

# The Blood of Judas

By Walt Sautter

Smashwords Edition

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## The Blood of Judas Matthew 5:3-10 – The Beatitudes

“Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill”

### Chapter 1

#### Encounter

Elda walked down the dimly lit, narrow street through the mist laden night air. She approached the several steps leading to a basement door and slowly descended them. The only lighting was emitted from a dull red bulb above the doorway. She knocked

soundly and the door cracked open. A man peered through the scant aperture straining to identify the shape before him.

“Elda, it’s you” he exclaimed and widened the opening. “Come on in Honey” he continued as she entered. “Hello Fritz.

Much of a crowd tonight?” she asked.

“About the usual. Pretty slow, like it’s been.

People are just too afraid to come. You know, there’re not fooling around anymore. A lot of our regulars have been picked up and been charged with antigovernment activities” he replied.

“Antigovernment activities?” she repeated in an inquiring voice.

“Sure! You don’t think all the stuff that’s said here goes unnoticed, do you?” he answered abruptly.

“What about you?” he continued, “Aren’t you a little nervous?” She paused and then replied.

“Sure, but I just can’t pretend that there’s nothing wrong with what’s going on. I guess coming here is my way of protesting. It’s all I can do. It’s pretty much all anybody can do.”

“I’m not sure how long we can continue. It’s just a matter of time before they come to shut us down or worse. Most of the other clubs are gone and some of their people are gone too.

We’ll keep open as long as we can and hope for the best but to be honest, I’m not sure there is a best.

Here, let me take your coat. I’ve got your table for you as usual” he said.

She removed her full length wrap revealing a tall, slim figure of curvaceous beauty and followed him.

He led her down a long hallway which opened into a large, spacious area.

Clouds of bluish smoke hovered against the low ceiling. Three dozen or so small tables each bearing a lighted candle were scattered about the room with a stage at the far end of the chamber.

Elda glanced about as Fritz ushered her to her table near the front, right corner of the stage. She estimated, fifty people at most, all engaged in conversations at whisper level. It seemed as if everyone was nervously attempting to avoid being overheard. Their unease was further evidenced by their constant glances about the room as they spoke.

“Are you expecting anyone else this evening?” asked Fritz.

“I don’t think so” she replied as she was seated.

“Adam- take Elda’s order please” he commanded the waiter. “Absinthe, a double” she responded.

The waiter quickly arrived back at the table bearing a goblet containing several ounces of the dark, green liquid and placed it before her. After she had taken a few sips the red velvet stage curtains opened and the show began.

A trio, seated at the left side of the stage began to play a slow, rhythmic, sensual song.

Several seconds later, entering from the right came a tall, slim blonde attired in a black sequined dress and donning a scarlet boa. She began to sing in a high, dulcet voice.

She, an obvious transvestite, moved slowly back and forth across the floor handling the microphone as if it was a phallus.

As her song ended, applause rose from the audience and the curtain closed only to reopen again moments later. At center stage stood a short, mustachioed, stocky man of apparent Jewish descent.

He began his comedic act.

“Hitler visits a lunatic asylum. The patients give the Hitler salute. As he passes down the line he comes across a man who isn’t saluting.

‘Why aren’t you saluting like the others?’ Hitler barks.

Mein Führer, I’m the nurse comes the answer. ‘They’re all crazy! I’m the only one here who isn’t!’ ” Laughter erupted and he continued.

“Two men meet. ‘Nice to see you’re free again. How was the concentration camp?

‘Great! Breakfast in bed, a choice of coffee or chocolate, and for lunch we got soup, meat and dessert. And we played games in the afternoon before getting coffee and cakes. Then a little snooze and we watched movies after dinner.’

The man was astonished: ‘That’s great! I recently spoke to Meyer, who was also locked up there. He told me a different story.’

The other man nods gravely and says: ‘Yes, well that’s why they’ve picked him up again!’ ”

“The German army Headquarters receives news that Mussolini’s Italy has joined the war.

‘We’ll have to put up ten divisions to counter him!’ says one general. ‘No, he’s on our side,’ says another.

‘Oh, in that case we’ll need twenty divisions!’ ” Again, the crowd laughed.

“Two Jews are about to be shot. Suddenly the order comes to hang them instead. One says to the other ‘You see, good news, they’re running out of bullets!’ ”

The crowd once again laughed but this time in a much muffled tone. The show continued and Elda continued to sip her drink.

Fritz approached her table.

“Elda, do you see the man sitting over there?” and he faintly nodded over his shoulder.

“The one wearing the dark jacket, smoking a cigarette, he said he would like to meet you. Shall I tell him to come to your table?” he asked.

Elda looked in the direction to which Fritz had nodded.

His table was about twenty feet away from her and she could see him clearly through the hazy atmosphere. He appeared to be in his mid-thirties or so, with dark curly hair and a neatly trimmed mustache. He was well dressed and bore an elegant air. He looked straight at her with his eyes flashing and took a long drag on his cigarette as she glanced in his direction.

She paused and then spoke.

“Sure Fritz – ask him to come over” she replied.

With that Fritz walked over to the man and whispered to him. He immediately reached into his pocket, withdrew some money, handed it to Fritz and rose from his chair.

He was about six feet tall and slim and walked with a confident stride towards her.

“Good evening.

Thank you for allowing me to sit with you. My name is Anton Brusksa and you are Elda, Fritz has told me” he introduced himself.

Elda extended her hand to him.

“Bruska, that’s a Russian name?” she queried.

“Yes it is. I’m originally from Russia but I have been in Berlin for some time now” he replied.

“And you?” he continued, “I’m sure you are German, am I right?” he asked.

“Yes, I was born here. My father owns a small shop about ten blocks from here” she answered.

“And what brings you to the Katacombe?” he asked.

“I enjoy the shows. The entertainment and a few drinks and the real world disappears for a few hours.

You know, things are not the best here in Berlin and I’m not so sure that they will get any better, most likely it will get worse” she answered.

“Unfortunately, I’m quite sure you’re right” he replied.

“Ever since the appointment of Heir Hilter as Chancellor and the Reichstag fire, it has not been good. You know the government has accused the Communists and has arrested four of them. President Von Hindenberg has given emergency powers to Heir Hilter and his powers are now complete. The Nazi Party now controls the parliament and they grant his every wish.

All the Communists have been rounded up.

Who will be next, nobody knows but I’d bet the Jews are next. What do you think?” he continued.

“Yes – he has never attempted to disguise his hatred of us” she answered in a somber voice.

“So you’re Jewish?” he asked.

“Well, my mother was and according to the law, that means that I am too” she replied.

“Have you been threatened by the authorities?” he asked.

“No, but I know some who have. There is talk of a boycott of Jewish businesses to be instigated by the Nazis next month. My father’s store will certainly be affected” she said.

“I thought you said that your mother was Jewish. Is your father too?”

“No, but having a Jewish wife and a child by her surely puts him in the Nazi’s crosshairs just as if he were a Jew himself” she explained.

There was a brief silence and then he spoke.

“This is an awful way to start a conversation with someone I’ve just met.

Let’s talk about something more pleasant. Tell me about yourself” he said attempting to brighten the mood.

“Well, you know my name is Elda, Elda Draken. I’ve lived here in Berlin all my life. I attended university and graduated five years ago. I studied art. It was one of the few programs that accepted women at university.

I now work at the museum but I am sure that my job there will not be much longer. The new government frowns on working women, especially Jewish working women. I’m



quite positive that I will be fired soon to make way for a man and being considered Jewish makes it a certainty.”

“What will you do then?” he asked.

“I’ll work in my father’s shop as long as it stays open” she answered.

“You said your mother was Jewish. What happened to her?” he inquired.

“She died in the influenza epidemic when I was a child.”

“Yes I remember the epidemic of 1918. People died by the thousands.

Several of my friends died during the contagion” he replied.

She paused and looked at him quizzically.

“Your childhood friends?” she replied.

“Oh, yes, childhood friends” he repeated.

“So you are Russian?” she asked.

“Yes, my family home is in Moscow. My father lived there for generations.” He stopped and then interjected.

“My father’s family that is!”

“And where do you live now?” she asked. He again hesitated.

“My livelihood requires me to travel frequently. I rarely go back to Moscow but I guess you could call it my home” he answered.

“And what is your livelihood?” she continued.

“I am a businessman” he replied hastily.

“What kind of business?”

“I deal in wholesale meats” he answered in a rather unconvincing tone.

“And your family?” she questioned.

“My father and mother both died during the Revolution” he replied.

“And your brothers and sisters?”

“I have none. They too perished in the Revolution” he answered.

“I guess I shouldn’t ask. I’m sure my questions opened old wounds.

I’m sorry” she replied and reached over and grasped his hand in sympathy.

Upon touching him, “Your hand is cold”, she said. He looked into her eyes.

“Cold hands, warm heart they say” he replied. She smiled and the conversation continued.

The curtain closed on the final act, applause rang from the crowd and the evening ended.

“May I escort you home?” he asked as they rose to leave.

“Yes, I would find that quite nice” she replied.

They left the Katakome together and he hailed a cab.

“May I see you again?” he asked as the driver pulled to the curb by her house.

She hesitated and then replied.

“Maybe we’ll meet at the club again. I certainly hope so. I go there quite frequently, most often two or three times weekly.”

“How about this Friday night? Will you be there then?” he replied.

She paused and then answered.

“Yes, Friday for sure!”

## Chapter 2

### Horror and Revelation

Elda arrived at the Katakome on Friday night as promised. She was seated at her usual table by Fritz. An hour passed and she fidgeted uneasily as she waited with no sign of Anton.

Then, she finally espied him, walking through the bluish, smoky haze, towards her.

“I’m sorry I’m a bit late but I had an urgent business meeting to attend to” he apologized.

“That’s alright. I’ve been enjoying the show” she replied pretending to be unconcerned by his lateness.

The evening wore on and as they spoke the warmth between them grew.

Then, abruptly the trio at the side of the stage stopped playing at mid song. The house lights rose and three men emerged through the club entrance and into the room.

Each wore the black uniform of the Schutzstaffel , complete with SS armbands and lightning bolts. The one with two stripes on his armband stepped forward and spoke in a loud commanding voice.

“As of this moment, this club is officially closed due to its antigovernment activities. Everyone will leave now and present identification at the door.”

With that, the two that accompanied him moved to the other exits and stood before them.

Everyone rose in stunned silence and began to file towards the main entrance in a trance-like state. Elda and Anton queued up with the rest. The line moved ever so slowly. When they finally arrived at the exit the reason for its slow movement became obvious.

At the doorway an SS officer sat behind a makeshift table, laboriously copying the details of every identification document which was presented.

Elda handed over her papers.

“I’m sure that we will meet again, Fraulein Elda” said the man in a sarcastic, threatening voice as he handed her papers back to her.

She said nothing and left the building and waited outside for Anton to be processed.

“What now?” she asked as they started to walk.

“I don’t know but I’m sure that it won’t be good” he replied.

“What should we do?” she asked anxiously.

“I don’t think there’s anything we can do, except wait” said Anton.

“I’ll come and see you here tomorrow evening. Will your father mind?” he said as they approached her house.

“No, I’m sure he won’t. I’ll see you tomorrow then” and she nervously unlocked the door and went inside.

The very next evening Anton arrived at Elda’s house. He walked up the five, stone steps to the front door of the brownstone building and knocked.

No answer. He knocked again. No answer. He knocked again and this time the door moved slightly ajar. It was unlocked!

He cautiously pushed it open wider and peered inside. Then he called “Elda, are you there?”

No answer.

“Elda, are you here?” he again called. No answer.

He quickly scanned the adjacent buildings before entering. He could see two of the windows in the building across the street with the curtains cracked aside and eyes staring out at him. He stared back at each and the curtains quickly closed in rapid succession.

He entered the house and walked down the long hall towards a doorway at the far end, continually calling out but this time in a low voice. Still no response!

Everything was undisturbed but vacant. He left, perplexed but suspecting the worst.

He walked down the stairs to the sidewalk. An old man with a cane approached him as he stood pondering about what had just happened.

“Are you looking for Heir Dranken?” asked the old man.

“Yes and Elda?” replied Anton.

“You won’t find them here!

Not anymore. The SS came here early this morning and took both of them” the man replied.

“Took them where?” Anton exclaimed.

“I don’t know. A lot of people have been taken away lately and I don’t think anybody knows for sure where” the man answered.

“If I were you I wouldn’t be eager to find out where, because you’ll probably wind up in the same place and from what I’ve heard, it isn’t a good place” the old man continued.

“What have you heard?” Anton asked anxiously.

“I’m not going to say. If I do, I might be next” came the reply.

Anton could feel the fear in the man’s voice but he had to know. He reached out with one hand, grabbed the old man by the front of his coat, lifted him from the ground and dragged him into the alley between the buildings.

“Tell me what you know” he commanded, his eyes flashing with a penetrating glow.

“All I know is that a friend of mine used to work for the railroad on the night crew. He retired a year or so ago but he always goes down to the yard every evening after supper to talk with his old pals. Now, he tells me, as of late, all the workers are herded out of the yard two or three times every night by the SS.

They bring in a whole bunch of people and load them onto the boxcars and lock the doors and the train leaves. Then they let the workers back in. I guess they don’t want anybody to see what they’re doing.

Where they go, he doesn’t know and neither do I. That’s all I know, honest mister.”

“If this is all done in secret so how does your friend know all this?” Anton continued to interrogate him. “One of the train engineers is a pal of his. They’ve got to keep the engineer otherwise there would be no one to drive the train” answered the man in a stammering voice.

“Well didn’t your engineer friend tell you where he took them?” Anton continued to ask.

“No, he said two SS men rode in the cab with him and they made him stop the train in the woods a couple of hundred kilometers from here. They unloaded everybody there, men, women and children. He didn’t really know where it was. It was in the middle of nowhere” the man continued to answer in a quaking tone.

“When did he say they load these people onto the train?” Anton asked.

“Like I said two or three times a night” the man again stammered.

Anton arrived at the railroad yard. He took up a hidden position, in the shadows, where he could keep a night vigil. He waited. Police vans pulled up periodically and discharged their passengers who were prodded through the doorway of the large station house by several SS troopers. After several dozen vans had been unloaded, those in the station house were marched to the waiting box cars into which they were packed. Those who were too feeble or too young were lifted by the others and shoved into the car at the shouted commands of the guards. The door was slammed shut and locked.

Anton strained to see if Elda was anywhere amongst the herded masses. He scanned every face with an uncanny vision as they were clustered towards the waiting train.

The night wore on and two train loads had gone on their way. Vans continued to pull up and unload. A third train would be filled before dawn, of that he felt sure.



A whistle with its long, low tone, sounded in the distance and within minutes the final train arrived. The boxcar doors were flung open by the guards and its passengers began to file from the stationhouse into them.

Once again, Anton examined each face as it passed by his gaze. There she was!

He quickly left his hiding place and stealthily approached the doorway of the stationhouse. He paused behind the attending guard's back and waited.

A call came from the SS guard at the door of the boxcar to hold up the line for a moment. Anton then slipped by the distracted guard and into the line of frightened passengers.

After a moment's pause, the line again began to move with Anton in it.

When he reached the open boxcar door, he like the others before him, was crammed through its entrance into a sea of humanity. All stood shoulder to shoulder with not so much as a hair's breadth between them. Most all were crying, cursing or praying. Many of the old people and children were all but crushed by the compression.

He stood on tiptoe and peered over the throng, searching for Elda.

There she was in the far corner of the car. He immediately began to push and shove his way towards her. As he arrived at her side, the boxcar closed with a thunderous crash and everything became pitch black. For several seconds, no one in the human herd made a sound and then suddenly, the car lurched forward and the fateful journey began.

“Elda” he whispered in the dark, “It’s me, Anton.”

There was no immediate response. He knew it was she in spite of the darkness. He could see her clearly and she made no reply. She merely stood motionless and mute staring into the blackness.

“Elda” he again whispered a bit more loudly.

This time she turned towards the sound of his voice. “Anton, is it really you?” she replied in bewilderment.

“When I first heard your voice I thought it was an hallucination. How could it be you?”

“It is me” he replied, “It is me and I’ll be here for you come what may” and he reached out and held her against himself.

She pressed her head closely to his chest attempting to saturate herself with his comforting embrace. As she was lying in his arms his apparent tranquility made her feel more secure than before. He held her tightly with a confident grasp. Not so much as the slightest quiver or any pounding of his heart divulged any fear to her.

The train continued throughout the rest of the night and into the dawn well passed the two hundred kilometer mark described by the old man. Tiny shafts of light streamed through the cracks in the walls providing a dim illumination. Hours passed on the seemingly unending journey. The foul odor of urine drifted through the air as people could no longer restrain themselves.

An old woman sandwiched next to Anton pressed against him as she collapsed but was unable to fall due to the wedge of the crowd.

The noisy banter of the passengers had long since subsided and an eerie silence prevailed only occasionally broken by moans and whimpers.

At long last the train came to a halt. The silence continued and even the sporadic outcries ceased. The only sounds heard by the passengers were the furious pounding of their own hearts as they waited.

Then, the sound of the car doors being unchained, one after another, filled the air.

Soon, Elda and Anton's car door was flung open allowing a blinding light, reflected from the glistening snowfall, to enter.

"Out! Get out!" came the shouted command of the SS man as he pulled the weak through the doorway. Several landed prone on the concrete platform while some of the others stepped on them in their eagerness to exit the torment of the boxcar.

Elda and Anton moved with the thrust of the crowd into the line which was marched down an icy path leading towards a large array of buildings in the distance. Many of the marchers, having been wrested from their home in haste, wore no winter clothing. Elda was one of them, clad only in a light dress. She began to shiver violently in the cold, damp breeze that flowed over the frozen earth.

Anton removed his coat and placed it around her and her quivering lessened.

She reached over and grasped his arm to express her gratitude. He felt as cold as the snow itself.

“Let me tear out the lining and we can share it” she said pointing to the coat.

He looked at her and smiled.

“No need. I’m not the least bit cold. Just make sure that you are warm enough” he replied.

They continued on, she wrapped in the coat and he seemingly unfazed by the biting cold. After several hundred yards, the images of gray, tattered buildings encircled by a tall metal fence came into clear view. Rows of windowless barracks ran side by side down the muddy road between them. The air was laden with the repulsive aroma of sewerage, smoke and stench, all in a vile mix. It filled the nostrils and sickened the stomach.

A mud spattered jeep roared down the road and stopped by an SS man leading the march. The passenger in the jeep shouted an order to him and the line was separated into men, women and children. Each was then hustled to a different set of barracks.

Anton gazed back over his shoulder, helplessly watching Elda and the other women being herded away as he and the men were spurred in the opposite direction.

He and thirty others entered the assigned quarters. It was a long, dark, hall-like building with no windows and but two dimly glowing light bulbs hanging from rafters. Strewn over the floor were squalid, canvas sacks stuffed with rags and hay. Foul odors oozed from

every crack and crevice of every part of the room. The smells hung in the air, seemingly unmoved by the stiff drafts that raced through the dismal chamber.

“This is home sweet home” came a sarcastic shout of the trooper who had led them there.

“I’ll be back to give you your instructions” and he slammed and chained the door behind him as he left.

Each man moved to claim one of the wretched cots and fell, exhausted onto its filthy surface. Anton walked to the rear corner and sat, propping himself against the wall.

An hour passed and rattling of the chain being loosened sounded through the door. It opened and a voice echoed.

“Aufstehen Beeilen Sie Abschaum. (Get up! Hurry you scum!)”

Everyone rose, except two, near comatose old men,, who remained huddled in fetal positions. The others, including Anton, immediately arose and lined up in front of the barracks. Two of the troopers entered the building and unsuccessfully prodded the prone men, with their rifle barrels. Failing to be aroused, they were dragged from the building and thrown into the snow alongside the entrance.

The others were marched off, single file towards the forest at the rear of the camp.

When they arrived at their destination, each was given a tool and the work began with several guards surrounding them, each brandishing a readied machine gun. The work of clearing the forest was backbreaking and unceasing. It continued until nightfall.

Twice during that day, one of the workers fell in exhaustion. Each time, the man was kicked and beaten. When one was finally unable to continue his work, he was dragged into the woods by two of the SS men and the sound of a gunshot resounded from the direction in which he had been taken. Shortly after the shot was heard, the guards returned unaccompanied and resumed their sinister supervision.

