will own nothing. They will work for handouts from those in power: Dominick." He sat heavily, obviously too fragile to continue forcing the arguments. "Gifu, continue giving Hill information!"

Gifu leaned toward the middle of the table. Hill and Cook turned, uncomfortable, but able to see Gifu. Suzi could now see Janet's signals.

"Slavery's not new, it simply has a new face. Stenislav, the economist that was assassinated in his home last year, wrote that soon the cartel in power will only let people lease their cars and pay rent on homes. He said that Americans will be able to survive only by borrowing and buying from the cartel's company store. That Dominick will establish a minimum quality of life for every American—in fact, he said 'every soul on this planet,' based upon productivity. And that they will conquer America and the world without ever firing a shot."

Sami twisted to see Gifu and Jan. When Gifu paused, she spoke.

"I agree, no cataclysm. But the need for an enemy within, an enemy Americans can focus their hate and frustrations upon, is in their plan. The big cities all have well-established mobs. Drugs and futility drive millions of city dwellers into frenzies. The cores of your cities burn. The neighborhoods of Watts and Detroit. Drugs are a key, but futility is the real weapon Dominick uses. As long as Americans fear the mobs, they focus within. As long as Dominick can keep the educational system from educating, and the people from working, ignorance compounds itself. Dominick will offer simple solutions to complex problems. The mass, the partially educated, will rise up and do Dominick's bidding. Like the politicians in ancient Rome, they will buy the mobs to keep them quiet, and unleash terrorism at will upon those who oppose Dominick."

Dan heard them, agreed they were right, but still held out hope that things could be righted.

"The thugs will not win, they must not!" He almost shouted.

Ito came to his feet, grimacing. Then he let a cruel laugh break his lips. "Thugs! Thugs you say? I've sat here and heard you call Dominick's

minions a bunch of thugs. That's what you think, isn't it? I see so clearly now, my dear Mister Hill, my dear Deputy Director. We're not dealing with thugs, we're dealing with well educated, bright, motivated, socially conscious individuals who are idealists to a fault. Idealists, Mister Deputy. Idealists who have a plan to end world hunger. A plan to raise the living standards of five billion people. A plan to end war. A plan to save the planet's environment. A plan to take care of men like you and me." He sat, smiling a Shikoku smile. Behind the two-way mirror, Hedeki moved toward the glass, studying his brother's face.

Hill was shocked by Ito's words. He made sense. Of course, Dominick's vision for the new global empire, what does he call it? The New Wind? is a more perfect world. They would own everything, control everything. Their will be done, on Earth as it is their heaven.

"I'll tell you something else," Ito continued, "if what we've already revealed isn't enough. The masses, yes including most Americans, will throw themselves at the feet of the new order. They will parade in the streets and celebrate. They will kill for it and all voices will be silenced. That is their plan. It is almost in place. Only we oppose it."

Jan shivered. What she heard almost sucked her in.

How wonderful! All people living with dignity. The American Dream? Isn't that what religions taught?

Then the reality of Dominick's real message hit her. World rulers, benevolent if you were a slave muted of mind and spirit. Humans like cattle, bred and managed by a few who thought themselves gods. A system that lay upon the genius of man like the *mano muerte* of the Dark Ages.

Only this Dark Age would encircle the world, enslavement for millennium to come.

Dan raised his head. "Shikoku, can we defeat Dominick and the New Wind Church?"

"Yes, and in a way not even I would have suspected two days ago. We have no choice but to work together, although our goals may ultimately be different. It will take longer than either of us may be around to enjoy, but we will win! Dominick's plan is targeted for complete implementation shortly after the new millennium begins. We can act before that time." He rose. "We break now! When we meet this afternoon Gifu will be in charge. We will discuss each of Dominick's tentacles and begin designing plans to thwart and re-direct."

Downtown Bombay:

Arles prowled the best hotels looking for clues of a woman traveling alone. She had the names Hill gave her, but no photos or other information. She sat, her feet hurting. She hadn't recovered from her stint waiting for Caldwell. Her feet and legs ached. Out of the corner of her eye she saw a tall and very attractive brunette leave the elevator and walk toward the main desk. "Whoa!" She let the sound out slowly. Susan was up and behind her, admiring her, noting a ringless left hand, a tour guidebook clasped tightly in her right. She breathed in her perfume. The essence aroused and generated energies in her mind and body, sweet like desert winds. The woman reached the desk, placed her room key in front of the clerk, and knew she had his attention.

"Room twenty-four. I'll be checking out early tomorrow. Can you arrange a five o'clock call! Then I'll need to get to the airport. My flight leaves for Pakistan a little after seven."

"Consider it done, Miss" He looked in the file for her registration. "Twenty-four, Miss Dominick ... Beatrice Dominick? You're traveling alone?"

"Yes. Please write it down. A five o'clock call. Airport ... to arrive there no later than six forty-five!"

"Yes, Miss. And today? Do you need anything today?"

"The Jehangir? The Jehangir Art Gallery. Tell me, can I walk there?"

Before the clerk could respond, Susan acted. "You're an American? I'm on my way to the Jehangir now. Would you care to share a cab with me?"

Beatrice turned, brushed her hair to one side and smiled. The lanky CIA operative had taken the bait.

"A cab? It is too far to walk then?"

The clerk responded. "No Miss, it's better you take the taxi."

Beatrice talked constantly, pretending her isolation in a strange land had kept her pent-up and fearful. She was letting all of that out. Susan learned enough about her to believe she planted her hooks in the most effective places.

"You can call me Missy," Beatrice said suggestively as she spun her tale and let Susan know what she wanted her to believe.

"I had made plans to travel together with my stewardess friends. Then the Captain called us in and announced that we were all being put on leave and given a whole month off. I didn't know what to do. I could have

flown back to Miami, but I wanted to travel. So did my friends Kate and Sandi. We three ... that is until Sandi got sick in Delhi, and Kate met this guy. I was suddenly on my own. It's hasn't really been so bad, but you know, I wanted to do more than just take tours. I wanted to contact American companies and maybe our government and see about jobs. I wanted ... I'm sorry Susan, I've been going on like a steam jet. Tell me, what are you doing out here?"

Susan explained that she also searched for a company to work for to see the world. She made up stories about looking at various options until "I met a man who worked for our own government. That was my lucky day! He told me they had an opening at the American Embassy ... actually the Counselor Section."

Beatrice acted impressed. "You do? What's it like?"

"I love my work! Do you know that all I do is help people? My job's simple. I provide services for our representatives in the field. Men mostly. Men who are alone and traveling most of the time. Men who need help but are too proud to ask for it. Missy, would you believe that many of the field reps I help don't even know we work for the same boss? It's really neat. I become their friend ... sometimes a traveling companion ... provide support ... and all the time I'm helping them!"

"I don't mean to sound inappropriate, but are you sure there is no sex required?"

"Oh, Missy, the way I explained it must have sounded bad." Her mind was racing.

Humm ... it seems this woman has morals.

"It's not like that. Although, to tell you the truth, there was this one guy who was very kind and wonderful. I didn't plan on it, but I fell for him. I traveled with him and much to our surprise we became lovers. We may marry someday. But that was not my job! I mean, it was my heart speaking, not anything expected of me."

"So, what exactly do you do? I don't quite get it."

"In my job I pass information to and from our people in the field, I report back about their mental health, physical problems, need for vacation time and so on. I'm more like a supportive friend. but definitely not a live-in."

"And that's all? You said men who are too proud to ask ... what does that mean? And please, call me Missy."

"Missy, do you know what a profile is? I mean like the profile of a man who would be a good pilot? Or the profile of a good father?"

"I think so."

"Well, the profile of a good operative is a man focused on his work who can convince others that he's just a normal guy. A good agent puts personal agendas and pleasures aside while he's working, is a loner, and covers his rear by avoiding entangling relationships. They have to be a little paranoid. They have to feel they are totally in charge ... that nobody is manipulating them. All that makes a good agent, but it also creates problems for those of us who have to watch out for them. That's why we could never get close to them if they thought we were there to nursemaid them or report on them."

"That sounds dishonest to me!"

"Maybe, but we help them. And Missy, if it weren't for us, many of them would burn out. There are even instances where we have saved lives."

"And that's your job? It does sounds important. Are there others?"

"Yes. In fact, that's what I'm doing here. I was supposed to meet a new employee. She was to have arrived today, but I got word she was needed in Delhi. We're so short-handed ... anyway, that's when I decided to see the Jehangir. Say, you wouldn't be interested in this kind of thing, would you?"

"It sounds kind of fun and I like the idea of making a contribution. I'll think about it while we visit the gallery. Today is my lucky day! A job offer and an experienced guide to boot. I'm so glad we met.

"I'm learning more about India all the time. I've been here almost two years now."

"And ... you like it?"

"Yes. But that's not to say that there aren't some things I don't like."

What a woman! What a body. Too bad she likes men.

"You're not married, Missy?"

"I was. A real bastard! Got married at seventeen, divorced at twenty. For the past three years I've been a flight attendant for Cathay Pacific. Some neat guys, but not the kind you keep. Wrong profile."

Beatrice had trouble keeping a straight face. She played along, amazed that American intelligence was carried out on such a primitive level. The woman had no idea who she was recruiting.

They left the gallery at noon, hungry.

"I know the perfect place!" Susan led. "It's called the Other Room. It's in the Ambassador Hotel. But first, while we're here near a phone, I need to check-in. I'm supposed to be working you know."

"Susan Arles. Yes ... I'll hold. Damn right it's important. Okay then patch me through! Look, he said call, I'm calling!"

"Hill."

"Listen, I found an ID, but she's leaving for Pakistan tomorrow. She'd be good. You said Dean was going to Pakistan. Need an ID for him?"

"Set it up."

"This one's smart. She'll want a contract. That's potentially dangerous. Right?"

"I can find a way. Drop by the Annex. It'll be ready after three."

Pakistan? Well, what can it hurt. I can keep track of the slippery SOB that way.

Friday, sunset:

Dean walked along the high wave line as the sun set.

Goodbye India, I'll never come back, but I have so many memories! Jan! Laura. I wonder what happened to Dorothy? I'll never really know what it was all about. I hate being used. The more I think about it, the angrier it makes me. If it weren't for the spy gambit, I wouldn't be here alone. I wish Jan was still here. I just need to forget it and let her go. I don't even know what part of our relationship was real. When will I learn to avoid attachments. Women in my life always leave. Even my mom. It's better not to depend on them.

"Damn them!" His voice was lost on the swell of the sea.

In darkness, David returned to 8 Front. The room's aura had scabbed over. Like a fibrous growth it prevented him from reliving their time together. He sat in the dark, depressed, wondering if he should give up and go home. He sat up a long while thinking before he finally drifted off into a troubled sleep.

Before dawn, Dean made his way to the lobby, checked-out, and took a taxi to the airport. The sun was a dusky eye, two fingers above the horizon. He boarded the BOAC flight and found his seat. Alone. Isolated. He sat in the tube and would soon be shot through the sky to another strange and lonely place. Pakistan. He closed his eyes and let the darkness rack the inner parts of him.

BOOK III
THE FALLOUT
SOLUTION

Chapter ONE

Bombay to Karachi flight

The woman mashed his toes as she squeezed by to the window seat. She was disturbingly attractive, even in her square-cut gray flannel business suit. Her lavender scarf, pinned by a cameo, barely hid the uplands of deep cleavage. Her tight skirt rode up over suntanned swimmer's calves.

She isn't wearing lipstick or makeup.

He held his breath until she passed. Breathing, he pulled in nectar that tingled his senses.

"That's great perfume you're wearing."

"Oh? I'm not wearing perfume ... I never wear perfume!"

Well Lady, it sure ain't BO!

One stewardess poured coffee, another collected plastic plates, wrappers and leftovers. His seatmate gave him a penetrating look as she passed her plate. He looked down, away from her probing eyes.

David Dean wanted to believe that by boarding the Pakistan flight he was leaving Dan Hill's CIA manipulations behind. India fell away, but he sensed his problems had not.

She turned toward him, scrunching sideways in her seat.

"Dean, let's cut the crap. I'm no good at games."

He stared at her.

How can she know my name? I've never seen her before. Is she another CIA handler? What games?

"No bad deed goes unrewarded you know. They're using you for their own gain. They won't let you go. You're their pawn."

She leaned toward him as she spoke, her face within inches of his. He heard her words, but it took moments to jog cognition.

"I ..."

"You don't need to say anything. I'm with you now and just so you understand, there is nothing I don't know about you."

She glared at him. He looked away.

"I know what foods you prefer, what you read, how you teach, what happened to your mother, and exactly ... I mean exactly ... how you make love. I even know you were put in a state mental hospital. There is nothing about you I don't know and you better get used to it. You are my responsibility." She paused, studying his reaction. "And no, I'm not one of Hill's CIA handlers sent to provide physical therapy like that nitwit Tanya Horowitz."

"I ..."

"Don't talk. Listen! I've studied you. I've actually come to like you. That's good for you and me."

Pretending to adjust her scarf, she drew attention to her cleavage.

"I represent people you only imagine exist. Money and power beyond anything a schoolteacher from Colorado could ever imagine. I'm better educated, more versed in world events and politics than anyone you will ever meet. I'm the best thing that has ever happened to you. Now tell me something. Did you really think the CIA and their cronies would let you go?"

He stared at her. She raised her eyebrows, tucked her chin and opened her hands demanding his answer.

He felt the clutch of fear.

Who the hell is this bitch! A new player from out of left field.

"Yes. Yes I did. I'm through with them!"

"Liar. I said I know you. I expected you to get angry and try to throw me off. So now, we both know. You're waiting for their next move. You thought when I took my seat that I might be a handler from Hill. Right?"

"What else am I supposed to think?"

Maybe a handler from hell?

"I'm not. That's the best news you could ever receive. If you live through these next few months, it will be because of me. Now tell me what you want. Ask anything."

Her hand went to her chest. She ran her tongue slowly, erotically over her lips. Powerful pheromones teased his senses.

"You're offering me ... sex?"

"I said I know you." She screwed up her face and stuck her tongue out wiggling it like bait.

"Get out of my face. There's nothing I want from you."

"Oh yes there is. We can prove Sheriff Apagai killed your mother. We can convict him and have him put away."

"What?"

"I know it takes you time to comprehend all of this, little man. We investigated the murder. Had her body exhumed. You had a sibling. Not your father's child."

"Apagai?"

"Even used his own .38. He held all the cards until we came along. If it makes you feel good, we told him we have the evidence. Told him we'll take him down when we're ready. Do you like that?"

"He really did kill her. I wasn't crazy. Dad's not ..."

"We can provide an amazing case against the county and the state. You and your dad would win big. But I know you won't go that route."

The way she taunted him, her tone of voice, made him want to backhand her mouth. She derided like a smart-ass pre-pubescent.

"If you already know everything, Miss Prissy. You don't need me. So bug off."

"You're so cute. Yes, I do know everything. I deal all the cards. And don't worry, you won't need their money, I'll make sure you'll have plenty of your own ... unless you die first."

He sat thinking, sorting, wondering. He felt the plane slow at altitude and begin its glide over the Arabian Sea to Karachi. He tried to think of Jan and Sami. Their auras were overshadowed by this nasty woman.

What the hell is her name?

"Okay. Who are you? Who do you work for?"

"Oh, Mister Dean. I forgot we haven't been formally introduced, have we? I'm Missy. Missy Beatrice Dominick. Yale, class of '66. I work directly for the office of the President of the United States of America. What did you think? That I'm a lackey like you?"

"You come across that way."

The cut got to her. He sensed weakness, a break in her facade.

"Taunt me all you like but it won't make any difference!"

"Okay." It was the one response that could jab her deeper.

She reached to the floor, got her purse, fumbled out a Kleenex and touched it to her nose as if it were a white flag. "Did I deserve that?" Her voice was softer.

"You're a flunky for someone. At least I follow my own path. I have no desire to be entangled in your web or anyone else's."

She used the tissue as a foil, turned back in her seat, slumped a little, and stared at the tops of the magazine and vomit bag in the seat pocket.

Why did they send such a bitch? Can she deliver Apagai? What the hell will I have to do for them? At least I can get to her. She's thin-skinned.

The plane taxied up to the gate and they walked through the terminal to customs. She wouldn't leave his side. They stood in line at immigration. She hadn't said a word since their last cross. He had the good sense to ignore her.

Missy moved forward in line and took his arm.

"Okay Dean. Some things you should know. You're staying at the Inter-Continental. So am I. We need to be in the same room."

"Let go of me! I'm not with you and we are definitely not staying in the same room."

"Yes, you really are. You need to trust me. Come on, admit you want to be with me."

"I'm not sure why I would. You think your looks will get you everything you want. Well, I'm not interested."

"Trust me and stay alive. Didn't Janet Hurlbut warn you? I know she did. Do you think this is a game?"

"You know Janet?"

"Never met the marine, but I know all about her, too."

"I'm in danger? From whom? Sami Onoto and that Shikoku group?"

"No, unless you know something I don't."

"So, you don't know everything."

"What I don't, you do. I'm not on the make. I need to be in the same room. Trust me."

"Trust? Yeah, right. There is nothing in your approach that even remotely signals trust. If you know me, you know I don't respond to churlish women."

"You're right. I came on too hard. As a business woman I must..."

"You came on like a spoiled little rich girl on her first assignment against a big bad man."

It feels good breaking through and zapping her.

"I'm sorry." A tone in her voice told him she meant it. "Let's at least go to the room and I'll try to explain."

He mulled her use of "try." Is she really sorry? I can't believe I'm actually considering her proposal. Why am I always trying to find the good in people?

On the way into town, he studied the currency conversion tables. The taxi fare for the eight-mile ride was fixed at 10 rupees—one-dollar U.S. The Inter-Continental Hotel charged Rs 6 for a single. Six-dollars at a posh hotel sounded pretty darned good. At least he wouldn't go broke.

As he went to check in, they had already changed his reservation to Mister and Mrs. Dean. It pissed him off. He wondered who altered it and if the clerk cared that their passport names were different. When the clerk opened hers, he saw her photograph and the name Beatrice D. Dean. He hadn't taken her seriously, not really, not until then.

He signed the register.

Chapter TWO

"Okay, so what do we do now? I haven't had a roommate since college. I'm not sleeping in the chair or on the floor."

"Neither am I. I had them put a fold-away in the closet."

"When?"

"I came through last week and made arrangements. I had to scout things out."

"Damn! Am I doing everything I'm supposed to do for you? What about my plans? If you think I'll rollover and let you take over you've got a surprise coming."

"You're to go ahead with the contacts you made and visit schools. Although you'll find that only one school will let you visit."

"You fixed that too? And, who are you to tell me I can go ahead? You've been trying to buffalo me since the plane. It won't work."

"No, I never contacted them. It's just that they don't like snoops. You're a snoop. Besides, I only tell you what's in your best interest."

"I don't like the game. I'm not going to play. Tell your boss I'm a lost cause. Go away!"

"I can't. We need you. You're already a player. Like it or not, Dean, they've got you by the short hairs."

"You mean you think you have me by the short hairs. Why does anybody want me? I don't believe you."

Missy threw her travel bag on the bed, unzipped it, and began unpacking her makeup kit and black silk underwear.

"Look, I need to clean up. I'll shower first, then you can have the bathroom. I need to get into clean clothes while I figure out a way to tell you what you need to know."

She moved away from the bed, unbuttoning her blouse. "I thought you were a man from out West who responded to straight information; was as good as his handshake. But you would rather I played games and didn't tell it like it is."

"But you blew it."

"No, we're here. Everything's going as I planned."

"Damn you! It's what I plan that counts. It's my dime, not yours."

She slammed the bathroom door.

The room was typically American. He could imagine he was back in the States. He didn't have a feel for Pakistan, couldn't remember the trip in from the airport.

I am sick to death of this intrigue. She's ruining my plans. So much for the spirit of adventure. Why me anyway? I'm just a normal guy; a simple teacher.

Dean smiled, picked up his bag and left the room. In the corridor, he turned and took the stairs. Eight flights down he found two doors. One led into the mezzanine, the other down a narrow flight of filthy stairs to the alley. In the alley, he took the longest route to a side street.

I'll call and cancel my reservation. She can find some other lackey. Short hairs, my ass.

The Inter-Continental Karachi sat in its own park off Doctor Ziauddin Road. He located a well-used trail from the back service lot and followed it through the tamarisk bushes. Beyond, lay a busy street and halfway down

it, a hotel sign. He cut across vacant fields and studied the hotel. It seemed pretty seedy and not what he was after.

The taxi rattled as if everything except his seat was loose. The turbaned driver looked Indian.

"Can you recommend a good hotel?"

The driver turned and pointed toward the towering Inter-Continental. Dean shook his head. The driver hunched his shoulders, thought a moment, and started the taxi.

"European? For you? I think the Jabees on Abdulla Haroon Road. We'll try?"

They passed along the river where hundreds were doing their washing. It was the first open-air laundry Dean had seen. Clothing, sheets, long white strips of cloth, were drying on racks. Uncountable numbers of women, heads hidden in troughs, leaned into their work, gyrating butts pointing to the sky.

"My country is young. We broke from India in 1947. I'll take you by the Mausoleum of Quaidi-Azam. It is nice here on the Arabian Sea. How long you staying? You travel alone? "

"A week or more. I'll need to find the International School."

"I'll take you by there. Don't worry, this taxi is very cheap for you. I'll show you Karachi."

"Could you take me to the hotel? I'm tired. Could I hire you to give me a tour tomorrow?"

"Okay. I can do that."

"Can we start early, about 8:00?"

The taxi driver dropped him in front of the hotel. It proved to be less than Dean had hoped for, but adequate. Anything was better than sharing a room with a conniving woman he didn't like. He registered and went up.

She works for the Office of the President? She didn't offer to show me any credentials. That damned Dan Hill. He probably passed me off to her. I hate beautiful women who think they can do anything they want because men fall all over them. Beatrice. The name fits. Missy. Little Miss Prissy. There's no question she knows a lot about me. How? Why? What do they want?

The window looked out on the blank-face windows of another wing. The shower was clean. The bed creaked.

What the hell, I'll only be here to sleep.

He'd missed lunch and was hungry, but too tired to go out. It was mid-afternoon. What he needed was a nap and time to sort out his problem.

In his dream, the knocking on his door was the throbbing of his boat motor as he crossed Lake Granby on a clear Colorado morning. A key was in the lock by the time he came to enough to know someone was trying to get into the room. He jumped up, grabbed the chair from the desk and jammed it under the knob just as the lock turned and someone's shoulder hit the wood. The door held. The knob rattled. Someone pushed again, harder this time. The chair creaked. He heard muffled men's voices. The key re-locked the door and was withdrawn. He moved to the telephone and dialed O.

"Someone just tried to break into my room."

"Oh, I say. It must be a housekeeping mistake. They clean the rooms between 4:00 and 5:00. Sorry mate, you should have put the occupied sign on the knob."

"No, these were men. They tried to force the door."

"Impossible. There are no men, just women who clean. Please accept my apology."

In another time, he might have.

The bed springs rasped as he sat down cradling his head in his hands.

It wasn't the cleaning crew. Could Missy have found him so quickly? He went to the window to see if he had a view of the courtyard. Nothing. A curtain moved across the way. He caught a glimpse of a face and the glint of light.

Maybe a lens? Shit, maybe a gun.

He dropped the curtain as he moved to the shelter of the wall, expecting a bullet.

I'd already be dead if they wanted. It must have been a camera.

He reached for his bag and removed the box containing his toupee. He had ditched his old sport coat and purchased a suede jacket in Bombay. His other personage in place, he checked the room one last time and slowly opened the door. The hallway was empty. Following the exit signs, he found the staircase. At the bottom, a door led to a side street. He eased out, certain he wasn't seen. A block down, a taxi did a U turn in the busy traffic. It pulled up next to him.

"Taxi Sir?"

He nodded. The rear door opened.

"Get in quick! Don't screw around, get the hell in here before they shoot you."

"Missy?"

Oh shit!

Chapter THREE

CIA Langley, Virginia:

"You may think I haven't taken heat for appointing you Deputy Director of Operations, Hill. I have. What did you think? You know all the President's men are watching you and judging me. The Cartel controls them, we know that, but there is no way they could know of Operation Cowboy. Is there?"

"How could they? Unless Hedeki Shikoku is playing both sides. No, there is no way. Besides, David Dean is in Pakistan. He's out of it until he gets to Greece. Then we'll pick him up again."

"Really? You haven't heard then?" the DCI asked. "Aston Martin made the granddaughter of Peter Dominick in Bombay. Said she was no threat to us, but she left on the same plane as Dean ... to Karachi."

"So? No way she would know Dean. Dominick is too protective to let a family member, a woman, spy. No way she could be a player. Why would he do a stupid thing like that? George, you're the Director. You would know."

"I know shit! Every agency under me withholds information. Besides, the FBI does domestic. They wouldn't tell me if Dominick, or anyone in the Cartel, was about to bomb CIA headquarters, let alone send a granddaughter to Asia."

"That has to end! Forget Texas politics and Saudi oil for a few weeks and get the intelligence gathering agencies together. Come up with some ruse. Invent a crisis. Whatever you do, do it!"

"You think it's that important?"

"We can break the hold of the Dominick Cartel and the New Wind Church if we have information. You said yourself they've had control so long they've lost all fear. Use that to our advantage. You're king of the spies, spy!"

"And? And what will you be doing?"

"I need to go back into the field. While in Bombay, I learned the Shikoku's have a base on the Greek island of Corfu. I'll be working out of there."

"Like hell you will, Hill. A DDO doesn't go into the field. I sweat blood while you were in India."

"I do when there is no one else. I have to go. You have to agree."

"And if you're compromised? What then? You say there's no one else? Bullshit! There's ... well perhaps ... you may be right. I'll have to think about it. There's got to be someone else."

"If you find someone let me know."

"It's dangerous work. Especially now that we slowed the drug trade from Asia, the cartel is screaming. The Generals fear the exposure of their drugs for support of-the war plans. They're pinching the President's ass and he's jumping on mine."

"And you have three choices. Fight, fade, or flee. Which will it be?"

"I have the President's ear. I pretend to fade, but I'll fight. I have disinformation that will push him over to our side."

"He knows all about the cartel. He's beholden to them for his presidency. The men around him are cartel zealots, born-again true believers. What can you tell him that will make an honest man out of him?"

"That they're going to remove him, blacken his name. Make him the fall guy and the villain."

Dan Hill sat back and stared at Big Oil George. The DCI could pull it off. The old man played an unrestrained game and he played to win.

"So, you swing the President. The Brothers Shikoku make their move and ... George, what do you have planned for me?"

"Danny me boy, you give me Europe. No one knows about your new agents—Dean and the women. What do you call them, Ingenuous Deputies? IDs? No one knows we move our information through them and put out disinformation through our networks of exposed agents. You do that and I'll do my part. America will be for Americans once again ... and about going back into the field? Forget it! Well, unless you can prove to me it's absolutely necessary."

Dan returned to his office. There was a knock on his door.

"DDO Hill? Sir, there's an Eyes Only coming through from India."

"Thanks Lieutenant. Get it to me as soon as it's complete."

"Sir, there's a call on line five from your wife?"

"Mister Hill, there's an urgent situation that needs your attention in Hawaii."

"Mister Hill, there's a reporter from the *Washington Post* on line four. You know, the one who did the story on the loan you got when you were near bankruptcy."

"Sir, you have a security meeting that already started. It's the fourth Thursday. What shall I tell them?"

"Mister Hill, here's the India stuff."

"Sir, what should I tell them?"

"Tell them, 'Meeting adjourned'. Get my wife on the phone!"

"Gloria? What's the matter honey? Is Chris okay?"

"Chris seems to have a cold. Are you too busy to talk?"

"No, just a normal day here." He tore the top off the envelope and read Aston Martin's Eyes Only from Bombay, then continued his conversation with Gloria, "I'm never too busy to talk to you."

"No Danny, don't be alarmed. It may not even be a cold. It's really not that bad. I just ... well, you were in India for two weeks. Now you're back and I never see you."

Hill stared at the Eyes Only.

"Gloria, I'll be late tonight, you know how it is. But I'll leave early tomorrow and we'll have a quiet weekend. Okay?"

"Love you."

He punched the button for line four.

"Hello, this is Hill."

"I was on hold for a long time. I thought you were trying to avoid me."

"Is this a new approach? I suppose you think I was sitting here waiting for your call? Or are you trying to goad me?"

"You read my story in Sunday's *Post*?"

"No, but my secretary just said something about it."

"You're not concerned?"

"Look Woodwind, I'll read it. Call back tomorrow morning." He punched a button at random and hung up. "Marcy, hold my calls. Invent a crisis. I have one." He studied Aston's typed message:

Dean has a shadow. Beatrice Dominick, granddaughter of Peter. She's on him like a tick. Registered Inter-Continental as his wife. Has passport to prove it. Dean none too happy. Tried to lose her, but she's on him again. What's important about Karachi? Do you have any idea what she wants with Dean? Advise.

ss: Aston

Hill put the message in the shredder and poured the remainder of his coffee on the strips.

Nothing I know about in Pakistan. Is the cartel on to me?

He called the DCI.

"George, do you have someone who can bring me up to speed on the Dominick Cartel? Specifically, Peter Dominick?"

"Well, actually there is someone. A second-rate analyst we had transferred to the filing section. Seems he wrote the same stuff about the cartel again and again. Try him. Name is Undercoat or something like that. Underhill. That's it. Hey, that's funny."

"This must be the year for second-rate analysts. Thanks George." Dan had his secretary track down Underhill and told him to report to Hill's office immediately.

The filing section clerk entered the office, portfolio in hand.

"Underhill, I need to be brought up to speed on Dominick. No one could locate your reports."

"The authorities had them destroyed."

"Who did?"

"I think it was the DCI. I know an order came through. They said I wasted taxpayer money. I was told I'd be sent back to the NIA."

"Who told you that?"

"The Deputy Director for Planning, Sir."

Planning is in the cartel camp.

"Just tell me what you know. I'll decide about your demotion or promotion."

Underhill tried to keep surprise off his face, couldn't, and stood shaking his head.

"Damn. For five years I've been doing my job. Nobody cared. Everything I wrote was discounted. They told me I was their worst analyst. Now suddenly, my job depends on my findings? Somebody wanted to bury what I had learned."

Hill sighed. "Same thing happened to me. Now let's start. Tell me, who is Peter Dominick?"

"The son of Petiro Dolmcunic. Came out of Slovakia—what was then Russia—in the late nineteen hundreds. Immigration changed his name to Petier Dominick. He was the leader of a criminal gang. A mobster thug, who also fancied himself a philosopher."

"A thug philosopher? I don't get it?"

"He wrote under many names. Used his own works to justify his actions. You know, he quoted philosophers that he invented. Petier came up

with a scam to unite people under his philosophy. In America, his philosophy became, 'America First'."

"He wasn't Italian?"

"His power in America came from poor immigrants. Many were Italian. To them, he was Pietro Dominick. He married an Italian, Beatrice Zagonelli."

"And he invented the America First movement?"

"Yes, he did. He knew that by stating high ideals he could unite people. They gladly gave him money and power because he was fighting to make this country great. Everything he wrote or said—as himself or as one of the author-philosophers he invented—was about making America stronger, better, and more God-fearing."

"And he didn't believe it?"

"Yes, in a way he did. But his goal was power. He discovered that people were zealous about making things better. People respond to high ideals like patriotism. People are united by dreams of the perfect society that provides food, clothing, shelter, law and order, and whatever."

"So, he became powerful. Because he was for America, politicians loved him. But Underhill, only a few know his name. Why is that?"

"Which name? Once he was organized, he got others to push his agenda. I researched what I called the America First family tree. From Dominick sprang, you fill in the blank. Almost any great American's name will work. Some, because they caught the dream and were carried along. A few, because Dominick placed them to do his bidding."

"They wanted America to be stronger, better, first. Why isn't that good?"

"Think about it. Who decides what's good? Who decides what the average man gets? Who regulates the economy? Who decides constitutional issues? Who decides which religious beliefs are acceptable? Who decides who holds the power to decide?"

"I get it."

"Dominick decides what's best for all of us. His people select the President. He determines who can run, who gets the money to win. His people control the Cabinet, the Supreme Court, and Congress. His people are state governors. Most important, his people—people who have bought into his vision—head the world's major corporations."

"We believe the Dominick Cartel is now a global organization, not specifically American. How did that happen?"

"That's Junior's doing. When the old man's son Peter took over, America and most of Western Europe was his. He plans to direct the course of the world."

"That would be hard to believe if I didn't know it's true."

"The philosophy is probably okay. It has to be or intelligent people wouldn't follow blindly. Peter, the son, is the father. His closest lieutenants believe God works through him. They are the chosen prophets, his disciples. He's even written his own version of the Bible. Sound familiar?"

"Absolute power corrupts, absolutely."

"And worse. Peter has founded his cartel on that rock, his church. He calls it the New Wind Church. He plans to rise up before man and command the Earth."

"When?"

"Soon. Peter's over sixty. His playboy son is dead, martyred. Only his son's daughter Beatrice, his granddaughter, survives. It has to be in his lifetime."

"Underhill, I want you to start writing it all again. This is between you and me. Eyes Only, understand? I'm putting you on paid leave as if we are about to give you the boot. But I'm also raising you to G-14. You lay low and write. I need to know where you are at all times. Is that acceptable?"

"People will think I'm a total zip. My wife and kids?"

"Can't know. But I'll talk to them and explain this is a special situation. I'll handle it."

"Then I'm in. Mind if I ask a question?"

Dan nodded.

"You were an analyst. I heard you were considered a dud?"

"We duds go against the grain."

"But now someone is listening besides the cartel?"

"Right. I need some other information before you go. Tell me about Beatrice Dominick."

"Mary Magdalena. Chosen of God to spread the word about Petier and Peter. A true believer. A goddess. Sole-surviving offspring. Smart as they come. Heir to the throne if she pleases her grandfather. Her father never got serious. He died mysteriously. I don't know the details."

"Why would she be interested in one of our operatives?"

"I don't know, of course. But that agent must hold a key to something. Something they need. Maybe it's a way of getting to you. I need more information."

"You'll get it."

Chapter FOUR

The Inter-Continental Hotel. Karachi:

"Okay Missy, how did you find me?"

"You were never lost. They knew where you went. I followed them."

"Who?"

"The clowns from the CIA."

"Then they know you latched on to me?"

"What difference does it make? They watch you because they don't understand who you are or what you do for their organization." You are such an amateur. You didn't even ask how I knew where the CIA guys were.

"For Hill?"

"No, for the regular CIA. Hill is a wildcard, a dud of no consequence. He's not really your boss, as you know."

"Oh really?" Now I know.

"But why do they watch you, Missy? Why are you so special?"

"Because I'm with you, David. Don't be so dense."

"There you go again. Didn't your mother tell you you're a bad liar?"

"What mother? I was raised by ..."

"Let me guess. Coyotes?"

"My aunt. My mother died when I was born."

"Then your aunt should have told you. Tell the truth. Why do they watch you?"

"I think my grandfather ordered them to."

"David, that part about you never lying? Is that true?"

"That's one of my essential beliefs."

"Oh." She tilted her head and studied him. His dossier said he lived by a personal code. He tried to be honest. He hated people who weren't. She wet her lips, pulled the lapels of her suit coat down, and nodded.

"Okay. I will not lie to you."

He is so naïve. He will believe anything I tell him if I say it is true. He will learn eventually that lying is necessary for survival.

"Thanks, although it doesn't matter. I'm not with you. Get your stuff and find a room of your own. Get out of my life!"

"I can't."

She leaned over as if her stomach hurt. He studied her, aware something was different ... missing.

No perfume. She isn't wearing that erotic perfume. If it's not perfume? Well, maybe it's something she emanates when she's in control? No, hell, she was in the shower when I left.

"You forgot to put your perfume on when you got out of the shower."

She sat up as if he'd jabbed her.

"What? I told you I don't wear perfume."

He's too suspicious. I've got to get him off this subject.

"You don't smell as good. Perhaps you shouldn't shower."

"You've got one hell of a nerve! What makes you think it will be easier to be together if you keep saying nasty things to me?"

"What goes around comes around. Besides, we aren't together."

"What is it about staying alive you don't understand?"

"Oh, so you still believe if you leave, I die?"

"A very good chance of it. Yes."

"You said you wouldn't lie."

"They kill what they don't understand. It's human nature. You are a conundrum to them. You were at the center of a major turnover in Japan. You were in Manila with a key Mitusuka Industries agent. She disappeared. You were in Calcutta ... then Nepal, then Bombay. Each time important shifts in the workings of the world economic system and the intelligence community occurred. You play innocent, but there are too many coincidences. Now you're here in Pakistan. They've had enough. They want you dead."

"Who?"

"They all do. The CIA, the drug lords, people who don't understand your mission."

"Well, my mission is very straight forward. I am studying schools around the world to find an existing model that will help kids learn more effectively. Doesn't sound too nefarious to me."

"Cut the crap, David Dean. Dan Hill gave you a mission. You're on a mission. Grandfather sent me to find out what it is."

"Oh, and then if you can't, you'll add your name to the list?"

"Damn it, David. I'm your friend. I will never willingly let you be killed."

I need to take you alive, you idiot. I need some way to get my hooks into you.

"How very thoughtful of you. Now can I go?"

"David," she lowered her voice and took a deep breath. "I read your dossier. When it said you responded to straight, tough talk and direct, honest ways, I thought that meant ... well, I obviously came on too strong. I screwed up."

"Yeah."

"I'm trying hard to make up for that. I'm a great person, really. You're right about me being on my first assignment against a man. I'm just finding my way."

"Okay, you were given misinformation and assigned to protect me. But how? Are you a black-belt or a gun slinger?"

"No. I'm the granddaughter of the world's greatest man. Out of respect for him, no one will hurt you if you're with me."

"Missy ... Beatrice, I have to think about this. Obviously, I'm not who or what you think I am. It's just that ..."

"You have places to go and things to see."

"Right."

"And did I ever say I would interfere with those plans?"

"You implied you would."

You better believe I will sucker.

"I won't. Listen David, give me another chance. You really don't like me? You don't like the way I look? How could the chemistry between us be so wrong?"

"You look fine. You just came on wrong. It's not all you. I have a red flag that starts waving when I'm around a woman who misuses her beauty."

"You find me beautiful?"

"Duh, like you never heard that before." He studied her shimmering, medium length brown hair, brown, almost black eyes, oval face, and skin like burnished amber. "Listen, one thing I learned early in life, maybe even from my mom, is that women who have physical beauty never have to grow inside. They never have to make commitments. If a relationship goes sour,

and they usually do when the man finds out that his trophy has no personality, she doesn't have to worry, another man is drooling at her hem."

"That's horrible! It's not true in my case. Your mother was beautiful. She moved from man-to-man. Your father was just a stop along her way when she got pregnant with you."

She leaned forward in the chair, the loose neck of her sweater revealing flesh and the lacy cups of her bra. "I was raised by a woman who taught me that it's what's inside that counts. I was raised like the son my father never had. I was taught to hate my womanhood, my body. She warned me about becoming just what you described."

"But you mastered all the moves."

"I am a woman. No one could hide that from me. Sure, I use my body. But damnit David, so does everybody. Yours isn't that bad. You use yours too, you know."

"Okay, maybe we can start over. Let's try. I don't like this constant sparring. What now?"

"Now? We make them all believe what it says on the registration and my passport. We are Mister and Mrs. I need to freshen up, then, dinner. Let's see if we can make this fun."

David showered and changed for dinner. He waited for her to join him and they boarded an elevator to the restaurant on the roof. As the elevator doors closed, he caught her scent. It caused an immediate reaction. He took a deep breath, adjusted his crotch, and decided not to say anything.

Chapter FIVE

Hilo, Hawaii

"Listen, tell her Janet Hurlbut called and to call me as soon as possible."

"She's not here. She said not to disturb her."

"Get Sami Onoto. It's important. Do you understand? Do as I say!"

Jan stood in her office staring through the glass curtains at the moonlit Pacific Ocean. The message was already two days old. She opened it thinking it was a routine communication from Sungana-Sungawa headquarters. She read the wire again:

Sami Onoto Cook.

DD in Karachi with B. Dominick, cartel agent. Investigating. Not as represented. Advise.

Gifu

I wasn't supposed to see this. Sami doesn't trust David. She had him followed. What would he be doing with an agent of the Dominick Cartel? I can't wait on this any longer. Sami would advise me to check it out.

She picked up the phone, looked at her watch to figure East Coast time, and dialed the special number George gave her.

"I'm sorry. The number you have dialed is not in service. If you wish to make a call, hang up and try again."

She hit the pound key. The line clicked rather than rang. A sleepy voice breathed, "Yes?"

"I need to speak with George."

She hit the record button on her machine.

"I'll get him. He's in the tub."

He'll be pissed. It's late there.

She heard him clear his throat.

"Okay. What is it?"

"It's Janet, George. Sorry, but I need information. David is with a cartel agent in Karachi."

"Rather, she's with him. Not his wishes, hers. She moved in on him. He tried to ditch her but was unsuccessful. We're covering it. He's not needed again until he gets to Greece. This whole thing is none of our making. We're going to find out what she wants from him. I'll let you know."

"George, who is the agent?"

"Beatrice Dominick. Granddaughter of Peter. Next in line we think."

"Is she ...?"

"You have nothing to fear Janet. She's not his type. Anything else? You okay?"

"I was fine until I heard he was with a member of the cartel. Now I'm not. You did say she was the granddaughter of Peter Dominick, the presidential advisor? George, why her?"

"We're working on it. Aston Martin is leaving for Greece to work with our friends. He will personally keep Dean safe. Be well goddaughter. Ethel and I send our love."

Janet hung up and immediately dialed Sami's number. The crescent moon was setting when Sami Onoto's call came through.

"Janet, I didn't think you would bother me at a time like this."

"I had to, and I'm sorry. Sami, is Gifu in charge or is he still Ito Shikoku's bodyguard?"

"He and I don't take over until both brothers are unable to ... well, you know."

"He sent a wire. It lay on your desk for two days. I opened it. I'm sorry Sami."

"That's what you're supposed to do. I have complete trust in you."

"It concerns David. He's in trouble."

"You mean that Beatrice Dominick thing? Don't worry, your call to the DCI confirmed what I had told Gifu and the others. Dean is not willingly involved. He is being used. We're on him until we know why."

"Sami? I called George less than an hour ago. You knew?"

"Honey, everything they do is monitored. We have to know everything. Gifu called me as soon as he read the transcript of your call to George. It's okay, Janet. The system is working. You were supposed to call. Dean is not a suspect, but he's led us to Dominick's granddaughter."

"Sami, he didn't lead you. He wouldn't."

"You're right. She's using him. Look my friend, my secret getaway with Frank is over. The phone hasn't stopped ringing. I'm satiated anyway. I'm coming home. I'll talk to you soon."

Janet sat back, assured that Sami wasn't upset with her. The conversation with George had not assured her.

Aston will keep David safe? What in blazes is happening? Why would the granddaughter of the most powerful man in the world be working David?

Sungana-Sungawa offices, Bombay:

"Taegu, as Hedeki's bodyguard did you ever have to protect him from an assassin?" Gifu asked.

"Never. Like Ito, he was so invisible I think no one suspected he ran things. And You?"

"Never, but not because he was invisible. All our enemies knew who and where he was. Why didn't the CIA or the Cartel come after our masters?"

Taegu paused before answering. "The CIA, because they didn't know of us until Acieto Onoto turned Mitusuka Industries. He told them about us."

"And the cartel?" Gifu asked.

"They think we are doing exactly what they want done."

"You mean find out who in the CIA isn't loyal to them? But we are going around them in our alliance with the DCI. They don't know because they think they control us. They think they are using us to identify those they don't control."

"They think they are," Gifu answered. "That's why they want Dean. Dean looks like the master spy. To them he is the agent of the unknown force working against the cartel. They think we will use him to expose his employer. The best part is, as we ally with the DCI and undermine the cartel, he gets the credit and they watch him, not us."

"The Shikoku plan is working. Dominick would never send someone into the field as precious to him as Beatrice unless he thought Dean was a major threat to his organization."

"Right, Taegu. He must believe Dean is the key to everything. He's letting her prove herself. She is his only heir. He's preparing her to take over when he dies. When she decodes Dean, she becomes everyone's choice for successor."

"So she dies," Taegu smiled.

"Not yet, my friend. Let's confirm this with Masters Hedeki and Ito. It is for them to decide."

Chapter SIX

Long before they entered the penthouse dining room of the Inter-Continental Hotel, Missy decided she would be perfect company for David and win his heart. She drew on her years of shallow social pretense honed as a preppie and at Yale. Her father made sure she mastered all the niceties of her class. Her manners could be impeccable. Her table conversation could be charming and witless. She knew how to use her sex to send signals no man could resist. If all that failed, and in all her experience no man had resisted her, she had other means of getting what she wanted.

"Oh David, here we are in exotic Pakistan. This city, the hotel, the food. I never imagined I could be so happy."

"I haven't had time to get the feel of Karachi. We might as well be in the U.S. Even the hotel food is Western. Personally, I like to live closer to the local economies."

"And the people, they're so different. David, for me this is a grand adventure. You may be used to strange places and even danger. For me, this is all new. I never want to forget you and these moments."

She raised her glass, sipped the wine, wet her lips and ended the performance by puckering her lips in a kiss, her eyes almost closed, open enough to study the effect on Dean.

You are such a liar. You were here a week ago setting things up.

"You're nice to be with, David. You are perhaps the most vital man I know. You make me feel safe and fully a woman."

"It must be the wine. And we're both tired. Missy, tomorrow I'm up early. I want to see Karachi and I need to drop by the International School and confirm my visit."

Missy smiled, coquettishly.

You rotten SOB. You think you can ignore me?

"Oh David. I hear you. I'm tired too." She leaned back in her chair, thrust out her chest, and put her hands behind her head, faking a little yawn.

The waiter caught her signal and came with the chit. Dean wrote their room number and slammed the leather folder closed. The waiter looked carefully at Missy, back at Dean, and smiled.

In the room, the housekeeper had turned the bed cover down and placed cellophane wrapped hard candies on each pillow.

"I'll set-up the fold-away." Dean opened the closet door and rolled the bed into the room.

"Where do you want it? How about over there, near the wall? It's close to the bathroom."

"Oh David, it looks so uncomfortable."

He put the brace in place and pushed down on the mattress.

"No, I think it's quite comfortable. If not, you may have to get your own room."

Nothing I do gets through to him. What's wrong with me? Shit, he may be queer. No, no way!

"Look Missy, you use the bathroom first. You can take all the time you want. I should have asked the hotel for a robe."

"I don't need a robe, but thank you David. Thanks for being a gentleman and thinking about my well-being."

"No, I meant for myself. I don't have pajamas."

"Does it matter?"

"Probably not. I just wanted to warn you."

You are such a prick!

She pulled her blouse out of her skirt and pushed by him.

I should leave the door open a crack. No, too obvious.

Twenty minutes later, she emerged. Dean lay stretched out on the bed, still fully clothed. She wore a towel as if it were an afterthought.

"I feel so naked. I could have used that robe."

He caught her scent and almost lost control. Dean closed the bathroom door and caught his breath. Her perfume made his mind rage. He shook his head, took a deep breath, and started to undress and shower. There was no place to put his clothing. Every surface of the room, from sink-back to toilet top was covered with her junk. A pair of panty hose hung from the shower rod. A black, sheer bra hung drying from the edge of the mirror. Her makeup kit, razor, and jars of cold cream and skin emollients were everywhere in his way.

She had missed the hook on the back of the door. He undressed and hung his clothing. Reaching in, he twisted the handles, started the water, and adjusted the flows until he got the temperature right. As he climbed over the edge of the tub, he bumped the soap shelf. A pink rubber douche bulb with a six-inch nozzle fell and bounced in the tub.

Geez woman, is there anything else you want to tell me?

"This little bed isn't that comfortable."

He couldn't help notice the towel on the chair and her fantastic topography under the thin sheet. He grimaced and shut off the light.

Her magical scent filled the room.

She pouted.

He drifted off into an erotic dream.

She gave up, relaxed and slept.

Sometime around midnight, he was awakened.

My God, she snores like a constipated mellophone.

He lay planning his escape.

The glass lampshade resonated. The ashtray pulsated.

Chapter SEVEN

Cartel Command, Central Asia

"I came here to help you, Rob. It's amazing. Yesterday I was at the side of the Great One himself. Today, I'm halfway across the world dealing with your security problem. Don't think I'm here to take over. You're a great section chief. As your Bishop, I don't take over, I help get support to where it's needed."

"They shouldn't have sent you Bishop Clarence. I didn't call for support. Ms. Dominick says she will get information from Dean. She confirms he works for the CIA and is knowledgeable about Sungawa-Sungana. He is their major player, she confirmed that. She's doing what has to be done"

"I know, Rob, and please, not so formal. Call me Clarence. Give Beatrice Dominick all the time she needs. Give her room to operate. She will expose this Dean character. My mission is to see that Beatrice Dominick succeeds. Of course, it might be easier to off him, Rob. Think about it. At least let's kidnap him and find out what he knows. You can do that without Miss Dominick knowing we're involved."

"I think you're wrong Bishop ... I mean, Clarence. You stop him ... and then what? We would have to start over. No, our people have laid the groundwork here for almost a decade. Every agent and operation from the Mediterranean Sea to the Arabian Sea is ours. They sent you here, but perhaps they never briefed you on the big picture."

Clarence ignored the insult. "You mean, every agent and operation are ours but the one Dean is involved in. This David Dean could blow everything."

"I don't think so. He may be good, but there is no way he can change American policy."

"So, Rob, if you people have everything under control, if you're so smart, what's he doing here?"

"Following the poppy, building a network. We'll know soon enough. Miss Dominick is stuck to him like glue. Or don't you have confidence in

Dominick's granddaughter? That is why you want to kill him? We can't kill him until we know who his contacts are."

"Rob, he's a risk to everything we've done. We've replaced or removed every CIA operative who understood the destructive influence of the Moslem fundamentalists. We've formulated American policy to let the fundamentalists create havoc so that we can rescue this entire region."

"Yeah, good for now. But what happens when they start killing Americans? Tell me that Bishop."

"Dominick figures that in. Trust him. They'll kill a few, but never enough to cause uproar. Hell, there are always casualties. Oil is worth as many American lives as it takes. The important thing is to nurture the movements and create instability in this area. Dominick says it will take ten or twenty years, by then we can mobilize American and all the rest of our world resources to move in and take control. Islam will be the religion of terror and hatred. New Wind Christianity, the religion of love, will replace it."

"It will happen," Rob replied. "I know in my heart that God works through Dominick. He sent his own granddaughter to ensure this. It takes so long, that's what I don't like."

"So, let's assume Dean is after the poppy. Look what happened to the Yunanese Generals. Look what happened to the networks in Southeast Asia. Look at Nepal and he was only there a few days, maybe a week. He's forced the Cartel to move everything through Latin America."

"Does he work for Columbia?" Rob asked?

"No, of course not. The drug cartels are ours. I think he's been assigned a bigger mission. Whomever he works for wants control of Iran,

Iraq, and Saudi Arabia. Our French division is preparing an Ayatollah name of Khomeini to move in when we take out the Shah. Egypt? No consequence, our fundamentalist friends will take out Nasser. Syria? No, too poor, too easily led."

"Israel?" Rob asked.

"No. Hell no. We've got the Israelis right where we want them. We control the Palestinians. No matter how hard either side tries for peace, we kill off their leaders and keep it from happening. Dominick knows that by keeping the world's focus on the Arab-Israeli conflict it diverts attention from our use of fundamentalist terrorism elsewhere. We must keep that conflict alive. Besides, we have to finish the job Jesus started. We have to convert them to Christianity through the New Wind."

"Okay Bishop, but you're on my turf here. You must agree to let Dean run. He's clever, but Beatrice Dominick can handle him."

Clarence hunched his shoulders. "Who knows? She has quite a reputation for getting things done. Dominick says she's to control the game. What we must do is back her up. Can't let her know we're here. It's like she's establishing her place in the hierarchy. Who would have imagined a damn woman being allowed to lead men?"

"Now we're on the same page for sure. I agree."

"Do you need more men, Rob? I can get more men."

"We have ones we can trust. We don't want any ignorant idealists jumping to the conclusion that we actually want to stop terrorism."

"Right," Rob replied, "Our religion only works after we eliminate the competition. It's Onward Christian Soldiers until then."

"There aren't many Christian soldiers out here."

"There will be, Bishop Clarence. Please go back to Washington and tell them to let us run things from here. I'm doing what has to be done. Things are going well, and higher-ups diddling with us won't serve our cause."

"Dominick will unite the world for the new Christ. Mother, country, and couscous for all."

"Here they call it kuskus."

"Either way, Rob, it's our apple pie."

Chapter EIGHT

"You snore like a fog horn. Do you know that?"

"I don't believe you. Is there ever a time when you are nice? I would know if I snore. Now leave me alone for a few more minutes. I have to meditate and read the Bible."

"What version is that?"

"My grandfather had it translated directly from the original Aramaic, Latin, and the King James English. It's the New Wind Testament."

"It's much thinner than the Bibles I know."

"It had to be. God directed him to condense the Old and New Testaments to make them readable by modern man."

"Like Cliff Notes? The Reader's Digest condensed version? Classics Illustrated comic books?"

"Yes. I know you meant that in jest, but that is what humankind needs. He is able to bring the Word to the masses. That's beautiful."

"Okay." Simple solutions for simple minds.

"Look, I told you I wanted to get an early start. I'll get breakfast and head over to the school. See you back here."

"Hold on! I'm going with you!" She jumped up, threw the New Wind on the bed as she straightened her hair. It bounced and fell next to a Gideon Bible someone had dropped on the carpet behind the headboard.

"Oh, you're protecting me, right? You will use your body as a shield and stop assassins' bullets, right? Get serious Missy. Go shopping, have your hair done or stay here and get saved. Just leave me alone."

"I told you. While I'm with you no one will hurt you."

"All these years, how did I survive without you? I'm going alone."

He was out the door and down the hall before she caught up with him.

"David, this isn't a game. I'll prove it to you. Trust me, I'll prove it."

David noted the real fear in her voice and realized she was serious. He stopped in front of the elevator and studied her.

"You're not just bullshitting me? You can prove it?"

She nodded, wiping tears from the corner of her eyes.

Dumb fuck! Now what do I do?

"I'll point them out. The guys who want to kill you."

"Sure, Huey, Dewey and Louie. That's not good enough."

"Then I'll help you capture one of them. I'm good at this kind of thing. Give me time to observe them and plan this. Then you'll have to believe me."

"You know Missy, you're about as believable as your grandfather. We catch one and then what? Kill him?"

"If you want to."

"For the love of Pete! You're too much."

"It is for the love of Pete. That's why I'm here. There is nothing in this world more powerful.

Trust me, you dumb bastard! "

Do you think all this is for kicks?"

"No, it hasn't been fun so far. I'm out of here."

"I thought you were going to have breakfast first."

"You showered. That perfume you had on last night was nice."

"I never ... oh damn you! Are you having breakfast or not?"

"Your snoring like the New Wind took away my appetite. Besides, I need to get over to the school."

"How? We have to be careful not to get into a car where you might be kidnapped."

"I'll pick a cab at random. You don't need to leave the hotel if you think it's too dangerous. Look, that taxi over there. I rode with that guy yesterday."

"I know."

"I'll bet you do. I told him I'd meet him this morning at the Jabees Hotel. Come to think of it, I'm still registered over there. Taxi!"

"No you're not David, I took care of it."

The cab pulled over to the curb and David climbed in followed by Missy.

"Very cool, man." It was the same driver. "You like this hotel best I see."

"Don't screw around. You knew I was here. You were waiting for me."

"Of course, Sir. My brother took your beautiful wife over to pick you up. I see you have worked out your problem. It would not be wise to leave her in this city alone. A woman alone attracts attention that is not good. It is an insult to Islam, and there are men who are allowed to sexually abuse such women before they are stoned. There are always too few women for this sport, so they are out looking."

"No, you're right. Can you take us to the International School?"

"But Sir, the school is closed due to the threat of bombing. All night the police have been there. The foreign families have been told to stay home because the government cannot ensure their safety."

"It just happened?" Missy leaned forward over the seatback and looked at his face in the mirror.

"Last night. It is very strange, but not as unusual as you might think. Many here believe foreign schools are a front for MI India, and your American CIA."

"How could they think such a thing? No one would use children in a school as a front."

"It has been in the papers ... the accusation I mean. There are many problems here. You must be very careful, many foreigners come here to exploit us."

"Missy, this man works for you, doesn't he?"

"What the hell are you ..." she thought it through and knew she couldn't deny it, "so concerned about? I'm protecting you. Sure he works for us. He's a good man."

"Your accent?" Dean leaned forward and caught the man's eyes in the mirror. "You're American!"

