

This Manuscript is a 1st draft for OPERATION SALON KITTY, a Kawashima Yoshiko novelette by Jason Shannon. Be aware editing has not been done and the novelette is not in its final form.

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CONTENTS

Character Introduction Page
Chapter 1
Chapter 2
Chapter 3
Chapter 4
Chapter 5
Chapter 6
Chapter 7
Author's Note
Chronology
Dramatis Personae
Glossary and Gazetteer
Map



Olive Yang¹



Kawashima Yoshiko²

Yang and Yoshiko are my dynamic duo of crossdressing, possibly genderqueer, possibly trans, definitely gritty antiheroes, based upon the real historical queer pioneers Olive Yang (1927-2017), and Kawashima Yoshiko (1907-1948). Olive Yang (born Yang Kyin Hsiu, also known by the aliases Miss Hairy Legs, Two-Gun Mulan), a nobleman's daughter from Burma's Kokang region, founded a drug empire in the Golden Triangle, spied for the CIA, ran afoul of various cartel networks and the Burmese state, served multiple stints in prison, and dated the hottest actresses in Burma. Kawashima Yoshiko (born Aisin-Gioro Xianyu, also known by the male name Ryōsuke, and the aliases Jin Bihui and Eastern Jewel), a Manchurian princess, was caught up in Japanese ultranationalist schemes, spied and honeybotted for Japanese military intelligence, commanded troops in battle while dressed in men's fatigues, and may have been tied in with the Black Dragon Society. Officially, Yoshiko was executed in 1948, aged forty, though rumours of their death being faked

1 Yang family private collection, dated 1956. Paluch, pp 121. Photo enhanced.

2 Kamisaka, cover image. Photo enhanced.

persisted. In my world, the Dragons were responsible for the faked execution, Yoshiko befriended Olive shortly thereafter, and went on to become Olive's closest confidante, and *consigliere*.

All the books in this series are designed as standalones, but to illuminate for the reader the road thus far:

1914: *Stalin's a Whore* (short story)

Pre-revolutionary Joseph Stalin escapes Siberian exile wearing lacy lingerie. Neither Olive nor Yoshiko appear.

1935: *Bitch-Slapping Stalin* (short story)

Yoshiko (28), spying for Japanese intelligence, obtains incriminating pictures on Joseph Stalin. Olive does not appear.

1942: *Operation Salon Kitty* (novelette)

Yoshiko (35) is brought in to consult on *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD) spying operation in a Berlin brothel. Olive does not appear.

1943: *Miss Hairy Legs* (novella)

Spearheaded by Olive (16), the Yang family allies with gangsters, bandits, and the OSS to reclaim Kokang after Japanese invasion. Yoshiko does not appear.

1945: *Green Dragon* (novella)

On the eve of the Battle of Ramree Island, a Kempeitai officer investigates a Burmese gangster. Olive (17) appears briefly. Yoshiko referenced, but does not appear.

1945: *The Pattaya Gambit* (novella)

In the party district of Pattaya, Thailand, Olive (18) tries to run a smuggling scheme during a vacation weekend with their girlfriend. Yoshiko does not appear.

1947: *Taming the Laser Leopard* (novella)

Arranged marriage of Olive (20). Yoshiko referenced, but does not appear.

1948: *Tiger Blues*

Olive (21) and Yoshiko (40) meet, undertake a dangerous mission in Tibet to keep a doomsday weapon from the Maoists.

CHAPTER 1

The foyer is lush and draped in velvet. There's a plush lounge with numerous sofas, afternoon tea being served, and a gentleman with a tankard of beer. A young woman, blonde of hair and blue of eye, rushes up to me. She's wearing a standard German beer maiden's dress, with a tight bodice and white blouse framing her ample bosom.

"*Guten tag, mein schatz!*¹" she greets, wrapping arms around me, engulfing me in her perfume. "Velcome, velcome. Have some beer. *Mein* name is Lorelei. Please, let me take your jacket, *ja*."

I'm ushered into an armchair, and, promptly, another girl arrives with a large tankard of Bavarian beer.

Before I can wave the girl away, a man appears, hands on hips. He's dressed in a suit and tie, but has the military crew cut.

"This is a private establishment, my friend," he says curtly. "By appointment only."

To the girl named Lorelei, whose bare thighs below shortened dress are now sitting on my thigh, I say, "Next time, *mein liebling*,²" and tuck a Swiss franc into her cleavage. "I will take a snifter of Jägermeister, if you please."

Standing now, her eyes dart between me and the man, torn between pleasing the customer and

1 Greetings, my sweetheart.

2 My darling.

deferring to the man who wants me thrown out.

Pulling out another *franc*, I tuck it in beside the first, and give the girl a little smack on the bum, then step up to the man. I take a cigarette from my case, place it between my lips, but I leave it unlit. Dismissively, I say to the man, "You don't mind if I smoke in here, *Obersturmführer*?"

Hearing the title, he jumps a bit, grabs me by the arm, and pulls me gently out of the plush lounge and into the foyer.

No sooner does he do this than the front door opens again. The man at the door isn't looking forward, rather he's chatting with a couple of henchmen who've accompanied him here, and so the man with his hand on my arm pulls me rapidly once more, and now we're in a kitchen. Sausage is being salted by an old German woman with an inch and half of ash hanging off her cigarette.

My own cigarette is still perched in my mouth, unlit. The man, wearing a vest with a pocket watch on a gold chain, also has a lighter sticking out of his breast pocket. My eyes go there, as his are looking back at the door, worried that we've been spotted by the new guest to the establishment.

At last he meets my eye, releases my arm, and removes his lighter to spark my cigarette.

"How did you... I mean, I don't know who you think you are—"

"Where's that *schlampe*³ with my Jägermeister?" I

3 Slut, trollop, slag.

ask dismissively.

For the first time, the man looks me up and down. I'm dressed similarly, in a finely tailored pinstripe suit, a blazing red tie beneath a vest, my hair freshly cut and parted to the side.

After another second, his eyes go wide. "Nein," he says in a half-whisper, "you are not... *Herr Kauerscheicht?*"

I take a long drag on the cigarette, exhale, and say, "That was Minister Goebbels who just walked in. Unless you want him to see the *Sicherheitsdienst* intelligence chief running the girls at his favourite whorehouse, I suggest you go through the service corridor to tell the *schlampe* to bring me my drink."

He stares at me for another half-second, eyes squinting at my vanilla blonde hair, then turns and barks forcefully at the old woman curing sausage. A moment later, the beer maiden appears with an ounce of Jägermeister in a crystal glass.

"*Danke*,¹ dollface," I tell the girl. "This gentleman here is going to tip you with some *reichmarks*. I haven't anything left larger than a hundred."

"Oh! You are so generous, *mein schatz*," she beams, her eyes turning expectantly to the man.

I've already given her two fifty notes, and now the *Obersturmführer* is tipping this harlot something north of one hundred *reichmarks*, given the black market wartime exchange rate between the two countries.

1 Thank you.

Reluctantly, the man pulls out his billfold and hands the girl some cash. The tart and the old woman banished, he turns back to me and says, "You? You are *Herr Kauerscheicht*? But..."

I run a hand through my hair. After an hour with a coiffeuse in Macao, my bob, swept back with a hefty dose of pomade, is now a vibrant shade of platinum, a little fried—I'll probably have to take it back to a buzzcut after this.

"Great-great-grandmother, fourteen generations back, was from Tibet," I say dismissively, waving away my Oriental features. Fourteen generations would place this ancestor somewhere in the 1620s, before the Qing dynasty was even proclaimed, easily passing the blood-based purity laws the Nazi Party has cooked up. Moreover, if such a long-ago date isn't enough to assuage him—

"Tibet?" he asks, the intrigue palpable.

I take another long draw on the cigarette. "*Großvater*² was a sell-sword for the Poles, got caught up on the wrong side of the line in Russia." I shrug, as though this explains everything.

I've studied the myth-making of the Thule Society carefully. While the locus of the Aryan race is Hyperborea—probably Iceland or Greenland—there's a lot of mystical borrowing from the inane ramblings of Madam Blavatsky, with the ancient masters and the oasis above the clouds in Tibet, stealing our swastika holding Tibetan Buddhism in

² Grandfather.

high regard, mostly as something profound merely by dint of not understanding it.

Here I am, a full-blooded Manchu, hair fried from the dye job, convincing this dolt that I'm an Aryan gentleman.

He continues to stare at me for another minute. I say, "I presume you have recording equipment installed in *Herr Goebbels'* room? Is it running, or do you need to turn it on?"

"Oh, right," he says at last. "Please, come this way, *Herr Kauerscheicht*... it is *herr*, isn't it?"

Before I can clarify, at last, *Herr Vollmann* arrives. "Ah," says the newcomer, barging into the kitchen, "Lorelei said that you were here."

Wolfgang Vollmann smiles at me like a playful child, salutes in the Roman style, and says, "Welcome to Salon Kitty, *Herr Kauerscheicht*."

Immediately the first man takes *Vollmann* aside. It's a small kitchen, and I can here snippets of his whispering: This is *Johann Kauerscheicht*? This is *Johann Kauerscheicht*? Something about Tibet, and, of course, my papers, which, needless to say, are flawless.

I sip the *Jägermeister*. Slightly bitter, perhaps, but with complex herbaceous notes.

Vollmann and the *Obersturmführer* come back to me from beneath a curtain of curing sausage. *Vollmann* is beaming, his hand immediately coming out to shake mine, if just to touch me. "You had safe travels, *mein*—"

"The train from Bern was suitable," I cut him off. The bastard is so clumsy that he's liable to blurt out that I took a dirigible in from Tōkyō, or try to embrace me in a hug.

He clues in to my curtness, and nods slightly. "I see you have already met *Obersturmführer Schellenberg*," he says professionally.

"Not officially," I say, finishing the Jägermeister. Setting the glass down, I turn to Walter Schellenberg and salute. "I am honoured to make your acquaintance, *Herr Schellenberg*."

The three of us exit the kitchen and proceed up a back servants' passage in the old house. There's a maids' staircase in here, leading to a back room on the second floor. Outside a locked door is a regal corridor, draped in red velvet, and two dozen rooms to please the most esteemed men in the Reich. This servants' room has the entire west wall stacked with television screens—bulbous, round, ten-inch monitors—and a listening station with headphones.

The finest of German engineering.

On the third monitor down, fourth from the left, I see Joseph Goebbels undressing in a bedroom. With him are two girls, one of whom is the dame called Lorelei, while the other is also blonde and blue-eyed.

"And this is the central locus," says Wolfgang Vollmann with a note of pride in his voice.

"May I?" I ask, nodding to the screen with the minister.

"Please, *Herr Kauerscheicht*," says Walter Schellenberg. "This is why Deputy-*Obersturmführer* Vollmann brought your name forward."

Using the keyboard, I type in the number stamped onto that monitor, and flick the audio switch. The speaker on the console now speaks with the voice of the minister of propaganda: "*Nein*, you two shan't touch me. I insist you engage in the verboten practices of Paragraph 175. Do it—forthwith!"

At this, Goebbels, wearing only shorts and an undershirt, promptly sits down in an armchair. The one trull is confused, but Lorelei quickly caresses the lingerie-clad dame's cheek and says, "Pink Triangle, dear."

Then the two women kiss, Lorelei pulling the girl in with passion. Fingers comb hair, hands go to breasts and backsides, and they collapse onto the heart-shaped bed. In the corner, Minister Goebbels watches studiously.

I flick off the audio. *Obersturmführer* Schellenberg says, "We have hundreds of hours of material of this nature. The most esteemed gentlemen, not just of the Third Reich, but from all over Europe."

By now, Lorelei and the other dame are nude, intertwined with each other on the bed, each with face between the other's thighs. Goebbels has relinquished himself from his shorts and is tugging his manhood feverishly as he watches the girls

perform mutual cunnilingus.

"Herr Goebbels only ever pleasures himself to such a show," Vollmann adds.

"And your goal here is to find seditious elements via pillow talk?"

Schellenberg glances at Vollmann. I say, "I have fifteen years' experience with these sorts of schemes, from the Chaco War to the casinos of Monaco. Of course, we didn't have the same technical assistance; often times, one of my girls would merely report back disloyal sentiments, or the madame would have to observe through the cut-out eye holes of a painting on the wall."

In truth, while my resume in this sector is long, everything that landed on Schellenberg's desk is entirely fabricated. Instead, it was me on my back, either in Shanghai, Tianjin, or Singapore, playing the coquette, giggling like a bimbo and using my mouth to expert effect. A man will tell you anything once you've kneaded his prostate (the same is true for a dame and her equivalent organ).

Schellenberg clears his throat. "Um, yes, that is correct. The clients here reveal much. We want to act on the... intimate information at our disposal."

I take a nice long drag on the cigarette, then slip off my jacket, slide it over the back of the chair, and take a seat. My eyes go to the woman called Lorelei, on screen, her face between the thighs of the other tart, whose face is contorting like she's about to zenith, and Minister Goebbels jacking off in the

corner.

"Very good. Let's get started."

CHAPTER 2

Long past the onset of the curfew, at around 3 in the morning, I check into my lodging, the Hotel Excelsior, four and a half miles away on Königgrätzerstraße. I have a large accordion folder full of SD files that were to hand at the salon, as well as pet carrier-sized metal case for a *mikrokassette* player, and about fifteen tapes of noteworthy surveillance from the past six months, stuffed into the side of the case. A smartly-dressed bellhop takes the mechanism from me and transfers it to a baggage dolly, amidst my admissions of its delicacy.

The first room they show me I refuse on the spot, because it doesn't offer a view of the Großer Tiergarten. I'm shown to a second, whereupon I go to use the restroom while leaving my open attaché case on the table, a stink packet slowly diffusing. Returning from the restroom, I call down to the front desk and explain there's a terrible smell in the room, and demand alternate accommodations, which, when a bellhop arrives, are sorted for me. Now in the third room, I imagine I'm safe from any bugs the SD may have rigged in this hotel, but still I break out the sniffer hidden in my cigarette case, and scan around the light fixtures, the nightstands, the electrical outlets.