As darkness spread over the area, the laborers were filed back to the barrack where several small loaves of stale, moldy bread and a large vat of cold liquid containing floating potato peels were waiting. Again, the door was chained as many fell with almost lifeless fatigue onto their filthy bedding. Most huddled around the repugnant meal voraciously dipping their bread scraps into the coarse soup as they ate.

Anton retired to his usual spot at the rear of the room against the far wall and sat. He made no effort to enter the congregation of the ravenous. He was hungry but his hunger was not for that bit of swill. He sat stone still, his thoughts of Elda racing through his mind. Even the tortures of the day's experiences could not diminish his thoughts of her.

Within minutes of consuming the loathsome meal, the room fell silent. The only sound was that of the scurrying of rats, vainly seeking the tiniest discarded crumb of nourishment.

Anton gazed about the room through the blackness searching for those who appeared to be mortally weakened. He spied several teetering at the edge of death. He was sure that none would survive the next day's toil.

He crawled on all fours over to the weakest, carefully pulled the man's head aside, sunk his teeth firmly into the man's neck and drained what little life he had left from him. Once satisfied he left the lifeless body and crawled back to the corner to resume his thoughts.

For a brief moment, a pang of remorse flashed within him. He instantaneously dismissed it. His act had not only satiated his hunger, it had saved the man from the horrors of the death that surely awaited him in the morning. In spite of its monstrosity, his act was above all, an act of kindness, not depravity, he thought. Throughout his macabre existence, he had always carefully selected those who would surely welcome death. He was sure to never extinguish any honest, vital being, no matter how overwhelming his urges might be. Anton felt himself to be as moral as one of his kind could be. He knew that his initiation into this ghastly reality had arisen from an unwitting act of benevolence and with that thought he found complete release from self-reproach.

As he sat, he felt waves of strength erupt within him. After a time, he stood and walked to the doorway and paused before it. He inhaled deeply and stepped effortlessly through the chained door out into the night air. He stopped and drew the frigid atmosphere into to his nostrils seeking her scent. Once sensed, he turned and surged towards her building at the far end of the camp.

He approached the building and once again stood silently before its chained entrance. As before he breathed deeply and stepped through its chained door and into the building.

The housing was similar to his in every respect, windowless, cold and squalid. The acrid odors of sweat, urine and excrement filled the air.

He saw her, there she was, curled tightly, lying on the floor at the back of the room. He approached, crawled next to her in the darkness, grasped her shoulder and gently awakened her.

She opened her eyes and struggled to sit up, straining to see through the blackness.

“Elda, it is Anton” he whispered.

The sound of his voice sent an instantaneous rush of exhilaration through her.

“This must be a dream, a hallucination, a prelude to madness” she thought. She remained silent.

“Elda, it’s Anton” again came from the darkness.

She reached feebly in the direction of the voice and touched him. “Anton, it is you!” she then answered in an astonished tone.

“You are here! It is really you! How is this possible?”

“You are so weak, barely alive” he answered.

“I’ve had nothing to eat since we were arrested” came her reply with an intermittent, deep cough.

“You are ill?” he asked in a raised voice.



“Yes, I think you are right.”

“Speak softly so as not to awaken anyone or alert the guards” she whispered fearfully.

“Fear not.

In the hours of the night, only you can hear my voice. Only you can feel my presence.

For others I appear as simply shadows of the dark unless I will to make myself known.

All these powers flow freely to me as dusk arrives.

When the sun rises, my powers diminish and I am revealed as all other men. Until that time my appearance remains hidden at my command.”

Then he continued.

“Elda, I can save you but the decision will be yours. It will be one for which there will be no retreat. It will be a decision for all eternity. Regret will never be an option for you, only acceptance.”

Anton knew full well that he could easily force his will upon her and he knew he would if she were to refuse him. It would be his only choice. His love for her would never allow him to let her just die in this squalor and leave him forever. He also knew that forcing her against her will, could easily scar the timeless relationship with her that he sought.

“What decision?” she asked. “Hold my hand” he replied.

She did.

“Touch my face.”

She placed her hand on his cheek.

“Press your ear to my chest.” Again, she complied.

She quickly drew away and spoke.

“Your hands are as cold as the snow as is your cheek and your heart is silent” she said with an air of bewilderment.

“Yes” he replied.

“How can this be?” she exclaimed.

“I am one of those of whom you have heard much and know little. You like most, have refused to believe I am sure” he answered slowly.

“I am a phantasm perpetually existing on the precipice between life and death. I need no earthly nourishment, save one. I experience no torment, no illness, and no barriers to my wanderings and no pain of death.

The only suffering that I endure is the thought of your loss and if you will come with me, that suffering will then also be relieved.

Let me share my gifts with you so we may leave this wretched place together.”

“I don’t understand Anton. I trust you but I don’t understand. How could this all happen?” came her uncertain reply.

There was a long pause and then he began.

“I am Russian, which you know. I was born into my first life, in Moscow in 1890. My father was a butcher with a small shop in the city until the great famine of 1892 caused him to close his business. There was no food to be sold and thousands died.

We too, were cast into poverty and after several years my mother and father both perished from malnutrition and disease. They didn't really die in the Revolution as I told you! The reason I told you of their deaths being at that later time is that I thought you would then be less likely to question my age.

Their sacrifices allowed me to survive and after their deaths I was taken to an orphanage at the outskirts of the city. The headmaster was a sadistic priest who enjoyed the company of young boys and was particularly fond of me and so I survived too, while many others did not. It was a horrible existence but none the less an existence.

I lived there until I was fifteen. Then, I decided that I could no longer live in the abusive clutches of the headmaster. The famine had subsided and I felt that I could endure on my own.

How? I was unsure but I was sure that I had to free myself. I can still remember as if it were yesterday, I was packing the few possessions that I owned into a cloth sack when he entered the room.

‘Anton, where do you think you are going?’ he shouted sternly. I didn't reply.

‘I said where are you going?’ he again shouted and once again I didn't reply.

'You're going nowhere' and with that he removed his gold watch from his pocket and placed it on the cot next to my sack.

'So you are stealing my watch and that is why you are leaving.

Let me call Borya. I am sure that he can handle this' and he turned towards the doorway.

Borya was the headmaster's brutal taskmaster well known for his violence assaults on those committing even the slightest infractions. I knew of several that had returned from his punishment chamber in almost unrecognizable condition.

As he turned away from me I instinctively threw my arm around his throat and pulled him backwards towards the floor. His head struck with a solid thud and he went limp. He appeared lifeless. I pressed my ear against his chest and heard nothing.

I pulled the ragged sheet from my cot, wrapped his motionless body in it and slid him under an adjacent bed.

It was a cold spring day when I left. Life was hard on the streets of the city. Despite the hardship, I was forever free of the old man and his sordid ways and that solace sustained me. I took refuge in abandoned buildings, under bridges and in any shelter that could be found. Begging and stealing became a way of life, the only way of life available.

After several years of wandering, I was befriended by a humble monk, Grigori, who invited me to stay with him in his shabby apartment. Recalling my experiences at the

orphanage, I was immediately suspicious of his intentions but I soon discovered my fears to be unfounded. Although kindly towards me, I saw his ways as strange.

He almost never left the apartment in the daylight. When he did he returned quickly in a state of great weakness and fatigue. He frequently visited a Doctor Ivanovicha, who he said had been a protégé of the great neuroscientist Doctor Santiago Ramon y Cajal in Madrid but he never disclosed the nature of his illness to me.

I can't remember ever seeing him eat, yet he always appeared fully nourished and healthy in spite of his constant visits to the doctor. He had a loathing fear of physical contact and recoiled at the mere attempt at a handshake. His sleep was silent and trance like and entered into most often during daylight hours. I never noticed any rise and fall of his chest as he slept only stillness.

Despite all of these oddities, he treated me well. He provided a warm place for me to stay and gave me money each day to buy food and all necessitates of life and asked for nothing but friendship in return.

One evening, an elated Grigori returned home claiming that his treatments by Doctor Ivanovicha had finally succeeded in alleviating some of the symptoms of his mysterious disease. He remained awake throughout the entire night eagerly awaiting the sunrise. As the light rays spread over the landscape, he tore open the door and stepped into their brilliance. He basked there for several moments, with eyes closed and arms outstretched.

Then, he turned and reentered the apartment bearing a broad grin the likes of which I had never seen of him before.

'It is done' he announced.

'My great friend Ivanovicha has, after centuries of darkness, brought me back into the light of the world. The gift I have promised him will surely be granted this very day' and with that he left the apartment without further explanation.

The very next day, Grigori again arose early and left the apartment.

Filled with curiosity, I too arose immediately after his departure and followed him down the winding streets and alleys. He arrived at a large house at the center of the city. The door was answered by a servant who admitted him without hesitation.

When he arrived home that evening his excitement was obvious.

'We will soon be packing our bags my young friend' he announced.

My immediate fear that we were being evicted was allayed by the tone in his voice.

'Packing for where?' I asked anxiously.

He hesitated and then replied with a wide, tooth bearing smile 'The Palace of the Tsar.

Did you hear me?'

The Palace of the Tsar' he repeated.

I thought surely he had gone insane. Most likely the clandestine treatments that he had received from Doctor Ivanovicha had driven him mad. What other explanation could there be for his maniacal ranting?

'When will we go?' I replied disguising my thoughts of his apparent madness.

'Tomorrow!' he answered gleefully.

'And what will we do there?' I continued, curiously.

'You and I will save the young Prince and claim the great favor of the Tsar and the Tsarina' he replied with sudden solemnity.

All were aware of the Prince's malady. It burdened all of Russia. The slightest laceration or bruise yielded nearly unstoppable bleeding. The disease had driven the Tsarina to near hysteria. She had appealed far and wide seeking anyone who might cure his affliction. All had failed and the Prince continued to live at the edge, with the threat of death occurring from the slightest injury.

Grigori had been a great friend and benefactor and I hesitated to question the absurdity of his answer lest I offend him.

'And what part must I play in his cure?' I asked.

With that came a flood of astonishing answers, each one more unbelievable than the previous.

'I was summoned to Moscow by Anna Vyrubov who is a great friend of the Tsarina' he began.

'All the men of medicine and healers have tried to save the young Prince from his tortures and none have succeeded. Fortune and power awaits those who succeed and you and I will.

I have already been rewarded greatly by the Tsar for the mere willingness of my efforts. He has allowed me to consult with his friend and physician, Doctor Ivanovicha, and paid him handsomely so that he might seek to remedy the unending plague which I have endured.'

'And what affliction might that be?' I replied.

'The weakness and certain demise impressed upon me by the rays of the rising sun' he answered.

'And Doctor Ivanovicha mended this infirmity?' I asked.

'With knowledge gained from his great mentor, Doctor Santiago Ramon y Cajal, he has succeeded in ameliorating the condition. Now only modest weakness prevails in the daylight hours, not the complete ebb of strength and approach of death that formerly persisted 'he said and then hesitated.

'I am not as I appear to be.

Place your hand in mine" he commanded.



I reached and grasped him. I touched him for the first time.

'What do you feel?' he asked.

'Coldness!' I answered.

'The coldness of death?' he replied.

'Yes' I answered shocked by his question.

He opened his shirt and bade me place my palm on his chest.

'What do you feel?' he again asked.

'Nothing! Again coldness' I answered in an awestruck, trance- like voice.

'No beat of life?' he continued.

'None!' I replied.

'I am dead but I am not dead. I am alive but I am not alive, I exist. Thus I have been for many centuries and thus I will be for many more centuries. I am the second generation of the undead who have risen in glory with the sanction of the Divine.

I walk with the blood of Judas Iscariot in my veins. It was he that was given the true blood of the Divine in the cup from which he drank at the last repast while the others drank but wine.

It was the reward given by the Savior for his faithfulness, love and willing obedience. It was he Judas, who was asked by the Christ to deliver him to the Romans so he could

become the sacrifice for all mankind. In doing, he selflessly surrendered his name to infamy for all eternity by carrying out the will of the Savior.

It was he, Judas who was my resurrector and granted me the gift of his resurrector, the first risen one.'

'But why you?' I asked.

'I had saved many during the Great Plaque by healing powers given to me by the Lord. How those were obtained and how they acted I know not, but act they did and I was able to spare many.

My reputation as a great healer spread and eventually reached the ears of the king. When his daughter took ill he summoned me to administer to her. My efforts failed and she died. I believe that king's soul was so stained by his sinister acts that my powers were made void.

I was about to be executed for my failure. As I was lying in my cell awaiting my certain end Judas appeared and saved me by granting me this life and these powers which I now possess.'

'And if he was granted eternal existence, where is he now?' I inquired incredulously.

'I continue by the life fluid of those who are living. My being is sustained not by consuming any of a fully vital nature but instead only by those who seek relief of life's sufferings or those who are of evil purpose. I carry only mercy and revenge for the oppressed in my still heart when I seek nourishment.

He too, was of like kind. He sought only those of the nature which I have described. His searches for beings of this circumstance, often led him to the battle fields of old, where the dying wounded cried out for a hastened end. One such of these places was that of the conflict of Sultan Mehmed II and the Prince of Wallachia, Vlad Tepes on the battlefields of Romania. Upon his capture by the forces of the Prince just at the hour of sunrise, he was impaled by a wooden stake as were the others. Little did his capturers know that this would be the only means by which his essence would end. And so he did and he perished.'

He paused with eyes cast downward.

'This now is my cursed blessing' he continued.

'And what purpose will I serve?' I again asked, increasingly fearful as to what he might say.

'When first Anna Vyrubovas summoned me I was unsure as to whether I might be able to serve the needs of the young Prince. I told her that to be sure I required a bandage from his wounds. Upon receiving it, its scent announced the rare nature of his vital fluid. It was then for me to find someone of a similar nature. After a long, fruitless search I finally found someone of like nature.

It is you!

The character of your blood was fully described to me when we first met by the aroma of your very breath. It was you whom I sought and it is you whom I have found! We

together will save the young man and we together will incur the eternal gratitude and reward of the Tsar.'

'And how will this be done?' I asked.

'Your blood and mine must intermingle that I might possess the necessity to administer to the boy. When that has been accomplished a slight infusion of our serum from my veins into his will diminish the ravages of his affliction until the next onslaught.

My prayers to Saint Judas, who has been already ascended to our divine Resurrector, have been answered with these instructions. I am therefore assured that by this implementation, the child will be saved.'

And so it began. I willingly participated; unaware that Grigori had not told me completely of the consequences of my cooperation. Our first amalgamation occurred that evening.

The lamp light flickered casting eerie, elongated shadows against the walls of the room as he and I sat at the table with arms outstretched upon it. He held the knife to his wrist and with a rapid slice opened his vein. He showed no wince of pain or recoil. His heavy fluid oozed forth, flowing down over his palm.

Then he moved the knife to my arm. I instinctively felt the urge to draw back but instead held myself still. He sliced it and my blood pulsed forth. Immediately, he grasped my arm and pressed it tightly next to his. As the two liquids mixed his eyes rolled back and his head fell forward all the while keeping our arms in a vise like contact. After several minutes, he regained consciousness and it was done.

The very next day, he and I moved into the palace. From that time on, he attended the boy regularly and achieved the greatest confidence and gratitude of the royal family.

The child's health improved exceedingly.

As for me, my vigor began to change. I first noticed it shortly after my conjunction with Grigori. I began to feel lethargic during the daylight hours and overwhelmingly robust throughout the night. My appetite waned and my meals were sparse. Soon all desire for normal sustenance was lost.

My interest in the slightest sight of blood, whether human or animal, was peaked. I felt a compulsion to take daily trips to the local slaughter houses so as to observe the butchering of the animals. The sights, sounds and smells I found to become more and more delightful. I soon began a regular collection of the blood of the slain animals claiming that I was using it as garden fertilizer. In reality it had become my sole source of subsistence.

My unnatural urges continued to rise and I confronted Grigori. It was only then that I learned of my unalterable fate.

I too, by my cooperation with him, was becoming such as he, existing on the precipice between life and death from that time forward. After time, my desire for human blood rose and my cravings could no longer be satisfied by that of animals.

It was then that he told to me the nature of the victims whom I should seek to satiate my thirst.

'Those suffering the torments of extremely poor health, longing for death are acceptable. Persons of a suicidal character who actually seek death will also be desired. The consumption of these shall be of a gentle, compassionate nature.

Also available to you are the malevolent evil doers, those who have proved their ways by malicious and diabolical acts. For them, the consumption shall be of the most violent and sadistic manner possible and the nourishment most invigorating.

This is the code by which you shall exist for all of eternity.

Under no conditions shall you stray from these commandments else you shall cease to exist. Damnation and its tortures will be yours to endure forever.'

Thus I was entered into the existence I now claim.

As the young Prince's condition bettered under Grigori's care, resentment and envy of those at the palace rose. Constant accusations of witchcraft, sorcery and nefarious activities of all sorts continually flowed from the lips of all who condemned him.

The Tsar and Tsarina cared little about the suggested source of Grigori's palliatives. Only the extraordinary results were of their concern and they continued to lavish praise and benefits upon him.

As time went on and he proceeded to work his magic, resentment grew. Finally, it rose to a level at which the wishes of the royal family and the health of the prince were no longer considered and a small group of covetous schemers decided to act. That decision portended the demise of Grigori.

Late one evening, he was invited to meet with the conspirators under the guise of social congeniality. Little did he know the real intent was his murder? Unknowing of Grigori's true breed, they attempted to poison him using wine adulterated with arsenic. To their surprise, the effort failed, in spite of his consumption of huge quantities of the lethal mixture.

Upon seeing his being unaffected, they resorted to shooting him. He fell into the snow at the doorway of the building as he attempted to escape. Believing him to be dead they began dragging him towards the river for the final disposal.

Suddenly, he revived from the stunning impact of the bullets which had temporarily stilled him and he began to struggle with his overwhelming strength. Again surprised, his assailants continued their vain attempts to subdue him. One grabbed an axe which they had brought to open a hole in the ice. Upon swinging it at him, the handle broke on impact. Its splintered end was then plunged into Grigori's chest thus impaling him. They had unwittingly and with great luck sealed his fate. His death was immediate and his body was cast into the icy waters of the Moskva River.

Without the healing acts of Grigori, the young prince again became ill. The royal family fell back into chaotic depression and I left the city. I traveled day and night. Luckily, I inherited from Grigori the tolerance of light he had acquired from Doctor Ivanovicha. The purpose of my travel was to find nourishment of which I could readily partake.

To continuously seek the ill or the evil to satisfy my needs required great effort. Every day necessitated a frenzied search. My being new to this way of existence and without

the counsel of Grigori, made the task next to impossible. Grigori, over the centuries had developed his senses so that he could immediately identify those whom he might consume. I knew I must find a way to survive until I too, could perfect those skills.

And, so it was that I decided to travel to Prussia where the Great War had just begun. I was there to search for those mortally wounded souls strewn about the battle field just as Judas had done in Romania.

I portrayed myself as a medic and combed the battle field each evening. Upon finding those whom I sought, I consumed them thereby easing their passing and filling my vital need.

When the war ended, my abilities had been honed to a keen edge and my lust for the blood of vengeance rather than the blood of mercy grew within me. I came to Germany knowing that my search for malevolent victims would easily be accomplished. The rise of the National Socialist Party would provide me with a lengthy menu. So it was that I arrived in Berlin and began my indulgence.

Several vain attempts at devouring SS thugs failed. It was as if each was enveloped in an invisible, protective shield sheltered from my advances. Each time I was thwarted and each time I was made to seek out nourishment amongst the weak and suffering instead. After about the fourth such incident, I began to recall the lessons of Grigori. He had told me of one great obstacle that could be encountered when preying on the purveyors of evil and their confederates.



The power to repel my quest for vengeance is granted to the one who touches the Spear of Destiny, that instrument which pierced the side of the Christ as he died on the cross. The power it bestows upon its possessor is superior to mine.

If held over ones heart at the midnight hour and the sacred words of protection are recited threefold, it ensures safety and victory for he who then harbors it and for all those who perform this same rite in his presence. The true Spear was obtained by the Fuhrer from the Imperial Treasury at Vienna by surreptitious means and replaced with a forgery before he rose to power. The secrecy of its theft prevented the Austrians from realizing his bellicose intent. Had they discovered its loss, they surely would have been alarmed and prepared for attack. Without knowledge of its disappearance, they continued to feel secure in its presumed presence and remained ill prepared and thus easy prey.