"Of course. But I was born here. I have family here."

Dean sat back. "It figures. Okay, when you prove to me I'm in danger, I'll believe you have my best interests at heart. Until then, drive by the International School, I want to see for myself. By then, I'll figure something out."

The school was closed. Police had erected a chain-link fence along the street.

"Lean way back in the seat, my friends. They're watching."

He drove by as fast as he could.

Dean's focus had been on visiting the school. He didn't know what to do. He needed time to think.

"Okay, you offered to show me Karachi. Still up for the tour?"

Missy gave him a sideways glance and leaned forward to talk to the driver.

"Oh all right, favor him. Give him the ten-dollar tour. Keep your eye out for tails." She turned to Dean. "You watch. We'll be tailed. You'll see I'm not kidding."

"My friends," the taxi driver said, "watch them play their game. That black car? See the dented front fender? He follows, then turns off. That gray car? The little four-door? Watch! He comes up close enough to follow and then, what do you know the black car appears in back of him. They play this game thinking I am easily fooled. There, the gray car has turned off. The black car is back in first position."

Dean agreed. They were being followed. "Your people, Missy?"

"David, something would have to hit you upside the head before you would accept reality. The CIA uses gray cars. What scares me is that black

ZIL sedan. Whoever's in it is cooperating with the CIA. My guess would be Russians. But it doesn't make sense."

"I thought the Russians were eyeing Afghanistan."

"Everyone wants a piece of the poppy."

"You mean heroin? Drugs? Is that why you're here Missy?"

"Sure, but only because you're here."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"Knock off the Mickey Mouse, David. I told you I know all about you."

He sat, shaking his head. "You only think you do. I'm not interested in anything related to drugs. I'm not here for any reason you imagine. I came here to study educational systems and get the feel of the place. If you know me, you know that's the absolute truth."

"You're good David. In fact, you're great. I don't know who trained you, but well, they knew what they were doing."

"Screw you! Driver, take me back to my hotel. Now!"

Hateful bitch! I've got to get away from her.

The driver turned the mirror so he could see Missy. She nodded. He found the next side street and turned around. The black car sped by. The gray car parked a block away and the occupants ducked down until the taxi passed.

Back in the room, Dean lay on the bed thinking. He didn't have a plan. He knew he had to escape. Every time Missy started to talk, he told her to be quiet. She fumed around the room, wondering what to do to get him to open up to her.

"You have to trust me!"

"Stop saying that. I don't. Enough talking! I may have to wait a week or so, but I'm going to visit the school when it reopens."

She went into the bathroom and slammed the door.

Dean realized the door opened out. He jumped up off the bed and grabbed the chair, placing its ladder back under the bathroom doorknob.

I must be a spy. Every time I get in trouble, I get the chair.

He stuffed his things in his bag, looked around the room for anything he had left, and saw her purse with passports and papers, but she had taken her satchel into the bathroom with her. He jammed her papers into his pocket and let himself out of the room. This time he walked to the elevators, pushed mezzanine, and tried to relax. At the mezzanine railing, he stood near the wall behind a potted ficus and surveyed the lobby.

Two men, both trying to blend in, sat in the large leather chairs. They would assume he left the hotel. When they left, he could go back to the room and go through Missy's stuff. He figured he would have several hours before she gave up and came back. If he could hide out in the mezzanine for a few hours, until he was sure they weren't guarding the entrance, he could slip out the back as he had before and head to the airport. There was a BOAC flight to Tehran at 10:00 p.m. If it wasn't full, he could activate his ticket and leave Pakistan.

Chapter NINE

Sungawa Headquarters. New Delhi:

"Dean didn't leave the hotel, Master Hedeki. We had every exit covered. He hid out somewhere inside until they left. We thought he gave us the slip.

The Dominick woman came back. She must have decided that Dean was gone, because fifteen minutes later she checked-out and was driven to their headquarters in the New Wind Church."

Hedeki Shikoku scowled. "He's amazing. Are we sure he wasn't trained?"

Gifu shook his head. "Not absolutely certain. After Dominick left, he left by the back door, crossed the lot, and found a taxi. Our men followed him to the airport. He pretended to buy a ticket on a JAL flight back to Bombay. All he did was ask for information. Then he went into a restaurant, mixed with the crowd, and looked for tails. We lost him, but he reappeared at the BOAC counter and activated his ticket for Tehran."

"And only our people saw him?"

"No. The SAVAK has men monitoring all flights into Iran. There is no reason to believe they are interested in Dean."

"Was he aware he was being followed in Karachi?"

"Master, the CIA, not our friends in the cartel, were tailing Dean. They rotated cars like amateurs. They used a gray CIA two-door and a black Russian sedan for some reason. I'm sure Dean knew he was tailed. I think Beatrice Dominick arranged the tails. But then again, maybe the whole thing was a ruse to scare Dean."

"Sounds like it scared him. Is that why he ran?" Ito asked.

"No, I don't think so. Dean does the thing least expected. It's his nature. He seems to rebel when manipulated and does the opposite. Dominick had the school closed. Beatrice was trying to manipulate him. He's independent. He split."

BOAC flight to Mehrabad Airport, Tehran:

The thin, well-groomed man in an expensive business suit was in his assigned seat. Dean showed him his ticket. The man looked at his, got up, and moved into the aisle to let Dean in.

"Sorry Sir, I read the seat numbers backward."

"You speak English."

"Oh yes. I work for Auto Luxe on Ferdowsi Square in Tehran. If you need to rent a car, we give better service than Hertz or Avis."

"Then you must know a lot about Iran. I know very little. I'm traveling to learn and to visit schools. I want to know how other people educate their children."

"The travel I would like. Schools? Well, I don't think you could learn much from us."

"Everybody says that. So far, everybody has been right. It's discouraging, but I have a long way to go."

"That's what you do? You travel and look at schools?"

"That's what I do. I'm a teacher in Colorado—out West in the U.S.—on sabbatical leave to study. I have a year to see the world and learn from others."

"I have been in Colorado. I was sent to Buckley Field for training when I was in the military. Denver is on a plain at the foot of mountains, like Tehran."

"Tell me about Iran. What should I see?"

"We are Persia. For 2,500 years we have been an Empire. We are the oldest Empire in the world. Our government is headed by the Shanhanshah. It is a constitutional monarchy headed by the Pahlavi family."

The old Shah used his power to bring our country into the twentieth century. His son is not so committed, some say. He is trying to please many factions. We are still trying to decide if we live in the past or future. I must warn you, there are many who do not understand western ways, and our mullahs do not want to give up land and power. They are like warlords."

"I have read that Iran's neighbors are very difficult to get along with."

"That is of great concern. The USSR, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq are neighbors each with different designs and plans. We must be powerful to repel them." He paused as the plane reached altitude and leveled off.

"Where are you staying?"

"I haven't picked a hotel. I prefer a place that is not totally western. I would like to find a European style hotel that is close to the local economy."

"But you still need your comforts, right? May I suggest the Vanak on Avenue Pahlavi?"

"Sounds good to me."

"And the Mehrabad Airport where we land is six miles from town. Of course, I will have a car waiting for me. I would be very pleased if you allowed me to drop you at the Vanak."

"I may be delayed at customs."

"You have your visa and all your shots?"

"Yes."

"Then there will be no delay. They will want to see your airline tickets so they know you are not immigrating. That's all."

"I don't like arriving anywhere late at night. You've taken a load off my mind. Thank you."

No, thank you, American agent. We have you where we want you.

Dean settled in for the flight. He was not happy about his short stay in Pakistan. He blamed Missy for that. He had planned to learn about the culture and visit schools. He wrote ahead offering to be a resource on issues in American education, and western history. In exchange, they were to provide him with a native speaking guide who would help him understand the Karachi educational system.

The plane dropped into an air pocket and surged ahead. Dean heard a grunt from the man next to him. He cursed in a language Dean assumed was Farsi.

"I don't understand how there can be holes in the air."

"Me either."

He studied the man. He was well educated, well dressed and ... he seemed to fit the profile.

Oh no! Another CIA plant? Could this be a coincidence?

"We land in about thirty minutes. Tell me, it's no coincidence you sat next to me, right?"

The man visibly tightened, giving Dean the answer he wanted. He knew he had given himself away.

"You're good. They said you were. How did I give myself away?"

"You didn't. I'm just getting paranoid. Who do you work for?"

"The government. You surprised us, leaving Pakistan so suddenly. I was assigned to make certain you do no damage in our country."

"You think I'm a spy? What if I told you I am not? That I have been trying to get away from all of you. I'm starting to realize it may be hopeless. You wouldn't believe me if I tried to explain. My only goal is to visit schools and get to know something of your country?"

"You know they had to close the international school in Pakistan. You use schools as a contact point?"

"No. As strange as it may seem, I really am just a teacher trying to learn about education in this part of the world. I am not a spy or a courier."

"Good cover."

"No, not a cover. I planned my year of study. Before I left the States, I was contacted by the CIA and asked to be a courier. I agreed, much to my regret. They used me. I've done everything I can think of to get free of them. Now, it looks like I'm in deeper than I thought. You would never believe what happened to me in Pakistan." The man's expression communicated that he knew.

"You know, don't you?"

"I know about your involvement with the Dominick family."

"Then you know it wasn't my idea. I finally managed to get away from her and them."

"No, not all of them. Don't turn around, but let me assure you there are others on this plane who work for those you call enemies."

"And you? You work for the Shah?"

"Yes, Mister Dean."

Now who's playing whom? Dean has to know I converted ... that I'm with Dominick now.

"The Shah brought progress against ignorance and the dark age that has gripped Persia for centuries. Our enemies are evil. Do you see why we are concerned about you?"

"I have nothing to do with them. I think the guys in the CIA who tried to use me—hell, they did use me—are also against them."

"No. That cannot be true. The cartel controls your CIA. They control America. We will control Iran."

He said "we". He's one of them. I'll play along with him and pretend he represents the Shah.

"Look. I think there are two factions in the CIA."

"If that is true, you would have to prove it. We have to know our enemies."

"If I do prove it, would you help me get free of this whole mess?"

"You think fast, trying to save your own life. You know there is an order to remove you?"

"I don't know. I don't want to know. Really? To kill me?"

"Perhaps. Let me talk to my superiors. How would you prove there is another faction in the CIA?"

"With your help, I'd connect you with the man who recruited me. His name is Hill. Dan Hill. He's Deputy Director of Operations."

"Ah, so that is why you are really here ... to facilitate the contact. Very clever Mr. Dean. Perhaps you deserve our respect. Perhaps you must die. That is not for me to determine. I am taking you to Mohammed Pashto."

"Gee thanks. Either way I'm screwed."

Chapter TEN

Langley, Virginia:

"George, Agent Fallout walked into our Embassy in Tehran and demanded they contact me with this message."

"Dean did? What the hell, I thought he was in Karachi?"

"Last I heard he was, but he's in Tehran now. He was escorted from the gate by a SAVAK operative."

"Dean? Our Dean? How could he be connected with the Iranian Secret Police?"

"The message says ... here, read this."

Hill. You set me up. Now there is something you need to do for me. Come here and meet with these guys. I told them you had a lot in common. If you don't come, they will kill me. Come now!

David Dean

"Well for the love of ... Hill, what's this about?"

"Iran? How the hell would I know? We support the Shah. We're on friendly terms. Why would they want to kill Dean? Why do they have him?"

"Think about it! Who was he last with?"

"Beatrice Dominick."

"That has to be it. They think he's connected to the cartel."

"Who knows what he's told them! George, is it possible there are forces in Iran still loyal to the Shah and not the cartel?"

"One of us will have to go to Greece and get the Shikoku perspective. It has to be you. You'll be safe in Greece, I'll make arrangements. Aston is the only other person we can involve in this, so you do Greece, I'll see how we can use Aston."

Central Asia. Cartel Control:

"We intercepted this message from Dean to Hill. How in the hell did he get away from Beatrice Dominick? What does it mean?"

"SAVAK is holding him to exchange for Dan Hill. That's all it could mean."

"They think the CIA's on their side. We've spent years nurturing that belief. They don't know our men are in key positions in Iran. Has Mohammed Pashto reported in yet? This is a very bad time for this to happen. Our operatives in Turkey and France are almost ready to set the fundamentalist nuts loose. This could be very bad. This could get back to Dominick."

"No, I think we have it under control. All the Iranians want is Hill. That means Hill is part of the faction in the CIA we have been looking for. He's against Dominick and the cartel."

"But he's so ..."

"Misguided? Who else would go against Jesus, progress, and our dream of a better world?"

"So what do we do?"

"Listen. Find out what they extract from Dean. We wait for Pashto to do his thing. He'll tell us what Hill has to say. Nothing will happen in Tehran that we won't know about. We have our men in place."

Bombay India. Sungawa-Sungana Headquarters:

"Hedeki, Dean just sent this message to CIA Langley." Taegu handed the printout to Hedeki. Hedeki pushed himself to a sitting position. It took several seconds for his head to clear. His eyes wouldn't focus.

"This had better be worth disturbing my nap." He took the paper from Gifu's hand and tried to read it.

"Here, you read it."

"It says SAVAK will kill Dean if Hill doesn't come to Tehran and meet with them. They are using Dean as bait to get Hill there."

Hedeki slowly shook his head. "I don't understand. Why Dean?"

"Master, they had to know that Dominick's granddaughter Beatrice was with Dean. They must believe he's involved with the cartel."

"And they know that the cartel is preparing radical fundamentalists to overthrow the Shah's kingdom? Do they know about France's involvement? Gifu, what do they know?"

"They know all of that, Master, but the Shah does not believe it possible. He believes in his power. People loyal to him believe the Americans support the Shah. The truth is hidden from the Shah. He has no idea of the cartel's plans."

"You mean they don't know America is controlled by the cartel and the cartel intends to create total uproar in the middle east which will eventually result in the defeat of Islam and a victory for Christianity? A victory for big oil?"

"Our sources tell us that some in the SAVAK, those loyal to the Shah, suspect America is not as supportive as it pretends to be. They may be the ones who would use Dean to get Hill to Tehran. Hill can confirm there is a faction in the CIA working against the Dominick Cartel."

"You think Dean knows?"

"Master, we taped Dean's conversations with Janet Hurlbut. We know what Sami Onoto learned from him. He must know or at least suspect that

Hill's factions are working against the President's men and the cartel supporters in the CIA."

"And he'd tell the Iranians?"

"Why not? He isn't playing a game. He just wants out."

"Gifu, if this is right, this is the best news we have had in a long time. It is time Iran wakes up to the dangers the cartel poses. We must do everything we can to convince them that Hill is their best hope." He paused. "But something doesn't add up. What if Dean is held by operatives loyal to the cartel?"

"It's a risk we have to be prepared for."

"Master Hedeki, when Ito and Taegu get to Corfu tomorrow our people will be in place. We must get to Hill and brief him in Corfu before he goes to Tehran."

"You must have Hill inform those loyal to the Shah, those who fear the cartel, that they are compromised. The cartel has men placed high up in the SAVAK and the Iranian government."

"One thing doesn't fit. Why would Hill expose himself? Why would the DCI put him in harm's way? Dean is a nothing, or so we have come to believe. There's a game being played. Find out what it is!"

Base for Secret Police. Reza, Tehran:

"We have their master spy and he will connect us with the Deputy Director of Operations?"

"Are you certain, Mohammed? Our CIA contacts say Dean is a dud. Besides, all I have to do is pick up the phone and I can talk to the Director. Why should I talk to his deputy?"

"Sir, my people are sure Dean was sent here to put us in contact with DDO Dan Hill. Why, I don't know. By all reports from inside the American systems, Hill is a man of no notice who doesn't have two rials to rub together. If he were important, he would be wealthy. All the key players in America are wealthy."

"But Mohammed, you say this agent Dean identified your field man and requested that I meet with Hill. What do you know about this agent, this David Dean?"

"Almost nothing. Our CIA contacts think he's a nothing, a diversion. Everybody agrees he played a pivotal role in changing CIA policy in the Far East, India, and Nepal, but even they don't believe he knew what he was involved in. We did receive one very interesting piece of information from a CIA mole. Dean's code name is Fallout."

"Fallout? Like in atomic?"

"I think so, sir."

Also, it could be meant as a way of saying that after everything is over, he handles the incidental results."

"And? What does that mean?"

"To me? I think it must mean that he's the clean-up man. If so, he is more dangerous than we thought."

"You think he has that kind of power?"

"All signs point to it even if they deny he's capable of it."

"And you were going to kill him. I think the best thing to do is get rid of him. We could pass him along to the Turks or get him out of Iran."

"He wants us to meet with Hill. Let's see what transpires. Dominick is interested in Dean. Who knows what information he carries."

Chapter ELEVEN

Corfu, Greek Ionian Islands:

Gloria plotted with every womanly scheme she could invent to keep Dan from leaving. Christopher was ill ... she was still too unstable to manage without him ... she would leave him ... if he abandoned her now, she would never trust him again. She even tried to get Ethel to ask George to order him to stay in Virginia. Nothing worked. He left early on Saturday morning. She wasn't allowed to know how he traveled. She assumed he flew on one of the CIA's clandestine airlines. All he told her was that he wouldn't be back for several weeks. On Sunday, she got over it. Things were so much easier when Dan wasn't around. There were so many things she could do without his approval, like visit her old friend Tanya Horowitz. I must find Tanya. I know it is against CIA policy to put someone with Dan's knowledge of the organization in harm's way. George made the decision because there was no one else he could send.

To protect Dan, George called Hedeki Shikoku and explained the problem. Shikoku assured him Dan would not be exposed. He knew the implications of having Hill captured by the other side. "George, I'll put Sami Onoto in charge of the operation to protect him."

Dan refused to fly via the military jets he used to get to India. He had learned his lesson. Secretly, because it was against company policy, he booked a flight to Rome on Pan Am and a connecting flight to Athens. From Athens, he flew to the island of Kerkyra (Corfu). Not even George knew his travel plans. Aboard, he slept and read, ate and dozed across the world. In Rome, he had a one-hour layover. In Athens, he cleared customs and was

directed to an Olympic plane that made the Corfu run. He was the only passenger. Everything was clicking together like ... until the small plane landed.

"This can't be the Corfu airport. It's too small. Where are we?"

"Not the main airport, sir. We use this strip because it's less crowded. We have transportation waiting. Sir, your bag will be transferred for you."

The plane's door opened down to the tarmac. Steps extended and the pilot led the way. Dan stopped in the doorway, caught by the strong smell of humid, swampy air. The sun had just risen over verdant hills in the east. White egrets flew as clouds over water on both sides of the strip. As he stepped down, one of the most idyllic landscapes he had ever seen greeted him. Beyond the strip, across shimmering water, a white Byzantine church with a red-orange tile roof sat on a tiny islet. The rock connected to the lake's edge by a narrow causeway. Tied along its length were boats of many colors. Beyond that islet, a stand of tall trees seemed to burst forth from another patch of rock. He could see the white walls and tower of a building. The water sparkled as ripples caught the morning sunrays. Birds filled the air. The sounds of their shrieking calls made the solitude and splendor of the place even more enthralling. He took a deep breath and relaxed. He had been in Athens and Patras, but never knew a heaven like this existed in Greece.

"Your transportation, Sir."

A black Lincoln limo purred up beside him. The pilot and co-pilot had already walked across the strip to another waiting vehicle and were gone. The liveried driver came around, opened the trunk, took Hill's bag off a cart

and placed it inside. He slammed the trunk and turned toward Hill. The limo's rear door opened.

"Please get in, Mister Hill. And welcome to Corfu Town."

"I hadn't expected such courtesy, or such a beautiful place."

"You are on the southernmost point of the Kanoni peninsula. The beautiful church on the nearest islet is really a convent, the Convent Vlacherna. On the islet with the trees, stands the Church of the Pantokrator. Many believe this is the most beautiful place on earth."

As he bowed to get in, more beauty greeted him.

She's trim, Oriental or perhaps Eurasian? Her features are soft. Her skin radiates light as translucent ivory might.

"Welcome to Corfu. My name is Sami Onoto Cook. I represent Sungawa-Sungana. You are very kind to come all this way to meet with us."

"You know I must get to Iran as soon as possible?"

"We know that at the present time you think you will be safe in Iran. But there is much for you to learn here that may make you think differently." She crossed her long, tanned legs. The short skirt rode up far enough for Hill to note she wasn't wearing hose.

"Our headquarters are far to the north at Cape Kassiopi. We will not have to go there. The Brothers have asked me to meet with you here in Corfu Town. I'm bringing someone here that you will be glad to meet."

"That could only be Janet Hurlbut."

"Then you also know who I am? I am rather surprised."

"Don't be. You would be amazed at how little I know. I am aware of you because Janet now works for you."

"And of course, she still works for you and your boss, the NIA and MI. She is still a marine."

Dan looked down. "I'll add that to the list of what I'm here to find out."

"Believe me, Mister Hill, the relationship we are establishing is already well along. A common enemy unites us better than anything else could. You know they want to kill your agent Dean?"

"Yes, but do you understand that Dean is an unwilling dupe. All he wants is out."

"It seems the more he wriggles, the deeper in he gets."

"Janet? Is she in love with him?"

"It seems so. She asked me to be here to try to protect him."

"From the SAVAK?"

"I don't think they'll do anything unless your opposites at the CIA order it. Those the cartel control believe Dean is a threat. They don't understand who he is."

"So why haven't they killed him? I mean they've had every opportunity."

"They can't make him. There is nothing to make. They want him alive because they think he will lead them to those who are frustrating their plans. We assume they don't know of our recent alliance. To them, Dean is the connection to all they fear."

"So that's why they want me in Iran?"

"Of course. They have to find out if you are connected with their opposition—if you are their opposition. They don't know if Dean or you are against the New Wind."

"The New Wind? Oh, that's the religious front for the Dominick Cartel. I heard it called that once before. They know I'm here in Greece, don't they?"

"We may assume so. But they don't know who I am and they can't make a connection with the brothers Shikoku."

"And Janet? Do they know her?"

"Hurley is her real name. A marine lieutenant that was with Dean in the Far East and India. They will not make a connection."

"So, when they get me, they torture me and ... I'm a dead man?"

"So is Dean unless you do exactly as I say. Are you prepared to do that?"

"Let me decide after I know what you plan for me."

"Very smart move, Dan Hill. We do not want to lose you. We have a better place to meet than the limo. It's in the center of Corfu Town." Sami gave instructions to the driver and they wound through the narrow streets of Corfu Town.

"What is this place?"

"The Palace of Saint Michael and Saint George. It is Ito's favorite. The Sino-Japanese Museum is located on the second floor. We use the building next to it, but we must enter through the Palace."

"It's cold and damp in here."

"Winter is not my favorite time. Imagine how I feel, coming from Hawaii."

"Is Janet here?"

"No, not until I call for her. Please sit at the desk. I'll turn on an electric heater."

Hill tensed with anger as the cold penetrated his thin clothing. He thought Greece would be warm. The heater fan clicked around, sounding like a flat bearing in a ceiling fan. The stench of burnt dust was followed by welcome warmth. Sami Cook pulled a chair up close to him, sharing the blast.

"What you don't know, Hill, is that the cartel and our companies have been partners for years. We got what we wanted from the cartel. They used us to get what they needed. It was a good working relationship until ... well, until we learned of their aversion to our beliefs and culture. The cartel is a WASP movement that was forced to bring in Catholics and other non-Anglos. They controlled America until the civil rights movement opened society."

Sami studied Hill's face. He nodded. She continued.

"Peter Dominick has only recently allowed non-whites into the organization. He had to do that because to have a world religion, one must accept that the majority of the people on this planet are not white. He first used the Latter-Day Saints' model of exclusion. When it became obvious that a religion cannot proselytize people who are made to believe they are of color because God is punishing them for the sins of Cain, they conjured-up divine revelations that allowed the opening of the ranks. Of course, those in power will always be without color."

Sami regretted not wearing panty hose or slacks. She opened her legs to the warm flow and let her teeth chatter for a moment.

"The cartel is now a unique extension of the force called nationalism. Peter has come up with a way to focus all of the zealous energy of love for

country, to forge one world, one God, one holy religion: A New Wind empire controlled by his church. The only problem with that is obvious."

"Sure," Dan nodded his understanding, "Little things in the way like Islam, Hinduism. Buddhism, Taoism, State communism and ... Japanese nationalism, right?"

"Right. When the Shikoku learned of the cartel plan ... well, let us agree it is not acceptable. The tempest you could enter in Iran is roiled by the cartel's attempt to use radical fundamentalists to make Islam so vile it must be destroyed. The plan is to turn Islam into a seething, murderous religion controlled by hate-filled radical fundamentalist mullah politicians."

"Same story, what is this, the fiftieth verse?"

"Was there ever a doubt that Christians would attempt to conquer the world? The Crusades? Gold, glory, and gospel? The fifth-column movements of missionary proselytizers?"

"Islam has the same teachings. Spread the word. Use the sword if necessary."

"True, Mister Hill. And consider this. Only the world's oldest religions accept other's beliefs. They have to be destroyed."

"So, it's not God's works on Earth. It's a socio-economic-political system. It's a clever masquerade, a way for the few to control the masses. They take the good, the beauty, the grace, and use it for their own gain."

"But never forget, the ideas so inspire the masses that they will do anything to empower the New Wind. The leaders are often good and decent people who have become true believers."

"One world, one religion, one economy, one ruler who may turn out to be a benevolent dictator. Perhaps an insane monster able to turn paradise into an Orwellian nightmare."

"Yes, all in the name of Jesus or Muhammed."

"And Iran? The Shah?"

"A battleground. The problem is the Shah believes in his power. He truly believes he is doing the right thing for his people by bringing them out of their dark age. He believes he has the support of Allah and the U.S. He does not understand the cartel's intentions, nor, as he is surrounded by cartel people, will he learn until it is too late. He knows he threatens the mullahs, their holdings and great power. He underestimates their fear, this hatred of enlightenment."

"And into that turmoil go I, insignificant Dan Hill."

"Not you, but one armed with another truth."

"Sure, what truth? Not me? What do you mean, not me?"

"The cartel members in SAVAK believe what they are told to believe. First and foremost, a visit by Aston Martin will assure them there could not possibly be opposition to their truth. That's what they want to hear, because it's what they believe."

"Aston Martin? Not me? That could get Dean killed."

"Of course. Aston explains that Fallout is the CIA man who picks-up the pieces for the cartel, but he works through Aston, not you. Aston is the power behind the throne; they believe you are not capable of being DDO. They'll buy it."

"He'd have to prove it."

"So, he can prove it. Why else would they have the granddaughter of the Peter Dominick providing cover for Dean? She has a passport in the name of Mrs. Beatrice D. Dean. He couldn't have a stronger recommendation. Aston explains that Dean is just a schoolteacher from Colorado being used by everybody. If they don't believe him at least we haven't lost you."

"Gad, you think it will work?"

"What's the alternative? Not one any of us can live with, right? If we lose Dean, or Aston—one or both—hat won't hurt us. Besides, we know the cartel has moles in SAVAK. Regardless of the contact, cartel or those loyal to the Shah, it won't make a difference. And we will know more about who is loyal to the Shah in the SAVAK."

Chapter TWELVE

No matter how Dean tried to explain his neutrality, the Iranian officials twisted his words to meanings they could understand. It was obvious that no American would be traveling alone across Asia without some purpose. The pretense of studying schools and education was too stupid to consider. Wealthy Iranians sent their children to Europe or America to be educated. The Shah himself had been schooled in Switzerland.

The explanations Dean gave for his actions in Japan were ludicrous. He had helped change the direction of Japanese history by destroying Mitusuka Industries. The reports laid out in front of Mohammed Pashto had been verified. Those actions by themselves confirmed that America's number one secret operative was in Iran for some purpose best known by

SAVAK and the Dominick Cartel. The man was so cool. He sat quietly, playing innocent.

"Sir, when you check me out you will see that I am not a spy, and I am not involved in your affairs."

"You are married?" Mohammed carefully folded a copy of the Karachi hotel register.

"No. I have never been married."

"Not even to a ..." he pretended to study the paper in front of him, "Beatrice D. Dean?"

"Oh shit! I can tell you how that happened, but you won't believe me."

"Try. It amuses me to hear your crazy stories. Do you know who that woman is? Your wife? There are rumors."

Maybe the granddaughter of Peter Dominick has the power to scare him. It's worth a try.

"Her grandfather would be very angry with you right now."

Mohammed jerked; his cocky, know-it-all attitude suddenly washed away by fear. Dean struck while the man was off guard.

"Do you think it is by accident that Beatrice and I were in Karachi?"

Mohammed's face paled. He began to sweat.

"Your intelligence must have told you we had to fake an escape from Pakistan. I was the decoy. Our enemies, and now I wonder if you are with them, were trying to take us."

Dean stood, towering above the Iranian. He put his hands behind his back and walked back and forth in front of the desk. "What have you done? I was to meet Beatrice here in Tehran. Now I am six hours overdue because of you."

"Then you ... you work for Dominick?"

"No, damnit! I've told you a dozen times. I am a schoolteacher from Colorado. I don't work for anybody. Get it?" Dean moved away from Pashto's desk.

The small man pulled his shirt away from his sweaty body and stood, kicking his chair as if it were the root of his problem. "It's just that we had no advanced warning."

Dean glared at him.

"I mean it was all very suspicious."

Dean glared and then let a smirking smile form his lips. He walked back and leaned over Pashto's desk.

"If Beatrice is still at the Inter-Continental, you must put men there to protect her. Have them inform her that I am safe and on task. Tell her to stay put, that I will contact her."

She must have followed me. She'd be at the Inter-Continental. Play out the bluff, but cool it. I'm sounding too British. Enough Ian Fleming.

"I will need a car and driver. I must get to Persepolis as soon as possible."

Mohammed seemed to be drifting on thoughts of his own.

Dean hammered him. "Listen to me! Listen carefully! No matter what, I am not to be contacted or interfered with in any way. I am a tourist, only a tourist. Do I have your guarantee of that?"

Mohammed nodded.

"The thing is, my good man, if you blow my cover, you will die. Is that understood?"

Mohammed nodded, sweat ran into his eyes making him squint.

"The driver you assign must do as I order. He is to protect me and guide me. I have a few things to do and then I will leave your country. We are on the same side. Do you have any questions?"

"No Sir. Not now that I understand who you ... your wife? That makes you the male heir we have all prayed for. Should I tell her where you are going?"

"The problem is she won't trust you, Mister Pashto. Whatever you tell her, she will fear the opposite is true. Her only way of verifying anything you tell her, even if she orders you to tell her, is by having you examined by ... well, you know how your people work."

It's like Mike Hammer bluffing the bad guy.

The man sat down hard, protecting his balls, rubbing his temples. "But I became a Christian when I was in America ... I attended Bob Jones University."

What? What does his religion have to do with it? Strange!

"Then don't be around. Only you know our plans. If you are not available to question, you can avoid nasty consequences. Anything else?"

"Your code name."

Shit! What code name? Now what is he talking about?

"How would you know my code name?"

"Your dossier. Why do they call you Agent Fallout?"

Janet told me that. It is so dumb. What difference does it make that I'm bald.

"Can't you guess by now?"

"I did speculate about it. You are the clean-up man. That's it, right?"

"My friend, you are very bright. You see why I am just a schoolteacher out studying education and the world. I am not an agent, not a spy, not connected in any way with any organization. That is the truth you must remember. That is the information that will keep us both safe."

He's buying it. But I asked them to bring Hill here. He'll tell them who I am ... That will work! He'll confirm what they think is my cover ... great!

"When you question Hill, he will confirm that I am a simple school teacher they use as a courier. Treat Hill well. But a word of advice. Get him out of Iran as soon as you can. The wrong people might focus on him. As you must know, he's not the main man. Now get my stuff and let me get on with my work."

I should have told him what a creep Hill is. I should have set him up. He deserves a lot of hell for using me, that bastard!

Dean left the secret police headquarters, sweating profusely. The cool wind felt good. Having a car and driver to tour him through Iran felt even better, even though the driver was obviously not some dreg. Dean observed the tall, lithe, coffee-skinned man with perfect features and beautiful flowing black hair. Being a secret agent had its perks. His travel bag had been sent ahead to the Vanak Hotel. He ordered the driver to go there before they headed south.

He had no way of knowing that Aston Martin, not Dan Hill, would arrive in Tehran, or that Dorothy Wentworth was standing in front of the Vanak Hotel waiting for a cab. Or, that Beatrice "Missy" Dominick, telephone in hand, was angrily pacing her hotel room at the Tehran Inter-

Continental Hotel demanding to speak with Mohammed Pashto, whom she was politely told had gone out and left no way to contact him.

Chapter THIRTEEN

Langley, Virginia:

Aston was elated when he received orders to report to Greece. He'd had enough of Bombay. Corfu was a desirable berth. He was informed he was going to Iran as a stand-in for Hill. It was Hill who was responsible for all the hell he had gone through in India. Now he was supposed to be the man behind Hill? Well, at least someone recognized his superior intellect and breeding. But Iran? How would Iran look on his service record? No one in the CIA could've found out that he had converted to the New Wind Church.

"Oh, and Aston," Dan Hill tried to sound casual, "make certain all your affairs are in order. This could backfire and that could leave you exposed."

*Exposed? Good choice of words. Dead is more like it. Poor bastard.
Better him than me*

"Take me by the Markazi Bank. I need money and I also want to see the Crown Jewels display. I need to get rials and then we can go to the Vanak Hotel," Dean instructed the suave looking driver. This guy could be a model for Arrow Shirts.

"Not to be able to the Central Bank, Sir, this is Friday their day of rest."

Their day? So this guy is a Christian, probably one of Missy's New Wind nuts.

"I'll need money. Do you think the hotel will take my traveler's checks?"

"This is taken already care of Sir. I have all the rials you will need. It is my order I extend every courtesy. Will you stay at the Vanak on Avenue Pahlavi?"

Beatrice will look for me there.

"There are those working against us who I want to convince that I am staying there. You understand ... Mr. Bedar? That is your name, right?"

"Just Bedar you should call me, thank you. And yes, you want them to think you there but maybe not be there."

"Okay, pretend you are dropping me off for the night. I have a bag there I need to get. You tell me, where is a good place?"

"Not far is Hadam Restaurant. Best chicken kebab in Iran. It is down Pahlavi Avenue. Very crowded downtown tonight. You can arrive easy not seen after dark."

"Okay, let me off in front."

Damn it! Dorothy Wentworth is here. I'd recognize her tall, gangly, masculine figure anywhere. Still awkward as ever.

"Hold it Bedar! I'll just sit here awhile and watch the crowd."

She came here to find me. If she connects, she's in danger. She's been waiting. Thank God! It looks like she's hailing a cab. Uh oh! There's that same guy from Nepal following her. He probably thinks she will lead him to me. Must be one of Hill's CIA thugs ... one of Caldwell's agents.

“Bedar, better drive up a block or so and let me out. There are people waiting for me and I don’t want them to see you.”

“Go in very quickly. Do not let them know when you leave.”

Tehran has three million inhabitants. It shouldn’t be hard to get lost.

In his hotel room he opened the literature he had picked-up at the desk and gazed out the grimy window at the Alborz Mountains through the smog and haze.

I missed the Markazi. I missed most of Pakistan. Bedar knows we’re going to Shiraz to visit nearby Persepolis. But first I have to find a safe place for tonight. After that I can visit the Golestan Palace and Museum and the ... let’s see ... the Ethnological Museum. Then we can get out of Dodge. Wait ... the University. I can find educators there to talk with. I may have to skip the museums. But Bedar was instructed to take me to Persepolis. I’ll have to ditch him and reconnect tomorrow night. I need a plan.

“I have an overnight invitation from a ... well, let me say a very lovely friend. Can I leave my stuff in the room tonight and pick it up tomorrow morning? I’m paying for the room. I just won’t be here and I’d rather my wife doesn’t know.”

“No problem, Mister Dean. It is the same to us. You can check out now or in the morning.”

“Oh, I’ll pay now. I’ll be back for my luggage before check-out time tomorrow. You are certain my things are safe?”

“Of course, what difference could there be? You have the room, you go and come as you please.”

“Thank you. I’ll see you in the morning.” He looked around casually to see if any of the few people in the lobby paid attention. No one there seemed aware of him. He assumed the hotel clerk would inform SAVAK.

It was dark as he left the hotel and made his way downtown looking for the Hatam Restaurant and the limo.

“Where is the limo, Bedar? I almost didn’t look inside here to find you.”

“Of course, I meant we could eat here. I hid the limo where I have before.”

“Bedar, I need your attention to this matter,” Dean leaned toward his handsome driver who had just finished his kebab. “Listen. There are people watching me. I think you know.”

Bedar looked up and around the room, surprised. Suspicious.

“Here is my plan. If I must hide from them and we are separated, I will go to the railroad station and buy a return ticket to Tabriz or someplace further away. I’ll sleep on the train. Then I’ll come back here tomorrow and meet you here tomorrow night at the same time.”

“Oh no,” Bedar’s eyes were wide with fear. “I would be punished for losing you.”

“Bedar, we only use this plan if we get separated. No one but you would have to know, I would be back here and we could eat and leave for Shiraz then.”

“But no, I will protect you ... I have to protect you.”

“If it happened, you would be protecting me. That’s what you are supposed to do. And Bedar, give me some rials just in case. Not too many, but enough so I can be safe.”

The table was cleared and Bedar ordered a sweet liquor he told Dean was made from Qazvin, a local red wine.

“There is a group of people over there.” Dean pointed his nose at a large group of well-dressed foreign men being seated across the room. “I think they are Pakistani. Do you know them?”

Bedar looked alarmed as he pretended to search for the waiter and studied the group. “I do not. Do you?”

“I’m going to go to the toilet. You watch them. If they are interested in me, then we will know.”

Dean got up, knocked his empty glass over as he placed his napkin on the table and pushed his chair back, its legs scraping the floor. Several men in the group looked up. He gave Bedar a frightened look and crossed the room toward the toilet. Beyond, he passed several doors and left Hatam’s by the rear door. Moving quickly, he crossed to the other side of Pahlavi Avenue and, mixing with the crowds, made his way back to the Vanak. Entering by a side door, he slipped up the stairs, down the corridor and into his room.

Dean couldn’t have imagined that based on information from the hotel clerk, the word was out to Missy, both SAVAK factions, and a CIA operative controlled by the cartel, that master spy David Dean was making contacts with subversive forces somewhere in Tehran.

Bedar knew that if he called and reported Dean missing, he would be killed. He left a message for Pashto that someone was hunting Dean and that he would keep him safe.

A city-wide search began that would last until the early hours of the morning when Bedar’s message to Pashto was heard by a SAVAK secretary

and reported. Soon all forces were recalled and sent to watch key departure points.

Dean had one of the soundest sleeps he'd had in months. In the morning he awoke, used the free grooming samples provided by the Vanak, slung his travel bag over his shoulder, left by the side door, walked three blocks and caught a bus to Tehran University.

Tehran:

Missy woke in foul humor, screamed into the telephone, called agents into her room and cursed them, and decided to get her hair and nails done. She was under the dryer, cotton between each toe and spacers between her fingers when she looked out past the door of the salon and saw Aston Martin make his way to the elevators, her CIA stooges riding his coattails, SAVAK agents riding theirs.

Bedar parked the limo in a far lot of the railway station while he met every train from Tabriz, Ahwax, Korramshar, Gorgan and everywhere else, prepared for Dean's arrival whenever that would be.

Dorothy Wentworth, sure she had missed David, caught a bus labeled Kuh-I Ramhat which the driver assured her meant The Mountain of Mercy near Persepolis. She settled-in for the long trip trying to read a guidebook translated by the Iranians from the German into Farsi and then English.

Dan Hill woke in his room in the Hilton Hotel, Corfu. He had an English breakfast, got soft-boiled egg on his tie, and then sat in the lobby waiting for Sami Onoto to pick him up and take him to meet Hedeki Shikoku who was due in from Bombay. He didn't know he would be meeting with Ito Shikoku, the brother who lived on Corfu.

Mohammed Pashto entered the American Embassy requesting political asylum. He imagined he could teach at Bob Jones or one of the many Christian Conservative Universities in an America controlled by Peter Dominick.

Janet Hurlbut watched Hawaii fall away as the only passenger on Sami's private jet as it turned west toward Europe. The last she heard, Dean was someplace in Iran and being hunted by every covert and evil force known to modern espionage.

Chapter FOURTEEN

"I'm somewhat familiar with Medieval European Religious History," Dean responded, "But your comparison between priests, popes and mullahs confuses me."

"Why, Mister Dean? You said you studied history?"

"You're saying the mullahs are a political and economic force, not religious?"

"Do dates grow on trees? Come now, were the religious forces in the middle-ages in Europe teaching religion or enforcing the economic-political systems of their masters?" Professor Darius smiled and shook his head gently up and down. "I've never met a mullah who wasn't teaching the poor unfortunates of this land obedience to power and themselves. They use Islam just as your history shows priests use Christianity. There is evil, and it has not yet been overthrown. Your history is not free of that evil either. Right?"

He caught a deep breath, “The Shah and his father before him have tried to break that power. You know they failed thanks to the French and you Americans. That’s the answer to your question about our schools. The mullahs maintain their power by controlling what the young learn. This misuse of religion as political and economic enslavement causes suffering on a scale impossible to comprehend. It is most brutal for women and children, but it cuts the hope out of everyone. It’s here for all to see, but few dare look, and because it is cloaked as religion, Allah’s message, few object to it. Only a small number of European and American type schools teach students to think. We are in hell, Mister Dean, and there is the devil to pay for generations yet to come.”

“But much of what I read is about Iran’s modernization and progress.”

“Sure, and I have been allowed to live because the Shah protects me and a handful of others. My family must leave this land we love, our home, because I was allowed to learn and think and question. It might surprise you that I am watched every moment. That to intimidate me, my family members have been kidnapped and beaten by gangs led by the mullahs. They will drive the Shah out of Iran—and soon. Even talking with you has shortened my time in my land. Please leave now and try to understand.” He was sweating profusely; his hands shook.

“And Mister Dean, you are right to project that as the educational system goes in a land, so goes its future. You couldn’t study a better example than Iran.”

Dean left the University grounds and studied the small map in the brochure. He planned to make his way to the Golestan Palace and Museum using side streets.

With so many thousands of years of history as an example they should have the will to get out of their dark age. They have a monotheistic religion, have had since the times of Zoroaster, but it's being used to enslave them. Does change ever come from the people, the masses? No, if I know my history change in all cultures comes from the educated aristocracy. Professor Darius believes the Shah will fail. We support the Shah ... no, something else seems to be happening. Forces in France and America and the Christian world are supporting the fundamentalists and the hell they perpetuate and create. But why?

Now I'm supposed to go into the palace and museum and see the remnants of a culture killed by misuse of religion and learn something? The entrance is almost deserted. Damnit! Clear your mind and stop thinking. What's inside may be the clue to their salvation.

Dean stood looking up at the entrance to the Golestan Palace.

“You are so predictable David, you prick! I'm only surprised you didn't go to the art museum first. You think you're so damned clever and all you are is a predictable fuck-up.”

“Missy!”

That bitch. I got under your skin once, I can do it again. I can give back more than you give Miss Priss.

“Missy, why did you desert me in Pakistan? Why did you let the SAVAK take me? I thought you were supposed to be protecting me. Is everything you say and do a lie?”

She stepped back, hand to her cleavage, then regained her composure and stared at him with her usual supercilious attitude. “What?”

“Oh, knock it off! You’re a klutz and your maniacal grandfather must be crawling in his skin. I sent you messages every way I could. That is how you finally got my message to come here. Right?”

“What?”

“Missy, I see you took time to have someone starch your hair. Your nails look like you’ve been peeling beets. How do you find time to preen when you’re supposed to be protecting me?”

“What?”

“You coming in with me or are you going to stand out here and fight off the SAVAK and CIA? They must have followed you here, so now I am in danger. Come on, if you can walk in that tight skirt let’s go inside. Can you make it up the steps? Why do you wear such tight clothes. Don’t walk too fast, I don’t like the smell of hair burning.”

“You SOB!”

“Missy, come on, we’re being watched. Try to act like you know what you are doing.”

Dean turned away to hide his satisfaction.

Got her. She’s so confused I’ll be able to slip away and meet Bedar. But I’m not going to miss seeing this palace.

“Okay Missy. Why aren’t you answering my questions? If you’re withholding information, I need to tell you that doesn’t work on me, right? You know everything about me. That’s right, isn’t it!”

“SAVAK contacted you when you got on the plane? What are you talking about?”

“You mean at the hotel. What about the airport? What about those other guys?”

“What other guys?”

“Missy, I’ve had enough of this shit. Go into the ladies and get yourself together. I’ll pay and wait for you.” He turned away again to hide his enjoyment. “Go on! I led you here, I’m certainly not going to lose you again.”

When she was out of sight, Dean savored the last image of her as she left the lobby, shoulders sagging, hands shaking, totally thrown off center.

Well Missy Prissy, you are certainly not yourself today. I noticed the improvement I’ve made.

“Two tickets please.”

“You look better. That new perfume smells like peaches ... or is that the hand sanitizer in there?” He reached out his hand as if to steady her.

“Don’t you dare touch me! And stop it! Stop making fun of me.”

“Fun? Missy I never thought being with you was fun. Since I got away from the SAVAK guys, I only thought of you as someone too inexperienced to trust with my safety. I do want to help you, though. I understand your situation. Someone is setting you up. You have nothing to fear from me. I’m on your side.”

“What?” Her eyes were wild.

“I said come on. I want to see this place.” He gave the taker the tickets and walked into the first hallway.

Missy caught up with him and grabbed his arm. “Damn you, David!” Her voice echoed down the corridor. She tried to whisper. “You didn’t get

away from SAVAK. What did you do with Mohammed Pashto? Or what did he do for you? Aston Martin is in Tehran. Are you meeting him?”

“Missy, would you shut the hell up. I came here to enjoy this place not to argue with someone who has all the wrong information. Now I’m not going to talk about anything but what we see. You don’t like that? Well, go sit in the lobby and we can go have a cup after.” He focused on an inlaid chair.

Bedar threw his arms out in frustration. “Mister Dean, I met every train. How did you get back here? How did you get to the restaurant? What did you do?” He sat back, somewhat relaxed. “I’m so glad you are okay Mister Dean.”

“Bedar, you are a good man. I got off one station before. That way I could see if I was followed. I wasn’t. I had a good sleep. I think what we did to throw them off my trail worked, don’t you? Thank you. I trust you a lot more now and we will have a good time traveling. Shall we order? Same as the other night?” Dean scanned the customers, hoping Missy didn’t have her people following him when he ditched her in the maze of the museum gift shop.

Chapter FIFTEEN

“We don’t have choices. We have options as I see it.” Aston held the phone close and scanned the bank of American Embassy monitors for possible problems.

“What the hell is the difference?” Hill asked. Can’t you just make contact and do what you’re there for?”

“Well option number one is not a choice, it’s a decision. We need to discuss it.”

“What are you talking about? An option is a decision, an opportunity, an alternative, a choice.”

“But you don’t get my drift. I’m telling you something important. You know this line may not be secure.”

“Oh. So go with it. We have friends in SAVAK.”

“Not mine. Are you telling me option two?”

“Okay, Aston, it’s your choice. Go with what you believe will work.”

“You’re sure? I’m letting you make this choice. It’s on your head.”

“Whatever. Anything else?”

“That’s pretty much it in a ... a diplomatic pouch.”

“Okay, so get going.”

“We meet today. I have to go there.”

“Right.” Dan Hill hung up the phone as Gifu and Sami clicked off their devices.

Hill shrugged his shoulders. “Did anybody understand what he was saying?”

“He’s obviously scared. Will he give away that he’s not the man in charge?”

“Probably, but they won’t believe what he says is anything but a ruse—a cover.” Sami Onoto shrugged her shoulders.

Gifu scowled. “I don’t like this. I don’t trust him. He could hurt us.”

“But he only knows what we told him. They have to think he’s one of the Cartel zealots,” Hill said.

“For all I know he could be,” Gifu stood and asked an aide for a transcript of the conversation, perused it, and scowled again. “This guy is trying to tell us that the guy he is supposed to meet with is not going to meet with him.”

“I think you’re right. Who is this Mohammed Pashto?”

Dan Hill came to his feet. “The cartel’s most powerful asset in Tehran. If option two is unknown, then I just gave him permission to go with someone ... we don’t know who.”

“Okay you guys. Aston knows it has to be a cartel player. Let’s hope he picks the right one. Watch for the diplomatic pouch and make sure only we see what’s in it. That’s how he’ll tell us who he picks. I’ve got to meet a plane. Hill, want to come? I think you’ll find it worthwhile.”

“Bedar, this limo attracts too much attention. We need a car that blends in.”

“I have use of this one Mister Dean, I have my orders.”

“Your orders are to keep me safe, right? We’re in danger. This big black Continental is like a flag for them to follow. Go to Avis and rent something smaller. Do you know where it is?”

“Yes, Avenue Shiraz. Not far on our way, but it is very expensive. It will cost almost \$15 of your dollars each day with miles they add.”

Dean smiled. “Bedar, we have no choice. Do you have enough cash?”

“More than 5,000 rial. That is 50 US dollars you know.”

DCI's office. Langley, Virginia:

“Look, Sir, and he means this with no disrespect, the President wants to know how your man Hill has his cowboys up Peter Dominick's ass.”

“Hill may be doing something I haven't authorized, but I assure you it has nothing to do with the Conservative Right Wing of our party.” Big Oil George was seething inside, trying to look cool and in control outside. “I have no idea why you would call my operatives cowboys. Terms like that are disingenuous and demeaning.”

“If I could talk with Hill, I'm sure I could get the information the President wants. Why are you hiding him?”

“What kind of accusation is that? Who the hell do you think you are? You come in here and use derogatory terms and insinuate that this organization is failing the President. You watch yourself young man!”

“Yes Sir. But it's not me you are talking to. Think of me as the ... oops ... I almost said President. I am running things as the President. I act in the bastard's place often enough. Dominick mentors me, but it isn't politic to share that information. “Think of me as the poor bastard that has to get this information to the President or see my head on a platter.”

“Look, before you get your sorry pathetic warped ego out of my office, learn one thing. I'm in charge of this agency and my people. I'd be glad to share information with the President, for his ears only. Now get the hell out before I have your head mounted on the wall next to our pathetic logo.”

When the zealous attorney left, George sat analyzing their conversation.

Just as I thought. The President is boozed-up or in some sort of mental morass and not in charge. These lowly attorney sucks are running

things with the backing of Dominick and his cartel. Hell, they've all got their law degrees from two-bit Christian law schools. They'll never let me talk to the President. They can make all the demands they want and I'll give them the same answer. Check mate. They think I don't know who is running things? They can't run interference for the cartel if they can't get to me.

New Wind Church communications center, Tehran:

“Everyone. Give me the room. This is a private conversation. Make sure this communication is secure.” She hitched her skirt up over her knees so she could sit in front of the desk and picked up the handset.

“Grandfather, it's me, Beatrice. Can you talk now? I need to share something.”

“Share? You really called to tell me you're in trouble. The word I get, you botched your simple assignment. You lost Dean.”

“Word you get? Who in the blazes from, one of the blundering clowns you sent to watch me? Well, let me tell you something important. I'm spending more energy trying to keep these guys focused than I am getting to Dean. Grandfather I need professionals,” she paused, “or did you send these idiots to test me? I'm calling to let you know I'm taking over and they're to get out of my way. Another screw-up on their part and I could lose Dean.”

“You did lose him.”

“No, I did not. I know exactly where he is and what he's up to. I know how he thinks and, as I planned, he's falling in love with me. He even sends me clues when your guys screw-up.”

“You’re that sure? Don’t underestimate Dean. Every source we have confirms he’s a master.”

“Well, I think I’ll have something to say about that. But Grandfather stop putting your clowns in my way, okay?”

“Of course, but where you are and what you’re doing is my concern ... I mean for your safety. By the way, Aston contacted me and told me Hill’s plan. We have nothing to fear from the other faction at the CIA. They think Aston works for them and is just acting like our man. Enjoy the humor in that. Are you certain Dean isn’t one of ours recruited by Jimmy Swaggart?”

“I’ve considered that, Grandfather, and I’m going to find out. Remember when I was working India you failed to tell me about Aston’s relationship to us? That could have led to trouble. If Dean is one of ours and I don’t know it, there is a breakdown in our communications of a serious nature. If you know and don’t share the information with me ... like some kind of test ... that is unacceptable to me Grandfather. Is Dean one of yours? Ours?” She paused. He said nothing. The message seemed clear, maybe he didn’t know.

“Grandfather, I don’t believe David’s playing both sides. Either way, he’s really dangerous. The truth is he’s more dangerous to us dead than alive until we understand how he is connected. Somehow, he took out our man Pashto. I’ll soon have that information. Don’t play games with me! Right now we have a good working relationship. Don’t ruin it with deception.”

“I agree. Beatrice, the test is a real one, not another one I am putting you through. Understand? I’m watching and impressed. Get through this and I’ll know my future is secure. Good night.”

Would it kill you to say you love me? Probably. I know you too well. I know what you love and it's not me. Your future? What about my future? You screwed dad up by withholding information. You told him God ordered you to test him and he failed. It is so convenient that God responds to your will. I suppose he also ordered you to be a pedophile. So now, I'm in your cross hairs? Dean was right, I'd have protected him if I knew the whole game. Damn you! Even you don't think I'm capable.

Chapter SIXTEEN

Kerkyra (Corfu) Sungana offices:

Gifu stood in his stocking feet, his head almost reaching the top of the four-drawer file cabinet. He slammed the third drawer closed and walked toward Hill with a file in hand.

“Dan Hill, all the reports so far, Aston has them convinced he's with the Cartel. He's told them about Dean and offered to negotiate our deal with Iran and France. They want money and as soon as Mister Shikoku gives the word, they'll have it.”

“But not until Aston is safe, right?”

“If it matters. We have to keep up appearances. It has to look like he is the main force in the CIA for opposition to the Cartel, and that he is their man so there really isn't a threat.”

“Knowing Aston, I'm sure he would never downplay his importance or status. We can count them in, if he doesn't screw up somehow. His ego is typically CIA.”

“How can he fail now? If they believe he’s a convert, and it’s credible, we know he worships Jerry Falwell, then they are even more secure in their plans.”

“What about Dean? He’s the loose cannon. He could tell them about Aston.”

“Aston has assured them by now that Dean is a nobody, just a courier, a not-too-bright teacher who believes he can predict the future of the world by studying educational systems. He’ll go on with his quest and no one will care.”

“Okay, then how will I know for certain it all worked as we planned?”

Ito Shikoku got up from his leather chair in the corner of the museum office where he had been monitoring the interchange between Gifu and Hill.

“That is very easy, Mister Hill. The Dominick woman will be the indicator. If they believe your Mister Aston Martin, she will have no more interest in David Dean. We watch her.” Ito had a smug look on his face that hid his pain. He continued:

“Peter Dominick has one hope for a bloodline successor. He watches her. He hates not having a male heir, but not as much as he is repulsed by women and hates having to depend on Beatrice. Recall, he teaches that men should do everything in their power to stay away from women. He says that if men cannot stay away from them, then they must do so at the risk of their soul, and then only to make children. He plans to breed his granddaughter until he gets a male heir.

His problem is finding a male other than himself who is perfect. He should have frozen his sperm before his lifestyle gave him the sexually

transmitted llama disease that rendered him sterile. He's getting old and knows he doesn't have time to train a male heir. He regrets having his son martyred before he got a male heir but ... the whole thing is driving him to do crazy things and take risks. That is to our advantage. Maybe his god will intercede for him and give him eternal life?"

Ito sat back down, chuckling inwardly at his joke; weakened and exhausted. "Mister Hill, you Westerners have belief systems that only madmen can invent."

"So Hedeki, my brother, you want to know how Sangana is faring in this part of the world. Good ... and Sami Cook must also know. We have agreed she is heir, Gifu accepts that, but must be in the briefing so we are all eating the same rice."

"Make it fast, the trip wore me out. I'm not feeling as I should."

"But you plan to outlast me? I'm not doing too bad. Maybe we should postpone the briefing?"

"Ito, no games. Get them in here!"

Taegu entered the room and sat at Hedeki's side. Gifu greeted Sami and stood to her side, intentionally slightly behind her. Ito looked closely at the others and sneered as he spoke.

"Let's get to the bottom of our organization, the basics. We exist to wield power and lead. Profits equal power. Commodities equal profits. Sungana-Sungawa manage commodities. Other organizations compete for these. We must remove competition and control our assets from conception to market."

Hedeki nodded, matching Ito's sneer with his grimace. It was obvious his head hurt and he was weakening. His gaze fell on Taegu. He gave a slight go-ahead nod.