By the time I'm finished, it's close to 4, which would make it about noon in Japan. In my travel

bag is an empty flask with the scent of gin, which I tuck into my inner breast pocket, and head down the back staircase, exiting the hotel into an alley. An older gentleman is there, emptying a rubbish bin into the waste receptacle, and, unfortunately, the door has already closed behind me when I see him.

Speaking past his cigarette, he says, "There's a curfew, miss. Don't want the police to spot you. Best to go around to the lobby until 6."

This is where my flask comes in handy. As he hefts up the next rubbish bin to empty, I sneak it out of my pocket, uncap it, and belch loudly, ignoring his warning and marching stridently for the street.

"Berlin police will vanish you," he warns. "The amount of hotel guests who just disappear after—*fraulein, fraulein!*"

But by now I'm gone, out on the street and around the corner. The man is trying to be helpful, but I'm fast, and he isn't risking his neck disobeying the curfew.

A half a block down, and there's another hotel, this one less prestigious, whose lobby I enter.

Hotel Excelsior had been expecting a late check-in from *Herr Johann Kauerscheicht*, which was readily obliged when one of Schellenberg's SD goons escorted me. This hotel, however, is not expecting a late arrival from any perspective guests, and the woman behind the counter looks surprised when I come in. She jumps up from her nearly

prone position and rushes my way. "Ah, *frau*—*erh, mein* friend, may I help you?"

My eyes go to the telephone on the side table. For effect, I belch again, and stagger a bit. With words slurred, I say, "I... stayed out too late. *Mein* gentleman friend... I just need to have *mein* brozzer come pick me up. Please, may I use your telephone?"

As if to underscore it, at that moment the goon squad drives by outside, a kitted-out Volkswagen with armour plating an a blazing red *swastika*. The woman quickly puts an arm around me and ushers me to the side table.

"Of course, of course. Ze manager, he does not like non-guests using the telephone, but a local call vill not arouse his suspicions. Please, zere is a park a block to ze east vhere your brozzer may rendezvous vis you."

She's hovering over me like a vulture, eyes darting back and forth between me and the front door. I say, "Frau... may I have some privacy, please? Zis is... well, indelicate vis *mein* brozzer."

"Oh, of course."

I dial Fukuoka; the dormitory at the women's university. The line rings seven times before Kotone answers. "Room 223."

The sound of her voice, tinny as it is, sends a warmth into my heart that's worth the risk of being disappeared by the Berlin police.

"Hey babe," I say. "How are your exams going?"

The mention of exams is a code. I'm not going to mention her name, the university name, the curricula, or even the country, and she won't mention the name Yoshiko.

"How are things at the factory?" she asks, meaning the job.

This is the first employment I've had in two years. It's been a bad run, stranded in Fukuoka with unsavoury twats keeping tabs on me, surviving by selling off my prized diamond watch, and the supposed largess of Sasakawa-sama.

She obliquely knows what I do, and she wants desperately to know what assignment on I'm on now. Am I chain-smoking?—yes. Plotting with Triads?—no. Waving around my sidearm and spouting smartass quips?—not yet. Am I ferrying the empress out of a riot in a Cuban car?—it would be a Mercedes here, if that were the case.

Kotone has read the book, and watched the film,³ and was a huge fangirl of mine before we were introduced in Tianjin; I'd had my fingers inside her before she worked up the courage to ask for an autograph, right there next to Muramatsu's.

"Are you..." she says hesitantly, "seducing all the ladies?"

I can almost hear the smile through the tinny voice. All this derring-do and panty-dropping one-liners as I chomp on a cigar gets her wetter than a

³ *The Dawn of Manchuria and Mongolia* (Manmō Kenkoku no Reimei) by Mizoguchi Kenji (1932). Presumed lost.

tsunami. "Now, babe, you know there are confidentiality agreements I was required to chop with my *hanko*.⁴"

"Oooh!" she pouts. "Give me something. Please. Have you had to smuggle microfilm internally? Did you have a commie in your bed last night who told you the Chairman is a lousy twat?"

I relax backwards in the chair. "Tell you what, I'll swear you to secrecy on this little tidbit—but it's strictly classified, you understand."

"You're a blonde?" she exclaims.

We chat. I stay on the phone with her for a good thirty minutes, the hostess of the hotel coming to check on me more than once. We talk about nothing. I just want to hear her voice.

"I can't wait to make sweet love to you," I say out of nowhere.

"Stop," she giggles, "you're going to make me blush."

The flight, the transfers, the hours I spent in Tōkyō researching the job—this is the longest I've been apart from her since I was deposited in Fukuoka.

The woman appears at the telephone once more.

"Gotta go, babe. Same time tomorrow?"

When I return to my room at the Excelsior, I know from the light shining beneath the door that the room is not empty, but the occupant therein is not a threat. Unbuttoning my vest and undoing a few

4 A traditional seal or stamp, used in place of a signature.

buttons from my blouse, I put the key in the door and step inside.

Wolfgang is laying sprawled on the bed, in his undergarments, hands behind head like he was waiting for me.

"Dollface," he says expansively, "what did I tell you? Easiest hundred K you've ever made."

"Quite the operation you've got here," I say, draping my jacket and vest on a nearby chair. My eyes covertly take in the contents of the room; I notice Wolfgang's shoes next to the door, his discarded clothes on the guest chair by the desk. All the files I've checked out of archive, and the *mikrokassettes*, appear to be where I left them. Then again, Wolfgang is not just a pretty face; he's Schellenberg's number two on one of the most advanced internal espionage operations in Europe, he's done undercover work in Shanghai, Tianjin, and Moscow; he would certainly know I'd be checking the tapes. "All your idea, of course?"

"Unofficially," he says from the bed. "*Herr Heydrich* is an asshole. The *Gruppenführer* proposed it in an intelligence briefing, and Schellenberg's men found us a *mamasan*⁵ who was trying to smuggle money out of the country."

"You realize that hundred K is going to be paid in dollars," I say from the desk, cigarette between lips, the flame of my Zippo doing its work. I puff deeply

5 The female manager of an establishment, sometimes used in the context of a proprietress of a *geisha* house.

as I stride to the bed, exhale a large plume of smoke from my nostrils, and deposit the fag in his mouth.

"Final fees are negotiable," he says, the cigarette bobbing. "We'll pay it in Swiss *francs*, but I'm sure the sum can be calculated with the maximum volatility of the exchange rate in mind. Hey, where were you? The desk said you changed rooms. I thought I had the wrong one for a second, and was being set up."

"Went to get ice," I say nonchalantly. "Freezer is down for repairs."

By now my blouse is undone and hanging open. I know he'd love to see me out of the binding as well, but, for now, I unbuckle the pants and strip to the undershorts.

He sits up in bed, twists at the hips and comes up to his knees. He's put on weight, been pumping iron. His blond hair has broken free from its tightly coiffed backward slick, and is now hanging daringly over his forehead. "I missed you," he says.

I put two fingers on his hardened pectoral and push him back. "Please. You've got a whole roster of dames here in Europe. Probably a different one every night, all big-titted, blue-eyed, blonde maidenhair. How many times have you done an employment evaluation on that trull Lorelei? Flick the off switch for one of the 'inspections'?"

The entire system at the salon has a master switch, which can kill the whole surveillance feed.

Reinhard Heydrich, *Gruppenführer* of the *Schutzstaffel*, the *Gestapo*, and the *Sicherheitsdienst*, is top of the food chain with regards to the brothel, who Schellenberg reports to weekly. Once a month, always unannounced, Heydrich will perform a personal inspection of the premises, during which time the kill switch is engaged, the screens go black, and the microphones fall silent. The girls he's inspecting were all hand-picked between himself and Schellenberg, rounded up as harlots from lesser bordellos, or slags from nightclubs, and put through extensive psychiatric testing to see if they could elicit information without asking direct questions, ply with alcohol without appearing pushy, ego-boost in such a manner as to press on delicate pressure points, identify military and paramilitary insignia, and they were even sent on a five-week sojourn to the Bavarian Alps to learn the most elysian techniques for fellatio, cunnilingus, sadomasochism, buggery, and beguilement the Nazi bookkeeping machine has thus far compiled. Standard honeypotting tradecraft.

"You think she's a looker?" Wolfgang asks, relaxing back into the bed. "Nipples are a little cherry blossom pink, no?"

By now my trousers are off. Wolfgang and I are wearing the same brand of undershorts. I proceed over to the mini-fridge and open the door. There are two bottles of beer in here and three empty shelves. Damned rations; I'd kill for a scotch right

now.

"I thought that was the Aryan ideal," I say, closing the door. "Amaterasu, is there nothing to drink in this town?"

"Flask of schnapps in my jacket. And by the way, I have not so much as cured the bratwurst to the young *fraulein* from the other side of the monitor. But she does owe me a favour, and she likes a finger or two in the bum. She's one of Kitty's girls, not card-carrying *Sicherheitsdienst*, so there's no secret reports going to Heydrich's desk."

I'm now standing at the desk against the wall. Wolfgang's jacket, shirt and trousers are here, draped over the guest chair, or the *mikrokassette* player case. The stack of *mikrokassettes* I'd removed from the case are still sitting there, stacked haphazardly—somewhere in those sixty or so hours are intimate recordings of *Herr Streicher*, *Herr Lutze*, and some foreign dignitaries. The case is pressed against the pewter lamp; some part of me is wondering if I should resweep the room in the morning.

Having fished the hooch out of Wolfgang's jacket pocket, I unscrew the spout, put it to my lips, and tip it skyward. It's no scotch, but it's not a flat beer either.

Swallowing, I leave the flask uncapped as I stride for the bed, handing the German the last mouthful of the schnapps. "Why, thank you, sweetheart," he smirks, sitting up to take the drink.

"Bonuses were implied when I signed on," I say, my fingertip lightly sliding down his oblique muscle to his hip, "but that particular perquisite wasn't mentioned."

"Bonuses?"

"Listen, I'm told blondes have more fun."

He smirks. "Looks good on you, doll."

"Don't get used to it."

He swigs the schnapps, while I, removing him from his shorts, get down on my knees, and take his dick in my mouth.

CHAPTER 3

I awaken around 11 the following day, and decide to let Wolfgang sleep as I study the files I signed out last night. They're sitting on a goldmine here. Everything's kitted out, the finest cameras and top-of-the-line microphones, the girls hand-picked. About twenty of them, plus another dozen gigolos, selected personally by Reinhard Heydrich.

I've got with me a stack of files, and a carrying case full of *mikrokassette* tapes, and I'm most of the way down my third page of legal paper making notes for my report. The girls are superb at drawing out pillow talk. *Herr Quisling* has a favourite girl who he insists wear a full black leather bodysuit and take a paddle to his private parts; the wife of the Slovakian consul rented out one of the boys to tie her up and assail her in a dramatic roll-play; a press secretary for the Romanian embassy by the name of Ljubo Kolchev has come in, only to see a woman disrobe and manually stimulate herself, for which she was given a monstrous tip; Madam Prime Minister from Portugal always rents two girls to play the part of the man, each wearing an artificial phallus and penetrating her simultaneously in the front entrance and the back; and the Duke of Gran Colombia, from America, made *Fraulein Lorelei* colour herself in body paint in the pattern of a bovine, crawl around on hands and knees whilst mooing, and attached a milking mechanism to her

bosoms.

"My, my," I whistle, admiring Lady Lorelei's versatility in the craft when that tape is playing.

Some of the recordings offer nothing besides blackmail material, but some show outright disloyalty.

A shocking proportion of the clientele aren't even interested in sex, but rather just want to be held and told what big men they are.

At last I hear stirring in the bed behind me. "You've got all the time in the world to do that report," says Wolfgang with a morning groan.

I'm sitting bare-assed on the guest chair, my hair frazzled, a dozen files scattered on the table before me, three cigarettes stamped out in the tray. I already searched the meticulous files at the salon last night to see if they had anything on Sasakawa-sama (he's a big fan of Mussolini, and has been to Europe many a time), a search that yielded nothing. Further, for the sake of filial piety, I check Puyi's name, also with no results (if he'd been in during a state visit, Ms. Lorelei would not have been his choice). I can't just let this sit. This is in my blood.

"Four pages so far," I reply, inhaling from my newest cigarette. "I was born for this type of shit."

He props himself up on an elbow. "Jacking off to Marie Pétain or She-wolf Volkenrath blowing their loads, or high-level espionage? Oh, hey cutie."

I'm on my feet now, striding for the bed. I give him the cigarette. "Do I have to choose?"

He takes a puff of the cigarette, then sits up to kiss me. "Someone's randy for round two," he says, noticing the shape of my nipples.

"Later, dear. I need to eat. What's good around here?"

He needs to shower. I use the entrance mirror to layer some more pomade into my hair. "How are things in Fukuoka?" he calls from the shower.

Amaterasu.

Of course he knows about Fukuoka. It's a colossal embarrassment. The mouldy house, the, the typhoon rains, the fishermen on the bay. Nothing to do there save watch old movies, play *mahjong*, and walk Kotone to campus. Even the *kabuki* theatre there has B-list actors who fumble with the performance.

"Quiet place to relax," I reply. I was, ostensibly, there to recover.

"I heard your friend's winter home suffered a break-in."

I stride into the bathroom, where he's lathering himself in the shower.

Leaning on the doorframe, arms crossed, I say, "Someone's done their homework."

"Wanted to make sure you weren't dead," he says, peaking out from behind the translucent shower curtain. "After all, I heard there was an open contract out for you."

I say nothing regarding the assassination scheme. Arms still crossed, I say, "I deny any

connection to Muramatsu-san's house—though he still owes me two thousand yen."

He smirks, but he knows when to back off. "You remember Stephenson, don't you?"

"Indeed," I reply, returning to my hair.