It is now in the custody of the Fuhrer and it endows him with authority over me and all others who oppose him.”

Anton paused his tale and then implored her.

“Elda, let me save you from the certain death that awaits. Join with me in the gift of eternal life and the search for the way to destroy this evil that has enveloped the land.

All I need is your consent to make it so” he whispered as he gently brushed her hair from her forehead.

She hesitated and then replied.

“I trust you Anton and I believe your words but you are giving me a choice between the certainty of death and the certainty of a gray, eternal life, living in the shadows and darkness. I am not sure if an existence filled with encounters of those racked with terminal torments and those of abhorrent evil is a price worth paying for eluding mortal death. I must be sure of my choice before I allow this to happen.”

He held silent for a moment and then spoke again.

“I will return tomorrow night” and with that disappeared into the darkness.

Anton returned night after night as he had promised each time finding her in a more weakened state. Life was slowing within her as the days moved on.

He, by contrast, remained vital and strong owing to his continual nourishment taken from the many surrounding him who were lying at death’s edge.

On the fifth night he arrived to find a squalid, slumped mass, a gaunt shell of Elda barely clinging to life. Her once beautiful form had withered into a skin clad skeleton and her well quaffed locks had been reduced to a snarled, tangled mat. She drew in slow, labored breaths as she lay motionless and mute on the cold, dirt floor of the barrack.

Panic filled him as he whispered.

“Elda, Elda speak to me!”

Her reply was silence.

“Elda” he repeated once again more loudly but again, no response, only a guttural whimper.

Although, she had never agreed, she too had never fully rejected his offers, he thought to himself as he knelt beside her near lifeless form. Should he surrender her to eternal death and lose her forever or give her eternal life and risk her scorn for his act? He was torn by inner turmoil. He clasped both hands over his face and closed his eyes. Minutes passed.

Then, he opened his eyes and slid his hands slowly down his cheeks.

Her loss would surely lead to his own demise, of that he was certain. The unending remorse that would consume him would be impossible to bear. The thought of letting her slide into the abyss of death when he possessed the power to save her would haunt him for eternity, of that he was doubtless.

Her breathing was becoming shallower and her unintelligible utterances less frequent as he anguished by her side. If he were to save her, it must be soon before the finality of death took hold. The compulsion to act grew within him and soon overwhelmed him. He moved in a trance like state guided by swelling emotion.

He reached down, lifted her wrist and punctured it with a quick thrust of the small knife he had brought with him. He could see her blood glistening in the dim light as it slowly pulsed from the incision. Then, in like manner, he plunged the knife into his own flesh and pressed his open wound tightly against hers.

He felt his life force flowing into her and a rush of warm passion rippled over him as the fluids mingled. Within moments, Elda began to stir, her breathing became less labored and her mumbled groans became more coherent. Then, her eyes flickered open and her lips began to move. A faint smile spread over her face as she looked up at Anton sitting beside her.

“Am I alive?” she whispered and again closed her eyes. He paused and then answered.

“You are more alive than you have ever been.” She reopened her eyes and spoke.

“You mean” she began and stopped.

“Yes” he interrupted.

“I had no choice. The only other choice I had was to lose you forever and that was a choice I couldn’t bear to accept. You must understand that to lose you would be to lose myself” he continued apologetically.

A brief silence prevailed.

“I understand” she answered.

“I too, feared your loss but I couldn’t find the courage to join you. This way of life that is now ours is an anathema to my religion but your assurances as to its purpose, makes me confident that the path is just” she continued and then paused.

An improved glow of vitality continued to ebb over her as she looked up at him.

“Thank you Anton for saving me” she said meekly.

Anton reached into his pocket and took out a small, cloth bag. He used the knife to scrape soil loose from the hardened dirt floor and placed several handfuls in the bag. He pulled the drawstring of the bag tightly closed it and handed it to Elda.

“Guard this carefully” he instructed her.

“This is the soil of your grave, the place in which you have died and been reborn. It is your protection when you rest. Without its presence your very soul is in peril as you sleep.”

She sat up, took the bag from him and secured it in the waistband of her dress.

“What has happened to my father? Is he still alive?” she asked.

“I don’t know. We were separated when we left the train” he answered.

“We must find him” she continued in a frenzied voice.

“We will! We will!” he consoled her.

“First, you must gain the strength to escape this wretched place with me and for that you must eat.”

“What do you mean?” she asked knowing full well the answer she was about to hear.

“You know the nature of our existence from the story that I have told you. We must find someone here that will welcome your embrace” he answered.

She paused, attempting to allow the full reality of her new being to enter her consciousness. After a moment or two and with a long, hard swallow, she replied in a weak voice.

“I have worked next to Stella since I arrived. She is steadily weakened and continually mumbles prayers asking for her own death. Today, I had to help her back here. She stumbled and fell several times and each time I struggled to bring her back to her feet. When we arrived she was too weakened to even eat the scant morsels we were given. I am sure she might welcome me as the answer to her prayer.”

“Where does she lie?” he asked.

She pointed towards the front of the room and together they moved in that direction.

With that, he helped her to her feet, grasped her hand tightly and together they walked towards Stella. He turned and spoke to her.

“Act now as your new nature requires” he commanded.

With that, she knelt down beside Stella’s skeleton-like frame, gently moved her head aside and exposed her thin, ashen throat. She hesitated momentarily and then the instincts of her newly acquired being consumed her and she began to draw nourishment from Stella’s near lifeless form. As she consumed the salty fluid she could feel a rush of strength and well-being flow into to her. It filled her every artery and vein. It poured over her every nerve and muscle imparting a euphoria and potency which she had never before known.

She arose and stood erect, her once gaunt figure replaced by one of fullness and vitality.

Anton reached out and grasped her by her waist and pulled her close and kissed her blood covered lips in a long passionate embrace. As they held tightly in each other's arms, they were filled with the knowledge that they were now bound for all eternity.

"More about your new life I shall reveal to you later but for now we must leave" said Anton.

"Follow me" he commanded and he stepped with ease through the barrack's wall, just as night breeze might rush through an open window. She hesitated.

"This gift is that of the Archangel Raphael. We can move as he, passing through the walls, as he did when he spoke with Enoch."

Then she felt his gentle tug and then she too stepped forward and passed with equal ease behind him.

"It is now we will search for your father."

"Where? You said that you haven't seen him since we arrived?" she replied.

"I think the camp commandant will know" answered Anton confidently.

"I am sure he would, but how will you get him to tell us?" she asked naively.

"I think we can. Come with me" he replied assuringly.

With that they started walking towards the headquarters at the far side of the camp. As they walked, a small contingent of three guards loomed in the distance coming in the opposite direction.

Elda upon seeing them immediately rushed into the shadows of a small alleyway separating the barracks. Anton stopped and awaited the approaching guards. One carried a large flashlight whose light he continually swept back and forth over the rutted street. Anton stood stone still at the edge of the muddy roadway awaiting their arrival.

The oscillating beam cast over him time and time again as they neared. Elda continued to cower in the darkness and stared with alarm as they came closer and closer to the motionless Anton. Each time the light struck him it failed to reflect but rather appeared to pass straight through him lighting the objects behind him.

When the guards came to about ten feet before him, they stopped abruptly. Elda crouched, frozen with fear as she watched.

One of the guards reached into his pocket and pulled out a pack of matches and lit the cigarettes of the other two. Then, they continued their march passed Anton without any acknowledgement of his presence.

He turned in Elda's direction and called her forward. She timidly emerged from her hiding place.

"As I told you before, to be seen or unseen as you wish is within your power. You can appear as a mere shadow of the night to those whom your presence is to be obscured.



All that is required is your desire to make it so. Remember however, these powers are only a blessing of the night. At sunrise, we are afflicted with all the vulnerabilities of mortals. It is the price paid for our freedom during the hours of dawn to dusk.

It is important to be most careful during these times since injury and even death are possible. True and complete healings are possible only after darkness falls. At that time even the most severe of injuries can be remedied, even from the edge of death, so long as one's body has not been destroyed.

They continued the march towards the camp headquarters with Anton leading the way. They soon approached the commandant's barracks. Two SS men stood stoically before its entrance. Upon seeing them, Elda instinctively slowed her pace and stopped.

Anton turned towards her.

"Fear not, I have clouded their minds and they cannot see us" he encouraged.

She then timidly began to move slowly forward but still cautiously lagging behind him. Once reaching the entrance of the building they entered freely, without the slightest acknowledgement of their presence by the guards. At the far end of the long hallway was the commandant's office, its door open wide revealing a huge, stocky man seated behind a large desk. A lamp glowed brightly behind him as he pored over the papers before him.

They entered the room unobserved and stood before the desk. Anton closed his eyes and furled his forehead as he concentrated. After a second or two, the commandant looked up with a startled voice.

“Who are you? Where did you come from?” he announced in a startled outburst.

“Beeile dich! (Guards! Guards!)” he yelled.

Elda glanced down the hallway to see the two guards that had been at the front door, racing towards the office.

Anton stood motionless, unconcerned about the approaching guards. Elda closed her eyes and forced herself to remain still.

They rushed through the doorway with guns drawn.

“Shoot them! Shoot them both!” shouted the commandant as he pointed at Anton and Elda.

Both men froze in astonishment and looked perplexedly in the direction to which he pointed.

“Why do you hesitate? I said shoot them! Both of them!” he repeated angrily.

They remained in their frozen pose and stared at each other in bewilderment. Then, one spoke in an unsure tone.

“Who should we shoot, Heir Commandant?”

“Those two, you fools!” he exclaimed and again motioned towards Anton and Elda.

He continued to hesitate and then again spoke. "We see none, Heir Commandant."

"See none? Are you blind?" he screamed.

Hearing intensity of his command, they blindly shot several volleys in the direction to which he had pointed. Several bullets struck both Anton and Elda but neither responded. The punctures made by the penetrating projectiles closed within seconds leaving no evidence of their entry and they both continued to stand silently before the Commandant.

Upon seeing the ineffectiveness of the firing, he ordered the guards from the room and sank back into his chair in disbelief. He looked up at them and spoke.

"Am I mad?" he asked himself meekly.

"Who are you and what are you and what do you want of me?" he continued in a low, stuttering voice.

"Who and what we are is of no concern to you. What we want is the fate of Fredrick Draken. He was brought here to your camp several days ago from Berlin" replied Anton.

"Thousands have been brought here. How could I know about one individual?" he answered.

"You have records, records of everyone and their every move. Find that of Fredrick Draken" Anton commanded as he motioned towards the several large file cabinets at the far end of the room.

“I have no such records” replied the Commandant.

A raging scowl crept over Anton’s face. He stepped towards him, grasping him by his hair pulling his head backward with a sharp thrust and with his other hand held his chin with a crushing grip. He bent over, inches from his face, with eyes gleaming and repeated his command.

“Find me those records! Now!” he yelled and with that he lifted the Commandant from his chair and threw him headlong towards the file cabinets.

The commandant slowly rose to his knees from the spot where he had landed and timidly opened one of the cabinet drawers. After several minutes of shuffling through the papers he withdrew several sheets of paper and began to peruse them.

“You’ve found it!” announced Anton.

“Give it to me!”

“I haven’t located his name yet” replied the Commandant.

“That’s a lie. You are looking at his name right now. I can see it in your mind” Anton answered sternly and ripped the paper from his trembling hand and read it silently to himself.

“Fredrick Draken nach Auschwitz geschickt auf Antrag des Doctor Hirt” it read.

“What does it say?” asked Elda eagerly.

“It says your father was taken to Auschwitz the day after we arrived here” answered Anton.

“Auschwitz! Why?” she cried.

“It says he was sent at the request of a doctor at Auschwitz, a Doctor Augusta Hirt.”

Anton looked up at the Commandant.

“Why does a doctor at Auschwitz want him?” he asked. The Commandant swallowed hard and replied.

“I don’t know. Every once in a while he sends for a specific person to be sent to him. I think it is because they have some special characteristics that suit his experimentation.

That’s all I know. I am required to conform to his requests by orders from Berlin.”

Elda turned to Anton. “That true?” she asked.

“Yes, he tells what is in his mind” Anton replied.

“When we arrived here I noticed that not all of the box cars were emptied. Many left still filled with passengers. Where were they taken?” Anton continued his interrogation.

“To other camps. Each of the cars is marked as to which camp they are to go” replied the Commandant.

“Do any go to Auschwitz?”

“Yes” he answered.

His questions answered, Anton closed his eyes. A statue like expression covered his face. He stood frozen; not a muscle moved.

Elda watched as the Commandant rose and slowly walked to his desk. He opened the desk drawer and withdrew a Luger. He then raised it to his head in a robotic motion.

Then he spoke.

“I was only following orders” he exclaimed. There was a brief silence.

“So am I” replied Anton and with that the silence was broken by the report of the gun shot that ripped through his temple. The gun flew from his hand as he slumped to the floor.

Anton immediately stepped to him, pulled back his head and sank his teeth into the neck of the lifeless body. After he had filled himself he arose and looked at Elda.

“Mother always told me it is a sin to waste good food” he spoke with a sly grin as he tore the Commandant’s SS arm band from his sleeve. He wiped the blood from his mouth and chin with it. When he was finished he threw the stained banner onto the Commandant’s corpse and turned away. Then he extended his hand to her and spoke.

“We must go to Auschwitz and find your father.”

“How shall we go?” Elda asked.

“Aboard the train” he replied.

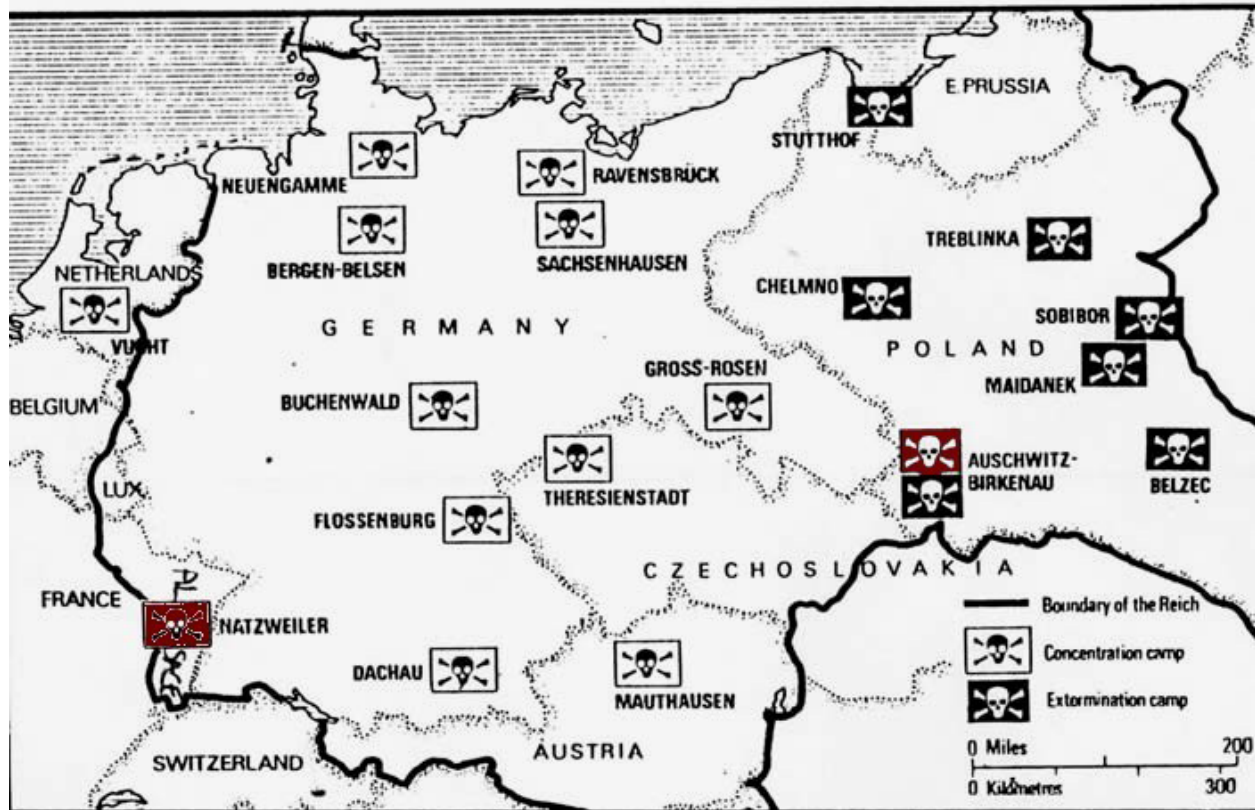
“We must leave now for the station before the sun rises. Once the light of day arrives all our powers are forsaken. We can no longer hide from the sight of others, we can no longer traverse physical boundaries at will or see the thoughts of others and worse of all we become subject to death itself. If we sustain mortal injury and can survive until sundown, we will then be healed as the sun sets. If survival until that time is not possible then a final death is our fate. We will cease to exist and our bodies will return to the elements. This is the risk we must endure so as to be able to walk in the light as all mortals do.

When night falls our powers are again restored and we walk again with the gifts of the Christ, given to us through Saint Judas.

Let us go now and hide near the train station until darkness and then we will enter the car marked Auschwitz and seek your father.”

With that they passed out of the office in the same manner as which they had entered, leaving the Commandant’s corpse to be found by the guards as the apparent suicide of a mad man.

## CONCENTRATION CAMPS



Sites of Nazi concentration camps.

## Chapter 3

### Pursuit

They hid the entire next day in the cool dark shadows of an adjacent pine grove watching train after train, arrive and leave. Each time prisoners were hustled from the same five cars marked "Sachsenhausen" while the rest were left unemptied and sent off to their other dreadful destinations. Each car was marked designation, Dachau, Buchenwald, Treblinka and finally Auschwitz.



At last the sun began to set and Anton and Elda could hear the sounds of another approaching train. They moved stealthily from the shadows towards the station just as the locomotive pulled in and the final rays of the sun disappeared behind the horizon.

The doors of the cars marked "Sachsenhausen" were flung open and the wretched cargo was pulled from it. The sounds of the guard's shouts, the incessant barking of their dogs and the cries of the people filled the air as they were pushed and shoved down the narrow path towards the camp.

Anton and Elda made their way to one of the cars marked "Auschwitz" and entered through the padlocked door. Once inside, they merged with the pitiful crowd of prisoners.

Soon, the train lurched forward and their journey to find Elda's father began. They rode for hours, stopping several times. Each time the mournful cries of the discharged passengers along with the screams of the guards rang loudly.

As the hours passed, Anton began to peer out of the small cracks in the wall of the car. He was searching for any sign of the morning light and hoping to see none. So far, none appeared.

Finally, the train again came to a stop and this time the door of their car slid open with the resounding crash of metal on metal as it slammed against the stop. Immediately, everyone was pulled, pushed and prodded by the guards from the sordid freight car.

Anton and Elda remained at the back of the car as the rest exited. Within minutes, it was emptied; the door was slammed shut and relocked. As they stood alone in the empty vehicle they could hear the receding sounds of the crowd leaving the station.

They then moved through the closed door and onto the platform. Two guards stalwartly remained at the far ends of the depot. Anton and Elda moved quickly towards a thicket adjacent to left end of the station so as to obtain hiding just as the sun's rays began to leak over the horizon. As they walked passed the guard, suddenly his dog began to howl and lunge in their direction.

"Was ist los?" commanded the guard as he pulled the dog backward. The dog continued to bark and strain in their direction.

Elda stopped in mid step as a bolt of fear shot through her. Anton too, stopped in mid step and turned to the animal, glaring straight into the beast's eyes. Within seconds the dog cowered, barking ceased and it seated itself quietly as the guard's feet.

The guard looked down and announced in a disgusted tone "Albern animal" and then continued his stoic stance.

Anton and Elda turned and walked to the sheltering thicket just as the sun's light began to reflect from the tops of the snow covered pine trees.

"We will wait here until darkness again prevails and then seek your father" said Anton.

"And how shall we know where to find him?" replied Elda.

“We will ask, just as we asked the Commandant at Sachsenhausen” answered Anton assuredly.