Taegu was careful to stay slightly behind Hedeki. "It is the political game that is hard. We have changed our game in recent weeks and must always be ready to move based on facts, not emotion. None of us find it agreeable dealing with some of our current allies, but the end game requires it. We must continue our relationship with those who use nationalism and religious fervor to achieve power and control commodities. The cartel operatives must believe they can depend on our support and information. Our few allies like the CIA's DO and DDO in the American mess they call government must think us supportive and dependable. The other Americans who are led by inculcated belief systems designed by Dominick and his father before him, must think us close to conversion and useful to their cause. We do not share our endgame with anyone. We only play to accomplish our objectives. We keep that in mind."

"We do." Gifu stepped forward, careful not to stand in front of Sami. "You say to make judgments based on fact, not emotion. That is too simple a way to look at it. Some emotional appeal is also based on fact. Let me pose this example. Some commodities are profitable but have high costs in the end. Costs that defeat our mission which as Master Ito has said, is to wield power and lead."

Sami visibly straightened in her chair and turned to stare at Gifu. Gifu continued. He noted that Sami Cook was caught off guard.

"If a commodity undermines the societies we will someday control, if the commodity has the potential to create conditions that are not

productive, if a commodity creates conditions that require policing and external controls that sap the energy of those in control, then their true cost must be accounted.”

Sami stood, pushing back her heavy chair with her calves. “I can’t believe I heard what you just said, Gifu. I never imagined ...” she paused and stared first at Ito and then at Hedeki for a clue to their feelings, “such thinking existed in our industries. I need to know your take on this information.”

“You may think you’re not betraying your agreement with these thoughts,” Ito snapped at Sami. “You are the heir, at least for now. Do you have the guts to take this stand? Even if we disagree?”

Hedeki slipped his hands down from the chair arms to his knees and pulled his body forward. “We are not oblivious to cause and effect. Take a stand Sami Onoto Cook. Whether you are the heir or not may depend on it. Better now while we are still alive and focused on our mission.”

Sami looked at each of them, stalling for time. Taegu had never seen beads of sweat on a woman’s forehead.

“Gentlemen, if we don’t control the drug infection we have profited so richly from, then we will not control the future. It was never my intent to poison the world for mere profit.” She nodded, bent from the waist in a gentle bow, and sat.”

Gifu couldn’t hide his reaction. “That is why only we must control the trade in such commodities. We are well on our way.”

Ito lowered his eyes in a nod to Hedeki, who responded in kind. “If the cartel continues as is, we will lose ... you will lose. We have only a few years to take control.”

Sami sat back, smiled at Gifu, and visibly relaxed. Ito continued:

“We are developing a plan to evolve the Dominick New Wind Cartel into a true business we control. I hope you three are up to that task.” He leaned against the back of the chair, fighting for strength and support.

“Taegu, Gifu, Sami, the keys to our future, through no planning of our own, are two people who know little about us and who may not even know we are using them. This is not as I would have it, but it has become fact. Sami, you say the marine you befriended, this Hurlbut person, and the one called Dean that she loves, are the keys to accomplishing our goals?” He looked at Hedeki from a face contorted with pain and contempt. “Now tell me brother, are the cartel’s men that stupid?”

Sami smiled. “What makes them stupid is their zealous fanaticism, what they call faith. They cannot imagine anyone rejecting their all-powerful God’s truth. That makes them act as if they are invincible. That makes them stupid.”

Chapter SEVENTEEN

New Wind Church rectory, Tehran:

Missy straightened the cameo she used to guard the cleavage which empowered her. In doing so, she got every agent’s attention and changed the direction of the conversation.

“Listen well! I’m not going to repeat this. You all ... especially you Bishop Clarence ... will need to act immediately on my orders.”

He is such a jerk! If he wasn’t the illegitimate spawn of Baker, I’d kick him back to the stone age.

“I never shirk my duty to Jesus, Miss Dominick. You can count on me to carry forth the Word into this evil land. I am but the messenger of”

“Enough Clarence! We all know who you are and how you view the Word.” I’ve had reports *ad nauseum* of your situational ethics. The issue here may or may not make sense to you, but you must do what I request. All of you. We are at a major crossroads in our fight for what is right as soldiers winning the freedom and dignity of these oppressed people.”

The twelve assembled converts stiffened to attention ready to take on any challenge.

“With the placement of Aston Martin, we have won our minor but troubling battle to take control of the liberal materialists in our government who have rejected faith. We control what happens in the West and now in the Middle East. We have pretended to cooperate with the Eastern menace. First the rise and fall of Mitusuka and now, the rise of the house of Shikoku. In the next few years, not long now, our plans to destabilize Islam and bring Dominick’s love to these lands will position us to take over Sungana-Sungawa Industries. We will have control of world trade, and most important, commodities that can be used to destabilize evil and give the New Wind power to lead into the new enlightened age.”

Bishop Clarence came to her side, moving his hands as if blessing her minions.

“By the powers vested in me, I have ordained thee. By the strength that flows through me, I call upon you to be ready to die, to give up all you hold important in the animal world and fight for spiritual purity. Whosoever lives for the New Wind and helps it sweep a clean path through these evil and backward lands will live forever at the right hand of

Dominick and thus the heart of the Holy Spirit, as I do. I call upon you to ...” he paused, wondering what Missy was going to ask them to do, “listen well and go forth and win for us.”

You SOB! Wipe the bullshit off your lips and get the hell out of my way.

“Soldiers, as you have just learned, even Bishop Clarence awaits my command. I tell you now that what I will ask is between each of you and me. Not even your compatriots can know the special assignments Dominick has for you. Bishop, you are in grave danger. We have made arrangements for you to be hidden here in this sacred place until we can ferret out those who would harm our mission through you.

Got you now, Clarence. I’m placing you in prison here, out of my way.

I’ll be meeting with each of you. Be ready!”

She fell to her knees, pretending to pray. At that signal the challenged disciples backed out of the room.

“Bishop, tell your father I know you well and am still thankful for his support. That must be your last communication with the outside world. I’ll make certain no harm comes to you and that your spiritual work while here in this key place is recognized. Prayer, not physical action is what is required from you now. Purify yourself by fasting and denying pleasures. Be ready to take the lead when called.”

She observed the strange, then divine grimace that came over Clarence’s thin, pinched face. Bishop Clarence was visibly shaken.

That means giving up sex, even if it has only been with yourself.

“But ... one thing. When will you give the men their direction?”

“First, they must go through purification, like you. When I know each is ready, I will come for him.”

“Now, a vow of silence. After you inform your father, let no one communicate with you lest you be contaminated. Do I have your vow? If so, I will tell Dominick of your heart.”

Poor man, you will always wonder what I tell each of them. Now I can cut out any useful information in your reports to Grandfather. You will never suspect all I want is for them to be out of the way and rendered useless.

Later:

“Okay Starcy Stanwick III, you work for me and only me. Are you really the third? Are there two others and you are a clone? You will still get paid by the CIA and secretly by the NIA, but you report to me, no one else. Is that understood? Do you need a written directive from the President? Is there any doubt in your mind as to whom you are to be loyal to?”

Starcy Stanwick raised himself to his full height, almost five-seven and a half, put on his superior, upper-class mask, and stared at the gap in the fabric below Beatrice Dominick’s cameo. “If so ordered, I would be pleased to continue serving you.” He paused and tried to look up and meet her eyes. “You must know that I have served you, and only you, since Reverend Robertson set my feet on this path.”

“Grandfather told me that, but it is good to hear it directly from you. That is why you, of all the men in this Army of God, are to be entrusted with this mission. One thing I must impress upon you, and I will say it again, you are not to communicate, report, connect or in any way contact any one,

including my grandfather, unless specifically ordered to do so by me. Understand that communications are compromised and too many people are listening and ready to use you to harm Dominick and all you believe in.” She saw the question of compromise on his face.

“But I must report to the Reverend and my superiors, or they will lose faith in me.”

Wake up stupid man. Pinch yourself, see if you are breathing. Put your hand in your pocket and assure yourself you're a man.

“You will report, of course, but not without working through me to get the right information to our loyal and dedicated leaders. Are we clear? Now do you know how important you are and how critical this assignment is?”

“They said I would know when God chose my direction. This is it, isn't it? I understand and agree,” he paused, his face screwed up as he thought, his head moving from side-to-side, “but does this mean my leave is cancelled? I can't go home to Connecticut as planned? I'm to be full-time from now until ...?”

You seemed so normal until I got to know you. Damn, another genetically compromised in-bred WASP pretender.

“It does. Your work starts today. Make arrangements for us to go to Mashhad. Don't tell anyone. Give false information if asked. Don't tell anyone we are going to Pakistan and then India. Pretend you are my driver and know nothing. Take this portfolio. Study the photos and information inside. Commit it all to memory then destroy it. We leave tonight for Mashhad and then secretly across the border into Pakistan. Arrange a truck with a closed shell over the back. Get one no one will suspect I would be seen in. You will drive. Leave it in back of the church where I can secretly

get into it. I'll be hidden in the back. You will not give away my position by looking in the back or trying to talk or signal me until we are safely in Mashhad, and even then, I plan to slip out and get to a safe place. So if you don't see me wait in the mosque. Be assured I'll contact you and we will leave for our mission."

Now for the test. He discounts everything I tell him to do because I'm a woman. He can't wait to call his mentor. The plane is ready. I can be in Persepolis in time.

Chapter EIGHTEEN

On the road to Persepolis:

"Mr. Dean, Sir," Bedar looked over at Dean as he steered around potholes and human obstacles on the narrow highway. "Sir, do you have someone to meet with planned in Persepolis?"

"I do. Cyrus, Darius and Xerxes. I may be a little late, but I plan to visit them."

"These code names, should I know them? Oh ... very clever. I am trying to mean how can I protect you if I don't check these men out?"

"Well, you are right. By our standards they seem brutal. But I can avoid being left in their dust. Bedar, is your interest really in protecting me or reporting who I meet?"

"Of course, that is my job and what I must do. You said you are trusting me more. I will not try to do much, just a little if you please in the way of protecting you from those who you told Mohammed Pashto I am to be protecting you from."

“Okay, I’ll help you do your job. I will tell you who I must not be seen by. Beatrice Dominick. Do you know her?”

“The other three and her? Why yes, of course, she is your wife and the heir to Dominick. She is the reason you are to be protected. Now I am not able to follow what you say about protecting yourself from her.”

Interesting, Bedar only pretends to speak poor English. He is more than he wants me to know.

“I will trust you with this information. No one is to know what I am telling you. She is watched by almost everyone, good and bad, and so am I. We have an agreement that we do not lead others to each other. When we meet, it is secretly and maybe only you will know.”

“And she will be in the ruins of Parsa?”

“Where?”

“Some of us don’t use the Greek name Persepolis.”

“Oh, yes, I think I read that. We can count on her being there. She will be there! Keep an eye out for her. In fact, I’ll have you scout ahead so we don’t create problems for each other.

Oh, and Bedar, I just had a thought. Shiraz is 70 or more kilometers from Parsa. Do you know where we can stay that is closer?”

“But Mister Dean, arrangements have already been made at the Hotel Park Sa’adi. Our room is reserved and I have sent ahead American \$6.75. I will find lodging nearby if you don’t like that hotel.”

“How nice. How convenient. You are very efficient, but it is far away from Parsa. Let’s go on and find a place near the ruins. The money does not matter as much as the time.”

“But ...”

“No argument, please. By the way, is there an Inter-Continental Hotel in Shiraz?”

“Yes. Very nice hotel, the best. Cyrus Hotel, but it costs American \$10 each night. It is for the very rich only.”

She’ll be staying there.

“You know if we don’t find a place, we can sleep in the car.”

“That is not good even if necessary and there is no other place. The Shah built a tent city for his guests but there is no place to rest for us. It is not acceptable to sleep in small cars. I have idea, but you must not fear scorpions and snakes because I have it to buy special powder to place around blankets.”

“What blankets?”

“We must buy sleeping blankets in the next market. I hope. Good ones that are clean.

Bedar stopped at the next market and after a bit of haggling, produced a rug and several blankets.

“Pretty clever, Bedar. This is a real Persian carpet, isn’t it? It feels very nice.”

“Yes, but it is very old and some of the edges are worn. I got it for a few rials. The blankets are new. You like them?”

“They’ll do. What is that can of white powder?”

“Very good old Persian way to keep bug stings and bites away. Just shake it out on the ground around you.”

“Oh, DDT.”

Down the road a ways, Bedar found a secluded level spot where they could camp for the night. Dean was excited.

“I never dreamed I’d be sleeping on ground that has shaken under the feet of armies for thousands of years. Alexander the Great may have walked right here. In my mind I can feel the vibrations of the past. The clouds from the Persian Gulf racing across the crescent moon look like armies.”

“I am sorry, Mister Dean. I didn’t know. We are too close to the military airport and we can move to another place of rest if the ground moving bothers you.”

“Oh, it’s not that. Airport? Oh, I see the lights of a plane over there. It’s a small plane landing. No, Bedar, it is not those vibrations I’m thinking about. Oh, and now that we are close to the ruins, I want to be there early tomorrow. We need to get some sleep.”

“Before you sleep, I learned in school this information that will make your visit better when we go to Takht-e-Jamshid, ‘The throne of Jamshid’, named for a mythical King of Iran.”

“I thought you called it Parsa?”

“Yes, that too. But first we go through Naqsh-e-Rostam, a sort of ‘Valley of Kings’. It is by tall cliffs with half-way up the cross-shaped cavities of the tombs cut into stone. And then the tombs of the main Achaemenian sovereigns, except Cyrus. The tombs are those of Xerxes, Darius the Great, Artaxerxes I, and Darius II. Darius the Great’s Tomb is larger than the others. Oh, are these the men you said you would meet here? Is that what you meant?” Bedar laughed.

“Right. How is it you know this history?”

“I will let you know more tomorrow. I am Persian. These are my people, my religion.”

“But your religion is Islam. You are a Moslem even though you were brought up in India.”

“No, not ever Moslem, only pretend. Many of my people would return to the teachings of our ancestors if we were allowed.”

“Aren’t you a follower of Dominick? The New Wind?”

“Of course. We Parsis use it to seek the fall of the imposter religion that was forced upon us.”

“Nietzsche’s Thus Spake Zarathustra,” Dean said under his breath.

“Oh yes, you know! Mister Dean, you are a Christian. Have you been taught to hate the Parsis, my people?”

“No Bedar. But if I am a Christian, it is in the same way it seems you are—biding my time and forever hoping for something spiritual to change human nature.”

“When the cruel and brutal Arabs invaded this land, most Parsis left and emigrated to India. That was in the ninth century. Islam lies about our religion and our people. We are called Fire-Worshippers and hatred is taught of us. My family came back from India with my grandfather when I was fourteen. We are forced to live secret lives. There are many thousands of us Zoroastrians. We are Parsis, the true Iranians, and we wait for the dawn of reason. And Mister Dean, we are different. Zarathustra was not a prophet, nor do we call his spiritual path a ‘religion’. He was a thoughtful benevolent who recognized one God on the basis of wisdom. He never said he had been missioned to bring any message from God to human beings. Mohammed became more important than his message and people made him a prophet, his ideas a cult, and his progeny important. Sadly, so did they corrupt Jesus. Men do such bad things to good.”

“That is a lot to think about, my new friend. Thank you for sharing with me.”

“And you. What I have told you and you me can get both of us killed. Now we have to trust each other.”

“You can trust me, Bedar. I will not be a danger to you. You have my word. Goodnight.”

The next morning, Dean studied the landscape now visible in the early light. The flat, brown desert surrounding them had been packed into hardpan by thousands of feet over thousands of years. He saw Bedar was also up ... carefully examining his blankets.

“What did you lose?”

“Checking for scorpions just in case. We don’t want them in the car.”

“They get in the blankets?”

“Even our magical powder can’t stop them. You must do the same.”

“Bedar, I learned in school that Persian beliefs go back maybe six thousand years or even earlier. What makes you think they will come back ... I mean that they can overcome Islam and Christianity?”

“Mister Dean, the answer to this question is quite clear. Zarathustra was against men bartering for gaining power through the name of God. And Zarathustra’s philosophy indicates that three principles of good reflection, good words, and good deeds, lead to human exaltation. Therefore, there remains no need for religious leaders to assume the role of mediating between God and people like some religions do for economic and political power. The meditation between God and people has become a lucrative job for clergies and causes them to extort the fruits of our toils by promising us heaven as they scare us of hell.

"According to Herodotus, Zarathustra even drove the clergies from temples and God houses that they had motivated others to build for them. As the clergies were deprived of their weapon to trick the people, they developed animosity toward Zarathustra's philosophy. It was said by my grandfather it will take almost until the end of time to free mankind, men and women, and let them personally know God. I would like to think that time will come in my lifetime. Once it looked like the Shah would do that, that's why we returned from exile, but he took on the clergy and lost. You should know the truth has been available for man for at least six-thousand years."

"Thanks Bedar! I'm learning you are very well educated and the perfect guide. Don't you find it dishonest to pretend to be with Dominick; a New Wind Christian?"

"My grandfather told me before they broke him that there is nothing Christ taught that is different than our ancestors have believed for thousands of years. For twenty-six years of his life, he was learning our beliefs. I have found this so ... so, no, I do not need to be dishonest." He smiled and hunched his shoulders, "Except with SAVAK ... well some of those I have met in SAVAK. Now Mister Dean, I will need to drive this car fast if we are to arrive when the gate is opened."

Chapter NINETEEN

1:30 AM. New Wind Church, Tehran:

"What do you mean she went to Pakistan without you? She's on her way to India? This is too much for me to accept. How can I tell Dominick that his

granddaughter is not under our protection and on a mission to ... to do what? What did she tell you?” Bishop Clarence balled his fists and waved them in front of him like a boxer. “Forget everything and get to Pakistan and find her before she leaves for India.”

Mid-morning in Corfu Town:

“The Granddaughter is going to India? Why? How do you know? I said we would understand more if she cut ties with Dean, but back to India? I find that hard to believe.” Gifu balled his fists in frustration. “We must find out where she is. Pull off Dean now and focus on Beatrice Dominick and ... get Sami Onoto in here. This may be the inroad we’ve been waiting for.”

Hall of 100 Columns, Persepolis:

Missy watched as David and Bedar explored the ruins.

So, David, the clue was to come here. I see you’re really enjoying yourself. Who is that gorgeous man with you? Oh, I know, he’s the SAVAK driver assigned to protect you. He’s one of ours, mine. What a specimen. I need to talk with him alone before David knows I’m here to help him.

Radio KLZG Gold County, Colorado

NEWS FLASH: Sheriff Joe Apagai was jailed today in his own Gold County lockup for the murder of Daniella Dean, deceased wife of a local pharmacist. His arrest was based on evidence given to the Gold Times by Bishop Prig the head of the New Wind Ministry. The Bishop said he found documents and evidence in a box someone left in the rectory. Judge Clark,

who presided at earlier trials and inquests, said the trial will begin this fall. The District Attorney is expected to seek the death penalty.

CIA Headquarters, office of the DCI. Langley, Virginia:

“Ethel, I know Janet is safe. In fact, she landed about five hours ago on Corfu. The plan is to get her friend David to Israel where it will be safe for them to be together.”

“But George, you know how she hates to have people plan her life. If she wants to meet with David, why can’t she without others setting it up?”

“Look Ethel, I agree. The problem is she is working for me and on assignment to Sami Onoto. Sami is working with the Brothers Shikoku. Janet is important and she is their way to keep Dean safe.”

“Really?”

“Honey, Janet would tell me if she disagreed with this plan. I’m glad you’re concerned and so am I. Now get off this secure line, I need it open in case Janet does try to contact me. I’ll be home before soon.

“There is another matter I want to discuss.”

“Okay.”

“Dan Hill hasn’t been home for days. Gloria is pretending it doesn’t matter. First, he’s out to India. Now he’s God knows where. They finally got the little Hill stabilized. He needs his father.”

“I’m planning to pull Hill soon. He’s not avoiding Gloria or fatherhood.

“And Tanya is not helping Gloria at all. She’s so ... so self-obsessed. She wants back in the field. Why not send Tanya? She’s proven herself in the field and she handles David.”

“It’s under my control, Ethel. Things are coming together. I trust Janet and I want Dean to step down and finish his travels in peace.”

FBI Communications Intercept Center Blue Bunny. Austin, Texas:

“It’s definitely high priority. Get this to the Director ASAP. He tried to pull this off as a communication with his wife. No way! This is the proof we have been screening for since last August. Finally, something Hoover can use.”

“But Sir, Hoover is ill. Maybe it is a phone call from his wife.”

“Sure, and your wife calls you on the most secure line in the world? She sees him almost every day for lunch and every night at home. Get real. This is all code. I think Ethel is the code name of someone, probably not a woman, who is out to destroy this President.”

New Wind Rectory sub-basement, Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington D.C.
Dominick’s private quarters. Tunnel one, level eight:

“I said don’t bother me!” Dominick turned to his liveried Bishop and waved him away. “In fact, look here. We’ve designed our own form of fanatic to incite the fundamentalist fanatics we’re giving power to in the Middle-East. My colleges and universities will select those most unstable and easily manipulated. Our own True Believers. We’ll create teams of these radicals and call them Neo-Conservatives. They will infiltrate the government and back our World Crusade for Jesus.”

“I’m sorry to interrupt your planning session Most Holy Peter, but you must read this! If I did not insist, you would be very angry with me.”

Bishop Right handed the pink, perforated computer printout to his most holy and stood fiddling with his tassels.

“You are right to interrupt. I can’t believe my own granddaughter would be so far ahead of you people. She’s my granddaughter, that’s for sure. So, she pulls the CIA’s strings through that weak old fart. She calls the shots. I read it as exactly opposite what was said, do you? Ethel? A univalent organic radical they add to gasoline that gives it clean power or something? She’s very clever. What a message!”

He looked up and stared at his captive Bishop. The man nodded, pawing his agreement.

“So where is she? Why did she go back to India? Maybe she stayed in Pakistan, but why? Our people must know. She had to be in a major communications center to contact him, but which one? SAVAK? CIA? Of course, CIA. Who else would have this maximum secure line direct to the main man. So, Beatrice will have Sami Onoto use this Janet person to pull Dean out. I figured the CIA had to get rid of him. But why Corfu? Why mention those Shikoku bastards?” He scratched his butt, picked at a scab on his hand, paced up and back and laughed.

“She’s bragging! Of course, she knows I’m reading this correctly now. She’s telling me she has them. Damn, if she were a man ... Well at least she’s mine and has the balls to run this outfit until I can breed her.”

Chapter TWENTY

Parsa, Iran:

“Mister Dean, look over there. That lady going into the visitor center. She is your wife she looks like.”

“Bedar, I didn’t catch a glimpse of anyone. Are you sure?”

“You said look for her. I am sure. What do I do for you?”

“I’ll stay here. I can stay out of sight in the shade of that giant column. It will give me the opportunity to study the people entering here. She doesn’t know you. Go see. Take your time. Be careful.”

Bedar walked slowly toward the building. Almost at the entrance, he heard her voice in his ear.

“Do you know who I am?”

Jesus, how did she get behind me?

“You are Beatrice Dominick, wife of David Dean. I work for you ... well for Dominick.”

“I am your immediate and only boss. You work for me, only me. You were assigned to protect Dean. I made that assignment.”

That’s a lie. She was not in touch with Pashto in those last days.

“Please do not mislead me. I am on your side, and I do work for you. I know that is true and I know you did not send me to protect Mister Dean. He has shared his story with me and I know he protects you, that is his main purpose.”

Missy felt blood rising to her face. Is it him or his attitude?

“Listen, how were you briefed? What are you doing with Dean?”

“In SAVAK I have a position in the elite force. That must be known to you as I work for you first. Your husband must not be taken or interfered with. That is my order. Since then, I have learned that he is a very special part of ... the New Wind’s mission. But not as I had been informed to believe by Mohammed Pashto.”

“So where is Mohammed?”

“All I know is that Dean convinced him to go into hiding.”

“Wait, if that is true, why?”

“Because to contact you would put himself and our mission in danger. It was to protect you.”

Her face grew fiery red. Bedar wasn’t sure if she was angry or blushing.

“Are you angry?”

“What makes you think you can ask me such a question? *God, he’s beautiful.* “So, Bedar, what are you doing now?”

“I came to see if it was you I saw. I’m not sure it is wise to contact Mister Dean here, in public. There are eyes on him even though I don’t know who is watching and reporting. He said to protect you from those watching you and him, if that makes sense?”

“Protect me? Do you mean from the Pahlavi factions?”

“Yes, of course, and the fundamentalists that we are helping gain power ... they threaten us.”

“And the Americans? The factions in the CIA, NIA, NSC?”

“I think I have learned of them all, and they are us. But I think there is another threat. Something Dean may know about, something from Japan that threatens us.”

“Us?” Missy scowled. “You keep saying ‘us’? What do you mean by that?” She directed as much energy as she could at him, hoping to break his confidence, trying to probe his loyalty. She paused, designing a new probe.

“Do you accept Jesus as your savior, Bedar? Do you believe Jesus is the answer to world peace? You are an educated Iranian. I have to know.”

“Miss Dominick, are you my confessor and judge as well as my boss? If so, I have much to tell you, but now is not the time and this certainly is not the place.”

“You ... You’re right. And yes, I am your confessor and your judge and the person in charge. I will find the time and place to get to the bottom of you.” She sneered, or tried to, fighting the Freudian meaning of her comment. She ended by smiling coquettishly; hating their chemistry.”

“I must get back to Mister Dean. Should I tell him you are here ... well, what should I tell him?”

“Easy. Tell him I investigated and learned that he was right on all counts. I was being used. Tell him that as a matter of demonstrating good faith, I have exposed Sheriff Joe Apagai and he is going to trial. Tell him we need to meet soon. Tell him I must not be seen with him. No one must know I am here. Then, Bedar, make it happen. And Bedar, if you expose us, you will be responsible for our deaths ... but not before I order yours.”

Chapter TWENTY-ONE

Sungana offices, Corfu Town:

“Janet, your flight was delayed. Why?”

“I don’t know, Sami. They said weather, but that was a lie. We put down somewhere in Western India, on the Arabian Sea. An NIA guy I never heard of—he had the ID—said he had orders to take me off. I told him I didn’t know what he was talking about and asked him for the written orders, which he didn’t have. He said the DO got a message that I was being used as a pawn. I asked him for what? He said to get David Dean. I pretended to be confused and told him that without written orders I would not go with him. He got angry, called me stupid, but he left when your steward saw my distress and made him go. We took off again and your Captain came back and begged me not to tell anyone what had happened. He said he would lose his job with you, even though someone at the top who he could not question ordered him to land.”

“Peter Dominick, Beatrice’s grandfather. Yes, we intercepted the message from him. Thank you for always being straight with me, Jan. I know all this must weigh on you, but you are here to get Dean out.”

“What? I don’t understand.”

“All along we have suspected that your friend is being used, but some fear that perhaps he has become more than a teacher studying educational systems. Now we believe he is not a player and that even Dominick and his granddaughter have discounted his involvement and bypassed him. I promised you I would help keep him safe, and now I can live up to that promise. In exchange, I have your friendship and loyalty, access to the inner circles of the CIA, and more respect from both Ito and Hedeki.”

“Thank you for being honest, Sami. Dean wants out, we know that for certain.”

Ito's Headquarters. North end of the Greek island of Kerkyra (Corfu):

"This view out into the Straights of Otrano gives me some peace," Ito said so softly Hedeki leaned forward to hear him. "There is so much I want to do in Albania," he pointed his nose toward the distant land mass. "Yet, the business of us is not yet finished."

"You mean neither of us is yet finished. We are weakening, brother, but not done yet. I should be in Urawa right now attending to my affairs and not looking out at my view."

"To know we will win, that is the peace I want before I go on," Ito sighed and closed his eyes.

"Peace? There never will be peace. It is not in the nature of humankind. War, yes. Turmoil, yes. Struggles for power over others, yes. Hatred and fear, yes. Peace? Never. We have agreed we set the stage for power to do what is necessary. Not good. Not fair. Not decent or kind. Just necessary and nothing more."

"Of course, brother," Ito's mouth formed the scowl that told of his inner anguish. "We thought, each of us as we built our industries, we were amassing wealth to serve ourselves. We thought of our power and it gave us satisfaction. Now all that is meaningless because we will not be here to enjoy that power. Now we plan for power that will control and balance the forces that shape the world. On that front we are winning."

"Not yet, but we will live to see the balance fall to us. Did that sick bastard Katasawa plant some kind of ethical values in our brains?"

"No, our values come from not being able to enjoy what we have built."

“But we never enjoyed the things of this world. Have you ever known love? A woman? Happiness in harmony with nature? Have you or I ever done the unthinkable thing ... have we ever just played?”

“You’re saying we are simply tools put in motion by another?”

“If not, what are we? Who do we serve if not ourselves? Who is the puppet master yanking us through this miserable existence? Shouldn’t we know?”

Hedeki slowly shook his head and looked at his hands. His face went blank except for the lines formed by years of pain, then animated with understanding. “Remember what Gifu found out? When we sent him to Korea? Remember?”

“Yes, but they are all dead.”

“Gifu learned that a man named Toyama Mitsuru organized the Kokuryukai, or the Black Dragon Society, which was a secret army designed to drive all whites out of our yellow world. Perhaps more important, Toyama Mitsuru believed in the resurrection of the Samurai and the re-establishment of ancient Japanese values regarding racial purity and superiority.”

“Yes, but that is not what we have done. After Japan lost Mitsuru’s war, the issue of racial purity is no longer possible. We were to be Samurai, but we are not. The only thing left from Mitsuru’s dream is power emanating from our ancient ways. That is what we have built, and if there is an ethical message it is subject to our own interpretation...”

“Or Doctor Katasawa’s,” Ito interrupted. “At some time when he was altering our brains that bastard may have had an idea of what he was doing.

“Excuse me now brother, I must rest.”

Hedeki dozed and awoke 30 minutes later. He changed the subject as if no time has passed. “Sami Cook is meeting with Dan Hill. I wonder what the DDO knows about Dean? The Marine, Janet Hurlbut, why is she in the meeting? Are Taegu and Gifu in there?”

“Your man and mine. Are we wrong about Dean? How could a courier be so effective if he wasn’t involved on the highest level?”

“We were not wrong. Too many things changed because he was involved. Now he’s through. All sides have discounted him. Every player in this drama has him pegged as a non-player. Dan Hill has to get him out now while he is out of the spotlight before someone takes him and breaks into his head. Sami is smart. She wants him where she can handle him. Janet Hurlbut is her tool. Let’s hope Sami is not her tool.”

“She could not be, brother. This confirms once again we picked the right successor.”

“I am right!”

Chapter TWENTY-TWO

“Mister Dean. I ... I’m not comfortable around your wife. I don’t want to be in meetings with her.”

“What are you saying Bedar, that she has attacked you? Believe me I know how that feels.”

“No, not that.”

“What is bothering you, then?”

Interesting. Seems he has the hots for her. Go for it, brother. She abrades me where it hurts most.

“Bedar, there is something I have told you but you must know as truth. She is not my wife. That is a game she played to get control of me.”

“Not married? But you are being protected because she is your wife? I am confused. What am I to report? What are you doing here?”

“Truth? Since I studied about ancient Persia, I have always dreamed of visiting Persepolis—Parsa.”

“That’s all? Isn’t this another of your secret missions?”

“They are all wrong. I do not have missions. I am not secret. I have learned to avoid problems caused by crazies like our friend hiding in there, but I am exactly as I tell people I am. I am a teacher on sabbatical leave studying the way different nations educate their children. I firmly believe we can predict the future of each nation by the way it educates its populous. I have a big enough ego to believe that is important.”

“This is a lie, right? Your cover?” Bedar walked around the red sandstone column grumbling and opening and closing his hands in strangle mode.

“Okay, Mister Dean the Deceiver. If you do this, then give me one example of what you have learned.”

“One? Thanks for that. I only have one good example.”

“Please go on. Convince me!”

“Okay. Take India. Started by Gandhi, set-up trade and technical schools. Not for all, but for a selected few. These schools produce accountants, doctors, technical trades people, engineers. In fact, they produce more educated than India can employ. Thousands leave India and seed the world as they look for opportunity. Some return with contacts and

ideas that are changing India. In time, India will be a nation that services the world. How's that?"

"By the light, my family is part of that. I know that to be true. And other examples? "

"I wasn't kidding. I've only found that one positive example, unless you consider Japan's educational system as designed in the American model by McArthur."

"So now I'm really confused."

"Look, it is important that I convince Missy Dominick that I am not a player. Can you contain your hormones long enough to help me do that?"

"My hormones, yes. My feeling that she must be made to understand why Islam must leave my land and let us return to the wisdom and strengths of the past ... No. My feelings that her New Wind nonsense is merely a means to an end for us. A means that is not stuck in a dark age like Islam. These things I cannot contain."

"I like that! Bedar, this will be our goal. I too believe that someday those conquered by the sword and cruelty and forced to follow a political and economic control system called God's way, can win their freedom."

"You mean?"

"God, Ahura Mazda, Yahweh, Christ, Allah. Same God, different name."

"You are so very wrong to think so Mister Dean. So very wrong."

Apadana's Staircase. Parsa, Iran:

Dean took each step slowly as he studied the ancient men marching in carved relief at his side. "Think of this time in history. The power, the lives,

the belief that it would go on forever. This is your history and everyone's, Bedar."

"Ha! It does go on forever, but now in stone and fallen ruins. This is the testimony we witness. But we do not learn from it."

I've climbed this stairway before and your thoughts are not new to me, Mister Dean. Mister liar.

"Let's meet Beatrice Dominick and get it over with."

"She is attractive, I give you that."

"You'll give me what?"

"Look, after we see the Palace of One-Hundred Columns, we can take a break and find a place to meet in secret. Any ideas as to where?"

"Kaba Zartosht, in front of the tombs. There is a worker's shed in the wadi below there. I think it is not used until when they work in the winter season."

"Go find her. Tell her."

Bedar disappeared in search of Missy. She was easy to spot and once he told her Dean wanted to speak with her down by the entrance to the tombs, she agreed to go with him. On the way, Missy plied Bedar with questions.

"Bedar," Missy asked, "why are the tomb entrances in the shape of Christian crosses?"

"Miss Dominick, do you think there was no world, no civilization, that man created no Gods until Jesus? These are the crosses your religion borrowed from ours. Romans executed on a tau frame, not like these."

"Well, I never gave it a thought. Abraham came from Ur to teach monotheism. This is far from there."

“Stop thinking of biblical boundaries. Think Persian Gulf, the rivers that feed it, and cradles of civilization connected by trade. Parsa is part of this Gulf region. Think trade and ... Well, think differently.”

“It is all in our great book of history, the Bible. The Old Testament and New.”

“Probably, but interpreted by people who thought in terms of then current empires and political boundaries. They were unable to think about certain things because they didn’t have information, didn’t even know about some of the great civilizations and what they had accomplished. Or could only think in the Greek mindset. Don’t you know that historians can date a movement or philosophy by knowing the limited mindset of the time? For an example familiar to you in America, the Mormon religion’s tenants are stamped by the extent of knowledge and the beliefs of the time they were written. What was imagined about the lost tribe of Israel and pre-historic American civilizations and religions did not prove to be true when scholars learned more of the New World, its people and religions.”

“Yes but ... of course, it’s a cult. The One God knew and told us. Our scriptures are divinely inspired. Besides, none of the civilizations before that were decent and governed by the teachings of Christ.”

“You have been carefully inculcated Miss Dominick, but maybe not all you need to know was given to you and you can’t find out because that would be a break of faith.”

You bastard. What makes you think you me? How dare you! You simple barbarian. Why should I put up with this insolence? Damn him, he has a comeback to everything I say.

“Bedar, my man, we follow a tradition that goes back thousands of years. The Greeks recorded much of the Old Testament. Alexander the Great conquered your Persia and brought to it Western Civilization and ideas.”

“That’s absurd. History written by those who conquer is not accurate history. Alexander burned our great libraries in 329 B.C. Alexander destroyed information that could have given you an insight into what later teachers like Jesus learned and taught. What did happen the first twenty-six years of Jesus’ life? What was he exposed to? What philosophies formed the teacher? There is so much more to learn. For example, have you read Annie Besant? She was a Western woman like yourself. **Hinduism and Zoroastrianism go back into what history calls ‘the night of time’, Hinduism being the more ancient, and Zoroastrianism the second religion in the evolution of the Aryan race.**”

“Jesus taught what God told him to teach. I’m referring to the truth as revealed to Peter for the New Wind Bible, ‘... and God spoke to Peter. You are my voice as Jesus was my voice. Through you I reveal my glory.’”

“I’ve noted many men who claim to speak for God. Doesn’t the rhetoric sound so very familiar? History is full of tyrants and false prophets. Are you sure it wasn’t something you were told at Yale Divinity School? I said divinity school? That’s a direct contradiction. What do you call it?”

“You’re trying to say oxymoron.”

“Yes, that’s what morons believe, incongruous information.”

“Damn you, Bedar. Why do you think you’re right when the greatest minds of all time have taught otherwise?”

Wow, where did this guy come from? He has the guts and brains to challenge me. I could eat him with a spoon.

“Because I am right and I could teach you something about the greatest minds. But not now. I’m going for Mister Dean. Watch for tails.”

“Wait. Before he gets here. I want to know something. What do you think? Is he a master change agent?”

“Change agent? I like that. Whatever else he is, he has brought about changes. I am confused as to who he really is. I like the way he represents himself as a simple teacher. It’s worked before. I’ll go get him and be right back.”

Palace of 100 Columns. Parsa, Iran:

This Palace was a giant. I wish I had some picture of what it looked like before it was sacked. I... Holy crap, that’s the CIA guy that was on Dorothy Wentworth’s tail in India and Tehran. There she is, oblivious as usual. He’s been doing this so long he’s getting careless. I’ll get her free of the bastard while he is stopping for a cigarette.

David moved quickly across the open gravel area surrounding the Palace, on a course that intercepted her. He waited behind a wall.

“Dorothy, Listen! Don’t turn. Don’t acknowledge me. It’s me, David Dean. There is a CIA thug on your tail. When you pass that next block of ruins, step through the fallen wall and make a B-line back down this side of the wall to me. Don’t let him see you.”

“I’m sorry, I had to look. He’s been following me for weeks. I kinda like it, he makes me feel safe, traveling alone I mean. I know as a woman I don’t need his help, but he followed me in a car. He’s in contact with others.

I came on a tour. The bus is somewhere nearby getting fuel so we can start back at 2:00. David, I knew you would be here. You are looking pretty good!

“Let’s get out of here. He’s not sure he lost you yet. No, he’s starting to panic. Duck down and let’s go!”

“Gad David, it’s too hot to run like this.”

“It’s hotter if they take you to get information about me. Here, let’s go into this ruin, it’s cooler out of the sun. You look great! Still fighting the past and your grandmother’s ghost? Are her tapes still playing in your head? Still deciding if you want to spend time with a man? I saw you in Tehran, but couldn’t contact you without giving you away.”

“I don’t know. I think some days I know, but then I don’t know when I need to know. I do know that you are my only friend over here and that you finding me tells me a lot.”

“Look! Your tail has called for help. Those two guys coming from the visitor’s center? Recognize them?”

“No, but why would they be dressed the same?”

“They’re Company. That’s the way they have to dress. I hope they’re sweating holes in their white shirts.”

“David, now what do I do? Now they know I know about them?”

“We have to get the hell out of Dodge. I need to think.”

What a screw up. I should have ignored Dorothy and left well enough alone. What to do now? Bedar and Missy are waiting for me down by the tombs. I can’t just abandon Dorothy. The other two will find me eventually. Besides, Bedar did want to have some one-on-one with her. Okay, it’s time to leave, thanks Horace Greeley, I will.

“Dorothy, where is the guy’s car?”

“Over there,” she pointed past the row of columns. “See the cars behind that berm. His roof, it’s gray.”

“It’s next to our rental. If we follow this wall, we can get to it. Bedar has the key. Maybe the CIA jerk left his key? If not, I can hotwire it. You ready to sprint? Got to keep bent over. Can you do it?”

“David, as you well know I’m in much better shape than you. Don’t underrate me because I’m a woman.”

To their amazement, the car was unlocked. David searched for the keys in all the usual spots. He found them quickly and told Dorothy to get in.

“I can’t believe the CIA guys would leave the keys under the floor mat.”

“It’s a guy thing, Dorothy, you wouldn’t understand.”

“Where are you taking me?”

“I’m not ... Well, I guess I am. We need to get to the airport in Tehran. We need to go by an indirect route. Look at the road map. We should turn East here instead of West, that will fool them. Let’s go through Kerman. We’ll get to Qom tonight if we can get that far. I have a BOAC flight ... open ticket. What about you?”

“The same. It has to be BOAC, it’s the one that lands in Istanbul. Aren’t they looking for you there too?”

“Sure, maybe I can go as your pet? Maybe I’ll have to go in drag. Any ideas? Objections?”

“Well, in drag you can hide in a bee-keeper suit, but you’ll have to find one. We’ll both need those burqua things and you need a passport as a woman. I don’t even have a bra with me. Nothing extra I can loan you.”

“No worries. I was joking but it may not be a bad idea. We can pick up what we need at one of the outdoor markets. We could both dress like conservative Iranian women.”

“I have a passport I stole in Karachi. You can buy us chadors, they’re the Iranian burqua. I read some women still wear them abaya style with a veil that covers most of the face. You can wear yours without the veil. I like dark blue. And henna. You can have fun painting designs on my face and hands.”

“Really?”

“No, it takes too long to wear off.”

“I have a grease pen. I’ll buy a book of designs.”

Chapter TWENTY-THREE

SAVAK headquarters. Reva:

“Mister Martin, you represent the DO and Hill, the Deputy Director of Operations?”

“No. I don’t represent them. I am my own man. I work directly for those in power. How else would I know your real name is not Ramsar?”

“You mean we here of the Iranian police are to believe that you are the main man in charge?”

“You know that. I also serve the interests of Iran.”

“You mean the Shah?”

“You know what I mean and I am tired of these games, Ramsar. Or would you prefer I address you by your real name, Hafez Nederi? What can I do for SAVAK?”

“Ramsar please. Only by Ramsar. I have family to protect, you know. Tell me about agent Fallout.”

“Ha! You fell for that?”

“Fell? He was to send Hill, you came. Fell for what?”

“Everybody knows Dan Hill was a second-rate analyst for the CIA. He never amounted to anything until I decided to use him and instructed him to contact the teacher and use him as a courier. The teacher was used, but never part of us.”

“Our sources said he was also code-named Cowboy?”

“No, he’s from Colorado, not Texas. You must have information about someone else. The DO is from Texas, he’s a cowboy.”

“And there are no women cowboys? Deputy Cowboys?”

“English is a very difficult language. Especially American English used in the West. Cowboy is male. Cowgirl is female. There were never women Cowboys.”

“That is ... very confusing as you say, and I lived for a while in Oklahoma. So, my information is contaminated. But ... David Dean is Fallout, right? He cleans up the fallout from your messy operations.”

“No, I can assure you we called him that because he has pattern baldness.”

“Come now, Mister Aston Martin. What would you have us believe?”

“Easy, Ramsar. His hair fell out. Easy jump to Fallout. Nothing more than a moniker we use to make fun of him and talk about him so no one knows who we are talking about.”

“But everyone here knows. That’s confirmation. He is your agent and you couldn’t let people know so you made up stupid names for him. There is no other logical answer, so please confirm that he is of importance.”

“Oh, I guess you understand more than you should. But he’s out of the game now. His usefulness ended when you learned of his code name and exposed him. Right?”

“We are understanding more than we should, Mister Martin. We know your game and players. Fortunately, you are on our side—we are on the same side. Now why are you here?”

“Obviously I put myself at risk to assure you, once and for all time, that we are on your side.”

“I was learning English as a boy, Mister Aston Martin, when the great Oral Roberts asked me to put my hand on the radio and ... we connected and I knew I would become part of his crusade. I was a boy, but that connection took me to Oral Roberts University. I went to Tulsa shortly after ORU was founded in 1963. My eyes were opened. They sent me back here to help save souls in my country.”

“I know that. So what do you need?”

“Direction beyond what I am getting from my superiors, especially since Mohammed Pashto asked for asylum to return to America. I need to know if Dominick is in charge and you are next in line? What about his granddaughter? Somebody else? We are poised to act, but the devil works in strange ways and I need to know you are not the ... false prophet.”

“Dominick, his granddaughter, some bishops, then me. Oral Roberts is a soldier of God who believes in Dominick. The proof is that we are in control and those who preached against us are gone or under our thumb.”

“We would like Dominick to confirm you.”

“He already has. Didn’t Dean tell you about his wife? Don’t you know The New Wind is really the Dominick Cartel? What more could you ask for?”

“Now daylight breaks across the wastelands. Now I see how you play this game. What next?”

“The hard part will be convincing your forces that the radical fundamentalists must be allowed to begin their reign of terror and evil.”

“We don’t accept that. Why destroy this great nation? Why bring about so much suffering? What about our mothers, wives and daughters? It is they who will suffer.”

“I am told it is God’s plan. Only when a crisis exists and evil flourishes and threatens will good people beat their plowshares into swords. Only then will the love and justice of Jesus sweep this land clear of those who follow false gods. And you have ample warning. Get your families out.”

“And America will lead that charge?”

“All the Christian nations are uniting. Some, like France, see only what they can gain in the way of favors, trade, and the power of a new type of colonialism. Others, Britain for example, know the pain of loss of their stature in this part of the world and seek to restore their power and control the oil beneath your feet.”

“And you? What do you get out of it, Mister Martin.”

“I am a soldier for Christ. This is a crusade that American will support for as long as it takes. Or the oil runs out, you ninny. Dominick is God’s vision and knows this does not end at Armageddon.”

“But the prophecies? Judgement day is near. It must be so, I listen to Roberts, Robertson, Swaggart, Falwell, Baker, even Schiller ... all of them preach God’s message against the heathens and the coming day of judgment.”

“Of course they do. That’s proof of Dominick’s power. He writes their scripts. But Ramsar Hafez, this Armageddon is not for us. It is the end of time for those who do not accept The New Wind. It’s the end of Pisces, making ready for Aquarius.”

“Mister Aston Martin, go back and tell your people we too are soldiers ready for the great war.”

Chapter TWENTY-FOUR

Worker’s shed below Kaba Zartosht. Parsa, Iran:

“You won’t believe this Miss Dominick. Dean took off with a woman. The CIA is swarming all over the place, I heard them talking. Dean took their car. They commandeered the car I rented for me and Dean, but he flattened two tires.”

“They’re chasing him? They took your car? He left with a woman? We’re stranded here and there are CIA guys all over the place?”

“Well, I’m wondering how you got here?”

“I ditched my tails, bribed a pilot and we flew down here. He’s at the airstrip. I hitched a ride.”

“Then it’s safe to guess people know you’re here.”

“No ... well, of course. They probably figured out the plane is here. I’m not sure I can trust the pilot.

“But Miss Dominick, you are perhaps the second most powerful person in the world. This is not making sense to me.”

“Bedar, I am the heir apparent, but not yet in fact. My grandfather has what I call the ‘revulsion disease’.”

“What?”

“He is one of the mules; a seemingly normal man but a dead-end. He is programmed by nature or mental illness not to reproduce. But in his case, he had to have an heir to take over the business. Unlike a mule, his seed was alive. My father was not the product of intercourse with a woman. She was a virgin implanted with his seed. They took my father by caesarian section. Like most of our religious leaders Dominick is disgusted by women. He is attracted to boys. He is unable to deal with the thought of a woman, me, being the head of the New Wind even though I am his only blood.”

“So you are Lilith? You are fighting the ancient battle?”

“Lilith? What?”

“In every religion I know of men have invented a story that God made man superior to woman. It’s similar to the one told in ancient Judaism that God created man and woman as equals. Then the woman would not lie beneath the man and be subservient. God realized his error ... interesting that he screwed up ... being a man and all ... anyway. God threw Lilith out of the garden so he could create Eve out of Adam, thus shifting the balance of power between man and woman. And remember, Eve was screwed by the snake’s information.”

“That’s bullshit. I never heard such a story. Let me paraphrase the New Wind Bible: Women give birth to males and prepare them to lead so

that women can focus on supportive roles. God does not intend them to lead men.”

“Really? And who wrote that, Peter? Nonsense! It is interesting to find in your history that whenever a woman is heir to the church, the perverted mules of the brotherhood make her into a demon or a whore. Lilith, they made into a demon. Mary Magdalena, Jesus’s follower ... perhaps even his wife ... a woman who witnessed his dying and is the only source of information about his rising into heaven from the dead, was denigrated and made into a whore by men who were disgusted and threatened by women. Did you ever wonder why the story is the one of Horace of ancient Egypt? The tale is the basis of your salvation. Shouldn’t you know more it and about her?

So, Miss Dominick, what are you? Isn’t that what’s at question here?”

Bedar, you monster! This is what they warned me about, the way the devil works to undermine our faith. This is the devil speaking in tongues and twisted words to threaten faith. This is my test, the one they taught and I would be subjected to. This is how it works. The devil sent this beautiful demon to taunt me. First, he connects with me, then he begins the erosion of my faith. But ... what if? Damn, there is no one I can talk to. No one to take my side against his ranting. I have no one I can trust ... period.

“Nice try, Bedar. You’re good at what you do, but you can’t fool me. I have my faith and it is like a rock. You can try to trick me with false words and ideas, but you cannot undermine my faith. You only make it stronger.”

“Yes, I understand faith. Yours is not your own, it was put into you with your first milk. Did you have a mother? Were you born equal or were you made from the rib of your father?”

“That’s rotten and evil. Enough Bedar. You’re a demon sent to test me and you lose. And yes, I had a mother. My father had intercourse with her. I was born vaginally, but because of grandfather’s revulsion to that sin, I never knew her.”

“The question is, are you Lilith? What you think I am is not important. If I succeed in testing you, it is because you are trying to figure out what you are. Lead ... or get out of the way.”

“You’re an SOB Bedar. We’re done here. I’m leaving this shack and ...”

“You’ll what? Fight, fade or flee, as the Austrian analyst pointed out your options? Fleeing seems to be the path of cowardice you want to take. Then you can fade into the side of Dominick and return to the womb of man. Buddha was born from a slit in his mother’s side because vaginal births do not preserve sacred virginity. The Virgin Mary, a married woman, never had intercourse? Did she have a slit in her side? After the birth of Christ and his brothers, was she still a virgin? Wow, what a message to keep women subservient slaves. Things related to having a vagina or putting a penis in a vagina are evil ... but think about it Miss Dominick. You believe becoming a mother is the original sin!

“You women are only disgusting and sinful to perverted male mules who have created a belief system to serve their ilk. Just how much have you thought of this revulsion disease you have identified? Do you understand Oedipal conflicts and hatred? Do you think the female sex is a canker designed by God to test man and create religious hierarchies?”

“You rotten bastard!”

“Well, Miss Dominick, without a penis you cannot blow the New Wind. Want to use mine and join me? You can rule through mine. It doesn’t

have problems with vaginas or virginity or even pubescent sexual thoughts about my mother. I think I am a normal male. Sexual organs aside, I personally can't stand women who don't think, don't lead, and who retreat through a slit into the side of perverted old impotent men."

Chapter TWENTY-FIVE

Sungawa-Sungana offices. Corfu Town:

"Janet, we searched everywhere. No one knows where Dean went. He set up the meeting between Dan Hill and the anti-Shah factions in the SAVAK. He couldn't have known we sent Aston in Hill's place ... unless he is working with SAVAK. I'm not sure he knows Aston. How could he? We're sure he didn't blow Aston's cover. We had men watching him. He met with Beatrice Dominick at the museum and then disappeared. We had reports of his SAVAK driver waiting at the railroad station but Dean never showed. We know his driver rented a car from Avis. He was definitely with Dean. They asked for maps and directions to Tabriz. We have every road, hotel and safe house covered."

"Sami, I know David's itinerary. First and foremost, David is seeing the things and visiting the places he identified. Think back, he has gone where he planned to go unless thwarted like the time in Pakistan by that female vulture Dominick."

"So where do you think he went?"

"Obviously Persepolis. He's probably in a hotel in Shiraz right now."

"Of course! I agree Persepolis, but that was two days ago ... or at the latest yesterday. He's on the move again. Janet, where is his next stop?"

“Istanbul. He has to get out of Iran. Sami, he won’t try to go overland across Iraq and Turkey. He has to fly from Tehran’s Mehrabad International. It’s less than a four-hour flight to Istanbul. He may already be there. Please Sami, we must check with your men watching British Overseas Airlines. No, if he came through there, they would have notified your people immediately. I have to get to Mehrabad. Can you get me there?”

“Damn it Dorothy! If you don’t need a bra and makeup, neither do I.”

“Hold still! You’ll have to shave just before we leave for the airport. This pencil is some kind of wax. I’ll just do dot designs around your eyes like these curlicues in the magazine picture. You could hide a pregnant Polar Bear in the chador with you. I think you should tie your shoes to your belt and wear sandals. I’ll paint your toenails black and do some designs on your feet. Hairy legs are nature’s way of making women and men equal. You know I refuse to shave. Iranian women are more liberated than you might believe.”

“Our US passports will give us away. Dorothy Wentworth and Beatrice Dominick are not Iranian names.”

“You have a passport that says you are Beatrice Dominick?”

“No, Beatrice Dean. I stole it from a would-be suitor.”

“Really? So, David, how do we get through immigration?”

“Bluff, I guess. You pretend you are my maidservant. We are the property of a very powerful Iranian serving in America.”

“It won’t work.”

“It might. It’s a cultural thing. If questioned you explain that my husband demands I travel under a name no one from my village will recognize. He has forbidden me to talk to any man. You are an Iranian American maidservant who protects me. How’s that?”

“Dumb.”

“Well, what’s the worst thing that can happen?”

“Miss Western lady, this Iranian chador abaya is exactly like our gulf abaya but it is closed completely down the front. It is meant to be worn up over your head. It is made of silky, georgette material. It must be black only. One size fits most, but you are tall. I have old-style big sizes. You want two? Remember, the veil is not included. I have those and sell also.”

“I will buy two. One veil. Now I need sandals to replace the ones I left behind. My foot is large.”

“May I ask why a Western lady is buying this older abaya fashion?”

“Of course. My husband demands it. I must please him. He is a good man who knows a woman’s place is in the home or in the grave. But now he serves Iran in America, where he married me. He must have his household there as it is here. I must travel and not be seen by men.”

“Of course. Let me help you find the correct footwear across the road in my uncle’s shop. I will wrap your purchases. Eight rials is what you owe here.”

Back at the hotel, Dorothy proudly showed David her purchases.

“Darn, I wanted blue. And this veil is not completely transparent.”

“Look David, they only have black. The veil is the heaviest I could find. Now try on the sandals and stop complaining. I had to lie and

compromise my core values to get this stuff and I'm not going to take any of your shit."

"You? This dump doesn't have hot water. There are silverfish all over the bathroom ... snap, crackle and pop ... and no paper. We have to get ready, get out of Qom and to the Tehran airport by 4:00. That gives us less than five hours. I'll shave as close as I can in cold water and you can paint over the cuts and stubble."

"It's your feet! You ever heard of clean socks and foot powder? Wash! I'll do your stubby yellow nails."

"Geez, I was camping."

"Okay, I'll pull off here and we can slip into our new identities. There's no one around."

"What about the car?"

"We ditch it near the airport. Someplace where we can get a taxi. Take your stuff. I'll have to ditch most of my manly gear in that wadi over there. I can buy new stuff."

"They'll want to search our bags. Here, take some feminine items."

"Kotex. You wear blue and pink underwear? You do have a bra! No man will search past these."

"You're cute. Basic black becomes you. Shall I call you Fatima, emphasis on fat?"

"Anything but seldom. Now check one more time. Do I look like a beekeeper?"

"Actually, David, I may like you better dressed this way. And beneath the veil ... a painted lady. Looks like tattoos. They match your hairy feet."

“When we ditch the car, we need to get away from it without attracting attention. Look for a place where the car won’t be discovered for a while.”

Mehrabad Airport. Tehran:

“Janet, what makes this easier is there are only two flights a week to Istanbul. My people assure me Dean was not on the last flight. He couldn’t have been. He was with the SAVAK driver that day.”

“Sami, thanks for coming with me. He has to get out and this is the only flight unless he waits four days. If he’s not on this flight, I’m going to take it to Istanbul. I’ll find him there or wait until he arrives. He has appointments at the International School.”

“I arranged that people continuing on not be let off the plane. That will make checking those who board easier. There are only five confirmed reservations and ten open seats. We will know exactly who boards. He will not get by us.”

“And Sami, is it okay if we take him back to Greece with us?”

“That is exactly what I promised and what we will do. Now go stand where you can’t be seen and watch the boarders. I’ll buy your ticket in case you go on to Turkey. Good luck, my friend. Let’s get your man.”

Chapter TWENTY-SIX

Parsa, Iran:

“Miss Dominick, if you don’t trust the pilot, we need to observe him before he knows we’re here.”