Willy Stephenson is British MI6. We had our run-ins in Manchukuo, and in Singapore. He's a bit of a rival of mine—one might say nemesis. Suave, debonair, smartly-dressed and drinking vodka martinis, he somehow manages to set aside enough time from seducing the ladies of the Far East to foil the plans of Tōkyō or Xinjing. He hasn't been back in Asia in years, and, last I heard, was in New York, trying to persuade the Americans into joining Britain's war.

The foolhardy attack on Pearl Harbor seems to have done that on his behalf—the war ministry is staffed by idiots.

Wolfgang, who's had his own professional rivalry with Stephenson, says, "He's in Gibraltar. The *Führer* wishes to seize the territory. But it would require the ascent of our erstwhile friendlies on the Iberian peninsula."

Ah, yes. I remember seeing something of that sort in the files I've borrowed. Taking my hands from my subpar coiffure, I shuffle a few papers and find it. A month ago, Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs Ramón Serrano Súñer, who also happens to be Francisco Franco's brother-in-law, was in. He was on a diplomatic mission to Berlin, and was invited

to the salon by Joachim von Ribbentrop, a sort of boys' night after a long day of negotiations. The microphones in the lobby captured the two discussing something or someone called Felix; I placed a requisition with Schellenberg when I saw the transcript last night, but it came back denied within forty minutes, the file sealed, I was told, by Heydrich himself. Nonetheless, it was not difficult to figure out what this Felix was: a proposed invasion of Gibraltar by the Germans to deny the British access to the Mediterranean, involving a *Wehrmacht* division traversing Spain overland. Don Súñer, on the *mikrokassette*, had initially picked the voluptuous Ms. Lorelei, but, as soon as he was behind doors with her, demanded she sneak out to the fourth floor and pick for him the prettiest of the madame's blond boys. I have tapes of Lorelei standing, fully clothed, facing the wall, as the blond boy gives Súñer a proper buggering. Later, Súñer confided in the lad that Felix would never happen with Spanish assistance, because Madrid wanted the Rock for themselves.

"Convenient that *Herr Stephenson* knows just where to show up to counter your plans."

"I thought so, too."

Wolfgang and I proceed separately to Borchardt on Französische Straße. I won't be of any use at the salon until at least 5, so I'm able to take a relaxed midday breakfast. I arrive first, and, due to rations Borchardt is dealing with, order merely the soup of

the day, with buttered sourdough pumpernickel. I can't get a good tea in this country to save my life.

Wolfgang walks in five minutes later, dressed in civvies, and stops when he sees me. A curious eye on me, he slides into the seat.

"May I ask...?"

He stayed behind in the room to shave, his face is now smooth as a baby's ass. While he was singing to himself in the restroom, I had an idea, something to acclimatize myself to this place.

"Is it too gauche?" I ask, turning to check myself out in a nearby mirror. The smudge of ash I'd placed on my upper lip, giving me the look of a 5 o'clock shadow only on the space below my nose, remains unblemished and perfectly square.

"I thought you said you didn't like moustaches."

"I don't like them on you."

He orders his own midday breakfast, and joins me at the table. In hushed tones, we chat about the salon, about Operation Felix and Mr. Stephenson's roll in things, about the past year he'd spent as a liaison to the office in Vichy. The soup is quite nice, very potato-heavy.

He shovels a healthy dose of pickled cabbage onto my plate. "This stuff is great for your guts."

Normally I've got an iron stomach, but I did take three bullets in the torso back in '36, one of which perforated my colon, and every now and then, thirty thousand feet below me causes my insides to tense up. I look to Wolfgang, pushing a forkful of

*spätzle*⁶ into his mouth. I didn't say anything to him about my constipation.

"Oh, fuuuck," I grumble, shrinking into the booth.

Wolfgang is turning his head. A Japanese is striding through the restaurant's door.

He's already spotted me, he blinks momentarily, and now he's smirking like a shithead and walking my way.

"Of all the dames in all the delicatessens in all the world," he says, "who'd have thought you'd be sitting here in this one."

I'm shrunken into myself, but Wolfgang has enough operational awareness to covertly slip a hand into my trousers pocket and pull out my Swiss passport. Matching the Japanese's energy, Wolfgang says, "I see you and Johann are old acquaintances. A pleasure, *mein* friend."

The man is frowning. He says, "Johann? Who in the fuck—"

But before he can get another word out, Wolfgang has presented both my passport (family name covered by his thumb), and his SD badge, covertly laying them flat on the table next to the creamer.

"That explains that dirty Sanchez on your upper lip," he grunts.

He's lunching here with a woman, her hair almost as ghostly blonde as my own. I recognize her as Adelheid Meier, deputy security chief for the

6 A pasta dish.

Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia; I recognize her both from her official dossier, shared with me along with other pertinents when I was hired on, as well as the tapes from the salon. She was in Thursday last, if I recall. She particularly enjoys being spat on and called a worthless slag as she savagely rubs herself, nearly choking on the pair of knickers Lorelei has stuffed into her mouth, the lips taped shut. She's also here with a man who I believe is her lieutenant, armed with a Luger on his belt.

"Friend of yours?" asks Meier, appearing behind the Japanese.

"I was asking what was good here. Be so kind and tell the maid to get us a table, I'll be with you presently."

Adelheid Meier nods and walks off. My passport and Wolfgang's SD badge are gone.

"*Herr* Iwata, am I correct?" says Wolfgang, more a statement than a question.

Iwata Ainosuke does not sit. Instead he leans heavily on the chair back and says, "A men's suit, a moustache, and a Swiss passport under the name Johann, blonde hair—what the fuck is this?"

I gather my courage, suck in a deep breath. "It's called a paying job."

Ainosuke stares at me like a cat. "It's been a while. Didn't think I'd see you again, to be honest. Shitty about the restaurant. That was a big loss for every—"

"Our German friends have deep pockets," I say

with a shrug.

He can easily place a call to his mates in Tōkyō, find out about the would-be assassination, that Sasakawa-*sama* had to whisk me away to safety in Fukuoka—let's be honest, the reports will say 'house arrest'—will find out about the intercession by Matsuoka, maybe even the angry letters I wrote to Tōjō-*sama*. Shit, he could even out my divorce, forced by the hand of Sasakawa. I can only imagine what he'll think if he knows I spent most of the last decade married to a maid. Fuck it—I'm happy to tell him Chizuko on her worst day has far better skill at eating cunt than he could ever hope to aspire to on his best.

Whatever calls he might make will happen later. For now, he turns to Wolfgang and says, "The SD is also running an operation in this town?"

"That's need to know, but wouldn't it stand to reason that the SD is always running an operation in this town?"

"*Herr Iwata*," calls Adelheid Meier from across the restaurant, indicating she now has a table.

Ainosuke turns back to me, no doubt contemplating some snide remark, but I cut him off. "So nice to see you again, *Herr Scheißkerl*.⁷"

He bites his lip. Cordially, he says, "Good day, Johanna."

He marches off. Wolfgang places a comforting hand on my thigh. "I didn't know he was going to

7 Shithead.

be here."

I say, "The right hand doesn't know what the left is doing in this town?"

His hand is still gently holding my thigh. "Is it any different between the Kwantung Army and the Kempeitai?"

Fair.

"Did he... break your heart?"

Wolfgang, to my knowledge, has never met Ainosuke, but he is familiar with the pertinent details. Back in '39, when I had the hotspot restaurant, Wolfgang was stationed at the German consulate in Tianjin, and there was nothing stopping us from resuming our affair, where, between the sheets, I may have mentioned my financial backers. Wolfgang attended the festivities when I first opened—it was the first time in close to a decade he'd seen me in a dress—and bowed reverently to Tōyama-sama when I introduced the two. Ainosuke, thank Amaterasu, was not in attendance—he was a minor partner, and all propriety required I place a call to the *Aikokūsha* building in Tōkyō to personally implore his attendance, though the same propriety saw Tōyama-sama command him to be in Java, and not to set foot on the mainland while my soiree was kicking off, and, moreover, to never send one of his goons to do a surprise inspection of his investment. Wolfgang, all smiles as he chatted with Tōyama over spring rolls and fine Yamazaki scotch, told me

in my suite that night about that bugged call between the Tōyama's household and the *Aikokūsha* office.

"You put a wire on the private residence of the most powerful gangster in the Far East?" I had asked, incredulous, pulling the sheets up over my shoulders as if in anticipation of a squad of cloak and dagger malefactors breaking into the room. "Not even the Kwantung Army Intelligence Service would do that."

I felt then his strong hand cupping the inside of my thigh. "They put me here in Tianjin. Part of my job is knowing the movers and shakers. One of those titans of the underworld is the chief racketeer and shadow emperor." He leaned in and kissed me. "Another is my dear Eastern Jewel."

The call between Tōkyō and Jakarta had been tense, Wolfgang elaborated. Ainosuke, using all proper politeness and deference to the most esteemed *shōgun*, had nonetheless been a petulant little bitch. He'd already paid twenty-two thousand *yen* for a five-piece Armani suit for the occasion, plus had arranged a courier to gift me the bottle of Yamazaki that Wolfgang, Tōyama and I polished off before Wolfgang tore me from that dress. Tōyama, ever calm and muted, had stated plainly that the villain would not be there. There was no dispute with Tōyama. It was the last nice thing the old bastard ever did for me.

Wolfgang squeezes my thigh again.

I feel a sharp thrust of pain at the scar on my chest.

I say, "No. He's just a twat."

CHAPTER 4

"Don't do anything rash," Wolfgang says as I stampede out of the delicatessen.

My fists are bunching. I force myself to breathe. "One call to Sasakawa, and he'll have travel records. I used the name Jin Bihui to get to Macao, and from there I switched to Kauerscheicht for the leg to Bern. *Herr Schellenberg* and his boss are working with the understanding I'm Swiss—"

Wolfgang puts a hand on my shoulder. "Would Iwata...?"

I let my lungs deflate almost entirely, feeling my frame shrink down. Have to think operationally. I think back to that *sumō* match in Tōkyō, wearing a fucking *kimono* and pouring tea the most revered Tōyama-sama, my—I shudder even thinking it—ex sitting there with a shit-eating grin. "Of course!" he was saying. "Count me in for... I'll write a cheque for one hundred thousand."

"He still wants to put it in me."

"I'll find out what he's doing here," Wolfgang says reassuringly.

Across the street from the unassuming building that houses Salon Kitty is a small café by the name of Kaffee Haus. I tell him to meet me there in ninety minutes' time, after he's visited the SD building on Prinz-Albrecht-Straße.

Thirty minutes later, I'm striding in the back door of Salon Kitty. It's 3 in the afternoon, and I strongly

doubt anything is happening; I'm not on shift, just gathering some info. In the kitchen is the proprietress of the establishment, Kitty Schmidt, real name Katharina Zammit, who smuggled some four hundred thousand *reichsmarks* to Britain in the late '30s, and attempted to flee via Holland, before being compelled to agree to this SD operation. She's in her early sixties, with short, curly hair, and dressed in a woman's jacket and business skirt, and chatting with one of the dollymops who works directly for the *Sicherheitsdienst*, dressed in a skimpy nurse's costume, bright red crosses positioned exactly over her nipples.

I salute, but don't stop for pleasantries. I head immediately for the basement, where all the recording equipment is stored, as well as the on-site archives office. This dingy room has about twenty banks of filing cabinets, all containing dossiers, reports authored by the SD tarts, and transcripts. As muffled sounds come from a bedroom above, it takes me about five minutes before I find the file for Ms. Adelheid Meier.

The woman has, indeed, been in several times before, Lorelei being her favourite.

"Ah, *Herr Kauerscheicht*."

I jump so violently I nearly bash my head on the cabinet drawer above me.

Walter Schellenberg is leaning half into the doorway. "*Frau Schmidt* said you were here."

His words are nearly drowned out by a wicked

cackling coming from the ceiling; one of the SD harlots is engaged in some particularly aggressive sadomasochism with an afternoon client.

"I'm not clocking in just yet. I need to cross-reference something."

"Most excellent. The establishment usually gets busy after five." He's doing his best to ignore the muffled whimpers above. "Please, may I ask, what is this? This is your handwriting, no?"

He steps now into the doorway and holds out a glass jar, a tag affixed to the lid.

"Why on earth are you selling a glass canister for five hundred *reichsmarks*?"

I hear footsteps coming down the stairs behind him.

"What does it look like? It's a jar of *Fraulein Lorelei's flatulence*."

Mortified, he nearly drops it. It's quickly taken from his hand by Kitty Schmidt, appearing behind him, relinquishing it from his grasp. "Ah, *Herr Schellenberg*, please do not lose zis. Zere is *ein Luftwaffe* pilot by ze name of Reiter coming in twenty minutes for zis."

I have the file I need, covertly slipped into my attaché case. "I'll see the two of you around 5," and I scurry past them and up the stairs.

I head across the street to the café, in need of a strong does of caffeine.

I order, take a seat, and lay out my hastily-prepared emergency packet. The first item in the

folder is a ticket to Zürich. There's a flight to Macao tomorrow at 6:15, my window for catching it rapidly diminishing. The next flight isn't until next week, out of Bern. The next item is printed still images of *Frau Adelheid Meier*, welts on her ass from the paddling, her face between Lorelei's buttocks, as well as the transcript—both the requests she made while sitting at the bar with the tart, sipping schnapps, and the malevolent taunts of Lorelei in the bedroom, and Meier's supplication. Further, I have her the file for her lieutenant, an *Einsatzgruppen* man, up on the fourth floor, buggering one of Madame Kitty's gigolos while yet another is behind him in a triple liaison; stills and transcript there as well.

My eyes go to the clock. The trains run on time.

The barista brings me my coffee, topped with whipped cream. "How's you black forest cake?"

"Freshly made."

"I'll take a small slice."

I check out the clock again as she walks away.

A large window looks out onto the street, and the bordello across the road. Immediately, I see problems. The camera above the door is well hidden, but the SD Volkswagen van parked at the end of the block is obvious if you know what you're looking for. The previous night, Wolfgang was in constant radio contact with some cronies, presumably the men in the van, alerting the control room of various license plates of approaching

vehicles. The main camera can do all that work, and they can eliminate the van. Moreover, there's a city maintenance worker tending to a garden, and carrying a pair of sheers, where presumably he will soon clean up the trees along the boulevard. He, too, by the cleanliness of his clothes, is clearly undercover SD.