With that, they huddled together in waiting. As the day came to an end and the sun’s rays disappeared over the horizon, they emerged from hiding and moved towards the lone guard at the near end of the station platform. As they approached, he raised his rifle towards them and shouted sternly.

“Stop! Wer sind Sie?”

They both stopped and Anton replied.

“It is no concern to you who we are. Where is the Commandant’s barrack?”

The guard raised the rifle even higher to his shoulder and began his response.

“Heben sie ihre hande und .....

” he suddenly stopped his speech in midsentence and lowered the rifle. Elda looked at Anton. His eyes were closed and his face bore a familiar pose, like that which it had shown in the Commandant’s office at Sachsenhausen.

The guard then again began to speak, this time in a calm, robotic tone.

“He is at the far end of the path. It is the building with the Swastika over its door.”

Anton and Elda left the guard in his entrancement and moved unheeded passed the other guard at far end of the platform. They began the walk down the path leading from the station.

Once at the barrack, they passed the guards as they had done before and stood before the Commandant's door.

This time he felt no need to further demonstrate his supernatural skills. By now, Elda was becoming well aware of the powers that Anton and she too possessed.

He again summoned his deep concentrated thoughts. Inside, the Commandant sitting behind his desk, looked up with the uneasy feeling of a presence about him. His eyes scanned the room but saw no one. Then, he pulled himself erect in his chair and stared straight ahead as if he was deep in thought.

The door of the office opened and Anton and Elda entered. Without a word, he rose and walked to the cabinets behind his desk, opened the drawer and rifled through the files. After several minutes, he pulled a paper from the drawer and handed it to Anton. He then turned silently and returned to his seat behind the desk.

Anton read through the long list of names on the paper and finally found it.

"Fredrick Draken sent to Natzweiler- Struthof by order of Doctor August Hirt" the entry read.

Anton looked up and spoke.

"I thought Hirt was here at Auschwitz?"

"He is now at Natzweiler- Struthof and he sends for what he calls 'interesting and demonstrative anatomical specimens' for scientific investigation and experimentation" came the robotic, monotone reply from the Commandant.

Anton looked at Elda without a word and she replied to his thought question.

“My father has two different color eyes. It’s called heterochromia iridium and is very rare in humans but common in many animals. That probably sparked Hirt’s interest in my father.” She answered.

Anton pointed to the Commandant and looked at Elda.

“Are you hungry?” he asked.

“Not now” she replied.

They turned and left as unnoticed as they had entered. They walked back to the depot through the cold night air hoping to find a train to Natzweiler- Struthof before daybreak. As they approached the station the first few snowflakes of a winter storm began to fall. They were in luck. Upon getting closer to the depot, they could see a train pulling up to the platform. Again, the boxcar doors were flung open and the sorrowful cargo was again herded from it.

Anton and Elda hurried towards the car marked “Natzweiler- Struthof” and upon arriving there, slid through the locked door to join the woeful occupants of the freight car. After the shouts of the guards, the barking of the dogs and cries of the evacuated passengers faded into the distance, the train moved forward, down the icy rails, towards its next destination.

Elda’s heart sank as she peered through a crack in the wall of the car and saw the crowd being marched down the path towards the camp through the ever increasing

snowfall. The tragic sight dimmed as the train accelerated and soon all that was visible through the narrow opening was a flurry of white.

She and Anton settled in a corner of the car, prepared for the long trip to Natzweiler-Struthof. An hour passed and then another. They felt the continuous shifting, left and right as the train made its winding way through the mountain passages.

Elda continued to stare out through the crack with a vacant gaze.

“What are the real chances of finding her father?” she thought.

“And if they do find him, then what?”

In what condition might he be?

Will he be starved, maimed or even dead?

If they find him alive, how could they free him?

Must he be made to be like them in order to be saved?

And would he agree to become of such an existence?”

All these questions raced through her mind.

Suddenly, her thoughts were interrupted by the deafening screech of steel on steel. Its screaming sound filled the air. The shifting of the car intensified into a rocking and then into a violent quake. The entire car pitched sideways throwing all the passengers against the far wall. As the mass of bodies struck the wall, the car seemed to be suspended, motionless in space for a brief moment. Then, a sudden feeling of

weightlessness as the car left the tracks and began its precarious fall to the valley below.

Time seemed to be slowed; almost stopped as they fell. Everyone and everything tumbled about inside the car as if in slow motion as they sped downward. Then, a resounding crack of an impact and the car was thrust sideways for a moment. Sunlight streamed into the still falling container as the roof of the car was ripped free by its collision with the rock wall of the cliff. The descent continued in ever accelerating free fall.

Seconds later, the impact with the base of the cliff yielded a thundering blast. The cars still coupled, rolled one after the other, in a long mangled chain, over and over again, before finally coming to rest. The sound of some still spinning freight car wheels and the moans of the injured passengers rose in the still, cold air. Within minutes those sounds faded into a deafening silence.

Elda awakened. She could feel a throbbing pain in her right arm and numbness in her hand. She looked about the mangled remnants of the car lying on its side. No motion, no sound, not a stirring of any sort could be seen, only ripped flesh and distorted steel. She pulled herself out through the hole which had been gashed in the roof and into the cloud dimmed sunlight and stood erect. Far above, she could see two cars still clinging precariously to the side of the crag, being held there by entanglement with the twisted rails which held them. Then, listening carefully, she could hear the faint, distant screams of the poor souls which the dangling cars still housed.

Roused from her stupor by the horror of the scene, she soon regained her full consciousness.

Then suddenly, "Anton! Where is Anton?"

The alarming thought flashed frightfully through her mind.

The pain of her injuries vanished as she frantically squeezed herself back into the wreckage. The clouds began to part and more light flooded the opening. She crawled over the strewn bodies, eagerly searching for him. Finally, she found him slumped under two others. Using all her strength she pulled the two lifeless forms from him and began to drag him towards the opening.

"How could this be?" she thought.

"With all his power that she had witnessed, how could this be? How could he be dead and she still be alive?"

Then, she remembered his repeated words with startling recall.

"When the sun rises all our powers of the darkness are relinquished and we are as all other mortals. We become subject to the same pains and sufferings and even death. If one can remain vital until the dusk, no matter how grave his injuries be, he will become fully vigorous and completely restored in every manner."

She bent over his near apparently lifeless body and placed her ear upon his chest hoping to hear even the slightest sign of life. Did she really hear a feeble beat of his daylight existence or was it wishful imagination?



She pressed even harder against his chest and listened even more intently, anxious to confirm a trace of hope.

Yes, weak but present, she could perceive the faint rhythmic pulse of his mortal being.

“He is alive! But for how long?” she thought apprehensively.

She again peered out through the open roof. Nothing but a sea of white stretched across the valley floor. Not a sign of life prevailed. She leaned back against the edge of the opening with Anton in her arms. Tears slowly streamed as she sat, trancelike, anticipating the fate awaiting both Anton and herself.

Hours passed. She held a tight grip on Anton’s wrist, feeling his vapid pulse becoming weaker and weaker. By now, the sun was high in the sky. She knew full well that sunset was hours ahead and the likelihood of his survival was diminishing with every passing second.

Then, within minutes, the moment of dread arrived and the tepid throb in his wrist became more weak and intermittent. Elda, with a sob, bowed her head in despair and pressed her cheek against his ashen forehead.

It was then, that she noticed the light streaming into the car began to pale.

She lifted her head and again peered out of the opening. The brightness of the glistening snow was fading. A shadow, dark as night, crept towards her. It moved closer and closer and soon enveloped the entire valley.

It became night when it should be day. The sun was replaced by the moon. Forlorn howls echoed across the snowscape as distant wolves prepared for their nightly hunt.

Elda's writhing pain in her arm ebbed and the numbness she had felt dissipated.

She felt a tight grip on her hand and looked down. Anton's eyes slowly opened. Now she could feel no pulse but his grip grew even stronger. His lips began to move and he spoke.

"What has happened?" he asked. Elda replied in a stunned voice.

"There was a terrible train wreck. The car left the tracks and we plunged into this valley."

"How come I know nothing of this?" he queried.

She hesitated.

"It happened just at sunrise. Everyone was killed except me" she answered.

"If the sun had risen then how is it that I am not one of the dead?" he asked.

"You were at the edge of existence.

"You remained barely alive until just a few moments ago. Now night has miraculously fallen during the day and you have survived" she answered as she hugged and embraced him.

"Night fallen during the day?" he repeated quizzically.

"Yes, but moments ago it was daylight and now it is night!" she replied.

Anton peered out through the torn roof opening. He could see the faint halo of light surrounding a huge dark disk in the sky. Then he knew.

He arose and stumbled out into the cool, still air. He raised his hands skyward, fell to his knees and cried loudly.

“Oh Lord Christ and Saint Judas, by this miracle, you have preserved me.

I give you my thanks for allowing me to remain faithful to my perpetual tasks. I shall continue in your name, mercifully relieving the agony of virtuous souls and casting your vengeance on those of malevolent heart.”

He held motionless as his words filled the dark landscape, echoing and reechoing from the canyon walls.

He then reentered the car and spoke in an urgent voice.

“Elda, this gift of darkness is only brief. We must gain all the strength that we can, now while it is still with us.”

He looked about the car and swept his outstretched hand, with a pointed finger, over the maimed bodies lying everywhere.

“None will survive. For those not already perished, their certain fate is death. Let us search amongst those here for the warmth of life that may still be present in some and feed ourselves while it is still possible.”

They moved throughout the car, from body to body, seeking and consuming that which was needed. With each swallow of the precious fluid, Elda became more vital and her senses more acute. Anton too, became strengthened as he took in long drafts of the blood from one and then the next until his thirst was sated.

With their stamina rekindled, they set out on a path through the valley, paralleling the train track on the cliff above. As they plodded through barren, snow covered terrain, an eerie light began to filter from the sky. Elda looked skyward to see a crescent sliver of sun. As they walked the crescent became larger and larger until at last the sun's full radiance again streamed over the land.

It was then that she realized the true significance of Anton's relationship with Almighty powers. His existence had been spared by authority of nature itself, an eclipse had saved him. As the light poured over them, their supernatural powers began to decay into those of mere mortals and the view before them continued bleak and endless.

Where would this wandering take them? Neither knew, however each was sure that staying at the scene of the disaster would likely result in their demise. The SS would surely arrive once the accident was discovered. If they arrived at night Elda and Anton could overcome them and take their vehicles. However, if it took several days, how could they survive that long? All the occupants would be long since dead and useless for the nourishment they required.

If the SS arrived in the daylight Elda and Anton would be defenseless and surely be executed. Taking the chance that the SS would come soon and at night was one they

were not willing to take and so on they marched ever forward, becoming more and more fatigued by the cold, cruel journey.

Every step was more exhausting than the one before it. The sun began its descent and dusk was shading the land. The howling of the wolves reverberated from the cliff walls with greater frequency and their cries less distant.

Elda saw it, a slithering shadow faintly visible in the distance. Then another darted even closer, followed by a third. Finally, a fourth appeared within a hundred meters and stopped. Its lurking, gray outline against the dimly lit snow made its nature obvious.

With a long, forlorn cry the other three joined it and in unison began to approach the two weary travelers. Two moved straight ahead while the other two moved one left and one right, surrounding their intended prey.

Anton and Elda stopped and stood stone still. Anton looked upwards hoping to see the setting sun disappear against the horizon. Its rays were failing but not entirely extinguished. It would be several minutes before day would completely slip into night.

“Don’t move and don’t back up no matter what” whispered Anton.

There they stood frozen as the wolves stealthily crept towards them and the sky light dulled. They continued their approach with each slow, deliberate, crouched step. Elda reached out and tightly grasped Anton’s hand. That slight motion invoked a low, frightening snarl. The pack paused momentarily and then they again resumed their slinky, menacing advance. When they were within feet of the two travelers they stopped

once more, appearing as motionless statues in the faint moonlight which began creeping over the terrain.

Suddenly, the lead wolf let out a sharp, reverberating howl and leapt forward at Anton. Without a flinch, Anton reached out and gripped the beast by the throat in midair. With his other hand he ripped its head to the side. The animal instantaneously fell dead before him.

He then turned to face one of the other two. It immediately cowered at his gaze, turned and ran off into the darkness followed by the others.

Anton turned to Elda.

“We should make use of this nourishment. Although animal fluids lack the potency of the human it must suffice for we can’t be sure when we will have another opportunity to feed ourselves.”

With that, they consumed all that they could from the lifeless creature and continued their desolate journey. They plodded through the knee deep snow for several more hours. Suddenly, Anton spied a dim speck of light in the distance. It grew brighter as they approached and the faint smell of wood smoke filtered through the air. A small house with a flickering light streaming through the window came into view. Behind it, there stood the outline of a barn and several outer buildings. Upon seeing it, Anton and Elda increased their pace. They had no way of telling what to expect, but whatever it was, it had to be better than this frigid desolation.

Arriving several hundred yards from the house, their attention was suddenly drawn to another light in the distance. The light came ever closer and they could see that it was not one light but two. The noise of racing motors could now be heard echoing over the landscape.

Anton and Elda moved a bit closer and did not approach the house but instead remained in the shadows of several pine trees adjacent to the building.

The distant lights came ever closer. Then, looming from the hazy darkness appeared the outline of a motorcycle with a sidecar. As it came into sharper focus Anton could see that it was being ridden by two SS troopers. The vehicle stopped abruptly in front of the farmhouse door and both men got out. They walked to the door and soundly rapped their gun butts against it.

“Offnen Sie im Namen des Fuhrers” they shouted as they continued to pound the door.

The windows of the upstairs rooms became illuminated and several seconds later the door opened revealing an elderly man in night clothes. Both SS men pushed their way passed him and entered the building.

Anton and Elda moved closer, up to the wall of the house and listened intently. They could hear the interrogation of the old man.

“Have any strangers been by this way?”

“No!” came the frightened reply.

“There has been a train derailment about five kilometers up the valley and we are seeking passengers who may have escaped. They are all considered to be prisoners of the Reich and harboring any will be a capital offense. You do understand that don’t you?” stated the trooper in a stern voice.

“Let me ask you again. Have you seen any strangers in the area?” he continued.

“No” the old man again replied in a quivering voice.

“Search the house” the first trooper commanded as he motioned to the other one.

“No, you’ll frighten my wife and she has a serious heart condition” protested the old man as he stepped forward.

“Pay him no mind” shouted the trooper and he pushed the old man to the floor with the butt of his rifle.

The second proceeded to do as he was ordered.

Anton and Elda could hear the banging of doors and cries of the old man’s wife from upstairs as the search was carried out. After several minutes the second trooper returned.

“What did you find?” he was asked.

“Nichts!” was his answer.

“Go to the barn and search there” he was then commanded.



Upon hearing the command Anton motioned to Elda and pointed towards the barn. Elda saw the trooper trudging through the snow to the door of the building and entering. She immediately raced to the barn and stood beside the open door. She could see the reflected beam of his flashlight scanning the building's interior. Then, the ray of light shone out through the open doorway and she heard the footsteps behind it.

The trooper appeared in the opening, turned and reached to close the door. Elda could feel herself fill with anxiety. She wasn't sure if it was from her eagerness or from her fear of what she was about to do. A feeling of strength swelled within her and she lunged towards her victim and gripped him tightly from behind. She had one hand around his throat with which she squeezed with all her might making him incapable of the slightest utterance. With her other hand she ripped his head to one side and sunk her teeth deep into his neck penetrating the carotid artery.

She felt it, the warm pulsating surge. The powerful fluid filled her mouth as she swallowed again and again until his body fell limp in her grasp. A feeling of strength and well-being overwhelmed her as she dropped his lifeless form to the ground.

"Anton was right" she thought.

"The more sinister the victim, the greater the power his blood bestows" he had told her.

The blood of those crying for death to come was sustaining but this was more than just nourishment. It yielded intensity and imparted vitality beyond description. Feelings of ecstasy and vigor pulsed through her as she walked back to the house.

“Where is Herman?” the trooper asked himself aloud.

A prolonged silence and again he spoke, this time to the old man in a threatening voice.

“You and I are going out to find Herman” and he grabbed the old man by the back of his nightshirt and pushed him out the door. He marched him bare foot through the knee deep snow towards the barn.

Upon seeing this, Anton raced to them and clenched the trooper from behind catapulting him backwards to the ground. His rifle fell from his grasp as Anton pierced his throat with a savage fury. Within seconds he lay cold and still in blood stained snow.

Anton arose, sated and wiping away the bright red drippings with the back of his hand.

The old man stood paralyzed, unable to fully comprehend the event he had just witnessed.

“Go back to your home and forget what you have seen. Be thankful for your rescue and fear not” spoke Anton.

The old man marched back to the house in a hurried, trance like state.

Anton and Elda proceeded to drag both of the lifeless bodies to the far side of the lot and deposited them in an adjacent hedgerow where the wolves were sure to dispose of them. They then went back to the house and claimed the abandoned motorcycle for their own.

## Chapter 4

### Dreadful Truths

With their regained strength and the motorcycle, travel was certainly less arduous than before. They drove further through the valley still paralleling the train tracks on the cliff above hoping to follow them to Natzweiter- Struthof and Elda's father. They rode for miles and into the early hours.

Finally, something became visible in the distance, a dim flickering light.

The smell of smoke flowed through the frigid air. Both recognized the odor as not being that of burning wood or coal. It bore an unfamiliar stench all its own. The smell became more and more nauseating as they drew closer. It was a sweet and putrid aroma, almost like leather being tanned over an open flame.

Soon the camp rose into full view with the source of the foul odor becoming evident. Several huge chimneys stood in the background, illuminated by the rising sun. Each belched their plumes of acrid smoke into the air which furled about the campsite in a hazy, ominous cloud. Anton stopped the motorcycle and both momentarily stared at the horrific sight before them.

Then, from behind a rise in the distant west, came the forlorn wail of an approaching train horn.

“The trains must have been rerouted to avoid the accident site. These people will let nothing stand in their way. It appears that the scheduled transport of these poor souls is being kept on schedule at all cost.

We must conceal ourselves until sunset and then we will search for your father” Anton concluded.

They drove over to a thicket at the edge of the camp and waited. Night soon fell and Anton worked his magic. They slipped passed the guards unnoticed and into the complex. Anton knew that their search should begin at the building housing Hirt’s laboratory. Finding it would be another question.

They walked passed the cold, gray buildings one after the other, all marked with letters and numbers. Then he spotted a building in the distance bearing a sign reading “Medizinische Gebaude”.

As they approached, they read a small placard next to the door. “SS- Hauptsturmfuhrer Doctor August Hirt”

“This is the building” he whispered to Eida.

“I am sure this is where we will find your father” he added trying to reassure her.

They entered the building again passing the guards unnoticed. At the far end of the hall could be seen a room with doors swung wide open revealing a laboratory. A small woman, dressed in a white gown was busily meandering about from one table to another.

She turned with a startled look to face them as they entered the room. She said nothing and stood stone still bearing a fearful stare as they walked toward her.

Then she finally spoke.

“Are you here to see Doctor Hirt?”

“Yes!” answered Anton.

“He is not here” she answered in a quivering voice.

“Where is he?” asked Elda..

“Are you his assistant by choice?” he questioned.

“No!

Not really. My choice was to be his assistant and live or go with the others.

I was a nurse before I was brought here and I suppose that is why I was given that choice and not immediately sent with the others.”

“Where did the others go?” asked Anton.

“To their deaths” she gave the grim reply with her head bowed.

“And what are your duties here in this laboratory?” he continue to question her.

“I am required to assist in the operations performed by Doctor Hirt and act as scrub nurse before and after the operations.”

She paused and then looked up.

“Having witnessed some of the things I have seen, I sometimes think it would have been better to have gone with the rest” she said with tears welling up in her eyes.

“Are you here to take me away?” she concluded.

“No!” replied Anton reassuringly.

“We are here to find Fredrick Draken. He was brought here from Natzweiter- Struthof by Doctor Hirt’s request. Have you seen anyone by that name here?” asked Elda.

“I don’t know the names of the people brought here. I know all of them have some special physical characteristic. That’s what makes Doctor Hirt interested in them.

What characteristic did Heir Draken have?”

“Heterochromia iridium, his eyes were of different color” Elda replied.

The nurse stopped and thought.

“Yes, we had a man about a week ago with that condition. One of his eyes was brown and the other blue. I remember it well. He was the first person that I had seen with that characteristic.”