‘I agree. Bedar, I have one request if we go together. You keep that crazy religious shit to yourself. I don’t want to hear any more blasphemy.’

“Got to you, didn’t I? Okay, what I can share with you is there, just ask. Meanwhile, tell me everything you know about the woman Dean left with.”

“Just what the CIA guys told you. She’s lanky and masculine. She was recruited by CIA to be Dean’s handler. She worked with Dean in Kathmandu and waited for him in New Delhi. They had a tail on her as she traveled. She never had contact with Dean until this morning.”

“So, she’s an agent? CIA? Maybe she works for Sungawa Industries? What’s your best guess?”

“None of the above. I think the CIA used her and then Dean used her and threw her away. He does that, the bastard. She kept looking for him. That’s my best guess. What is strange is that they met up in Persepolis. That I don’t understand.”

“Okay, so it shouldn’t be that hard to spot them before they board the plane in Tehran. He may dump her again, but either way, he has to get that BOAC flight.”

“Stop! The plane is over there. The pilot is probably in the shed.”

“We scout to make certain no one else is here. If he called you in, the place will be under surveillance.”

“Bedar, the shed is the only place to hide. No cars, no places except that fuel tank to hide. You go to the shed. Nobody here knows you. I’ll check the tank.”

Bedar headed to the shed. Stepping inside, he was surprised to see someone he knew.

“Mohammed Atosa, what are you doing in this desolate place?”

“Huh ... oh, hello Bedar. Are you assigned here? I haven't seen anybody here since the mechanic left. I flew that Cessna down last night. I'm waiting as instructed. What are you doing here?”

“I'm on assignment too. Your passenger is my assignment. Have you reported in?”

“No, I had instructions from the very top. Follow orders. Do exactly as Miss Dominick says.”

“You're a good man, Atosa. She must get to Mehrabad in time to catch a 4:50 P.M. flight. Can you get us there? Is the plane fueled and ready?”

CIA Headquarters. Langley, Virginia:

“It's confirmed Sir. For whatever reason Dean disappeared in Persepolis. We need to cover Abadan and Tabriz. Also, if he wants out of Iran, he will have to catch a British plane in Tehran.”

“Okay Underhill, you're the expert. What's your best guess?”

“He is scheduled to go to Istanbul; he keeps on schedule. I say put double coverage on Mehrabad. He's traveling with a woman. He'll be easy to spot.”

“Goddamn sandals. Have I ever told you your feet are too small?”

“David, try to walk without squeaking. Stay hunched over. Look old.”

“That ink stuff you used is running into my eyes.”

“Good. Red watery eyes will make you look old.”

“We're up. Show the confirmations. Get the boarding passes.”

“Yes. I want to check this bag for her. I'll carry mine on.”

“Ma’am you should let her sit down awhile. She doesn’t look too good.”

“Oh my, I will. Can you find someone to carry my bag to ... over there? I’ll need to help her get to that wheelchair.”

“Nice move. How’s my Denver shuffle?”

“Stop squeaking those damned sandals.”

“With my arthritis and gas? Okay, this is the immigration line.”

“Sir, you speak English? Please, before I waste your time. When her husband was transferred to America, he hired me to come get her. Since eight years old she has never seen the face of a man other than the Diplomat’s. Now the sooner she gets on and I give her medicine to quiet her down, the better.”

“American names?”

“The family would never forgive him if they knew. These are confiscated passports SAVAK gave us.”

“Pass.”

Chapter TWENTY-SEVEN

Corfu:

“I’m going to Istanbul, Sami. Have your people contact me. I’m sorry if I disappoint you. I have to find David or I’ll never forgive myself. I know you think I’m being ruled by emotion.”

“I most certainly do not! You never have been. I want Dean to be safe too.”

BOAC flight, Tehran to Istanbul:

“Geez, my shoes are jabbing me in the side. That was easy.”

“David, how do we get into Turkey? They won’t buy the passport story.”

“I’m thinking.”

“Do you plan to hog the window? I want to see the Anatolian Plateau.”

“We can switch seats next time we go.”

“Well, that won’t be long. We should have stopped in the airport. Look, the last passenger is getting on.”

“Dorothy, don’t look. I know that woman. Her hair is different. She has a deep tan. Dorothy, we’ve been discovered.”

“That pretty woman? You know her? Do you think she knows you’re here?”

“Has to. Why else would she be here? She is supposed to be in Hawaii.”

“David, she took her seat without ever looking at us. She may not know.”

“Let’s watch her.”

“I have a plan. I’ll put my shoes back on. I’ll clean my face. I can shed this tent and veil and be a man again. You can ditch your abaya and be Dorothy Wentworth again. The problem is, Janet Hurley. If she hasn’t recognized me, she will when I change.”

“Here Fatima, honey, take this cold cream and use it to wipe those cute curlicues off your face. Remember, you threw away your stinking socks? Lean way forward, no one will see you.”

“If we can get off last, maybe we can shed these tents and ditch them. It will only take seconds. Hopefully, Janet will get through customs and be on her way before we get there. Now who else got on the plane? Who is watching us? We’ve got to know. These will be the longest three and a half hours we’ve spent together.”

“Sami Cook, all the evidence suggested Dean was not a player, just a pawn.” Gifu scratched his shaven head and examined his fingernails. “Now you say he’s disappeared again? No untrained school teacher could do that. If he’s still in Iran he’s working for one of the factions in SAVAK. If he got out of the country, then someone had to get him out. I most humbly suggest that we rethink this situation. Does the marine really think he’ll follow his itinerary? I will not talk with either brother until we have more information. We must find him and get into his head.”

“Gifu, thank you. What bothers me is Dean’s relationship with Beatrice Dominick and the New Wind cartel interests. He’s not on the Shah’s side, we know that from Mohammed Pashto’s reports. He’s not on our side or we would know it. He could be the key to the Cartel, but I doubt that. If he is as Janet says and we believed, an innocent, then Janet will find him and we will know for sure. Meanwhile, while I was at the airport with Janet I observed several CIA stakeouts, and at the last minute, Beatrice Dominick and a man we know is the SAVAK driver assigned to Dean.

“The whole bunch were scrutinizing the passengers as they boarded for Turkey. Janet boarded at the last minute and none of the spies paid any attention. They have the airport staked out. I think there are more Cartel, CIA, and SAVAK people there than customers. Dean could have flown to

another city ... no, to get out of Iran he had to clear immigration in Tehran. Dean must still be in Iran ... unless, what if he went into Iraq? Or if he went to Tabriz, could he be heading to Turkey overland? Either way, Janet will find him in Turkey.”

“Gifu, you are staying there until you hear?”

“No, I’ll fly to Turkey. I’ll have everything you need at our airstrip near Bursa. Miss Cook, under no condition enter Bursa. There are problems there right now.”

“Ito Shikoku, Sir. If we are to depend on the two wild cards, then Sami Cook is the one on trial.”

“Any insights into Dean’s connection to the cartel?”

“None. And what we know about Janet Hurlbut is too little. Has she taken Sami in?”

“Gifu, go on to Turkey and follow this. It is important. It may be too important to entrust it to women.”

Chapter TWENTY-EIGHT

International Arrival Gate. Yesilkoy Airport. Istanbul, Turkey:

“They brought a wheelchair. Maybe if you act distraught, I can ask for a quiet place to medicate you.”

“We’re last off the plane. The longer we delay the more time Janet has to get gone. Too long and immigration will be closed. They’ll go looking for the two Iranian ladies.”

“So, tell them a quiet room and about five minutes for the medication to work. We’ll have to slip out and go through customs.”

“David, I can’t believe I’m doing this. When we’re out, if we get out, I’m leaving you. I don’t need this.”

“Should I sob louder? I’m sorry Dorothy. I don’t like it either.”

Mehrabad International. Tehran:

“What do you mean, confiscated passports?”

“Exactly what the SAVAK uses. I have seen this before.”

“What are the names?”

“Dorothy Wentworth and Mrs. Beatrice Dean. But of course, these were not Westerners. One may have been British, the other was a tattooed Iranian of a Shia sect.”

“Both women, you are sure?”

“Very definitely. I could not make a mistake that close up.”

“Then you must not talk to anyone else about this. I will take it from here. If there is to be pain, I will take it. You stay out. Keep shut.”

New Wind Church Rectory, Tehran:

“Get this out now! Code it. Use only secure lines ... No, on second thought it must be hand-delivered by courier. Peter Dominick must have this information and no one else.”

CIA Substation Xerxes, Tehran:

EYES ONLY TOP SECRET. Confirmed: Dean and Wentworth stripped of their passports by SAVAK. Faction pro-Shah. Whereabouts of two unknown. Surmise held or dead.

Rodeo Internal Persia (RIP)

Corfu Town:

“You read that crap?”

“They took their passports.”

“Taegu, we’ve got to be smarter than that. They don’t take passports and then issue them to someone else.”

“You’re right, Gifu. It was Dean and Wentworth. But how? No one saw them.”

“Sami Cook was there. Janet was there. The CIA... They went through and boarded the plane. There’s no other explanation.”

“We find out how. We know when and where and ...?”

“I haven’t a clue as to why?”

“He’s traveling with Wentworth. He’s following his itinerary.”

“And he’s a ghost. How high up in the Cartel would you have to be to be able to board an international flight and not be seen?”

“That could only be it. He has teams of agents running interference for him. This Dean is more than we ever thought. Get to Sami. He was on the Istanbul flight. But how could Janet Hurlbut have missed him ... them?”

“We are being had, and if he goes on, we will not. It’s good you’re flying to Istanbul. Make sense of all this.”

Istanbul:

“Roll the chador up tight. Here, I can stuff both of them behind this room divider. They’ll be here until the next remodel. Now, check me over.”

“Rumpled, but passable.”

“You too. Okay, now we need a reason to be late through customs.”

“We’re in love, love. We stopped to mouse and have eyes only for each other.”

“That came from you? You, the woman who has no ...”

“Try to remain calm. I can act, but don’t wet your lips and don’t do anything with your tongue.”

“It’s not my tongue I was thinking of. Are you serious about splitting?”

“Absolutely. We get through this and I’m going my way. Don’t try to contact me again.”

“Okay, we sneak out this door, pretend we’re making out against the wall.”

“Geez, the guard is angry. Here he comes.”

“He’ll push us through. Smile, we’re on Turkey TV.”

“I’m not going to get my checked bag.”

“Good idea. Buy whatever you need. Get out of here and get safe.”

“Okay David, you crazy bastard. I think you have a life. Find it and forget me.”

“Dorothy, I never could or will. I’ll save your bra and stuff for ...”

“Damn you! Give me that carry-on. And you know what? I really don’t like you very much.”

As Dean turned, he saw a taxi pull away. Janet was staring straight ahead.

“Taxi! “

“Hi, speak English?”

“Korea, ’52. We’re seeing more Americans these days.”

“Korea? Great. Can you follow that cab with the hanging bumper. My wife thinks I’m not following her, and I’d like to keep it that way.”

“Of course. Christian women have no one to control them. I don’t know how you guys can put up with it.”

“You’re right, she won’t listen to me. She’s really okay, but she has her own money and liberated ideas. I think she’s going to meet a friend. Oh, don’t get the wrong idea, a girlfriend.”

“And the tall woman you were arguing with at Yesilkoy International? The one who is following us in the taxi right behind?”

“Really?”

“As you can see. Where are we going in this parade?”

“Your name is Harbiye, I see on the license?”

“No, that is my family company who owns this taxi. My name is Caddesi Harbiye. My American friends call me Turk.”

“Well Turk, I don’t know Istanbul and I have no idea where my lady is going. I do know the woman following us is ... well, let me say she is not someone I want to meet again and I don’t want her near my wife. When we know where my wife is going, can we ditch the cab following us?”

“I do not think so. It is my brother and he is too good a driver. He knows all my tricks I taught him. Maybe we can stop and I can talk to him?”

“Well ... after we see where my wife goes we can go a few blocks and then stop. I’ll talk to her and find out why she is following me. Then I will ask you to recommend a good hotel near my wife where I can be invisible.”

“That might be very hard for you to do. Now my other brother’s taxi is following. This is a big day for Harbiye, you have brought us good business.”

“Can you see who is in the last cab?”

“I saw him get in my brother’s taxi at the airport. Definitely Japanese. Short. Thin. Looks very strong.”

“And he’s following us?”

“Or the lady you want to hide from your wife.”

“Okay Turk, this calls for creativity. After we see where my wife is going, can you lose our parade long enough for me to jump out and get lost? Here, here’s ten dollars. You keep the change, lead them into the city and if they ask don’t give me away. Don’t tell them where my wife is. You will save me from liberated women who want to cut the manhood from men.”

“For 7,000 lira I can be very confused about what you were doing. I am most happy for this diversion from boredom. My cab is number seventeen. Please call for me when you want to return to Yesilkoy ... or other places you might wish to go.”

“Gifu, can you hear me? There is a lot of static on this end. Okay. Our man reported that he followed Janet from the airport in Istanbul. He said others followed her. One he recognized from the photo of Dean when bald. The other was the American woman agent Dean met in Nepal. Dean disappeared. The taxi driver’s brother told our man he was following his

wife. The American woman seemed quite discouraged when Dean disappeared. The taxi took her to the Plaza Hotel. I have a man watching her. I will be glad when you arrive in Istanbul. Control from Corfu is very difficult.”

“Yes, yes Taegu. And Janet Hurlbut?”

“The Hilton. Our suite there as planned. She does not seem to know all this is happening.”

“And ... Taegu, does that mean Dean was looking for Janet ... or Beatrice Dominick? Dominick is the one who says she is his wife.”

“Gifu, he did not get out at the Hilton. He continued on and then lost the American agent ... and our man.”

“Thank you for the update. When I arrive in Istanbul, I will make sense of these events. Has Sami Cook contacted Janet?”

“She is flying into Bursa. One call confirming Janet’s arrival at the Hilton. Janet reported she had not found Dean.”

“And she claims she doesn’t know Dean and the woman were on her plane? They cleared customs in Turkey. She didn’t see them? What is going on is a danger to us!”

“I have learned two Iranian women boarded at Tehran and used Dean’s and Wentworth’s passports. No Iranian women went through customs in Turkey, but Dean and Wentworth did. They had to be dressed as Iranian women, but it seems impossible.”

“Not for Dean. Expect the unexpected. It is possible Janet Hurlbut missed them, but I can’t imagine how. We must know where Beatrice Dominick is at all times. Dean The Deceiver will meet with her. He is a

grave threat. I have another two hours in the air. I'll stay at the Pera Palas Hotel as planned."

"Gifu, I have briefed Hedeki. He says not to tell Sami Cook about these events until we know for certain Janet and Dean are not playing us."

"The only way we will know anything for certain is known to us. Taegu, there is one who does know what we need to know. We need to see into DDO Dan Hill's mind. Katasawa's chemicals can be used without the DDO knowing we have gone into his brain. Start the process."

"Bedar, they're in Turkey. My people know where I am. I must go before my grandfather interferes."

"I can't go back. SAVAK knows I'm with you. Factions loyal to the Shah will not be kind."

"And so? What are you suggesting?" How about a night together forgetting all this?

"You can get me out and to Canada ... or?"

"Or?" *You bastard. Go ahead, say what you're implying.*

"Or I could work with you until we find Dean and his masters and make certain they serve only you. I can help you take your rightful place."

"As head of the cartel? They would never accept a woman as the head of the New Wind Church."

"The cartel and as the one who will lead a great new religion. A religion with no self-appointed intermediaries to God. A religion women thrive in as well as men."

"You think I am Lilith the Demon, don't you? I mean you said you really think I am."

“You are Lilith, but not a demon. You are the one to win religion back from the perverted mules. You are life. They are misfits in a same-sex loop where they will not pass on their genes, see no future, just power now and a self-aggrandizing afterlife. You reject their use of sin to control women ... all people.”

“You mean I am normal, fertile, and I want a man? That I can breed?”
I could with you, you heathen.

“Now you’re getting it. Those with children hope for a brighter future. You believe in a better world, not a world created to test our loyalty to a sexually embarrassed male god.”

“Look, I know what I can and can’t be. Bedar, the mules aside, you can’t imagine the world I come from. You must understand the control systems in place to preserve the power of the World aristocracy. You can’t begin to know the power of secret societies and fraternities of the rich and powerful, the networks of the progeny of those who control the world and will pass wealth and power along down through their generations. They believe in the future, theirs.”

“That’s not the belief in the future I’m telling you about.”

“But ... Bedar, do you know how sick and perverted some of those children of the rich are? Do you know the human trash that fills the ranks of the secret societies? If you knew, you would know they would never let me do anything but breed more of them.”

“Beatrice, you have something they do not control. You can take the keys to power. You can beat them.”

“Like hell. I’d last ten minutes. I think you’re naïve. How would I even do that Mister know-it-all?”

“Easy. You’re a woman. They know you would never do that. You’ve been carefully brainwashed and trained to be under a man. That’s their religion and politics.”

Under you ... maybe. That would be ... Damn it, B. Stop it!

“My grandfather ...”

“Holds the keys and he’s old and his brain is deteriorating, right?”

“He is protected by his bishops. The cartel, with all its corporate faces, is controlled by Dominick’s men. I have no allies.”

“Then find them. What about the brothers Shikoku?”

“You son-of-a-bitch!” They’re more heathen than you.

“Oh, you probably think they are anti-Christ minions of the Devil.”

“I do, because they are.”

“What you don’t know is hurting you. I thought you were brainwashed. I was wrong. Your brain is jammed and full of partial information. It needs to be opened to reality.”

“I said no more of this testing of my faith. You are the devil I know, and I reject your false information.”

“You mean you fear truth won’t stand a test of faith.”

Chapter TWENTY-NINE

Corfu:

“Mister Hill, what is wrong?”

“Wrong? What do you mean Taegu?”

“This stress is hurting you. It shows on your face. I read it in your body language Mister Hill and you must slow down and rest. Please, I have two very ill brothers to take care of. I do not want you to be ill.”

“I ... I do feel a little stressed. I have so much to do.”

“Please, I will make you some very special chamomile tea. I will cancel meetings this afternoon. Please rest and I will see to it you are awake for the evening meal. You can work tonight. The brothers are also resting.”

“Shizu, he sleeps, the sedative is mild it will not last. Help me give him this injection and you must operate the recorder.”

“Hedeki, Ito, this is most informative. I have summarized from his blathering. He is a very complicated man with many marital and parenting problems.”

“Get on with it! What did you learn?”

“Master Hedeki, enough to change our perceptions of things. There are only two of them in the CIA who oppose the cartel. The Director of Operations and Hill.”

“What? Impossible.”

“Master Ito, here is how they work. Hill convinced the DO that all agents of the CIA and most of the FBI and NIA—all their agents are compromised and known to everyone. It is true, as we know. In their mindset of superiority, the white, usually Anglo-Saxon, usually protestant, elite keep control through law enforcement and clandestine operations. They select for service only those loyal to their culture of power. Agents all have the same profile. They are from wealthy families, have gone to the

“right” prep-schools and universities, are recruited and are posted around the world. Further, they work in networks of brothers bound by allegiances to secret societies formed to protect and police each other.”

“Pompous and evil. Nothing new, it’s as old as man. Perfected by the Brits. Not unlike our own. What is the power of the secret societies over them?”

“Blackmail. They have, through their rituals, gained information they can use to ruin each man.”

“Yes, of course. Blackmail.”

“You know then, Master Ito. Hill proposed fielding operatives that do not fit the profile and using the agents in place to pass disinformation.”

“Hill came up with that?”

“And George bought it. They recruited Dean as a courier and used him. He is aware and hates them, but Hill is reluctant to let him go.”

“And who else?”

“Master Hedeki, Janet Hurlbut is a goddaughter of the DO they call Big Oil George. He and Hill and MI use her. But that is what she told Sami and it is the truth Sami uses to our advantage.”

“And?”

“A string of women called ID’s. Ingenuous Deputies recruited as handlers and messengers. None know what is happening or the role they play.”

“Aston Martin?”

“An Ivy League WASP. A patriot and a nationalist who believes in Dominick and spreading Christ’s message as interpreted by Dominick.”

“So that is why he was so effective in Tehran. He is truly a key to the Cartel.” Ito looked tired and angry.

“Can two men change the world? Two unlikely players in powerful positions?”

Taegu bowed. “As two brothers have.”

“Mister Hill, you are not getting some flu or cold I hope?”

“I hope not, Ito. The rest did me good. Maybe some coffee Taegu? When I sleep in the afternoon, I awake grumpy. It’s like a hangover.”

“Well, get over it! We have work to do. While you rested my brother and I came to some conclusions that will take us all some time to adjust to.”

“You made sense of Aston’s report?”

“More than that. Aston supports the Dominick madness as you know. He is a neo-conservative, as his kind of true believers are now calling themselves.”

“Yes, of course. The DO and I feed him information we want the cartel to have. His contacts provide us with a list of those we can manipulate to bring the cartel under our control. Like in Tehran.”

“By our you mean Our control, right? And you and the DO and We are running Dean and Janet Hurlbut. We have work for them.”

“Actually, Ito, Dean is not dependable. Janet is more loyal to Sami Cook than to me. She loves George, and keeps him in the loop as you know.”

“Dean is no longer an innocent. He has taken to your work and mastered the game. Janet seems to be too innocent.”

“Ito, Dean is the key we hold that opens the cartel through Beatrice Dominick.”

“I agree. But there is a complication. A man name of Bedar. He travels with her now and reports tell us she treats him with deference.”

“Deference? You mean she is having an affair with a SAVAK agent? The one Mohammed Pashto sent as Dean’s driver?”

“That man, yes. He is a Persian who grew up and was educated in India. We know that his grandfather was loyal to the Shah’s reforms and brought the family back to Iran. A powerful local Mullah had him arrested and tortured. He lost his mind. His son, Bedar’s father, got Bedar out of Iran. He sent him to seminary in Canada to avoid the old man’s fate. A brilliant student and once a favorite novice of the Society of Jesus, he received the Louis Molina award for excellence in historical perspective. He was never a Jesuit. He returned to Iran in 1969 and became a member of SAVAK.”

“She is known as a ball-breaker. A man-hater. What in the hell is going on?”

“Hate? Love? Human emotions are easily manipulated. Bedar is the Rasputin in the Dominick court.”

“And she ... they ... are in Turkey looking for Dean?”

“We must not let that happen. Gifu is there now. Janet is there. Sami Cook is traveling from Bursa to Istanbul. Dean is there somewhere, he arrived with Wentworth. He lost our man. According to Gifu, Beatrice Dominick and Bedar are in-flight in a small plane, due to arrive in Istanbul in about one hour.”

“Are we to believe that Dean will stick to his travel itinerary?”

“Janet says he intends to. She knows where to find him. She told Sami Cook she would report to her when she does. We can only hope we get Dean before they do.”

Istanbul:

Once Dean left the airport, he headed into town to the American Express office. He needed money to replace his clothes and wanted to pick up any mail they were holding for him.

“Name is Dean, David. You are holding my mail. I also need to write a check for lira.”

Feeling a bit flush, he went to Galerie Edip Men’s Clothing to resupply for the journey ahead.

“My luggage was lost by the airline. They say they will find it, but I have nothing except what I am wearing. Can you provide me with underwear and socks. Maybe a suit? I need slacks without cuffs. Oh, and they lost my good hat. Do you have hats? And glasses for the sun? I have only this shirt. They lost my suitcases.”

“Most happy to be of service Sir. Many of our customers are provided by the airlines. We understand. Mister?”

“Anthony.”

“Where are you staying? The suit and slacks will have to be tailored to fit you. We prefer you come in and we check, but we could send them to your hotel.”

He seems like a nose SOB.

“You provide great service and I appreciate it. How about I shop nearby and come back? An hour or less would be perfect for me.”

“But your hotel?”

“Oh, didn’t I tell you? I am on the afternoon flight to Ankara ... and I will proudly wear the clothes I have purchased from your fine store. Oh, and by the way, is there a stationer nearby? I need a large mailing envelope. I don’t have time to go to the post office.”

Istanbul Hilton Hotel:

“I’m from British Overseas. Have a special delivery envelope for a Miss Janet ... it looks like Hurley. I must deliver it to her in person. It contains her tickets.”

“I’m sorry Sir, but we don’t have a Janet Hurley registered.”

“She is with a company. Something like Sun-something Industries. The description the airlines gave me is that she is attractive, suntanned, and traveling alone.”

“Sungana? They have suites here, but ... let me check. Did she arrive today?”

“Yes, several hours ago.”

“Yes, a young woman. But she was not alone. A Japanese man followed her. A bodyguard, I think. She ... Sir, I cannot give you more information. The Hilton respects our guest’s privacy.”

“No of course not. And I don’t want to know anything but how to deliver these damn tickets. Is there a room number? You can sign for them and put them in her mailbox.”

“If I sign and the lady is not Janet Hurley?”

“We’re both in trouble. Look, where can I find her?”

“Those suites are on the top floor. I cannot let you go up there.”

“I don’t want to. I just want to do my job and get out of here. Okay, take this envelope. Put it in the box for that room. Write me a receipt that you put it in room number whatever’s box. Seal the receipt in an envelope I can give to the airline if there is a problem. I won’t see it. You have not compromised your guest’s confidentiality. Then we are both covered and I can get the hell out of here. I have three other packets of tickets to deliver before their flights.”

Was that too easy? Now how do I get up there and into her room? A Japanese bodyguard? The maids should be cleaning rooms about now.

Chapter THIRTY

Istanbul Hilton. Sungana-Sungawa Penthouse:

“My God, what’s that?” Snoring? Somebody is under my bed! The phone’s too far away. I’ve got to get out.

“Help!”

“Hey, what? Janet, is that you?”

“David?”

“I must have fallen asleep. I’m hiding here.”

“You scared the hell out of me. You snore! You sounded like what I always imagined was hiding under my bed.”

“Sorry, I had no place to go or way to contact you.”

“Get out from under there!”

“I’m trying, my pants are hooked on a spring or something. I’m stuck.”

“Good, stay there. You scared me and you shouldn’t be here.”

“I know and neither should you. What are you doing in Istanbul? Get down here and unhook me.”

“David, keep your feet away from me. Whew, how long has it been since you showered?” You paint your toenails? Black?”

“I lost my socks. I’m sorry.”

“Don’t move. I’m finding where you’re hooked.”

“That’s nice, but try lower ... lower or I’ll never get out from under here.”

“It’s sharp. Did it stick you?”

“No, not yet. Easy. Okay, I can wiggle out.”

“You look like hell. David, I’ve never seen you so trashed and ...”

“Handsome? Suave? Rough-and-ready? Between camping out on the road, wearing that hot black chador disguise, and then wrestling these dust bunnies under your bed, I’m pretty rough around the edges.”

“You need a shower. David it’s 2:00 AM. I was sound asleep.”

“I got here about 3:30 last afternoon. Got in while the maid was cleaning the bathroom. I really needed sleep.”

“Got in from where?”

“Tehran of course. Didn’t you know I was in Iran?”

“You drove here?”

“No. Dorothy Wentworth and I were on the BOAC flight with you.”

“You couldn’t have been. Dorothy?”

“Yeah, I knew her from Nepal and India. Then we met in Persepolis.”

“You were with her?”

“Not that way, silly. Dorothy doesn’t do it with anyone. She’s just a friend sent by Hill to take care of me. But we got around that.”

“David, nothing you are telling me makes sense. You were not on my plane. I checked all boarders.”

“You sat in front of us.”

“Was there a secret compartment on the plane?”

“Well, kinda. I mean I was in a chador, abaya style, and my face was painted with dots. So were my feet. My shoes were tied around my waist. Dorothy was similarly attired, but her face was uncovered.”

“You were the two Iranian women? You painted your toenails?”

“No, Dorothy did. And my feet. We were women until customs. Then we were lovers. Left a few minutes after you did. Dorothy had enough. She split. I followed you and that’s how I knew you were staying here.”

“I can’t believe it. How did you know to do that? To get through customs? To avoid everyone looking for you?”

“Figured it out as we went along. I ran into Beatrice Dominick in Persepolis. Saw Dorothy being tailed by CIA guys. We got out of there and I knew we had to get out of Iran.”

“Dominick? You ditched her in Pakistan, right? She’s beautiful, they tell me.”

“A physical bombshell. Other than that, she’s as ugly as a perfumed skunk.”

“Did you know she’s traveling with your guy Bedar?”

“He was warming to her. He’s not what he seems.”

“What do you mean?”

“He’s a major player against the New Wind and the cartel. He’s old Persia.”

“David, I never heard that before. You better shower and then we can talk.”

“I can’t. Well, not without help. How will I get this polish off?”

“Sami Cook will be here about 7:00. She won’t believe you’re here.”

“I can always go back with the dust bunnies even though that spring has sprung.”

“David, this is not funny, your being here and all. The way things have played out, no one trusts me or Sami at the moment. They know you were used, but now they believe you have become a major player and must be taken out. I also have my orders from George, but I am loyal to Sami Cook as well. The brothers who control Sungawa and Sungana are dying. Sami was altered and is starting to have head problems. The cartel is in a position to be taken over. Beatrice Dominick, Bedar and you are the key to taking over the New Wind Church and the Dominick Cartel. David ...”

“Janet, what in the name of hell are you talking about? I’ve set up appointments to visit schools. That’s the most important thing on my agenda. Got soap?”

Hilton Hotel room 727. Istanbul:

“Bedar, I need your help. I must find David Dean. He is the key to our access to those in the CIA who do not support God and decency. He can give us those rats who work for the Japanese and have never accepted our Savior.”

“I know I’m the key. But only if you use this new information to take your rightful place at the head of the cartel and the church.”

“I never said I agreed with you that I could ... or would ... or wanted to.”

“No? Well, I’m curious. Just now you used the word decency. I never heard you use that term in conjunction with the New Wind before.”

“Decency? Are you kidding?”

“All of our talks have been about power and economics. You never talk about the real reason for religion.”

“Yes I do! It’s all about that. That’s what everything we do ... I do ... is about. “

“Really Miss Dominick? Let me test that statement. Describe the real reason.”

“To serve God to mankind. To do God’s bidding on Earth for the masses. To save souls for God and bring salvation to man.”

“That’s it?”

“Bedar, there is nothing else. Believe me, they, we, I have studied this point many times. This is our reason for leading humankind.”

“Have you ever observed anything else the churches do that could be the main reason they exist? Take your time, think about my question. I need to know what you know.”

“Well ... no. Nothing. There is no higher function than what I have already mentioned.”

“Then to you, the Dominick Cartel and the New Wind Church are the same in structure. Only God is above religion and only Dominick is above the cartel. They have the same outline; they both lead mankind, don’t they?”

“Of course. It takes one to support the other, just as it takes armies to spread and protect the faith and political systems to control the masses and direct man away from his baser instincts.”

“Oh, like fighting against original sin which contaminates humans. Your religion has to exist to intercede for them and to save them from themselves.”

“Absolutely right! Okay, my Devil friend, so now you know we are in agreement. I don’t need you to try to weaken my faith. I passed, didn’t I!”

“No Beatrice. You failed completely. You missed the main reason religions must exist.”

“What?” You bastard! How dare you doubt my pure insights into what we are doing and why I am willing to dedicate my life to do it?

“Beatrice, the only thing churches do that is not manipulative or evil is comfort and serve fellow humans regardless of religion, faith, belief system, race, sex, color of skin, origin or whatever. Anything beyond that is man’s evil against his fellow man. That’s it, period. None of the answers you gave address that highest calling.”

“What?”

Oh my God, that makes sense! What’s he doing to me? Who the hell is he if not the Devil?

“And my answer is no, I won’t help you. Not if we are in such disagreement. All you would do is become another tyrant using religion to exploit humanity. I think you are way better than that, but you don’t.”

“You SOB! I’m going to take a long hot bath. I need time to think. I’m tired.”

“Try my lovely, but it won’t wash off. The stain I mean. You have to purge it from your soul.”

“Get the hell out of here. I mean it! If I need any more of your crazy ideas, I’ll have them extracted with a knife. Get out!”

“I guess I can go over to the Shikoku brothers. Maybe I can help from that side? I’d rather stay here and calm your fears.”

“I said out. Get out Bedar. Now!”

Chapter THIRTY-ONE

Corfu:

“Gifu, there are at least a dozen reasons Dean must be removed and any one is enough to make us move swiftly.”

“What you are saying is not new to us, Master Hedeki. The problem now is Dean’s relationships with Janet Hurley and Sami Cook as well.”

“No, we must not move until we know how they are working together. Dean may have started as an innocent, but he’s dangerous now. He is able to move through security and cultures like a ghost.”

“Yes Master, at this very minute he may be anywhere. He may have left Istanbul. I can’t find him. The Wentworth woman has confirmed reservations for Israel. The flight goes via Cyprus. None are direct from Turkey. She was looking for Dean. She seems to have given up, but strangely she has booked a layover on Cyprus. No one would do that if it weren’t for a meeting. I think she’s meeting Dean.”

“Recall Nepal and India. She’s somehow connected to him. According to Hill she delivers messages, that’s what Hill confirmed. Watch her. Bring her in if she does anything strange.”

“Everything she does is strange, Master. She isn’t normal. I’ve never observed a woman like her.”

“Whatever. Do you have contact with Cook and Hurley?”

“They can’t move without my knowing it. Cook is arriving at the Hilton as we speak. Can Taegu get more information from Hill about Hurley? When we examine how she has fit into things it’s too convenient to be an accident. She is not to be underestimated.”

“I’ll make it so. Be ready to bring the ladies in, Gifu. Don’t hesitate to act if you fear they are acting against our interests.”

“I have men in place. We’re ready at any time.”

“Now Gifu, what of the cartel-religious mess?”

“We listened to a debate between Beatrice and Bedar. He is threatening her. She may be coming to our side. She threw him out of their hotel room.”

“Bedar? She doesn’t suspect he’s to bring her to us?”

“Of course not. First, he has to break through twenty-nine years of programming. He’s making progress. She doesn’t know how to deal with her feeling for him.”

“Gifu. I want Dean here where we can learn from him. Get him here before someone else gets him.”

Penthouse. Istanbul Hilton:

“David, Sami and I are in trouble. We sense it’s because of you.”

“Me? How could that be, I’m not working for the CIA, I’m not in your games. I just do what I’m here to do.”

“I know that, but what is true does not read that way to others. What you have done ... like slipping out of Iran and into Turkey ... no one would believe that a naive teacher from Colorado could do such things. I believe you. Maybe Sami will ... no, probably not. It’s impossible to believe that some unwilling random US citizen has changed the course of relationships in the Far East and now the Middle-East.”

“I did what?”

“Your actions have changed the balance of power to our side. You have done more than Dan Hill or George or whole spy networks. Now you are the key player between the Dominick Cartel, the New Wind Church, American anti-cartel forces, and the brothers Shikoku.”

“I don’t even ... the brothers Shikoku? You’ve got to be kidding. Who the hell are they?”

“I work for Sami. She works for them.”

“Really? A United States of America Marine Lieutenant? You work for them? Are you a traitor? No, don’t tell me. What am I supposed to do to get out of this and do what I’m here for? I need as far away from all of you as I can get. Wait a minute. Sami’s sister, Suzie Song Onoto? She was altered by a monster corporation in Japan. She said her two sisters were also altered. I know a lot about what they did to her. Was Sami part of that? Are these Shikoku guys part of the corporation that did that to them?”

“Geez, David! See what I mean? You’re not supposed to have information like that. Only a few people in the world know about that and now you too? You’re in so deep there is no way I can protect you.”

“You? You’re my protector?”

“I can’t trust George to protect you anymore. He’d trade you for access to the cartel.”

“He’d do what?”

“David, honey, everybody wants you. Some want you dead. Some want you so they can chemically probe your brain and learn what you know. They have no regard for you or your life. Now Sami is due here any moment.”

“What are we ... what am I going to do?”

“First, you have to stay alive. Second, I haven’t a clue. When Sami gets here, after she gets over the shock of seeing you and recovers enough to believe you. ... if she does ... then I guess we’ll make a plan.”

“How about I just get back under the bed and hide in the dust bunnies.”

“David, what if I can’t protect you?”

“Jan, I still don’t know what or whom you’re protecting me from.”

“Believe me, from all the different bad guys, and some not so bad on our side.”

“I feel sick! But I’m telling you, I won’t die with black polish on my toenails. Can’t you get some remover?”

“Sami Cook. Sami. Over here please I need to talk with you before you go up.”

“Gifu, why are you here?”

“Follow me. There’s an empty card room off the bar.”

“Gifu, I don’t like this. Why are you here?”

“Just listen. Everybody’s here. Everybody is here because they want David Dean. We want him because he’s connected in ways we don’t understand. Our masters doubt even you because you have had contact with him. They doubt Janet. They doubt Bedar because Dean manipulated him when he was using Dean to find Beatrice Dominick. We need into his head to make certain he’s not playing all sides. Until he is under control, all of you ... maybe even Taegu and me ... are under suspicion. Sami, you have the most to lose. Our masters still have doubts about your loyalties. I do not. That’s why I’m here to warn you. Re-evaluate Janet. Make sure she is not using us all. Maybe she is controlling Dean? Maybe it’s all her?”

“Thank you, Gifu. Be where I can contact you. I’ll determine Janet’s loyalty in the next hours. First and foremost, I am Sungawa-Sungana Industries. Thank you for your trust.”

“Only cracking Dean can make this right.”

Corfu:

“Taegu, Gifu hasn’t made any headway in Istanbul. Tell me more of what you learned from our close look at Hill. You described it as another area of interest?”

“Certainly. Hill hasn’t put all this together, but it’s clear the CIA Director, they call him Big Oil George, is not playing to free America from the Dominick factions for the sake of America. He has a small group of very loyal men and they plan to take over the Church and the Cartel for their own gain. George wants to be President, build a dynasty, and use that position to take world control.”

“Is Hill too dumb to see what George is doing?”

“No, too idealistic. He has to trust someone and George brought him in, but not to the inner circle. He has the information, but sees only what he can deal with. So, we have another faction that wants world dominance, and we knew nothing of it until we got the information from Hill.”

“And Janet Hurlbut or Hurley is tied to Big Oil George and is close to Sami Cook. Did you and Gifu miss that?”

“Master Ito, at first. Of course, we were cautious and we still are. Janet’s connection to Dean and Dean’s connection to Hill gave us the insight that he is their most effective agent. We must get him and tap his information or he must die, and soon.”

Room 727:

“Bedar, I want you to come back.”

“Look, you know why I left and I won’t change my position. Missy, I asked you not to use those pheromone perfumes on me.”

“I don’t need to. I’m not. I’m sweating, that’s all. Bedar, don’t you sense it too?”

“I do. But if you are going to become another monster at the helm of Dominick, I will have no part of it.”

“As if you have morals? As if you don’t have your own agenda? As if you aren’t trying to manipulate me? I have been taught that only the devil forces us to question faith.”

“Of course, you were. It’s an icy talon they hooked into your brain and used to control you. You know that now.”

“What is and what is not? That’s what I don’t know. You take the most important thing I believe in, my religion, and tell me any superstructure

above serving one's fellow man is evil. That may be the dumbest thing I've ever heard."

"Yes, or the most important. Missy, I do feel about you as I never felt about another soul. But you are not ready and the time to act is now. Our relationship cannot grow because we are on different planets. I can't come back."

"How dare you! I may be a woman, and my grandfather and his minions may discount me and use me as breeding stock, but I have the power to make you cringe. You must do as I say."

"Okay, if you have the power and are prepared to use it for the better of all people, I will. Obviously, you're not ready. You aren't even Lilith. You are frozen in place by inculcated messages you haven't learned to identify and question."

"You have no idea of the quality of my education."

"Nor you mine."

"What?"

"Missy, the education you describe is learning in compliance with the values and intents of those who stay in control because they write the curricula and the tests that direct what you and yours study and 'learn'."

"What?"

"It's time to do what I should have done earlier in our short relationship. I should have brought in one of my heroes."

"What?"

"William Glasser."

"What? Who is he?"

“Given all the crap hurled at you, all the things that have happened to you, and all the junk jammed into your head, I want you to know I understand and I’m sorry about that. It’s just too damn bad. There’s no way to change what happened. But you have a choice. Right now. Now! A choice to win or lose your power. What are you going to do—I mean right now, tomorrow, and the next day? What are you going to do to get past that shit and get what you need?”

“I don’t feel well, I have to go.”

“You need time to think?”

“Maybe. Mostly I need to get my men looking for David Dean. If I can find that rat spy, I’ll know a lot more about what you are saying and if it’s true. David is the only person that gave me straight information. Help me find him. He’s here somewhere in Istanbul.”

Penthouse:

“Sami, come in.”

“Sorry it’s so early Janet, but things are really messed-up and we have a lot of things to get straightened out.”

“I know, believe me I know. And things are worse than you might think.”

“You know I saw Doctor Westfault ... the guy who is working to save Ito and Hedeki?”

“My God, no, I didn’t know you did. Is it the strange head problems you’ve been having?”

“You really didn’t know I was having more problems?”

“What did he say? I always knew you had a weakness from a head injury. I knew it wasn’t from an accident. I’d been briefed about that.”

“I don’t want to talk about it now. It may work out.”

“Sami, I’m not alone. Will you listen to the whole story? You may choose not to believe me, but I swear it’s true.”

“Is Taegu here? I met Gifu in the lobby.”

“No, Sami. I awoke at 2:00 am and David was under my bed.”

“Oh come on! You’re kidding right? He’s trouble. Because of him, they think you’re betraying us. Well, are you?”

“No, I’m not. Nothing has changed. I’m not working some deal against you or anyone. David snuck in here after sneaking into Istanbul. I never planned it or expected it. I won’t deny I was happy to see him, but I never dreamed ...”

“Where is he. Have him come out. You know I may have to let Gifu take him.”

“I know. He knows it now too. He doesn’t understand.”

“David, Sami is here. Join us.”

“Hi David. You know everybody is looking for you. Very clever you hid out here. How did you know?”

“I followed Janet from the airport. Got into the room while the cleaning lady was doing the bathroom.”

“You came from the airport? It’s how you got into Turkey that has everyone miffed. And out of Iran, I might add.”

“Show her your toenails, David.”

“What would you have done?”

“You polish them ... black?”

“Sure, all us Iranian women wearing chadors and war paint do.”

“You dressed as a woman?”

“It worked.”

“And to get into Turkey, he and Dorothy ditched their chadors and pretended to be lovers. They were the last through customs.”

“Okay, that was clever, I guess. You had passports?”

“They did Sami. David used the one Beatrice Dominick had made-up that said she was Beatrice Dean. In Turkey they used their own.”

“Look, don’t tell me the rest of this wild tale right now. And Janet, it would have been better if you allowed David to answer. David, I have some questions I need answers to. Tell me about Beatrice Dominick and Bedar.”

“He was my SAVAK driver when I got away from Mohammed Pashto. We became friends. He shared his background and dreams for a free Persia. He got the hots when he saw Beatrice. I was to meet with them when I saw Dorothy Wentworth being tailed by CIA guys. I decided to get her out and me out to Turkey. I really didn’t want to spend any more time with Beatrice anyway. I really don’t like her.”

“Did you know that Bedar was just using you to get to Beatrice?”

“I kinda thought he was his own man. He is against Islam and Arabs, against the New Wind, and has an education I found remarkable for a driver. I guess I decided he was a master agent or something. Oh, and his grandfather brought them back to Iran from India because of the Shah’s promises. Yes, I guess he could have been using me to get to Beatrice. It makes me wonder now that I look back.”

“David, even Janet doesn’t know this. Bedar works for us. Indirectly, I’m his control. He’s helping us educate Beatrice so she can take over the cartel and the church to bring them under our thumb.”

“Geez, Sami, why tell me? Now I know something else that will hurt me. I want out and I’m almost ready to head to Europe and get out of this Asia madness.”

“Something else you said? What do you mean?”

“Don’t ask him that Sami. It’s a conversation I had with him earlier and I told him he shouldn’t know what he knew.”

“Which was?”

“Sorry Sami, I was a good friend of your sister as you know. When she was recovering from all the horrible things they did to her, I was with her and learned about it as she did. She said there were three sisters and she was oldest. You and then another she could barely remember.”

“Is she alive?”

“Yes, I think so. She got her original personality back and could block the Song and Onoto personalities. She had planned to go into hiding and when I last saw her in Manila, she was ready to disappear. She planned to try and contact you in Hawaii. I don’t know if she did or you were ready.”

“I wasn’t ready. I remember her. I didn’t know then that Onoto was our father.”

“I didn’t believe there was a hell until I knew what they did to her ... all three of you. She deserves a good life.”

“Did you hear me tell Janet about the doctor when I came in?”

“Yes, I couldn’t help but hear.”

“Suzi Song will need the same operations I must have. If not, what they implanted in our brains will continue to deteriorate and we will lose our memories.”

“That’s horrible. I don’t know where she is. We’ve got to find her.”

“Janet. Your godfather George, what are his political objectives?”

“Whoa, that’s a quick change of subject. Well, he plays like he’s an old man just finishing his career. He’s not that old. He’s a World War II vet. He’s probably in his late fifties. Ethel, his wife, is a year older, I think. She likes to look matronly, but it’s all for him. I’ve known it is an act. I think it disarms people who might suspect him of political and power objectives.”

“Has he ever implied that he could do a better job than Dominick and his merry minions?”

“Sure, all the time. He wants to destroy them. I sense that from the depth of his anger when he jokes about them.”

“Would he want to take over the Dominick Cartel and the New Wind Church?”

“Geez, what a question. He would probably do a good job. Maybe, but he’s weak. We know it’s only George and Dan against the whole corrupted Dominick system. They need help, and that brought them to the Shikoku brothers, right?”

“It did. For your information, he has other men who run parts of the cartel that support him. They lie in wait. Now Dean here is the one to work with Bedar to get Beatrice Dominick positioned to take over Peter’s realm.”

“Damn you women! I don’t know how to play your crazy games and if I tried, I’d screw up bad. Now, thanks to you, I know stuff that I could be killed for knowing? Janet, how could you do this to me?”

“David, Janet is the one who gets her life swept away and along another path. Janet doesn’t know it yet, but as I weaken, I plan to put her in charge.” This should tell if I can trust her. She didn’t have a clue. She’s totally shocked that I can.

“My God Sami stop talking like that. What pure bullshit. It is David who gets the sharp end of the spear. I’m your secretary, that’s all. I can be the go-between with George. And I don’t want—will not take on—any more. Understand?”

Chapter THIRTY-TWO

“Bedar. Listen. I am Gifu. You can verify if you need to. I did not intend to contact you here, but ... we finally have Dean. We can set-up a meeting. You can bring him to Beatrice Dominick. It will make your position stronger as you suggested.

“Gifu, Ito’s aide?”

“Yes, we met in Bombay. You can set the conditions of the transfer if you like. That will insure you are not being set up. My only condition is that we get him back in good shape once you finish convincing Beatrice that she needs our collaboration.”

“We’re staying at the Hilton. Two rooms. It’s best Beatrice is not seen. Can you get him to my room, 454?”

“It will be very difficult, but ... yes. He is not a willing guest. Can you be prepared for him by noon today?”

“I have to prepare Beatrice. In my room by 3:00?”

“At 2:50, go to the refreshments room at the end of your hall. When you return Dean will be in your room. Do not be distracted by diversions we may provide for our cover.”

“Okay Missy, I don’t like what is happening between us. What can I do to assure you I’m not screwing around about who you are capable of being?”

“I told you. Get me David Dean. He’s your friend Bedar. I need information and he is the only one who hasn’t tried to bullshit me. I know a lot about him and believe me, he is honest about his intentions.”

“I agree. But you know he really may not be connected. There is a good chance he really is a teacher trying to figure out the world.”

“Sound familiar? You’re trying to be my teacher and make me change the world.”

“That’s only partly true. I won’t be party to making you do anything. You are my boss, and you are in control. I accept that and agree that you should be—that I am to support you.”

“That’s bullshit, Bedar. You try to weaken all that I believe in and my faith.”

“Strengthen it. Only strengthen it. I’m providing more information than you were allowed to have, that’s all. For the first time, you have to admit, you understand that as a woman you can lead and make changes.”

“And I’m to trade one sick old man for two just like him? All three mules.”

“No, I prophesize that a woman will lead the forces that break the evil power of the Cartel and the misuse of religion. A woman. Maybe you, but

observing your reluctance to examine reality I believe it is someone else. You and she will reshape God's will on Earth."

"What?"

"I can bring Dean to you. I will if there is hope you can lead for the good of others."

"And that I help you bring back the glory that was Persia?"

"That would be a natural outcome. I have faith too, you know."

"And, my Devil friend, what of the massive churches? The collections of wealth? All the repositories of art. You would end the age of religious power?"

"Of course, you will. All is evil that is not in the service of humanity. Everything beyond helping each other is superstructure designed to empower the few."

"What about the cartel and all its arms?"

"None serve mankind. All enslave mankind in some way and bend individuals to the will of a few. Cartels are the same as religions."

"And I'm supposed to do what?"

"Allow a system to arise that helps individuals find internal morality. External control by fear does not work. After thousands of years the proof is evident, it has failed terribly."

"And you? What will you be doing while I'm destroying all I believed in?"

"I hope to connect you to your own body and soul."

"What?"

“You have not explored your own temple. Without contact with the most powerful force, you wither and have no juice. We don’t need another mule.”

“Force? What force? Bedar, are you trying to make me believe in magic?”

“What are we here for? What do all energies focus upon? The continuation of the species. Reproduction. Europeans just killed over forty million people in World War II. In the overall scale of things that loss doesn’t matter because the species continues as if nothing happened.”

“You mean you think we’re here to breed so the species survives?”

“Look Missy, if you are to believe in the future, having children will ensure humans survive as a species. If you have children, you have an investment in the future and want it to be a better place. If you don’t have that connection, you believe in a dead-end mythology and secretly hope it all ends when you end.”

“I’m not ready to procreate.”

“But it’s time you learned the depths of love, one to another and mother to child - and it takes a lot of practice.”

“Bedar, it’s 11:00 in the morning. When will you bring me Dean?”

“I go for him at 2:30. He’ll be here by 3:30 or 4:00. Meantime, I didn’t get much rest last night.”

“So, you Devil, if I have so much to learn, you think I’ll let you rest? I can teach you a few things you know.”

Chapter THIRTY-THREE

Penthouse:

“David, do this and you’re free.”

“I am free. You can’t hold me. I don’t have the big picture and don’t want it. What is it you want me to do? Schmooze that bitch? I know little about her grandfather and all that New Wind bullshit. I never heard of a cartel except in a turn-of-the-century muckraker’s book.”

“Look, Janet doesn’t know about it all either. I know some of it. The bottom line is that people who control the illegal trade in drugs and own whole countries and political systems, including America’s, can be brought down. Isn’t that enough to make you agree to help?”

“Sami, I guess I have to take your word for all that. I don’t know why you would be better at exploiting the people and planet than Dominick. More people live better than ever before. Something about the system must work.”

“I see your point, David. You’re searching for answers as to the future of nations based on their educational systems, right? Well, go one step further. There is no future if people who think in terms of controlling the masses and enslaving them for the benefit of the few are in control. You see that organized religion is the tool of those who want to own and control the world. You have ideals, so do I ... we.”

“And Janet, you know nothing, right? That’s why you’re not betraying our country or the military or the CIA. I’m supposed to believe that?”

“You are, David. And you’re not alone in doubting me. The Shikoku brothers and others are questioning me the same as you. All I can say is

that I will not lie. I tell them all the truth as I see it. If I am feeling manipulated, I tell Sami and we discuss it. She has not tried to use me or to get me to do anything against my values. Even you ... there's the proof if you want proof."

"David, you need to know that the brothers are very ill. You know from my sister Song what was done to them ... to us. Well, what they experienced was worse and it will kill them. I am their chosen heir. Why? Because Aceito Onoto was my father. I am in the process of proving to them that I can take over Sungana-Sungawa and all its interests in trade oil, electronics, tobacco, automobiles and illegal commodities like drugs. I know I can run stop the illegal parts of it and we can operate honestly. I can and I will. What stands in the way is Dominick's hold on America and all the tentacles of his cartel. Beatrice can take control of Dominick if we can make contact with her and, if she is not a zealot like him."

"Sorry to raise a doubt, Sami, but do you have any idea what a monster Beatrice Dominick is?"

"She was made into a monster. She is changing. Your friend Bedar is showing her the light. That's where you fit in. For some reason, I guess because you didn't put up with her crap, she sees you as the one who got her thinking and doubting all the evil the New Wind blew into her mind."

"Really?"

David, Sami is telling the truth. You can hate Beatrice all you want, but she sees that as honesty. And she knows you are not an agent. If Bedar is to bring her into our camp, he will need your help."

"Where?"

“Two floors down. This afternoon. My man Gifu will take you to Bedar. You’ll be constrained if you like so no one thinks you went willingly.”

“I’ll never get to see Istanbul or visit schools. That really pisses me off.”

“Don’t be so sure, David. We can arrange it, can’t we Sami?”

“I’ll try, but first we have to make all the guys looking for David Dean believe he’s meeting Dorothy Wentworth on Cyprus.”

“Cyprus? I don’t have arrangements there.”

“No, but planes flying to Israel from Islamic Turkey have to pretend to fly to Cyprus. They land, take-off, and then go on to Israel.”

“I’m going to Israel.”

“See! They’ll look for you on Cyprus.”

“Oh.”

“And David, Beatrice did something for you to show her power and respect. You’ll have some happy news in all of this garbage.”

“I can only imagine.”

Chapter THIRTY-FOUR

Church of the New Wind. Washington D.C.:

Peter Dominick was gathering the leaders of all his forces and preparing to make a major call to action. “I want everyone in the top tier here. Accept no excuses. Use the cathedral. All the bishops. All my corporate managers.”

Once called by his Holiness, they came quickly. Dominick carefully made preparations for his most powerful sermon to date.

“Dress me. I will stand partially in shadow with the light haloed on my head from behind. Jesus will be directly behind me, slightly higher. Set the stage and let them know the awe of my coming before them. Incense and holy smoke.”

“As before, your Godliness, thy will be done. How will you address them?”

“I want all the speakers on. My voice should seem to come from everywhere. It is the voice of God.”

“They wait, your Holiness.”

“Darken the chancel. I will rise on the lift and seem to appear from nowhere.”

“Give me a sign when you are ready and you want the lights to come up.”

Soon after, the service began.

“My soldiers of the true faith. God sees you. He knows you. He commands you. You are carrying out his wishes. Each of you is known, and although you sin in thought and often deed, that too is his plan. How else can you learn if you do not falter? How else can you overcome the Devil if you are not tempted? How else can you know your loyalty to me and the church if you do not occasionally question? That you are human and frail is God’s plan. That you are in need of constant help from this church is God’s plan.

“Now these are the questions you have put forth in your quest for self or your quest for God. They are important questions. You ask, why can’t I own things? Why can’t I have personal wealth? You have these thoughts; these questions. I am here to teach you as God has instructed me to do.

“You may not own, accumulate wealth, build little empires for yourself or your family and friends. When you do that, as some have tried, you show that you have misinformation about God’s plan.

“Ownership is not necessary if you have control. I have given you control. When you travel, you have a private jet, the finest automobiles, the best hotels and spas. When you dress, you have everything you desire to wear. When you eat, God gives you every food and drink you can desire. You do not need to own these things, for God provides them to you because you are his chosen and blessed.

“And you have asked, why is it necessary to be political? God answers, that is the way of things. It is Caesar’s realm and what is rendered unto Caesar is the power to staunch the evil within the masses and bring them saved unto God. You who are politicians know this. As you vote and represent the will of God on earth, you bring the masses into God’s care. Like you, he provides for every one of them that accepts his word. Some must grow through this life and receive their awards in the afterlife. That is not for us to determine. What may seem to be their suffering, is their purification. This is God’s plan.

“And finally, you ask about God’s plans for destroying the works of the Devil and winning Christ’s crusade against evil. Some question God’s direction that force is necessary. It is God’s plan that evil be countered. We stand aware that to have peace and a new age we must rid the Earth of those who are not God’s chosen. They are the minions of the Devil.

“In closing, God has instructed me to tell you that we now have the balance of power. Godly people control most of the planet. We are opposed by weak forces that have no convictions. The New Wind is blowing around

the Earth and sweeping away those who do not follow you leaders. Soon you will control everything although you own nothing. I am God's chosen one in this time, as Jesus was before me. Through us, you shall have life everlasting. You have done this. You are God's soldiers. Stand tall! In the name of the Most Holy, I forgive your transgressions. This is God's plan."

The cathedral erupted into spontaneous shouting and applause. People's faces and hearts were filled with ecstasy.

Peter Dominick aka His Holiness waited impatiently for his followers to leave. His lift platform was finally lowered and he stormed back to his office. His bishop scurried behind him.

"Damn your careless attitude Bishop Right, the lights were supposed to go down and I was to disappear into the basement."