My eyes sweep across the cafe. There are about fifteen other patrons in here, enjoying a late afternoon snack before the curfew comes into effect. One young woman is one of Kitty's girls, probably starting her shift in another thirty minutes. She is likely one of the harlots rounded up by Heydrich's men while the SD was gutting the inside of the bordello, put through dubious psychological tests, and deemed to have the right psychiatric metrics to get a man to admit he thinks the *Führer* is a cockwomble while she stuffs her nipple in his mouth. Elsewhere in Kaffee Haus is a young mother, blonde, with three young children, her husband likely fighting near Volchansk. At a table near the front window, two men in suits are eating *wurstbrot* sandwiches on rye with the bright yellow of mustard at the edges. They're chatting amongst themselves, presumably about business, though the older man's eyes keep straying out the window to the whorehouse across the street. The younger man is talking as though making a business presentation or discussing his progress with a client—

And now I see the heavy cable coming out of the

second floor of the salon. It's bolted to the brick face of the building, runs down from the very room where the monitoring station is set up, and disappears into a communications box on the sidewalk.

The more I observe this, the more I'm realizing the younger businessman looks familiar, as though I've seen his picture recently.

Wolfgang strides through the front door, and marches straight for me. Without ordering, he sits at the stool next to mine, and immediately says, "*Herr Iwata* is staying at the Hotel Kaiserhof, courtesy of a special foreign compensation from—"

"Silence," I say quietly. My voice is barely a whisper, but he stops mid-sentence.

To a nearby barista, I say, "*Fraulein*, may I please get this cake to go?"

Stepping out onto Giesebrichtstraße, Wolfgang, keeping business completely out of things, says, "You know, you're kind of hot with that moustache."

With a slight motion of my shoulders, I lead him away from Kaffee Haus, and from Salon Kitty, down in the opposite direction. When we're a block away, he makes like he's picking up a dropped pen, and takes a look behind us through a parked Mercedes' side mirror. No one is following us.

"What...?"

"Not sure," I reply. "Just have a strange feeling."

Doubling back, up the back alley and entering through the service door, we make our way

upstairs. He continues his explanation. Ainosuke was brought in by the security services in Bohemia and Moravia, where there's been a lot of partisanship—civilian pushback, industry sabotage; your standard fare. One particular group is being called the Zdenek Partisans, laying booby-traps, blowing the tires on military patrol vehicles, overwhelming the *Einsatzgruppen* men inside and stealing their weapons and cargoes. Often times the men are butchered. *Herr* Heydrich is taking this very seriously, as he is the Protector of Bohemia and Moravia. Ainosuke, it seems, has connections; one of his malefactors, a co-conspirator in the assassination scheme that landed the twat in that icy prison atop Mount Rurui-yama, happens to be familiar with one of the Czech partisans causing problems in Moravia. The bastard fled Japan after the hit, and wound up a *rōnin*⁸ advising Lord Semyonov, thence opening a *dōjō* in Busan when the Russian project fell apart, and, after Ainosuke's release and subsequent relocation to Java, joined his old cohort there. Now Iwata is being paid for his consultation on these Czech bandits.

"*Herr* Semyonov was unavailable to consult personally."

Of course he was. Cousin Puyi pays him exceptionally well.

I groan. "I do wish His Excellency would call me

8 Continental adventurer; a term for right-wing agitators who advance Japanese ultranationalist aims overseas.

from time to time."

"Didn't you bang his wife?"

"Two of them, but he doesn't know that."

"About the second one, or either?"

"I was doing him a favour. He doesn't satisfy them anyway. Just relieving a little household pressure for His Majesty."

Entering the salon, I see *Herr Schellenberg* reading a report in a small office next to the kitchen. Both Wolfgang and I give the Roman salute, he nods, and we proceed upstairs.

"What are they paying him?" I ask, referring to Iwata.

"I didn't get that number."

"Whatever it is, that's my new fee, plus ten percent."

I set down the files I have on Adelheid Meier and her lieutenant. Just below that folder cover is my ticket to Zürich. It's almost as though Wolfgang can sense it's there; hesitantly, he says, "He doesn't know your cover, your assignment, your hotel."

I've already made note of all this. But how easy would it be for him to place a call to Sasakawa-sama, track the name Jin Bihui, and then uncover the name Kauerscheicht?

"I'm on the clock, *Herr Vollmann*. Can you afford me the space to work."

My tone is perhaps a little icy. He rises from his chair. "I'm going to find out about this Czech situation."

Then he looks left and right, leans in and kisses the top of my scalp, before turning and exiting.

My eyes go to the Meier folder once more, and the ticket inside. Back to Fukuoka, back to Kotone, back to frugality.

I let out a deep breath, put the folder to the side, and take a forkful of the black forest cake.

CHAPTER 5

An inch-long column of ash hangs off the end of my fourth cigarette as I watch a bank of a dozen monitors on this third shift at the salon. Wolfgang is not on the clock today, as he was called into *Herr Heydrich's* headquarters to advise on some big security concern. I am here with *Herr Schellenberg*, who, I understand, normally only pokes his head in and out, but has been getting flack from his boss in recent weeks, and is now monitoring the op more diligently. Every scrawl on my legal pad arouses his interest, and he keeps trying to sneak a peak at my notes, though my notation is so minimal that he is unable to make heads or tails of it when his eye drifts downwards.

The previous day, I requisitioned everything the SD had on Willy Stephenson, only to find a small spattering of reports, ninety percent of them authored by Wolfgang. My request for reports regarding Czech sabotage, or the Number Three on the most wanted list, who once sat in Lord Semyonov's sitting room in Chita was denied. I've been able to piece together bits of it; Ms. Meier, in her post-coital cuddle sessions with Lorelei, has expressed frustration at the Czech menace—in fact, the direct quote was that she 'needed Lorelei's release' after a low-level partisan confessed to receiving intel from the Czechoslovak government-in-exile, and *Herr Heydrich* chewed her ass over it.

The Czechoslovak government-in-exile, in London, is being propped up by Lord Orkney, who Westminster has appointed special liaison to the Czechoslovaks.

Ah, Lord Orkney, you haggis-eating bastard.

The SD report on Orkney is likewise scant and authored by Wolfgang, from the days of his assignment in Vichy: Colonel in the Boer War, delegate for the Allied forces in Russia, deputy ambassador in Kyōto, territorial administrator on St. Helena, special military attaché in Shanghai, chair of the exploratory commission to Tibet; barely more than a CV.

“Herr Kauerscheicht...” Schellenberg says conversationally when I make a two-word note, “what does your, uh, expert eye determine needs more scrutiny in the tryst on screen?”

On the central monitor currently is the buxom tart Lorelei, in the sixty-nine with a female client of Southeast Asian extraction. The client has been in here once before, and the SD intelligence network has record of her at brothels in Vichy and Marseille, lovers of both sexes, but they don’t know her name, nor do they seem to care about her background. *Herr Schellenberg* is so squeamish that a woman’s tongue on vulva makes him squirm—and not in a good way. Moreover, this Indochinese, hand upon the rear of Ms. Lorelei, currently has a thumb inside the woman’s rectum, which is causing *Herr Schellenberg* such a curl in his nose that he’s risking

a muscle spasm.

"Check the archives for notes on pillow talk Lorelei has elicited from this doll. Also may put in a requisition for statements from the whores in Marseille and Vichy."

Schellenberg moves to make a note in a pocketbook. "Indeed, indeed. The *Sicherheitsdienst* can send an operative to interrogate."

Every manner of titillation is present on screens around us. Dollymops are pouring Champagne copiously; the gigolos on the fourth floor are on hands and knees make-believing they're canines; a party official is using a projector to play one of the *Führer*'s animated speeches, using the pale flesh of his slag's bosom as a screen, stroking himself as watches with fixation, the girl trying to placate the fantasy by giving a lot of *sieg heils* herself; two dames in head to toe Hugo Boss leather leotards are using strappers on a face-down naughty boy from a Panzer division, cackling as they tell him they're going to breed him like a good blondie broodmare.

Also with us in the room is Kitty Schmidt, drinking a French coffee which she's topped off with a hefty dose of Belgian *jenever*.⁹

Madame Kitty says, "Zis woman has come in *ein* few times. She says noßing to *Fraulein* Lorelei after zeir lovemaking, leaves qvickly, *und* vonce had *ein* Zird Republic *franc* intermixed vis her payment."

9 A Belgian spirit

One of the speakers wails as a U-boat captain on the fourth floor achieves fruition, his lover's hand now fully inside him.

I adjust the volume to key in on what Madame Kitty is saying. The alcohol on the woman's breath is plain, but she knows her stuff. "I believe she has *eine* glass eye."

"*Frau Schmidt*—"

I'm cut off by commotion at the front door. The camera outside picks up a newcomer approaching the property, practically goose-stepping. This woman, hardly old enough to drink alcohol, is perfectly Aryan with blonde hair and fine features, dressed in a women's SS uniform, with a pistol on her belt and a German shepherd on a leash. She barges into the foyer, and the microphone picks up her, dare I say, Hitlerian voice demanding, "Zat impudent *großbrüstig*¹⁰ *schlampe* in ze pink harlot's panties!"

That would be Lorelei, I think.

Kitty's daughter, Kathleen, age thirty-six, meets the young tyrant in the foyer, and the mic picks up her saying her darling is not currently available, but many other fine companions—

At this point, the young blonde pulls a pair of pink undergarments, presumably Lorelei's, from her SS uniform pocket, and seeks the dog's assistance in locating the dame. The dog sniffs, then stands proud, angling his body to the stairs.

10 Big-breasted.

Kathleen Zammit tries to assuage the woman, but she's getting what she wants regardless, and the dog nearly drags the young bitch up the stairs.

Beside me, Kitty says, "Oh, it's *Fraulein Grese*. I'll handle zis." And then she's gone, disappearing out the locked door into the velvet corridor.

"*Fraulein Grese*?" I ask Schellenberg.

He's all to happy to expound, taking his eyes off the lovemaking of Lorelei and the Indochinese. "Up-and-coming guard at Ravensbrück. That's a... uh, women prisoners camp. Stalwart ideologue, brilliant adept in the craft of discipline. Her only fault is her extramarital interest in ladies. Hmm..." He flips through his pocketbook. "Yes, she did also have an affair with Dr. Mengele—he's one of our preeminent physicians—and, oh dear..." He's flipped to the next page. "I have noted here that she sought an abortion from a prisoner abortionist, which the woman performed at gunpoint. I suppose we never did anything with that, perhaps because the zeal in her personnel file is exemplary."

On screen, the woman called Grese boots her way into the room her dog has identified, wood splintering on the door frame, startling Lorelei and the Indochinese on the heart-shaped bed. Kathleen is there, and now also appears Kitty, placating and apologetic. Lorelei is smooth as always, stroking the woman's ego, while the Indochinese is clutching sheets to herself.

Kathleen is trying to say that Lorelei is booked,

while her mother is trying to massage the situation and suggesting the Indochinese reschedule and be comped both this session and the next. All of this noise is cut through as though by a *katana* with the bellowing voice of that little tyrant, who says, "Zis vill be fine. You, *schlampe*—put face in her qvim. You—ride her face, spank ze *titten*,¹¹ und call her a cow und slovenly *hure*.¹²"

Kitty is wearing a small radio receiver pressed into her ear canal, with a nearly invisible wire looping over the ear and disappearing down the back of her neck and into her blouse. Using the microphone on the desk, I turn to the right channel, push the button, and say, "Let her stay, comp the Indochinese."

Schellenberg looks at me curiously. I nod to the Indochinese on screen. "That tramp's not going to say no, and Lorelei is professional enough to manage the two of them. Maybe this opens up the Easterner."

Money changes hands, words of apology and accommodation are shared, and Kitty and Kathleen bow out, the Indochinese, while still reserved, coming out from behind the sheets tentatively. *Fraulein Grese* ties the dog's leash to an armchair, sits, takes off her gloves, unbuttons her blouse enough to slip and hand in and caress her own breast, and unzips her trousers. "I vill enjoy *meinsel*self

11 Tits.

12 Whore.

here in ze corner. Zis *schlampe* vill impel you to emit from ze Gräfenberg organ—do so all over zose disgusting udders *und* zen spit on ze fat cow!"

Schellenberg says, "This is highly unorthodox, and the *Sicherheitsdienst* does not have an unlimited budget to be compensating slags who—"

"This woman is clearly a Free French-affiliated Lao partisan. Are you going to remove this bitch Grese by force, and potentially lose a stream of information on Ravensbrück and Dr. Mengele? She wants to jack herself off in the corner, what are you losing? Oh, and you should bill her for that door bolt."

Schellenberg shifts uncomfortably in his seat. "Well, I suppose... that tart... uh, *Fraulein* Lorelei... she's quite good at evincing personal details after *Fraulein* Grese has... reached crescendo."

On the monitor, the female Hitlerian voice barks, "Ja! Pull on ze nipples—harder! Do not put your mouth on her qvim—ze *großbrüstig* *schlampe* does not deserve it!" The young woman has saliva running down from the corner of her mouth as she masturbates furiously, sexual paroxysm radiating from her eyes.

I stub out the fag and rise from my seat. "Leave the tapes running, I'm off to get some lunch."

"Uhh, *Herr* Kauer—"

But I'm already gone. Going down the flight of stairs, I slip into the toilet and splash some water on my face, using the bar of soap to eliminate the

moustache, and then slick a fresh dollop of pomade through my hair.

Two blocks over, on an unlit street, I find a small warehouse with an unimposing business placard. Stepping up to the industrial door, eyes peeled for brigades of *Gestapo* or Stormtroopers or Berlin police, I knock heavily, and am met with a gravely voice barking at me through the intercom: "Ve're closed. Business resumes 8AM tomorrow."