“And where is he now?” Elda cried, hoping for a consoling answer.

The woman again bowed her head and paused. Then she slowly motioned to a table at the corner of the room. Anton and Elda both turned in that direction and timidly walked to the table.

Resting upon the table and shelves behind it were several dozen, sealed jars, each containing fragments of flesh, organs and human heads in formaldehyde.

Elda slowly cast her gaze from one jar to the next in stunned silence. Then she saw it. Two eye balls, one brown and one blue suspended in the colorless liquid with a tail of flesh fiber floating behind each. It bore the label "Heterochromia iridium – Friedrich Draken – Probe 01237"

She immediately dropped to her knees with a loud sob and wailed.

"Vater, Vater, was haben diese Bastarde dir getan?"

Anton helped her up from the floor to face him.

"You should have let me die rather than let me live and endure this horror.

Death would have been a lesser ordeal. Now that I am cursed with this eternal life, these thoughts shall never leave me. They will be with me for all time, digging deeper and deeper into my soul with every passing hour" and with that she again fell to her knees in mournful anguish.

Anton reached down and raised her to her feet once more and held her tightly in his arms.

"Elda, my love, I know full well that nothing can extinguish your pain but I can assure you, revenge can surely deaden its bite and revenge you shall have. Together, we will avenge your father's cruel death and other loathsome acts that one mortal committed

upon another. Trust me, we have the power and the will to vindicate and so it will be done.”

Her sobbing ceased and she turned her head towards his with an understanding and grateful glance.

“Are you sure this can be done?” she asked in a soft, pleading, tear-filled voice.

Anton held her by the shoulders and looked deep into her eyes and spoke.

“Let me remind you of the abilities that you and I possess. These holy gifts are bestowed on us by the Savior through the great Saint Judas.

When night falls, we have the power to cloud minds, to read minds and pass through barriers unobstructed. We can survive fatal assaults and heal our bodies at will. We can move through the shadows of darkness unseen. We can allow our presence to be known or unknown as we see fit.

With all these available authorities, do you really believe that we will be unable to claim justice for your father?” he consoled her.

She cast her eyes downward and replied.

“Yes, Anton, I do believe that it will be so and when it is done I will give thanks to you and our protector.”

With that began the long ride northward to Berlin.



## Chapter 5

### Vengeance

It was a long, treacherous journey through the wintry expanses of the western Deutschland. The daylight hours were grueling and painful with the sleet and snow raining heavily against their faces as they rode. During the night hours they regained strength and the pain dissipated as they continued onward, unimpeded. After hours of travel they arrived in Berlin.

Finding Hirt would be the next task. They had no idea where he would be or even what he looked like. The most logical places would be the Brown House (Braunes Haus – National Headquarters of the Nazi Party) also known as The Fuhrer Headquarters or the Gestapo Headquarters at Prinz-Albrecht-Strasse.

Entering the Brown House even at night might present a problem. If they were to encounter Nazis who were very close to the Fuhrer and sat with him on a regular basis, the protection of the Holy Lance which the Fuhrer possessed might protect them too. In that case, Anton and Elda would be powerless against them. They would be devoid of the powers to remain unseen, to influence minds and to resist deadly assaults. They would suffer the same fate as every mortal at the hands of those under the shelter of the Spear.

If they entered either building and encountered Hirt how would they even recognize him? They must obtain a picture, a description or some information about him if they were to successfully avenge the death of Elda's father. Anton reasoned that the only place to get the information they needed would be found in the records of the SS.

Those records must be housed in the Gestapo Headquarters he thought but where in that massive building? Probably in the basement or so he had heard. He would like to spend as little time as possible in his search. He wanted to be sure of their location before entering that menacing snake pit and risking the encountering of one who might be immune to his enchantments.

"I had a friend who worked in that building before it was claimed by the SS. Her name is Elfreda. I know she would be familiar with its design. She might be able to tell us where the records would most likely be kept. She lives several blocks from here" said Elda.

They walked to Elfreda's house. It was darkened and shuttered with a large, crudely painted, yellow star on its door. The word "Jude" was scrawled under it.

Elda turned to Anton.

"I forgot. She was Jewish too!"

"We must enter the building late tonight without guidance and at our own peril. I know of no other way" spoke Anton solemnly.

They returned to a location across from the SS Headquarters and waited.

Soon the sun began to set and Anton arose from his seat on the bench.

“Before we enter we must strengthen ourselves to the fullest extent lest we become weakened during our search.”

He waited for a moment scanning the building intently. Then, he spied two lone SS troopers walking down the steps of the building.

He motioned to Elda as the two came towards them. Within minutes they passed by and Anton and Elda began to follow them as they rounded the corner at the end of the dimly lit street.

They too, rounded the corner and moved to within a few steps behind the two. The men sensing they were being followed stopped and turned. Anton looked straight into the eyes of one and Elda gazed into the eyes of the other.

The two men stood as frozen statues.

In an instant, Anton leapt upon one, knocking him to the ground. Elda did likewise to the other. With that, they filled themselves to the ultimate, savoring every drop.

When it was done, they arose. Anton reached over and grasped Elda tightly and pressed his blood stained lips to hers with a passionate embrace. He released her and spoke confidently with renewed intensity.

“Elda, my love, now I am sure we shall have vengeance, not only for your father but for all who have suffered at the hands of these beasts” he encouraged her.

He reached down and took the pistol from the victims and tucked it into the waistband of his pants. Elda did the same and lifted a gun from the other. They proceeded to drag

both bodies into a nearby alley and covered them with some discarded newspaper from a trash can.

With that, they returned to the SS Headquarters on Prinz-Albrecht- Strasse, waited for the late hours of the night and readied themselves for their perilous entry. When the time arrived, they went to the back of the building and cautiously slipped in through a locked rear door. A long, vacant hallway loomed before them. They slowly moved passed door after door, carefully searching for the inscription, "Dokumentation".

They moved down the stairway at the end of the hall and into the basement. At the foot of the stairs, there it was - a thick metal door with single word above it, "Records" spelled out in German.

Once again, both used their powers to traverse the door. Inside was a large, brightly lit room with row after row of file cabinets each bearing a label as to its contents. One after another bore the label "Judin" with a letter of the alphabet following.

Elda searched for a cabinet marked with the letter "D". She soon found it and immediately began to leaf through the folders. Then, there it was, "Draken, Frederick". She started to read.

"Age 61, male, born in Berlin, October 7TH,1882, daughter Elda, sent Auschwitz November 6th , 1942, transferred to Natzweiter- Struthof by request of Doctor August Hirt November 15th, 1942....."

Elda slowly lowered the folder and stared aimlessly for a moment. Then, in a sudden fit of rage she ripped the papers into pieces, shoved them back into the file drawer and slammed it shut.

She continued her perusal of the file drawer labels one after the other, through row after row. Finally, she arrived at one inscribed with "Camp Medizinisches Personal".

She called to Anton who was still searching through the stacks.

"Here, I think I have found it, the files of the medical personnel at the each camp."

She opened the drawer, thumbed through the files and pulled out one entitled "Doktor August Hirt – Natzweiler- Struthof". She opened and read:

"Doktor August Hirt

Born – Mannheim – April 29, 1898 SS – Hauptsturmführer (Captain) Chairman at Reich University Stationed at Dachau, Auschwitz Currently at Natzweiler-Struthof" she continued to read.

The next page revealed a complete description of Hirt's work.

"Prisoners are gassed and the corpses immediately transported to the laboratory. With a French inmate assistant operation and preservation begins upon arrival. The body must still be warm and eyes open and shiny.

Often prisoners are dissected before gassing. Most of the operations involve castration, hysterectomy or removal of usual organs or appendages."

Then, she could read no more and turned away handing the papers to Anton. He continued to leaf through the folder searching for a picture of Hirt. On the third page there it was.

A picture of a middle aged man, of average size, with dark hair, slightly balding, with wire rimmed glasses and wearing a Fuehrer-like mustache. He was attired in a white lab coat and appeared standing over one of the cadavers upon which he was working. It was a gruesome picture but one which gave Anton and Elda a clear image of Hirt.

Anton tore the picture from the folder and tucked it in his pocket. He replaced the file in the drawer and they left the building as they had entered.

## Chapter 6

### Confronting Evil

Actually finding Hirt would prove difficult. The file they had read gave no indication as to where he might be. Dozens of SS officers routinely entered and left the building daily.

All they could do was watch and study each individual hoping to recognize him.

Days passed and Anton and Elda took turns keeping their passionate vigil from the park across the street. On the evening of the third day, Anton sensed a familiar odor quaffing in the approaching breeze. He recognized it in an instant. It was the very faint stench of death, so faint that it was perceptible only to him.

He knew what that meant. It was just as Grigori had warned many years ago. He looked up to see two men attired in black escorting a third man dressed in an SS uniform. They walked towards the steps of the building. Anton strained to see the faces as they passed under a street lamp. He pulled the picture of Hirt from his pocket and glanced at it and then the face of the third man. It was Hirt and the other two were those emitting the vague scent he had perceived.

He watched as all three climbed the steps and entered the building. He waited patiently, hoping they would not leave until after Elda returned.

His hopes were fulfilled. She joined him after an hour or so and none of the three had yet left the building. As soon as she arrived he began to tell her what he had experienced.

“It was Hirt who entered the building about an hour ago” he began.

“He was accompanied by two others” he continued.

“SS?” she interrupted.

He paused and then answered.

“Not exactly! They were two others such as we.”

“What do you mean such as ‘we’?” she asked excitedly.

Then he began to explain.

“When I was created as I now am by Grigori, he told me of these beings and warned me of their sinister nature. He had created several others such as me at earlier times. All who were created were to accept their mission as that of relieving the sufferings of the dying and destroying those of evil intent. All went well for many centuries. They set forth to accomplish that for which they were created and did so with zeal and triumph.

In the year 1786, two were seduced and corrupted by Lucifer himself. Just as the Great Tempter had approached the Christ, he tried to seduce these too.

He offered them great power and glory if they would but obey him. They, unlike the Savior, fell under his spell and readily accepted his favors.

From that time on they have walked the earth in the service of evil and destruction.

They were there at the “Revolutin Francais” lapping the blood of many innocent victims of the guillotine. They urged and aided the Jacobins as they unleashed the Reign of Terror.

They accompanied Napoleon as he spread misery and strife over the face of Europe. They drank the blood of the fallen on the battlefields and also that of the righteous who openly opposed his tyranny.

They came to America and walked the dusty roads of the Southern Plantations draining the lives of slaves at will. They were there at Shiloh and Cold Harbor too, savaging Union and Rebel soldiers both those mortally wounded and those not yet stricken. .



I, myself, have never encountered creatures such as these. All of this was told to me by Grigori. He gave me warning that if I were to meet them, I and all others like me should be prepared to defend myself against them. They would seek to destroy me if they knew of my presence.”

After listening intently Elda spoke.

“If you have never seen them, then how do you know it is they who accompany Hirt?”

“Grigori told me that once they had pledged their allegiance to the Evil One, Saint Judas cast a plague upon them as punishment for their betrayal. He has afflicted them with the scent of death that they must carry with them for all eternity. It clings to them and warns those such as we of their presence.

The odor is slight now and only perceptible to us but as their evil deeds continue it grows stronger. As they continue their course it shall eventually completely envelope them and all those they serve. It is because, although their bodies do not decay, their souls are rotting and thus release the vapors of death.”

“Does this mean that we are unable to avenge my father’s death and destroy Hirt?” she questioned.

He paused.

“No, we shall accomplish that for which we came but with great difficulty.”

“What do you mean?” she asked.

“In order to destroy Hirt we must first destroy his protectors. That will be no easy task since they too possess powers such as ours” he answered grimly and then continued.

“The advantage we hold is that provided to us by Doctor Ivanovicha many years ago. Our ability to walk in the light of day will surely help us in our efforts.

Those whom we seek to destroy must continue to hide from the brilliance of the sun and can only roam about in the hours of darkness. They have not been freed of this curse as have we. They must rest on the soil of their graves and await reawakening as the sun again sets. If we can find them while they cower from the light in their slumber, their destruction will be manifest.”

“If that is true, why must you and I then carry with us a packet of our soil too?” she asked.

“It is to ensure our existence if the protection given us by Ivanovicha begins to ebb and we too then become subject to the measures such as they. It is better to be prepared for that possibility than to face such circumstance without provision” he answered.

“Now, we must find their place of rest and do what must be done. After that has been accomplished, we will crush the life from Hirt and send him to the Gates of Hell post haste” he added eagerly.

They continued to wait.

Soon four dark figures appeared in the doorway of the building and began to descend the stairs. They were Hirt, the two creatures and a young man appearing to be in his

twenties. The man was clothed in ragged attire and wore the yellow star on his lapel. One of the creatures pushed and prodded him to walk in front of them as they left the building. They walked down the street and rounded the corner.

Anton and Elda quickly emerged from the shadows of the park and stealthily followed. They saw the four walk several more blocks to a dimly lit cellar at 72 Anhalter Strasset. Hirt dismissed the two Nazi guards who had stood at its entrance protecting the lair during their absence. He then shoved the young man through the dark basement doorway. He and the others followed and slammed the door behind them.

Anton and Elda waited and watched. An hour passed. No one left or entered.

They approached the building, crept up to the darkened window adjacent to the doorway and peered through. They saw nothing, no light, no motion, and no sound, only cold blackness.

Anton could tell that they had not left the basement by another exit. The feeble stench of the two leaking through the cracks of the window sash assured him of their continued presence.

Anton then whispered to Elda.

“We cannot confront these in the darkness when they possess their full potency. We must come in the daylight while they slumber. Although we are weakened in the daylight hours we still will have sufficient strength to dispatch them since they will have no power to resist.”

## Chapter 7

### Revenge

As faint glimmers of sunlight poured over the horizon, Anton and Elda prepared for their gruesome task. When the sun had made its full appearance, they walked back to 72 Anhalter Strasset carrying with them the required utensils for the act they were about to perform.

Upon arriving at the building they found the two Storm Troopers again standing before the basement entrance. Hirt had stationed them to guard his loathsome henchmen during daylight hours lest they be discovered defenseless.

Anton and Elda, upon seeing them, continued to walk passed the building.

Being out of earshot of the two, Elda spoke.

“Why does Hirt require his protectors if they themselves require protection from dawn to dusk?” she asked.

“In the beginning, when the Fuehrer became aware of the existence of these beings he asked Hirt to investigate their physiology and develop a new super soldier possessing powers such as they have.

After a time Hirt realized that they gave him great power amongst his Nazi confederates. Who would oppose him in any way, knowing full well that he has the allegiance of fiendish creatures such as these at his disposal?

I believe the Fuehrer himself would be intimidated by knowledge such as this and regret his decision” he answered.

“Why do the beings serve Hirt? What power does he have over them?” asked Elda.

“He has no power over them but he provides them with safe shelter during the daylight.

With him they have no need to continually seek secure hiding for their sleeping hours.

They need not continually hunt for nourishing prey. Hirt can grant them an endless banquet of victims at Natzweiter- Struthof without their slightest effort.

In return for these favors they serve him well” answered Anton.

“We must find a way to enter the building without detection. Being discovered during the hours of the day could mean our demise. We will have no powers to resist bullets or blades and would surely perish by them” he continued.

“Entering during the day, without discovery is impossible. The guards will certainly see us. Then how shall we enter? ” she asked.

Anton was silent. After a moment had passed he turned toward her with a solemn look and spoke.

“We must come at night and observe. When Hirt and his companions leave we will use our power to pass the guards and enter the building. We will hide ourselves until the morning breaks and we will then act to destroy them.”

“But where shall we hide?” asked Elda.

“We must come tonight and if we can gain entry we will examine the interior. We will not make a hasty plan but instead leave with knowledge of the dwelling. Then, we will make our plan” he answered confidently.

When the night came they returned to 72 Anhalter Strasset and again waited. Hirt with his accomplices soon left.

Anton used his abilities to cloak the perception of the guards and he and Elda entered through the locked door.

The basement was expansive and consisted of several, dimly lit, dusty rooms.

Anton walked ahead and Elda followed slowly through the rooms carefully investigating each. Upon entering the third room, Anton excitedly waved his flashlight beam over to the left.

There, against the far wall were two well-worn cots. Covering each was a white linen sheet. Anton pulled the sheet back from one of them revealing a second sheet strewn with a fine layer of soil.

Elda likewise folded back the sheet of the second cot to expose a similar covering of soil beneath it.

They carefully replaced the sheets so as to leave no trace of their investigation and moved on to the next room.

Again, Anton moved the light beam to and fro over the dank, musty interior. As it moved it illuminated a large, blood stained, crumbled, burlap sack lying at the rear of the room. Anton walked to the bag, slowly opened it and shone the light over its contents.

The rays of light reflected from the open, glass-like eyes and the glistening red fluid covering the face of the corpse within. It was the man who had accompanied Hirt and the other two the night before. Anton looked more closely. The man's throat bore a huge, open gash which had nearly severed his head from his body. Anton closed the bag.

"What was in the bag?" Elda whispered.

"Their dinner scraps" answered Anton solemnly.

They walked to the last room of the basement where the building's utility and heating systems were housed. Lying next to the furnace was another large, blood stained, burlap sack with a form similar to the one found in the other room. Anton was sure of its contents without even opening it.

"More scraps?" she whispered.

"Yes" he replied.

He bent over, opened the furnace door and peered in. He could see several charred bones lying in the glowing embers. One appeared to be the remains of a femur with its

hip socket ball protruding up through the fiery mass. Another looked to be a jaw bone with several teeth still mounted in the blackened fragment.

He closed the furnace door and turned to Elda.

“Their garbage disposal” he remarked sarcastically.

Adjacent to the furnace room was a half-filled coal bin and behind that a storage room containing odd furniture pieces, paint cans, cardboard boxes and the like. Mounted on the ceiling was a single light bulb. Anton reached up, unscrewed the bulb and placed it behind one of the boxes.

“We shall hide here, await their return and then remain hidden until daybreak when we will dispatch this evil” he whispered to Elda.

“What if they too are protected by the power of the Spear?” she asked.

“When Grigori first described the existence of these beings to me he told me when they had succumbed to the powers of Satan they had relinquished the protections of all holy relics. He reminded me of the Christ’s words – ‘No man can serve two masters - God and Mammon’.

These have chosen Mammon and they therefore possess none of the immunities granted by the Spear.”

With that they settled themselves at the darkest, far corner of the room hidden behind its contents.



They sat silently and waited.

Within the hour they heard the faint sound of the front door opening as it echoed through the basement. Then the loud voice of one of the creatures cried.

“Halten Sie ihn immer noch (Hold him down).”

It was followed by the sound of a struggle and terrified screams. Then, dead silence.

A short time later, they heard footsteps approaching and the sound of something being dragged into the furnace room. The clang of the opening furnace door resounded. After several minutes another clang of the closing door and footsteps leaving echoed through the room.

After a time, the front door was again heard to open and then close. It was the sound of Hirt leaving. Then all was quiet as the night wore on.

As dawn approached, scant rays of light crept through the cracks in the storage room wall. Anton knew the time had come.

He reached up, tore a piece of exposed wooden lath from the plaster wall. He split its end into a jagged tip and honed it on the cement floor to a sharpened point. Over in the corner, protruding from one of the cartons, he noticed a large, heavy metal crucifix. He pulled it from the box.

With the sharpened lath in one hand and the crucifix in the other, he and Elda then silently left the storage room. They quietly entered the room containing the cots.

Lying upon each one was the grotesque form of one of the beings. Each was lying on his back, motionless with trickles of coagulated blood streaming across his ashen cheeks. The hair was long and matted by the same gelatinous fluid. The clothing was black and speckled with dark red spots. The eyes were wide open but lifeless and the hands were at the sides in a cadaver like pose.

The odor of decomposing blood filled the room.

Anton stealthily approached one of the cots. The creature remained lifeless.

He carefully placed the pointed slat upon the beast's chest and hammered it with a solid blow from the weighty crucifix. The lath plunged deep into its target and pierced the heart with one strike.

A gush of maggot laden blood erupted from the body, rancid smells poured out into the air and a loud, shrill, mournful cry exploded from its lips.

Alerted by the hideous sounds, one of the guards rushed through the basement door. He slammed it forcefully against the wall as he flung it open. A resounding crash echoed loudly.