"I knew that. The novice pushed the lever, he was instructed to pull it. But Your Holiness, the effect was more than we could have ever planned. In that light, with all the smoke, you rose up and out of sight beyond the lights and into the darkness. The lights made it seem Christ looked up at you from the cross."

"Do you have the video? I want to see this miracle."

"Sorry Most Holy that they had to leave you up there so long. It took forever to empty the cathedral. The video will be available in your quarters."

"Do you think they miss the prayers and chanting?"

"No, not since we started playing Gregorian chants in the hallways and elevators."

"Do you think they got my message?"

“Yes, but away from here where they are the power, they build their industries and measure their success by the level of their compensation. They have no need for money, as you have made so very clear, and they tithe and do as the church requires, but still, they amass money and power and it contaminates them.”

“Not all.”

“No, some, like those who are building oil service and construction companies put their money into political contributions, lobbying, and bribes. Still, your Holiness, they think of it as their money.”

“This is not right. Perhaps my instructions today will reach them. Still, if they focus on building the church and God’s power here on earth, then it is not all bad. It could be, but it is not at this time. What you must prepare for me is a list of those most successful in building their own wealth and power. For each, there will be a time when they hunger for more and extend their reach. If, although the church has provided for their every need and given them every opportunity to be in power and to lead, they still corrupt themselves, then they cannot be here on earth with us. Keep track. Do not hesitate to share your lists with me.”

“Before you dismiss me, I have news about your granddaughter.”

“Ha! It’s not from her, is it?”

“No. She imagines she is proving herself with deeds. You said she would try that. I think she is flailing about. She’s in Turkey now, searching for David Dean and the key to our enemies in the CIA.”

“Let her flail. And that man, the Persian?”

“He is one of the most perfect specimens of Aryan breeding. He wears his black hair long, often in a braid. His face, they say, radiates charisma.

He is tall and lithe with perfect teeth and health. He is brilliant, a perfect male. You would be joyous in his presence.”

“And will he breed her?”

“The Bishop says he is trying. They are together in Turkey. She doesn’t know you approve of him as her mate.”

“The child must be a boy. He must be born caesarian. There must be evidence it is a virgin birth. It must be born near the time of the winter solstice when Sirius and the stars known as the Three Wise Men are aligned in the eastern sky, and the sun stops in the Southern Cross for three days before it is reborn and begins its journey back to the North. Can this be done?”

“Bedar knows that. He will make it so.”

“And she is unaware?”

“Of course. A woman is a captive of her body cycles and lusts. Her mind clouds when she is called upon to rise above what she is capable of thinking. She will give you a male heir. Then you can have her removed as you did the others.”

“Good. It is God’s will. As it was in the beginning, so it is today and will be tomorrow. This is our burden, Bishop Right. If we do nothing else for Christ, this will insure our life everlasting.”

“Bishop, I have not seen a report from our editors. Have they blocked the publication of the Egyptian texts? Have they discredited the false God Horace? We need to do this once and for all time, now. This is like a nightmare that keeps coming back. Can’t we destroy the pyramid texts and the tombs?”

“We’re working on that, your Holiness. There is a problem. There are so many copies and the Egyptian government is not yet under our control.”

“Discredit them as God has ordered.”

Chapter THIRTY-FIVE

Hilton Hotel:

“Bedar, I know you are using me, I just can’t figure out why.”

“Then let me tell you again. First, I have fallen in love with you. Don’t give me that look, you know damn well you have me by the balls.”

“That’s it? It’s sex? Your body parts and chemistry? What about our spirits? Is your soul entwined with mine?”

“I ... All I know is that it is more than sex. Yes, you have me.”

“And I think it’s mutual. Although I wouldn’t say you have me by the ovaries or anything like that.”

“Right, but do I?”

“And?”

“You are the most intelligent woman I have ever met.”

“But you don’t like what I believe and know.”

“No, not the stuff put into you with fear so you can be imprisoned in thought and led in body.”

“And you aren’t? I mean you haven’t been taught and trained and given salvation?”

“No, not actually. My salvation is not given by someone, it is earned by me and grows inside me as I act out of thought and deed, not fear of punishment.”

“That sounds so good, but you are an uncommon man.”

“No, all humans are the same in that respect. It’s one of the things we do. It is as necessary as surviving, reproducing and ...”

“Coming closer to God?”

“If God is light, then God.”

“Stop! I’m sorry I asked. Bedar, what would you have me do?”

“End the evil. Redirect the cartel. Redirect the New Wind. Reach back into time and recreate a world where there is no original sin that requires men to intercede with false gods for souls and thus become masters. Be a modern age Lilith. Work with those who oppose the monsters of deceit. All the while, play to lead and come out on top as would please a loving God.”

“Or die trying?”

“Or die living, knowing what you could have accomplished for human-kind.”

“I’m flattered.”

“No, you are not. You’re scared as hell. You know what is inside you that was not forced in by evil men. Not just you, but all of us were mentally raped and repeatedly abused. You fear anger that would make you separate. You fear trusting me and others and going the direction of your mind’s heart.”

“Hold me ...”

“Do you want Dean? I won’t bring him if you are not ready to join another team.”

“I’m so ... yes, I want him. Bedar, I’m not totally convinced you are not the Devil.”

“You’re right. The Devil would do this ...”

Penthouse:

Dean was sitting watching Gifu as he pulled out some photographs.

“Can you identify this woman?”

“I do know her Mister Gifu. She’s Tanya Horowitz. That’s a great photo. She would like it. Dan Hill had her trained as my physical therapist. If you think dumb, think dumber. You say they took this photo here in Istanbul?”

“Dean, don’t lie to me. There are factions that call her Terrible Tanya, and we have proof she has a double. You were her contact.”

“That’s ridiculous. If you are going to discount everything I say, why bother asking? I have no information about how terrible she is, but I can tell you again she was not very smart. She was used by Hill to get information to me and about me so he could jack me around.”

“How?”

“Damn, you would have to ask that. If you must know, by perfumed letters, pink and sometime blue. Always from Gloria, Hill’s secretary, now his wife.”

“And later? When she was working the Far East?”

“She told me she used the Tampax Express. I don’t have a clue what that is.”

“So you do lie when it is convenient. It’s part of the job; we all do.”

“Look Gifu, if you want my cooperation in this mess stop trying to be philosophical. I don’t lie. In this case I have no idea of what would be ‘convenient’. Don’t paint me with your contaminated ideas and view of how things work.”

“And you want us to automatically trust you?”

“No, you want me to trust you, and you just shot that possibility down.”

“David, Gifu is not your enemy. He’s doing his job.”

“Oh. And this makes sense to you Janet? You want me to trust him?”

“I do.”

“Okay, I’m really tired of all this. Do you have information for me? Is there some method to the madness and the quest you’re forcing me to undertake? Gifu, I’m not on your side, that’s for sure. But I agreed to talk to Beatrice and I will. I’ll tell her what you told me to tell her. And no, Tanya the Terrible is not here as my contact or friend. I would rather not see her ... but I have a hunch you’ve seen a lot of her. Like in India? Remember, omission is a form of lying. Are you telling me the truth? You’re blushing, Gotcha Gifu.”

“I know what you are saying is true. I did spend time observing Tanya Horowitz. I think we can trust you, Mister Dean.”

“Well don’t. As soon as I get this done, I’m not to be involved in your games again. I need your word.”

“Mister Dean, you can have my word, but it is only mine. It is up to the brothers to decide. I have orders to bring you to them. I have learned more about who you are, but it is still their decision. Only they can decide.”

“No Gifu, and you too Sami. It is my decision. You don’t own me. I decide.”

“David, we understand your feelings. Janet has explained your strange frontiersman values. I think they are very special and very good. I know the only way to clear you from all this is to let Ito and Hedeki decide.

They have their ways and they never err. If you are telling the truth, you have nothing to fear.”

“Sure, only my mind is at risk. I don’t want holes in my skull and injections that make me someone else. I survived electric shock when I was a kid and I’ll never go through anything like that again.”

“I’ll explain that to them. They are not in a position to let anyone that can harm them get by.”

“Good Sami. When I’m out, you can trust in this, I won’t have any interest in them. I’ll never harm them or think of them again. I’ll do this thing with Beatrice and then I’m not yours anymore. Janet, once we planned to meet in Italy or someplace beautiful. I’m still up for that.”

“Taegu, can you hear me? This line is secure but weak. Tell our masters that I can assure them Sami and Janet are not compromised. Tell them Dean is dangerous in that he is not loyal to anyone but himself and his damned ideas about the world. I’m bringing him in for examination after he meets with Bedar and Beatrice. He’s helping us, but only because he sees no way out. He will try to escape. If he gets to Israel, we have no way to get to him so he will be our guest or he’ll be dead. His choice.”

“As you instructed Gifu, we’ve been looking for a man who looks like Dean. We found one. He’s one of Lord Ayers’ Brits. We tagged him as a possible, remember? He’s arriving in Istanbul now. If you agree, this twin will lead the others and take the heat off of us getting Dean out of Istanbul. Make a big thing about this Dean getting away from you. The twin will get on the plane to Cyprus and the Wentworth contact will not surprise anyone. You fly out of Bursa with David Dean when all is clear.”

“Good. And one other thing. Find out from Hill why Tanya Horowitz is back in the field.”

“Hill left this morning. We don’t need him here. He’ll check in. I’ll find out. George must have sent her. I know Hill didn’t.”

“Another day here and it looks like I’ll be heading back with Dean. Sami needs to have a face-to-face with our Masters. My advice to Ito will be to include Janet Hurley.”

“Really? You really are convinced of their loyalty! Then I agree Gifu. I find comfort in knowing we were not wrong in our first assessment of these women.”

Chapter THIRTY-SIX

Istanbul Hilton. Room 424:

“Gloria? Gloria? Is that really you? I know I shouldn’t have called you on your private home phone, but, well, I wanted to write, but the DCI said not to. I thought of sending a Tampax, but they are hard to get here. What a strange place. I saw another David today. Unless, I’ve been worrying about this, they did something to his head.”

“Tanya, I’ve been so busy I almost forgot you were in ... where are you anyway?”

“Turkey. Isn’t that a funny name? Maybe that’s why we have Thanksgiving?”

“No, it’s a country. You saw what?”

“Lots of shops and the prices seem low. Lots of shoes. Great dresses.”

“No, you said you saw David Dean?”

“Yes, but it wasn’t really him ... unless they changed the bumps on his head.”

“I don’t think they would do that. You’re sure it wasn’t our David?”

“Positive. I know his head like ... well, like I know my own breasts.”

“Any other clues that it wasn’t David?”

“Sure.”

“Well, what were they?”

Oh, he is shorter, has a different build, and he was friendly with Gifooley.”

“What?”

“My friend from Bombay. The man I told you about who helped me shop and leant me to the Chinese.”

“Gifu?”

“You remember. Great. Well, this David likes Gifoo. My David wouldn’t like him.”

“He was with Gifu? Where did you see them?”

“I was shopping for some really great buys on slacks. It’s hard to get slacks in the East. I found some here that were made in England or Scotland. Summer-weight wool, not too many colors to pick from. I am not sure if I like the cuffs. They will take them off.”

“And he came in?”

“No silly. It was a woman’s store. They were walking by.”

“Tanya, you have to find David. You’re staying in the hotel district? Well, find a place to hide and observe people coming and going. Maybe he’ll come by. If he does, help him do whatever he wants to get to Israel. And Tanya, if you happen to run into Gifu and the fake Dean, pretend you think

he's the real David. Don't let them know that you know that the guy is a fake. Understand why? Give him a message ... let's see. Tell him to meet with Dorothy on Cyprus. Understand?"

"Okay Gloria, I can do that.

Dan called out to Gloria from his office.

"Who was that on the phone?"

"It was Tanya. On my private line. She spotted a Dean doppelganger walking by in Istanbul."

"A double?"

"She's positive and she should know. The double was with Gifu."

"Good God! What did you tell her to do?"

"Just watch for the real Dean and of course, shop. Oh, and if she meets Gifu and the fake guy, she's to pretend he is Dean and not let on that she knows he's not. What's wrong honey?"

"I may have been bamboozled—or I'm about to be. Honey, I have to go to Langley. Sorry about our plans for tonight."

"What? Eat another pizza supreme, change diapers, and play scrabble?"

"Sorry."

Chapter THIRTY-SEVEN

Istanbul:

"Bedar, I never thought this would happen ... I mean that I would wake up next to someone I really want to be with."

“It’s natural. Missy, this is what life is about. Love is what we are here for. Nature puts a lot of force behind continuing the species.”

“I know that. I am just getting it through my thick head that this is not sin.”

“What?”

“Honey, you’ve got to understand. I know it sounds funny now, even to me, but I was taught that if I remained celibate, I would be a bride of Christ. I lost that opportunity in college. Now, I’m really not a virgin and I have no gift for Christ.”

“Good God, Missy, did you hear what you just said?”

“I know it sounds strange, but ...”

“But hell! Is there anything in Christ’s teaching that suggests he wants a bunch of virgin brides? Is there anything you were taught that makes Christ into some sicko that wants humans not to reproduce, not to love each other physically, not to be natural as God made us?”

“I guess there must be. No, I don’t recall anything.”

“Beatrice Dominick, what you were taught came from the sick minds of men who were dead-enders. What’s strange to me is that they have such a revulsion to women and the idea of virgins waiting for them in the afterlife would make them prefer hell. Yet they decide Christ wants virgins to ‘marry’ him. Talk about carry-overs from pagan cults. Give me any evidence that Christ was hung-up on sex.”

“I know you’re right, it’s just that I was taught that. My life changed when I had too much to drink and had sex in college. I didn’t even enjoy it.”

“You and thousands of other good girls. You know, what we just had was not sex. For me it was love. Loving, living life and being human with your soulmate is no different than what you do with God.”

“Bedar. Don’t we have to get ready so I can meet Dean?”

“You don’t want me here?”

“Only if you’ll keep your damned ideas to yourself and not change the direction I want the meeting to go.”

“I’ll promise that. Tell me, though, what do you want from him?”

“What I learned and found to be true. He doesn’t lie or play games. I can ask him any question and he’ll tell me the truth as he sees it.”

“Oh, like me?”

“I wish! Everything you say is with a split tongue. He’s not trying to convert me to some ancient religion.”

“Damn you Beatrice, that hurts. I’m not and you know it. I want you to have the tools to examine the crap caulked into your brain that is not godly or in your best interests. Nothing more. I want you to succeed and change the world.”

“And do what with you?”

“Well, this morning was a good start.”

Chapter THIRTY-EIGHT

Cumhuriyet Caddesi Street. Istanbul:

“Oh no, pretend you don’t see that woman. She knows the real Dean. By the Samurai, here she comes.”

“What should I do, Gifu?”

“Pretend you know her ... really well, if you understand my meaning.”

“Tanya, you’re here in Turkey? What a pleasant surprise. David and I were just talking about you.”

“Gifooie, what are you doing in Turkey with David? David, I have been looking for you. I have a message for you and ... gee, you look tired and stiff. looks like you need some PT and soon.”

“I ... er ...”

“Tanya, David has a lot of work to do. Give him the message and then we can set-up a meeting.”

“Can Pirgooie drive me around?”

“No, we don’t have the limo here. He’s still in Bombay.”

“Okay then, David you look like you need some TLC.”

“What’s the message, Tanya, we have to go.”

“Oh, David is to meet Dorothy on an island named after a fruit. Citrus, they said. No, that’s not right. Cyprus. That’s it.”

“That’s the message?”

“Mister Gifooie, it wasn’t for you, David understands, don’t you Davey?”

“Of course.”

“Look you two, I’m very busy shopping. I have to run. Where will we meet later?”

“I’ll call you Tanya.”

“You and David will need some one-on-one time, right?”

“Oh, that would be great. I do my best work alone.”

Tanya turned and headed down the street to the Grand Bazaar. Once she was out of sight Gifu turned to the Dean double.

“Well Sam, you fooled Tanya. That means you can fool anyone. Relax, she’ll report back to Hill. Everyone will know to go to Nicosia, Cyprus and watch Dorothy Wentworth.”

“Can I really ... I mean, be alone with her? I mean, wow! Bloody great that would be.”

“That would be too risky now. Maybe after Cyprus.”

“But I’m through here now, right?”

“Almost. You leave for Cyprus soon. Give me time until we know the real Dean is ours. Go back to your room and wait. I’ll let you know when we leave. Tanya will wait. I’ll do what I can.”

Penthouse:

“Sami Cook, open the door, it’s me.”

“Gifu?”

“Let me in. I ran into Horowitz. She delayed me. I’m running late. Dean, are you ready?”

“I guess. Ready as I’ll ever be.”

“Okay, fourth floor. Right hand corridor, Room 454. It’s unlocked. Bedar will be down the hall at the ice machine. Make certain nobody sees you. Go in. He’ll join you. Come directly back here when your meeting is over. Don’t try to leave ... there are people watching for you that will kill you on sight. I’ll get you out safely.”

“Okay, I do this and I’m through. Right?”

“Of course, we discussed that.”

“Wish me luck Janet. Sami, take care of her, okay! And find Suzi before it’s too late for her.” David left the room and walked down the hall to the elevator. The door opened and he was shocked to see its passenger.

“David? What are you doing in this elevator?”

“Tanya? What the hell ...”

“I got on and forgot to punch four. I had to ride to six with a lady who smelled like she was a French perfume and itch powder. I’m on four.”

“You have a room on the fourth?”

“424, that’s me. Were you coming to find me?”

“Good idea, Tanie. I was looking for a way ...”

“Oh, that’s so sweet. I just had a meeting with Gifooie and the other David Dean he’s taking around.”

“What?”

“I know, I saw him with your double except he’s not really like you. Gloria said not to let on that I knew he wasn’t you. I didn’t. They think I didn’t know. I told them Gloria’s message. Oh, we get off here.”

“How long have you been here in Istanbul?”

“Too long. The shops aren’t really that good for the things I need like slacks without cuffs.”

“You came for me?”

“I was to find you and, oh yeah, tell you to meet Dorothy on Cyprus in the capital of Nicotine ... no wait ... Nicosy... You know where I mean right?”

“Nicosia.”

“That’s it! Anyway, I was to tell your double to go there if I ran into him.”

“And you told ...?”

“Gifooie and the other you.”

“Wow. You’re great Tanya.”

“David, since I saw you, I learned how to flex my ... well, you can’t see this muscle. Wait, I’ll take this off. You have to feel it. I’ll show you.”

“Bedar, why call here?”

“Gifu, I did as you told me. I got back to the room and ... no Dean.”

“What?”

“No sign of him.”

“I’ll get back to you.”

“Sami, the slippery bastard did it again.”

“He’s not down there? Janet, come in here. Dean didn’t make it to Bedar’s room.”

“Impossible. He couldn’t get out of the hotel without every agent in Asia following him. Gifu, you have your men watching. How could this happen?”

“It ... let me think. He couldn’t have left the hotel.”

“You mean he’s hiding someplace? What do you mean?”

“I think I know why Tanya Horowitz is in Istanbul. I’ll bet she’s staying here. She foxed me. She’s in this hotel to contact Dean. That’s the only answer. He’s in her room.”

“And he knew it all the time? He promised. Gifu, Dean doesn’t lie. Something else happened.”

“Sure, and Tanya is suddenly smart or there really is another Tanya Horowitz. Impossible. We caught Dean first-hand lying to us.”

“Tanie, I wasn’t looking for you. There is something I have to do, then I’ll come back here. Tomorrow, I have schools to visit and some business of my own to take care of. Then I’ll need your help getting out of Turkey.”

“I know David. That’s what Gloria said. You’re going to the Holy Land, right?”

“That’s my plan. Israel anyway. I don’t know how ... not yet anyway. Tanie, I have to go, I gave my word.”

Dean left Tanya and continued on to the planned meeting with Bedar.

“Gifu, I’m in 454 and no one is here.”

“What?”

“I said no one is in this room. Wasn’t I supposed to meet Bedar in 454?”

“You are there now? Wait, I’ll call Bedar.”

Bedar showed up at the door a few minutes later.

“Dean, I checked this room out and you weren’t here half an hour ago.”

“No, I got sidetracked. Sorry. Gifu said not to let anybody see me. Good advice. Now where is Beatrice?”

“Okay, let’s see if the hall is clear. We go up to seven.”

“Seven? Why did we meet here?”

“No one would know where Beatrice is, of course. I’m still pissed at you for ditching me in Persepolis.”

“It wasn’t you. I had to get Dorothy away from the CIA guys. I owed it to her.”

“You could have warned me. Anyway, it worked out. I had time to get to know Beatrice. She’s everything I was told she is not.”

“That sure wasn’t my experience. She tried to take over my life.”

“You got through to her. She knows you don’t lie and she wants straight answers from you. She thinks I’m the Devil because I’ve told her about the evils of organized religion and the false discipline of theology.”

“That’s a subject I was taught never to discuss. We can’t expose theology or superstition or zealots in America. We have limited freedom of speech where religion is concerned. We’re not as free as we lie to our kids we are.”

“David, for a hick from the West, you have some interesting insights. You taught history?”

“Sure, still will when I get back. I teach all the lies we tell about our past to manipulate the masses and the future. Ever read Edith Hamilton? I teach the vital lies we tell ourselves.”

“This is seven. Let me make certain no one is out there.”

“Okay Janet, he didn’t lie, he just got lost for thirty minutes in that made-up world of his. He’s up to something. I’m sure Horowitz is in on it. Janet, does he never not do what he damn well pleases?”

“I knew he would honor his word. Sami, all we have to do is ask him what happened. He’ll tell us. He doesn’t play by our rules ... Well, Gifu’s anyway.”

“Janet, if Gifu is successful in leading the forces of our opposition to Nicosia using Dean’s twin, all the pressure will be off us and Dean.”

“Then why don’t we let him visit the schools and do what he came here to do? I promised him he could.”

“No way Gifu will allow that. He has to deliver Dean soon.”

“In the end, that makes us the liars and Dean pays the price. I lose his trust and any hope for love.”

Chapter THIRTY-NINE

“Most Holy Peter, we have word that your granddaughter is meeting with David Dean. Bedar gave a note to one of our men. If that is so, then she has done what you sent her to do.”

“No Bishop, we won’t know if she has succeeded until we see the results of the meeting. How soon will we know?”

“Later today, I suppose.”

“Then I want her back here. And I want Bedar away from her. My heir cannot be conceived until the Spring Equinox. Can you keep him where he can’t cause problems? After that, he’ll have to disappear. Jesus God is the only father acceptable to me.”

“Of course. Bedar knows not to impregnate her until spring. I trust him. We’ll need his help keeping her in line.”

“Then get them here and don’t let either out of your sight.”

Chapter FORTY

Corfu:

“Taegu, it’s this guy Bedar who worries me.”

“I know, Master Ito. He has done everything we have asked. Hedeki has also expressed his concerns, but I think things are going our way.”

“Look brother, anytime you have a wild card there could be trouble. Taegu, Ito and I need more information. This Dominick thing is too complicated to rely on only one plan. You have listened to the tapes Bedar sent of his conversations with Beatrice? You know he is getting through to her. But you also know that what he is teaching goes against everything we know about power and control. His philosophy is a danger to us. It is useful to help Beatrice replace Peter, but then it must be suppressed. Any man stupid enough to think that any but top-down power is needed to run things is a fool ... a dangerous fool.”

“Master Hedeki, it is necessary to have Bedar bring Beatrice to our side. Now she meets with Dean. Bedar and Dean. I sense danger.”

“Will we get a tape of the meeting?”

“Perhaps, Master Ito. I am concerned. Bedar said they have to meet where he cannot tape ... but he will try.”

“Really? That sends up a red flag. Ito, Taegu, this is what I want. I want Beatrice Dominick and Bedar buried when they have served our purpose. There is no reason to have them around making trouble. Guarantee me they are disposed of when they finish our work.”

“Gifu is bringing Dean here so we can examine him.”

“Then unless we learn something that we need Dean for, that is the perfect time to make certain he never wakes. Our plans are threatened by those three.”

“I have no problem with that, brother. As I said, it is Bedar and his poison theology that worries me.”

Hilton, Room 727. Istanbul:

“David, come in. I hope you are not still angry with me. I was screwed-up. You got me thinking. I thank you for that. I did something for you to show my good faith. I will do what I can to do more.”

“Hi Beatrice. What can I do so I can get the hell out of all this nonsense and finish my travels in peace?”

“Don’t you know what I did?”

“You mean Apagai? That is more than I could have asked you to do. You can’t believe the hell my dad and I went through because of that killer.”

“I know what they did to you. They tried to destroy your mind with electric shock.”

“It almost worked. I can’t wait to talk to my dad. It was the two of us against ...”

“The Devil, David. You two versus the Devil. I know.”

“Look Missy, you have power beyond anything I can understand. I know you have resources that can penetrate any secret, system or person. I don’t have that kind of power, and I really don’t want to be around it. So, why me? What do you want from me?”

“How did you know my grandfather was setting me up?”

“I guessed ... a woman doesn’t have much chance to do what you told me you were going to do. You live in a world of hurt. I sensed that. And yet there was a part of you I could reach and I used it to get away from you.”

“Oh, you reached it all right. Damn you! Well, you only imagined the truth about what was happening to me ... good try.”

“Okay Missy and David, I know you have a lot to talk about but Missy why don’t you let David into the room and ... here Dean, here’s a chair for you. Sit! Now talk.”

“So? Now you have Bedar.”

“Look at him David. He’s the most perfect man. He’s beautiful and he’s mine.”

“Hey! Missy, you are beautiful too, but I don’t call you mine.”

“I want David to know we have something together.”

“I can tell. Your perfume has changed to heat. It’s from both of you. It’s nice. Tell me Missy, did you think I didn’t suspect you used perfume to entice men.”

“To what? Pheromones are real. I had some enhanced and sure, I used them.”

“You didn’t need them.”

“Really? That’s a compliment, isn’t it?”

“Natural tells me a lot more.”

“Okay Dean, all this is nice and so what if you know what we were doing before you arrived, but Beatrice has some major soul-searching to do. You can help. That’s why you’re here.”

“What is that, Bedar? Isn’t it in the new condensed version of the New Wind?”

“Dean, on our travels we had a chance to get to know something of how we each, shall I say, perceive religion.”

“I gained a lot of respect for you. When I first saw you, I wondered why Mohammed Pashto appointed you my driver.”

“Actually, he didn’t know I was using you to get to Beatrice.”

“You were? Geez, I’m so naive.”

“Not too. Since then, you performed feats only an experienced undercover operator would know.”

“Or a teacher from Colorado studying educational systems and trying to stay clear of a bunch of nuts. You never believed me, but it’s the truth.”

“Beatrice and everybody else think you can connect Beatrice to the brothers Shikoku, can you?”

“No. I’m supposed to be free—left alone.”

“Dean, ask Missy. They plan to get into your head and then kill you.”

“Why?”

“Because of what you know and what you’ll learn here.”

“That’s just great. So you’ll tell me all this stuff that will get me killed? How do I play this, Bedar? Like some gullible sap? Do you want me dead? This stinks!”

“David, can I have my passport back?”

“No. I destroyed it. I don’t know a Beatrice Dean. You want me killed too?”

“Bedar, he knows we don’t want him hurt. We’ll help you, David. But first.”

“First what? We’ve already had first. Now, let’s get to last. I have some things to do in Istanbul and then I need to get into Israel. I hear I’ll be safe under the veil of the Mossad. I don’t mind telling you both I’m scared as hell. I don’t want my mind drained and I certainly am not ready to die.”

“We have a plane. If we fly out over the Mediterranean we can cut back and get into Israel. We are going there. It’s safe for us too.”

“Okay, what’s the information they will kill me to get? I’m already dead, I might as well cooperate.”

“That Missy is the future of the New Wind Church and the Dominick Cartel.”

“I knew that already.”

“Yes, but not for real. To do what she needs to do she needs allies. There are two groups we are looking at. The CIA under Big Oil George and Dan Hill, and the brothers Shikoku.”

“Well, maybe. Look Beatrice, what makes you think you would hurt fewer people than your grandfather?”

“She is not like her grandfather.”

“Bedar, I asked Beatrice. Missy?”

“I don’t know a short answer, David. I’m a woman. Nothing they do was designed to accept or respect women. Mothers believe in creating a better future for their children. Dead-end males, who have some biological cutout so they can’t or won’t reproduce, see the world as stagnant and any form of armageddon as a quick way to their imagined life ever after. With the resources Dominick controls, I can bring about a kind, new age led by men and women who are equal. Bedar and I agree on that.”

“Geez, Missy. This is a new you, right?”

“You started it. Bedar makes me think ... well, examine all the lies the bastards put into my head.”

“You need to know, Ito and Hedeki are dying. Sami Onoto is the heir they have chosen.”

“She has physical problems too. I knew her sister—the whole story of what was done to them.”

“What?”

“Dean, how in the hell can you know that? One minute you’re telling Missy you are a teacher on sabbatical who is not a player. Now you’re exposing secrets no one knows.”

“Bedar, I’ve been exposed to them. It’s a long story, but a woman they used to handle me and I became ... well, friends. The CIA also used a marine who was put in place to use me. Her godfather is the head of the CIA, the DCI, your Big Oil guy George. Agent Hurley is Sami Onoto’s secretary.”

“What?”

“Missy, Janet is on assignment from MI. She tells her godfather George at the CIA everything and she tells Sami at Sungana-Sungawa everything and she works for them all.”

“She’s a double ... no triple ... a quadruple agent?”

“Not really, everybody knows she is the go-between and doesn’t lie.”

“David, your con isn’t working. Is she also from Colorado? This sounds way too improbable.”

“Missy, what if David is right? This could be great news for you.”

“Bedar? David? You’re saying three women will call the shots?”

“I hadn’t thought of it that way, but conceivably, if Gifu and a guy they call Taegu are not appointed when Sami needs medical attention to repair her brain, Janet could be the strong player. But then, if I am to be brain-drained and killed, I’m not sure Janet is who I thought she is.”

“David, who do we approach about a cooperative venture to take over Dominick and company?”

“Sami, I guess. I don’t have good feelings about the brothers Shikoku.”

“David, we can help you find out about Janet’s role in your planned demise. I would be glad to do that for you. But, well, how do you know details about Hill and how did you set-up Aston Martin to meet with the anti-Shah factions in Iran and convince them everyone at the CIA was a tool of Dominick?”

“I told SAVAK I was in Iran to set up a meeting between them and Dan Hill. I made that up on the spot. I also pretended to be married to you and part of the New Wind Church.”

“David, you lied?”

“Well, maybe. I tried not to say anything that wasn’t a fact they thought they knew.”

“Really!”

“Who is Aston Martin?”

“You really don’t know?”

“I really don’t.”

“Ito and Hedeki sent him to Iran instead of Hill. He’s loyal to my grandfather. He pretended he’s the main force in the CIA.”

“Bedar, to change the subject, what happens to Persia and your family?”

“I don’t know. The New Wind plans to make Islam so vile that Christian fundamentalists and evangelicos can feel good about another crusade. The Shikoku want to encourage fundamentalism and open markets to trade in drugs and goods to those affected by the horrible futility

they create. I want to see a rebirth of Persian values and religion. I've come to the conclusion that all these forces are going to lose."

"Lose? Why Bedar. You said I could make a difference."

"That's why, Beatrice Dominick. You will free women and all these petty attempts at power will fade away."

"Bedar, even a teacher from remote Colorado knows that ignorant women who have lived under the heel of religions will not willingly throw off their chains. Without education they may become the most violent fighters for the ways of their oppression."

"That, my friend from the West, depends on the information used to empower them."

"And you thought I was an idealist? Good luck. All I want is to go back to Gold County and inculcate children with myth and superstition so they can be good citizens and support the American oligarchy."

"For that we are going to help you escape your planned fate?"

"That and the fact that you may wish to give me sainthood someday. It would be nice if it came with bag of money like the Pulitzer or Nobel. Beatrice, are you through with me?"

"Frankly, no, David. I know you understand more than we give you credit for and oddly enough, I trust you to tell me the truth. So, I need to know, with what you have learned, do you think Bedar is the Devil working to confuse me and destroy my faith?"

"Human beings created the Devil to explain why the God we created in our image reflects our human frailties; is not all powerful. I don't think Bedar is a fallen angel trying to steal your soul."

"Does that mean ... No?"

“Yes, No! He’s without the necessary forked tongue, tail and cloven hoof. His information is, as I just demonstrated, idealistic. His arguments are valid and you can trust what he tells you or makes you examine of your own beliefs. His only sin I know of is pretending theology is a valid tool and of any use whatsoever.”

“Oh thanks, Saint Dean. Sorry you don’t have a strong opinion. And about theology, we are in total agreement. Your man Thomas Jefferson was right.”

“Okay Beatrice, I’ve answered your questions. Bedar, get me the hell out of this. I still need to visit the schools I scheduled and do some sightseeing. Can you get me back to room 424 now and pick me up when you have a safe way to get me to Israel? How about tomorrow night? Late, maybe 11:00? I’ll be packed. Oh, and tell Gifu I took a boat to Cyprus and will meet Dorothy Wentworth as planned. Tell him I had an accomplice ... tell him anything that covers your rear and mine.”

“Sami, Gifu believes Bedar helped David get to the boat.”

“So, maybe he did. I’m not totally on Gifu’s side. He and Taegu have committed their loyalty to me when the Shikoku are gone, but I don’t want Dean hurt in the meantime.”

“Bedar swears he did not help Dean get the ship to Cyprus. I believe him.”

“Why? You don’t even know him, Janet.”

“I do know David. He wouldn’t leave without visiting at least one school and talking to educators here.”

“Really? But how dumb can he be? That’s the first place we’d look for him.”

“We would. Not Gifu if he believes David took the ship. He checked. A freighter sailed about 6:00 on the evening tide. Gifu saw Tanya Horowitz at the docks and she confirmed Dean was gone. He’s sailing to Nicosia tonight.”

“Should we tell Gifu? Dean may still be here in Istanbul.”

“And get David hurt? I don’t want to lie to Gifu, but ...”

“But?”

“But we don’t know, do we Janet. You might have a suspicion, but you can’t swear that Dean is still here. The thing to do is follow your hunch and check his itinerary. Let’s see if we can find him tomorrow. That’s not a lie and, in fact, it’s the reasonable thing to do to back up Gifu and the plan.”

“Sami, you know I’m right about David.”

“Pineapples! I only know you have a feeling and I need facts. We’ll get them tomorrow.”

“Thank you. The way the Shikoku work scares me.”

“Just understand they do what they think they must. Their burden is great and greater now since they merged their two companies, and decided they were strong enough to take over the cartel and all of Dominick’s holdings.”

“And you Sami? You’re walking between fires. You have problems of your own. How can you accept this burden?”

“I’m not alone Janet. You have the connections and the insights and the morals to be my second. You know the DCI’s agenda, and although you might not believe it, it’s as ugly as Dominick’s. You know enough about

every player to work with me to re-focus and cut out the evil. We're in this together, and we're women, ever think of that? Women at the seat of power? Women calling the shots? Women like us shaping a new economic system, new political alliances, nations and the world?"

"Is that coming from raw ego or id?"

"Some ego, of course, but no id. I want a world that is at peace and respects the rights of each human being. Janet, there are almost eight billion souls on earth. To me, it's not eight billion over one, the majority rules, it is the rights of one over eight billion. Protect the one, and all are protected. That became my dream when I was offered power."

"I can easily share that dream, but Sami, power corrupts. How many will we have to kill or conquer so that our dream wins?"

"You think we'll end up being as evil as Dominick?"

"We could. We'd have to plan a way to bring about changes. I haven't a clue as to how that can be done."

"I do. We reach women. Let's say Beatrice throws in with us. Three women reaching out to women in ways that empower them. It won't be easy, but with time we can get information to women in all cultures. We're not anti-men, we need to educate them too. It's a plan that frees more than half the world's population and brings them prosperity.

"God help us!"

"Well, as we overheard Bedar say during his conversations with Beatrice, 'God has failed so far. Maybe we'll help God'."

"That should give me the shivers. Maybe God is a woman oppressed by evil just as we are?"

"Now that's a great thought! Hang on to that one."

Chapter FORTY-ONE

The DCI's home. Virginia:

“Ethel, it's time for me to make a major move. Are you with me?”

“You know I am, but let's discuss it.”

“Okay, Hill reported back from his time with the Shikoku. He has a lot of interesting information, but most important is that both brothers are dying, probably within the year. An ancient brain-warping technique was used to create them. We learned a lot from Acieto Onoto and now Hill has information that the secrets lie in a laboratory in Urawa, Japan. I have already made plans to get it the instant the Shikoku are gone. There are two very bright servants whom they trust, but they plan to pass their power to one of the daughters of Onoto. We know a lot about her from Janet. They have been grooming her. Both servants have agreed to serve her.”

“Janet says she is a nice person. I asked her.”

“Yes, she probably is, not that that makes any difference. You see, before they die, the Shikoku plan to use Beatrice Dominick to infiltrate and take over the New Wind Church and the cartel. Dominick controls hundreds of companies. Beatrice Dominick, with our help, and yes, I'm working with the brothers to do this, will gain complete control and all those loyal to New Wind and Peter Dominick will be removed. We will have broken the cartel.

“Of course. Their motivation is linked to fanatical religious conservatism, evangelicalism, and fundamentalism. They cannot be changed.”

“I knew you would understand my pain, but when the Devil is in them like bile, they have no future.”

“So what then?”

“We continue to weed our garden, my love. The Onoto woman and the Dominick woman must be contained. If Bedar’s theology of equality spreads, it could ruin all world order. He will be dead at the hands of Mullahs. It is planned. The blood will be on Peter Dominick. Beatrice won’t blame us and Janet will be loyal to me. The men I have groomed who are now leaders in the cartel and the politicians I have placed in high offices will carry out my plans. We will win it all and be able to keep America’s eye focused on Christian values and crusades, even as we mine America’s and Europe’s wealth and resources equalizing wealth across our globe.”

“We can do it George. God will smile down on us. Thousands of lights around the world will be lit by your gift to God. You and I will uplift all peoples and begin the new age.”

“A year, maybe more, and you and I will begin our dynasty that surpasses anything Egypt ever had.”

“You and Me? Why George, we’re just a couple of old, tired people putting in our time.”

“It worked. It was your idea, Mom.”

That night. FBI communications center outside of Washington DC:

Sir, our best cryptologists decoded Tanya’s message to Gloria after one of the young trainees observed that only parts of the conversation held information vital to the Nation’s future. We sent this message:

NOTIFICATION TO AGENTS SERVING IN THE MID-EAST:

The real David Dean has sailed on a citrus boat to Cyprus for a meeting with Agent Wentworth. The other David Dean, the stand-in provided by the Brits, is on board a BOAC flight to Nicosia and will only pretend to have a meeting with the CIA's agent Wentworth. All agents move to Cyprus. The real David Dean will be wearing slacks without cuffs. He can only be identified by his phrenology. An expert phrenologist is on his way from Germany. Cranial photo detail will follow. Major J.A. Bray.

CIA Communications Center. Off the coast of Syria:

We were able to intercept the FBI communication forwarded by the Brits to an operative in Istanbul. All agents are ordered to intercept David Dean traveling on a citrus boat to meet with Wentworth. All agents are to be out of Istanbul by midnight Istanbul time. The operation was named off the cuff: Headbumps. D. Dander, Field Operative

Dorothy Wentworth knew men were following her. She had tried to warn David that men followed him from the airport, but the bastard ditched her. She visited the Blue Mosque and Saint Sophia. Unable to shake the creeps on her tail, she caught the next flight to Cyprus. On Cyprus, in order to avoid a group of men who seemed angry with her, she took a city bus, got off, crossed the buffer zone and entered Greek Cyprus telling the guards she was a tourist crossing "for a few hours to shop." None of her tails were allowed in and several were detained. Realizing she was safe from all of Dean's enemies, she took a bus to Rizokarpaso where she relaxed for a

few days before booking passage on a ferry to Patras. She wonders to this day if Dean is alive, but won't risk contacting him. She said she plans to finish her travels in Paris and return home with her gay lover.

Interview notes by Thomas Chatt, Esq. BSS.

Chapter FORTY-TWO

While Sami and Janet Hurlbut observed David Dean as he visited an International School and traveled around the city visiting local secondary and elementary schools with local education authorities, they received an urgent message to return to Corfu. Minutes later Sami was notified that Gifu was being held by United Nations officials on Cyprus where he had tried to cross the buffer zone. He would not be able to break-free for several days. She also picked up an urgent message from Doctor Westfault.

She and Janet rushed back to Bursa, got Sami's jet, and flew to Corfu. They picked up Doctor Westfault in Corfu Town and helicoptered to Ito's hideaway on the Straights of Otrano. It was too late. Ito Shikoku was in a coma, and Hedeki, after going berserk and trying to kill Doctor Westfault, was in restraints. Taegu seemed a broken man, as his conditioning forbid any action against his master.

Doctor Westfault, with some relief and pretended sadness, explained that Hedeki's mind was no longer rational or, in fact, useful to Hedeki. He and Ito would be dead in a matter of days. He demanded access to more information from the deceased Doctor Katasawa's lab in Urawa, then gave Sami an EKG. Pointing to unusual squiggles. He urged her to let him operate as soon as possible, although he could make only temporary repairs

until he had more information. Sami authorized Taegu to take Westfault to Urawa and gather information.

Janet called George's secret number and was informed by Ethel that the DCI had left for Saudi Arabia and a meeting with close friends.

Dan Hill received a certified envelope in the mail which contained the unencumbered deed to his home and a note from George saying that he and Ethel had some extra money laying around and knew of only one place to put it. "I know you and Gloria will make it up to us through your loyalty."

Gloria thought she was pregnant again although she couldn't recall when or how she and Dan had been together.

Christopher stopped crying all night and actually slept four or more hours at a time, but only if she held him. The pediatrician said early trauma would gradually be replaced by secure feelings, but he would be "very clingy" for a long time. These days Dan seems to be very clingy too, she thought. At least he's gone a lot.

The following day, Dan Hill received another certified letter. This one from the Republican National Committee. The inquiry opened new corridors of thought in his expanding mind. He wrote back that he would accept being considered as the running mate and vice-presidential candidate. The letter was signed by Peter Dominick's most powerful lobbyist.

Snooping in George's office at Langley, Dan observed an Eyes-Only folder on the DCI's file cabinet. Sure that it had been left out by accident, too curious to ignore it, he removed the red tape, opened it and learned that the brothers Shikoku were incapacitated and that Sami Onoto was to have

brain surgery and that she was expected to recover. Janet Hurlbut was temporarily in charge of Sungawa-Sungana Industries! He called George's secretary into the DCI's office, pointed to the Eyes-Only and, controlling the fluctuations in his gut and voice, asked her why the file was left in the office.

"Sir, I gave it to the DCI just when he was leaving. He left it here, I guess. I never saw it again until now. I saw him put it on the file cabinet. He didn't have time to read it so he probably left it for when he returns. His office is secure."

Back in his office, Dan placed a call to Janet Hurlbut and learned from Shizu, whom he had befriended while on Corfu, that Taegu and Doctor Westfault were in flight on the way to Urawa, Japan. Janet was on her way to Hawaii.

"Clarice. Make arrangements for me to fly to the island of Hawaii. Company jet. Top security."

"But Sir, the Hawaiian Islands are a chain. Do you mean Pearl Harbor?"

"No, I mean the big island, Hawaii."

"Do we have an airbase there?"

"Get me there as soon as possible. The pilot knows all that stuff, you don't need to."

"But Sir, the DDO does not leave the country. It says that in my manual."

"Normally you're right. This is an emergency and yes, I do leave the country. This will be the third time I have had to go into the field. That's why it is absolutely confidential. If our enemies know I'm out ... well, that

would not be good for you or me. Understand? Clarice, you earned your clearance rating and your position here as my secretary. Don't blow it."

"May I remind you the DCI is also out of the country? Who will be in charge?"

"I will be. I am as close as a secured line. Pretend I am in conference in my office or at a meeting. In fact, tell everyone who asks that's where I am. I'll get back to them and they'll never know I'm not here."

"But who should I say is flying?"

"Oh, book for ... Conan Descry. That is the *nom de plume* I was going to use in my detective series once I retire. Tell them it is company field business."

Chapter FORTY-THREE

"Are you Mister Dean? A lady asked me to give you this message when you came to the hotel. They said you were young and bald. Are you the man?"

"Thanks. Anybody else asking around about my head?"

"No. In fact, a lot of people checked out last night. There's some big meeting on Cyprus."

David,

Sami and I promised you would have time to do your things here in Turkey. We followed you today to make certain no one else did. Gifu, everybody, thinks you have taken a boat to Cyprus and will meet with your friend Dorothy Wentworth. We leave here in about an hour. My advice is to get to Israel where no one can get to you. After

your visit there, I think you can go on to Europe and finish your year. If things work out, you'll be free and only of interest to me and your family. I'm on for Italy. I'll contact you.

Janet

"Sir, you are not a guest here so you will have to use the white phone."

"Thanks. Where is it?"

"The booth, of course Sir, the phone booth right over there."

Dean walked over to the booth and called Bedar.

"Bedar. It's Dean. I'm downstairs in the lobby."

"Janet left your stuff at the front desk. Tell them your name and sign for it. Then, outside you will see a white limo with the New Wind crest on the door. White, get that? Get in and the driver will take you to the airport. He'll wait there with you until we arrive. Beatrice has arranged for a bigger plane. We should be on our way to Israel in two hours."

"I'll be at the airport."

Dean hung up and headed out to the curb.

"Can I get you a taxi Sir?"

"No ... well, maybe." Bedar said a white limo with the New Wind logo ... that limo is black with the New Wind logo. Dean decided to be cautious and went over to the first taxi in line.

"I'm looking for a driver name of Turk Harbiye. Cab 17 I think."

"Ah ha, my cousin. He parks over there by the busses."

"I see him. He's a friend of mine. Look, that big black limo? Can you wave him through so he has to go around and not see me? Here is ten thousand lira if you help me. Thanks."

Dean waited for the black limo to move out on to the street and turn around the corner. He approached Harbiye's cab.

"So my friend, you sneak in and now you sneak out. I like a man who knows how to avoid trouble. Where in this beautiful city do you wish to go?"

"San Sofia. Is it close?"

"Very close Sir. And then?"

"I don't know. I have heard Cyprus is very nice. Can I take a ferry?"

"We can check. The ferries are very slow, it is better to fly if you are American."

"I have time. How slow?"

"Well, my wife's friend's aunt lives in Nicosia. She won't fly. It takes her three days and then almost a fourth to get to Nicosia."

"Sure. Sounds great. I need a sea voyage and time to relax. Turk, may I take you and your wife to dinner tonight? You pick an authentic Turkish place I would enjoy."

"Do you mean that? You must understand that we Turks believe in hospitality to strangers more than anything. You will come home with me. Meet my family and see how we enjoy life."

"Turk, that is a lovely offer. I had just about given up hope that I would experience something of the real Turkey."

Chapter FORTY-FOUR

Room 727:

"Your grandfather countermanded your order. He had them send my black limo. He wants Dean."

“Bishop, why do you tell me this?”

“You are the heir. Peter Dominick is an old man. Many of us believe our future lies with you. You have proved your powers.”

“Thank you. And yes, I am the future and you are very wise. You have done a good job here in Istanbul. We are making converts and spreading the glory of Christ.”

“All over Turkey. Many hear the truth and give their lives to us ... and thus to Christ of course.”

“How did Dean know not to get into the black limo, Bishop?”

“I don’t know.”

Bedar spoke softly to Missy. “I do. I told him white and only white.”

“Right Bedar. So where did he go? We have to leave.”

“The doorman saw him get into a taxi. If he’s not at the airport, we can’t wait for him. He’s on his own. You don’t need him anymore, do you?”

“No.”

Yesilkoy Airport. Istanbul:

“Listen, the mark, Dean, is not with Beatrice Dominick. That guy with her is not a white guy. Pull your men back and wait. When Dean makes a last-minute run for the plane, kill him.”

“But we were ordered to take him alive if possible.”

“That was then, now it’s too late. Aston ordered me to take him out now, no more games. The Company knows what it’s doing. It is not for us to question Martin’s orders.”

“We work in teams of three. Let him pass two before the third turns and takes him down. The others create a melee that lets all get out. SOP, all the way.”

Chapter FORTY-FIVE

“Most Holy Peter, we have won. Aston is active and running things. The DCI is weak and when the pressure got too strong, he went on vacation. We have information that Hill has fled to Hawaii to meet with the little woman who is now the heir to the Shikoku empire. The two will make a pathetic attempt to negotiate with you, through Aston, and you can clear the table. It’s as if God planned all this and brought weakness and chaos to our enemies.

“And my heir? Do you think it is you, Bishop Right?”

“Well ...”

“I can assure you that you will join God before that happens. Why isn’t Beatrice here? Where is she? What happened with David Dean? How can you crow when these loose cannons could screw up our plans? Answers! Don’t come again unless you have answers.”

“All I know is that she and that Persian man are in Israel. Dean is probably dead, or soon will be.”

“Israel? Making a deal with the damned Mossad? Trying to hide from me?”

“No, Most Holy, she is meeting with our people in Jerusalem. She wants to show you that she supports you and will bring the New Wind

message to those would-be Christians trapped by ignorance in the holy places.”

“And that ... that’s supposed to make me happy? Make me honor her? Respect her? I don’t need that crap. I want her here under my control.”

“In a woman’s mind, it is feelings that rule. She wants you to know how she feels. That is what I am told and what I know to be true.”

“What will get her here?”

“Go to her. Bless her works and she will do your bidding.”

“God doesn’t go to man; man cowers before God.”

“I agree, of course, but you are cursed with a woman and must deal with her. Do so not as you are, Most Holy, but as her grandfather. Hook her with the pretense of love. Meet her in the sacred city. Win her with your powers of persuasion.”

“Right, you have some worth, and I will think on what you propose.”

You do that you stupid old goat. Beatrice is the future. The bishops have met and now support her. We may have failed to control you, but we will do what we want with the woman.

“Sami, you are in flight somewhere over the Arabian Sea. You land in Turkey to refuel. How are you feeling after the surgery? I want to know you are all right.”

“I have some pain, but before he left, Westfault assured me what he did was not too invasive. He just injected silicone or something where the patches were getting thin. He’s convinced I’ll be up and around tomorrow at the latest ... he said today, but I’m laying low for now. He wants me in his clinic in Bombay as soon as he gets the information from Doctor Katasawa’s

lab in Urawa. Janet, thank you for watching out for me. What are you doing while I'm gone?"

"Hill is meeting me. He leaves D.C. tonight. George is in Saudi Arabia and from all I have learned, his deal with them requires that a woman never be allowed power. Their women are enslaved and they like it that way."

"Bedar reports that George made a deal with the New Wind bishops. I hope not. If he did, Beatrice will remove Peter, but George could take over."

"Will she come to Corfu?"

"I think so Sami. After removing Peter, Bedar said.

"I'll be well enough by then to deal with her before I go to Bombay."

"Sami, is Gifu back?"

"No, but I talked with him. He thinks Dean is in Israel with Beatrice and Bedar. But he's not. We don't know where he is at the moment?"

"Janet, you would know better than I. What's on his itinerary?"

"Israel. But he can't get there from any Islamic country."

"So? He has to go to Europe first ... or Cyprus."

"Not Cyprus. He knows they are all waiting for him."

"You mean were. We're waiting for him. My guess is he's going to Cyprus to get to Israel."

"Good for him. Now the way things have changed, the Shikoku could care less about him. I have ordered our people to forget him. We are preparing to land. I'll call later."

"I'll be with you in Bombay after I go through the reports in Hawaii."

“Bedar, the Bishop of Istanbul told me he would get grandfather here. I find it hard to believe he could be persuaded. Peter hasn’t been out of his nest for over forty years.”

“Beware of him—all of Dominick’s bishops and managers. They are tired of Peter and believe they can take over using you as a figurehead under their control.”

“Yeah, a female Christian figurehead without a maidenhead. I know you’re right, Bedar. It’s just hard for me to believe they think I’m that weak.” And you! You think I’ve given up all my faith and beliefs? You think you have changed me and I no longer have my connection to God? Well, mister devil, I have a foundation you cannot shake. I have insights you will never understand. The New Wind will save mankind, and if I can lead, even you will have to follow.

“You will win, Beatrice, because you know their plans and no matter what they do, you are young and you have time. They may win battles in the short run, but you will be able to fulfill your dreams. Remember, over time you win.”

“And they want Peter dead? Bedar, these men are steeped in religion and godliness. They have sworn fealty before God to Peter.”

“Remember, Missy, they have learned the truth. They do not believe the myths. They oppress as a matter of policy. They think nothing of removing those in their way, as long as it’s your hand dipped in his blood. Although they set it in motion, they believe they are clean—that they have fooled God.”

“Blood? I will not have him killed.”

“They would, so they assume you will. And Missy, I honor you for that. He will have time to examine the ebb and flow of his greed and avarice as a reclusive monk forcibly withdrawn from the world in the land he knows is not holy.”

“Maybe he can meet justice and decency before he meets his Devil.”

“No, men like him are unable to admit to any wrong or misdeed. He’ll die proclaiming that history will absolve him of all he is accused of. He’ll go to dust unable to confess his sins to himself. Men like him stay insane by lying to themselves. Do you think Hitler repented? Can you imagine Mao facing up to his misdeeds?”

“It’s almost time. Once through customs and on the road to Jerusalem, near the ancient olive groves and the garden, he will receive my injection and experience another reality. I didn’t want to see him again, but I must admit I’ll enjoy seeing his evil charisma fade into a stupor. Bedar, don’t get me wrong, as a girl I tried to love him and to win his love. All I got was his disgust for me because I was a girl and then a woman.”

“Three young women will change the world. Someday, they’ll look at the winter sky and Sirius. They’ll see the three bright stars and say: “Look in the East. the Three Wise Women.”

“Damn you Bedar, that’s not funny. If that happens, I will have failed.”

Chapter FORTY-SIX

“Look, damnit, there are no fruit boats from the mainland to Cyprus any time of year. The guy at the airport was not Dean, the head bump guy

confirmed that. He has to be coming by ferry. If he left when he was supposed to, he'd be here by now. But obviously he didn't. If he left the day before yesterday, he will be arriving this afternoon. I'm telling you, our orders are to wait for him and make sure the bad guys don't get him. If he's not here today, then we meet the boat tomorrow. The DDO himself cut the orders. All we have to do is hide him and get him on the Company plane to Israel. This assignment has been nothing but a screw-up since Persepolis. We do this last order right, we can get back in the Company's good graces."

"Hey look! What did I tell you? That's him. Okay, he's jumpy looking constantly over his shoulder. We move in the crowd from the ramp. I'll tell him who we are and why we're here. You show the photos of Dan Hill, Janet Hurley and Wentworth. He'll understand."

Lod Airport. Tel Aviv, Israel

"David, how did you get here? Where were you? We waited as long as we could. You're arriving, but David, Bedar and I are flying out. I'm meeting Sami Cook on Corfu."

"I'm going to a kibbutz near Haifa. I've made arrangements to visit schools."

"How can you be so foolish? After all that's happened you haven't changed your plans?"

"Beatrice, I only have the rest of this year and I only have so much money."

"You're safe here in Israel."

"Two CIA guys helped me on Cyprus. They identified several SAVAK agents, a Japanese guy, plus, and this is hard to believe, some guys from the

CIA that don't work for Dan Hill, who were all looking for me. I got by them all and I can do it again."

"Well, right now Hedeki and Ito Shikoku are dying and their interest in you is gone. You know that Hill and his faction of the CIA still think you have value to the Company."

"It's happening then. Sami Onoto is a decent person. While I'm here I'd like to meet a nice Jewish ID that can show me Israel. Are there women in the Mossad?"

"Damn it, be serious. David, why don't you just go home!"

"Oh, I am. From here I go to Greece. Then Yugoslavia. I'm on my way."

"Bedar, talk sense to him."

"Dean, see those men over there that look like old grocery clerks? Well two of them have followed Missy and me since we flew in. Others have searched our plane, our rooms, and another was in the monastery where we left Peter Dominick. Beatrice retired him you know, and he 'joined' a reclusive order here in the Holy Land."

"What's your point?"

"You're safe because they're watching you. Leave this country and you are a hunted agent again. You know too much Dean and they can't take the chance of letting you live."

"Nice. Good thing I'm only paranoid when I'm awake and asleep. So, Bedar, what should I do?"

"What you do so well, my friend. Do your own thing on your own schedule. It has worked so far."

"And you?"

“I’m right where I need to be.”

“Bedar, they’ve pulled our plane up from the hanger and are anxious to get us out of here.”

“Bedar, I liked you better as a simple SAVAK driver. I loved your Persian accent. You had me convinced you knew little English.”

“You understand, it’s not English, I speak Canadian.” They shook hands and parted company.