"I came to check on my shipment," I reply, depressing the grimy button on the intercom. "Order number X-503, departing for Austria."

Suddenly the heavy door clicks and swings open. The man with the gravely voice says, "Velcome, freund.¹³ Coat check?"

I'm led down a bland hallway and into a large darkened room. A door at the far end, past a stack of wooden crates, is muffling loud music, lights shining from the thin window, and I'm pointed in that direction. On the other side of the door are tables, chairs, a makeshift bar, candlelight, and a small round stage where a jazz saxophonist is hitting the G major. There's also a drummer on stage, and the room is full of people in flapper dresses, pinstripe suits and fedoras.

This warehouse is owned by a Dane, who has been running this underground jazz club for at least a year, playing contraband American music and defying the curfew. Wolfgang told me about it; he's

13 Friend.

been here a couple times, with a girl, by my reading, though omitted that detail.

"Hey zere, handsome," says one young German, strutting up to me.

"Need a drink first, doll," I say to the blondie.

He motions for the bar, which is just a couple of folding tables, though they do have a decent selection. Blondie and I walk over, I drop a couple of *reichsmarks* on the bar, and nod for the Ardbeg in back.

"You vill need *ein* few more *marks* for zat, *freund*," says the German, whose name is Ludwig. "Very hard to get Scottish whiskey zese days."

The bartender is nodding, and I double my stack of notes. It comes in a ceramic mug, but at least it's not Jäger or schnapps.

I turn to the man called Ludwig. "What will it be, dollface? On me."

"Vhat? Oh no, I couldn't."

"I can't stay long, and I'd love to toast this fine music with someone."

He orders himself a gin and tonic, which also comes in a mug, and we touch glasses.

He take me to a table, where we a good view of the musicians. They're imitating some American musicians who I've heard before. Ludwig's friends include a burly man who looks like he should be laying rail line in the Alps, and a waif of a girl in a yellow flapper dress and beret.

"Are you new to Berlin?" the girl asks, leaning in

close to I can hear her over the trombone. "Ve have not seen you here."

"My boss is a Portuguese industrialist," I reply. "Some girls at the hotel mentioned not all of Berlin was so rigid and stuffy." I place a hand on her thigh. "Johann."

She looks down to the hand on her leg, smiles, and says, "Greta. *Und zis is Gerhard. Kannabis?*"¹⁴

"Why not?" I say, taking the proffered joint. I inhale, hold, and let the jazz pulse through me.

The trumpeter is good. Reminiscent of a Brooklyn band I used to listen to.

"You are a fan of jazz?" Ludwig asks, the joint pinched between his lips.

"I used to be a dancer in a place like this. In... Macao."

"You? *Eine* dancer?" asks Greta.

That was the year I met Chizuko, I realize with a start, a tightness forming in my chest.

"A long time ago."

Twenty minutes later, I'm making out with Ludwig, his hand all through my hair, the pomade now ruined and dishevelled, my jacket draped over the back of Gerhard's chair, who's gone to make a telephone call. Greta taps me on the shoulder, holding out a ceramic mug for me. "Your boss pays you vell, Johann," she says. "Ardbeg is very expensive. Oh, smells like scorched vood."

"Thanks, toots," I say, rising off of Ludwig. I take

the scotch, devour it in a single gulp, and, while the taste is still on my tongue, lean in and kiss her hard.

"Oh!" she says, pulling away. "Zat tastes like burning building."

I belch. "I need to move my legs a bit. There's a telephone around here somewhere?"

Ludwig points me in the direction of the warehouse office, where there are various desks in darkened rooms, with outside lines available. I head in that way, find what I can only assume is the company president's office, collapse into his expansive leather chair, put my feet up, and press the telephone receiver to my ear. I ring Fukuoka.

It rings seven times before Kotone answers. "Hello?" she says hesitantly.

"Babe," I say, a smile now spreading across my face.

"Lover boy," she responds after a moment, taken a little aback that I should be ringing so early in the day.

"You're probably getting ready for class, but I wanted to hear your voice," I say, reclining as far back as the chair will allow. "I'm at this place, it's called the Hot Club. Superb jazz ensemble. Oh, I'm in the mood. I wish you were here."

She giggles. "I've told you, jazz just sounds like a bunch of squawking to me."

"You have to develop an ear for it. It takes time. I'll teach you. With this contract, I can buy back all my old records."

She and I talk for the next few minutes, the marijuana and the distant sound of trumpeting moving through me. She's telling me about her morning class, for which she was in the middle of studying when I called. The professor is a muff and is always springing essay assignments on them last-minute.

"I miss you," I say, cutting her off.

"I know."

"No, I really miss you."

"Oh, Yosh—" she cuts herself off to avoid using names. "You need this job, sweetheart."

Speaking of the job, I should get back to it. I've taken an extended lunch break.

"I'm going to buy you the prettiest set of earrings when I get back."

"I thought you didn't do jewellery."

I swallow. Her voice is pleasant, but there's a laser undertone to it. I told her I was never marrying again.

"I'm sorry," she says. "I shouldn't—you're working."

Just now Gerhard comes running by the open office door. He's yelling at someone else, saying, "Exfil, exfil! They got Emil. Looking for Czechs and Slovaks, citywide crackdown."

Kotone probably heard something about Slovaks over the phone. I'm sitting up immediately. "Gotta go, babe. I'll call you tomorrow."

"Okay, but—"

"Hey, doll... I love you."

I hang up before I awkwardly put her on the spot to say it back. I'm on my feet and out of the office. The whole club is clearing out, the musicians gone, the alcohol table toppled over. I run into Ludwig, who has my blazer.

I come back in the rear entrance of the salon. The kitchen door is open, and I see Kitty inside by the oven. I take a quick peak at myself in the toilet mirror, try to fix up my hair, redo the moustache, then slide into the kitchen, where the madame is straining to reach for an upper cupboard. I'm shorter than she, so I'm no help there, but there is a step stool near the door, so I pick it up and bring it over to her.

"Ah, *Herr Kauerscheicht, danke.*"

She uses the stool to reach the upper shelf, retrieving a bottle of Bordeaux red wine.

"*Fraulein* Grese is still spooning vis Lorelei. Ze compatriot from ze Orient cuddled vis them for *ein* bit as vell, but saw herself out about ten minutes ago." Uncorking the bottle, she pours healthily into a large stemmed glass. "Ve have *ein* colonel vis the Luftwaffe in ze lounge right now, *und* he only drinks ze premium stuff."

After filling the glass, Kitty takes a pull herself straight from the bottle. Then she hooks a finger into a nearby mug, pours a mouthful, and slides the glass across the counter to me.

She ambles past the half-wall into a small

antechamber off the kitchen, collapsing heavily on a *chaise longue* against the wall. She removes a French cigarette from a case and deposits it in her mouth. Following her into this small room, I fish my Zippo from my vest pocket, and light it for her.

She sighs. "Danke ze Fazzerland for *damen*¹⁵ like Lorelei. Zat girl knows vhat she is doing. Ah, vhen *Herr Schellenberg* came to me *und* said I needed to hire on his own special creatures—do not worry, *Fraulein* Kitty, zey have been trained in *ein* special school, zey are mistresses of seduction zat vill make your whores look like unvashed fishwives. *Schwachsinn!*¹⁶ Ze *flittchen*¹⁷ may have been comely, but zey zought ze zenith of enchantment vas missionary vis some moaning. Do you know how many of zose *weibsbilder*¹⁸ I had to teach how to trim zere maidenhair, or how to vear *ein* pubic vig!"

She takes another hefty sip from the wine. "Ve have ze finest girls from Brest to Clit to Cunter.¹⁹ Ve are ze cream of ze crop! Respectable women from all over Europe come here to learn how is best to satisfy zere men. I should not say zis, *Herr Kauerscheicht*, but a certain *fraulein* from ze Old Chancellery has come here multiple times—her man has very specific needs, *und* she pays *ein*

15 Dames.

16 Nonsense, rubbish.

17 Hussies.

18 Wenches.

19 In France, Romania, and Switzerland, respectfully.

modest fee *und* she probes ze girls vis qvestion after qvestion: vhat diet *und* sphincter training is reqvired for ze most voluminous of bowel movements. She is never sure of his satisfaction, however, because his veinerschnitzel is so puny zat he barely stands above ze pubic hair. Oh, do not look so shocked—many of ze men who come to zis salon have such endowment insecurities. In fact, I dare say, at least zirty percent of our clientele vould have a *schwanz* smaller zan yours, *Herr Kauerschiecht*—oh, I have had too much."

I shoot back the wine. "*Fraulein*, do you perchance have a breath mint?"

CHAPTER 6

Three nights later, and I'm eight pages into my report. It's Saturday night, and busy. All the girls are booked.

On Thursday, Wolfgang once more came to the Excelsior, but last night he had to make a special delivery of film reels to the SD headquarters on Prinz-Albrecht-Straße, leaving me with just my hand and a four-month-old *mikrokassette* of Lorelei giving a good railing to some British slag named Unity, tattoo of a three-titted valkyrie on her left buttcheek, Lorelei thrusting so hard that her hair was frazzled and thick beads of sweat were falling off her nipples, the tall Brit whimpering about how she wanted this reaming to leave her brain-damaged.

Each night, I've sneaked out to call Kotone, chatting about her courses for hours.

I have about three dozen files scattered between the Excelsior and my attaché case, most dealing with the backlogs of intel, but a few key files on this Czechoslovak problem. These Zdenek Partisans... I'm almost certain they're tied back to the government-in-exile, and thus to that rascal Lord Orkney, who is not someone to underestimate. He has ins with every ministry in London, and could have the British Secret Service in secret communications with the Czech radicals. This

causes me to think again about Mr. Stephenson, and what he's doing in Gibraltar.

"Look alive, *Fraulein Kauerscheicht*," says Schellenberg stepping into the monitoring room.

I look past the dozen or so open folders of paperwork before me to the bank of monitors.

"*Herr Kauerscheicht*," says Kitty, also in the room.

"What's tha—oh, I didn't mean... you can fill out your report later. This is General Dietrich."

Sepp Dietrich is a major-general in the Waffen-SS, and commander of the *Leibstandarte* Panzer Division. His men are, if memory serves, encamped near the Sea of Azov, while he's here being given the red carpet treatment by Kathleen Zammit, who's practically helping the general out of his jacket. Dietrich has been in here before; I have at least three *mikrokassettes* of his liaisons back at the Excelsior, but I only skimmed them, making a minor mechanical tweak on the player to run at double playback speed. He always comes in with an enormous envelope of cash, and is a preferred client. As Kathleen greets him, and see's his jacket hung safely in the front closet, twenty dames are scrambling in the lounge to assemble, some with hair akimbo, one with a garter not attached to the stocking (an offence, for which, I hope she isn't disappeared from Kitty's service). General Dietrich is quite particular with how he spends his cash—all twenty of these broads are going to accompany him to the grand ballroom, large enough to

accommodate the party, and the session could go into the second, or even third hour.

"Only twenty?" I remark with a half-smile to Kitty.
"Doesn't have the stamina for thirty?"

The evening matures, and a cavalcade of politicos rotate in and out. One might wonder who is actually conducting the war. General Pétain's daughter hires one of the blond boys to give her a good defiling, and insists on being strangled with a belt at the moment of zenith. A Finnish foreign secretary shows up with his wife, renting out two of the male tarts to ravage her, while he sits in a chair in the corner, watching and hanging head low. Lorelei is standing, spread-eagled on her bed, urinating on a Hungarian politician by the name of Szálasi, and calling him a dirty boy. A *Wehrmacht* major shows up briefly just to purchase an unwashed pair of *Fraulein* Lorelei's knickers, which he cheerily puts in a plastic bag and gives a proud Roman salute to Kathleen. The lights flicker as a Latvian SD auxiliary by the name of Viktorija Arājs is repeatedly electrically shocked on the nipples by one dominatrix, while being forced to lick and suck the unwashed toes and unshaven armpits of another. I go through several cigarettes, a pile of butts gathering in the ashtray.

"Well, well," I mutter with a slight smirk, using the dial to zoom in on the video of the front foyer.

Frau Kitty, her flask uncapped and in hand, pauses to eye me. "Someone you recognize?"

Standing there in the doorway is the unmistakable face of Gian Galeazzo Ciano, Second Count of Cortellazzo and Buccari, one of the most powerful men in Italy. It also happens that Mussolini is his father-in-law.

"Make sure the reels still have lots of space left on them, this could be important," I tell the madame. My eyes comb the bank of monitors, where I see Lorelei emerging from the toilet, cleaned up after her session with the Hungarian. With the microphone, I speak into the radio receiver in Kathleen Zammit's ear. "Kathy, dear, put Lorelei with him. Have her bring him a negroni, two orange peels. Use the navy strength gin."

"Johann," Kitty forces herself to say, "If zis is *ein* important guest, perhaps one of Schellenberg's girls would be more appropriate. Lorelei, she works for me—"

"She's good. She knows her stuff."

On screen, the tart, now at the bar, is holding a freshly made negroni and striding for the man removing his jacket.

"This sod," I tell the madame, pointing at Count Ciano on the screen, "has been targeted before by harlots. He knows the game, and he has *Il Duce's* ear, so we need an experienced malkin."

I neglect to mention that *I* was the harlot to have targeted him. Not personally, as I was new to the game back and my CO thought I was too inexperienced. He instead sent in one of my

contemporaries, this beautiful dame by the name of *Kunomoto-san*. This was in Shanghai in '30, just months after leaving my husband, and the count had been dispatched by his new father-in-law to be the Italian consul. Although he was freshly married, he was already sleeping around, and visited many cathouses in the Paris of the Orient. This freedom within the marriage didn't seem to be an issue, for his wife, Edda, also sought release elsewhere, and found herself the plaything of Zhang Xueliang, the Young Marshall of Manchuria, whose daddy I... well, the less said, the better. Zhang was proving just as uncooperative as his father, had promptly gone cold turkey on the opium, and was in Shanghai trying to raise support for the republican government. I had found myself in the bed of my CO, *Tanaka-sama*—the twat who later put a bounty on my head—and reviewed the tape on which Ms. *Kunomoto* had to hurl a chamberpot through the second-storey window and flee naked into the streets, clutching to her bosom the silk dress with the wire. We didn't have all the high-tech videographic equipment, just a scratchy audio recording where the sound of breaking glass nearly blew your eardrums out.