Within seconds of hearing it, Anton turned to see the guard standing before him with rifle raised.

“Halt! Erhebt eure hande! (Halt and raise your hands!)” he shouted anxiously.

He moved threateningly closer as he spoke. Anton dropped the crucifix. It fell to the floor with a loud clang and he raised his hands as commanded.

The guard again moved even closer. As he did his eyes darted, almost involuntarily, to the macabre mass lying on the cot.

Then Anton saw the flicker of a shadowy form spring from the dark corner of the room. It quickly approached the guard from the rear. A flash of light radiated throughout the room and the roar of a gunshot reverberated.

The guard slumped motionless to the floor revealing Elda who stood with her smoking pistol still raised. The guard's skull struck the concrete floor with a thud and blood spurted from the gaping wound in the back of his head.

Both Anton and Elda immediately moved to the sides of the front door awaiting the entry of the second guard. They didn't have long to wait.

Upon hearing the shot the second guard raced into the basement. As he passed through the entrance, Elda stepped behind him and fired another shot squarely into the back of his head.

He too, dropped almost instantaneously as a lifeless mass.

"Others will soon come!

We must leave here now!" exclaimed Anton.

"What about the other that we must destroy?" asked Elda.

"That shall be for another day. We cannot remain here and chance peril" he replied.

With that, they hurriedly left the building and sought hiding in an alleyway across the street. They watched carefully. Several shades were raised in the surrounding apartment buildings. The outlines of inquisitive people attempting to see the source of the commotion below filled each of the windows. After several minutes, seeing nothing, each window was vacated one by one until they were again all tightly shuttered.

Anton and Elda remained huddled in the alley way some time longer, waiting to be sure that they would not be seen. Just as they were about to leave their concealment, approaching voices sounded.

It was Hirt! He was accompanied by the two troopers who were to assume the next guard shift.

Upon arriving at the building they suddenly stopped and their banter ceased.

“Wo sind die beiden, die hier sein sollte? (Where are the two that should be here?)” he exclaimed in an alarmed voice.

All three entered the basement, the troopers first with rifles raised. Within seconds, Hirt ran from the door and into the street. As he did he pulled a whistle from his pocket and sent out shrieking, incessant blasts.

Once again, window shades began to rise and silhouetted forms peered from within.

This time, upon seeing the source of the uproar, all immediately lowered them. All were fearful of the consequences of appearing to have knowledge of the incident whatever it might be.

Soon a cadre of storm troopers appeared and surrounded the area.

Several entered the building and all those adjacent to it. They proceeded to roust the occupants of each apartment into to the street.

About fifty old men, old women and children were then herded to a place in the center of the roadway, encircled by the troopers with rifles pointed at them.

Hirt spoke in a loud, commanding voice.

“Niemand hat etwas gesehen? (No one has seen anything?)” he began sternly.

“Two of my best men lie murdered in this basement” he continued pointing to the cellar doorway.

“Both were shot! Guns make noise?”

And no one saw or heard anything?

No sounds of struggle or gunfire?” he repeated in disbelief. There was silence.

“I will give you one more chance. Step forward and tell me what you know!” he shouted.

Again silence.

He turned to the Nazi officer beside him.

“Send all of these people back to their homes. Station guards around each building and let no one enter or leave.

Each night I will send for one of them and you will bring them to me so I may introduce them to the one who lies inside and was spared.

When that time comes, all will be required to appear in their open windows so they may see and hear the consequences of their silence.

It is quite possible that some may regain their memory after that which they shall see.”

With that the troopers were stationed about each building.

Anton and Elda remained hidden in the alleyway hoping to devise a plan to reenter the basement and finish their task.

Time passed and dusk approached when Hirt returned. He entered the cellar as darkness began to envelope the landscape. When the sun's light had completely vanished, Hirt and the creature emerged from the basement lair and stood at the center of the roadway showered by the light from the street lamp above.

“Bring me three” Hirt announced to the troopers.

Several of them scurried into one of the doorways and minutes later appeared again dragging two women and a child with them. They made their way towards Hirt and the creature with their victims vainly struggling.

Once there Hirt spoke in a loud voice.

“All of you must come to the window and bear witness” he shouted.

His words broke the stillness and echoed from the walls of the buildings.

Windows above the street slowly opened, one by one. The outline of a person filled each. Hirt glanced about to be sure that every window was occupied.

Then, he motioned to the troopers to bring one of the women forward to the creature. As they did, the creature threw off its hood revealing its misshapen, shriveled face and decay riddled, dagger like teeth dripping with glistening beads of thirst.

The woman's screams filled the air as it leapt toward her and bit deep into her neck. Upon the rush of blood into its mouth, the creature thrust back its head carrying a large piece of the woman's throat between its jagged teeth. It spit out the bloody mass and again attacked the open wound, gorging on the blood spurting from the torn vessels.

A horrified cry came from one of the windows above. Hirt hearing the outcry motioned to one of the troopers who immediately aimed his rifle at the window from which the screams had come and fired. Instantaneously, a body catapulted through the open window and into the street below.

"No more outcries will be tolerated.

Watch this in silence and reconsider your decision to continue withholding information from me" Hirt yelled.

Then all became quiet.

When the beast was done with the first, the next was brought forward to suffer the same demise. Again the creature sated himself. This time the witnesses remained mute. Then the final victim was devoured.

Fully satisfied, the being and Hirt reentered the basement leaving the mutilated corpses in the street. Several troopers immediately grasped the arms of the fallen victims and followed, dragging them behind. The other guards resumed their posts.

Within minutes smoke poured from the building's chimney and the air filled with the smell of burning flesh.

Moments later Hirt exited the cellar into the blood stained street and again spoke.

"We will be back tomorrow night.

Who among you will be next? Something to dream about! Close your windows and go to sleep - if you can!"

The windows all closed, the shades were all drawn and Hirt left accompanied by the Nazi officer and two troopers.

The next morning found Anton and Elda still secluded in the alleyway across from the building. The guards had remained in place throughout the night and were relieved with a fresh unit as the sun rose.

"How shall we enter now and complete our task?" asked Elda.

"I am not sure but it must be done" Anton replied.

They continued to watch and ponder.



Suddenly, from the distant east came a dull, thunder like noise. It grew ever louder until at last its source was revealed. Airplanes were approaching and from the ever increasing rumble, it was many.

As the roar intensified, the ground began to quiver. Then, the sounds of nearby explosions rang over the terrain, amplified by reverberations from the building walls and saturating the air with alarm. The thunderous bursts moved ever closer until their approaching flashes of light radiated in the background.

Seconds later several buildings began to collapse as they were struck by the falling missiles. Cries of terror streamed from the windows as each crumbled under the impact carrying many of the occupants to a rubble filled grave. Many ran from the falling structures, covered with dust and wounds. Some bore small children in their arms as they fled. None knew where to flee, but flee they must.

A minute later, all was silent, save the occasionally sound of falling fragments of the destroyed structures.

Miraculously the building housing the creature was unscathed.

The buildings adjacent to the alleyway occupied by Anton and Elda had also been spared. A small pile of debris had fallen from the surrounding blasts into the alley entrance and a cloud of dust had been cast throughout its interior but neither he nor she had been injured.

As the cloud settled they could see that most of the guards who had been surrounding the area had deserted. Only three stalwartly remained.

“Now is the time. Our saintly benefactor has made it so. We will easily dispatch these three from behind and then complete our destruction of the remaining evil” spoke Anton confidently.

With that, each grasped his pistol to reassure themselves of its presence and then moved towards the mouth of the alleyway. They began to climb over the rubble towards the street and drew their weapons as they did.

Upon reaching the alley entrance they immediately noticed a group of troopers heading towards them. It was headed by Hirt and behind him were two carrying a large, coffin like box. They approached rapidly, almost at a trot.

Anton and Elda pulled back into their hiding place and watched.

Hirt and the two men with the box entered the basement while the others remained at attention in front of the doorway with the other three guards. The last remnants of dust were still suspended in the air allowing shafts of sunlight to be seen as it poured down over the landscape.

After a time, Hirt and the two men carrying the box emerged from the basement. Then they all marched off leaving the street vacant.

Anton and Elda waited and then again climbed over the debris in front of the alley and into the street. They studiously scanned the surroundings for any sign of Nazi troopers. None could be seen.

With that, they entered the unguarded basement. The cot upon which Anton had destroyed the first being was gone as were his remains. The second cot was still in place but empty. In the boiler room nothing was to be found but the smoldering, bone fragment, filled embers within the furnace.

“They have gone, taking the evil with them. Hirt fears his own destruction and that of the being by the next wave of bombings” said Anton.

“We too should fear for our own safety and obtain refuge. We will again seek it at a later time” added Elda.

“We will wait here until nightfall. There are I am sure, many suffering fatally injured in the ruins that surround us. We will obtain all the nourishment that we might need to continue our pursuit” announced Anton. They waited and at nightfall ate voraciously.

## Chapter 8

### Guidance of the Saint

Throughout the days following, Anton and Elda remained across from the SS Headquarters hoping to see Hirt. Every day brought ever increased bombings. The ground shook under the impacts and dust from surrounding buildings filled the air as they collapsed into rubble. Terrified screams and cries of the injured echoed from the debris as brilliant exploding flashes penetrated through the settling ash.

Activity in the streets and at the Headquarters diminished with each passing day. It soon became apparent that many were fleeing the city to escape from the unrelenting bombardment. Hirt and the creature were probably among them.

As the destruction came ever nearer, Anton and Elda too became fearful for their safety. Serious injury during daylight hours would surely mean their demise.

With that knowledge, they too joined the long stream of refugees leaving the city. By day they trudged like the rest, step by painful step. They, as the others, weren't sure where they were going but continued the cruel march forward towards the unknown. At night they boarded passing military vehicles by using their powers of concealment to remain unseen by the soldiers.

On the third day of the journey, a steady, misty rain began to fall and the ankle deep mud it created made travel even more wearisome. Anton and Elda continued to move slowly as part of the long dreary line wending its way across the countryside.

Then, through the fog filled surroundings, Anton noticed a thin gray form of a man standing in the distance. He appeared to remain motionless as the line of marchers passed seemingly unaware of his presence there at the roadside.

As Anton and Elda approached, the others continued to pass by unaware of his presence. When they finally reached him, the man took up a position beside them and began to walk with them. After a short distance he spoke.

“Who is it that you seek and why?” he asked.

“Why is it that you ask whom we seek? How might you know that it is our mission to find someone?” replied Anton.

There was a brief silence and then the man replied.

“It is how that I know of you and your nature. I have been sent to aid in your quest to destroy the evil one and his disciples.”

“Sent by whom and from where?” asked Elda.

“I come from another plane which is coincident with the one in which we now exist but is unperceived. There dwells your ultimate creator, the one who gave ongoing life to Saint Judas and in turn to Gorgi and then through him to you Anton. It is he who has sent me” answered the man.

“If this be true, then who are you?” asked Anton.

“I am the one to whom the origin of your life was given by the Master. I am Judas” came his reply.

With that they stepped from the line and knelt before him.

Several of the marchers paused and stared. To those passing it appeared that Anton and Elda were speaking with no one present.

“War and destruction does strange things to people. Many go mad such as these” said one of the marchers to his companion as he motioned towards them kneeling at the roadside.

“I was in the last war and I saw the same thing happen. May God be merciful on their poor souls” remarked the companion and they continued walking.

“Arise! I did not come and I was not sent to seek your veneration. I was sent to make you stronger, to make you more able in your quest to obtain justice and annihilate evil.”

“And in what manner will that be done?” replied Anton.

“I shall confer to you the ability to cast your powers upon all manner of creatures and men at all times. No obstacle shall impede you. Even those possessing the Holy Spear shall not be immune from your potency. Your newly received prowess will be maintained in both darkness and light.

The failures of the flesh which now apply to you in the light shall be rescinded and you will walk free of earthly harm in the day as well as the night. The only acts that may harm you are those wrought by one such as yourself.

From this danger I cannot release you.” answered Judas.

He drew a small crystal flask from inside his cloak and held it up for them to see the crimson liquid it contained.

“This is the fluid that sprang from the Master’s side as he entered death. It is the elixir of life and the nourishment of the spirit of those such as we. By Him, through it, we had been granted our enduring existence both physical and ethereal. It is within this flask that all strength and virtue resides.

Take and drink for it is in this way that you shall receive the Master’s blessings” he commanded as he passed the container to Anton and then Elda.

Each in turn raised the flask to his lips and consumed sips of the potent fluid. Instantly, they felt a glow of invincibility flow through them. Feelings of strength and potency swelled within them and the certainty of success enveloped them.

The powers promised by Judas suddenly became apparent. They turned towards the passing line of travelers. Now none paused and stared as they had before. None even acknowledged their presence. Those that looked in their direction appeared to cast their gaze through them and beyond. They were now as invisible as Judas had been.

“We must thank you and the Master for these additional gifts which you have bestowed upon us ...” said Anton as he turned back towards Judas.

He stopped in mid-sentence startled by the sight of a void where Judas had once stood.

Then he turned towards Elda and they continued their journey. As the night approached both suddenly felt overpowering waves of sleepiness envelope them. They left the line of marchers and entered a small grove of trees adjacent to their path. There they sat, leaning back against a fallen tree, with closed eyes as the dreams began.

A vision flashed through the minds of each as they slept:

In the distance loomed a large, brick façade with three entrances framed by columns of white marble. As they moved closer, a marble lintel hanging over the entrances could be seen. Above it rose three arched, stained glass windows, the center one bearing the image of the Virgin Mary between two souls entering the Kingdom of Heaven.

Within moments they found themselves standing before the church altar gazing at the gleaming statuary and golden adornments. A strange crucifix rose above the altar as they neared it. It bore the body of Christ but with gold, six pointed star emblazoned upon its chest. The scroll above the figure was no longer inscribed with INRI but had been replaced with a swastika.

Then from the sacristy entered a short, stocky man garbed in priestly vestments. He paused before the altar and faced it. His chasuble bore the embroidered image of the Virgin on white satin background.

He genuflected and turned revealing the front of his investment inscribed with a black swastika in a white circle and surrounded by a bright red border. Then, he raised his hands with palms outward and spoke.

“Bambini vengano a me del Reich ei vostri sforzi per liberare la Terra di omicidi di nostro Signore sarà premiata. Io ti salverà dalla morsa del



vostro persecutori e passare voi in custodia in modo che si possa ancora salire qualche giorno e finire la missione santa.

Vieni da me a Santa Maria dell 'Anima e si sarà risparmiato in modo che si possa agire ancora una volta in nome di Nostro Signore in quel giorno.”

With that he turned and walked back into the sacristy in silence. Upon his departure the altar transformed into a molten mass and flowed down over the platform on which it had stood.

Anton and Elda watched as the church walls then began to quake and soon slumped into a fluid mass around them.

Anton slowly opened his eyes and sat motionless attempting to comprehend the vision he had just encountered. Elda too soon awakened.

“My dreams perplex me” he spoke.

“As do mine” she replied.

“Tell me of yours and I shall tell you likewise” he answered and with that they related the same vision to each other.

“It is surely a revelation from our benefactor to give us guidance in finding he whom we seek.”

“It could be of no other source” agreed Elda.

“The priest’s speech in the Italian tongue tells that he is most certainly in Italy.

But what he said is another matter.

I do not understand Italian” she added.

“He said:

‘Children of the Reich come to me and your efforts to rid the Earth of murders of our Lord will be rewarded.

I will save you from the grip of your persecutors and move you into safe custody so that you may finish the holy mission.

Come to me at Santa Maria dell ‘Anima and you will be saved so you may act again’ “answered Anton.

“The priest of our vision is doubtlessly a Nazi sympathizer helping to enable the Roman Ratline. His church is Santa Maria dell ‘Anima, Our Lady of the Souls. It is the German Church of Rome” he continued.

“Roman Ratline?” questioned Elda.

“The Ratline is a group of supporters who have the power to arrange for the escape of Nazi criminals and in so doing allow them to avoid justice.”

He paused and then added.

“Trust me Elda, the Ratline will not prevent us from obtaining the justice for your father and all the others savaged by Hirt. We shall go to Rome to confront this priestly

preserver of evil and discover the destination of Hirt and his companion. We will then pursue them and eradicate them from the Earth.

This I promise you” he said solemnly as he pulled her close and gently stroked her hair.

“How will we ever be able to travel the great distance to Rome and accomplish that which is to be done?” Elda asked with a soft sigh.

“I am sure our patron will not abandon us. He will petition the Lord to provide for our journey so that we may continue to destroy the evil which lives among us. You must share my trust and it will certainly come to pass” he answered confidently.

As the sun rose, they left their resting place and rejoined the sprawling line of refugees.

From the direction of the sunrise, Anton could tell that they were moving southeasterly.

Although the direction of their travel was true, the path to Italy stretched sixteen hundred kilometers (a thousand miles) ahead.

## Chapter 9

### Crated Death

As they walked, convoys of German soldiers frequently passed by, casting a choking dust over the marchers at the roadside. As the journey continued, Anton suddenly noticed one of the trucks with its hood raised in the distance.

Three soldiers stood at its front as a fourth was sprawled across the fender laboring to repair the crippled vehicle.

“Another favor from the Master to help us complete our task” thought Anton.

He motioned to Elda. They left the line and approached the disabled truck.

They entered the rear of the truck unobserved, seated themselves on a large wooden crate which was strapped to the bed and waited. Soon the repair was completed and the rear flap opened and two of the soldiers also boarded. Anton and Elda remained unseen.

The other two soldiers got into the cab; the engine started and lurched forward. The slow, rugged ride continued for hours as they headed south.

As they traveled the muffled voices of those in the cab could be heard.

“Was ist es, fuhren wir? (What is it that we are carrying?)” asked one.

“Ich tun nicht, aber es muss unbegingt geliefert werden (I don’t know but it must be delivered without fail)” answered the driver.

“Wohin? (To where?)”

“Vater Hudal am Notre-Dame des Souls in Rom (Father Hudal at the Our Lady of the Souls in Rome)” replied the driver.

“Mit dessen Bestellung? (By whose order?)”

“Gestapo – Offizer Augusta Hirt, dass ist alles ich weib (Gestapo Officer Augusta Hirt that is all I know)” was the answer and the conversation ceased.

Anton leaned back reassured in his thought that the hand of the Master was guiding them.

After a time, one of the soldiers suddenly began to rap on the rear of the cab.

“Stoppt den Lastwagen. Ich muss pissen! (Stop the truck. We must relieve ourselves!).he shouted to the driver.

The vehicle came to a halt and the two soldiers in their hurry, jumped from it leaving their rifles behind.

Anton spoke in a whisper not even realizing that he could not be heard but by Elda.

“Lunchtime” and he motioned to her.

A moment later they too jumped from the truck to find the two standing in the roadside brush with backs to the road. Simultaneously, each grasped one of the soldiers from behind covering the mouth of their victim with a powerful grip. They silently drank their fill and pushed the bodies deeper into the underbrush.

They reentered the truck just as the sun was beginning to set. Anton gave a sharp rap on the cab. The vehicle again thrust forward and the journey continued.

His curiosity aroused by the overheard conversation, Anton began to examine the wooden crate upon which they sat. The lid was tightly secured by several large nails.

Then noticing the rifles the soldiers had left, he unfastened one of the bayonets and with it began to pry the lid from the crate. As the edge lifted, a foul vapor rose through the crack from within. Anton quickly reclosed the lid and held it tight. He reached over and grabbed the rifle next to him and using its butt, hammered the protruding nails back into place resealing the lid.

The stench issuing from the crate had clearly revealed to him the nature of its contents.

He again picked up the bayonet, pried a scrap of wood from the crate's lid and began to whittle it into a sharpened point. As he finished, a low groan sounded from the box.

Then, a rumbling and the crate began to vibrate.

Suddenly, light streamed into the truck compartment as the rear flap blew open. It was the light of the full moon rising over the horizon and casting its ghostly glow over the quivering container. Then the lid burst from the crate in a shower of splinters and the creature within sat erect with hands raised. The green, mold laden fragments of decaying flesh hung from its face and a loud mournful cry erupted from its lips.

It turned and ripped the stake from Anton's grip. Once in its grasp, it plunged the wooden spike deep into Anton's chest. Anton fell backward with his life's blood showering from the embedded pike.