Chapter FORTY-SEVEN

Langley, Virginia:

“Mister Hill, it’s me, Clarice. I told Mr. Martin you were in an important meeting. He keeps calling for you and says it’s important that I break into the meeting and get you.”

“Aston isn’t in his office? Can you find out where he is?”

“One moment, I’ll ask Jenna.”

“Oh, he’s calling from Hilo, Hawaii. Did you know he was there too?”

“No ... Clarice, something isn’t right. Do not let him know I’m in Hilo. Tell him if it’s that important, you’ll go into the meeting and get me.”

“This all seems so ... sneaky Mr. Hill. I’m not sure,”

“Clarice! That’s what we do. We’re a spy agency and we are sneaky. If you have a problem with that, you are in the wrong job. Aston Martin wants to move up the ladder and become DDO. That means he is our enemy.”

Clarice return and made the connection between Martin and Hill.

“Hill? Aston here. Have you heard?”

“Aston, this better be good. I was in an important meeting. Well, what is it?”

“Dominick resigned. Joined a monastery. Bishop Right is in charge. I’m supposed to make an alliance between Right and Cook. You know Sami Cook aka Sami Onoto. She is the new head of Sungana-Sungawa Industries.”

“Aston, I don’t know what you’re talking about. Who is Right?”

“Bishop Right. He was Dominick’s axe man.”

“Really? And how is it that you are in Hawaii on company time working for him?”

“Well ... I came here to find you. Word had it that you were here to negotiate with Cook for the DCI.”

“Aston, I’m sitting here at my desk trying to understand. Tell me again, you say this bishop from the New Wind Church sent you to Hawaii to negotiate with Cook? I never authorized contact with any of Dominick’s people Aston, explain!”

“Hill, I ...”

“Aston?”

“Well, Danny, you don’t know it but I’m acting on the direct orders of the DCI.”

You lying SOB. The DCI is probably using you, but it ends here.

“Funny. I just got off the phone with George. He is in Saudi Arabia. He specifically said you had given an order to have David Dean, my operative, killed. He asked me to terminate you immediately. The meeting I am in is with my staff here and the Company attorney. It’s about you. Aren’t you flattered? Let me break it to you as clearly as possible, you are being

terminated and all your credit cards and access to Company resources are cancelled. When I hang up, I will officially label you a rogue agent and order you picked up and disposed of. The DCI put men on you when he learned you had turned. Is that why you called? Have a nice day Aston Martin. Stop what you are doing and get lost. Don't make order your removal."

Quick thinking. That SOB didn't think I knew he was working for Dominick? Well, he underrated me and my imagination. I'll need to fill-in George so he knows in case Aston contacts him. No, Aston will run to his bishop. As a rogue agent he is a liability to the Church. The bishop will take care of him. Wow, this game is getting complicated. He didn't know Janet is representing Sami. Interesting. Now to make certain Janet isn't playing George's game. Dean has information I need. Operation Cowboy is the best thing I created.

Chapter FORTY-EIGHT

Onoto Stronghold, Hawaii:

"Janet, Aston Martin was sent here to contact you by a Bishop Right who was Dominick's number one."

"He played it both ways. George said he was sending him to represent 'our' interests. I assumed by 'our' he meant his."

"He did. You know then?"

"Dan, when I got here, I read through pages of reports on the DCI's relationships with men he had placed in Dominick's empire. He doesn't control the key bishops, but he owns or controls most of the cartel

headmen. Dan, George has created the framework to take over Dominick's interests. There is a report that he plans to use Beatrice and then trump up charges and 'de-claw' her. He plans to use Sami. Dan, he thinks I will betray her."

"You are an officer. You have to follow orders."

"Can you get me out? I've served my time. I've been loyal but this is the end."

"A medical discharge. I can arrange it."

"Sami will be a great leader. She plans to work with Beatrice and me to create a kinder, gentler world."

"Janet, everybody involved is involved because they want to create a new world order. Everybody, as you have observed, wants to head that order. Janet, they are often honest patriots and god-fearing men. That's what drives the movements. Trying to take power so they can do great things."

"That's been so, I agree, Dan, but ... Dan Hill can you imagine a way of living that is circular, not lineal? Not top-down with a father figure in charge, but a movement that puts the onus on each individual?"

"I don't think there has ever been such a structure."

"There has. In many societies, people selected their 'leaders' based upon expertise in a particular area, and for a particular time. Anthropologists studied examples of groups who selected a leader because she knew the best way to prepare food for winter, or he knew the way to the hunting grounds, or she was able to provide information about motherhood or ..."

"You mean no chief?"

“Exactly. I think head men took over because they convinced everyone that the only way to spirituality and the gods went through them. Follow me or die.”

“That’s a new one. I don’t know if it’s possible with so many people.”

“Mister Hill, remember Clarion the slave and the politician in Aristophanes old comedy?”

“What?”

“The ancient Greeks.”

“What do they have to do with it?”

“In Plutus, a slave meets a politician. The dialogue ends when Clarion the slave asks the politician what he did to qualify for his position. The politician answers: ‘I wanted it’.”

“Geez, Janet, that’s ancient history. We’re talking about what you will do today.”

“The point is, we need a system that selects from those most qualified to lead at that time and place, not forever and certainly not because they can. Not a control system that is taken over by the most ruthless, awful and powerful just because they want it.”

“Oh.”

“Mister Hill, don’t you understand? Men in power fear women because they know the power of their mothers. They know women want a future of peace for their children, not empires of hate and pain so a few can control the many.”

“I kinda buy into that. But Janet, how do you plan to get around George and his thugs?”

“Honestly, Dan, Sami sent me here to go over all of our data about the DCI and the empire he is building. I don’t think we can take George on, not now. My report to Sami is bleak. Unless Beatrice has another plan ... we have to back off and pretend to support Dominick’s world order with a new name and boss. George is not creating; he’s taking over what Dominick created. All the patriotism and religious buzz words will remain the same.”

“So, you join him?”

“No, we fade and cease to be a threat in his mind.”

“And then?”

“Dan Hill, we’re all young. George is doing what Peter failed to do. He’s creating a dynasty. Remember, he has sons. He will use his thugs to put his ilk in power before he dies. But we know something that has always held true. The ilk become corrupted and weak. They always fail. When his dynasty breaks down, we move.”

“Nice plan. I think it’s mostly bullshit, but at least you see reality. Good luck telling Beatrice and Sami Onoto they will be old hags by the time the world is ready for them.”

“Or dead. But other women will follow. We’ll make certain of that.”

Chapter FORTY-NINE

Freighter Ting Li Guan. Mediterranean Sea:

Most Urgent. CIA Horowitz under our control via Turkish operatives.

French destroyer L'Enfant demanding immediate possession. Advise.

FBI Communications Center Everclear:

Chinese communication intercepted by CIA Langley. Is Horowitz their light cruiser or the French Republic's? Do we respond? Please advise.

CIA Communications Center, Langley:

"Lieutenant, can you understand this message?"

"Not me Sir. Sorry Sir. It may be garbled. I can't ask the FBI to resend. We aren't supposed to intercept."

"What good would that do even if we could? Nobody reads this routine stuff. Put it in the circular file."

Mossad offices, Haifa:

"Did you get that stack of sent communications from last night?"

"Sure did. Makes no sense, as usual."

"We were worried until we read that last one."

"I don't have it Sir."

"Oh, it's a phone cipher. Basically, it says none of them make sense of the communications either. Crazy Americans."

"But Sir, there is no light cruiser Horowitz. Not in any fleet."

"That's what I mean. We know the light cruiser they refer to is Tanya Horowitz. The Chinese nabbed her in Istanbul and are taking her out by freighter. She's a French heroine. Her exercise tapes are selling all over the world. They are protecting her."

"Really?"

"And Levi, we're learning a lot from Fallout. It all makes sense now."

“So David, all you have learned will be lost because you are too stubborn to go home and go to Europe another time. You have so much to teach ... all you have learned up to now.”

“One might imagine that, but the reality is that most of what I’ve learned ... let me put it this way ... would leave me out of a job and run out of town. I couldn’t share what I’ve learned about patriotism, politics and religion. No, I have to keep to the accepted party-line and pretend there is freedom of political-religious criticism in our theologically oppressed country.”

“But you can write about what you learned. You can go home, organize, write, and see Europe in a couple of years.”

“Sure, but even if I write it as fiction, I’ll be a pariah. Nobody will hire me. I couldn’t do what I love and that is to teach.”

“If you insist on going, David there is something we can do. We can do what we did for your friend Bedar.”

“He left with Beatrice. Isn’t he safe?”

“Maybe, from all the forces who thought he worked for them, but not from her. The Dominick heir is a very mixed-up lady.”

“That’s an understatement! What did you do to protect him?”

“All I can tell you is that he works with us now. We protect him. He will disappear. We have a new identity for him and a place he can thrive. Perhaps in a few years you two can get together. I’ll let you know when it is safe for him to be Bedar again.”

“I’m glad. He has so much to teach us. He taught me to understand what it is to be Persian.”

“Dean, you will be out of the game. Only Dan Hill will know how you were used and that you survived. We will see to it that he covers up Operation Cowboy. Besides, he no longer needs you ... well, he says he might, but with George making his move on Dominick, he’s got other priorities. Everyone will know Fallout is dead. We’ll put out disinformation that Fallout was an operative recruited by the CIA from Military Intelligence, a Harvard man named Donaldson using your name as his cover. Oh, and one other thing. Never use your real passport. The feelers out for David Dean will last for years. Of course, sadly, some will still believe you are Fallout, an American agent even more dangerous than Terrible Tanya.”

BOOK IV
THE SPY WHO
NEVER WOULD

Chapter ONE

Now that he was in Israel, Dean let his guard down. He believed he was through with Dan Hill, the CIA, the Shikoku brothers, Missy Dominick, and everybody else who had tried to involve him in their schemes. Song Onoto was safe somewhere in the Caribbean. Sami Onoto was in Hawaii recovering from brain surgery. Their father, Acieto Onoto was dead, as were the Shikoku brothers.

Missy Dominick was now head of the New Wind Church cartel. Sizdah Bedar, was leading Missy to new realities that Dean believed did not include him. He had learned that Tanya Horowitz was confusing the Chinese and that Jan Hurley (a.k.a. Hurlbut) was temporarily in charge of the Shikoku empires until Sami Onoto recovered. Jan was planning to meet him in Italy. He believed his life was finally his own and he could focus on school visits, education, and his quest for knowledge.

Sharon La Motte had been in Israel since she was 10. Her parents were murdered in Auschwitz. She had been told her mother had managed to hand her baby daughter to a woman standing by the tracks just as the train stopped at the concentration camp gates. That was all she knew about her parents and her heritage. She was given the name Sharon by the lady who sold her to the orphanage. She and a number of other children thought to be Jewish were eventually rescued and sent to Israel where she was adopted by a French couple who were learning how to survive in the Jewish state.

Andrea la Motte, with his resistance background, had skills he used as a Mossad agent. Andrea and his wife Cher, a Bergen-Belsen concentration camp survivor, came to love and respect their adopted daughter. Andrea urged her to prepare for a career in the Mossad. As she neared 24, she was given her third assignment and instructed to seek out a spy named David Dean. The Director asked her if she was ready for a very dangerous assignment. All she was told is that he was trouble and needed watching. He had recently entered Israel, and was traveling around the country under the guise of studying Israeli schools. Her handler warned her the man was tricky and a rogue agent most likely connected with the American Central Intelligence Agency.

For the first time in the service, she was afraid. In a pre-contact meeting, Ari, her partner and trainer with 20 years of field experience, explained that Dean was known as Agent Fallout. Although he had never been violent, she should be on her guard.

“If you can get him to cooperate, people of consequence will pay attention.”

Sharon had Dean under surveillance and got a feel for his daily routine. He went to the same café for coffee each morning. She stepped across the street and walked up to his table.

“Good morning. Would you mind if I joined you? I’ve seen you here for the past two mornings. You looked like someone who knows his way around a place. I’m looking for interesting sights to see.”

“Pull up a seat. My name is David.”

“Oh, you are American. I thought you might be French. My name is Sharon. I’ve got my map, here. Can you point out places you’ve seen and

liked?” As she studied Dean, she sensed he knew their meeting was no accident.

As they looked over a map of the Israel-Jordan border, he seemed truly interested in the history of the region. He told her stories about some of the ancient sites nearby. When she confessed she had never been in this part of Israel before, he offered to show her around.

She felt an instant chemistry between them. She felt safe, but was on her guard. Of course, he would know how to manipulate people and she had been trained to recognize a con. Still, Dean wasn't anything like she expected. He was warm, open and easy to talk with.

Over lunch, they shared observations and concerns that the border area would soon be a war zone. He told her a little about himself and why he had come to Israel.

“Sharon, you wouldn't believe what I've been through in the past few months. I'm a teacher. A public high school teacher in the United States. I took a year away from teaching to visit 22 different countries looking for ways to improve public education. I believe that we can predict the future of countries by looking at how they educate their young people. I want to know if anyone on the planet has education figured out. I mean a system that is student-centered and effective; that prepares kids for their future. The system we have now is based on a model that was old a century ago.”

Sharon gave him one of her, now I've heard it all looks.

So here it is. This is the con and I'm supposed to fall for it. He almost had me. So smooth and unassuming. No wonder this guy is dangerous. He's too smooth.

After lunch they took a stroll. As they walked along an ancient stone wall which once divided two farms, she put her arm in the crook of his and stopped. She looked up at him and smiled. "David, I know you suspect I'm not a tourist. I am with Mossad.

"I'm not interested. Been there done that. You'll have to find someone else."

"The Mossad knows your background and knows you are here. There is no escaping them. I'm here on assignment to make contact and bring you to my superiors. My partner Ari would like to talk to you. I think you will like him. He is a straight shooter like you. I trust Ari and he is someone you can also trust."

"Trust?" David shook his head. "I don't know anything about you. And believe me, I am very tired of women with a hidden agenda coming on to me. Why would I trust what you tell me about anything. I know more than I ever wanted to about this game. I don't know what they have told you about me, but I don't lie Sharon and I don't make things up." Since it seems I have no choice, let's get this over with. I'll meet with Ari somewhere public. You need to be there too. You can leave me a message at my hotel. I'm sure you already know which one."

"Got a deal David. I'll set up the meeting."

Sharon left and David was disgusted with himself and his situation. Every time he thought he was a free man, some other gang of spies tracked him down, wanted information, and thought they could use him.

After touring in the afternoon, he went back to his hotel and found her message waiting for him. He was to meet the two of them in 30 minutes at the self-serve.

David studied Ari seated across from him at the table.

Looks like a soccer coach. Beneath the flattop his crew cut blonde hair is receding in front and revealing a thin spot in back. He is hunched a little, not straight, like he spent his life bending over to help others. Around 5'7" in height, . he's thin, athletic, looks under 30, but is probably older. Round face, like a boy. Kind of innocent looking. Could have fooled me. He doesn't look like a spy.

Ari asked Sharon to get coffee from the self-service bar. He turned to Dean. "Look man, we don't know what to believe about you. All reports say you are dangerous and there are a lot of people who want to kill you. I think you understand the power of the Mossad. We can protect you while you are here or leave you to the sharks."

"Kill me? For what? If you are so well informed, why don't you tell me why I'm dangerous and who is trying to kill me? I'm sure you are right about people hunting me, but at this point, I have little insight into 'who'. The last few months have been a nightmare. Everyone thinks I am this super spy and I am just a school teacher trying to study international schools to improve my teaching."

Sharon came back with 3 cups of coffee skidding around on saucers that didn't have cup molds. There was no way she could keep the coffee from spilling. The hot liquid was burning her hand. Her face was red with embarrassment. Both men jumped up and back as hot coffee ran off the top of the table and dripped onto their chairs. David stood and stared.

Ari was quick to respond. "Let's change tables, shall we? It's okay Sharon, they gave you the wrong kind of saucers." Ari was grinning as Dean tried to dodge the splatter.

“Hey, I think we are off to a good start. Sharon only got burned a little and both of us escaped with nothing but coffee stains. Dean, no one has ever asked me “why”? If you really don’t know ... and you want us to believe that you don’t know ...”

“Would you believe me if I said I don’t? What if I’m telling the truth? Does that change anything?” Dean wiped at a spot of coffee beaded on his shirt. Sharon was blotting the stains from her sweater.

“We don’t know the game you are playing Dean, or is it Agent Fallout? We have you now. How you cooperate will be up to you. Come with us peaceably and there won’t be any problems.” He pointed his nose at the man standing nearby. “There is no choice here. We’ll leave it to our superiors to figure you out.”

“Thanks a hell of a lot Sharon. So much for trust. You’re not the first woman used to trap me. But get this straight. I’ll cooperate in every way unless you piss me off even more. I never said I wouldn’t and I will unless you and Ari screw up. Am I under arrest?”

“Just follow us.” They drove across Tel Aviv to a modern residential-looking complex. “Hey Ari do you have any identification? How about you Sharon? Do you have an ID? I guess it’s too late to be asking now.

This is a luxury apartment building. It doesn’t look like the headquarters of a powerful Mossad spy network.

Sharon got her ID out and flashed it at Dean. “Look David, stop calling us a spy network. You definitely don’t want to piss off our superiors.”

Why rescue him? He is some kind of secret something. The director will expose his true mission. Education my ass.

Dean stood when Ari asked him to stand. A tough looking guy said he would see if the suspect carried a weapon. Frisked, Dean stood waiting for a man with graying hair and a neatly trimmed moustache to finish writing something. It wasn't hard for Dean to figure out that keeping him waiting was part of the game. He wasn't willing to play.

“Okay guys, listen up! If you think treating me like a hostile will help, I assure you it will only serve to shut me down. Your choice now. Be straight with me and I'll be straight with you.”

The heavysset man with graying hair pushed his chair back and looked up. “Hey Cowboy, we are in charge here. You are not! You are on our turf and we call the shots. We hold all the cards.”

This guy has been reading too many westerns. Is he talking to me like he thinks Louis l'Amour would talk to a bad guy from Colorado?

“Screw you and the horse you rode in on. Get someone here that knows what he's doing.”

Ari stepped forward. “Look Grayling, I think Dean is beng sincere. Just ask your questions.”

Dean looked at Ari and smiled. “You don't need a screwdriver to pry information out of me. No games. No Mickey Mouse. Let's sit down and talk straight. Turn on your recorder. Get someone competent in here. But, quit jiggling.”

Grayling tightened his upper lip. His little mustache looked like the business end of an artist's brush. “We have proven ways of getting information Dean. I want no part of this deviation from procedure. I don't want my tail in the crack. You take responsibility Ari. I'm only doing this on your push. I'm out of here. He picked up his briefcase and left the room.”

“I never worked with him before,” Ari explained. “Sorry Dean, he is leading a move to change interrogation tactics. You know, make it personal and get the confidence of the person of interest. This is the first time he tried to be a Colorado cowboy or whatever he thought would soften you up. He obviously screwed up. One of our CIA contacts told Grayling that your boss called you Cowboy.”

Dean grinned and looked at Sharon. She turned and looked away.

“Well spin my spurs. It sure didn’t work with me pardner.”

The bedroom door opened and Dean got a glimpse into another room set up as an office. A tall painfully bent man with a deeply pockmarked face stood looking at Dean. He wore a dingy blue cardigan and his slacks were too loose to hold a crease. His hair had been black and was now salt and pepper sparse. His eyes commanded attention. His voice left no debate that he was in charge.

“Where is Grayling? Ari is this Fallout?”

“Director ... Sir!” Ari stood rigidly at attention. “We brought David Dean in. He came willingly. Says he’ll cooperate Sir. Grayling left ... riding off on his huff I guess.”

Dean had enough! “If you are the man I need to see, let’s get on with it.”

“If you are the innocent you say you are, how did you get so entangled in this complicated web of international power wars? Why don’t you start from the beginning.”

The afternoon was gone before David got through his explanations. The bedroom office was cramped and hot. Sharon sat to one side of the room on the ladderback chair. The director rolled his chair out from behind

his desk and slid his notebook and papers around to the side where he could reach them. Sharon's hair was damp and losing its fluff. Ari sat next to Dean facing the director's desk. Dean's knees almost touched the directors.

As if the room wasn't crowded enough, six agents joined them. They had to sit on the floor with their backs against the wall. The air in the room was stale, making the hot and humid space almost unbearable. Dean assumed that this was not by accident.

Dean, with years of teaching experience, had no trouble commanding the room. Several times the director interrupted to ask for clarification, but most of the show was Dean's. Dean looked over at Sharon. She turned away and didn't engage.

The director looked at his watch, raised his hand and motioned that everyone should clear the room. Dean noticed that several fingers had obviously been chopped off the director's left hand. The three stumps were of different lengths.

"Ari, Dean is our guest. Make sure he has everything he needs and let's begin again tomorrow at 8 am. But not here. Schedule a larger and more comfortable room. We will meet downstairs." He got up, signaling with his eyes that everyone must leave. He reached down and adjusted his right knee. There was a barely audible click as he balanced and stood.

Sharon would not meet Dean's eyes.

She doesn't believe a word I've said.

"So Sharon, do you and Ari have a place for me to stay?"

Ari responded. "We have a guest room for you on the top floor. Sharon will take you to a safe place where you can eat. Me, I'm going home

to my family. I have to say you surprised me David Dean. I can't say I had a clue about you. The director will need time to check out your story. Those other guys in the room are already on it. Until then, you are our guest. By tomorrow morning the director will have a lot of questions."

Sharon and David exited the room and took the elevator to the penthouse. "Sharon, what is the director's name and what happened to him? Why is he missing fingers? He can't stand unless he locks his knee brace?"

"It's just Director. They don't use names here. Monsters tried to take him apart. They carved him up and thought he was dead. He was thrown into a pile of dead in a trench. He waited until dark and crawled over the rotting corpses of our people and escaped. He became the Gestapo's worst nightmare ... a nightmare to many working against us."

"Sharon, what gives? You won't look at me and something is obviously bothering you."

"David, if all that really happened to you ... there's no way you would be here right now. You would be dead. I've never heard such a story. I think the Director is letting you hang yourself."

"It is a very strange tale I will give you that. I have told the truth and I tried to stick to the facts without exaggerating."

"That's just it. I think you do both. We'll see what tomorrow brings. I'll hold judgment until then."

"I'll be here. What time is breakfast?"

The basement room was cool and felt open compared to the bedroom office of the Director. He was already seated at a large desk with files and

reports spread out in a fan in front of him. Dean noted from the empty coffee cup and the napkins covered with powdered sugar and crumbs, that he had been working for hours.

“Take a chair. We won’t need to be here long.”

Dean felt the chill of cold sweat down his back. Sharon smiled. She would not look directly at David.

It’s as I thought, the Director has me cornered and will drop the hammer. Sharon is right. They think I am lying and a fraud. I have to do something to change their minds. But what?

“Dean, your stories check out. What do you need from me?”

He held his hands up and apart, Dean noticed that he didn’t have a thumb on his right hand.

Dean, Sharon, and Ari, were not expecting the Director’s question. Dean was stunned. Thoughts of torture and prison stopped feeding his fear.

“We’ve done a deep dive into his background. He is what he claims to be. He wasn’t trained as an agent and his moves were not predictable. In similar situations yours and Ari’s are. And even though we try not to reward certain behaviors, most agents are predictable especially when they are following orders. When I first heard of him, I suspected he had no training. He has good instincts. He acted logically and erratically, to stay out of their game. That kept him alive. All he knew was that they would use him if he let them.”

“But what of his ... adventures? I mean was all the trouble he got into just a fluke? If so, how could it be of value to us?”

“Only almost everything. In fact, information from him is ... unfiltered.” He smiled warmly at Ari whose body language told the Director that he was way beyond his range of understanding.

“Every FBI, CIA, DEA, SAVAK and a large number of our agents are known by every sourcing agency. We feed on each other and usually act on old or no information. Dean, on the other hand, provided new information—names, activities and organizations that we knew existed but we had no detailed information. Dean put flesh on the bones. If I have my way, we will utilize his methods to train and retrain our people. I’ll be meeting privately with you later, Dean. There’s a lot of information about your experiences we need to understand.”

“Thank you, Director. But you asked what do I want? I’m not going home. I’m headed for Europe. As you know, I’m not working for anybody. I really am a teacher searching for insights into education.”

“We can help. Fallout has to die. We have to get you into Europe without anyone knowing and ...” He turned to Sharon. “Miss La Motte you will set this up and accompany Dean to Europe to make certain he is safe and free.”

“What role do I play?” Ari looked over at Sharon then back at the Director, “I mean we are a team.”

“Agent, you have two kids, right? They are both in school. Get Dean to Hersalia so he can visit one of our best schools. You introduce Dean to teachers that can give him the information he seeks. Invent an identity for him and keep as invisible as possible. I like his idea that we can predict the future of nations by knowing how they educate their children. And again, I

want a plan to extricate Dean safely and get him to Europe without his enemies knowing he is not dead. I want it on my desk in 24 hours.”

“I guess you are stuck with me Sharon. Just me as my shadow.”

“I’m trying to decide if I am being punished, sacrificed, or trusted. One minute I think you are the most polished con I have ever met, and now? You are an asset I’m supposed to nursemaid. Beats me.”

“I have no idea how you can kill me, get me a new identity, and get me to Greece. I await your plan, Ms. Nursemaid. Meantime, I really want to learn about your education systems. Isn’t Hersalia a kibbutz named after the wife of Romulus, a founder of Rome?”

INTERNAL MEMO EYES ONLY

To: HR. Information required.

From: Director.

Complete background information about each of the following:

Dan Hill, DDO, CIA. B.O. George, DCI. Tanya Horowitz, PT. Susie Song Onoto. Acieto Onoto, Agent Caldwell, CIA, Janet Hurley (Hurlbut) US military, Dorothy Wentworth, Missy Dominick, New Wind Church, Peter Dominick, Sizdah Bedar, unknown affiliation.

“How will you kill me off then ... I mean Agent Fallout?”

“By a devastating explosion just as the assassins are closing in.”

“Here in Tel Aviv?”

“Of course not David. In Istanbul. We will use a double and pull him out just before the explosion.”

“So, you put me on a plane ... I mean us. But won't their people be watching?”

“Watching an overweight Hasidic rabbi with long curls and a beard? An old man dressed in the middle—ages finery of those stuck in time? On an El Al flight to Frankfurt? With a diplomatic passport? Flying first-class on a weekday? A young mother with her newborn child, traveling to Germany tourist class. I don't think so David. And once in Frankfurt, the rabbi will be picked up by the American consulate. While waiting in the back of the limousine, you'll change into a Greek fisherman with a captain's hat, flowing mustache and a dark complexion. Traveling on the same flight to Athens on Olympic Airways Flight 33, is a college girl wearing a gray skirt and blue blazer, carrying a book bag, who is obviously returning to University.”

“The Director approved this?”

“You clear Greek customs, hail a taxi—one of ours, take off the makeup, and change again. You assume your new identity, the one Ari has created and is sending via EL Al. When you check into the Kings Palace Hotel on Syntagma Square they will ask for your passport and you will hand them a letter explaining that the hotel failed to return it, but the airline will deliver it tomorrow. Meanwhile tell them you will have your passport and identity papers in the morning”

Their plan is working ... except the brown makeup I rubbed into my face and hands won't wipe off!

Sharon got into the taxi and asked why he had not removed the makeup. He pointed at the tissue that had no effect on removing the brown. “Oh, you need cold cream. I will find some.”

“I’ll take it from here. Get me what I need. I’ll check in as a fisherman.”

He carried the bag with his toupee and good sports coat, and went to the registration desk.

“I’m a-gonna meet my boat tomorrow at the port Piraeus and the damned guy at my hotel in Frankfurt didn’t give me back my passport. They’re sending it fast. I’ll have it tomorrow or I’ll go back and gut him.”

The desk man was adamant. “I have to give it to the tourist police, you understand. Early morning? I better have it for them or they will come for you. We will both have trouble. Understand? You will pay in cash, right?”

“Cheapest room. I don’t need much. Here’s the cash.”

Dean took the key as the registrar pointed to the hallway marked 110, where he found his room down the dark, side corridor. He guessed it was used for temporary staff.

About an hour later a buzzer on the wall over the door screeched three times. It took a few minutes before Dean deduced that he was being called. At the desk, the registrar turned and picked up a small package.

“The hotel in Frankfurt sent this as a gift and apology for holding your papers. You should have seen the French package that delivered it—barely spoke English. Cute as a button. Said she worked for the French hotel. I never heard of it. I think the gift is some kind of hand cream. Hard to understand her. Ooh-la-la. Wish I could speak French.”

Fisherman Dean smiled. “For hands, yes. They sell it.”

This dye or whatever it is won't come off until I scrub off a layer of flesh.

It took Dean more than an hour to turn himself from a dark-skinned fisherman to a guy with a barely noticeable toupee, glasses, white shirt, and gold sportscoat. The mirror reflected a sunburned tourist with a healthy energy about him.

He was exhausted, and although the bed was lumpy and uncomfortable, he crashed. Tel Aviv was a memory. Frankfurt a dim recollection of deplaning and being pushed and pulled into his new identity.

Sometime before first light, an explosion rocked Syntagma Square's offices, hotels and shops. The high window in his cell-like room was blown open by the force of blast and then pulled closed by the air rushing to fill the square. Dean jolted awake. His ears popped and he jumped to his feet with nowhere to run. He realized that he could not be seen leaving the room because his sun-tanned fisherman persona who had checked in to the hotel had been washed down the drain.

He opened the door a crack and saw hotel workers, maids and bellmen, pushing a line of their fellows toward the back of the dark hallway, then to the right and down what must have been stairs. Outside light was streaming from an exit door.

Great! There is a rear exit. The fishermen and I will leave in the morning and go around to the front, find Sharon, get my new identity and check into the Kings Palace.

Dean listened at the door and picked up a word here and there, enough to learn that the bomb blasted the El Al office and started a small fire. The blast broke windows, but nothing too serious affected the hotel.

“I don’t think tourists did it,” a stout maid with the dust covered uniform told a friend as they returned to the hotel. “You know the Jews, always cooking and leaving their gas on.”

Right! Bombs go off every day set by anti-Semitic gremlins who are Jews, cooking and leave the gas on.

Suddenly, Sharon was behind him. “David, keep walking don’t acknowledge me!”

Of course, David turned and stared.

“Did you hear me?”

“I know, keep walking. Don’t worry Susie Q, no one will give a hippie with tangled hair, purple eye shadow that looks like it was applied with a putty knife, and military surplus clothes, a second look. Do you have my papers? I’m ready to check in.”

“Didn’t you hear the explosion? See the fire? Everything was lost. You know what that means? You have to remain David Dean.”

“All my papers were destroyed?”

“David, everything we had for you. You still have your USA passport? Check-in. I’ll be in contact. It may take some time, but I think with Fallout dead in the explosion, Dean may not be followed. What value would you have to them?”

One van after another dropped off airline personnel at the Kings Palace entrance. The check-in line extended out onto the sidewalk. Dean found a place at the back of the line and moved slowly with the others. He was admiring the rear view of two short and trim stewardesses wearing the caps of Olympic Air. Ahead and behind him were other women and men

representing airlines he had never heard of. He had never seen so many attractive women in one place.

“Sorry for the delay,” a bellhop explained. "Due to the bombing of the El Al offices last night all personnel were held up at the airport until about an hour ago. We will have everyone checked in as soon as possible.

“Attention, Attention," he announced, "Make sure your luggage is on one of the carts with blue tape. It should get to your room shortly after you do."

Wow! Beautiful women everywhere. I must have died and gone to heaven.

When he reached the registration desk, he knew there was no chance he would be identified as the fisherman. The woman took his passport, regarded the pertinent information, and looked at the roster for a room.

“No reservation, Sir! You’ll have to wait until a room is maid serviced. Please enjoy the bar and we will call you. Put your bags on the cart with yellow tape.”

Carefully working his way through the sea of uniformed stewardesses, making eye contact with every woman he bumped into, he found a stool at the bar next to an attractive lady. She turned toward him, looked him over, and asked if she could buy him a drink.

“You are not with an airline. Are you here on business? You’re American, aren’t you? Have you been here before? Have you climbed to the Acropolis? What are you drinking? Try the ouzo If you like anise-flavored drinks. How long are you here? My crew is here for a three-day layover. You can call me Catherine. There seems to be a shortage of men here. What’s your name?”

“That was an awful lot of questions,” David laughed. My name is David. I’m from Colorado in the USA. Haven’t been here before. I’ll try the ouzo. I take it you have been here before?”

“Probably everyone you meet has been here before. Been here, done that.” She said with a slow grin. The way wrinkles crept around her mouth told him she was well over 30.

“Okay David. Obviously, you are here on business. Is it sales? Is that why the toupee? Most of us like bald men, but if you are a salesman, I can see why they make you wear it. Here you can swim and you can do other stuff. Nobody cares.”

“How did you know? I’ve been told it’s very good.”

“David, we look down on people all day. Color match, scalp visible at the part, too neat. if you’re looking from our vantage point yours is a really good one, don’t worry.”

She doesn’t need to know the real reason I have two identities.

“Okay Nancy Drew, I notice you have a wig or something. I guess many women have hair to fit every mood.”

“I’ll bet you can’t guess my natural hair color?”

“I suppose I could find out? But what difference would it make. You’re very attractive and use every advantage your airline requires. I guess what counts is what’s underneath ... I mean inside ... who you really are.” He paused waiting for her response.

“I sometimes wonder who I really am ... I mean what happened to the girl who wanted to be a mother and a house frau instead of a woman of the world. An educated hostess and caregiver. Sometimes, a waitress, bar hop, and a peanut pusher. That is the downside of my career choice. I tried

marriage. Not what I had imagined. You are not wearing a ring. Did you take it off or are you really single?”

“I’m single, really. I’m living on the road and it’s not the life a woman needs.”

“So, we meet here in the hotel bar. It’s both of our stories. We have different lives that are really the same. We take what we need and give back whatever is necessary. What neither of us has is a future. All we have is brief interludes of—physical pleasure. That doesn’t bother me. I think of my future and draw a blank. I probably will suffer it when I get there.”

Enough of her idea of foreplay. What a hollow existence.

“Catherine you must know Athens. While I’m here I want to get the feeling of being Greek. I have some schools to visit ... I sell them educational stuff. But most of my time is my own. Why don’t we order another drink and you can tell me your life story?”

“Okay, you’ve got a deal if you’ll tell me yours.”

“Deal! Go for it”

“Catherine was perhaps the most common name given to girls in 1950s Russia. I could use my given first name and never be questioned. I knew better than to use my last name because the Stalinists had tried to erase all of the history that came before the *Man of Iron* took power. I grew up in the desolation caused by the Germans in rural St. Petersburg. Even before puberty I had learned the value of pleasing men—or in those days the neighborhood boys I ran with. I collected information and rubles. I was good at it. By the time I was 20 I had a fortune in information and more rubles than I knew what to do with.

“I knew more about male anatomy than the men it belonged to. I shared irritating diseases with dozens of customers before I was tracked down and forced to suffer a number of cures, including Mercury treatments, that rendered me sterile but almost disease-free. I had to report to the health department once a week for tests. If any test was positive, I would be imprisoned and probably disappeared. That future, and the loss of my information gathering vices and my rubles lead me to offer my services to the KGB.

“Now I spend most of my time in hotel bars gathering information and reporting on the people passing through. The management of the King's Palace has strict rules. They keep track of the number of drinks that I get my marks to buy. They allow me to stay for up to a week at a time. Then I move on to another hotel in Greece or France. It's not a bad life. If my looks hold out for another two or three years, the KGB will find another position for me.”

“Sounds like you have had a pretty rough life.”

There is something fishy about this David Dean character. He is too nice. It's not normal. I'm going to suggest to the KGB that they put him on their watchlist.

“David. Listen!”

“David D. Front desk please.”

“That's me. I'll go check in.”

Dean moved through the packed foyer. At the registration desk there were three people ahead of him. One stewardess looked familiar, but he thought little of it until she turned.

“Sharon?”

“Pretend that you don’t know me. Make it look like you are hitting on me. Don’t give me away.” She whispered.

“TWA??”

“Checking in. My room adjoins yours. We will talk. I have information.”

Missy Dominic all over again. When will they leave me alone?

Dean made it through the line and got checked in. Once inside, he locked the door and stretched out on the bed.

He heard scratching and rattling on the door between the rooms. Then nothing, then gentle knocking on the door to the corridor.

“Dean, you didn’t waste any time. That woman Catherine you were trying to pick up is a known KGB agent. I think she’s fishing. She can’t find out who you are.”

“KGB? How in the hell would you know?”

“David, let me screen women for you. I mean, I can check out the ones who are safe. You must understand that this hotel is a hot bed of international spies. I’ll bet you gave her enough information about yourself that it will be only a matter of time until the bad guys have you pegged and wonder what you are doing in Greece.”

“Pegged? You mean they know my connections?”

“You have a history, David. It may be complicated because you never agreed to work for them, but Dan Hill, Deputy Director of Central Intelligence still thinks he owns you, and he may already know that you are not dead. You think you have fooled all of those against you, but even though my Director checked your stories, there are maybe five people on

the planet that know you are not a secret agent. I even catch myself doubting you.”

“Okay, I have to believe you for now. If there are still agents working me, and I believe you, I can use them. I can feed them wrong information that will send them off in other directions.”

“David, according to the Director, who is a fan of your form of chaos, that is what you do. I’m just beginning to understand how you play the game.”

“Play the game! It may seem like a game to you, but all I try to do is avoid working for them, with them, or against them. I just stay clear and get what I need ... to do what I came here to do.”

“They have your itinerary. All they have to do is meet you at your next stop. If you lose them, they can easily find you again.”

“Yes, but when I get to Westphalia in northern Germany, I will pick up the VW Combi Camper I ordered and paid for before I left the States. It will be easier to avoid public transportation and hotels. I can change my schedule and go and camp where I want.”

“David, we had no idea you did that. How would we have known? When do you pick it up?”

“I’ll call VW and tell them when. Meantime, Catherine has offered to give me a tour of Athens. Agent or not, I can fill her head with stuff I want her to know. I guess you would call that ‘playing the game’.”

“You would actually go out and spend time with that woman even though I told you how dangerous she is? David, I can’t run interference for you if you throw yourself into the path of real danger. The KGB doesn’t have any compunction about killing anyone who worries them.”

Dean paused, thinking. “Does she know who you are, who you work for?”

“No. No way!”

“Then Sharon, get some other stewardesses to join us. It will be fun and you can do what the Director has ordered you to do.”

Chapter TWO

“There is almost a full moon tonight. The view from the Acropolis will be spectacular. Why did you invite all these others?”

“Catherine, word just got out around the hotel. I didn’t invite them, I guess they need something to do.”

“Did you tell them we had to climb up the back way? That we will be breaking the law? Oh well, since you are the only male, I guess you have an obligation to chaperone all us lonely women. We must sneak out and pretend to be looking for a bar.”

On the rock-strewn trail climbing to the Acropolis, Sharon moved in back of Dean and whispered, “Where were you last night? You scared the hell out of me. Were you with that ... that KGB bitch?”

Dean almost tripped as his foot rolled a rock down the trail. “I’ll tell you later.”

“Tell her to do what?” A woman following them dodged the rock. “Do you two know each other?”

Dean turned and looked back at Sharon as if seeing her for the first time. “No, she’s looking for shoes like mine. Climbing in sandals is not safe.”

Dean held the strands of barbwire apart as most of the ladies were still dressed in their uniform skirts. Because of the heat, they had ditched their jackets, scarves, and bras as evidenced by the soft forms beneath their semi-transparent silk blouses. They bent, ducked and crabbed through the fencing. They helped each other up and over the last rock lip and stood waiting for Dean. In the moonlight, the rocks glowed. They were made of white, translucent marble. At this end of the acropolis fluted sections of fallen columns and broken pieces of decorative ionic capitals lay abandoned.

They stood looking out over Athens which lay far below like an open book, the pages covered with beige and white scree fields of broken marble. The spine of the book ran down the deepest part of the valley. Twinkling stars of street lights, stores and houses seemed to dance as the heat waves rose from the city bringing welcoming warm breezes that played around them.

Finding backrests among the ruins the group relaxed and stared out into the moonlit night. Behind them the skeleton of the acropolis looked inhabited. Shadows hid behind standing marble. The six women holding up the porch of the Erechtheion seemed alive and present.

How did I end up in the middle of all this female energy? It certainly is different.

Sharon sat on Dean's right. Catherine chose a spot on his left. The others, twelve in all, sat to the left and right of them. Someone suggested that they hold hands and the energy created, one to another, stopped time and worries. A very attractive stewardess to Dean's left started singing *Some Enchanted Evening* and was joined by humming smiles.

“I brought wine. Carla brought ouzo.”

“I have some really good hash.”

“Are we safe here?”

“We have to leave at dawn.”

Chapter THREE

“David, you have to tell me ... why do you discount my abilities?”

“I have no idea what you’re talking about or what your abilities are, Sharon.”

“So, you just slip out and don’t let me know?”

“Oh, you mean last night for dinner? I never thought you would join me. In fact, I thought you weren’t supposed to be seen with me. It’s nothing personal.”

“Right. You can’t just go off on your own. You know your personal safety is my responsibility. I am in big trouble if anything happens to you.”

“Okay, sorry I didn’t check in. Here is what happened last night. I was listening to Armed Forces Radio on my little transistor set. I heard that the Denver teachers had just voted to go out on strike. You may not know how important that is. Well, it is to me as an educator with a conscience. I knew the only news I could get from the military radio would be all far-right propaganda. Nasty guys like Paul Harvey and Rush Limbaugh. AFN is run by white supremacists and is designed to brainwash young minds. So, I stewed and paced around my room until I realized I was hungry.

“You could have let me know.”

“I asked the desk lady for a good place to eat. She recommended a budget place with great Indian food and gave me directions. I left the hotel, turned right and then right again. A block down on a side street I found the place. I went in and waited to be seated. As I stood there looking around, I couldn’t believe my eyes. Talk about synchronicity in the Universe. Sitting at the one of the tables, I saw Governor Love, the Governor of Colorado, my home state. He was talking to a guy named Daniels that I knew was a major player in State politics. I was going to sneak by and pretend that I had never seen them ... you know, Sharon, I assumed that they were having a secret meeting and wouldn’t appreciate being exposed.”

“So what? You snuck in and ...?”

“And I got caught. When the waiter sat me at my table, I looked up and Governor Love was staring at me.

He was trying to place me. He knew me from working in the control box at football games.

“He motioned me over. I had no choice. I went to their table and he knew my name. He said he and Daniels were returning from Africa and a *Wide World Of Sports* program. I told him what I had just heard on AFN about the teacher's strike. He lost it for a few minutes, and told me that could never happen. Teachers were under control and wouldn’t do that to him. Daniels agreed. They got angry with me and suggested that for some reason I had brought them false information. We parted under that cloud. I went back to my table and ordered. The lamb sag was great. They paid and left without a backward glance at me. I came back and crashed.”

“Come on Dean. You expect me to believe that here, in a strange country you have never been in before, in a hotel that you have never been

in before, you go to a small out-of-the-way café for dinner, and run into the Governor of your State and his power man? You tell him news that he obviously just heard for the first time about teachers in Denver. He gets angry and thinks you are setting him up. You don't part on the best of terms. Sounds pretty implausible to me”

She can't believe this could happen. She's right. I can't believe this happened either!

“I liked it better when I thought you were a con man.”

“The thing I can't figure out is why they didn't ask me what I was doing in Athens.”

“Strange maybe, but you have no clue as to what they were doing in Greece. In my world it would indicate they were meeting where no one would know them—meeting for some nefarious purpose. You'll probably never know. Since it doesn't have anything to do with you. I wouldn't worry about it.

“Unless they want to know how a teacher from Colorado just happened to be in Athens at the same small café. They will check up on me and be told I have CIA connections. If what they met for was to share information—plans that are dangerous if exposed—I might be in trouble.”

“David, I think it's time to get you out of here.”

Ari, are you in Athens?

Listen Sharon, the Director has ordered background checks on almost everyone Dean mentioned when he told of his past adventures. He learned that those interested in Dean know that he did not die in the explosion. The CIA's DCI and DDO think they need him to carry messages in Europe. It

seems that Dean had a lot of unfinished business before he came here. Be advised that at least three other groups are looking for him. I'll get more information, but be aware.

Damn, no matter what I do I find trouble. She's right, I've got to get out of Greece but not before I visit Greek schools. I still want to go to Delphi and places I've taught about but have never seen. Then I can head to Yugoslavia and visit Zoran. They don't know about him. He's not on my itinerary because I didn't know whether I could connect with him until just before I left the U.S. I can't tell Sharon where I'm going. She's clever, but I'm sure the Mossad are tracking her. If they are, then others are too.

Catherine seems way too interested in me. The KGB has close ties to Tito, so they will find out that I went to Yugoslavia. By that time, I can be in Austria on my way to Germany to pick up my VW. I will be harder to track when I'm camping. Dan Hill and the CIA must already know my passport was recorded at the hotel. The Greek Tourist Police know, so they know ... ain't no way I don't have tails. But who in their right mind would go to Yugoslavia, especially in winter?

High above Turkey:

"Beatrice, I'm worried about David. He thinks he's safe in Europe."

"I'm worried too. I've been thinking about how to keep him safe. Sami doesn't know what to do with Gifu and Taegu. I'll ask her to send them to Europe and keep an eye on David"

Athens:

“Look Sharon, before I go North, I’m still going to visit the schools on my itinerary and do some tourist things.”

“What do you mean tourist things?” What makes you think it’s safe to stay in Greece for even for a few more days? I really don’t think you know the danger you’re putting us in. When something happens to you, Ari and the Director will ask me why I didn’t protect you ... why I let you stay in Greece. My job is on the line.”

“Tell them you had no say. Tell them thanks. Tell them anything that will cover you.”

Now I’m sure of Sharon’s priorities ... not that I thought differently. Cover your ass, Baby. I’ll cover mine.

“If you’re gonna do it, at least book your flights so that I can book mine.”

“I don’t want to go back to Hellinikon airport. I think I’ll use the travel agency here on the square.”

“Of course, David, that’s what they are here for.”

Of course, Sharon. Are you staying here or going back to the hotel?

“I think I’ll hang out and see what you come up with. I’m sure it will be a surprise.”

David crossed the square and stepped inside the travel agency. The agent motioned him into the chair and David told them where he wanted to go. Once he had covered all his options, he went back to tell Sharon what he wanted her to know.

They have railroad schedules too. I'll give her flight information for Frankfurt and then slip away on the train to Yugoslavia. But first I have Greek schools to visit and I want to see Delphi and Meteora.

David found Sharon sitting outside a small café. He told her about the flight to Frankfurt.

“Thanks for the flight information. We can meet in Frankfurt after we leave Greece.”

“David, what took you so long? You didn't tell me which school. I got lost.”

“Sorry Sharon. I kept looking for you in the groups of students and faculty. I thought you were there doing your spy thing and blending in with the crowd. Luckily nothing really bad happened.”

“If Ari finds out I wasn't even there I'm gonna be in a world of hurt. What do you mean nothing really bad happened? David, what happened?”

“Well, I actually visited two schools. What's bad is that I didn't learn anything new. Nothing. Nada. Zip. They were typical top-down schools for wealthy Greeks, Brits and Americans working in Greece.”

“That's what you call bad?” She gave him a strange look, paused and decided to tell him. “You know Ari and I had a discussion about you. Now don't take this the wrong way. We think you have serious trust issues and deep-seated stress-related problems from your close calls and bad experiences in Asia. These delayed feelings are making your behavior erratic. Any reasonable person in danger would take our help and be happy for the protection—especially if you are the non-spy guy you claim to be.”

“What exactly do you think I should let you do? Take over my plans and what? Control my every move? Send me in directions you would like me to go? Places that you and those you work for think I should go?”

“Of course not. I just need more cooperation. I need to know in advance where you are planning to go if I am to mediate ... no, that’s not the correct word ... intercede. My job is to clear the way for you and be there to help if something bad happens.”

“So let me get this straight. I’m suffering from some sort of mental limitation because I don’t turn my life over to you? Right?”

“You have trust issues and that is forgivable and understandable. But we are on your side.”

“Sharon, in the last few months I have met way to many dames that ‘just want to keep me safe’. That’s why I’m in the mess I’m in now. I trust you ...maybe ... a little ... but it’s not what you think. I can say I absolutely trust you to spy on me and report to the Mossad. It’s clear your orders are to follow me and learn all about any mission I might have with the CIA, which I don’t have. Once the agency uses you, the stain never goes away.

David pretended to be thinking then acquiesced.

“Okay.”

“Okay what? Okay you will cooperate and let me help you?”

“Okay yes, you are right. How could I have been so blind. But Sharon, if we are going to build a trust relationship, I need to know you better.

If I have to have her on top of me, it will be on my terms. At least that way I can keep tabs on her.

If you are going to be my confidant and companion, I want to be close to you in every way. That’s how trust is built.”

Finally! A breakthrough. I knew this day was coming. I've been trained for this. Now I can put all my skills to work. It might even be fun. It's not a bad assignment. He's good looking and actually seems pretty sweet. If he was my boyfriend, we would be building trust this way. I should tell Ari. No. Not just yet. I'll play along for a while and see where this leads. What they want is results. I'm sure I can get them."

"So Sharon, do you think we are being watched at all times?"

"It's you they are watching, not me. But thank Moses we are aware of them."

"I think it's both of us. Can you make any of them? Do you have plans to ditch them?"

"Them? How do you know there are two?"

"One is probably keeping track of us. The other? Who is that woman?"

"You mean the maid? She probably checks the sheets and gives a daily report."

"You're kidding right?"

Chapter FOUR

"Were we followed?"

"No, Catherine bought your story about going to the airport to buy a ticket. She caught a taxi and is going there now."

"And the maid? I think she really is a maid here at the hotel. What about that guy who looks like a dork on vacation?"

“He overheard your conversation with Catherine. When she left for Hellinikon, he made a B-line for the bar. If he’s an agent he doesn’t fit the mold.”

“I rented a small panel van. Fiat, I think. It’s blue with rust attacking it. I’ll pick you up on the side street that runs a block down from the hotel. I’m hoping I’ll recognize you. Wear a short skirt and tight elastic top. If you look like a hooker, I’ll pick you up.”

He cruised the street that ran in back of the Kings Palace. On his third pass, he spotted Sharon—rather, a hooker so hard up she was working the street mid-day. Her wig was purple with glitter that also sprinkled her shoulders. Her face was hidden under makeup that one could assume was held in place by deep smallpox scars riddling her skin. Her T-shirt accentuated her breasts which were thrust forward and flattened by a tight elastic band that almost, but not quite contained her gumdrop nipples. Her skirt was so short, a pink band of G-string flashed messages to anyone interested. She was barefoot, and that bothered him.

“How much?”

“Dean, get me off this street. See that cop over there? See that woman who says I’m in her spot?”

“Quick, get in.”

“Can I get in to the back and change?”

“Into?”

“Didn’t I throw my bag in?”

“I never saw a bag. Lucky, I got you before the cop.”

“Oh God, I left the bag in my room. I was so preoccupied with the disguise I forgot it.”

“What disguise? I thought I was to pick up a prostitute. I did. Now you want to change?”

“Stop it Dean! This isn’t funny. What do we do now?”

“Cheap hotel. I sneak you in. Then I go shopping for your new outfit. How about a business suit? We’ll have to wait until dark. Meanwhile I’ll drive us far away from Athens.”

“Dean, we have to stop. I’ve got to pee.”

“Really? Dressed like that? Sharon, look in back. I think there’s a pop can back there.”

“No. Absolutely not. Look for a pull off—bushes, privacy, I’m not built like you. I can’t go in a can.”

“Looks like a bigger town. Lamia 5 km. We still have a problem. You can’t go in anyplace and it’s about an hour until dark.”

“And I have to stop. Really, David I’m not kidding.”

“What about a bigger can or jar? I’ll find one.”

David found a roadside motel at the edge of town and pulled in.

“I’ll get us a room. Hang in there.”

“Finally! This motel gives me the creeps, but we are in and there is hot water.”

“I think this makeup comes off with cold cream, but I’ll try hot water and soap.

“I know all about cold cream and makeup. First, let’s wipe off all that we can. Then ...”

“What do you mean ‘we’?”

“Look, this is no time to be modest. I’m coming into the shower with you and I’ll be a perfect gentleman.”

After a long hot uneventful shower, David dressed and went out to find Sharon some clothes.

“All I could find was a trench coat. A man’s size small. No women’s clothing. No cold cream.”

“Damn, all I’ve got on under it is a t-shirt and g-string. Don’t you dare make some smartass comment! We have to find a discount store in the next town. By the way, now that you’ve got me compromised, where are we going?”

“Delphi Theatre. It’s an ancient religious sanctuary dedicated to the Greek god Apollo, built sometime in the 8th century B.C. as I recall. It was home to the Oracle of Delphi and the priestess Pythia, who was famed throughout the ancient world for divining the future. She was consulted before all major undertakings. I think we should get Pythia’s take on your situation. Oh, I forgot. You’ll need shoes.”

“You have me barefoot and barely dressed. I did this to myself, but I’m expecting you to get me out of ... no, poor choice of words ... I’m hoping someone other than Pythia will help us find what I need. I can’t go visiting anything without decent clothes!”

“We could go back but we are about 190 clicks from Athens and it took us 3 hours to get here. I know we will need several hours to explore the site, but not without shoes. There is a modern town named Delphi near here. I’m heading there now.”

“I need a story to tell the shopkeeper. How about I was skinny-dipping and someone stole my clothes?”

“Skinny-dipping? Where? How about someone broke in and stole your suitcase while you were in the shower. You had to buy what you are wearing from a woman in the next room.”

“Something like that. I hope the shopkeeper is a woman.”

Fortunately. The town of Delphi had what they needed. It had shops for tourists and locals. Sharon picked one that seemed to have a lot of clothing neatly folded on shelves. The woman behind the counter bought her story and Sharon bought traveling clothes.

“She told me to dress in layers, and always wear dresses and skirts of very light colors. You know, white, light blue, light pink, and yellow. I like the softer colors and she had a light blue blouse and skirt that fit me perfectly. What they call bras didn’t fit me. She had several pairs of sandals, and I picked these because they look good with the outfit. I tried to find underwear that ... well, I had to buy bloomers, I guess that’s what they’re called. If I’m not careful I could fall out of them.”

“Definitely be careful!” He said trying to keep a straight face.

“We have some daylight left. Want to find the Oracle?”

“Not until we find cold cream.”

“Another thought, how will you explain these items on your expense account?”

“I’d have to be pretty dumb to declare them.”

Kings Palace Hotel. Athens:

“Yes Sir. I don’t know Sir. I will. I’m going to her room now. No Sir, she didn’t say anything to me. Yes Sir, she wouldn’t leave without telling me. I agree Sir. She knows how to handle herself. Yes Sir, when I know.”

“Director, I found Sharon’s travel bag in her room. It’s packed with her disguises and toiletries.”

“Like she was ready to go someplace?”

“Maybe Sir. I suspect she was always ready to follow him if necessary. She must have taken her passport.”

“But she’s missing and the bag is there. Ari, find her! Now! Is Dean missing too?”

“I’ll check Sir.”

Delphi Theatre:

“Remember Dean, I’m not on vacation. I’m working and running interference for you.”

“If I’m a tourist, you’re a tourist. Try not to enjoy this magnificent view. Remember what you’re doing here.”

“No one knows we’re here. No one could have followed us. I can’t contact Ari, but I know he trusts me and will wait to hear from me. It’s only been a day and one night ... seems longer than that.”

“I’ve read about the Treasuries of the Greek City States where they kept the offerings to the Oracle and to Apollo. The booty from wars and mines was stored in treasuries—which were fortified buildings. Those who donated to Apollo would ask questions like, ‘Should we go to war?’. Or ‘Should Zeno marry Zita?’ Pythia would sit over the chasm in the earth and with that energy give answers via the priests to their questions.”

“Isn’t that the way it works today? I mean there are those who have the power to speak for God and make decisions about people’s lives.”

“Sharon, I guess so, but this special place was supported by all the Greeks—every city state representing a pantheon of gods and beliefs. It was agreed by all that Apollo or other gods spoke through that rift in the rock and, you might say, wafted it up through Pythia who sat on a three-legged stool.”

“Politically, I can’t say we have evolved, David. Lots of politicians pull their stuff out of ... well, a cleft in the ground. David, I just want to wander and sit and take this all in slowly. In my mind I can imagine the theatre and what it was like to see a play here. Why did mankind forget Apollo?”

“Too bad we can’t ask Pythia.”

“Sharon, we have to get going and find a decent place to spend the night. I want to visit the monasteries of Meteora. They are in central Greece—six Eastern Orthodox monasteries. They built them on top of vertical rock formations—natural pillars. Originally there were twenty-four monasteries, but only six remain.”

“David, how do you know all that?”