Kunomoto-san was not, in the end, disgraced, and was not recalled to Tōkyō to expose her own intestines to daylight, because yours truly discarded the wig, slipped on a newly-ordered tailored suit, and charmed the wife Edda, gaining some valuable

insight on the new Italian government, and Mr. Zhang's intentions with regards to Manchurian independence.

Into the microphone, I tell Kathleen Zammit, "Tell Lorelei to see him to a presidential suite, then step out to put on something more ravishing."

I step out briefly to meet with the tart, and forewarn her about the count's violent outbursts. "His favourite is putting it between your cheeks and coming to fruition on your back."

Twenty minutes later, I see General Dietrich is curled up with five of the twenty women in a bed, and the camera in the bath is showing the Hungarian dirty boy emerging from the tub. Lorelei, a healthy does of petroleum jelly slicked between her buttocks, has performed marvellously; she's lying nude, her head resting on Count Ciano's stomach, himself dressed loosely in a robe, and smoking a cigarette. He takes a huge drag, then slowly exhales a cloud of smoke. Says the count, "Your *Führer* is a petty little *coglione*²⁰—how you say, a twat. Everything is shouting shouting shouting, the Jews are stealing his mail, there are communists in his soup."

"*Heil Hitler*," Lorelei says lazily—obedient and loyal, but with enough of a tone that it's plain this is merely a mechanistic response and should be taken as such.

Count Ciano runs a finger through her hair, tucks

20 Literally 'testicle'; used synonymously with 'idiot'.

a lock behind an ear, his body still melding into the heart-shaped bed.

"My father thinks he is like red-bottomed baboon, throwing his own excrement in bold display. You know he smokes methamphetamine? He gets twitchy like a twenty-year alcoholic who's been hosed down in a drunk tank."

Herr Schellenberg abruptly comes into the surveillance room. "Cameras off," he announces.

I look up from the video feed of Lorelei and the count, my pen abruptly scratching across the page from where I'd been scribbling furiously. "*Obersturmführer*, we're rolling on damning admissions from—"

With no patience, Schellenberg abruptly steps forward, reaches under the desk and flicks a master kill switch, which *Frau Schmidt* has previously warned me not to accidentally depress if I were to place my attaché case beneath the table. All the monitors die in darkness and the earpieces go silent.

I remove the earmuffs from my head and set them on the desk. Schellenberg, like a schoolmarm, says, "*Herr Heydrich* is performing an unscheduled inspection. The logs will reflect that we are down for maintenance. That is all, *Herr Kauerscheicht*."

He adjusts his tie, then turns on his heels, and marches out.

Kitty, who sat quietly at the end of the table while he was issuing his decree, says, "Zis may take

ein couple of hours. He comes in here frequently. It does not matter what ze cameras are capturing, everyzing dies when crosses ze zreshold." She lets out a deep breath. "You had might as well take *ein* break, *Herr Kauerscheicht*. In *mein* quarters, I have *ein* fresh bottle of *jenever* on which ve could pop ze cork."

I slump backwards in the chair. Now we're just two people sitting in a darkened room, twiddling our thumbs. At last, I say, "I had might as well be useful; I'll swap out the reels while we wait."

"If you insist, but zere is no one looking over your shoulder. I vill go start vis the *jenever*, I vill save you *ein* glass."

We both depart, her ambling down the service corridor to her private room, while I take the stairs down to the main floor, thence to the basement, where a bank of two dozen film reels are currently sitting motionless. This is not my job, but I work tirelessly, swapping one semi-filled reel for a fresh one, slotting the used ones in labelled cases, and moving swiftly to the next.

The whole process takes me about fifteen minutes, with a lot of heavy lifting, but it helps work out my aggravation.

Wiping off my hands with a cloth, I relock the door, and climb the stairs. This back access on the main floor consists of a service hallway, a door to the kitchen and storeroom, a toilet, an exit to the back alley, and the staircase leading up and down. I

emerge from the staircase—

—And nearly walk straight into Iwata Ainosuke.

"You?" he burbles, his eyes narrowing. "What are... what was your name again? Josefine?"

"Johann."

Behind him, Kathleen Zammit opens the door leading to the foyer and lounge, abruptly disappearing into the kitchen. As the door swings, I see Adelheid Meier in the lounge, along her number two, the *Einsatzgruppen* lieutenant, his hand on the thigh of a small-breasted tart in stockings and garters.

"Boys night?" I ask. "Finalize your business terms at the local whorehouse?"

He stares at me for a second. "Should a lady really be inquiring about what happens at the local whorehouse?"

I wonder if he thinks Ms. Meier is just going to sit in the lobby and enjoy a snifter of Jägermeister. Or if that lieutenant isn't going to pawn the trull off onto his boss and find himself on the fourth floor, bound and gagged, and bent over the bed.

Just then, the toilet door opens, and out strides Lorelei, apparently now finished with the count, and presumably a little less slick between the cheeks. She's wearing a set of baby blue knickers and a translucent negligee. Ainosuke, who I take it was waiting for the toilet, sees the girl, sees me standing next to her.

I put my arm around the dame's shoulder, giving

her a little tap on the backside, and whisper to her, "Warm yourself up, toots, I'll be up presently."

She doesn't betray any confusion. She merely leans down, pecks me on the cheek, squeezes my own ass, and then exits the door to the main lobby, Ainosuke's gaze affixed to that *arsch*²¹ as she saunters off.

Turning back, he says, "Still fancy the ladies, do you? Tell me, what does your husband think of this penchant of yours?"

I haven't seen my husband since I fled his camp on the harsh Mongolian plain, decked out in a scarlet dress, hair flailing behind me like a waving flag, astride a cream-white horse, the Gobi's sand dusting into my eyes as the beast charged. Ainosuke knows this. Tōyama would have told him. It's also in that damned book, for which I'm still owed two thousand *yen*.

I say, "Probably the same thing your wife thinks about your penchant for slatterns."

His jaw tenses, but he doesn't come back with a rejoinder. He lets out his breath and says, "Good evening, Yoshiko," and then steps into the toilet.

I fly up that spiral staircase like a whirlwind, my fists bunched. The monitoring room door is closed, and, opening it, I find a completely darkened room, neither Schellenberg nor Schmidt—nor, for that matter, Wolfgang—anywhere to be seen. My nostrils are flaring, my shoulders tight, and I wish I

could take Wolfgang and run off to that jazz club and forget the rest of the shift. But, no, I tell myself, that place cleared out for fear of Heydrich's *Gestapo*.

I take a breath, force myself to relax.
Heydrich.

Looking left and right down the service hallway, finding no one, I step into the surveillance room, crouch down, reach under the desk, and feel around for the kill switch.

I flick the surveillance equipment back on.

The screens come to life, and quickly go from monitor to monitor, turning each off individually, terminating the feed, but not the video capture in the basement. And, more importantly, not the direct feed running through underground cables to Heydrich's office in the *Schutzstaffel* building.

The room now dark once more, I slink back out into the hallway, and gently pull the door shut.

CHAPTER 7

I storm out into the back alley, march towards the main thoroughfare. Four Stormtrooper goons are ambling about on Giesebrichtstraße, who, seeing me, try to act as tough guys and block my path. "Ze curfew vill be in effect in fourteen minutes, *fraulein*. I recommend you find your vay to your residence."

My nostrils flaring, I reach into my breast pocket and pull out the red armband with the misappropriated Buddhist symbol and loop it over my upper arm. The SD insignia is emblazoned beneath the *swastika*, which gives them pause, but they don't want to give way.

"You want to escalate this to your sergeant?" I ask, knowing full well their CO is *Gruppenführer* Lutze, probably currently licking the asshole of one of Kitty's blond boys inside. "Shall we raise him on the radio?"

At last one of the other ones says, "Uh, *nein*, *fraulein*, zat von't be necessary. Please be careful in ze *straßenbild*²² at night; zere are *kommunist*²³ plots afoot."

"Noted," I say dismissively, striding past them

22 Streets.

23 Communist.

and jogging across the street. I march two doors down, making sure they've moved on to harassing some other bystander before I double back. *Kaffee Haus* is just about to close up for the night, most of the lights already off, and chairs upturned on the tables as a janitor mops the floor. The *fraulein* behind the counter remarks that they close promptly at 9, and can only serve what's already brewed. I nod curtly, bypass the counter, and head straight for the moustachioed man still sitting in the booth by the front window. He, too, is wearing an armband, this one in the pine green of the Romanian Iron Guard, with the word *Diplomat* stamped below the checkered Cross of Michael the Archangel.

Fluidly, I slide into the booth opposite him, slipping my sidearm out of its holster and positioning it aimed squarely at his nutsack, beneath the table, clicking back the safety.

Calmly, he says, "Has the Romanian embassy done something to offend the *Sicherheitsdienst*?"

"You want to play dumb with me?" I reply. "We both know the reason why the Rock of Gibraltar remains in His Majesty's hands is that Señor Franco is buggering up Operation Felix."

His face is unmoved. With a slight nod to the table, he says, "Nambu 14, if I'm not mistaken. Standard issue, Japanese military. Not exactly the preferred sidearm of a *Sicherheitsdienst* officer."

"You can give my regards to Agent Intrepid.

We're... old friends, of a sort. I understand he's in charge of the naval unit protecting the Rock."

"I'm afraid I'm not aware an Agent Intre—"

"At the Service's Christmas party, order him three measures of gin, one measure vodka, a half-measure Lillet, shaken, in a martini glass, with a lemon peel. I'll leave you a handful of *reichsmarks* when I walk out of here."

At last his exterior cracks with the slight raise on an eyebrow. "I don't believe he's imbibed that in a number of years."

"Tell Mr. Stephenson it's been over a decade; he can move on from that dame."

Whatever he's about to say next is interrupted by the barista, coffee pot in hand. "Would you like—"

"Give us a minute, my dear," says the man. "I'm sure the SD can issue an exemption if there's issues with the curfew, and I'll escort you home personally."

Her mouth flattens into a line, she nods, and slinks away.

"What can I assist you with, *Herr Kauerscheicht*?" he says.

"The name's not Kauerscheicht, but you probably know that, don't you, Mr. Kolchev? Of course, your name's not Kolchev either." I shift the gun to my left hand, bring my right up and offer it. "Kawashima. Anonym Eastern Jewel."

With reluctance, he reaches forward and shakes my hand. "Wilson. Codename Resolute. I wasn't

aware that the Japanese—Kwantung Army, neh?—had a footprint here in—”

“They don’t. Listen, I’m going to do you a solid. I hope your recording, because *Herr* Heydrich is getting his rocks off right now, and someone accidentally bumped into the switch that turned all the cameras back on.”

His eyes go slightly wide.

“Count Ciano is also in there, as is General Dietrich.”

Silence hangs for a moment. At last, he says, “His Majesty’s government will be very grateful with this information. What...?”

“Am I requesting payment? Give Stephenson my regard. Lord Orkney, too.”

With that, I holster my pistol, slide out of the booth, and march for the door.

Coming back in the rear door of the cathouse, I find Wolfgang checking the toilet, and, seeing me, rush my way. “Oh, thank Odin. I saw *Herr* Iwata was here, and thought... why don’t I take you back to the hotel. *Gruppenführer* Heydrich is doing one of his inspections—a Saturday night, the bugger—there will be no furtherance of the op for at least a couple hours.”

I’m about to snarl back to sod off, already two steps up toward the monitoring room, when I remember that the cameras are rolling, and Wolfgang could either notice that and destroy the tapes, or be blamed if the London papers release an

expose next week featuring *Herr Heydrich* giving a double blowie to a couple of gigolos.

By now I'm nearing the top of the staircase. I pause, Wolfgang ascending the stairs behind me. "Wait here," I say, step up to the second floor service corridor, slip into the monitoring room, grab the attaché case with my report in it. I make sure the door clicks shut when I exit, meet Wolfgang back at the stairs, and hand him a file folder from inside the case.

"Come with me."

"Of course, I—"

"This is my report. The punctuation on the last few pages might be spotty. Tell Schellenberg to clear my payment tonight. And then come with me... to Bern."

"Bern?" he gasps. "But—"

"We'll have three days all to ourselves, kitten. Flight to Macao doesn't leave until Wednesday."

Wolfgang doesn't know what to do with this. I'm supposed to be here for perhaps another week. He put his neck on the line to bring in this Swiss consultant—but, he was also hoping to come to the Excelsior every night next week.

He sputters, "Joha—Yoshi, I could be disappeared."

I take his hand in mind. "*Herr Schellenberg*, I'm sure, would not object to you escorting a waifish damsel to her home in Switzerland. There are dangerous Czech terrorists out there."

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Salon Kitty was an infamous high-class brothel in Berlin during the time of the Third Reich, folded into the intelligence apparatus of the *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD), who wiretapped the rooms and collected pillow talk from several notable clients, including Nazi top brass and visiting foreign dignitaries.