Then, with a scowl, it spoke in a low, garbled tone to Elda who sat in stunned paralysis.

"You have not seen the last of me.

You have vanquished my brethren but I shall survive you and every of the Master's servants sent to destroy me.

I shall destroy you also. Of that be sure. Azazel has said it to be so.”

With that being said, he scooped a handful of soil from the crate floor and ripped open the compartment flap. His shadow silhouetted against the moon as he leaped from the truck and raced into the darkness.

Elda bent over the impaled Anton, pulled the spike from his chest and cradled him in her arms. Tears poured from her eyes and she wept bitterly as she rocked his lifeless body to and fro, vainly hoping for his resurrection. He remained still, cold and breathless.

“I am certain that it was right. We shall meet again but at the time of its demise. Of that I am sure” she thought vengefully.

The soldiers in the cab hearing the commotion brought the vehicle to a sudden halt.

They hurried to the back of the truck and cautiously peered in.

Knowing full well that once the soldiers found their cargo missing they would end their mission to Rome, Elda was left with no other choice. She must act alone. She sprang from the compartment and savaged the startled victims with such suddenness and intense ferocity that even she herself was surprised. They were little match for her onslaught and they were quickly ended. When it was finished, she stood motionless, the blood of her killings streaming from her lips and feeling of empowerment flowing through her.

“I must complete the task or peace will never be mine. Now I shall avenge not only the death of my father but now that of Anton too” she thought.

She commandeered the truck and continued the journey to Our Lady of the Souls with Anton’s still corpse lying in the back.





Chapter 10

## Seeking The Savior of Evil

After hours of travelling, it finally rose in the distance just as the dream had foretold.

It was a large, brick facade with three entrances framed by columns of white marble, a marble lintel hanging over the entrances and above it rose three arched, stained glass windows. The center one bore the image of the Virgin Mary between two souls entering the Kingdom of Heaven.

It was Our Lady of the Souls.

Elda drove to the rear of the building. There stood the rectory. She parked the truck, walked to the back of the vehicle and pulled the flap aside. The sunlight streamed over Anton's motionless form.

"How am I to continue without his love and guidance" she thought mournfully.

"It is not how but must" she added pensively as she pulled the canvas back into place.

Her strength intensified, fueled by her sadness and her eagerness for revenge mounted as she walked to the rectory door. She could feel the excitement of her intended act welling up within. Hudal would be subjected to her every strength and be destroyed for his evil deeds.

She knocked soundly and the door was answered by a short, stocky German woman.

"I am here to see Father Hudal" Elda announced.

“The Father is seeing no one today” was the curt reply and the woman began to close the door.

Elda reached out and blocked the door from being fully shut.

“I am here to speak about Doctor August Hirt. If you tell the Father of that, I am sure that he will see me” answered Elda sternly.

The woman hesitated and then spoke “I will tell him.”

Elda released her grip on the door and it closed with a thud. The woman turned and hurried away down the long hall towards Hudal’s office.

Seconds later Hudal came to the door. “Hello my dear” he greeted her cheerfully.

“Do come in” and he pushed the door open widely. They walked into the living room and sat down.

“Now what is it that you care to speak about concerning Doctor Hirt?” he asked.

“You have helped him to gain asylum from those who would have him pay a just debt for his crimes” replied Elda sternly.

“As a man of God, who has taken vows to do what is right, good and just, how can you save a diabolical creature such as he from fitting punishment?” she added.

Hudal paused, leaned forward and then spoke.

“It is true that I have taken the vows of which you speak and they include my obligation to respect and adhere to the word of the Lord. He had said many things.

'If someone wrongs you seven times in a day and comes back to you seven times saying, "I am sorry" you must forgive.'

'Forgive and you will be forgiven.' 'Love your enemies.'

Do my vows prevent me from heeding these words?

All that have come to me seeking refuge have first confessed and pledged to a righteous path and all have been forgiven. I have helped no stained souls escape only those whom I am bound to grant forgiveness and mercy."

Elda remained silent trying to absorb the full understanding of what he had said and then replied.

"Is it not also said 'An eye for an eye'?"

"Not by the Savior" answered Hudal.

Again there was silence.

Elda's urge to destroy Hudal ebbed as his words flooded her thoughts.

When she first entered the rectory she was sure that he must be destroyed. She fully expected to meet one as malignant as Hirt himself. His demise would help avenge her father's death. It would help to soothe her burning desire for vengeance.

But now, after hearing Hudal's words she knew that killing him would only add to her mental agony for his acts were not of malice. They were acts of forgiveness and

repentance and consistent with the teaching of the Christ. His utterances penetrated deeply and she knew she must spare him.

Spare him yes but not Hirt and certainly not the creature who had stolen Anton from her. Hirt's repentance and confessed remorse was surely a facade designed to convince Hudal to save him, of this, she was most positive. Even if his contrition was real he still must be punished for the torturous death of her father. That she could never forgive. Even the commandments of the Lord could never sway her from that mission of retribution.

Elda looked up pensively and spoke.

"Father, would you bury one on sacred ground whom you believe has sinned and not repented?"

"What do you mean my dear?" he replied.

"My friend and lover Anton has been struck down by the most wicked of beasts and lies dead. He died with righteous vengeance and murder on his soul. Can he be forgiven and buried here at Our Lady of the Souls?" she asked.

He thought and then replied.

"I must see his body and bless him with sacrament of Extreme Unction for that to be done."

With that, Elda escorted the priest to the truck. She opened the flap exposing Anton's corpse and they entered the compartment. Hudal knelt beside Anton and administered

the holy oils he had brought with him. Once finished, he arose and turned to her and spoke.

“We cannot just throw his shrouded body into the grave. We need a coffin. I will call Mr. Gullipia. He is the local undertaker and a good friend. I am sure he will supply a coffin. It may not be the most lavish but it will suffice. It will be a poor man’s casket but I am sure it’s poverty will not deter Jesus from welcoming him with open arms. The coffin that carries him into the earth is of little consequence, it is the cleanliness of his soul that is paramount and the sacrament of Extreme Unction has made it pure. Of this I am sure my dear.”

Within an hour of his request, two workmen delivered a plain wooden casket to the back door of the rectory. Elda and the priest carried it to the rear of the truck and slid it in next to the lifeless Anton. Together, they lifted the body and placed it in the container. She knelt by the coffin and gazed down at his face as he lay there.

Hudal reached for the lid. Elda grasped his hand firmly as he did. A tide of emotions swept over her and her willingness to commit his body back to the earth began to ebb. She looked up at the priest and spoke slowly.

“I must spend some final minutes in solitude with him.”

She paused and then continued.

“No more will I see this face or hear his words. I must summon the courage to render this final act that will have him leave me forever” she spoke sadly as she stroked his ashen cheek.

At these words, Hudal arose and left the truck compartment. Elda remained kneeling at the coffin.

“Oh Lord!

How can this be? Anton has served you well and sought to smite evil from the Earth as you have commanded him. He has been your servant in every cause. He has given you praise and acted upon your every wish.

How can it be that you have allowed the creature, who has shunned you and spread evil over the land, to extinguish Anton’s being?

Return him to me, I beseech you.

Saint Judas, help me!” she cried aloud mournfully

She placed her hands over the wound in his chest and slumped over the edge of the casket in a despairing swoon.

As she lay in her fainted state guiding words from the Saint flashed before her. They came as enlightened bursts which streamed through her consciousness. Moments later she was awakened by a hand on her shoulder.

“Are you alright my dear?” spoke the words of the priest through the mournful haze.

“Yes! Yes Father” she replied as she sat upright with her eyes still closed.

“We must get on with it. I have called my workmen to open a grave” he uttered softly.

Elda opened her eyes and spoke.

“Father, I cannot bury him!” she exclaimed.

“I have been visited by another in my faded state and instructed otherwise.

I must retain possession of his body until I am again approached.”

“Instructed by whom?” inquired the priest.

“I recognized him as Saint Judas” she answered.

“He has come to us in the past and aided us. I am sure that if I follow his commands once again, he will grant assistance, even in this dreadful circumstance” she added.

“You cannot keep the body. It will never remain in its present state.

Decomposition will surely ensue” advised the priest.

“I am sure the holy one knows this full well and will prevent that. I must trust in his commands for if I do not, all hope of relief from my anguish is lost. I must keep faith in the words of my patron. It is all that I have left” she answered.

There was a silence.

“Then be it as you will. I will pray for your success” he replied.



They then raised the lid over the coffin. Elda watched the darkness envelope Anton's body as it was lowered in place and secured with several nails by the priest.

"Father, I was also commanded to follow the path of Doctor Hirt for without that act Anton can never be returned to me. Judas has told me that to extinguish that evil life will allow the resurrection of Anton, for he is a true servant of the Lord and I believe this to be true. Will you help me in this task?"

He hesitated and then answered.

"You know that I cannot do this. I cannot aid in the demise of one who has confessed and repented no matter how grievous his sins might be" Hudal answered.

"The confessions and repentance of Hirt and many of the others whom you have aided were but a means by which to gain your favor. The only sincerity was in their desire to escape punishment for their crimes. Of this I am sure, for the Saint has told me this too" he said.

Again a silence prevailed.

"I must give this great thought. You will stay here with me tonight in the rectory and I will speak with you in the morning" he replied.

With that they left the truck and walked to the rectory. "Father, who is Azazel" asked Elda as they walked.

He stopped immediately upon hearing the question.

“It is the name of one whom we hope to never meet.” He paused and then spoke again.

“From where did you hear the name of this foul being?”

“I shall destroy you also. Of that be sure. Azazel has said it to be so’,

Those were the words spoken by the creature that killed Anton” she replied.

The priest again paused and looked at her with a solemn gaze.

“I knew not of any creature that accompanied Doctor Hirt!” replied the priest.

“Did the Doctor have a crate with him?” asked Elda.

“Yes, he did. He said it contained his personal belongs and I asked him no more of it” answered the priest.

“That was the coffin of the Being” answered Elda.

“Tell me, how do you know the name of Azazel?” she continued.

“It was said by the prophet Enoch ‘The whole earth has been corrupted through the works that were taught by Azazel, to him ascribe all sin. And Azazel taught men to make swords and knives and shields and breastplates; and made known to them the metals of the earth and the art of working them. And there arose much godlessness, and they were led astray and became corrupt in all their ways.

The corruption brought on by Azazel degrades the human race, and the four archangels saw much blood being shed upon the earth and all lawlessness being wrought upon the earth. They implored the Most High saying ‘Thou seest what Azazel hath done, who

hath taught all unrighteousness on earth and revealed the eternal secrets which were in heaven, which men were striving to learn.

Then God sees the sin brought about by Azazel and has Raphael bind Azazel hand and foot and cast him into the darkness and make an opening in the desert and cast him therein. And place upon him rough and jagged rocks, and cover him with darkness, and let him abide there forever, and cover his face that he may not see light', this is what is said of Azazel by the Holy Scriptures" Hudal replied.

"If this is true then how can he commit to and aid the creature?" asked Elda.

"Although bound, he need not be powerless. His will can still be implemented through his many faithful servants who carry out his wishes and seek his favor. They believe in his eventual release from his imprisonment and his rise to grandeur. When that happens, a new wicked kingdom will arise and they will be ready to fill positions of great power and prestige."

"And the acts of the creature will help to enable this?" asked Elda.

"Surely if sufficient evil pervades the Earth, some of God's devoted warriors may be dissuaded to abandon him and swear allegiance to the dark forces. If that were to happen Azazel could easily be set free and assume power over Heaven and Earth. This is what the black hearted ones anticipate and they labor without rest to make such come to pass."

“If you knew all of this why did you aid those who came to you seeking to escape?”  
asked Elda.

“I was never told of Azazel or the creature of whom you speak. As I explained I merely sought to forgive and save the souls of those who came to me in distress.

Had I been aware of what you have told me my actions surely would not have been as they were” he answered regretfully.

Elda asked again “Will you help in my quest to save Anton and destroy Hirt and his sinister accomplice?”

They continued to walk to the rectory. Suddenly the priest stopped and spoke.

“From what you have told me, you need not wait until the morning for my answer. I will help you in every way I can but you must promise to return when the deed is done so I can cleanse your soul of this sin through confession and penance.

Murder, even to eradicate evil, is still a sin and must be washed from one’s soul” replied the priest.

“That, I will certainly do. Thank you Father.

And I will pray for you and beseech the Saint in your behalf to free you from the guilt I am sure you will bear for helping me in this act” she added.

With that they continued to the rectory.

Once there, the priest led her to his office. He walked behind the desk and opened one of its drawers, speaking as he did so.

“My dear, I will give you these papers that will allow you and your cargo safe passage to Argentina on the Santa Fe. It is the ship of Alberto Doderro, a man who ensured the safe passage of Doctor Hirt and many others. With these papers and the letter I am about to write, you too will be safely transported to South America. There you may seek out Doctor Hirt and his companion and do what you must.”

He then took out paper and pen and began to write as she waited. When it was completed he handed it to her and they both retired for the night.

Elda entered the guest room on the second floor or the rectory and immediately took out the letter and papers given to her by Hudal and perused them thoroughly. The papers were to disguise Anton as a fallen SS officer and she as the officer's sister.

“To the Captain of the Santa Fe,

This letter is to authorize passage on your vessel to Elfreda Fritz, the wife of deceased Officer Herman Fritz of the Schutzstaffel. She will be accompanied by the body of her deceased brother, Walter Schlutz, also an officer of the Schutzstaffel, whom she seeks to bury on consecrated ground away from the threat of desecration by the invaders.

Please extend to her all courtesies and assistance.

Long life to the Fuhuer.

Signed: Doctor Alois Hudal”

She reexamined the papers which accompanied the letter. All seemed well and she folded and tucked them tightly into her pocket. She then took up a seat next to the window and stared outward from the darkened room. She remained motionless, pondering what had happened and what was about to happen.

Then, suddenly, she noticed a figure moving through the hazy moonlight. It was Hudal carrying a large gasoline container. He was walking straight towards the thicket where the truck was hidden.

She slowly arose from her seat, all the time staring intently at him. She then quickly thrust open the window and leaped from it. She floated downward as a leaf might fall and landed lightly on the ground below. She silently raced after Hudal as he walked to the truck and began to soak it with the gasoline. With the saturation complete, he stepped back and began to fumble through his pockets in search of a match.

Upon seeing this, Elda sprang from behind him and grasped him by his throat. She sunk her fingers deep, crushing his windpipe and pulled him backwards with a viselike grip.

His lies and deceitful explanations flashed through her mind. His treachery was so complete and convincing that her fury became directed not only at him but also at herself for having been so foolishly misled.

Why could she not have read his mind and recognized his true nature?

Could it be that she had found his words so enchanting that they erased all thoughts of his deceit? Be it as it may, it was over now and she did what was to be done with no remorse.

Rage filled her and she sunk her teeth deeply into his neck and drained all that was possible from him.

When it was done, she reached down and tore the blood soaked, priestly collar from him, pulled his jaw open wide and stuffed it into his mouth. She then reached into each of his pockets and pulled a wallet from one. It was filled with hundreds of deutschmarks, money probably given to him by his Nazi clientele, she thought. She took it all and hastily stuffed it into her pocket.

Then fatigued from the assault, she sat on the running board of the truck trying to regain her composure. She remained motionless, absorbed in self-recrimination and reprimand for having believed Hudal. She found it difficult to excuse herself for her foolhardiness but knew she must remain resolute in her pursuit of Hirt and the creature.

Then, from the distance by the rectory came the sound of shouting and the flashing of lights. She stealthily crept to the edge of the thicket. Surrounding the rectory were several SS troopers, all training their flashlights on the building.

Three others entered the front door and two more entered the back door.

Shouts of "Vater Hudal! (Father Hudal!)" and "Wo ist sie? (Where is she?)" echoed from within the rectory. Several minutes later, they again appeared in the doorway this time

with the housekeeper. After what looked like a brief interrogation, they all climbed back into their truck and drove off.

Elda retreated to the truck. She opened the flap and entered the compartment. She loosened the lid of the coffin and using the priest's flashlight peered in. Anton lay peacefully apparently unaffected by the degrading forces of nature. She closed the coffin confident that the promises of Judas were to be fulfilled.

She went to the cab of the truck and once again took out the letter and papers Hudal had given to her and using the flashlight reexamined them carefully. They surely looked legitimate. She could only hope that her assessment of these was better than her assessment of Hudal himself.

In any case, she was about to find out, for the path that she was about to follow would lead her to that ship and hopefully passage to Argentina. She would then continue her quest for Hirt and the Creature.





## Chapter 11

### Passage to Vengeance

She rode all through the night and into the next day, to the Genoa port. She drove down the coastline uneasily searching for the Santa Fe. Soon she found it standing at dockside. It was a large gray ship, with its name emblazoned across its stern and flying an Argentine flag high above.

She slowed as she passed and noted two armed soldiers standing at the gangplank. They were carefully examining the papers of each passenger as they boarded.

The thought of Hudal having called the Nazis raced through her mind. Had he divulged her plan to follow Hirt?

Had he told them of the papers he had given to her?

Why did he give her those credentials in the first place? Was it that he was sure they would never be used?

Did he just want to secure her trust so that she would stay at the rectory and surely be captured?

Or, do the papers themselves contain a coded message identifying her as an imposter?

In spite of the gifts she possessed, she could answer none of these questions. With all of these thoughts flowing through her head she made what she was sure was a

dangerous decision. She would try to board the ship at night when all of her powers were fullest just in case. She would present Anton's body for boarding only after she was confident that Hudal's papers were fully accepted.

She turned down a side street and parked the truck in the shade. She went back to the compartment, climbed in and opened the coffin lid. There lay Anton, completely undefiled as was promised. She got back into the cab and waited for sundown.

As the shadows crept long, she started the engine and warily drove towards the berth of the Santa Fe. She arrived just as darkness was complete. She left the truck and nervously approached the soldiers at the ship's entrance.

"Heil Hilter" Elda choked out as she raised her hand in a Nazi salute.

The blinding beam from the flashlight of one of the soldiers was directed squarely in her face.

"Halt! Ich muss sehen, Ihre Papiere! (Halt! I must see your papers!)" announced the other soldier in a stern, commanding voice.

Elda timidly pulled the papers from her pocket and handed them to him saying nothing.

The trooper stood motionless for several minutes, shining his light over the papers and carefully reading every word. When finished he looked up and spoke.

"So you are the wife of Herman Fritz!

He was a brave servant of Deutschland and the Fuehrer” he said reverently as he handed the papers back to her.

“Danke” she replied quietly looking as mournful as she could muster.

“As you can see I must bring with me the body of my dear brother. Will someone help bring the coffin on board?” she added.

“Bringen Sie zwei Besatzungsmitglieder (Bring two crewmen) ” he shouted towards the ship.

In moments, two strong men approached, lifted the coffin from the truck and carried it onto the ship. Elda followed close behind as they carried it down into the cargo hold.

“Place it near the entrance so that I may come and visit him during the voyage” she requested.

With that they obediently set it down near the compartment door.

Elda left and found her small, cramped quarters on the upper deck and threw herself across the cot-like bed. Hours later her rest was disturbed by the lurch of the ship as it was moved away from the dock and moved seaward to commence its ten day journey to Argentina.

Elda roamed the deck by day and savored Nazi passengers by night to sustain herself and maintain her strength. Each time the drained corpses were thrown overboard and quietly devoured by the sea. She visited Anton nightly, continually reassuring herself of his preservation.

On the night of the fifth day the ship headed straight into a hurricane and began its relentless rise and fall with the turbulent waves. The wind tore across the decks and the ship rocked. The bow sank deeply into each assaulting wave and then was thrown almost vertically upward by the impact only to again plunge into the next powerful crest and repeat the violent cycle. The onslaught of the sea was endless through the night.

Elda left her cabin at midnight. Even with her powers at full strength she struggled to fight the drenching gusts sweeping over the deck. Slowly, step by laborious step, she fought her way to the cargo hold entrance. She closed the door behind her and started unsteadily down the steep, swaying steps.

As she descended and approached Anton's casket, from the far recesses of her mind came a low, muted whisper.

"Awaken me so I may arise."

Another few steps taken and again.

"Awaken me so I may arise" this time a bit louder.

A few more steps and once more and loudly the words rang through her mind.