“I taught about Greece although I have never been here. When I return, I can teach a truth I know.”

They finished touring the sites and returned to their motel. It didn’t take long to pack and soon they were back on the road.

“How long a drive is it? This rusty van rides like an AIL Storm, one of those military off-road vehicles!”

“Think of it as an Israeli Jeep Wrangler? I’m thinking we can find a place in the Pindos Mountains in Thessaly. Two or three hours from here. I hope we can find private lodging and not have to show our passports or identify ourselves. We have to assume Catherine and others are looking for

us and they are covering all of the major tourist attractions. The KGB, CIA and Mossad have tentacles everywhere, but luckily Meteora isn't on the major tourist path."

After a few hours, they were ready to stop for the night.

"We need to find a place that will provide us dinner, beds, and breakfast. Probably a private residence with a few extra rooms to rent. I can stop and ask. Hey, there's a sign in front of that place."

"What does it say?"

"How the hell would I know, it's in Greek."

"Let's try it. Maybe whoever lives there can send us to someone who has a place."

"Boy did we luck out. Even a place in back to hide the rusty blue kidney crusher." A great example of Greek hospitality. She greeted me like we were family. She lives alone, loves to entertain, is a great cook and keeps the guest room clean and ... really comfortable.

"David, she assumes we're married, right? Any chance for a roll-away bed."

"Good thing she hasn't asked. You could try to explain that you are my handler, but that could be a bit problematic."

Catherine:

Visit confirmed. Very nice couple driving rusty blue Fiat van.

Informed our agent who has been looking for them.

Meteora:

“We only have time to study one monastery. We can’t go up on top because you aren’t dressed properly, and neither am I. I’ve read that the 14th century Monastery of Varlaam is a must-see. Monks wanted to be closer to God. They built scaffolds for climbing and getting supplies up to the top.”

“You mean they didn’t build there for defense? It seems like they could keep attackers out, but they could only last as long as they had water. I’ve been to Masada. When they ran out of supplies during the Roman attack, 960 Sicarii jumped and committed suicide.”

“That was back in 74 CE. I guess by the 14th century the monks knew better than to get trapped and have to jump. Besides, from the 11th century through the Byzantine period and after, the monks were not targets.”

“We can hike around the base and cross over to the bases of other monasteries. The views from below are really spectacular.

This is so amazing. I want to come back here. I’ve seen enough to want to stay here for days.

“Someday I’ll come back to Greece. Sharon, despite our rough beginning, I have to admit it has been nice sharing this beauty with you. Whatever happens, know that if I do something you don’t like, it’s not personal.”

She will be hurt and maybe even be pulled from this job. But I have plans to meet with as many foreign exchange students as I can. Zoran came to our high school through the American Field Service program. He had to adjust to a country without a dictator and learn about freedom American style—and our conceited superiority. He lived with the Miles

family. He and Steve were friends. Last I heard everyone lost contact with him. At the last minute he agreed to my visit, but I know something is wrong.

“David, why would you say such things just when everything is going great and we’re starting to work like a team?”

“I guess it’s like you said, I’m still affected by my time in Asia.”

“We have to get going. It’s time we start back to Athens. I have to return the rental and we have to appear ... Shit! Sharon, look down the row of cars ... there! See that guy standing by the Mercedes ... a row back from the panel van?”

“He’s the guy we saw earlier. He went to the bar after Catherine left for the airport. We foolishly decided he wasn’t someone we had to pay attention to.”

“Surprise. At least he hasn’t seen us yet. Let’s watch him for a while, see if he leaves his post.”

“David, we can’t hide here all day. The guy is getting antsy, but it doesn’t look like he will leave any time soon.”

“Give him another fifteen minutes. He moves like he has ants in his pants.”

“Okay, he’s getting in the car ... no, he’s locking the car. I think he’s taking a break.”

David and Sharon climbed into their car and made a break for it when they thought he wasn’t watching.

“Crap! He saw us leave. He’s headed back to the Mercedes. He did this to get us to make a move. He’s full of surprises. Do you think he’s KGB?”

“You’re sure he isn’t one of your people? He knew Catherine. You know for sure she’s KGB? He’ll follow us back to Athens. So what? If they haven’t made you, they’ll assume we are tourists doing the tourist thing. You can tell Ari that you couldn’t contact him because we were being followed. You protected me and exposed the tail. Let’s keep him from getting bored. Next opportunity I’ll pull off and let him pass. Wave and smile.”

The rest of their trip back to Athens seemed uneventful. They anxiously looked for the Mercedes but never saw it. As they entered the outskirts of Athens David informed Sharon of his plan.

“I’ve got to return this wreck. I’ll drop you off just outside Syntagma Square and you can walk to the hotel.”

“I’ll go in as if nothing has happened and pick up my key. I’ll head up to my room and wait for Ari to contact me. I’ll tell him I left my bag to throw off Catherine and anyone else following me. Then, I’ll tell him the rest of our story.”

“Oh, and Sharon, tell him I made reservations to fly to Frankfurt and that you have booked a similar flight. Tell him that I know the KGB and the CIA are watching. Tell him I plan to lose them, if possible.”

My first priority now is to lose Catherine and whoever is watching me. I hate to do this to Sharon, but if they don’t pull her, I can make it up to her in Germany. No one will expect me to take a train from Thessaloniki. Once there, I can book on the Inter-Continental Express and go straight through to Beograd.

CIA Langley, Virginia:

Eyes Only. Action Required. Stop. David Dean in Greece. Stop.

Israeli connection TBD. Stop. Locate. Do not terminate. Stop.

“Hi, I need to check out. Dean—Room 320.”

“Paying by your American Express I see. US Dollars. \$13.75 per night. Six nights. \$82. 60. What else can I help you with?”

“I’ll need a taxi to Hellinikon Airport. How long will the taxi and check-in take?”

“Hellinikon is only six miles from here. Airport check in will take ... well, you must plan for at least half an hour.”

“Oh, then I have plenty of time. My flight doesn’t leave for three hours. Can I go back to my room?”

“No, I am sorry to say I cannot charge you for another night. That room is being cleaned and already has a guest waiting. Please, I can secure your luggage and you can wait in the bar. Or may I suggest what many visitors to Athens do, you can go to the airport and enjoy the many shops and food services there.”

“That sounds like a good plan. I’ll hang out at the airport until my flight. I’ll need a taxi. Oh, there are many in front of the hotel. Thank you, Sir. I have enjoyed my stay.”

Okay, that went well. Everybody knows I’m leaving and on my way to the airport. I can get a taxi. Oh no, Catherine is smiling at me waving me over to her station at the bar. Stewardesses lay over for three days. She was here when I got here and it’s obvious she is planted here. The guy

who works with her, who followed us from Meteora, must be around here somewhere. I'll stop for a minute and say goodbye.

“Catherine, I’m on my way to the airport. I hoped I’d see you before I left.”

“Hi Dan ... no, it’s David. Right? What a pleasant surprise to see you again. I had an extended layover and a few extra days to enjoy Athens.”

So smooth. She is such a liar.

“I’m still thinking about that magical night we climbed to the Acropolis under a full moon. I hope your airline isn’t having trouble.”

“This often happens. I laid over in Paris once for eight days. What have you been doing?”

“Getting to know Greece. Typical tourist I suppose. Got out to Delphi and Meteora. Too little time, so much to see.”

“So, you are leaving Greece?”

“Not that I wouldn’t stay ... I love this country. I’ll come back some day and really get to know my way around.”

“I guess you’ll be going home?”

“No. I’m off to Germany.”

“Germany? Why there?”

“Work. I’m evaluating schools. Catherine, I have to go. My taxi is waiting. So long.”

Thessaloniki. If I take a city-to-city bus, I can catch the train there. They’ll be sure I caught a taxi to the airport. I’ll walk down King George Street to the Grande Bretagne Hotel and catch a city bus to the main terminal. Long distance buses run from there.

Finally! It took the whole day to get here, but I got my ticket. Train is mostly empty. The ticket counter guy said there is a heavy snow warning and the train may have to wait for an engine with a snow plow. Starting to snow here now. Good. We're pulling out of the station.

Yugoslavia border. Guy is freezing—conductor just got on the train. Punched my ticket. Started to open my passport but got interrupted. He's getting a message. He's asking all five of us to leave this car and move forward. Seems like they are dropping these cars and shortening the train. Never opened my passport.

We have followed him through five empty cars and now we're in the old part of the train. Used to be first class cabins, now jammed with 3rd class passengers. He's taking my arm and pointing for me to enter this cabin. There's no room. He let go of my arm, frowned, and with his eyes motions for me to sit.

Everyone around me is dressed differently. They appear to be farmers and country folk with big extended families. Smells like sheep and unwashed bodies. I'm the only one in here that isn't local. Clothes are homespun of heavy wool. Their tops are long and belted at the waist. Men and women. Gray-white. Only their belts and hats have color. If looks could kill, I'd be dead. These people are not happy I'm in here.

A big man spits on the floor and says something in a language I've never heard spoken before. I got one word, Russkie. They think I'm Russian. The whole family—if this is one family—want me to leave. They're scowling, balling their fists, clenching their teeth.

“American. Not Russian. American ... USA.” Here, look at my passport!

Once they knew that I wasn't Russian, I'm treated like a guest. A mama with a crowd of kids opened a newspaper-wrapped haunch of lamb or goat. She began slicing off thin, lean strips which she passed out like blessings to everyone. Across from me another woman is doing the same thing but making sandwiches. The men have homemade bota bags made of leather with wooden spouts full of what they call slivovitz. Each time they pass the bota to me I have to take a swig. It's really potent. We're all bombed. I have a sandwich in my left hand full of meat and some kind of relish. When I take a bite, they immediately hand me a bota. If I object, they laugh, make comments, pound me on the back, and give me another sandwich.

We're singing now. Singing, drinking and eating.

The train stopped about two hours ago. A half hour ago the conductor, who spoke enough English to communicate, came through the car explaining that the train had been pulled on to a siding, waiting for the rotary snow blower engine that would clear the track and pull them ahead. I scraped ice from the window and looked out into a world of white, swirling snow. Two men were making their way to the front of the train, kicking their way through snowdrifts that were as high as their waists. An hour later they heard the diesel growl of the snow plow's engine as it went past them, but could not see it or feel a bump if it hooked onto them. It was getting dark. The lights and power in the train flickered and went out. The cabin, packed with humanity, was warm enough, but cold wind came through gaps where the windows didn't close tightly. A

rag was stuffed in the biggest crack. The train lurched and started rolling. We're moving slowly, but we're moving. The old train car rocked, moaned and shuddered. The window where I scraped the ice away is already covered by hoarfrost crystals made up of the moisture and odors from the passengers. I am so comfortable and feeling safe for the first time in days.

Dean woke up with a jolt. The cabin was empty and they were all gone. The lights came on.

It is freezing cold which is probably why I woke up. Wow, I can't seem to clear my head. Stomach feels queasy. What time is it? Where are we? Did I sleep through Belgrade? Got to pee.

“Gud you awake up. Train stops you get things. Be ready.” He tips his watch out. “Fifteen minutes. Belgrade stop. You last left.”

“What time is it?”

“Late five hours. 2:00. No one at station here. You have friends? Station open in three hours. You wait?”

“I need a hotel.”

“Snow too deep. If you walk, you walk down this street I point you and two block hotel. All sleep. Ring bell. Pound on door. Make big noise.”

The station's closed just like he said it would be. Dim emergency lights are on. So quiet—I can almost hear the snow falling. The street lights make pools of light but don't penetrate beyond. It is so quiet—deserted, empty, ethereal. It's like that 1942 Edward Hopper painting called Nighthawks only there are no people; there is no place to escape the night. This could be what it will be like at the end of the human species. I'm trapped in a dead city.

The cold is penetrating, sucking heat from my body. I've got to find that hotel the conductor told me about. Hope it isn't a wild goose chase. I could die from exposure. I can't step over the drifts. I have to plow through them with each and every step. The snow is getting up my pant legs. I can barely see. Yet the starlight penetrates even the shadows. I am the only living thing on the street.

Dean followed the conductor's directions and found the hotel. He started pounding on the door. The noise reverberated up and down the street.

"Okay. Okay. You ... train late. You get room."

"Thank you."

"Check in 9:00. Room 5."

It feels good to get under some covers. I'm frozen. Belgrade seems so gray and dark. It's winter, but there is an oppressive darkness over everything. The snow has not been cleared from the streets and the trolleys aren't running. Few cars around and those that I see are mostly dark sedans that have government markings. Before I contact Zoran, I need to know about Yugoslavia.

CIA Base Station Zorba. Stop Cowboy not in Greece. Stop Tito cover in Yugoslavia. Stop Advise. Stop

Dean was awakened at 9:00 by a crinkled old man with glasses low on his nose pounding on his door. He was wearing an ugly brown sweater baggy and patched at the elbows. He smelled of old clothes, cheap after shave and rotting teeth. His floppy slippers dragged across the floor as he

pushed his way into the room. He thrust a clipboard with a form bigger than the board onto the bed.

“This check in. You form. Give passport. Not too late to break fast.”

Dean took the form and a stubby dull pencil. He studied the form and had no idea what information was required. He smiled and asked the little man for help. The old man had little command of English and had no idea what to tell Dean.

Dean shrugged, handed the old man his passport, took the clipboard and went to the common room where breakfast would be served. Taking a table, he looked around aware that regular guests often reserved their own table. The room was deserted except for a trim fiftyish-looking lady with a faded red pill box hat. She opened her thin lips into a smile showing poorly fit false teeth. She pointed to a table near him. He nodded, smiled, pulled the chair out and sat down.

“That table is usually reserved for one of Tito’s civil servants. Don’t be concerned, he left before the snow began.” She motioned to the windows and the white world outside.

“You speak English!”

“I should, I am English. Do you speak a Slavish language? No? If not, I can help you with the form. Bring it over here young man. Are you ...?”

“American. And I do need help ... information about Yugoslavia especially.”

“You were on the train that got trapped in the blizzard? Was it bad? When did you finally get here? Was there anyone else on the train? How did you find this hotel?”

The old man brought a table setting and stood waiting for his order.

“Oh, I can just tell him you want an English Breakfast, if that is all right with you?”

Dean nodded, not sure what an English breakfast served in Belgrade would be.

“I think it's about 2 am. The family in the train with me left during the night. Once they knew I was American and not Russian we had a grand time singing, eating, and drinking ... I finally fell asleep.

When Dean awoke, he was the only passenger left.

"Are there other guests in the hotel?"

“Not today. Last week before the student demonstrations. Now there is also trouble in Croatia. The students in Croatia are so disruptive that protests could stop everything. I warn you not to travel there. Here in Belgrade, we are under military orders, so keep away from groups of students.”

“David, that is the name I put on your registration form. Why are you here?”

“I’m actually here to meet with a student that was in the American Field Service exchange program at my school. He would be at least 22 now, and probably not mixed up in the protests because, as I understand it, his father is a government official. I don’t think there is a problem. I was invited to visit and be his guest.”

“A problem? Don’t be too sure! Nowhere on the planet is a country so divided. A country divided into six constituent republics, some with autonomous provinces, cannot stand. Each of the Socialist Republics is questioning why they are part of Yugoslavia. You must know that Croatia wants to go its own way. Boznia and Herzgovina want to get free from

Montenegro, Macedonia, Serbia and Slovenia. They never wanted to be joined into one country. Each wants to be in charge of their own destiny. Yugoslavia is a country forced together after WW I and re-formed after WW II. It has been held together since 1963 by Josip Broz Tito when he proclaimed himself President for life. There are differences of religion and language. Only a dictatorship supported by Russia and the Central European powers can hold the lot together. Students are questioning the dictatorship. The protests started for real two years ago in 1968. It is only a short time before this whole area becomes a war zone. You don't want to be here when that happens."

"Thank you for your help. I don't even know your name."

"Brenda. I'm Brenda Stanton-Phillips Broz. But my name means nothing to you, nor should it. You are American and not involved."

"It seems I'm involved now. Thank you for explaining things to me. Brenda, you warn me that I should leave. So why do you stay here when there is obviously a war coming ... several wars if I understand what you have told me."

"You are so like an American. You Americans assume that I can leave ... that I am a free person. David, a few days ago I couldn't talk to you or anyone the party doesn't approve of. I cannot leave this hotel, let alone Belgrade. I cannot go back to Leicestershire. I married a Broz. We once owned this hotel and other properties."

"I don't understand ..."

"Nothing I can say will help you understand. Enough to say, I am a casualty of family politics in a police state. Now that is enough about me. How will you contact this student?"

“I have a phone number. Are you being watched now?”

“Something has happened ... and of course, this storm is causing all kinds of problems. They all pulled out earlier. I expect them to return soon. You should not be here when they do. Call that number and ... I hope your student is not one of the trouble-makers.”

A black ZIL sedan pulled up in front of the hotel. Slush was piled high where the blades had pushed it to the curb. The windows of the government sedan were tinted, but Dean could see a profile of the driver and a man in the passenger seat wearing a broad-brimmed hat. The ZIL sat idling. A curl of hot exhaust gases rose into the air then were whipped around as a trolley passed. Dean went through the door and stood on the hotel steps. The rear door of the government sedan opened and Zoran, barely visible in the darkened car, motioned for him to get in.

“Sorry that you have come at such a bad time, but welcome. Be careful what you say, this driver doesn't speak English, but he has a job to do. This is a government automobile assigned to my father. We will go to our apartment, but we cannot talk freely. Please understand that Belgrade is a powder keg and life here is complicated.”

“Zoran does my being here ... well, does it put you in danger?”

“It might. Over the years, my study abroad experience in America has been viewed negatively by those in power. As you know, some of the experiences I had were amazing and positive. There are also many things I learned about America that are not flattering. I've had a hard time convincing others that America is not as we imagine. More often than not America's talk doesn't match its walk. Like here, some are free and others

are economic chattel. A large percentage of your population may be brave, but they are not free. You have religious strife just like we do. You pretend that Christians practice Christianity while branding all Moslems and Jews as devils.”

“So, it sounds like both sides are angry with you. What about your family?”

“We can’t talk about it like we did when I first got back. Any way we explain it, one side or the other is sure we are traitors. That I am a traitor. Now that the students are demonstrating, I am suspect and my family is losing support. All government officials who work for the Tito machine have targets on their backs, as do their families. I want to go to Switzerland, but that may not be possible.”

“I need to leave, don’t I?”

“Yes. You need to get out before someone questions why an American teacher has contacted me.”

“How? When I entered from Greece, the conductor was distracted by the storm. There is no entry stamp on my passport.”

“Really? That creates a problem. I would have suggested a train through Croatia and Slovenia then on into Austria, but without an entry stamp you could not leave Serbia and cross those borders. You would probably be arrested and never seen again. Let me think. The border with Hungary ... you could say you never stopped here and that you traveled through Serbia, were stopped by the snow, which they can confirm, and are on your way to Austria. You never officially entered Yugoslavia because you were only passing through. The Hungarian border is very porous. I think it is your only chance. That is how I would go if I could leave.”

“My ticket ends at Belgrade.”

“We can extend it to Austria. Snow problems forced you to stop here. You had to buy a new ticket. Let’s get to the train station right away.”

The Hungarian customs officer was on edge and being very cautious. “Where are you staying in our country?”

“Sadly, I must get to Austria soon. I cannot enjoy your hospitality. The blizzard forced me to stop here in the middle of the night. Now that it is clearing, I can go on as I planned.

“Just going on?”

“Yes, my ticket is through to Austria.”

He didn’t stamp my passport. If I get into Austria, it will be as if I was never here.

Chapter FIVE

Radio phone. Mossad Headquarters, Tel Aviv:

“He was assigned to you! You tell me he is going to Frankfurt and now I get word he is in Innsbruck. Why are you still in Athens? This is unacceptable in every way. Please be so kind, La Motte,” his voice dripped with contempt, “to explain how you let this happen. Mossad doesn’t lose people.” The Director put sarcasm in his voice, holding her attention with an energy that coursed from some sore place in his mind.

“Sir, you told us you admire his ability to use chaos and to operate in an unpredictable manner—not according to plans. If he truly got to Austria, then this is another example of his skills to operate in ways we are not familiar with. I’m learning about him and how he does things. Sure, he took

off and convinced me, the KGB and who knows who else that he was doing what he wanted us to think he was doing. He also told me where he is going—Germany. I'll reconnect with him there if you let me do my job. He expects me and I am getting insights into the way he operates that will be helpful despite this incident."

"Director," Ari who had come to the meeting promising himself that he wouldn't get involved in Sharon's problems, stood to make his point. "None of us know how Dean operates. Sharon has convinced him that he can trust her, and she already knows more about him than any of us. I don't think she failed. She has already given us information that we would have a hard time getting any other way."

"Director," Sharon held the satellite phone close and pretended to be angry. "When I think back to our conversations, I think he tried to warn me that he was planning to lose them—me included. I don't think everything he does is random or chaotic. When I find out how he lost us and ended-up in Austria, I can begin to understand how he has survived so long."

"Alright La Motte. I am skeptical but I will let this play out. Consider yourself warned. You have a strike against you now. If you lose him again ... you're out!"

"Ouch! That was bad. Ari, you saved me", Sharon said. Thank you. The problem is Dean may have evaded me, but his itinerary is known to everyone. What he is doing in Austria and how he got there is a mystery, but his next stop is Westphalia, Germany to pick up his VW camper van. His notes say Rheda-Wiedenbruck. I think he will be staying there."

"Get there before he does. Act like nothing has happened. Blow his mind. Where will he stay until he can pick-up his camper?"

“His notes said the AM Doctorplatz. I’ll be there waiting for him.”

Langley, Virginia:

Hill. Hold Dean in Germany. Alert our teams.

Innsbruck

What a beautiful city. Someone is following me. What’s a stewardess doing at the train station? Another Catherine. Same age, same look ... she’s watching me ... turns away and pretends to be adjusting her hose. Definitely KGB. But how? She wasn’t on the train from Hungary ... they dropped her here. Now they know I’m here. Got to ditch her.

I’ll pretend to catch a train to Germany. There’s a milk run connection from Innsbruck to Garmisch. I’ll buy a ticket and pretend I’m waiting to board. Boarding in 30 minutes, not bad. I’ll board and then disappear. She will be sure I’m on the train. I can use the ticket tomorrow or the next day on my way north through Munich. I can change in the toilette. Unless she is looking for a bald guy in a bulky sweater, I can go out and find a place to stay and explore.

I’ll come back here and spend some time. What a city, and the surrounding mountains are beautiful. Too bad it’s ski season. Find a telephone office. Call Westphalia and have them ready my VW.

“What do you mean I cancelled my order? Three days ago? I never called you. I’m on my way—I’ll be there today. What? Listen! I ordered the camper and paid for it. No one was authorized to cancel the order. You must have other campers. No, I don’t care if the vehicle has been built to conform to California ERG standards. I want it this afternoon.

"You can pick me up at the Paderborn airport. I can go through customs at Munich and take a local up to Paderborn. I don't have a time schedule for the Munich to North Rhine-Westphalia leg. Should I call when I arrive? Thank you. That's great. You know the schedule. See you this afternoon."

What the hell. Someone cancelled my order. Mossad? KGB? No, seems like something Dan Hill and the CIA would do. Just wait until I have my camper, it will be easy to lose them on the road.

Okay. Now we are talking! The rail ticket was cheap and I won't lose much by switching to a flight. I need to get to Munich, go through customs, and find a flight to Westphalia. Wow, I can spend tonight in my VW camper.

Wiedenbruck, Germany:

"The reservation is in the name of Dean, David Dean."

"Mam, do you want a double or a single?"

Sharon smiled, hesitated ... "A double. Two persons. He may arrive late."

She let thoughts of their reunion form and went through her well-thought answers to the questions he was sure to have. He would be happy she was here ... but angry? Maybe angry. Surprised for certain.

She looked around the hotel room and began to plan how she would surprise him. She opened her bag and took out the silk nightgown from under her other disguises. She laid it carefully on the bed, stood back to look at it, and decided to shower and then put it on. If she knew anything

about David, he would be delighted. She undressed and hurried to the shower. Drying off, she imagined him walking into the room.

He should be here by now. His schedule put him here by 5:00.

Paderborn, Germany:

Got to Paderborn airport early. The guy from Westphalia isn't here, but an officious man at the counter is.

"Yes, they are always punctual. You can expect that here. We have schedules and we keep them. Wait over there by the door. Look for the Mercedes van. It will be on time. Germany runs on time."

Everybody on the plane is gone. The guy at the desk who assured me that Westphalia is always on time is closing up. The taxi left. Aah, the van is here. The plane landed 15 minutes early. At least it's here now and on someone's schedule. I can't wait to see my new 1970 camper. I never had a new car before. I'll live in it for 7 or 8 months and then ship it back to the States. This is going to be great!

"Mr. Dean? Sorry I am late. We didn't realize the plane was arriving ahead of schedule. We make it a point to be on time. Climb in and I will take you to our office where you can take delivery of your beautiful new camper."

"Thank You! I have been looking forward to this for a long time.

Dean couldn't believe his eyes. The camper was everything he had hoped for, and more. He couldn't wait to take it out on the road.

"Mr. Dean, if everything is satisfactory and you agree to take delivery, sign here, here, here, and once more, here! You will need petrol, don't forget. Oh, and I advise you not to use the autobahn until you are

experienced driving this bigger vehicle. My advice, use secondary roads. In fact, stop for supplies near here—you will need to equip the camper and shop for food. Stay the first night in the town RV park. Don't just jump out into traffic until you are familiar with the camper.”

“Thank you, Hans ... and your staff for correcting the error and getting this camper ready. I know you stayed late to help me. Thanks for the map and directions. I'm on my way. I will do as you suggest.”

CHAPTER SIX

"He came directly here? We had reservations last night at the hotel in town. I don't believe he would pick up the camper and leave without me." She had tears in her eyes. "I don't know what to do."

The VW salesman was suspicious. This rather attractive young lady was asking for information he didn't feel authorized to give. “Miss, are you related to him?”

Sharon reacted slowly, then, wiping her tears, she sobbed that she had misunderstood the directions he gave her.

“He told me to meet him last night and today we would begin our dream vacation exploring Northern Europe in our new camper. Oh Sir, it is all my fault."

“Well miss, he got a late start last evening and I recommended he stay in Rheda at the RV park. Many of our buyers do. I advised him to shop for supplies. He may still be there. I'll call you a taxi.”

Wow, I never thought I would need this much stuff. Warm blankets, pillow. kerosene heater. Kerosene. Gas stove. Bottles of gaz. Pots and pans, TP, towel, soap, dish soap. Knives. Forks and spoons. Paper towel. A mirror. A coffee maker...

Back to the camper to stow this stuff. Then food. I'll be here all morning just stocking the camper.

“Need a hand with all those bags?”

“Sharon!”

“David, did you think I had forgotten you? Or that you had lost me? You did try to lose me, didn't you?”

“Lose you? How could I lose a talented Mossad agent? I knew you would find me. You knew I would be here to pick up this camper. I knew you knew except I thought we would reconnect at the first stop on my schedule.”

“David, this is the first stop. You didn't expect me to find you. You rat! Now when do we start seeing the country?”

“We stow this stuff and then shop for food.”

Dean was enjoying the fun of getting to know his new dream vehicle. He wasn't that happy to see Sharon but he was resigned to her presence. He figured she would catch up with him eventually. He tried to engage her in some simple conversation.

“This new car smell you are complaining about is really paint burning off the engine.”

“It's almost gone. How can you drive having to shift all the time? I'd have to look away from the road every time I had to shift.”

“There is a cure for that. If you hit something head-on, you lose your feet.”

“What? Oh, I see. No front end, just a sheet of metal. If I drive, you’ll have to teach me to shift without looking at the gear stick. What other revelations can you share?”

“Uh Sharon, I forgot to buy a bucket. Maybe we can get one with a seat.”

“You’re planning to stay in camper parks, right? Showers, electricity, toilets ... all sound good to me.”

“We also have to plan for nights when we are not in a camper park. Oh, and speaking of nights, where will you sleep?”

“On the bed ... where is the bed?”

“They thought of that. The rear seat folds down and makes a narrow bed. There is a hammock under the pop top. Canvas bed kinda like a cot. You’ll love it once you learn not to turn over in your sleep.”

“I don’t get the bed? We can’t share? Change every other night? Nothing?”

“No, I’m sure your training and the spy books prepared you. Look, we can share the cooking and cleaning. As long as you shower at least once a month, you can take naps in the bed. Damn, I forgot to buy another set of sheets. We have to stop and buy some.”

They drove through the afternoon enjoying the beauty of the landscapes.

“David, everything is so green. Every pasture and field looks like a painting. Can’t we find a place around here to camp? It’s our first night. We

should have a special dinner and celebrate. Look, there's a field and a camping sign. It looks like there is also a bathhouse."

"Well, outhouse—maybe."

"David, this is as good as any time to ask you ... were you in Hungary?"

"Why ask? I went through there but didn't stop."

"KGB report. Like who are you trying to kid. Didn't stop? Why were you in Hungary?"

"I won't lie to you Sharon. I had to get from Yugoslavia to Austria. I had passport problems—the Yugoslavian customs official didn't stamp my passport."

"Sure. You went to Yugoslavia from Greece? You were in Hungary because you had to get to Austria. Which country did you have business in?"

"I'm not sure we are talking about the same thing. Business? I went to see a past student of mine, an exchange student. Yugoslavia is about to break up. I probably made a mistake going there."

"Okay David, it seems I'm not going to get a straight answer. Why did you have to go to Austria?"

"Well, that's easy. To get to Germany, of course."

"David there is a town right over that hill. I need time to walk and think. I'll be back before dark. I'll help with dinner."

Phone booth. North Rhine Highway:

"Ari, I thought you'd never answer your phone. It's been over a week and I was worried. I thought that you might be on another assignment."

Dean and I are together. We picked up the camper and are on the road. The Director should be pleased.

“He is? I’m sure he expected Dean to ditch me. Well tell him I’m with Dean and we are still in Germany, headed for Switzerland. Yes, Dean is sticking to his itinerary and hasn’t had contact with anyone but me. He told me he was in Yugoslavia, Hungary, Austria but not meeting up with contacts—claims he doesn't have any.

“He denies any covert activity and yes, I think I believe him. I had a short visit with our agent at the gas station in Rheda. I asked him to contact you—did you get his message? I wasn’t sure he would forward it ... I mean my message. He told me a lot about Interpol, the Greek police, and how the German police are also tracking us. He had a lot of information. Yes, I think he’s a good agent.

“If the Director is pleased with me why would he tell you that he is planning to make some changes? What do you mean I have to go to Tel Aviv? I’m just getting Dean’s trust. Talk to the Director for me, Ari. I’ll contact you again soon. Don’t let them take me off Dean.

“Yes, I am safe and keeping it professional. Oh and Ari, the agent told me that two guys who were obviously CIA were towed into the station. He overheard them cursing two oriental guys who disabled their car. Is that important?”

“What a beautiful evening. How was town? How did your report to the Mossad go?”

“It went fine if you must know. I found a phone booth along the highway and checked in with Ari.”

“I trust you aren’t setting me up and you report my activities honestly. I’d hate to think you were just telling them what they want to hear to keep your job. Maybe I can even help you so they don’t replace you. Tonight, we’ll pop the top and ...”

“David, I smell bad. I haven’t bathed in two days.”

“Then I’m finally having dinner with the real Sharon? The real deal and not the spy?”

“David, I’m not used to going without a shower.”

“I don’t find you offensive. Last shower I had was in Austria. I did take a marine bath. Do I smell?”

“What the hell David. Let’s see if two can sleep on the bed.”

“Not so fast my dear, you’re still sleeping under the pop top. And Sharon, we have a problem ... maybe several problems.”

“What? Is there something you haven’t told me?”

“No, but you keep digging until you know there is no dirt in the hole. What I’m worried about is this, I think the CIA guys cancelled my order for the camper. I have no proof, but why would the KGB or your people do it? What do you know about the European secret police?”

“You mean Interpol? All I have been told is that it is an international criminal police organization located in Lyon France. It is the only police organization that spans the entire globe. It exists to promote the widest possible assistance between all criminal police authorities in the prevention and suppression of ordinary law crimes. It’s like it can do anything it pleases. If they are messing with you, they think you are much more than you pretend to be.”

“Then they ain’t messing with me. Who else would want to know why I’m in Europe?”

“I have no idea. I can ask Ari to check it out. Is that right by you?”

“Maybe ... no, go ahead and ask him. We need to know which people to avoid.”

“David, you do have a manly odor.”

“Right. You know before deodorants and unnatural perfumes or chemicals that could block sweat and natural odors, body odor was not no making it do okay any minute now considered offensive. In civil war times when a man was separated from his woman, he placed cotton balls under his arms, did stuff, and then mailed the balls back home. Evidently, these balls were full of treasured smells that reminded his lover of his strengths.”

“Are you kidding me. You just made that up—right? Then again, it is probably true that most of the people on the planet don’t use a deodorant. I was assigned to observe a group of older French ladies who used perfume and powder to cover their ... shall we say stink? Being around them made me nauseous. I’m thinking there is a difference between smell and stink. I am not intending to investigate further.”

“Well, you smell nice. I know it’s not the stink of polyvinyl chloride in the upholstery or the smell of the canvas. I’ll let you know what word to use in a few more days away from a shower. Until then, we won’t wash the sheets.”

I have to tell David about the information the undercover agent gave me when David was taking a marine bath and a shave in the gas station earlier. The agent gave me a lot of formation about the police and others who might be aware of our travels. He also told me about the oriental

guys who sabotaged the vehicle of two CIA thugs who were probably on our tail.

“So Sharon, what did Ari say? Fill me in.”

“Too much, but your suspicions about the DCI and the CIA keeping track of you are correct. The KGB has pulled all but two agents. The state police of Italy and Spain have been advised of your presence, but they are short-handed and can’t spare agents to follow you. German states have their own Landespolizei. In all sixteen German states there are criminal police offices called the LDK, Landeskriminalamt that keep watch. They are directly subordinate to the state’s ministry of the interior.

While we were in Greece, the Hellenic police were advised to observe you, but nothing was reported except that you left Greece from Thessaloniki. I was also told that there are actually two groups of CIA agents looking for you. Ari thinks you have information the CIA guys involved want to make sure you never share. I was also told that while you are in Germany the highway patrol, the Autobahnpolizei, may be used to track you, but probably not.”

“You remembered all that from just a conversation? Do you have, total recall?”

“Well David, I had qualities the Mossad was looking for. I have always remembered things.”

“I’ll remember that.”

“David, Ari had other news. I don’t like it. I don’t think you will like it. They are changing my assignment. Evidently the reports I have sent convinced the Director that I should come back to Tel Aviv.

“You mean they are recalling you?”

“They know your first visit is in Porrentuey, Switzerland about fifty miles from Bern, and that is in four days. If I fly from Bern, I will leave the day after tomorrow. I’m hoping you can drop me at the airport if that happens.”

“So, he didn’t actually say he was recalling you?”

“No, but I know how the system works. He may fire me or he will give me another assignment. David, what will you do while I’m gone. I mean, are you really going to visit schools and foreign exchange students? I mean, is this really what you are going to do? You were telling the truth?”

“Are you coming back? What do you mean ‘while I’m gone?’”

“Wishful thinking. Probably not if you are really doing what you say.”

“I am, Sharon and that is not a lie. You won’t have a reason to keep spying on me. It is a shame really, we were just getting used to camping together.”

Sharon checked in with Ari at the next gas stop.

“Hi Sharon, it’s Ari. The final orders came through and you are being ordered back to Tel Aviv. I just got word from the Director that you have a new assignment. He thinks you are the right person for the job. Our agents have been checking out David Dean's story. One part of the story is so outlandish and hard to believe that we are totally skeptical. At this time, we believe that Dean's meeting with Dorothy Wentworth in Nepal was no accident. The DDO's special agent Caldwell met her plane and was seen talking with her in Kathmandu. We think she was assigned to keep track of Dean or she and Dean are working together. There are no records of Wentworth working with the DDO or her time in Nepal, in northern India,

or her time in Iran. The fact that there are no records may be proof that she is an undercover CIA asset.

The story Dean told of their escape from Iran does not make sense. We have reason to believe that Wentworth is now somewhere in Europe. Your job is to find her and by whatever means necessary, determine who she works for and if she is the link we have been looking for to determine if Dean is who he says he is. We have reason to believe Wentworth is in Germany. You must not let Dean know you are in Europe and especially that you are looking for Dorothy Wentworth. Is that understood?"

"Got it. I hate to leave Dean but I understand my orders. I'll get a flight to Munich in two days. By the time I get there I will need contacts with our German friends and all the information about Dorothy Wentworth we have. "

"We need to get this cleared up. I may have made a grave error in supporting David Dean. When we pull this thread, we may unravel his true purpose. I think we should be ready to remove him if he is working against us."

"Ari, let's not be too quick to judge Dean. There must be some reason he would invent a story like the one he told about dressing in a burqa and slipping out of Iran."

Munich International Airport:

David dropped Sharon off in front of the terminal. Her plane was on time. As they said goodbye, Dean couldn't help but wonder what her life would be like now. David was happy to be on his own but he couldn't help but have some compassion for Sharon given her tough history. Sharon was

orphaned as a little girl. She never knew her parents. They were killed in the holocaust. She was raised by nuns in a Nazi-inspired Christian orphanage with no knowledge of her heritage. At age 10, she ends up in Israel and is adopted by a French couple. Now the Mossad is her family. What a complicated tragic story. Dean shook his head as he drove away. He realized he really had no idea what drove her.

Porrentuey Switzerland:

December 18, 1969

Dear Mom and Dad,

I can't believe I am here! Do you remember me telling you about Sally? She is spending her senior year of high school here in Switzerland as a foreign exchange student hosted by the Spira family. I reached out when I knew I would be traveling in Europe. They have been terrific.

I visited their school, attending classes with Sally and her Swiss sister. Last night I attended a student concert. Classical music ... really good. Theirs is a very traditional, rigid education system. Her host family has wealth and culture. Their home is beautiful. They have three kids ... two girls and a boy. Meals are like feasts. The food is prepared by their cook, and is way beyond my simple taste. We get along although I do not speak French, and it seems that I am a slow learner. Sally has shared a lot of information with me about the Swiss educational system.

The fifteen-day Christmas holiday is coming up. They will go to Cran-St-Sierre, an exclusive ski area. They have invited me to join them, but I would really be out-of-place. They all dress like they fell out of the

pages of a fashion magazine. I have my warm parka and jeans. If I can sleep in my camper and avoid social events, I will join them on the slopes.

I bought a pair of White Star skis, an old brand I would not ski on at home. They are stiff. Have poor edges with no stopping power other than a snowplow. I got poles and goggles and a new pair of lace-up boots—yes, lace-up. I will miss my Langes. If I am lucky, I won't break something.

Sally is very happy here. They have a chauffeur to take them to school and she enjoys all the benefits of wealth. When I leave here, I'll go to the American Express office in Geneva to get my mail and mail this letter. From there I will head south and find a warmer, sunnier place.

Love from Switzerland.

David

Dean shopped for warmer gear, a blanket, and food before going into the high country. The roads were open but slushy wet. Fog occluded everything fifty feet away. He knew he was driving through beautiful mountains and following a river. but he hadn't seen anything through the fog. He was afraid he would miss the road to the ski town.

He wound up the mountain road until it broke through the cloud layer and found sun and reflections from snow covered peaks. David drove into town, and circled until he found the hotel where the Spira family was staying on the main drag. He found a level parking space in front of a line of stores about a block away and pulled in. He knew there would be laws against sleeping in vehicles, so he didn't pop the top or turn on interior lights. Dean made his bed and prepared a meal. When it got dark, he exited street-side and walked up to the hotel.

Every day he met Sally and her family at the base of the ski tow. In the mornings there was often four or 5 inches of fresh powder. By midmorning powder was gone and the moguls were polished into a challenging terrain that made skiing fun. From high up the mountains the views were spectacular. The rugged Alps reminded David of parts of Colorado, like Mount Sneffels and views from the Dallas Divide area.

Dean camped on the main street and was there about a week. Early one morning a group of shopkeepers stood on the curb and a big man pounded on the sliding door. He opened it slowly. A big tank truck was idling noisily next to me. The tanker truck was trying to deliver fuel oil, but the VW was parked over access to the pipe that fed oil to the buildings. Dean crawled into the driver's seat and started the engine. The windshield was covered by snow and ice and he couldn't see out. He dismounted with a scraper in hand and explained in English that needed to clear a peek hole. The faint air from the defrosters was no help. Guided by people on the street, he moved the camper down the block and into another parking place.

“Young man, you are not to be living the street. Besides, that black Citroën across there! Not good they are here because of you. You they watch. You leave!”

Dean had seen the black sedan and mentally noted that it was free of mud, ice and snow, unusual in a high mountain town where all vehicles were in need of a wash. He studied the sleek French car and surmised, as had the men guiding him to this new parking spot, that he was being observed, and most likely had been since he left Westphalia. No one was in

the Citroën, but thinking back, he had seen two men in dark suits exciting it several days ago.

Christmas vacation was over. Dean had to leave and was preparing to do so. He unfolded his map and saw that the main road he had left to climb into the mountains continued on to the Simplon Tunnel. He read that he could put his VW on a flatcar and ride the 12.5 miles from Brig, Switzerland to Domodossola, Italy. The railway tunnel was cut through the rock some 7050 feet below the Alps.

Visibility was sometimes, 35 feet. Dean drove below the speed limit and kept a watch in his side mirror for the Citroën. As he reached Brig, he slowed around a curve and caught a glimpse of black as it overtook him and then braked to get out of sight. As Dean pulled into a line of cars and trucks waiting to load on the flatcars, he lost sight of his shadows, his view blocked by warning signs advising drivers that large bolts of static electricity were generated in the tunnel that would kill anyone outside of their vehicle. Signs in every language known to tourism warned that drivers must keep arms and legs and everything inside their vehicle. Some of the signs had graphic images of people struck by static lightning. When the camper was loaded and tied down, a worker came along, tapped on the window and said something he did not understand in German, because the VW had German oval license plates, while motioning for him to keep the door and windows shut.

The ride through the tunnel was like no experience he ever had. Even locked in his VW, he could hear the click-clack of the passage. He could also hear the zaps of static lightning striking all around the VW. Finally, after what seemed a long time, he could see light at the end of the tunnel.

After making it through the tunnel and sitting patiently in the VW while the workman unhitched his camper and let Dean drive off the railroad flatbed, he pulled over to see if he was followed. The only other vehicle that had come through the tunnel with him was driven by a Japanese guy.

There were several police cars, but no one seemed interested in him. He turned on the radio expecting the staid Swiss monotones he recalled and was bombarded by the passion and vitality of Italian music.

Dean pulled out his Italy map and was aware of dozens if not hundreds of places to explore. Places he knew from geography studies as a high school teacher. He circled on the map a few of the places to visit before he went to Rome for his next school visit.

On the map Dean saw roads leading to Genoa, Pisa, and the Cinque Terre. Others led to Florence, or east to coastal cities like Venice or far south to Pescara east of Rome. The main highway led to a toll road which was the fastest way to Rome, but he decided to stay off toll roads and make his way down the west coast. He pulled back onto the highway looking for a Tourist Information stop where he could get a map of regional campgrounds. He got the information he needed and headed toward Pisa, where the map said there were good places to camp that could handle a RV.

The American School in Rome, Italy:

When Dean visited the American School in Rome, he could have been visiting any suburban school or private academy in the US. He recalled with great fondness how comfortable he felt there and how much he had in common with the staff. One evening after he had been at the school for

about a week, he was invited to go with a group of teachers to a pizza joint. At least seven teachers, including the driver, jammed themselves into a tiny Fiat 500 and made their way through Rome to the Pizza Oven. It was the first time since leaving the U.S. that he dropped his guard and felt completely safe. That comforting reminder of home and predictable educational programs affirmed, in Dean's mind, the strengths of the American system, and the difficulty educators would have breaking-up the top-down, inculcating and controlling educational approaches used to produce compliant workers and citizens who could be enslaved for the benefit of political and economic oligarchs.

The next morning, he saw the black Citroën parked about a block down from the school. Between classes he found a window facing the right direction and confirmed that those following him were still there.

The next day, he saw the black car arrive and two men get out and walk up the street to a little café. He was being followed, but so far they had not interfered with him. Why? Who were they? Were they CIA? Mossad? Members of the New Wind Church? He suspected that they worked for Dan Hill. Nothing made sense.

After his comfortable visit to the American school, David spent the last half of the month of January exploring. He assumed that he was out of reach of Dan Hill the CIA and others, but he was wrong if he thought they had given up tracking him. On January 19, 1970, he left Rome to explore Naples, Pompeii, Amalfi, Sorrento, Capri, and then begin making his way north and west through southern France to Spain.

Munich, Germany:

Sharon's flight from Tel Aviv arrived almost two hours late. Off the plane, the passengers of El Al flight 1150 scrambled for their luggage and left the air terminal. Sharon melded into the passengers around the carousel, identified her bag, grabbed it and moved to the side of the room where she could observe anyone who looked out of place. Custodial crews took advantage of the almost empty terminal to remove the trash, sweep the floors and get ready for another surge of humanity.

She figured the meeting with the agent who was bringing her information to track Dorothy Wentworth, had probably been canceled. A taxi driver came through the double doors, spotted her, they made eye contact, but he pretended he hadn't seen her. He walked around the carousel and looked like he was really pissed off.

"Anyone else need taxi? Someone here called and I was way across the city."

Sharon picked up her bag, took one final look around, and answered, "I'm two hours late. My husband and kids were supposed to meet me. They aren't here. Can you take me home?"

"No problem, *Fraulein*. Come with me."

Once inside the taxi, the agent introduced himself. "Your husband and kids? Nice move. How did you know that guy with the luggage cart was watching you? I'll take you to a safe place. I have a thick packet for you with some documents they included by mistake. I have to return two. Read as I drive. Welcome to Munich."

Sharon had not finished reading the first thick document in the packet when they arrived in front of a small frame house in a row of similar

houses built with Marshall Plan funds in an area that had once been a commercial center that had been bombed and burned toward the end of the war.

"I'll leave the dome light on until you are ready to go in. Don't worry no one can see the light. This taxi has tinted windows and bulletproof glass. I'll need the two copies marked "confidential" when I return tomorrow. The housekeeper is waiting for you. If you need me before tomorrow here's my card. Dial the phone number on the card backwards. I'll respond ASAP."

So, there was a guy at the airport. Who does he work for? What connection to Wentworth does he have? Assuming that Wentworth is involved with the CIA intelligence network, what possible connection to David Dean can she still have? According to Dean, they did not part on the best of terms.

Wentworth is really screwed up. The profile I just read about her suggests that as a child and young lady she was deeply warped by a really sick man-hating grandmother and a mother who could only get out of the game by dying. Everything about her suggests that she would be the least likely candidate to be an intelligence agent. She was contacted by CIA agent Caldwell, but he soon gave up on her.

Sharon had asked for background information she would need to evaluate Wentworth's involvement with Dean and the possibility that he made stuff up as a cover for his true identity as an agent. What Ari or someone at Mossad headquarters had assembled for her were three fat files covering everything that had relevance to that time and that Wentworth and Dean were involved in from Nepal to Turkey. And a thin HR file with

her name on it marked "confidential." The other item was a brown 5 x 7 envelope marked "confidential" and held closed by a giant paperclip.

The safe house lady had been advised that Sharon's plane was delayed by two hours. She made peanut butter and jelly sandwiches assuming that Sharon would be hungry when she arrived. Sharon kicked her shoes off, got peanut butter on her lips and a drop of jelly on her blouse. Then she collapsed on the bed. She desperately wanted to see the contents of the files, but she was exhausted and fell into a deep sleep.

It was midmorning when Sharon woke up. The housekeeper brought her a large mug of black coffee. As her mind cleared, she reached for the thin file. It was gone.

Sharon turned to the housekeeper who was straightening the bed. "There is a file missing. What happened to it?"

"I have it. The agent that picked you up at the airport asked me to have them ready for him. He said he told you that he had to return two files. He is coming to pick them up within the hour."

"He said I should read them. Please get them for me."

She opened the HR file and was shocked to find it was hers. She couldn't imagine why they would inadvertently include it in the Wentworth information. As she started reading her personnel file, it was as if a doorway opened in her mind that had been slammed shut by her damaged child.

Memories she had blocked for over 20 years flooded back as if a clot had been removed. Images and feelings of intense emotional pain came back. She read the story of her early years and tried to process what her innocent young self had been forced to block.

"When Sharon was an infant, in an attempt to save her from certain death, her parents had handed her to people along the tracks outside of the Auschwitz concentration camp. She was taken to an orphanage. Five of the nuns, strongly influenced by Nazi propaganda, had a meeting to determine if she was from a Christian or a Jewish family. Sharon did not look like a Jew. She could be raised as a Christian. They took a vote and the majority decided that Sharon was conceived in evil and thus filled with evil.

For the next five years Sharon endured attempts to destroy the evil inside her and convert her to be a lover of Christ. She was beaten, starved, and psychologically tortured. Two of the nuns molested her and forced her to touch them sexually. At the age of eight, following their own perverse brand of Christian teachings, they determined that she should be sterilized so she couldn't pass on Jewish genes. At eight years of age Sharon, and every other female eight or over determined to be of Jewish descent, was anesthetized and sterilized. She was wasn't told that she could never have children. Two years later she was sold by the devout Christians to a group from Israel who were searching for Jewish children to repatriate them in Israel.

Sharon read the file several times and was overwhelmed by an uncontrollable sobbing that wracked her body for a long, long time.

Spain:

David sent several letters to Spanish schools requesting a visit. He tried to make contact at least three more times. No one responded to his

requests. He was a bit worried this was interference from his unwanted tails, but he persisted. No one seemed to be following him at the moment.

Dean's first stop in Spain was Barcelona. He was unprepared for the pollution caused by a weather inversion. His eyes burned and watered so much that he could barely see to drive. He pulled over near a tourist information center, went in, and got a 10-day weather forecast. As much as Dean wanted to stop and explore Barcelona and at least one school, he had to get out of the pollution.

It was now early February. He made his way East to the Costa Brava. It was off-season and the beaches were deserted. He had no trouble finding a place to park overlooking the Mediterranean Sea and the jagged coastline. Dean made his way to the small village of Colera, where he found a bakery in a small market, and stocked up on groceries for the next few days.

The weather was mild and his belly was full. Dean packed sweet tobacco into his pipe and watched the sun set and the skies grew dark. The wind shifted and came in from the sea. He slid the door shut and prepared for his first night in Spain. As he finished cleaning up his dinner dishes someone pounded hard on the door of his camper. Pulling back the curtain he saw three soldiers of the Guardia Civil, armed and looking ready to arrest him. Dean slid the door open ready for trouble. One soldier reached in and grabbed his pipe, holding the bowl to his nose and sniffing for what he believed was marijuana. The second soldier spoke to him in what he assumed was German. He replied:

“I’m American not German. I am a guest in your country.”

The soldiers relaxed. They were young and curious. They studied the inside of the camper and smiled at each other as they exchanged what must

have been positive comments. The oldest one of the three looked Dean over and asked to see his passport. Dean handed it to him and he studied the photo. He shook his head and then pointed at the top of his head. The others looked at the photo and shook their heads. Dean reached into the box and took out his toupee. He placed it on his head and smiled. They laughed and laughed punching him in the arm.

They knew a little English and he knew a little Spanish so they were able to communicate in bits and pieces. After a short time, they wanted Dean to step outside on to the beach by the Mediterranean Sea and look to the South. All along the cliff face, as far as he could see campfires were twinkling. Then they pointed directly west of where he camped and showed him their fire.

“Soldados ... we guard frontera. You go mañana por favor. Buenas noches.”

“Buenas noches and gracias.” Dean waved, turned out the camper lights and drifted off to sleep.

During the next week, he took roads that kept him close to the Mediterranean Sea. He pulled the VW into places that had beautiful views of the coastline and the sparkling sea. He got to know many small towns and had a sense of what it was like to live along the coast. Every night, just after dark, soldiers pounded on his camper door. Every night the visits turned into friendly conversations. Dean looked forward to these visits from those guarding the Spanish coastline.

Dean had read Washington Irving's, Tales of the Alhambra, written in 1832, and was looking forward to his visit to this last Moorish stronghold in Spain. When he left the east coast and started west along the south coast,

he found the turnoff for the road to Granada. He soon discovered a campground full of travelers like himself and pulled into a spot that was barely wide enough for the combi camper. As Dean visited with people from all over Europe, he told them about his quest for information about Spanish education. A friendly couple pulled Dean aside and urged him to visit the main school in Granada. Another couple overheard and warned him to be very careful as this was one of Franco's schools run by his military dictatorship.

CHAPTER SEVEN

By far one of the most disturbing schools Dean visited was in Granada, Spain. Spain at that time was under the absolute dictator General Francisco Franco. Franco ran a military dictatorship he established in 1939. Franco claimed absolute power over every Spaniard. Impressed that an American educator wanted to visit their school to get ideas for ways to improve American schools, they made an appointment with Dean to visit in two days' time.

As Dean approached the school, a large gray school bus pulled out of its parking spot on the steep hill in front of the school building. The space was big enough to park his VW. He turned the front wheels into the curb in case the emergency brake didn't hold. There were no signs or other markings near the space that indicated it was reserved for school vehicles. Steps led up to heavy metal doors at the school entrance. To the right side of the door casings was a large button about the size of a lemon that he assumed was a doorbell. He reached over and pushed the button. For a few

minutes nothing happened. Then the heavy metal door on the right opened a crack letting out a gust of stale air. He heard the scuffling sounds of people moving through the building. A man in full military uniform with a chest full of medals looked me over and frowned.

“Que quiere, Señor?”

Dean pointed to himself. “I’m American. Do you speak English? I have an appointment with the Director.”

It was obvious that he was not an English speaker and had no idea what I said. He hesitated, looked around and decided to let me in. He left me standing there in the foyer while he motioned that he was going to get help.

Shortly he returned with Dean’s guide.

“Bienvenido Señor. I am happy you want to see our school. Walk with me por favor.”

When they entered, the corridor was filled with young men in identical plain gray military uniforms marching shoulder to shoulder to their next class. Unlike other schools Dean had been in, the students did not talk or joke with each other. They moved in tight formation, seemingly at attention. The streams of marching young boys disappeared into classrooms opening off the corridor. He noted that there was not enough room in the classrooms for all the students so the corridor was lined with desks. A bell rang followed by a sharp command from inside the nearest classroom

“*Siéntense!*” Students quickly sat down at their desks, eyes straight ahead. Those in the hallway overflow areas also took their seats. An officer who was clearly in charge, also boasting a chest full of medals and ribbons.

He indicated to Dean that he should follow him into his office. He shut the door and motioned for him to take a seat.

"What can I do for you, *Señor*?"

"I am from America and have been traveling for several months visiting schools in Asia and now in Europe. I am an educator searching for ways to improve education."

He gave me a wry look, smiled, and said, "Follow me. I will take you on a tour myself." He turned and dismissed Dean's previous escort.

He held the door as the two of them left his office. The corridor was quiet. In fact, it was hard to believe that hundreds of young men were in the building. He led Dean into the main corridor. As soon as they entered the long hallway, all of the students stood and snapped to attention. He led Dean by them as if they didn't exist. The two men entered the first classroom on the right, and the entire classroom, jammed with at least 40 students stood and snapped to attention. As they continued down the hall and entered classroom after classroom, it was the same. Students stopped whatever they were doing, stood, and snapped to attention. Wherever we went in the building on the first floor, second floor, or third floor we interrupted the classes and the student soldiers dropped everything they were doing, stood, and snapped to attention. Hundreds of young men were so well-trained, or programmed, that they would stand and snap to attention when adults entered their space. It was obvious to Dean that they would respond immediately to any order given. Training young men in this way meant that the dictator had soldiers who would die for him without question. Learning seemed secondary.

After two hours of disrupting every classroom, the tour was finally finished.

“Gracias Señor Director for taking the time to show me your school. It was very enlightening.”

“De nada Señor Dean. We are proud of what we accomplish here. I hope you can use our techniques to improve your schools.”

“Adiós.” They shook hands and Dean walked through the gate to his camper. Dean left the school in Granada in a state of mental overload. He was glad to get away and he turned his camper in the direction of his next stop.

As he drove up the hill, winding his way to a parking lot just below the Alhambra’s walls, he tried to clear out of his head all he had seen at the “school”. If you could predict the future of a country from its schools, Spain’s future looked pretty bleak. He found a place on the wall surrounding the complex with a view north across the valley to the snow-capped Sierra Nevada mountains. He breathed in the natural landscape and began to clear his mind. He was ready to change gears and immerse himself in the magnificent world of the Alhambra.