The brothel, located at number 11 Giesebrichtstraße in a wealthy Berlin neighbourhood, was owned by Katharina Zammit, better known as Kitty Schmidt, who, in 1939, had attempted to flee Germany after smuggling most of her wealth to a British bank. She was arrested at the Dutch border and forced to comply: her establishment would be torn down to the brick and studs, and renovated with cameras and hidden microphones. She would be allowed to keep her regular girls, but, in addition, she would hire on hand-picked honeypotters willing and able to elicit details through pillow talk. More than a thousand girls were rounded up in night clubs and brothels throughout the city, and put through extensive psychological testing, of which, only twenty passed, and were put in Kitty's employ. The whole operation was under the purview of Reinhard Heydrich, and

directly handled by Walter Schellenberg, despite the latter's sexual prudishness. Among the more high profile clients were Joseph Goebbels, who is said to have liked lesbian shows; Sepp Dietrich, who did, indeed, hire out twenty girls for an extensive orgy, though no useful intelligence came from this; Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs Ramón Serrano Súñer, who attended as a guest of von Ribbentrop, and let slip that Spain would not consent to Germany's planned Operation Felix, because Spain planned to seize Gibraltar for itself; and son-in-law to Mussolini, Count Gian Galeazzo Ciano, overheard on tape remarking how he and his father-in-law ridiculed Hitler behind closed doors. Reinhard Heydrich himself also utilized the services of the workers, though these were marked down as inspections, and the recording equipment was turned off on such occasions.²⁴ Heydrich was assassinated by Czechoslovak anti-fascists in May, 1942,²⁵ which, I've implied herein, was the brainchild of Radka Zdenek, a fictional Czech nationalist, who will appear elsewhere in this universe. The brothel itself produced 3,000 recordings, though little was ever done with this intelligence. Other clients I have referenced herein, including Auschwitz guards Irma Grese and Elisabeth Volkenrath, future Hungarian leader Ferenc Szálasi, Marshall Pétain's daughter, Norwegian Minister-President Vidkun Quisling,

24 Roland, pps 112-115.

25 Kershaw, pps 782-783.

British fascist sympathizer Unity Mitford, Portuguese dictator António de Oliveira Salazar (gender-swapped herein as Antónia), and Latvian SD auxiliary commander Viktors Arājs (also gender-swapped to Viktorija) were not among Schmidt's clientele.

British intelligence agent Roger Wilson, undercover in the Romanian embassy as a junior press secretary named Ljubo Kolchev, observed from the café across the street suspicious men as they installed some of the cable that would facilitate the wire taps. The British were able to connect their own tap to the main cable heading to *Sicherheitsdienst* headquarters, and harvest all the same information.²⁶

Salon Kitty was damaged in an Allied aerial bombardment in July, 1942. Schmidt did reopen after repairs, but her clientele had diminished, and the SD gave up on harvesting information. Kitty Schmidt died in 1954, aged seventy-one.²⁷

Yoshiko was on the wrong side of World War 2. They did, however, recognize the folly of attacking America, and did, several times, telephone the home of Hideiki Tōjō, offering to be a peace mediator between Japan and China.²⁸ By 1939, their restaurant closed and narrowly escaping death at the hands of axe-wielding bandits, their usefulness

26 Roland, pp 115.

27 Ibid., pp 116.

28 Birnbaum, pp 189.

to the Japanese military had eroded, and they found themselves stranded in Fukuoka, saved from assassination by political fixer Sasakawa Ryōichi, a fan of Mussolini. The exodus from China to Fukuoka is the last we hear of their self-proclaimed marriage, the longest relationship of their life, to household maid Chizuko.²⁹ In Fukuoka, they developed a relationship with a girl named Sonomoto Kotone, where they exchanged erotic letters, Yoshiko longing for female companionship and feeling their separation from China. At the time, Kotone was in high school.³⁰ I have aged Kotone up to university age. In the spring of 1941, Yoshiko's house arrest was rescinded by Foreign Minister Matsuoka Yōsuke, and they eventually settled in Beijing.³¹ Their association with the *Sicherheitsdienst*, and consulting work done in Europe is the product of my imagination.

The book *The Beauty in Men's Clothing* was written by Muramatsu Shōfū in 1933, suggested to the author by Kwantung Army Major Tanaka Ryūkichi, Yoshiko's lover at the time.³² It follows a thinly-veiled Yoshiko ('Mariko' in the book) as 'she' embarks on a daring espionage career in Shanghai. Both Muramatsu's winter home in Fukuoka, as well as the break-in to steal two thousand yen (an

29 Ibid., pps 124, 136, 173.

30 Ibid., pps 187-188.

31 Ibid., pps 189-190.

32 Ibid., pp 63.

incident also referenced in *Tiger Blues*) are the products of my imagination.

Willy Stephenson is loosely based on Canadian-British spymaster William Stephenson, who is chiefly remembered for running a pre-Pearl Harbor propaganda campaign in New York to pressure the Americans into joining the war. Acquainted with naval intelligence officer Ian Fleming, his name is on a short-list of those believed to be the inspiration for James Bond. Fleming noted Stephenson's drink of choice: Booth's gin, high and dry, easy on the vermouth, shaken not stirred.³³ He is erroneously³⁴ codenamed Intrepid in a 1976 Canadian biography, closer to fiction than to fact, and I have played on the Intrepid codename in a Bondian fashion, replacing the 00s with such adjectives; thus Roger Wilson, who I've swept into this spy world, is named Resolute, a codename that is the product of my imagination. Stephenson's assignment in Gibraltar, as well as his association with Yoshiko, are entirely fictional. He has previously appeared in *Bitch-Slapping Stalin*, and will appear elsewhere going forward.

Irma Grese, known as the Hyena of Auschwitz³⁵ and the Beautiful Beast,³⁶ was a notoriously sadistic female camp guard. At Auschwitz, she oversaw

33 Hemming, pp 160.

34 Ibid., pp 280.

35 Hellinger, pp 45.

36 Ibid., pp 107.

30,000 Jewish inmates, specifically manoeuvring herself onto a punishment detail, where she was responsible for thirty deaths per day. Beginning her training at age eighteen at Ravensbrück in July, 1942, I have smudged the dates a little to make the timeline work. She is alleged to have engaged in sexual activity with both men and women, including Josef Mengele.³⁷ Mengele, married at the time, is said to have broken things off with Grese when learning of her bisexual persuasion.³⁸ Her involvement with women was with Jewish prisoners in her custody, and the sadism I portray here is tame in comparison to the real thing: she would often whip female prisoners across the breasts, breaking the skin and leading to infection and lice infestation. When camp doctors treated these wounds (without sterile instruments or anaesthetic), Grese would watch rapturously, said to be in a state of sexual paroxysm. She did conceive through one of her affairs with men, and, abortion being illegal, forced a prisoner doctor to perform the procedure at gunpoint.³⁹ Grese was taken into custody by British forces following Germany's surrender, and tried as a part of the Belsen Trials. She was hanged on 13 December, 1945, aged twenty-two, the youngest war criminal executed following the war, and the youngest woman executed under British

37 Ibid., pp 110.

38 Gelbin, pp 198.

39 Perl, pps 60-61.

law in the twentieth century.⁴⁰ Elisabeth Volkenrath, also a camp guard, was executed the same day,⁴¹ aged twenty-six.⁴²

Iwata Ainosuke was a far-right gangster, ruffian, and rabblerouser who was a co-conspirator in the assassination of a politician, for which he served twelve years in prison. Founder of the *Aikokūsha* (Patriotic Society), he was associated with Yoshiko's adoptive father, ultranationalist China *rōnin* (or continental adventurer) Kawashima Naniwa, and, in 1925, released from custody, began courting Yoshiko, then age eighteen (Iwata was thirty-five). Yoshiko said death was preferable to dating him, and, when he presented a gun, Yoshiko shot themselves in the chest, but survived.⁴³ Soon thereafter, Yoshiko abandoned their feminine presentation, shaved their hair, dressed in their brother's university outfit, and proclaimed they had "a tendency toward the third sex."⁴⁴ I have tweaked the details of Yoshiko's suicide attempt, which is expounded upon in *Tiger Blues*. In 1926, Iwata began agitating in the East Indies against Dutch colonialism and in favour of Japanese imperial takeover.⁴⁵ He became a power player in the far-

40 Roland, pp 224.

41 Ibid., pp 163.

42 Ibid., pp 224.

43 Birnbaum, pp 74

44 Ibid., pps 77-78.

45 Cook and Cook, pp 53.

right underground, and Yoshiko did have an association with him in later years, meeting with him, and *Gen'yōsha* (Dark Ocean Society) chief Tōyama Mitsuru, in 1935 at a sumo match, possibly courting the favour or funding of these far-right benefactors. At this meeting, Yoshiko was dolled up and presenting femme.⁴⁶ I have no evidence to suggest that Iwata or Tōyama had any part in the ownership of Yoshiko's restaurant. Iwata would wind up testifying at the Tōkyō Trials regarding the March and October Incidents of 1931; attempted *coups d'état*.⁴⁷ His association with German security forces is fictional. The prison on Mount Rurui-yama, on Kunashir Island in the Kuril Archipelago, is fictional.

Lieutenant-General Grigory Mikhaylovich Semyenov was a Russian White, who took up arms against the Bolsheviks in the Transbaikal region during the Russian Civil War, based in Chita. Scattered White forces, nominally allying Admiral Alexander Kolchak, Lieutenant-General Anton Denikin, General Pyotr Wrangel, and Baron Ungern-Sternberg, among others, allied themselves with the Czechoslovak Legion, a legion of Czech and Slovak nationalists who were stranded in Siberia on the eve of the October Revolution and betrayed by the Red Army. International Allies, including the United States, France, Britain, and especially Japan, used

46 Birnbaum, pps 158-159.

47 "Document Number 3038".

the existence of the Czechoslovak Legion as a *casus beli* to aid the Whites. Japan contributed the most support, at one point nominally controlling large tracts of Siberia, creating an odd alliance of Japanese ultranationalists, battle-hardened Czech and Slovak soldiers, Russian anti-communists, and Chinese and Mongolian mercenaries.⁴⁸ Towards the end of the war, Western Allies pulled out or severely diminished their support, leaving Japan alone with the increasingly corrupt and feudalistic Whites (towards the latter stages of the war, Kolchak had been killed, Denikin had fled for British exile, Wrangel had fled Crimea for exile in Constantinople, and most of the Czechoslovak Legion had been resettled in the newly independent state). Semyenov briefly found himself as the highest-ranking White leader still in the country, before he, too, fled to China, living off a Japanese-supplied pension. He made inroads with Japanese Intelligence and became a supporter of Emperor Puyi. He was captured in Manchukuo by Soviet forces following Japan's surrender in 1945, and hanged in 1946. These events will be touched on elsewhere in the series. His association with cohorts of Iwata is fictional.

Edda Mussolini married Gian Galeazzo Ciano on 24 April, 1930, and the count was appointed Italian consul in Shanghai that same year. While there, Edda did, indeed, engage in an affair with

48 Bullock, pps 91-92.

Manchurian warlord Zhang Xueliang, although her seduction by Yoshiko is fictionalized. Yoshiko, at this time, was in Shanghai, was working for Kwantung Army Intelligence, was engaged in an amorous relationship with Major-General Tanaka Ryūkichi of the Kwantung Army, and was alleged to be honeypotting as a spy.⁴⁹ Two notable marks were Sun Fo, member of parliament, and a British attaché who let slip that Japan would face no military repercussions for their meddling in Manchuria.⁵⁰ Yoshiko's name is sometimes attached to the assassination of Zhang Zuolin in 1928, carried out by Japanese military agents, though this is unsubstantiated and almost certainly inaccurate. Count Ciano did visit Salon Kitty, where he joked behind closed doors about how he and Mussolini would ridicule Hitler in private.⁵¹ After Mussolini was ousted by the Fascist Grand Council, Ciano and Edda were placed under house arrest, but managed to flee to Munich. The couple appealed to neutral Spain to take them in, which was denied, and the Nazis, furious at Ciano for what they saw as betrayal of Mussolini, extradited the couple back to Italy to face trial. Ciano was convicted and shot by firing squad on 11 January, 1944. He was forty years old. Two days earlier, Edda escaped to Switzerland disguised as a peasant. She returned to Italy after

49 Coggeshall.

50 Behr, pp 196.

51 Roland, pp 115.

the war, and was sentenced to two years for aiding fascism. She died in 1995, aged eighty-four.

The theory that Hitler was an amphetamine addict, and that the Blitzkrieg was fuelled by amphetamine, comes from German author Norman Ohler, who argues that the pharmaceutical Pervitin, an amphetamine, was mass distributed to the *Wehrmacht*, and that Hitler's personal physician, Theodor Morell, was heavily medicating the *Führer* with Pervitin since 1936.⁵²

The factoid that Hitler was either a urophile or coprophile (referenced herein via the unnamed young woman, Eva Braun, seeking dietary advice) comes from a 1943 Office of Strategic Services (OSS) report authored by Walter C. Langer, Henry A. Murray, Ernst Kris, and Bertram D. Lewin, which, by this author's (admittedly not psychologically trained) reading, is a lot of contorted psychoanalysis based upon his vegetarianism, his 'feminine' relationship dynamic with women, and a masochistic anecdote regarding the actress Rene Mueller.⁵³ The report also speculates on Hitler's possible homosexuality,⁵⁴ and his possible impotence.⁵⁵

The Hot Club was located in Frankfurt, not Berlin. It was formed in 1941 by a group of young German

52 Ohler, *Blitzed*.

53 Langer, pps 189-194.

54 Ibid., pp 196.

55 Ibid., pp 182.

jazz enthusiasts to secretly perform and listen, defying the Nazi Party's ban on the genre. The regime condemned the genre as 'degenerate' and '*Negermusik*' because of its African-American roots, viewing it as a direct threat to traditional Aryan values. Led by Horst Lippmann and fellow musicians like Emil Mangelsdorff, the group held clandestine jam sessions in the back of a restaurant, using lookouts to watch for the *Gestapo*. If the secret police arrived, the band would immediately switch to state-approved music to avoid arrest. The club was closely linked to the *Swingjugend* (Swing Youth), a counter-culture movement that rejected the rigid, totalitarian lifestyle of the Hitler Youth in favour of a more liberal, Anglo-American outlook. This defiance came with severe personal risks; many members were eventually targeted by the authorities. Emil Mangelsdorff was arrested for 'defeatism' and sent to the Eastern Front, while Horst Lippmann was imprisoned for listening to the BBC and spent the later years of the war hiding in a basement.⁵⁶

Puyi never consummated any of his five marriages. The historical consensus is that he was gay,⁵⁷ or, in one reading, that he was impotent as the result of childhood sexual trauma.⁵⁸ The notion that Yoshiko had an affair with their cousin's wife—

56 Rebel Sounds.

57 Behr, pps 114, 249-250.

58 Wang, pps 410-411.

specifically Wanrong, his empress—appears frequently in media, including Bertolucci's *The Last Emperor*, and Lilian Lee's *The Last Princess of Manchuria*⁵⁹ and its film adaptation. I have found nothing suggesting this has an historical basis, but I have nonetheless continued the trope in this world.