"Awaken me so I may arise."

Elda stopped and concentrated with all her might.

"And how might this be accomplished?" she replied with deep thought. "How shall I awaken you my love?"

“You have always possessed the power to awaken me.

It is with your source of life’s nourishment, with blood struck from your breasts. With this, and this alone, I shall regain life’s vital force” came the answer streaming into her consciousness.

Elda removed the lid of the coffin and stared down at Anton’s lifeless form perplexed at the thoughts that had flooded her mind.

Then, she reached down as if controlled by an inexplicable force, and pulled a protruding nail from the lid. Without hesitation, still in a trance-like state, she exposed her breasts. She immediately plunged the tip of the sharp implement into one of her breasts and then into the other. Blood spurted from each of the shallow wounds and tickled down over each nipple.

She wiped some of the blood with her fingers and gently rubbed the gleaning fluid over the deep wound in his chest where the stake had been driven. Then she continued smearing more of the liquid over the lips of Anton’s cold body.

She drew back and waited. He remained motionless.

Again, she swabbed blood from her breasts and this time separated his lips and thrust the liquid into his mouth. Again, she drew back and waited.

For a moment, she thought she saw him beginning to stir and then again become still.

Was it that he was truly awakening or was it merely the rocking of the ship that gave this evidence of his revival?

She waited some more, straining in the dim light, hoping to see further indications of his reanimation.

Then it happened.

The open gash on his chest began to shrink, like an evaporating puddle and within seconds only a scar remained where the impalement wound had once been.

Then, ever so slightly, his tongue began to pierce his blood smeared lips, attempting to draw more of the reviving liquid back into his mouth. Again, it protruded, and licked the sticky fluid from his lips, this time with more vigor.

Several seconds later, his eyelids began to flutter and soon he lay with eyes wide.

“Anton” she exclaimed with overwhelming excitement, “You have been returned to me”.

He continued to lie still, now and then swallowing hard, but still silent and frozen.

“Would he truly be arisen or merely a remain as the partially revitalized corpse he now was?” she asked herself. She buried her head in her hands fervently hoping to see Anton’s full resurrection but fearful as to what she might see when she again looked up.

“Elda!”

The word echoed and she lifted her head to face him sitting erect. Without a word of reply she lunged towards him and grasped him tightly in an embracing hug. She firmly pressed her lips against his with exquisite joy. Surges of ecstasy fired every nerve and quivers of emotion raced through her very being.

“You are the instrument of my resurrection and my eternal love” Anton whispered gently.

Simmering passions surfaced and burst forth from within each of them.

Elda hugged him even more tightly and they fell back into the casket, fulfilling the deepest of their lustful desires.

Then, with passions quelled, they sat upright and Anton spoke.

“I am now what I was but not what I have been. My powers have been erased and I exist now as every mortal, destined to live out my years from this moment forward until my corporal end.

My resurrection required that I cease to exist as the undead and reenter the world of the living. Only in this way could I return to you and we could again consummate our physical love for each other as we have so done. My only regret is that although my love for you is eternal now my time with you will no longer be eternal. ”

Elda silently looked into his eyes. The flashes of the supernatural powers that had been once his, were no longer. Instead, they now glowed with affection and enchantment. After a moment she spoke.

“No sacrifice would have been too great if it allowed your return to me. Although our time is now limited it is surely better than being lost forever. The heartbreak that consumed me before you were arisen has been erased.”

They resealed the empty coffin and together they slowly made their way across the gyrating deck back to Elda's cabin.



Chapter 12

Retribution

Elda brought food to Anton each day and she fed on the Nazi passengers at will. After five more days, through rough seas, they finally landed at Buenos Aires.



As the ship was being towed to the wharf, they went to the cargo hold and Anton slipped back into the empty coffin and Elda resealed it. The ship was soon securely docked and disembarking began.

Again the words, "Heil Hitler" struggled from her lips as she encountered the two Nazi soldiers standing at the foot of the gangplank. Again, her papers were thoroughly examined after which she was allowed to pass with two crewmen carrying Anton's coffin behind her.

Several waggoner's were lined up at the wharf and Elda quickly tried to hire one. All were reluctant at the sight of the coffin, except one, who eagerly agreed. The casket was loaded, Elda climbed into the passenger's seat of the old, sputtering pickup truck and the wearisome journey to Bariloche began.

Bariloche was spoken about by Hudal. It was an Alpine-style town on the edge of the Argentine Andes, a haven for Nazis escaping Germany and the refuge of Hirt according to Hudal.

As they rode, the driver began to speak with Elda and to her surprise, in flawless German.

"Was bringt dich nach Argentinien? (What brings you to Argentina?) " he asked.

"I have come to bury my dear brother. His wish was not to be buried on the soil of a defeated Germany. I am bringing him to Bariloche to be buried where the new Reich

shall arise. Of this he would surely approve” she answered with all the conviction she could muster.

“And what is his name?” asked the driver.

“Walter Schlutz, he was an officer of the Schutzstaffel who was killed in Berlin by an air attack.”

There was a long silence as they jostled over the rutted, dirt road towards Bariloche.

“It is quite curious” he began again.

“But several months ago, I drove another to Bariloche. He too, carried a coffin with him. He said it contained the body of a friend he was to bury there also.”

Elda straightened herself in the seat and replied. “When did you say you drove him?”

“Several months ago but exactly when I can’t remember.”

“What was his name?” she continued.

“Again, I do not recall” came his unconvincing answer.

More silence as they continued the jarring ride out into the desolate countryside.

Suddenly, the driver brought the truck to an abrupt halt in the middle of a small thicket.

“I think there is a problem with the rear tire. Let me check it” announced the driver as he left the cab.

A long minute passed and Elda sat nervously awaiting his return.

Then she heard his voice once again. He was standing next to the truck by her open window.

“Raus hier! (Get out!) he commanded.

She slowly lifted the door handle, slid out of the truck and stood before him. She faced him with a small gun tightly clutched in his right hand and aimed directly at her forehead.

“You are a beautiful woman and I find this very hard to do but I must do as I am ordered” he stuttered as his hand shook.

“What are you doing?

What do you mean?” asked Elda still pretending to be a perplexed Elfreda Fritz.

“I have been contacted by Berlin. You are an imposter and a Jew.

They told me everything and I have been ordered to kill you and as a faithful servant of the Reich I will obey” and pulled back the hammer of the pistol.

Elda’s mouth instantly dried. The sun beat strongly through the leaves of the trees that surrounded them, creating bright patches of sunlight covering the ground. Then she remembered that her powers now persisted during the hours of both the day and the night. In spite of the brightness of the day, he could do her no harm.

She decided to coerce all the information that she could from him before she began the slaughter.

“What did they tell you?” she began.

“After you left Our Lady of the Souls the priest’s body was found. Some days later, when the rectory was searched his diary was found. In that diary the whole story was told.

It told of how he had given you the papers to board the Santa Fe so you would trust him implicitly and remain at the rectory until the Gestapo could come and arrest you but obviously you had escaped.”

“If this is true, why was I not arrested when I boarded the ship?”

“The diary had not yet been found” he replied.

“Then why was I not arrested when I left the ship?” she asked.

“We are in a foreign country which has graciously allowed us sanctuary. It would be unwise to cause any unnecessary commotion which might draw attention to us and imperil our status here.

It is much easier and less noticeable to handle the matter in this way” he answered.

“Are there any more questions?” he added in a more confident tone.

Elda could see that his timidity was quickly waning. His hand was no longer shaking and voice no longer trembling.

Suddenly, several loud bursts echoed from the coffin lying on the truck bed. A shower of splinters flew from the lid and then the lid itself was catapulted into the air.

The driver, startled by the uproar, whirled around to view its source.

Without hesitation, Elda grasped the gun and wrenched it from his hand. She then sunk her teeth deep into its flesh. Anton leapt from the shattered casket and onto the stunned driver. Then, encircling his throat from behind with a vise like grip, with all his strength, he choked the man into unconsciousness.

When all signs of life had ebbed, Anton released him and stood upright.

Elda rushed to him and tearfully fell into his arms. He held her in a close embrace.

“There was no need for you to risk yourself. I, as you know, cannot be injured by the acts of mere mortals” she said.

“When I heard the threat I became overwhelmed with fear for you. You must remember that I am no longer what you are and I am subject to emotions of but a man.

I felt compelled to act as I did so as to prevent you from harm” he replied and he drew her even closer.

They placed the driver’s body into the shattered casket and slid it into the high weeds several yards from the roadside. Then they got into the truck and continued the long journey to Bariloche.

The travel took three more days over the rocky, rutted roads of the Patagonia. Finally, late in the third day, the Bavaria like town, with its gingerbread houses, loomed from a pine forest at the base of a pristine lake. The snowcapped mountains in the distance framed a picture of a peaceful and tranquil place, starkly different from the horrors that

had been left behind by its Nazi inhabitants. Those sights and thoughts angered Elda even more and her thirst for revenge rose to new heights as they approached the village.

They parked the truck on the outskirts and walked to the center of the town. The people they passed were a mixture of Argentine and German origin and Anton and Elda blended in with ease. The sound of whisking brooms could be heard everywhere as shopkeepers hurriedly swept the sidewalks in front of their stores.

Soon the shadows began to grow long as the sun sank behind the mountains in the west. Shop after shop drew its blinds and a "Closed" sign appeared in every store window. By the time Anton and Elda reached the end of the main street, all lights were dimmed and a strange silence pervaded. They turned and looked back. Not a person was to be seen, not a single store was open, only a ghostly void.

They began to walk back to the truck. As they reentered the center of town, suddenly one of the shop doors sprang open and an old man appeared. He hastily turned and fumbled for the key. Finding it, he quickly turned, locked the door and shook the handle soundly so as to be sure of its fastening.

Anton and Elda hurried their steps to reach him before he could slip down the alley at the side of the building.

"May we speak with you?" shouted Anton.

The man turned towards him and replied abruptly.

“No! No! Not now!”

“Please! Only for a minute!” shouted Elda.

He stopped at the corner of the alley way and paused. Anton and Elda raced towards him.

“Only for a minute for I must get home before nightfall and I am already late” he spoke in a nervous, one breath sentence.

“Why are the streets deserted and all the shops closed at this early hour?

Even the restaurants and inns are shuttered?” asked Elda.

“You are not from around here?” replied the man.

“No” answered Elda.

“If you were you would know” came the answer. There was a brief pause and then he continued.

“I must speak quickly.

It all started several months ago. Many of the local town’s people began to disappear in the night. People left their shops to go home for the night and were never seen again. People went to visit a friend for the evening and they are gone. People leaving an inn after an evening, they disappeared.

Soon everyone was afraid they might be next. No one remains out after sundown any more.

Fear is everywhere.”

Anton and Elda looked up and down the street as the man finished. At the far end of the street Anton noticed a single lighted shop window gleaming in the distance. He pointed in its direction.

“What is that shop and how come it remains open?” he asked.

“That is the butcher shop. It used to be owned by my friend Carlos but he too disappeared. He was one of the first. His wife couldn’t run the shop by herself and his son is too young so she sold it right after he disappeared.”

“To whom?” asked Anton.

“New people - A German.

Many Germans have come to our towns lately.

I don’t know much about the one who bought the shop.

All I know is that it is said to have the best meats around now.”

“So why don’t they close like everyone else?” continued Elda.

“They are not open. No one would come to the shop in the night.

I think they work there at night preparing for the next day’s business.”

“And why are they are unafraid?” asked Anton.

“Maybe it is because they are new and do not yet believe the tales of the town folk?”



“What tales?” said Anton.

“I can say no more. I must leave!” the man yelled. He then turned and raced down the alleyway and into the darkness.

Anton and Elda walked towards the shop light. The translucent window shade was drawn tightly but left a fine crack at the side through which Anton peered. He cast his gaze over the interior seeing nothing.

Suddenly, from the back room emerged a dark haired and slightly balding man wearing a blood stained apron. Anton squinted hard.

It was Hirt. The mustache was gone but he was sure it was Hirt.

He carried a tray of freshly cut meat and placed it carefully in the case. He then returned to the back room and out of sight.

Anton motioned to Elda and they moved to a window at the rear of the building. Anton again peered through a crack in the window shade. Hirt stood alone before a large chopping block swinging his meat cleaver. A resounding thud echoed through the shop each time it struck its target.

“It’s him! I’m sure it’s him!” Anton whispered to Elda who crouched beside him.

“I will destroy him” she replied with eyes flashing. She stepped eagerly towards the wall of the building as if to enter.

Anton grabbed her arm firmly and pulled her back as she was about to pass through the wall, into the shop.

“No! Not now!

If the creature returns and finds Hirt dead he will surely flee.

We must dispatch both Hirt and the creature and the night is not the time. I am no longer as I was and will be of little help against its powers.

We will wait until the day when it is powerless” explained Anton.

The snapping of twigs suddenly sounded from the woods at the rear of the building.

Anton and Elda crouched even lower.

Through the trees emerged a grotesque form, silhouetted against the moonlight. It was the creature, carrying a large burlap sack over its shoulder. They watched silently as it entered the back door of the shop and threw the blood soaked sack on a table adjacent to the chopping block.

Hirt cut the string that secured the sack’s opening and pulled it down over the contents revealing the face of a man. It was bloodlessly pale and lifeless with eyes staring and blood oozing from the deep gash which encircled the throat.

Anton again squinted hard through the window slit.

It was the man with whom they had spoken but minutes ago!

Hirt removed the sack and then the clothes using a butcher's knife to cut them free.

Without hesitation he then began the methodic dismemberment.

First he cut the head which he immediately discarded in a wooden barrel alongside the door. The legs were next. Each was carefully skinned exposing the bright red flesh underneath.

Hirt looked at the creature with a faint look of disgust.

"Why do you bring me these old ones?"

The best I can get out of them is sausage and stew meat!"

The creature merely nodded and Hirt went on with his gruesome work throwing much of the stripped flesh into a grinder next to the table.

When the last scraps were cast into the barrel then Hirt spoke.

"Put some of this out for Fleischesser so he may eat when he return. Bury the rest."

The creature left the room carrying the barrel into the backyard. He set it down, reached into it and pulled several bones from it. He placed them in a tray lying on the ground. He again picked up the barrel and vanished into the woods only to return a few minutes later with the empty container.

"We will stay here and see the place of the creature's daytime chamber" Anton whispered.

With that they began the wait. Several hours passed and faint light started to spew over the horizon.

A rustling sound came from the woods and seconds later a grey shape loomed in the darkness. Eyes of a massive German Shepherd glowed from the murky forest and its bared teeth sparkled through the hazy dawn's shadows.

Upon seeing the dog's presence, Elda, concentrated with all her power to prevent it from detecting their presence. She watched as it stopped momentarily and warily sniffed the air. Then, it resumed a slow trot to the tray of bones that were left in the yard and began the grisly feast that was set for it.

The sun was climbing over the distant landscape as Hirt and the creature swiftly left through the back door of the shop. Hirt lifted the cellar door adjacent to the exit exposing a crumbling stairwell. The creature descended the stairs into the damp, foul smelling basement and Hirt lowered the door behind it.

An hour passed. Anton again peered into the shop. Hirt was slumped in his chair; eyes closed drawing deep sleep laden breaths.

Anton slowly crept to the back of the building and Elda followed. He carefully perused the yard searching for any available instrument. Then he spied the fly covered remains of the dog's banquet lying on the ground. At the side of the tray was a long bone which had been cracked to a keen point by the canine's powerful bite.

He picked up the ghastly spike and slowly opened the door to the cellar. An overpowering stench arose forcing him to momentarily pause and he then proceeded into the dim catacomb. Lying on a filthy, blood stained cot at the rear of the basement lay the creature.

Anton stealthily approached the body, raised the bony stake high and plunged it deep. The creature instantly grasped the impaling spike and recoiled into a fetal pose. Then, with a final gasp it released its grip and lay limp. Anton wiped the sticky liquid that had gushed from the wound from his hands and left the still hemorrhaging corpse.

In the meantime Elda had quietly entered the back room of the shop so as to not awaken Hirt. She reached for the cleaver lying on the table, grasp it tightly, took a deep breath and held it high.

Just as she was about to extract her long sought revenge, Fleischesser appeared in the doorway. It stood in a crouched pose snarling and barking.

Elda turned and Hirt awoke. "Who are you?" he exclaimed.

She paused with the cleaver still held above her head.

"I am the daughter of Fredrick Draken, a man you murdered at Natzweiter- Struthof." Hirt looked down at the floor and up at her.

"I do remember him. He was quite a special subject. He was afflicted with heterochromia iridium, two different color eyes.

If I recall correctly I believe I even saved him. His eyes that is" he added with a smirk.

“And the rest of him, well” he continued.

“Let me introduce you to your father. There he is” and Hirt pointed to the dog.

“You know, they say ‘you are what you eat’ ” he chuckled.

Her rage could be contained no longer and she brought the deadly instrument down with all her strength.

He fell instantly from the chair into a crumbled mass. The cleaver’s handle protruded from his head and bloody gray ooze streamed from the cavernous opening.

The dog simultaneously lunged at Elda, mouth wide and teeth bared. The impact knocked her down into the pool of blood ebbing from Hirt’s skull. The grip of the dog’s jaws sank deep into her forearm. She blindly searched its face with her other hand and upon finding one of its eyes, drove her finger deep into the socket.

A loud shriek erupted and it instantly retreated back through the doorway from which it had come.

Anton entered the room and lifted Elda from the floor.

“Are you hurt?” he asked looking at her wounded arm. She turned and pointed at Hirt’s lifeless body.

“I have no pain. All my pain has been blunted by the elation of revenge” she replied with a faint smile.

Anton reached down and pulled the cleaver from Hirt's skull and then picked up the body and placed it on the table next to the butcher's block.

Then a sharp knocking came from the front door of the shop. Anton walked to the door, parted the shade and looked out to see several people lined up at the entrance.

"Son las nueve, ¿por qué no se abre? (its nine o'clock, why are you not open?)" shouted one of them. Anton paused for a moment and then spoke impulsively.

"The butcher is sick. We will open tomorrow if he is feeling better" and he closed the shade.

He walked into the back room and spoke.

"It would be a shame to disappoint all those customers" and he picked up the butcher's knife from the table and began to cut the clothes from Hirt's body.

Elda nodded.

"I remember when we met the man yesterday; he said that there were many new Germans coming to the town. I'm sure most are like Hirt, Nazi criminals fleeing Deutschland" she replied with a faint grin.

"It would be good for us to settle down in a nice little town like this" she added coyly.

Anton continued to cut the clothes and then reached for the cleaver.

Just Ends

Several days passed.

Again Anton and Elda were in the back room of the shop.

A sharp knock came from the front door of the shop. Anton walked to the door, parted the shade and looked out to see several people lined up at the entrance.

“Son las nueve, ¿por qué no se abre? (its nine o'clock, why are you not open?)” shouted one of them. He smiled broadly and unlocked the door.

“Lo siento! Estabamos ocupados en prepara las carnes de la jornada Por favor que venga! (I am sorry! We were busy preparing the day's meats. Please come in!)”

The customers hurriedly lined up in front of the counter.

A large banner hung in the window and another behind the meat case. It read “Bajo una nueva dirección con la misma gran cortes! (Under new management with the same great cuts!)”

Elda emerged from the back room wearing her butcher's apron. One of the customers immediately spoke.

“Buenos días Miss Elda and how are you today?”

“Fine and you?” she replied with a smile.



“I too am fine, however my neighbor is not.

He is a German man who came to our town about a month ago and now he is one of the many who have disappeared” he answered.

“Are you sure that he disappeared?” she asked.

“No one has seen him for two days now” answered the man.

“Are you sure that no one has seen him?” replied Elda and she smiled as she pointed a tray of steaks in the case.

“These are very good, very tender and juicy. Can I interest you in one of them?”

The End

### **Character List**

Elda Draken

Anton Brusksa

Fritz (Katakome owner / host)

Fredrick Draken (Elda’s father)

Saint Judas (Christ’s disciple)

Dr. August Hirt (Doctor at Natzweiler- Struthof)

The Creatures

Dr. Alois Hudal (Priest at Our Lady of Souls)

Azazel (The fall angel in the Book of Enoch)

### **Places**

Sachsenhausen - concentration camp as the principal concentration camp for the Berlin area