He spent hours studying and photographing the amazing architecture. He sat in the courtyards and let the beauty soak in. He found shade beneath palm, date, and fig trees. In 1492 this was the last stronghold of the Moors who had lived in Spain for almost 700 years. It was the end of religious tolerance, advancements in mathematics, and science. The beauty of their art and culture was ignored, then destroyed by the “devout” Christians who brought the Inquisition to Spain, and starting in 1492,

brought disease, death, suffering, and the dark side of Christianity to the New World.

That night, Dean recorded his thoughts in his travel journal:

Today I visited a Spanish school. It was more like a military academy, really. On that visit I learned that subject matter and individual development had no place there. These schools were designed to create robots who would always do as their masters ordered. The citizens of this society had few rights. They had to conform to the wishes of one man, a king, a dictator, supported by a powerful group of oligarchs who built their empires on the backs of enslaved people. The cost to individual freedom was high.

The history of humans is a history tarnished by slavery. When one is aware of this horror and takes the time to read about the great American experiment designed to end authoritarian systems that are designed to limit the rights of human beings, one is a soldier of another type. A soldier fighting for representative democracy and constitutional limitations on those who accrue power.

Munich, Germany:

Sharon stopped reading her HR file and lay back on the bed squinting her eyes tightly shut as if she could blank out the memories of the horrors she had experienced as a child. Somehow, at 10, she had successfully blocked those memories. She realized now that the roots of her most formative years were exposed; there was no way she could avoid dealing with what had been done to her. The realization that almost everything she did, thought, feared, wanted, or dreamed about was tainted by what she

experienced in her most formative years. In the few minutes since the documents revealed her early life, her two lives were connected. She could never be a mother. She could never marry and have a family. Did Andrew and Cher know that she had been sterilized? Everybody else knew, but they had kept this information from her. She pushed the thoughts to the back of her mind and chose sanity.

She focused on the most powerful forces in her fight to retain control. The love and support of her adopted parents, the La Mottes. That love and gentle healing support developed the person she was now. So, she didn't have to deal with all the hell forced upon her. But now? The scabs were pulled off and she could not hide her past or the fury deep in her heart, a burning anger she felt at those claiming to be the wives of Jesus Christ, a Jew, and the strange perverted men with their dangling crosses who did the nuns bidding.

The taxi driver was in the living room chatting with the housekeeper. Sharon knew he had returned for the two files. She took her file and went into the bathroom and locked the door. They knocked on the bedroom door and she called out that she was in the bathroom and would be out in a minute.

In the 5 x 7 envelope was a report from an agency she was familiar with, The Genetic Heritage Project. Genetically, the report said her mother was 90% Ashkenazi and a mixture of other Caucasian races from central and eastern Europe. Her father was 10% German 15% Polish and 75 percent Ashkenazi. There was nothing else in her file that interested her.

She went back into the bedroom and picked up the other files. At first, she was totally confused as they were about something called the New Wind

Church. She had never heard of it. She recalled David Dean had spoken about a CIA agent named Caldwell who had approached Wentworth in Nepal. Toward the end of one file, she found a reference to Dorothy Wentworth. Carefully she tore out the two pages that contained references to the woman she was looking for.

Two weeks ago, Sharon had received a communication from Ari telling her that David Dean was now in Spain. She was somewhat relieved. There was no chance that she would run into him as she pursued Wentworth in Munich or Paris.

Chapter EIGHT

By mid-February, David entered Portugal. He wasn't wearing his toupee and was driving a German-made vehicle with German license plates. Two men in blue suits, as out of place as CIA officials usually are, stood to the front and side of each vehicle entering Portugal, scrutinizing everyone passing through. David recognized one of the men who had been with Dan Hill in India. They gave David the once-over and waited for the next vehicle. He could see that the border guards were angry about the brazen way these thugs had invaded their territory.

Safely through the border and inside Portugal, David stopped at an attractive roadside restaurant. As he finished eating, two of the Portuguese border guards came in. On his way out, he stopped at the table where the border guards were waiting for service.

He smiled warmly, made eye contact with one of the guards, and in his best British accent asked, "Who were those thugs at the border?"

“American blue suits. They just assume that they can do anything they want to ... and they do. They said they were looking for an American who was very dangerous. They weren't there when we left, but they were looking into every vehicle and intimidating people. They told us they had found the guy.”

“Pushy chaps those Americans. Enjoy your meal.” David paid his check and went back to his VW.

Why here? Why the Portuguese border? Portugal is not on my itinerary. How did they know I'd be here? I wonder how long they've been following me? What do they want with me now? I thought once the Mossad recalled Sharon, I'd be free and clear. Now he knew he was wrong. The old feelings of wariness came back. He had to keep up his guard at all times.

David continued on toward Lisbon, the capital of Portugal. As he paid the toll and began to drive across the new bridge into Lisbon, he was amazed at the view. The beauty of this vantage point even surpassed the views from the Golden Gate Bridge in California.

Lisbon was a quaint city with a history that went back through time and a language that seemed to Dean to be a mixture of German and Castilian Spanish. He spent two days walking through the narrow streets and getting a feel for the Portuguese. Lisbon was one of the cities in a country that he vowed to return to in the future.

Leaving Lisbon, David drove north toward the Spanish border. He stopped to explore a parador in a fortress where he could stay and remain in Portugal. Late that night he wrote this letter home:

Dear Mom and Dad,

There is a time in the winter's day, when the southern sun falls red orange and then winks out. At this time, the laughter and cries of children echo through the streets where they play. The worker returns from the field or road. The shopkeeper counts the quarter hours until he can close. When the sun drops below the horizon, shadows creep from the ground up the buildings. A chill evening breeze blows around sharp corners.

With the stirring of air one can sense the fortress mass. The tide of evening air moves through town, it is unnoticed if one is housed and snug within the castle walls and battlements. Here on a fortified hill, in a town little changed since the 15th century, night settles around the many lighted courtyards and down the cobbled streets. It is the night of February 17, 1970, a night of the day of a man awash on the great mass of this Earth, on a peninsula called Iberia in a land called Portugal.

The town quiets, the sky begins to darken. Strange shadows fall across the picturesque windows of the Cathedral. The old men leave their stations and the plots they bond around. The bridge over the river, strong since Roman times, fades from view, claimed by the time of stars and the lunar globe. The iron railings, the stone cannonballs, the flags of Portugal and Spain, the ancient vine-covered walls, disappear, giving way to darkness and the evening's coolness. The smell of coal and wood smoke dress the air, carried by gentle breezes. One's ears struggle for a sound, but nothing breaks the calm of nightfall.

The castle hill lies near the Portuguese-Spanish frontier on high, often rocky plains. It has its own small forest. The bastions of past guard posts, empty now, look out on the vistas of land that seems to undulate

with the changing light. Inside the walls the streets are so narrow that the rock-laid patterns are unseen, hidden by edifices close together, but still not one. Oxen and a donkey cart are all that is left of the day's traffic. Automobiles are parked along the street with passenger side tires halfway up the sidewalks. When the sun shines life abounds. Like an ant colony, the humans watch the orb of the sun and live by it.

Entry into the surrounding forest is gained through a plaza within the town's outer wall. Passing through the hand-wrought iron gate I walk beneath a narrow archway framed by great wooden doors studded by iron rods with spear point's pointing to the dark forest.

Inside the castle, the tons of sandstone blocks assure the visitor of solidarity and safety. A suit of armor stands guard, pike in hand. There is heat within, so the great fireplace hearths are clean and unused. Steam radiators-break the spells from the past as this is now a paradior hotel. In a deep brown-stained niche, a man assigns rooms and keys. A boy leads the way down the crooked halls past the wax smelling rooms. At the end of the passage, he turns into a darker, deeper recess and places the key into the lock and enters past the massive paneled door. The squeak of the great hinges has been saved. Inside, the room fairly gleams with beautiful wood floors, paneled walls, a great standing chest of almost black wood, shuttered windows with heavy woven curtains, and a large metal freestanding bathtub. All is lit by the chain-slung lamps centered on the high ceiling. This is no deserted abode of the ancients. I appreciate the modern fixtures and steam heat. This is a great bedroom, a room with heavy leather-wrapped furniture and a bed built for visitors much shorter than me.

Through another great arch is a room fitted out as I suppose the dons and counts and kings of the past would have it. A man's room full of the tools of war.

Walking through this great hall one treads from old carpet to old carpet. Double doors open into a fine dining room. The tables are graced with white cloth. Crystal and dishes dress the table and are set between heavy silverware. The far wall of the dining area is the rounded inside of the largest tower. Windows free the eye to scan below, across the Roman bridge, to the distant rooftops of the outer town. The ceiling is high and braced with massive beams. The light falls in patterns from ancient wrinkled glass. Dinner will be served from 8 o'clock until 11. I shall partake and then rejoin you.

Well, it is 10:50 and I have just returned from a sumptuous meal. It started with soup of some kind ... very good. Next a fish came in all dressed in a coating of batter. The fish had large bones that were easily removed. It was one of the tastiest fish I have ever eaten, though I didn't know it's family or even its nearest cousin. Then came four large slices of ox tongue cooked to a "T" and smothered in gravy and fresh green peas. All of this with a fine red wine from the area, and a tart or tort cake with chocolate filling between its layers. The whole meal cost was about \$2.50. Perhaps I could get a castle cook to work for me in my camper?

So, I am now back in my room. The short bed covers had been folded back in the fine style I wish to become accustomed to. The clock tower bell just pounded 12 times, and I'm sure sleep will find me even here in a Portuguese castle fortress.

Love David

Chapter NINE

Dean had to be in Paris to check in at the American School by February 21st. He left Portugal and drove back through Spain. He entered France at Irun. Then he drove up the center of France, knowing he didn't have time to stop and explore all of the villages and cities he passed through. Dean kept to his itinerary and mentally marked every place he wanted to return to. He pulled off the road to rest his eyes and catch a few winks of sleep, but by the time he reached the Bordeaux region, Dean had to stop for the night. He pulled off on a side road which led into a wild and tangled wood. The first turn off which was level and big enough for the camper was about 2 miles in.

The tangled brush that surrounded him was a disheveled new growth wasteland where once a vast forest had been. He got out of the camper and walked around. Dean could see the ruins of a house that looked like it had been bombed in World War II. It was overgrown with vines and brush and still showed signs of fire blackening on the insides of remaining walls. It was growing dark and he was tired and wanted something to eat. Returning to the VW he began preparing a sandwich. Dean had a creepy feeling about the place so he locked the doors, drew the side drapes, and prepared for bed.

Sometime before false dawn Dean was awakened by someone or something trying to get the sliding door open. Whatever it was knew how to open doors. Soon it moved to the front driver-side door and tried to open it. Then it came back to the passenger side and tried the passenger side door. As it passed in front of the windscreen, Dean caught a glimpse of a large

hairy thing that looked like a large dog with an almost human face. In its frustration for not getting into the camper it began to emit awful guttural growling sounds from deep in its throat. It clawed at the sliding door handle again and pushed and shook the whole vehicle. Luckily, it didn't get in. It systematically tried each door again, and banged against the front windshield with a hairy fist.

In the first gray light of dawn, Dean watched a thing that was neither man nor beast disappear into the thick brush. He crawled forward into the driver seat and started the engine. Headlights burning a pathway back along the dirt road, still shaking with fear, Dean was certain he had just survived contact with a werewolf.

Back on the highway, he drove for about a mile then pulled over to examine the sides of the VW camper. Around the handle for the sliding door were deep scratches. He examined the other door handles. The metal behind them was scratched. This was no phantom from a bad dream. The damage was real.

Attention La Motte. Stop. DD on way to Paris. Stop.
Wentworth in Paris. Ari

As Dean reached Paris, he noted that he had driven 5280 kilometers since picking up the camper in Germany. He had a lot of time to think about his travels in Asia and the people he met who he had learned to fear, admire, or love. For some reason, and Dean never understood why, Janet Hurlburt wrote and broke off their relationship. They had planned to meet

in Italy, but she decided to stay in Hawaii and continue working with Sami Onoto, and the FBI.

Sizdah Bedar was one of the only men he met in Asia that earned his trust. He was fascinating and his strong commitment to his spiritual beliefs were inspiring. Bedar earned Dean's respect when he took on the task of reeducating Missy Dominick about the positive potential of her role in the transformation of the New Wind Church cartel that she was poised to inherit.

Dean smiled as he remembered the awkward and somewhat odd Dorothy Wentworth who he first met in Nepal; who helped him in New Delhi and at the Taj Mahal. She had gone along with his dangerous plan to pass through customs and get out of Iran and into Turkey. Thinking about the two of them disguised as Iranian women still made him chuckle.

In a little less than four months his whole perspective on life had changed.

Only humans have the capacity to create complex systems that entangle them in such dangerous life-threatening games ... whether they choose to or not.

Outskirts of Paris, France:

Driving into a strange town or city he was always confused by the complicated signage at crossroads. Even small villages made it difficult to stay on the main highway. The villages and big cities were designed as destinations, not obstacles on through roads.

Navigating his way through large cities like Lyons was difficult. Dean often pulled off to check his map's. He knew that in Paris it would be very

difficult to find his way as he had no mental map or understanding of the complex city. He came up with a plan that worked.

As he drove into Paris, Dean found a place to park near the first metro station he found. The camper seemed enormous next to the small French cars. He wrote down the cross-street location and the name of the metro station. Descending below ground, he got a metro map from the pay booth lady and bought a ticket that would allow him to travel all day on any and all lines.

At almost every main stop he left the tunnels, popped out in neighborhoods, commercial shopping areas, factory and industrial areas, and often near sidewalk cafés where people gathered for coffee and sweets. It was a great way to explore the city. He found the Eiffel Tower, the Trocadero, the Seine River, Notre Dame Cathedral, museums, and even the way to Orly airport. By the end of the day Dean had a good grasp of the layout of the city. He made his way back to the VW with ease.

Still uneasy from the goons searching for him at the Portuguese border, Dean couldn't be totally free. He was looking forward to his visit to the American School in Paris. Dean settled into a small hotel excited about his visit to the school scheduled for the next day. Even though he had found only a few innovative programs so far, the best being in Israel, Dean had high hopes for this visit.

When Dean arrived at St. Cloud, about 15 minutes north of Paris by metro, he was assigned a staff member who knew Paris well. Roy Crane, an ex-pat who had lived in Paris for more than two decades, helped him book a hotel room in a part of Paris he could afford. It offered convenient metro

access to the American school and was within walking distance of museums and the heart of Paris. He also helped Dean find a place to keep his VW.

Dean went back to the hotel where he had spent the previous night got his belongings, and checked out. He moved into the hotel Roy had recommended and settled into his new surroundings.

The hotel was a one hundred twenty-year-old brick structure shaped like a piece of pie with its point separating two streets that merged and became one. His room was on the fifth floor at the point of the pie overlooking the Odeon Theater District. The hotel had a very primitive steam heating system. The scientific belief that heat and steam always rise was proven wrong by the radiator in his room. Located on the top floor, it never got hot and was rarely warm. People may sing about April in Paris, but he had never heard a song about February in this magical city. On a really cold night, Dean pulled a chair alongside the radiator, threw a blanket over it, checked to see if the radiator was really on, and tried to sleep in his make-shift tent.

Dean wrote in his journal:

I believe everyone has a dog in Paris. Twice a day they take their dog out for a walk so it can defecate at some unused place on the sidewalk. Although vehicle traffic is heavy in Paris it moves slowly. I learned to walk in the street with or against traffic, and avoid the shitty situation.

The headmaster introduced Dean to the staff of the American school's elementary and secondary teachers.

“Tell us something about yourself, Mr. Dean.”

“Well, I’m a teacher from the state of Colorado in the western United States. I am on sabbatical leave for one year, taking the opportunity to visit schools in many countries in Asia and Europe. My goal is to gain a better understanding of successful student-centered educational programs that could serve as a model to improve public education systems in the US. Thank you for the opportunity to learn about your work. Do you have any questions?”

“So who do you work for ... the Department of Defense, the FBI, or the CIA? I suppose you’re really here to spy on us and report back to your superiors.”

Dean was totally surprised by the question and the paranoia it reflected.

The headmaster stepped forward. “Take it easy now folks. I’ve looked into Mr. Dean’s background and can assure you that he is simply a teacher, like yourselves, trying to improve programs for kids at the high school where he teaches. He has no ulterior motive. Please show him every courtesy.”

The teachers seemed mollified and hurriedly left the room to connect with their students. The headmaster turned to me, “My apologies David. Many of the teachers here are exceptional educators but they had problems in the American system.”

“But even though this school is located in Paris, this is still an American school, based on the American system, right?”

The headmaster gently gripped Dean's arm and smiled. “Once you spend more time with us, you will see there are many differences. Let me show you the grounds.”

Things improved dramatically as Roy told him more about the school. By the end of the first week, Dean was settling in, observing classes, and visiting with secondary school teachers. He thought things were going well and his presence at the school was accepted.

TGIF (Thank God It's Friday) was celebrated in most of the schools he had visited. He was invited to join a group of teachers who had a favorite hangout at a beer joint on the north side of St. Cloud. By 10:30 a few of the teachers had left but the partying was still going on. Dean planned on leaving so that he could catch the metro back to Paris and his hotel. The metro ran less often as the evening hours waned. Late at night it only ran one train each hour until 1:00 a.m. when it shut down completely. A teacher that Dean knew only by sight handed him a drink and proposed a toast. A few minutes later Dean stepped outside the bar to get some fresh air.

The next Dean knew, he was sitting, soaked to the skin by the mist, against a cold concrete wall. Except for occasional streetlights the city was dark. Dean had no idea where he was or how he got there. He noted that he was near a metro stop, but the lights were out and no trains were running. Dean guessed that it was about 2 a.m. on a cold foggy morning. In the far distance he could see the lights of Paris. He had no choice but to start walking. Dean followed the metro tracks toward the bright lights far ahead. After walking for about an hour he got his bearings and knew where he was.

Trying to get warm he walked as fast as he could, occasionally jogging to keep his blood flowing. The false dawn lit the clouds. It must have been about 6 in the morning. Dean walked a little faster until he heard the rumble of the metro train and knew he was at one of the last metro stations

before the train went into the tunnels. Dean took the train to the St. Germain station and then headed to his hotel. The sun was breaking through the fog as the city came alive.

He got to his room, took off his wet clothes, pulled a chair up close to the radiator, threw the blanket over it and warmed up slowly in the ‘tent’. Dean had let his guard down. He had been drugged and left without his hat or coat, in the fog and drizzle of a cold winter night. Dean knew who had slipped him the drugs and his first instinct was to get even with him. What Dean really wanted to know was why he had done it. His gut told him it didn’t have anything to do with his dangerous past.

On Monday morning Dean stood outside the door to the teacher's classroom waiting for him. He came down the hall with a stack of papers in his hands. As he freed one hand, he fumbled in his pocket for the room key. He saw Dean standing there glaring at him. The stack of papers went flying. He dropped the key and was looking for a way to escape. He wouldn’t look Dean in the eyes.

He looks like he pissed himself.

“What the hell is wrong with you? I haven’t done anything to you!”

“I know you’re here to spy on us.”

“Bullshit!”

“I have proof. The agents who forced me to work for them are also after you.”

“Screw you! Your paranoia and stupidity almost got me killed. You slipped drugs into my drink last night and left me to freeze to death in the rain. I’m no spy and if they want me dead, they've had many opportunities to kill me. How they knew about you and set you up is a mystery to me.

They played on your paranoia. How did they know you were so gullible and could be turned to do their dirty work?”

“Listen, I’m here because I’m a draft dodger. Some guys from the DOD or maybe even the CIA have been using me to gather information about the ex-pat community here in France. If I don’t do what they say, they’ll take me back and put me in jail.”

Dean stared at the quaking man, “Okay, let’s say I believe you. If you are truly the puppet of those who know your secret, you better convince them that you are incompetent, unable to do their bidding, and not worth their time. Meanwhile, I won’t turn you in if you stay clear of me. Otherwise, draft dodging will be nothing compared to charges of drugging and attempted murder. Your freedom will end forever.”

Dean felt uncomfortable about the way he dealt with the teacher and the way he handled being drugged and dumped in an industrial and rundown part of St. Cloud. He realized that the government thugs trying to blackmail the teacher so he would spy for them had no interest in Dean. The teacher had picked him because he was an easy mark.

The only people that might still be after me are Hill’s minions, Missy Dominick’s religious fanatics, or perhaps even the Mossad. I haven’t seen anyone looking for me since the Portuguese border. Every time I start to relax and make friends, something bad happens. When will I ever learn.

Over the next few weeks, Dean continued meeting teachers and observing classes. The American School in Paris was organized like schools he was familiar with at home. He attended a school board meeting. The board was composed of wealthy and powerful parents who placed their children in the school and made sure that it was run like a prep school for

Ivy League colleges. Almost all the board members had attended prep schools designed to teach them that they came from special families that were superior to other Americans. They learned how to work together so they could control corporations and the various branches of government. By the time their students entered schools like Harvard, Dartmouth, Princeton, Georgetown University or other universities that graduate America's religious, corporate, and diplomatic elite, they were prepared for leadership positions that would allow them to preserve the wealth and power of their families—the ruling oligarchy.

Dean was aware of some French history, like the end of the divine right of kings, and the weakening of the privileged class. He had been told that the French military was still the domain of those with inherited power, often without merit.

In exchange for his time at the American school, Dean visited several public schools in Paris. On a visit to an urban high school, he passed a wooden fence around a construction site across from the school. On the fence was written in bold red paint, "Kill The Teachers." Dean entered the school through a police checkpoint. He was frisked, asked for his ID, and the police wanted an explanation of what he was doing there. It was obvious that the security was not protecting students from outside radicals, but protecting the school employees from the students within.

In America, the men who controlled Ronald Reagan, Governor of California, were developing a political strategy that made the nation fear its children. They defined Reagan as the leader who could stop students from disrupting society. In this Paris school, Dean experienced a similar systemic philosophy that made the children wrong and the "professionals" right.

Dean entered the first classroom and noted that the “professor” stood on a raised platform with his back to the class. He was writing on the board. As he wrote what he made into salient facts for the students to copy into their notes, heads turned and Dean became the focus of their attention. Dean smiled and nodded as his bodyguard introduced him as an American teacher who came to observe the class. The man on the platform was oblivious to the interruption and continued pontificating to the board in front of him. A group of students left their desks and gathered around Dean. An attractive girl with long French braids asked if teachers in America interacted with their students? Dean switched his gaze to the man standing on the platform with his back to the class, and told them that interacting with students was the joy that teachers felt, and perhaps the major reason they taught.

Dean was amazed that most of the students spoke what they called American English. The students told him that they learned some English in school, but most of their English was learned by watching American movies, and American and British TV programs.

The students told Dean that kids who listened, took good notes, and regurgitated exactly what the professor said, would pass. The others, were labeled as, “too dumb to learn”. They would eventually be moved into other programs or pushed out of school.

Dean noted that wherever he visited, except the military schools in Spain, kids were kids. These systems often abused them, dampened their curiosity, and stifled their development. There was no room for creativity or being different.

Time passed quickly and the weeks went by without confrontations. As the school was about to take its midwinter break, Ann, the teacher Dean most admired, asked him what he planned to do? There was a large poster in her room with a photograph of Mont St. Michel. He asked her if she had ever been there? She told Dean she had been there several times, but not during high tide when the ocean surrounds the island.

“The Hotel La Mere Poulard on the island is fantastic and I always wanted to stay there. If you want to go, I’ll make reservations”.

The tide rushing in and surrounding the fortified city makes a roaring sound like a flight of jets. At a distance of about ¼ mile, hundreds of birds take to the air in front of the roiling waves moving across the sand flats. Soon, the rising tide overlaps the causeway and encircles the island as it crashes into the shore of the mainland. It is spectacular.

During the drive from Paris, Dean learned that Ann's dream had been to be a ballerina. For more than 15 years her whole focus in life was to dance on her toes. As she reached her late 20s, her body betrayed her. She gained weight and muscle mass and was no longer slender and lithe. Since late childhood she had lived with strict discipline and a narrow focus. By the time she was 25 she had to reinvent herself.

She told Dean she enrolled in teachers college and focused on a degree in elementary education. After a few foundation courses she decided that there was something wrong with her perceptions which never quite matched those of her instructors. After another year in school, and more courses related to “effective” teaching, she told Dean that she knew her understanding of the educational process was accurate. She had figured out

early on that the courses required were not child-centered, but rather, were designed to perpetuate a system focused on conformity. Ann did her student teaching in a public elementary school under the supervision of an experienced teacher.

Ann told Dean that she decided to be upfront with her concerns about the teacher training courses. Ann vented about issues that really concerned her, like no adjustment of the curriculum for boys who matured much later than girls of the same age. They were constantly being forced to compete on an unlevel playing field

She explained that Betty, her supervising teacher, had been in elementary education for 10 years. She told Ann she wanted her to know that despite the limitations of the system, she had never lost her idealism or her dreams of being a really great teacher.

“I live with an ever-present sense of guilt and ethical compromise. Hardly a day goes by that I know what to do but cannot do it because of the system that has been in place, seemingly forever, that keeps me from meeting the needs of children and forces me to conform to the values put in place by those who are not educators. They have created tests and measurement systems that force us to teach all third-graders as if they have identical needs and readiness levels. If the majority of children in my class don’t read on a required level for third-graders, I am labeled a poor teacher. In the top-down system forced upon us there is no provision for different maturation levels, sex, early childhood trauma, language, or any mitigating factors that differentiate children.”

Betty reached over and squeezed Ann’s arm. “Don’t give up, Honey. I sense you will be an agent of change one day. You will find your way.”

“Dean, I graduated and tried to work in the public schools for a while but I realized pretty quickly that I could never work in a system like that. I left the US and found a place here in the American School where I could individualize my instruction for each child without being punished or labeled as a mediocre teacher. I could help each child succeed at their own rate.”

Together as educators and friends, Dean and Ann explored the narrow streets of Mont St. Michel talking non-stop about teaching. They bought a rotisserie chicken dripping in garlic and onions, drank wine, and delighted in the sunset from the ramparts high above the sea.

In early April, Dean said his goodbyes, paid the hotel bill and headed across northwestern France. He stored his VW and caught the train to Cherbourg. From the train, Dean decided to take the hovercraft to England. It seemed like a good idea at the time. Although the craft ran on air, it was noisy, uncomfortable, and cold. Spray covered the windows and blocked the view. Before they even reached the dock at Dover the passengers were lining up and ready to get off. All but two who kept their seats at the rear. Dean noted that there was something familiar about them, but decided that he wasn't familiar enough with the facial features of Asian people to recognize a passing acquaintance. He reached Dover and watched a ferry dock. It offloaded relaxed happy travelers. Next time he would take the ferry and enjoy the comfortable views from the decks.

Dean caught a train into London, took a taxi to Russell Square, and found his hotel. He spent the rest of the day exploring the vast collections of the British Museum nearby.

The only U.S. cities Dean felt an affinity for were San Francisco and New Orleans. He didn't like big cities. But he fell in love with Paris and he knew, after only a few hours, that he could love London. Dean had a day to acclimate before he reported to the American School in London. He imagined that it would be like the other overseas and international schools he had visited.

He used the underground to familiarize himself with London, as he had in Paris. On Monday morning he took a taxi to the American School.

Dean entered and smiled at the receptionist. "Hello. I am David Dean, an American teacher. I contacted you about visiting schools here. I believe I have an appointment with the headmaster."

"Oh yes," she said, "We have been expecting you. I'll get Mr. Hurtt."

Dean couldn't suppress a big smile. It had been almost a year since he first contacted Mr. Hurtt and scheduled his visit. The headmaster of the American School in London was currently in charge of the elementary, middle, and high school. To say he was busy would be an understatement. Many board members, administrators, teachers, parents and students depended on him. Dean got a glimpse of him as the receptionist went in to tell him of his arrival. He was around 6 feet tall, with a strong bearing, graying at the temples and distinguished looking. He looked up and smiled.

I don't sense any fear, mistrust or hesitation in his demeanor. No spy business getting in the way here. I hope he sees me as a fellow educator.

"Mr. Dean, David. I've blocked out an hour to meet with you. Barb, we are going down to the teacher's lounge for coffee. Hold my calls please."

The teacher's lounge was almost deserted at that time of morning. Harry and his wife Pamela did everything they could to make Dean

comfortable at the school and in London. Harry and Dean started talking about education and never stopped talking education whenever they were together. Dean had so much to share about his months of travel and he had so much he wanted to learn about English schools. Harry was full of ideas about schools to visit. He had just finished reading an interesting government report on schools by Lady Plowden.

“You have to read the work of Lila Berg. Her book, Life and Death of a Comprehensive School will change your point of view. And don’t forget Summerhill.”

Harry helped Dean plan a visit to Leicester County, and another to Summerhill, so that they could discuss what was happening. He also wanted Dean to visit a core city school.

“It’s a remarkable program, David! They take kids from all over the Empire and in a very short time, they accelerate the student’s ability to communicate in English. Soon they are successfully talking with each other and their teachers.”

“How did you end up here, Harry? What brought you to London?”

“I served in England in World War II. After the war I stayed on to help rebuild London. I was an ex-pat that fell in love with Pamela, a wonderful English girl. Classic story. We married and I never left. I always was a strong believer in child-centered education. Working here, I feel I can make a difference for kids. I know a bit about the school where you teach in the US. Your schools have a good reputation even this far away. I would love to visit one day and see if I could learn something that I could use to continue to improve the quality of our education system.”

"I undertook this journey to connect with others who were passionate and coming up with new effective models of teaching. I can't wait to visit your school and the ones you recommended".

Harry helped Dean get an appointment with the core-city school he had mentioned. On a cold gray English morning Dean took a bus into downtown London. The bus stop was about a block from a school building still covered with the grime and carbon of centuries. Beneath the black patina of pollution there were places where I could see the red brick of the original structure. Some nearby buildings had been steam cleaned. They looked new and welcoming.

Inside, it was like stepping back in time to the 20s or 30s. Dean was greeted by a fiftyish woman who radiated warmth and competence, promises of friendship, and a strong sense of leadership. She held the door for Dean and invited him into her office. Over a cup of tea, she prepared from a beautiful antique tea service behind her desk, she smiled and took charge,

"Harry has told me a little about you and your travels. You have visited a lot of schools, but never one like this, I'm sure. We'll go look around in a few minutes, but first, tell me about yourself."

Dean was used to explaining who he was and what he was looking for.

"Child-centered education? You mean you are actually an educator who believes in tailoring education to the needs of students? If so, I don't think you will have a hard time understanding what we are doing. Let me ask you a question.

"As an elementary teacher, first through sixth grades, what if you were given this class of 10 to 15 students who all come from different

cultural backgrounds, speak different languages, and cannot communicate with you or other students. Their ages range from 6 to 12. Children in this class come from families that have fled atrocities that we cannot even imagine. Or they come from remote corners of Africa, India, Southeast Asia, Indonesia—all over the Empire where English is rarely spoken. Different skin color, dress, foods, cultural practices. Different in each and every way except being human. You are required to ready the students so that they can enter classes and not only survive, but learn the foundation data and information that will allow them to be successful.

“These students are exactly as I have described. They are in the classroom I’m going to place you in. Are you ready?”

What she described was an impossible situation that no one in their right mind would create. Dean had visited schools that sorted students who spoke different languages or had different cultural backgrounds, grouped them together, and attempted to teach them the language skills and cultural norms it was assumed they needed. He was totally unprepared for a completely different way of educating kids.

She opened the door and almost pushed Dean into the classroom. With a nod at the teacher in charge, she announced that she had other work to do and would see him afterwards to talk about his observations.

At first glance the kids were exactly as she had described. The sights and smells in the classroom were as varied as the students. Dean expected kids to be sitting at rows of desks focusing on the teacher. Instead, the students were sitting or kneeling on the floor, playing with cardboard cutouts of all sorts of things. He noted that the students were running the cutouts through some kind of machine that read the magnetic tape glued to

them and said the name of the cutout. The main sounds in the room were the names of things like house, car, cow, book, teacher, or mother.

Individually, or as he studied the students, a brother and sister from the same culture, were learning the English language by associating the thing on the cutout with its English name.

It was late afternoon when Dean returned to the American school. He spent most of the day witnessing an educational approach that motivated students and was not directed by a teacher telling information. He began to understand how motivation accelerated learning and how technology was a tool students could use as they taught themselves. He had new insights into the need for experiential and hands-on education.

In months of travel and visits to dozens of schools he learned very little that was new. In only a few hours at the core city school in London, he had learned more about learning and teaching than he had in the past.

Chapter TEN

Dean was reluctant to leave England. He caught a taxi to the ferry station, but stopped it several blocks away in front of it an attractive looking café. As the taxi drove away, he turned and saw a gray Rover with its doors open and no one around.

That's strange. I've seen that rover before. Several times. Maybe it was following me? Why would the passengers get out and leave the doors open?

Suddenly the air was pierced by the sound of a gunshot. It seemed to come from the back of the restaurant. Dean saw a man in a blue suit stagger

into the space between buildings and collapse. One of the Japanese men who Dean thought he recognized earlier, came into the tight space and kicked the gun away from the hand of the man on the ground. Another Asian man appeared and Dean suddenly recognized him.

That is Gifu, one of the Shikoku's bodyguards. The guy on the ground is CIA. One of the agents I pissed off in Thailand. Looks like he's dead. I better get out of here.

Gifu called out to him, "Mr. Dean, wait!" Dean turned back toward him and stopped. Gifu approached and spoke quietly. "I am here to protect you. Sami Onoto said to keep you safe. You are safe now. This man is no longer with the CIA. They wanted to kill you. We have your back. Try not to worry but be attentive. Please go quickly now."

Sami Onoto? She sent the brothers Shikoku's bodyguards to protect me? Jan, Sami, and Beatrice, you are my guardian angels!

Dean was anxious but confident that he had protectors. Still, there was no way he was sticking around to solve this puzzle. He caught the ferry back to France. Safely on deck, he realized there were so many places he wanted to see and so much he wanted to learn.

Dean needed time to process what had happened. He felt a deep sense of relief just knowing he was not really alone. He picked up his camper and felt happy to be in his home on wheels. Later that afternoon he remembered the black Citroën and the other men who had been following him. The sun was setting and it was glorious. Dean wished he had someone to share it with.

It would be nice to have someone to share in the beauty of sunsets and the excitement of travel: learning new things, being close. I miss Sharon's company.

Sharon was three days behind Dorothy Wentworth who had left Munich for Paris. Sharon needed to understand why if she was to get the information the Director wanted.

"Ms. Wentworth met with a man named Smith," Ari told Sharon. "I spoke to our informant who is the concierge at the Munich hotel where they stayed. He said the two argued and did not seem happy to be together. He overheard them talking about a meeting in Paris. He wasn't sure the two were actually traveling together. They did check-out at the same time. Pick up the trail Sharon. Find Wentworth!"

Sharon recalled hearing Dean mention the name of an agent named Caldwell who had gone missing somewhere on the Rajpath Road in India. She couldn't recall anything beyond that, or any mention of a man named Smith.

Sharon booked the next available flight for Paris. Her plane was late getting into Orly airport but Ari had given her a number to call when she arrived. He had promised her a support system for whatever or wherever her investigation led.

They had lost over a month because the men following Dean had wrongly reported that Dean never left Portugal, or had returned to Spain. Now Wentworth was somewhere in Paris or even London, and Sharon didn't have a clue as to how to find her. She didn't know if the man named Smith was still with Wentworth.

The big mystery was what Wentworth was doing in Paris. Was she looking for Dean? He was the only other person who could be connected to Wentworth. But Ari had reported that Dean was in Portugal and Spain. Dean had a scheduled visit to the American School in Paris and Sharon believed that he would stick to that schedule. She had tried to convince Ari of this, but he read her a report sent to the CIA by the agents assigned to follow Dean. Now they were weeks behind him. Based on his itinerary, Dean would have left Paris by now and arrived in London.

If Wentworth was trying to meet up with Dean the meeting had already happened. She contacted Ari at the number he had given her when she arrived at Orly. "I need to know exactly where Dean is now." She waited almost a day and there was no answer. Sharon tried again, "Ari, do you know where Wentworth is now?"

"My informants say they think she is in Paris."

Sharon immediately recognized that this was not Ari's voice on the other end of the line. She realized that their cover had been broken and that someone else was intercepting her calls. She suspected the cartel. The fact that they were able to jam Mossad communications gave her an idea. She decided to play along to feed them mis-information.

"Ari, do you know Smith is an agent of the New Wind Church cartel? Why is he meeting with Wentworth? Dean is not in danger. Dean works with the cartel; he is a true believer. We need to protect him. To protect him we need to find him. If he has been captured, the information they squeeze out of him will deeply damage our cause. Update me. I can keep this from happening, but only if I have the information I need."

"Sharon, Peter Dominick is being held in a secure place. His daughter knows that the CIA's DCI is making a move to take control of New Wind. Beatrice Dominick will never take over the cartel. The cartel needs a strong successor like Bishop Clarence. Keep on track searching for Wentworth who can lead you to Dean."

Sharon's suspicions were correct and Dean followed his itinerary. He had already been to London and returned to someplace on the continent. That could mean that Dean was out of danger—or he was actually an operative working with three major intelligence services. Wentworth was the key. She had to find her!

Sharon located St. Cloud on the map and studied the layout of the metro. She located the stop near the school. She figured she could get information from students who might have seen Dean. If Dean had met with Wentworth and Smith she could find out. If not, she could find other ways to get the information.

Dean pointed the camper east. He wanted to explore the small country of Luxembourg. Following the road descending into the city of Luxembourg, he had mental images of discovering a fantasyland castle and a place that had remained relatively unchanged since the Middle Ages. Dean parked the VW and explored this very special place on foot. He had brunch at a sidewalk café, but there was no rv park or secluded place to park and sleep. Dean took another two hours to walk around and get a feeling for the magical city.

Back on the road, as he headed into Germany, he became aware of a black Citroën behind him. It sped up and slowed down always keeping the same distance between them. He couldn't see into the car but he imagined it contained the two thugs that were for him at the Portuguese border.

Do these thugs have the same orders to kill me as the ones Gifu and Taegu killed in England?

He played with the idea of losing them, but that would tip them off that he knew they were there. Dean decided to continue exploring and spent a week making his way down to Munich. He spent another week slowly making his way to Switzerland. Occasionally he caught sight of the black Citroën.

Those CIA agents must not want me dead. If they did, they certainly have had plenty of opportunities.

In Paris, Dean had seen an advertisement for the International Graduate Study Institute (IGSI) that was offering a course in education studies worth five semester credit hours. The course would start in June at the Hotel Rousseau in Montreux. He found Montreux on the map. The small Swiss town was not far from a camping area next to the Castle Chillon which had been built in the 11th century. It was on the shores of Lake Geneva known as Lac Lemman on the French side. On his way there, Dean spent a few nights camping around Bern and then Zermatt. In Zermatt, he unpacked his skis, found the aerial tramway near the Matterhorn, and tried his luck skiing on blue ice with deep crevasses on both sides of the narrow pathway.

Wouldn't that just make it easy for everyone if I slid right off into one of these crevasses. No one would even know. I would just disappear forever.

It scared him half to death. The fact that he made it off the slopes was the only living proof that he had survived the experience. Swearing that he would never again put on White Star skis, he did enjoy skiing back to his VW.

Dean arrived at the camping area next to the Castle Chillon and pulled into a space that overlooked the beautiful lake and majestic mountains. He had been driving, sightseeing, and visiting schools for a little over a month since leaving London. The opportunity to stop and "live" for a time in this beautiful space anchored him for the first time in many months. He decided to stay here until the course started in three weeks.

Dean was anxious to get out on the water and explore the lake. In town he purchased a Sevylor inflatable kayak. At the campsite he blew it up, connected the paddles together, adjusted the seat, put it in the water, and hopped in. These explorations of the large lake and the small communities on its shores became his daily routine. He would pull in to the shore at a local dock, tie up his boat, and go shopping for ice cream or groceries. He wore only a swimming suit and a broad brimmed hat. His money was in the pocket of the swimsuit and often wet. His excursions into lakeside towns were so shocking to the staid and anal Swiss, that they totally ignored him and acted like he wasn't there. He got treats and rowed back out onto the lake, ever on the lookout for the paddlewheel ferry that ran the lake every few hours.

He had good books to read, access to bathrooms and showers whenever he needed them, and a wonderful body of water that had about 15 acres of tall cattails, other aquatic plants, and a beautiful sanctuary for birds at the far end of the lake.

Just off the wall and maybe 20 feet from his camper, a pair of swans were taking turns sitting on a nest of at least five eggs. They usually ignored him, but as he came in and out in the kayak, they announced their displeasure. They made quite a ruckus squawking loudly and extending their wings to look much bigger. One morning he awoke to find seven swans ... two proud parents and a fluffy flock of five yellow newborn cygnets.

The weather was perfect. As Dean sat by his camper and admired the castle, he thought about the contrast between the 11th century Europeans who built this castle and the Stone Age cultures he had studied in southwestern Colorado. While Chillon was being built, prehistoric people in the southwest were using stone blocks to build complexes of rooms in large rock overhangs high up in the cliffs. He was struck by the different timelines of human growth and development. He remembered the words of his archaeologist friend, Dr. Art Rohn who talked about the ways in which cultural life and continuity exist at different places on earth at the same time.

Dean had taught the history of old world and new world cultures. The fact that new world cultures developed and thrived in different ways in Europe, the Middle East, or Asia long before the conquest of the New World, made them different, but not inferior.

Dean understood the European's viewpoint but didn't necessarily agree with the notion of European superiority. Creating God in their own image, they decided that their stage of cultural development was evidence of their God-given right to enslave and destroy other human beings and cultures that they viewed as primitive. What an arrogant misconception that proved to be.

Chapter ELEVEN

Educators began to gather at the Hotel Rousseau in Montreux. Dean was assigned a room in the hotel. He walked back to his campsite, packed his gear, and drove to the hotel parking lot. It was the first time since London that he had the comforts of a big living space and prepared meals in a hotel.

Dean had spent more than 10 months visiting schools and trying to understand how educational systems could be improved. In Montreux, he had a chance to observe teachers in class and increase his insights into the reasons why it was so hard to create student-centered education.

The class gathered midafternoon to fill out registration forms and other documentation. As one of the few attendees who had not come with a group, Dean watched small clusters of educators that moved together like proteins in a petri dish. Over the next few weeks these groups worked together and protected their space. They did not make room for strangers. They did not allow new ideas to threaten them.

Dean did find someone of like mind and they ended up sharing their insights into education and the conference non-stop. Royal was the assistant principal of the Department of Defense school in Munich. He

encountered this type of survival thinking regularly in his job. The teachers' actions demonstrated that they came from educational systems operated by people who know they have all the correct answers and punish people who think outside the-box. It was not the first time Dean had seen this type of behavior by teachers and administrators. He had been experiencing it almost continually in his visits to schools during his travels.

Dean and Royal focused their attention on teacher participants who came alone or with a friend. These participants were very cautious, but obviously wanted to meet other people. Most of the people in the room were women. There were several men, but as he got to know them, they were taking this course for credits required for certification, nothing else.

Dean circulated around the room approaching individuals and small groups. He assessed the information they gave him about themselves. Meeting up with Royal, they compared notes. They had found and connected with three other educators who came to Montreux to learn.

Classes were held in the hotel's conference rooms. Chairs were arranged in rows, all facing the podium at the head of the classroom. A portable chalkboard was placed to one side of the speaker. Dean wasn't surprised, this was the most effective way of delivering top-down, authority-centered information.

The head of IGSI entered the room, looked around, and stood next to the podium. He shook his head, scowled, moved a few feet in front of the set-up, and said, "This will never do! Please stand and move your chairs into two equal circles. If you came as a group don't sit in the same circle or if that's not possible don't sit together. Each of you is an educator with knowledge and experiences to share. Introduce yourself. Share your most

important contribution to education. In approximately an hour we will take a break. When we return, change circles so that you are with new people and do the same thing again.”

More than half of the participants were unable to identify any contributions to education they had made. That was because they had learned to survive in systems that expected them to do exactly as contracted. The schools they taught in did not want their input or their creativity. The schools were not designed to adjust their policies and procedures based on teacher experiences and insights or, and this was of great concern to Dean, student needs. Teachers were treated as laborers hired to do a job. Royal observed that these conditions required passive adaptability. They were considered by many to be the reasons why they professed, “I just love teaching.”

Dean was familiar with the labor-management system as it was applied to education. He knew that system worked well for workers in trades which did not focus on educating human beings. He was disgusted by teachers who bought into it. His thinking had been formed, in part, by one of America’s great philosophers, John Dewey. Dewey observed that every educational experience should end with the student making a contribution to himself and to society. Dean and Royal had observed the destructive effects of systems that produced teachers who had four or more years of education beyond high school, and were comfortable in school systems structured in a way that did not practice what Dewey taught. Dean observed too many educators who do not make a contribution to themselves or to society.

Dean learned a lot from the others in their small group. Perhaps the most effective ideas were shared after class when the five went to bistros and talked freely over glasses of wine or beer.

The course was ending. Dean wrote his final paper on experiential education and used examples from the summer programs he had been developing in Colorado. Royal, Susan, Annie, and Paula presented papers on teacher training, classroom organization, school governance, and student development. Their time together had been very productive, and the IGSI staff complimented them on their contributions.

Dean wanted to go into Scandinavia and observe schools in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland, but first he had to get to Hamburg, Germany and arrange the shipping of his VW to the US. Royal had been tied to his job in Munich and had not traveled as much as he wanted to. He had a VW van and offered to follow Dean to Hamburg where Dean could drop off his Combi Camper and then they could drive into Scandinavia.

In late June they said their goodbyes in Montreux and headed their campers north. Dean had to be back in London by the first week in August to catch a British Air flight back to Denver. They had almost a month to explore the North Country.

Royal and Dean enjoyed Hamburg and then headed for Denmark. Dean wasn't ready to leave Europe or end his year of exploration and travel. Time was growing short and all he could do was make mental notes of the places he wanted to visit the next time around. Royal and Dean talked to

educators and school directors whenever they could, but it was challenging as schools were not in session during the summer.

The rugged beauty of the coast of Norway was in stark contrast to the miles and miles they drove through Sweden's flat forest-covered terrain. Finland, at that time, was under Russia's thumb. It felt dark and oppressive to them.

Dorothy Wentworth overheard Smith in the next room talking to CIA's Dan Hill on a radio phone.

"Hill, I think it's time to get rid of that dumb bitch Wentworth. She is totally worthless and hasn't brought us any closer to finding Dean."

Hill replied, "It's time to give her back her passport and let her go home. I know she never bought into the idea that she was serving her country as a real patriot. I objected to her involvement all along and never approved of the way they were using her."

"I think she knows exactly who Dean is, but she will never give him up. There's no way we can let Dean go back to the states. We have to get what we need and take him out. We don't need her either."

Wentworth was furious. She now knew for sure that they were just using her to find Dean. She lied to Smith telling him that Dean was going back to Rome and they could catch him there. She ditched Smith using tricks she'd learned from Dean, on the night train between Paris and Rome.

David was a little nuts, but he was always a perfect gentleman.

The Mossad had also tapped into the conversation between Smith and Hill. Ari listened to the recording and it made him angry. It confirmed the

CIA was using Wentworth to get Dean. It was finally clear that she was a civilian and not a member of any information gathering service.

Ari shared a copy of the recording with Sharon. Sharon didn't agree with their assessment of Wentworth. She knew that Wentworth was still key to understanding Dean's story about their escape from Iran. She had to find her and prove one way or another whether Dean was telling the truth before the CIA took him out. Time was running short. He was due to leave Europe very soon.

Sharon learned from Ari that Wentworth was staying in a small hotel on the outskirts of Paris. Sharon assumed that if Wentworth suspected that she was Mossad, she would never work with her, especially after the conversation she overheard. Sharon went back to her room and disguised herself as a college student. She knew Wentworth had no idea who she was. She waited in the lobby until Wentworth got off the elevator and started towards the front door. Leaning forward, sobbing, she rubbed her eyes as if she had been crying. Dorothy saw her and was going to walk past, when Sharon spoke to her.

"Please. Help me! I saw you before and it looked like you were a woman traveling alone. I don't know what to do. The guy I met last night stole my purse, my passport, and my money. He tried to rape me but I fought him off. He took everything. What can I do?"

Dorothy stopped and sat down next to the distraught young woman. She put her arm around Sharon's shoulders. Sharon could see that there were tears in her eyes.

"My name is Dorothy. Is there someone I could call for you? A friend? A family member? Your father, perhaps?"

"I'm all alone. My father is somewhere in Switzerland but we've been estranged for more than 10 years. I came to Paris with a group of friends for a semester abroad. They have all left for the summer. I met a guy a few months ago who was a teacher. He'd know what to do but he's long gone. He is exactly the opposite of the guy I met in the bar last night who attacked me. I wish my teacher friend was still here. He would know what to do."

"I had a similar experience once. I was in Nepal and if it hadn't been for a really good guy, I think I would've been emotionally traumatized for the rest of my life."

"Are you still friends? It sounds like you connected with a good person."

"Friends? I guess we were friends, but I was always afraid of him—not him physically—but the way he got into my head and helped me understand who I really am. There was something else that scared me about him—it's like he was always on the run turning and twisting to avoid something I didn't understand at the time."

"Dorothy, I don't understand. You mean he was dishonest or a criminal on the run? Mentally unstable? Dangerous?"

"No, not in any way, but he did ask me for help and he got me involved in the crazy way he lived. Turns out there really were people after him, and I don't think he had done anything wrong. I helped him get out of Nepal. I helped him in Delhi and Agra. I ran into him again at Persepolis. That time I helped him get out of Iran and into Turkey in a way almost too fantastic to believe. After that, I told him I never wanted to see him again;

that we were through. But in all that time he respected me and is the first person in my life to see me for who I really am."

"Did you ever see him again? Are you happy about that? Didn't you look for him?"

"A strange thing happened. I was contacted by my government and they asked me to help them find him. I believed them when they said they wanted to support and recruit him because he has skills our country needs. I decided in part to help them because, it was my best chance to reconnect with him. I can tell by the look on your face that you don't believe me when I tell you I believed their story. I was naïve, no question about it. As soon as I agreed to help, they took my passport and froze my accounts so that I was financially dependent on them. Just the other day they returned my passport and unfroze my accounts. I guess that means they found him."

"Dorothy, you have helped me a lot. I'm going to call my dad in Switzerland. I'm hoping he'll understand, but he's never really been there for me. We've been out of contact since my parents divorced. Thank you, Dorothy for stopping and helping me talk this through. With your help, I can take the next step."

Amazing! Wentworth gave me all the information I need to verify Dean's story. I think I just saved David's life! I need to contact Ari right away so he can inform the Director. He can contact the CIA and they can call off their rogue agents.

CIA Rogue Agents:

We lost him in northern Germany. There is no sign of his VW. Dean and his camper have disappeared. We have done an aerial search for the

camper. He must have hidden it in a garage or on a farm somewhere. The DDO must have tipped him off. He must be hiding until we give up the search. He has to be somewhere north of Hamburg. Do you have any information about our two agents? They haven't checked in for a long time.

Chapter TWELVE

Hilo, Hawaii:

Sizdah Bedar joined Sami, Jan, and Beatrice in a tiny secure room at the center of the Onoto fortress. "Before you three ladies decide you can take a rest, there is an item of business that I think we all agree on. Rogue agents of the CIA—two of those involved in killing the US DEA agents—have put a kill order out on David Dean. The DCI and the DDO are aware of it but it seems they have no intention of stopping it. The rogue agents are involved in drug sales developed to finance the war effort in Vietnam. They blame Dean for everything they were ordered to do that came back to bite them.

Beatrice, your networks can identify the rogue agents and stop them. Jan you can inform the DCI that Dean is in grave danger and if he is killed, an investigation will expose plans he and Ethel have made to take control of the cartel.

Sami, you are now in charge of the fifth column movement in Asia and Europe built by the Shikoku brothers. Will you and Jan use your contacts to extract Dean and guarantee that he gets back to the states unharmed?"

Bedar leaned forward in his chair and made sure he had their attention. "Each one of us knows the real David Dean. He never lost sight of

his goal. He understood that you could predict the future of a nation by the way it educates its children. He knew that in this world of politicians, dictators, and powerful oligarchs who lie continually, only educated citizens can counter evil. He taught us to recognize the vital lies inherent in our respective countries. Jan Hurley, you love him but, by joining forces with Sami and Beatrice, you know that David Dean can never be in your future."

Beatrice smiled and nodded her head. "Sizdah Bedar, none of us knew anything about Persian history and religion until we got to know you. You are a Persian educated in India and Canada; a non-Christian schooled by the Jesuit order. Now we measure and weigh our values against ancient wisdom and our life experiences. No one here appreciates that more than me. We three women have years of work, frustration and pain ahead, but in the next few years we will utilize the resources we now control and make the world a safer place. Maybe, if we are successful, a hundred years from now the people of the world will tell stories about the Three Wise Women."

EPILOGUE

CIA headquarters Langley, Virginia:

Policy Updates

There never was or has been an Operation Cowboy. CIA and FBI investigations proved these were false accounts, spread by political enemies of the CIA, about a teacher and his relationship with DDO Dan Hill.

The director of the CIA has gained control of the Dominick Cartel.

The Republican National Committee selected Dan Hill as their candidate for vice-president. Hill resigned as DDO of the CIA. Robert Underhill, a well-respected CIA analyst, was promoted to the DDO position.

Marine Lieutenant Janet Hurlburt received a medical discharge and is believed to have moved to Hawaii.

Aston Martin's body was never found. His death was by natural causes.

The suit against the CIA by Dorothy Wentworth was thrown out due to potential damage to national security. Dorothy Wentworth finally resolved issues about her sexuality and in Munich, she met a person like herself.

The investigation into the disappearance of Agent Caldwell was closed due to a lack of information.

The relationship between the CIA and the DEA has never been stronger.

False information put out by unreliable sources in the Golden Triangle was designed to undermine American credibility. There never was a Drugs-for-War program.

No pre-war Japanese corporations existed after General Douglas MacArthur took over and redesigned the Japanese economy.

Dr. Katasawa was a real person who practiced an ancient trade.

The attempts to undermine our leaders which imply that Big Oil George, the DCI, and his wife Ethel, are establishing a dynasty, and that his goal is to become president, are attempts to hurt our information-gathering agencies The reports that their two sons will control the USA are fabricated lies spread by those trying to undermine our democracy.

Laura Callert returned from India and had breast reduction surgery. Plaything Magazine featured her as Player of the Month.

The American public is educated enough to discern the difference between fact and fiction.

No credible public servant could get away with lying to the American public.

Gloria Hill supports Dan Hill's plan to enter politics. Dan will have co-custody of their son Chris when he is on vacation from his boarding school.

Tanya Horowitz is working with the Chinese to develop a fashion and PT empire. Its motto is, *'It's Only Skin'*.

Sizdah Bedar, after a long and fruitful relationship with Beatrice Dominick was captured and executed in 1978 by the mullahs who convicted him of the crime of being Persian, in Iran.

Beatrice Dominick died of unknown causes on a visit to the Vatican in 1998, leaving Janet Hurley in charge of the Dominick Cartel and what remained of the New Wind Church.

Special Mossad agent, Sharon LaMotte, a national hero for her work in planning the Six-Day War, adopted more than 10 children. With her husband Nigel, she made certain that each was graduated from university and is making a contribution to themselves and to their country.

It has been confirmed by the CIA that one can predict the future of a nation by studying its educational system. Presently, there is great concern about the future of democracy in America. This decline in the support for the American Dream can be directly associated with the attacks on, and the disruption of, public education that gained power in the early 1990s.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a useful tool that we control and is of no threat to mankind.

David Dean returned to his teaching position in Colorado. The head of the graduate program at the University was correct. Because Dean was not instructed by the professors at the University during his year-long sabbatical studying education systems around the globe, there is no concrete evidence that he learned anything.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Over the years, my wife Jo, my sons Alex and David Nathaniel, and my sister Lois Eggers have been my greatest fans, my trusted readers of drafts, and a sounding board for my ideas. Their love and support mean the world to me.

In addition to my own lifetime of experiences in education, my many discussions with friends, colleagues, and collaborators helped shape my thoughts along the way. Thank you Jalynn Bacon Dorow, Dan Kenley, Jack Hillman, Dr. Carla Van West, Dr. Roger Irwin, Dr. Ron Gould, Dr. Bruce Brodarius, Dr. Franz Rosenberger, and Dr. Don Goe.

I miss those friends in the hereafter who live on in my heart: John Crosby, Dr. Leonard Cain, Dr. Robert Kastelic, Adele Seronde, Dr. Art Rohn, Mark Hampshire, and Audrey Allmon.

This is a work that embellishes fact with fiction. References to specific persons living and dead are not intentional. References to covert, public, and private agencies, and orders and assemblies of people for government, religious, or other means are often fictitious. Dates, times and geographical settings are accurate.

Edward F Berger, Ed.D. 2023