Paragraph 175 was the Nazi law criminalizing homosexuality, and identified gay men were required to wear a pink triangle armband, before their persecution turned to detainment and annihilation. Queer women were not treated the same way under Nazi law; their queerness was foremost regarded as an anti-family crime, and were persecuted as 'asocials' (if not otherwise repressed as Jews, Roma, or another persecuted group).⁶⁰

Unity Valkyrie Mitford, ironically conceived in the Timiskaming, Ontario, Canada hamlet of Swastika in 1914,⁶¹ was a British Nazi sympathizer who became a close confidant of Hitler's. She became infatuated with fascism at a young age, decorating her bedroom with *swastikas*, while her sister, with whom she shared the room, became an ardent communist and decorated her half with hammer and sickles. The sisters had to draw a line down the centre

59 Lee, pp 49.

60 <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/lesbian-s-under-the-nazi-regime>

61 Litchfield, pp 46.

dividing the room between them.⁶² At age eighteen, she met British Union of Fascists founder Oswald Mosley, with whom another sister was having an extramarital affair, and became an instant convert to his ideas.⁶³ Unity travelled to Munich in 1934 to finish her schooling,⁶⁴ with the goal of meeting Hitler. The school was located close to the Nazi Party headquarters, and Unity stalked the *Führer* for a period of ten months until Hitler finally invited her to his restaurant table.⁶⁵ Hitler later invited her to the 1936 Berlin Olympics.⁶⁶ In 1939, Hitler warned her, and her sister Diana, who had the affair with Oswald Mosley, that war with Britain was inevitable.⁶⁷ Diana returned to England, but Unity did not.⁶⁸ Unity was distraught, not wanting to see Britain and Germany at enmity; on 3 September, in an emotionally distressed state, she sought assurances from *Gauleiter* Adolf Wagner that she would not be detained as an enemy alien, then fled the men he dispatched to follow her. In Munich's English Garden, she attempted suicide, shooting herself in the head.⁶⁹ She survived, but suffered brain damage which left her unable to walk,

62 Ibid., pp 137.

63 Ibid., pp 69.

64 Ibid., pp 167.

65 Ibid., pp 204.

66 Ibid., pp 256.

67 Ibid., pp 301.

68 Pryce-Jones, pp 229.

69 Ibid., pp 232.

incontinent, and with a changed personality. Doctors estimated her mental acumen was that of a ten-year-old. She did not remember the incident.⁷⁰ The bullet, inoperable, was still in her skull. Transferred first to Bern, Switzerland, she was then, in 1940, brought back to the UK by her family.⁷¹ She died in 1948, aged thirty-three, from meningitis caused by cerebral swelling around the bullet still in her head.⁷² Her lesbian dalliance with a German sex worker in 1942 is a product of my imagination.

Enrst Gräfenberg did not describe the erogenous zone to which his name is attached until 1950. I have fudged the timeline to make the remarks by Irma Grese work.

Hans Reiter is fictional. His character is an homage to Brass' 1976 nazisploitation film *Salon Kitty*.

Wolfgang Vollmann is fictional. In my world, he plays the roll of an on-again, off-again love interest for Yoshiko. He has previously appeared in *Bitch-Slapping Stalin*. Lord Orkney is fictional. He is referenced in *Tiger Blues*, and will appear elsewhere going forward. Lorelei is fictional. Adelheid Meier is fiction.

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71 Pryce-Jones, pp 238.

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CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

- 1907 — Yoshiko is born.
- 1913 — *Aikokūsha* member assassinates Japanese official. Iwata sentenced to twelve years in prison.
- 1915 — Yoshiko adopted out to Kawashima Naniwa.
- 1925 — Yoshiko and Iwata meet and briefly date. Yoshiko attempts suicide. Begins outward masculine presentation.
- 1926 — Iwata begins agitating in the East Indies.
- 1928 — Yoshiko marries Mongolian nobleman Ganjuurjab.
- 1930 — Yoshiko and Ganjuurjab divorce.
- 1931 — Yoshiko begins working as a spy for the Kwantung Army.
- Yoshiko and Chizuko marry.
- 1 March, 1932 — Puppet state of Manchukuo established.
- 1933 — Hitler becomes chancellor of Germany.
- Yoshiko appointed as Colonel Jin Bihui of the Rehe Vigilance Corps.
- Publication of *The Beauty in Men's Clothing* by Muramatsu Shōfū.
- 1935 — Yoshiko enters into business partnership with Tōyama Mitsuru and Iwata Ainosuke.

- 1936
 - Yoshiko shot three times in the course of the Rehe Campaign.
- 1937
 - Yoshiko opens The House of the Rising East, a hotpot restaurant, Tianjin.
- 1939
 - House of the Rising East closes.
 - Yoshiko becomes the target of assassination by General Tada Hayao, seeks assistance from political fixer Sawakawa Ryōichi, is banished to Fukuoka.
 - Dissolution of Yoshiko's marriage to Chizuko.
- 28 June, 1939
 - Kitty Schmidt attempts to flee Germany, is arrested by *Sicherheitsdienst*.
- 1 September, 1939
 - German invasion of Poland; the European Theatre of World War 2 begins.
- 1940
 - Yoshiko begins relationship with Kotone.
- March, 1940
 - Salon Kitty opens under the direction of *Sicherheitsdienst*.
- 1941
 - Yoshiko travel ban is rescinded by Matsuoka Yosuke.
- 22 June 1941
 - Operation Barbarossa begins; German invasion of the Soviet Union.
- 7 December, 1941
 - Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. Soon thereafter, Yoshiko begins campaign to contact Hideki Tōjō to mediate peace deal with China.
- 27 May, 1942
 - Reinhard Heydrich mortally wounded by Czechoslovak anti-fascists in Prague.
- July, 1942
 - Allied air raid destroys upper floors of

Salon Kitty.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

KAWASHIMA YOSHIKO, called JOHANN KAUERSCHEICHT, called JIN BIHUI, called EASTERN JEWEL— Manchu spy posing as a Swiss-German espionage contractor.

Japanese

IWATA AINOSUKE— *Shōgun* of the *Aikokūsha*.

SONOMOTO KOTONE— Yoshiko's girlfriend, a university student.

SASAKAWA RYŌICHI— Political fixer.

CHIZUKO— Yoshiko's ex-wife.

TŌYAMA MITSURU— *Shōgun* of the *Gen'yōsha*.

MATSUOKA YOSUKE— Foreign Minister.

MURAMATSU SHŌFŪ— Author of the novel *The Beauty in Men's Clothing*.

VESPER KUNOMOTO— A seductress-spy working with Kwantung Army Intelligence.

Germans

ADOLF HITLER— *Führer* of the Third Reich.

JOSEPH GOEBBELS— Minister of Propaganda.

JOACHIM VON RIBBENTROP— Minister of Foreign Affairs.
REINHARD HEYDRICH— Director of the *Sicherheitsdienst* and Protector of Bohemia and Moravia.
KATHARINA ZAMMIT, called KITTY SCHMIDT— Madame of Salon Kitty.
KATHLEEN ZAMMIT— Her daughter.
WALTER SCHELLENBERG— *Obersturmführer* of the *Sicherheitsdienst*.
WOLFGANG VOLLMANN— Schellenberg's deputy.
LORELEI— A sex worker.
ADELHEID MEIER— Deputy security chief for the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.
IRMA GRESE— Guard trainee at Ravensbrück.
SEPP DIETRICH— A major-general of the SS.
JOSEF MENGELE— Mad scientist engaged in human experimentation.
VIKTOR LUTZE— Commander of the *Sturmabteilung*.
ELISABETH VOLKENRATH— Camp guard.
HANS REITER— A Luftwaffe pilot.
LUDWIG, GRETA, EMIL and GERHARD— Patrons of the Hot Club.

Others

BENITO MUSSOLINI, called *Il Duce*— Prime Minister of Italy.
GIAN GALEAZZO CIANO— Second Count of Cortellazzo and Buccari. Mussolini's son-in-law.
EDDA MUSSOLINI— His wife, Mussolini's daughter.
FRANCISCO FRANCO— Prime Minister of Spain.

DON RAMÓN SERRANO SÚÑER— Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs. Franco's brother-in-law.

ANTÓNIA DE OLIVEIRA SALAZAR— Prime Minister of Portugal.

BARTLEBY CARTHAGE, LORD ORKNEY— Special liaison to the Czechoslovak government-in-exile, in London.

ROGER WILSON, called LJUBO KOLCHEV, called AGENT RESOLUTE— Undercover MI6 agent, posing as a Romanian press secretary.

WILLY STEPHENSON, called AGENT INTREPID— MI6 agent with whom Yoshiko has a long history. Currently posted in Gibraltar.

VIDKUN QUISLING— Minister-President of Nazi-occupied Norway.

PHILIPPE PÉTAIN— Marshall of Vichy France.
MARIE PÉTAIN— His daughter.

RADKA ZDENEK— Czech nationalist and anti-fascist rebel.

PUYI— Emperor of Manchukuo. Yoshiko's cousin.

GRIGORY MIKHAYLOVICH SEMYONOV— Major figure in the White resistance to Russian Bolshevism during the Civil War. Advisor to the Manchukuoan throne.

VIKTORIJA ARĀJS— Head of the Arājs Kommando, a *Sicherheitsdienst* auxillary group in Latvia.

FERENC SZÁLASI— Leader of the Arrow Cross Party in Hungary.

ZHANG XUELIANG— Manchurian warlord.

HELENA PETROVNA BLAVATSKY— Mystic and spiritualist, and purveyor of Theosophy.

GLOSSARY AND GAZETTEER

Aikokūsha— (Japanese) Patriotic Society, a Japanese ultranationalist secret society agitating in the East Indies. Founded by Iwata Ainosuke.

Amaterasu— The Japanese sun goddess.

Ardbeg— A Scottish whiskey.

Bern— The capital of Switzerland.

Bohemia and Moravia— A German protectorate occupying Czech territory.

Chaco War— A 1932-35 conflict fought between Bolivia and Paraguay.

Franc (Swiss)— The currency of Switzerland.

Frau— (German) An honourific for a married woman; Mrs.

Fraulein— (German) An honourific for an unmarried woman; Miss.

Freund— (German) Friend.

Fukuoka— A city on Japan's Kyūshū Island. The home of Sonomoto Kotone.

Gen'yōsha— (Japanese) Dark Ocean Society, a Japanese ultranationalist secret society originally founded to agitate for Japanese domination of Korea. Headed by Tōyama Mitsuru.

Gruppenführer— (German) Group leader, used as a

top rank in paramilitary organizations

Guten tag— (German) Hello, greetings, good day.

Herr— (German) An honourific, the equivalent of 'mister' or 'sir'.

Hot Club— An underground jazz club.

Hyperborea— An Atlantis-esque mythical northern realm. Associated with the origins of the Aryan race among Thule Society beliefs.

Il Duce— (Italian) The Duke, a sobriquet for Mussolini.

Jägermeister— A German herbal liqueur.

Jakarta— The capital of the Dutch East Indies (currently occupied by Japan).

Jenever— A Belgian spirit.

Katana— (Japanese) A sword.

Kwantung Army— A general army of Imperial Japan until the end of World War 2. They were responsible for operations in Manchuria, Mongolia, and China. Yoshiko spied for their espionage division.

Liebling— (German) Love, lover, sweetheart, darling.

Luger— A German pistol.

Macao— A Portuguese colony in southern China.

Manchukuo— A puppet state created by the Japanese in 1931, encompassing the region of Manchuria. Puyi was emperor, and Yoshiko was among the royal family.

Monaco— A city-state on the Mediterranean.

Mount Rurui-yama— A large mountain on Kunashir Island in the Kuril Archipelago. It is home to a

harsh prison, where Iwata Ainosuke served twelve years from 1913-1925.

Nambu 14– A semi-automatic Japanese pistol.

Negroni– A cocktail containing gin, vermouth and Campari.

Obersturmführer– (German) A paramilitary rank, literally 'senior storm leader.' Used herein to refer to Walter Schellenberg.

Reichsmark– (German) The German currency. Exchange rates varied wildly during World War 2; in 1941, USD \$1 was approximately 20 *reichsmarks*.

Sake– (Japanese) A Japanese rice wine.

Salon Kitty– A Berlin brothel used by Nazi intelligence for espionage purposes during World War 2.

Schatz– (German) Sweetheart, darling, treasure.

Schlampen– (German) Slut, trollop, slag, tart.

Schutzstaffel (SS)– The state security agency of the Third Reich.

Shōgun– (Japanese) A title given to the head of a Japanese secret society, such as the Black Dragon Society, Dark Ocean Society, or Patriotic Society.

Sicherheitsdienst (SD)– The intelligence agency of the Third Reich.

Swastika– (Sanskrit) A Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist religious symbol, appropriated by the Nazis

The Beauty in Men's Clothing– A 1933 Japanese pulp novel by Muramatsu Shōfū, fictionalizing Yoshiko's spying exploits.

Theosophy— A spiritualist movement founded by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky in the nineteenth century. Aspects of pseudo-mysticism are borrowed from Tibetan Buddhism.

Thule Society— An occultist and *Völkisch* secret society. Many prominent Nazis were members.

Tianjin— A city in northern China. Yoshiko owned The House of the Rising East restaurant here.

Tōkyō— The capital of Japan.

Volchansk— A town in Ukraine and location of a series of battles in 1942.

Xinjing— The capital of Manchukuo. Modern-day Changchun.

Yamazaki— A high-end brand of Japanese whiskey.

Yen— (Japanese) The currency of Japan.

Zürich— A large city in Switzerland.

MAP

